

THE
BAPTIST PREACHER.

ORIGINAL—MONTHLY.

REV. HENRY KEELING,

EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR.

NEW SERIES—1850.

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THE BAPTIST PREACHER.

New Series

January, 1850.

No. 1.

EDITORIAL ADDRESS.

In accordance with a practice well nigh universal, we present our patrons and readers this, our ninth New Year's Address. We sincerely congratulate them and ourselves, that Divine Providence permits us to enter upon the duties of another year. We intend, however, no mere passing compliment, but mean what we say. That for which we offer congratulation, involves grave responsibilities, of which we cannot be, nor can our patrons and readers be, insensible. It is a matter of grave import to live. The mere misapplication of talents is unfortunate if not bad; to suffer them to remain unemployed, is a perversion of Divine goodness; and to abuse them is still worse. No man, who can work, has a right even to remain idle. Especially does it behoove every man in this age, and in this country, to see and know what he does. But that we may confine our present remarks to the subject which now more immediately concerns us, although in connection with the present season, we must descend to several particulars, upon each of which, we shall be brief.

1. Our past history.

Eight years ago, we issued the first number of this Work, under the title, "The Virginia Baptist Preacher." At that time there was but one publication of the kind in all the land, and that was "The National Preacher," edited in New York. Ours was an experiment, anticipating at first a limited circulation of sermons, by Baptist ministers alone, either residents of Virginia, or those who had emigrated hence to other States. At the end of four years, at the suggestion of friends South and North, East and West, and with a view to enlarged circulation, possibly embracing the whole Baptist family in our vast country, we changed our name to "The Baptist Preacher," and sought a co-operation commensurate with the title. Experience soon convinced us of the impracticability of this, except by a removal to New York or Philadelphia. A great city is to such a scheme, what the heart is to the body.

But had it been otherwise, the disruption which at about that time occurred between the North and South, not only among Baptists, but other denominations, must have proved fatal to our project. Previously, few Southern papers could boast of Northern subscribers. It was much more common that Northern papers enjoyed Southern circulation. One obvious reason for this difference was, that few persons emigrate from South to North, while many do from North to South. And what is more natural, than that we highly esteem that which comes from home? We have actually known Northern ministers residing in the South to do more for the papers of their native, than their adopted, homes. In the mean time, works of similar description, among other denominations as well as our own, and on all sides of us, have been springing into existence, with what success, we are without the means of knowing.

Suffice it to say, that any enterprise of this kind in the South, must look to the South alone for the field of its labor and of its reward. But even this disadvantage has its offset. Generally, the smaller the plantation, the better is, or ought to be, the cultivation of the soil. A single State, thoroughly canvassed, will do more than the whole slightly passed over.

2. Our field of labor.

It was with us, for a long time, a cherished idea, that the "Preacher" might be one of the links by which the North and the South might be held together, and enjoy at least religious communion. Nor is this idea, even now, utterly abandoned. We still have respected Northern names on our list, and hope to retain, and even to increase them. But we never have been able to enlist any strong feeling in our favor from any point north of Pennsylvania and New Jersey. The fact is, that to this hour, there is more of kindly feeling in the South for the North, than there is in the North for the South. True, we feel that we have been wronged, and that we now are wronged, but we have made allowances, and do make allowances, for the prejudices of men. The mass of the people at the North do not know the facts of the case of which they dispute so warmly; nor are they acquainted with the arguments based upon those facts. And the same is true of our own people. Indeed, the more enlightened among us, and those who had studied the subject of discussion most, have but imperfectly understood it. Stung by Fuller's letter first awakened our own mind to the conviction, that Dr. Fuller himself had made concessions to Dr. Wayland, and concessions material to the argument, which ought not to be made. In other words, the premises upon which Dr. Wayland's whole argument rests, are themselves false. But leaving all this to rest where it belongs, two

things are settled and fixed. The first is, that as Southerners and as citizens, free, civilly and religiously, we will not be dictated to by any power or authority but that of God. The other is, that while we do not mathematize as they do us, others whose views on a subject not vital to religion differ from our own, we cannot maintain ecclesiastical fellowship with men who denounce us. In our view of the matter, pro-slavery or anti-slavery, has no more to do with christianity than has the questions, bank or anti-bank, tariff or anti-tariff. The church of Christ was instituted by Him for certain purposes specified in the law itself, and no human organization has the right to impose any extraneous restrictions whatever, whether as matters of legislation, or conditions of membership. If, in the primitive churches, the slave and his master came inned at the same table, by what law can our Northern brethren exclude us both?

3. Our relation to the community.

By the community we mean all who are not Baptists. In spite of all we can do or say to the contrary, this publication, as well as every thing else that appertains to us denominationally, suffers detriment by the very use of the epithet. *Handwritten note:* *And this is a disadvantage for us to avoid it.* This is a disadvantage under which we must continue to labor. We beg attention to it now, for two reasons. First, we wish others who love Christ, but do not go with us, to consider whether they are not doing us injustice, when they consider themselves less sectarian than ourselves, merely because we are obliged to be distinguished from them all. And secondly, that Baptists may not forget the solemn obligations which their isolated position creates.

The fact is, there are but two denominations of christians in all christendom: Baptists and Pede-baptists. The latter include all who admit to baptism or any substitute for it, infants, or minors who cannot, or do not, profess faith in Christ. It follows that all the sects are sprouts of the Romish church, whose only antagonists are Baptists. In accordance with these views, if we could be any thing but Baptists, and were to become so, we should be Catholics. And it has always seemed strange to us, that any one except a Baptist should think of a controversy with a Catholic. The two strongest objections we have to papacy are in common to it, with all Pede-baptists: the admission of the world into the church, while yet in infancy, thus confounding the world and the church; and the union of church and State, the latter being an inevitable result from the former.

In accordance with these views, notwithstanding our position as Baptists exposes us to the charge of bigotry from our Pede-baptist brethren,

nevertheless, we are so latitudinarian as to aver, that if we belonged to any *Pedo-baptist* sect whatever, a mere change of residence, or of domestic relations, or prospect of extended usefulness, might determine us to unite ourselves with another sect. We could be a Methodist in *Richmond*, a Presbyterian in *Charleston*, an Episcopalian in *Philadelphia*, and a Lutheran in *Baltimore*. Why not? Any christian who can commune with another may belong to the same church with him; and nothing can be more preposterous than for a church to admit to its table one whom it would reject or expel as a member, or for an individual to commune with a church of which he could not consistently be a member. Fellowship and communion are plainly correlative. Yet our *Pedo-baptist brethren*, without distinction, denounce as refusing to commune with them, those whom they would not admit as members, or whom, if members, they would immediately expel, namely, all Baptists. We are not saying these things in accusation of our *Pedo-baptist brethren*. We are simply calling the attention of our readers to facts, and facts which it behoves all men, especially Baptists, maturely to consider.

4. Our relation to other periodicals.

The religious periodical literature of the times, is one of the most remarkable facts of the times. Its results transcend all arithmetical calculations. But there is one feature common to it all. Every denomination, in the organs maintaining its own particular views, carefully excludes the rest, except for purposes of caricature or criticism. Who ever saw an honest statement of a Baptist peculiarity in a *Pedo-baptist paper*? Hence, the great mass of *Pedo-baptists* are profoundly ignorant of what the Baptists hold and teach. And their ignorance is generally in proportion to their cultivation and refinement in other respects. Paradoxical as this may seem, it is as true as revelation itself. What we see and know, we hold to be indisputable. From these premises, and others such, we infer that solemn responsibilities devolve upon Baptists, peculiar to themselves.

This subject, "Our relation to other periodicals," the relation of "The Baptist Preacher" to other periodical publications, presents two aspects.

As regards other publications circulated among Baptists, this work interfered with none of them—cannot be a substitute for any one of them—nor be substituted by any one of them. A miscellaneous magazine, or a weekly newspaper, could not supply the place of "The Preacher," much less could the Preacher supply the place of the weekly news paper. All we wonder at is, that such a thought should ever enter the mind of any one. The magazine is a source of instruction and pleas-

ure. How any family could dispense with the weekly paper, we never have been able to divine. The Preacher stands upon its own merits, and occupies its own sphere.

As regards the religious periodical literature of the country in general, without reference to any particular class of publications, the "Preacher" proposes objects for which all of them combined, would be no substitute.

To what magazine or weekly newspaper can you refer, expecting to find such a production as *Howell's sermon on Ordination*? It alone, is worth the whole eight years' subscription of the Preacher from the commencement. And this is only one of a hundred, on all great and important truths of the gospel, preached by some of our most distinguished men in all the Southern and Western States.

The position occupied by Baptists, is in the highest possible sense enviable—but in others greatly unenviable. We stand single handed against the whole world, religious and irreligious. Not that the irreligious world do not respect us and admire many things that distinguish us. We know they do. But they do not appreciate religious truth as we do, nor can they comprehend the motives that actuate us. This is not to be expected. We must bear reproach. Nor do we expect to be comprehended by the mass of our brethren of other persuasions. Most men are without the time and opportunity for elaborate investigation. Our chief difficulty is with the clergy. It is their business to know. But we have two consolations. The first is, God and truth are on our side. The second is, the world and our brethren will do us justice at last. It is inevitable.

But in the mean time, we have an important and difficult part to act. To be faithful under such trying circumstances, is no easy task. These very remarks made in all good faith as they are, may subject us to the imputation of irrelevancy. But we know otherwise. We will explain by stating a case in point. There is a Baptist Tract and Publication Society; and there is another common to all the other evangelical sects. This latter is a noble institution. But it cautiously conceals truths for which Baptists would go to the stake; the concealment of these truths is one of its articles. Nay, more than this is true—it can publish no sentence to which any one of a committee of all the sects, makes objection. The *Pedo-baptist* must sacrifice a part of what he holds to be truth; but he need not violate his conscience. For ourselves, as a Baptist, we would prefer to be a *Pedo-baptist*, were it possible, rather than unite in such an organization. We should, then, at least be consistent. But to contend for an isolated church, in order to maintain

truths held sacred, and yet unnecessarily to unite with those from whom we dissent, for the very purpose of propagating their peculiarities and concealing our own, is an inconsistency of which we cannot be guilty while we retain our senses.

Hence our reasons for wishing a religious Baptist periodical, as well as permanent literature. "If we, as Baptists, suffer commerce, agriculture, mechanics, politics, science, literature, fashion, taste, every thing not religious, and all the religious sects of the world besides, each to have its own periodical literature, while we are destitute or careless, are we faithful, are we honest?"

5. Our relation to the ministry.

We have heard several persons say, "We do not like to read a sermon;" and others, "We can hear more than we have opportunity for, or can retain if heard." All such persons misapprehend the relation we sustain to the living ministry. We do not propose merely the transfer of a few sermons from the pulpit to the press; and still less the substitution even on a limited scale of the press for the pulpit. We wish to be auxiliary to the pulpit.

That such a work as this, well conducted, circulated, read and heeded, should not be a valuable auxiliary to the pulpit, is plainly impossible. It frequently happens that an elaborate sermon, on some absorbing topic, called for by the times, is preached. Its discussion is confined to particular audiences, or circulated only by means of the weekly papers or a pamphlet. This work is a vehicle for all such. Young preachers need good models upon which to form their taste. The sermons of this work ought to be such. In a word, men of abilities need some channel just such as this for conversing with churches beyond their respective charges—churches for the same reason wish to hear other and distant heralds of the cross—a widely extended interchange of thought and opinion is desirable; the *Preacher* is a medium for all this and much more. And we can see the fruits of our labors in all these respects on all sides around us.

6. Our relation to the churches.

Of course we do not mean in their ecclesiastic capacity—but the entire community of Baptists, individually and generally. One great object to be attained by some means, is the training of the minds of our members in the knowledge and defence of the great truths of the gospel. It is a fact not to be concealed, that many, most minds are confused by the multiplicity and contradictions of the doctrines they hear. Tens of thousands have no stated ministry. They hear all—and rely chiefly on a protracted effort once a year, for building up the cause in their midst.

Our first great desire is, to see every church with its devoted, enlightened, supported, pastor or bishop. Next, a Sunday school in every church. And then a sound religious permanent and periodical literature. To express our views of the importance of a weekly religious newspaper, we have no adequate words. Each State needs its own denominational paper. This, in the present condition of things, is vital to denominational prosperity and usefulness. We rejoice to see this impression becoming general.

In conclusion, we desire attention to two more particulars.

1. The strongest possible motives urge us to do all in our power to render this paper what it proposes to be, and what the public and the denomination expect. A trial of eight years convinces us that we can never again resume our ministerial functions. All the solicitude felt by a minister of the gospel that his pulpit ministrations may build up the Redeemer's kingdom, is felt also by us, that this periodical may make "full proof of its ministry." Does the pastor or the evangelist water by his prayers and tears, the word sown by him? So do we. Does he say in his heart, "Then we live, when ye stand fast in the Lord?" So say we. In a word, the publication and dissemination of the sermons of others, appears in the providence of God to be the vocation to which we are called. This is, therefore, to be added to the minor motive, that this is our business. It is our business both religious and secular.

2. The issue of the work involves many considerations, which must be left to the intelligence, punctuality, generosity, and forbearance of its patrons. During a part of the past year, personal and domestic affliction interfered, especially during the cholera panic, with the regular mailing of the numbers. It is hoped there will be no irregularity hereafter. The best means have been used to prevent it. To our old friends who, from the beginning, have taken an interest in the work, we renew our pledge to endeavor to make it worthy their continued support. And may we not hope to obtain many new friends, both agents and subscribers? The best method of sending us names and money is by mail, addressed to us at our risk. We prefer this to any other, even if we must pay the postage; a thing never necessary to be done, except through neglect, as the post office laws always provide for this object in some way or other, and we may expect another improvement of these laws during the present session of Congress.

Editor.

P. S.—Since the foregoing was in type, another publication, similar in kind to this, has been added to the list of those already claiming the

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Editor.

P. S.—Since the foregoing was in type, another publication, similar in kind to this, has been added to the list of those already claiming the

attention of the public. It is the "Pulpit Reporter," edited in New York. Its prospectus number consists of 40,000 copies. Its aim is, of course, to be a national work. Its object is to publish the sermons of evangelical ministers of all sects, just as they are reported from the pulpit. It cannot, therefore, supply the place of "The Baptist Preacher," which is confessedly a denominational work. As we said on another page, while we do not propose to enter the arena of controversy, we do not conceal any part of what we believe to be the truth, and shall contend for our denominational peculiarities. As Baptists, we are obliged to do this by conscience itself; a candor and honesty, for which no liberal Pede-baptist can blame us.

Moreover, Baptists will scarcely fail to perceive in the enterprise alluded to, an incentive and an encouragement to increased perseverance and fidelity. If Pede-baptists leave no honorable measures unused to propagate what their ablest advocates admit, is without *command* or *precedent* in the New Testament, but must be proved in *some other way*, what shall we do with *both precedents and commands*?

But may now Pede-baptists be as good as Baptists? Other things being equal, certainly not, unless disobedience is as good as obedience. If other things be unequal, the question is as impertinent as the question, may not a foreigner be as good as a citizen? As a man he may be, but as a citizen there can be no comparison, since he is no citizen at all. A lady as such may be superior to another, who is also a wife, but neither kind words, nor kind acts, nor an honest heart, dispenses with the matrimonial nuptials. Although a mere ceremony, they are essential to legitimacy. Neither taxes, nor military service, can constitute a citizen; it must be the oath of allegiance, a mere ceremony. Ed.

GOD LONG-SUFFERING, AND THE SINNER INSULTING:

A sermon, by REV. HENRY KEELING.

"The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."—2 Pet. iii: 9.

The great, distinguishing, attribute of man, has, by many, been supposed to be reason. But it is not. That which elevates us highest in the scale of existence, is the moral sense. It is that we may know truth from falsehood, and right from wrong; that we may pursue the good and shun the evil; that we may be religious; that we may be holy. Moral excellence is in its own nature the noblest excellence. It is that which constitutes the chief glory of Deity himself. It is not that he is omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent and unchanging, that makes him God; it is that he is good. Of the moral attributes of our glorious Creator, three are exhibited in the text: his faithfulness; his patience; his benevolence. It is of two of these that we propose now briefly to discourse; and we select two, because the existence of one of them is mentioned as a reason for the exercise of the other: the long-suffering and the benevolence of God. We wish you to see, at one glance, what it is that we propose to show. God is patient; and this patience is extended—"He is long suffering to us-ward." This is a fact. The reason of it is, that he is benevolent: "He is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."

1. God is patient; and this patience is extended even to long-suffering. The connection of our text advises us to discuss this proposition by several subordinate propositions, each of which claims your serious and candid attention.

First. It is of the very nature of sin, intentionally to misunderstand truth and duty; and

Secondly. When truth and duty are understood, it is of the very nature of sin to pervert and abuse them.

The coming of Christ in his kingdom and glory, was an important item, in his own ministry, and that of his apos-

tles. Of this you may see a striking specimen in the last verse of the first, and of the second, and of the third chapter of the first epistle to the Thessalonians. I should be glad if you would read them consecutively. The first reads: "And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come." The second reads: "And what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?" And the third reads: "To the end that he may establish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints." It is not much to be wondered at, that when such prominence was given to this idea—and the thought was brought so vividly before them—the Thessalonians supposed the end of the world to be at hand. The apostle hastens in his second epistle to correct the misapprehension. "Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our being gathered together unto him, that ye be not soon shaken in mind, nor be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand." It is evident, in a word, to those who will carefully compare the various expressions, "The day of God"—"the coming of the day of God"—"and the coming of the Son of Man," that the connection in which they occur, will usually supply the meaning. That they sometimes designate the day of retribution—sometimes the overthrow of Jerusalem—and sometimes the display of Christ's power in establishing his kingdom, protecting his friends and prostrating his enemies, is evident and clear. As the author of the Natural History of Enthusiasm has forcibly and beautifully expressed it, "To the christian church, the second coming of Christ, stands where his first coming stood to the Jewish—in the very centre of the field of prophetic light; and a participation of the glories then to be revealed, is limited to those who in every age are devoutly looking for him." It is essential to the nature of prophecy, that it should be in some respects dark, in others plain; dark until events reveal it, then incapable of being misunderstood, except intentionally. It mattered not, if Eve did suppose that the promise, "The seed of the woman shall bruise the head of the serpent," was fulfilled in the

birth of her first son. "I have gotten a man from the Lord;" facts soon undeceived her. But to our point. And let me here throw in another proposition essential to this discussion. It is,

Thirdly. That all interpretations of scripture, whose moral is bad, are false.

These men said, vauntingly said, and vainly thought they triumphantly said: "Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation."

Listen to the apostle's refutation of their infidelity. In the first place he denies their assertion, that "all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation." Although for his mercy's sake he had long delayed it, God had once destroyed the world by water, and they knew it. In the second place, if it was true, that the threatened vengeance had been long delayed, they misconstrued the non-fulfillment of the divine threatening when they ascribed it to want of veracity or power. He is not slack concerning his promise. He is governed by another motive. And as he did destroy the anti-deluvian world by water; so he will the post-deluvian by fire.

It is not an easy thing to hold the truth in unrighteousness. False interpretations of scripture are usually connected with badness of moral conduct. The man who vauntingly asks, "Where is the promise of his coming?" and the man who "scoffs at religion," and the man who "walks after his own lusts," are usually the very same man.

Never was there a more obviously true remark, than that of the wise man: "Fools make a mock at sin." Sin is moral insanity. In these days of refinement, it would be rude to charge men with want of intelligence. Indeed, no good could result from such a reflection. But is it not strange that men should be less willing to be thought weak than bad. "O, we know we are sinners." This is nothing. But to be pronounced "weak," this is shocking. We make no such charge. Inspiration has decided that the man who "scoffs" at things sacred, is a fool. Sin occupies such a position in religion, that inadequate or unjust conceptions and moral feelings in relation to it, lead to inadequate or unjust conceptions and moral feelings respecting every thing in it.

"Who laughs at sin, laughs at his Maker's frowns;
Laughs at the sword of justice o'er his head;
Laughs at the dear Redeemer's tears and wounds;
Who but for sin had never groaned and bled."

Contempt for religion, scoffing, ridicule, and immorality, are intimate companions. "Scoffers," "walking after their own lusts."

Bishop Porteus fitly observes: "In making wit his principal instrument to vilify the gospel, Voltaire showed a thorough knowledge of the world. He knew that mankind generally prefer *wit* to *logic*; and love to be *entertained* rather than *convicted*; that it is easier to point an epigram than to produce an argument; that few men *reason* justly, but that all the world can laugh."

We have said that sin is worse than moral weakness; that it is moral insanity. No, the Bible says so. What are among the most decided evidences any man can give that he is insane? What test would you consider the most decisive? Let me suppose a case. You are a merchant. You deal in ten articles of merchandise. In nine you have invested one hundred dollars each. In these, when you buy or sell, you manifest the utmost solicitude. You buy the best quality on the best terms; and you sell for the surest and highest pay, even to extortion. But whenever you deal in that other article in which you have invested a *million*, you are indifferent. You buy at the highest price—*yourself* at the lowest—you care not whether you are paid or not—you are utterly careless on this subject. Could you give a stronger instance of insanity? Scarcely, except by paying no regard to religion, and feeling deeply interested in every thing else. That is no highly colored picture of the poet,

"But what of their follies passed, surprised
Them most, and seemed most totally insane,
And unaccountable was value set
On objects of a day, was serious grief,
Or joy, for loss or gain, of mortal things.
So utterly impossible it seemed
When men, their proper interests saw, that ought
Of terminable kind, that aught which e'er
Could die, or cease to be, however nam'd
Should make a human soul—a legal heir

Of everlasting years, rejoice or weep,
In earnest mood; for nothing now worth seem'd
A thought, but had eternal bearing in't."

I have been briefly considering the apostle as suggesting these positions—that it is of the nature of sin intentionally to misunderstand truth and duty; and when understood, to pervert and abuse them; and so to interpret the scriptures as to educe from them evil instead of good. In the close of the chapter he adduces other examples in those who "*vested*" the "things hard to be understood" written by the apostle Paul, as they did also "the other scriptures" to their own destruction. That religion involves truths hard to be understood, is unquestionable. What of it? In the philosophy of nature, a child may ask a thousand questions which Sir Isaac Newton could not explain. But what of it? Shall we close our eyes on the beauty, and our ears against the melodies of the glorious creation? When we warn men to flee from the wrath to come, they talk of "*election*." Whether men believe they *can*, or *cannot* repent, the result is the same:—the first, postpone it indefinitely; and the last lie down in indifference. Many a man who wishes to avoid the duty of believer's baptism, thinks he finds a sufficient reason in the odium of restricted communion. "All men do not think alike," therefore "the salvation of our souls is of no consequence to us." Such reasoning on any other subject would be denounced as indicative of insanity. On religion it is very good. And yet our Maker, Ruler, Governor, Judge, bears with us. When we look abroad on the earth and see its idolatries, and crimes, and corruptions, its godlessness: we wonder that all is not swept away with the besom of destruction. In regard to the incorrigibly impenitent, one would be apt to think they are borne with, that they may find their ultimate overthrow the less tolerable. But our text says not. It is that God would have all to come to repentance.

II. "He is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance:" this is the reason why "he is long-suffering to us-wait."

If there be any one great question to which all others should be held subordinate, it is, "*How will the Judge of all dispose of me?*" "*What is to be my doom forever?*" The text decides one thing for you: If you perish, it is

your fault, not God's. "He is not willing that *any* should perish." I know what your cavilling will answer—it is, that if God is omnipotent, and chooses to save you, he can do it. This is impious—yet the scoffer and the worldling both say it.

The truth is, you have never studied the subject. Perhaps you have studied law ten years, and religion not ten hours. To learn your mechanic art, you have labored seven years, but the art of religion not seven hours. To amass a fortune, fifty years are but a moment; but to gain heaven, an hour is eternity. But here is a truth that requires no study. If you perish, the fault is not God's, but *your's*.

Do you ask me for illustration? You see it even in the law—that hard master—that yoke—that "do and live" system, from which the gospel releases us. "Thou shalt have no strange gods in my sight; thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, nor any likeness; &c., for I am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children of the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; but showing mercy to the thousandth of them that love me." If his judgments, even under the law, go to the third and fourth, his compassions go to the thousandth.

Does his glorious goodness pass before Moses? "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, slow to anger, abundant in goodness and truth, showing mercy to thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin;" and if the sublime description does contain the awful words, "By no means clearing the guilty," it is not until the *last resort*. Truly was it said to Israel, "All day long have I stretched forth my hand to a disobedient and gainsaying people." "As I live saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of the sinner, but that he turn from his wickedness and live." God has no pleasure in the death of the sinner, but he has pleasure in his repentance and life; and he swears it. "As I live saith the Lord." And yet you trifle with his forbearance. To reason, or to persuade, would seem to be in vain. To make men good is not a work of omnipotence, but of grace. And no man was ever made good *unwillingly*. It is true that you are in the hands of God. And unless his electing love, and the sacrifice of his Son, and the sovereign interference of his grace, prevent, you must perish; but this

is made certain by your own temerity, not his severity. If you will not come to Christ that you may have life, Divine goodness is under no obligation to come to your rescue by force.

I know the thousand objections you make, and you ought to know they are futile.

Although this is not a professor's chair from which to teach metaphysics, but a pulpit from which to persuade men "to repentance," I will mention one and expose it.

I heard it for the first time adduced, with great skill, and sustained with power, some years ago, by the late learned and talented President, Thomas R. Dew, in a fire-side discussion with the lamented Rev. I. T. Hinton, late of New Orleans, but then of this city. Hinton had just preached on Divine Decrees and Human Agency, in which he advocated both and their consistency; and Dew afterwards proposed to him this difficulty: "Suppose some one of these non-elect, it matters not what you call them, I use the term for the sake of distinction, of those who finally will *not* be saved, *were*, suppose he *were to accept*; you say *he can*—that the means are provided—that every thing is ready—*suppose he were to accept*, would there not be one in heaven not within the contemplated plan of salvation?"

Such a difficulty, if it weighs any thing, weighs as much against the foreknowledge of God, as against his purposes; and the consequent certainty with him of all things future. But foreknowledge is essential to Deity. And future events cannot be certainly known even to Deity, unless they be certain; nor can their certainty be predicated on any thing short of Divine efficiency. By whatever instruments God effects his purposes, he is the sole cause—governing all things; yet without violating human freedom and accountability.

Notwithstanding all the provisions made, and they are ample, not a sinner would be saved, if God did not interpose for his salvation in a way in which he does not interpose for those who are lost. For all concur in refusing every communication and opposing every condition he makes to them. To save any and not all, is therefore election, unless it be true that men who repent make themselves to differ, and thus save themselves by being better than others. This is not the salvation of the gospel. What God

does to-day being right, was always lawful for him to design to do. His present agency and his purposes are therefore co-incident. With these are parallel, his foreknowledge and the certain futuration of the things themselves. Hence to reject the doctrine of Divine purposes, including election, is to avow atheism, unless we *suppose* a God, as Dr. Clarke has done, *without foreknowledge*.

Uncertainty in all things is to my thoughts, terrific in the extreme. I rejoice in the government of God. You forget that he is Benefactor, Friend, Father, Saviour, Lawgiver, Governor, Judge—all. It may be essential to the happiness and safety of the universe, that he punish the incorrigible offender; and that he do no more than he does, for the salvation of those who reject the gospel and are lost.

When God bids us act, we need not hesitate, and ought not, nor do we but at our own peril. It matters not whether I am worthy, if he makes me welcome to the gospel feast. He bids me come. I know, therefore, with certainty more than mathematical, that if I desire to come, and come, there can be no ancient decree, nor any agency in the universe, that can forbid me. And I know that the provisions are ample: because if they were not, I should not be invited. Yet such is my own waywardness, that I also know, I should not be inclined to accept, had he not graciously disposed me.

Let us then bring this thing to a practical issue. What do you say? What do you? Will you postpone, and that indefinitely, as you have already done a thousand times or more? Then I have no hope for you. True, you may yet come and be saved, but I have no hope of it. You reject the offer to-day; and I know nothing of to-morrow. This meeting was called, and this discussion has been had for a practical purpose, of momentous import, involving all your interests now and forever. We cannot dismiss it without a decision. If you do not vote viva voce, nor by ballot, you vote. Your hearts say aye or no. So God takes your acceptance or your rejection of his offer. What do you? The result is only known to yourselves and to God, never to be revealed till the last day. God grant that many, that all, may have said, "Lord, I accept thy gracious offer to be saved through the gospel of thy dear Son." Amen.