

# SERMON

PREACHED IN THE CHAPEL

OF THE

COLLEGE OF NEW JERSEY,

MARCH 1, 1846.

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BY JOHN MACLEAN,

VICE PRESIDENT OF THE COLLEGE.

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COLLEGE OF NEW JERSEY

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Professor T. B. Johnson, D. D., of the College of New Jersey,  
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Preached at the request of the Synod

PREACHED AT THE COLLEGE OF NEW JERSEY

## SERMON.

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“And by it, he being dead yet speaketh.”—Hebrews xi. 4.

THE object of the present discourse is to discharge, to the best of my ability, a duty assigned to me by our departed friend, Professor Dod. Upon his death-bed, and apparently at the point of death, he gave me a message to his colleagues expressive of his great regard and sincere affection for them; and then, scarcely able to speak, he added, “I wish you also to say to the students what it would be proper for me to say.” Had his strength not failed, he would doubtless have given utterance to his feelings in terms which we should all have delighted to treasure in our hearts; and the very repetition of which would have rendered unnecessary any attempt upon my part to convey to you an idea of his affection for you, or of the deep interest he took in your welfare. Ardent in his feelings; terse and pointed in the expression of them, he would have spoken in his characteristic strain, and would have made all to feel, that what he said was the genuine offspring of a mind teeming with the purest and noblest sentiments, and influenced by considerations that mark the true Christian and the sincere friend. Such indeed was he to you; and none the less so, when exacting obedience to rule, and strict attention to study, than when unbending himself in the familiarity of private intercourse, and indulging in playful yet instructive conversation. If sometimes stern, yet oftener gentle; always easy of access, and delighting in acts of courtesy and of kindness. By his affableness in private not unfrequently surpri-

sing those whose only acquaintance with him had been limited to the lecture or the recitation-room ; where from the strict order he enforced, and from his earnest desire to make his pupils proficient in their studies, the sterner features of his character were sometimes exhibited. But these were the features of the outer not of the inner man. Here were beautifully blended those traits of character which are at once the evidence of the highest worth, and the sure pledge of eminence in all that is pure, and noble, and lovely. If these traits were not seen by you all, it was because of your want of acquaintance with him. No one who knew him will venture to question what I say, and there are present those who I am confident can corroborate what I affirm. That his intellectual powers were of the highest order, you all know. No one could hear him speak on any subject, without perceiving at once that he was listening to no common man. He possessed indeed originality, but was peculiarly distinguished for the quickness with which he was wont to seize upon thoughts suggested in conversation, and he would often give them back with a strength of expression, and with a distinctness of view, that would surprise and gratify even those to whom he was indebted for their first conception. In the utterance of his thoughts, he did not discard the figurative illustrations which a fertile imagination was ever ready to supply, yet he knew well what was their appropriate place ; and while he employed them to give variety and elegance to his style, he made them minister efficiently to the elucidation of his subject.

Although it is no part of that which I have mainly in view, to speak of the moral and intellectual qualities of the dead, yet as I propose to call your attention to such points as he was wont to regard as of the highest importance, and to insist upon with untiring zeal, I deem it not amiss to bring to your recollection the claims which he had upon your esteem and reverence, that you may be the more disposed to listen to a repetition of his lessons on the most important of all subjects, viz. your relations to God, and your obligations to love and serve Him.

Should I be successful in this attempt, I shall render you a service which will be justly appreciated ; and which I trust will answer in some good degree the benevolent purpose of him who

both living and dying was devoted to your interests, and desired your best good. And now let me request you to recall the feelings with which you heard from me the words, "I have just left the bedside of Professor Dod, and I fear that you will never hear his voice again. He gave me in charge a message to you, which, if it be the will of God to take him to himself, I will endeavour to deliver."

When I returned to his chamber, a friend, standing at the door, said to me, "He is dying." After a little, however, he revived; and he inquired if I had returned. He had not forgotten his request, nor the purpose for which I had left the room. I came to his bedside, and told him all that I had said to you, and of your deep sympathy, and of your fervent prayer that he might be restored to us, if consistent with God's holy purpose. He spake not in reply, yet he was evidently moved and gratified by my report of the deep and solemn impression made upon your minds, and of the heartfelt sympathy manifested by you all for your dying teacher.

He is gone, and his remains now sleep with those of the other good and great men who in their respective times were the glory of our College. But have the dead no voice? Must the recollection of them perish, when they are removed from our sight? Not so. Speaking of the faith of Abel, Paul says: "And by it he being dead yet speaketh." Abel's faith has told upon the world for generations, and it continues to illustrate and confirm the great truth, that without faith it is impossible to please God. And may we not indulge the hope, that the truths declared from this very desk by him, of whom and for whom we speak, will long continue to exert a hallowed influence upon the minds of those who heard them, prompting them to consecrate themselves to the service of God, and with all diligence to improve the opportunities enjoyed by them of acquiring such knowledge, and such mental and moral training as will best qualify them to discharge their personal and relative duties? To these points were his religious instructions chiefly directed, and how can I better comply with his request, than by recalling some of these very lessons by him so often and so forcibly presented?

Immediately after his decease, neither my feelings nor my engagements permitted me to do what I had promised in this matter; the vacation soon followed; and this is the first time I have occupied this place since the present session began.

And now let me have your earnest attention while I speak to you in the name of our departed friend, and repeat his instructions.

I. With him it was a favourite maxim, that we should carry religion into all the affairs of life, and that we should seek to serve God in all things. We must not be content to be religious upon the Sabbath, and heedless as to our conduct during the other days of the week. We are not to be pious merely while engaged in acts of devotion, and then forgetful of our vows and prayers, but we should blend piety with all our pursuits, and exhibit it in all intercourse; not less observant of its precepts in the more common transactions of life, than in matters of the highest interest. By these remarks is not meant that we should have no hours allotted to the sole purpose of communing with God, and of the cultivation of devout feeling, but simply this, that the practice of religion should not be limited to these hours, but is to be associated with all we do, and to give character to the whole of our walk and conversation, thus making the glory and the enjoyment of God, the great business of our lives. In cases where men dispense with the usual forms of worship and with the positive institutions of religion, having no fixed times for prayer, and praise, and for pondering God's word, regarding their mental recognition of duty as a full discharge of it, they will invariably be found sooner or later to be not more free from the forms of religion than from its power, although they may profess to have faith in God, and to associate him with all their thoughts. And where men do not stray so far from right practice, and from right views of truth, they often mar their peace and diminish the lustre of their piety, by neglecting to improve as they should their stated hours for devotion. If we would have at all times a devout frame of mind, we must have regular and fixed hours for devotional exercises. If we would be godly in all things, we must have stated seasons for communing with

God. So that on the one hand we must guard against considering attention to the mere forms of religious worship as religion itself, and as furnishing a dispensation from the obligation to be pious in all things; and, on the other hand, we must avoid the error of thinking that we can be habitually pious, and yet have no respect to the ordinances of religion. The latter is a form of error not often avowed in terms, yet not unfrequently adopted in practice; while a profession of godliness and attention to its forms, accompanied by a denial of its power, is of more frequent occurrence, and would, therefore, seem to call for a more frequent rebuke, and for the continued repetition of the precept, "Whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." Let all your conduct bear the impress of piety; and seek to say with the apostle, "for me to live is Christ," and with an eminent saint in later times, "I cannot say that I have already attained, but that my heart is set to learn, that in all I do, whether sacred or civil actions, still I may be doing but one work and driving one design, that God may be pleased by me, and be glorified in me." Alleine.

If in all things we would serve God, we shall engage in nothing unlawful, and to our lawful callings we shall devote ourselves with all diligence. We shall also seek to make our amusements and recreations subservient to the glory of God. To these then we shall devote whatever time may be necessary to keep our minds and bodies in a healthful condition, and fit for vigorous action. Within these limits, and with this end in view, our very diversions will not only relieve our minds from the pressure of more weighty matters, and impart to them greater elasticity of thought and feeling, but, being associated with the high and holy purpose of serving God in all things, they will minister efficiently to our spiritual welfare.

I need scarcely say to you, that an idle man cannot serve God in anything; and that nothing will render perdition more certain than slothfulness. For proof, read the parable of the slothful servant, as recorded in the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew. It was not because he wasted the talent entrusted to his care, but because he buried it in the earth, neglecting to improve it as he ought to have done, that he was condemned as a

wicked servant and cast out as unprofitable. Again, many things may be lawful as diversions from more serious pursuits, a devotion to which is altogether inconsistent with the proper service of God; and many an unprofitable servant is diligent in pastimes and trifles; and there are not a few, who, with lofty aspirations, and with abundant self-complacency, are ever musing upon schemes never to be fully developed, and upon the execution of which they have no thought whatever of venturing. Content with the beautiful visions flitting before their minds, they think they do enough in imparting to others a fragmentary idea of unfinished speculations, leaving to meaner minds, as they would regard them, the task of testing their truth and utility. If you would serve God in all things, you must be followers of none of these. You must not spend your time in idleness nor in idle musings, nor give yourselves up wholly to diversions, however innocent in themselves. Your pursuits and your diversions must be such as are consistent with God's revealed will, and must be entered upon with the design and desire to honour God and your Redeemer; and yet secondary considerations not inconsistent with this governing motive, may lawfully be permitted to influence your conduct. It has been well remarked that "the Christian is one who may do many [things, . . . . from the pleasure they afford his friends, from the gratification they give his own tastes and predilections, from his abstract convictions of what is honest, lovely, and of good report, but his main and predominant motive, that which is paramount over others; and which, when fully presented, is conclusive against every other is affection for his heavenly friend."—"*Life in Earnest*," by the Rev. James Hamilton.

II. Another favourite topic with our departed friend, was the obligation to improve to the utmost our intellectual and moral powers. Upon this he was wont to dwell with earnestness, contending that their full development was essential to the perfection of our Christian character. Not, indeed, that any mental and moral training would make us perfect men, or give us a full and clear perception of spiritual truths, or that the views which such training enables us to take of the great truths of

revelation, would, of themselves, exert a renewing and sanctifying influence upon our minds. He believed and taught the doctrines of human depravity, and of regeneration by the power of the Holy Ghost. But in perfect consistency with this view of our natural condition, he held that between our minds, when enlightened and renewed by the Holy Spirit, and the truths revealed by the same Spirit, there was such a correspondence, and such an adaptation of one to the other, that the highest attainments in Christian knowledge and piety must be looked for in connexion with the highest condition of mental culture; provided that the culture of the moral powers be co-extensive with that of the intellectual. If the intellect alone be the object of attention, and its improvement the sole aim, we may nourish it to that extent, that it will become possessed of gigantic dimensions and of gigantic power, but it will be a power for mischief, and not for good. On the other hand, if our intellectual training be wholly neglected, slight at best will be our advances in religious knowledge; and supposing that we have sufficient intelligence to comprehend those simple, yet all important truths, a knowledge of which is essential to salvation, and a simple belief in which, under the teachings of the Spirit, has made some individuals humble, consistent, and devoted followers of Christ, and even eminent in piety; yet this I regard as no objection to the view of the matter above presented; the fact is that in these cases, the intellectual powers, though not the direct object of attention, have been unremittingly exercised in meditation upon moral and religious subjects. This, indeed, may raise a question as to the best mode of training our intellectual faculties, and it conclusively proves that moral and religious subjects are well adapted to their development; and well it might be so; for what subjects are so vast, so elevating, or requiring such an effort of the human mind to grapple with them, as those pertaining to our relations to God. And is it not by application to matters that task our powers, be they mental or physical, that these powers are exercised and augmented? But it does not follow from this, that we cannot, or that we ought not to exercise our minds upon other than moral and religious subjects.

Advances in the physical and abstract sciences, and the perception of the beautiful in the works of nature and of art, can never lead unrenewed minds to a correct knowledge of God, nor even incline them to seek after the knowledge of divine things; and for some they have such a power of fascination that they divert the attention from more grave and serious matters. But minds taught by the Spirit and word of God to know and to adore Him as He is revealed in his word, and which delight to see, in the mental and physical, as well as in the moral creation, evidences of their Creator's wisdom, power, and goodness, will be rendered more devout by all the discoveries they are permitted to make respecting his wonderful works.

Therefore, with a strictly pious end in view, we may apply ourselves to studies, the direct tendency of which is merely to develop and strengthen our intellectual faculties. Nay we are under a solemn obligation to do so. In giving us capacities to investigate and to comprehend to some extent the mysteries of matter and of mind, and in enabling us to receive pleasure and profit from a knowledge of them, God has given us a clear intimation of what our duty is in relation to these things. Did they yield only forbidden fruit, and serve no other end than to increase our knowledge of "good and evil," it would be duty to reject their tempting offers to make us wise. But it is not so. By the varied exercise they give to our minds, they greatly augment our power to perceive the beauty and excellence of moral and religious truths, and enable us to view with increased delight the manifold works of God, which are sought out by all them that have pleasure therein.

Seek then not only to be good men, and sincere Christians; but to be at the same time full-grown men, and intelligent Christians. The latter you cannot become without the due cultivation of your intellectual powers. And remember that this can never be effected by idle musings, and mere desultory reading. You may thus keep your minds constantly employed, but they cannot thus obtain the nutriment necessary to their growth and the full expansion of their varied powers. The quantity and the quality of our intellectual aliment, as in the case of our

common food, should be proportioned to our powers of digestion, and the more and more vigorous these become, the more and more should they be tasked. It is upon this principle that the course of studies here pursued has been planned, and the complete mastery of this course should be the aim of every student connected with the college. It argues no little self-complacency when a youth regards himself as a better judge than his teachers, not only of what better suits his taste, but also of what is best suited to his improvement. Of this fault be blameless. But our college course has a higher and nobler aim than the mere cultivation of the intellect, hence it has incorporated into it so large a share of moral and religious instruction. It seeks to train you for the service of God and of his church, and to prepare you for heaven. Whatever else then you undervalue or neglect, endeavor to set a just estimate upon this part of your college training. By the daily study of divine truth and the daily practice of the divine precepts, the expansion of your moral powers will keep pace with that of your intellectual, and the symmetry of the whole man will thus be perfect.

III. A third topic upon which Professor Dod was wont to dwell, was the folly of a voluptuous life. Of its wickedness, too, he never lost sight, but upon its folly it was that he brought his power for irony to bear. Who that recollects his discourse upon the words of Solomon, "Rejoice O young man in thy youth, and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thy heart, and in the sight of thine eyes, but know thou that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment," will forget the keen edge of his satire, or the solemn warnings administered to those who, unmindful of their duties and privileges, seek to live as if idleness, mirth, and sensual indulgence were the great ends of their being? But upon none did he descend with such awful severity, as upon those who, not content to ruin themselves, seek by all the allurements in their power to seduce others into the paths of sin and destruction. And who so worthy to receive the sternest rebukes, as these destroyers of their youthful associates? If any of you should ever be firmly

bent upon self-ruin, never, I pray you, be willing to bring down upon yourselves the double damnation of alluring another to his ruin; yea, rather entreat him to take warning by your example, before his appetites and passions shall have gained like yours an irresistible ascendancy. In the world of wo, it may afford you some relief to reflect that you were not directly concerned in the destruction of any of your fellow-beings; and it will assuredly augment your guilt, and by consequence your misery, to be instrumental in the eternal perdition of your companions and friends, by designedly tempting them to sinful and soul-destroying practices.

But perhaps it is going too far to suppose that a case like this can ever occur among young men, professedly devoted to the acquisition of useful learning, and so far as any of you are concerned, I indeed hope and believe the picture is too darkly shaded, and that none of you are disposed to make sure your own destruction, much less that of others. But it does not follow from this that you may not do both. Should any of you now be but occasional sharers in the regalements of hilarity and of the drinking bout, and but now and then visitors at the haunts of vice, you may be laying the foundation of habits which may yet prove your disgrace and ruin; and before the thought even enters your mind, you may find yourself bound hand and foot, and at the mercy of your insatiate appetites. Should you yourself escape so awful a fate, a more innocent and unsuspecting youth, first led by your invitation and example to partake of the social glass, or to mingle in the company of the thoughtless and the lewd, may become the victim of your most unfortunate civilities, and may have reason to curse the day on which he formed your acquaintance. For your own sakes then, for the sake of your youthful friends and associates, from a regard to the feelings of your parents, to the interests of society, and especially from a sense of your responsibility to God, and of your obligation to him, never become the votaries of pleasures, flee youthful lusts, and all temptations to their indulgence, bring into complete subjection your appetites and passions; and seek to honour God by the diligent improvement of your time and privileges. By so

doing, you will escape the folly and sin of which we speak, with all their fearful consequences.

IV. Let me now call your attention to another point upon which he was wont to lay much stress, viz, our responsibility for our doctrinal belief.

In the remarks under this head, I desire that it may be distinctly kept in mind, that it is only in reference to moral and religious subjects that we assert the responsibility of men for their belief; and that it is only for the proof and illustration of one or more points involved in this discussion, we speak of their belief in regard to other things. All indeed who admit that there is any such thing as obligation or responsibility, also admit that it is our duty to seek after the truth, yet there are those who contend that this comprises the whole of our duty in relation to matters of faith, and that men who adopt directly opposite opinions may be equally virtuous. But have men's opinions no influence upon their conduct? If they have none, then we admit that men of antagonistic views, the atheist and the Christian may be equally virtuous, and equally worthy of esteem. But who is prepared seriously to defend such a position? Is it not at variance with daily observation and experience? To use the language of that learned mathematician and divine, Dr. Isaac Barrow, "Even in common life Faith is the compass by which men steer their practice, and the mainspring of action, setting all the wheels of our activity on going. Every man acts with serious intention and with vigour answerable to his persuasion of things, that they are worthy of his pains, and attainable by his endeavours. What moveth the husbandman to employ so much care, trial, and expense in manuring his ground, in plowing, in sowing, in weeding, in fencing it, but a persuasion that he shall reap a crop, which in benefit will answer all? What stirreth up the merchant to undertake tedious voyages, over vast and dangerous seas, adventuring his stock, abandoning his ease, exposing his life to the waves, to rocks and shelves, to sweltry heats and piercing colds, but a persuasion that wealth is a very desirable thing, and that he may

hereby acquire it." If then men's opinions have an influence upon their conduct, their modes of life will be as various as their modes of faith, and their conduct must correspond with their belief. How then can it be shown that we are responsible for the one and not for the other? The only consistent course is to deny all responsibility for either life or faith, or to maintain it with respect to both. Is it anything short of absurd, to maintain that we are not responsible for our belief, and yet hold that we are responsible for the legitimate fruits of that belief—not responsible for adopting erroneous opinions, and yet responsible for the wicked conduct resulting from these opinions?

The groundwork of this error, if we mistake not, is this, that in all cases our belief is nothing more nor less than the unbiassed assent of the understanding to the truth of a proposition given in view of the evidence of its truth or falsehood; or in other words, the unbiassed judgment of the mind upon that evidence; and hence the inferences, that it is the evidence alone which influences the mind in its judgments, that our belief is involuntary, and that for its adoption we are not responsible.

But surely those who assume this position must overlook the fact, that we have not only an understanding and a will, but also affections or passions and that these not unfrequently bias the understanding and incline the will. Hence it is that men of corrupt minds adopt and maintain corrupt opinions; not because they have followed the unbiassed dictates of the understanding, but simply because they loved darkness rather than light, error than truth: and this propensity to evil has blinded their minds to the perception of the truth, error being more congenial to the state of their feelings, as it permits them to pursue their wicked courses undisturbed. They hate the light and therefore will not come to the light lest their deeds should be reprov'd, and therefore they are ready to embrace any system of erroneous opinion which may chance to be thrown in their way, and willingly persuade themselves that it is not false, or if false, that they themselves are not responsible for their belief of it, since they have adopted it upon a conviction of its truth. And where is the authority for stripping the decisions of the understanding

of all moral character except in relation to matters altogether foreign to morals and religion? Is the distinction between truth and goodness, and between the head and the heart, so clearly ascertained, that we are at liberty to assign the whole department of truth to the head, and all of goodness to the heart? Is there not in fact an intimate connexion between them, so that in all matters pertaining to religion and morals, neither truth nor goodness can exist apart.

In various matters, indeed, the decisions of the understanding have no moral character; but this surely is no proof that in matters connected with morals and religion, the judgments of the mind in regard to them are unconnected with our moral feelings, and have nothing worthy of praise or blame. With respect to the question whether the birth of Christ took place at the epoch commonly assigned to it, or at an earlier or later period, our belief, true or false, can have no influence upon our conduct or feelings, and in forming it, our minds may have been influenced simply by the testimony presented to them. But not so with respect to the fact of his birth, and to the claims asserted for him in the scriptures. Our belief here cannot fail to exert an influence upon our lives and feelings, and in weighing the testimony given in support of their truth, our desires to find them true or false, our passions, and our humours, cannot have less influence in inclining the balance, in matters of such vast moment, than in the ordinary affairs of life; on the contrary, it is natural to expect that they will act with a power proportionate to the interest felt by us in the decision to be given, and that, they will to a greater or less degree mould our belief. Unless then we are prepared to affirm that we are not responsible for our feelings, and for any inclination we may have to embrace error, we ought in all consistency to admit, that the adoption of opinions which lead to sinful practice, so far as this adoption of them is the result of a corrupt bias, cannot be otherwise than guilty.

That our passions and our desires do exert a mighty influence upon our judgments of things in the ordinary affairs of life, is a matter which must be obvious to the most careless observer. Is not the impression universal that men have a strong tendency to

suit their opinions to their inclinations, and to be swayed in their judgments by their wishes? For what other reason than this is it, that it is regarded as a valid objection to a man's acting as judge or juror, that he is a near relative of the person upon trial, or that he has already formed and expressed an opinion of the guilt or innocence of the person to be tried? The question of the man's integrity is not involved in the objection, but simply the consideration, that his forming and expressing an opinion has a tendency to bias his mind contrary to the evidence and to prevent his giving a true verdict? If this be the case in practical matters of daily occurrence, what possible reason can be given for asserting that it does not hold, in relation to the higher concerns of religion? And if it does, it is absurd to contend, that the understanding alone is concerned in our judgment of testimony, and in deciding upon the truth or falsehood of any given doctrines: or that we are not responsible for our belief. Christ said to his disciples, "yea the time cometh that whosoever killeth you, will think that he doeth God service," and Paul also avers of himself, "yea verily I thought I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth, which also I did." Now was the murder of the disciples, and conduct of Paul free from blame, because they acted as they believed they ought to act? Ought not a man to act in accordance with his convictions of duty? If so, how can he be blameworthy for his acts, and yet not blameworthy for his belief which moved him to those acts? Were we unable to trace the belief of such men to its source, and to show, as we have already done, that this belief is the legitimate offspring of a corrupt heart and of a perverted mind, the very fact, that it is so closely and necessarily connected with such acts of wickedness, would of itself be sufficient to prove, that such belief is sinful, and that those who hold it are guilty, however thoroughly they may be convinced of the truth of what they believe, or the lawfulness of what they do. The two arguments here presented, one derived from the influence of our belief upon our conduct, and the other from the source of that belief, are not in conflict, but mutually strengthen each other, and, in our judgment, show conclusively that we

must be responsible for what we believe. No sincerity in adopting a false belief can save us from the natural consequences of such belief. If a man could persuade himself, that were he to swallow poison, or to cast himself down from a precipice, he would suffer no injury, his persuasion would avail but little to counteract the established laws of nature, or to save him from the ordinary results of such madness. So if a man adopts a belief contrary to the word of God, nothing can save him from the legitimate consequences of his error in so doing.

In the scriptures we are taught that the salvation or damnation of men depends upon their reception or rejection of the truth. "If ye believe not in me ye shall die in your sins." "He that believeth is not condemned, but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." If unbelief is not sinful, why has God made it the ground of condemnation?

Be assured, then, my hearers, that we are responsible for our belief, and seek, I pray you, to understand and to embrace the truth, with the full conviction that the knowledge and belief of the truth is essential to salvation. There are damning errors, these you must shun; there are saving truths, these you must cordially embrace. Of these truths the holy scriptures are the repository. Search then the scriptures, which, through faith, are able to make you wise unto salvation. Study them with all diligence, preparation, and prayer for the teaching of the Holy Spirit, that you may be kept from wresting the truth to your destruction, and that you may become experimentally acquainted with its renewing and sanctifying power.

V. The only other topic to which I shall call your attention is the absolute necessity of faith in the Redeemer in order to salvation.

No doctrine is more plainly taught in the sacred writings than that we are saved by faith in Christ, and that there is no other method of obtaining salvation. Call to mind the following passages in the word of God:

“Neither is there salvation in any other, for there is none other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved.” Acts iv. 12.

“For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life, and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.” John iii. 16, 36.

“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.” Acts xvi. 31.

“Without faith it is impossible to please God.” Hebrews xi. 6.

We are saved, indeed, not in virtue of any merit in our faith itself, but solely in virtue of the righteousness of Christ, upon whom that faith is exercised. We are expressly said to be saved by grace through faith. Faith, then, is the instrument of our salvation; the ground of it is the Lord Jesus Christ, whom we receive by faith, as he is offered to us in the Gospel, and on whom alone we rest for salvation. Again, we are said to be “justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood.” Here, then, as in other passages of God’s word, we learn that Christ is the propitiation for our sins, that through him it is we receive the atonement and become reconciled to God, and are made heirs of eternal life, and yet, in his infinite wisdom, he has so connected faith with salvation, that there is no salvation without it. At the same time he makes it distinctly to appear, that it is not for our faith, but through our faith we are saved. The Apostle Paul evidently regards it as the same thing to say that we are saved by grace, and to say that we are justified by faith. It is the blood of Christ that cleanseth us from all sin, and he it is, “who of God is made unto us, wisdom and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.” 1 Cor. i. 30. The whole work of salvation is a gratuitous work, and the righteousness of Christ is infinite, and yet it is no less true that unless we believe, we cannot be saved. Receive then the Lord Jesus Christ, as he is offered to you in the gospel,

and rest upon him alone for salvation. This is the faith which God requires, this is the faith that saves the soul. Believe, and you shall be saved, despise the grace of God, and you will assuredly perish.

Not only did our departed friend preach this doctrine, but he embraced it, and it was this which sustained his soul in his dying hours. In that hour when he felt his heart and flesh were failing, he also felt the force of the truth,

“’Tis only this subdues the fear of death,  
A pardon bought with blood, with blood divine.”

Ah! could you have witnessed the serenity with which he bade his friends a last farewell; and the confidence with which he rested upon the precious promises, “Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.” “I am the resurrection and the life, he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live.” You would have been ready to say, “Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord.”

What was it that made his soul so calm, so resigned, so happy in view of his departure. What else than the firm belief that he was going to be forever with his Redeemer? Of the divine character of that Redeemer he had no doubt, and his belief on this point he expressed in the strongest language, “I know no God but Christ,” having, it may be, in his mind the words of Paul, “For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.” Such, on this point, was his own belief. Had you been permitted to surround his dying bed, and had he been able to address to you, in person, his last counsel, would he not have bid you to believe in Christ, and with all his remaining strength would he not have implored you to flee all youthful lusts and to devote yourselves to the service of God? Take, then, these entreaties as from him. When dying he thought of you and bade me do for him what he could no longer do, to tell you of his affection for you, and to give you such advice as he himself would have given. This I have endeavoured to do, not in the manner, indeed, in which he himself would have done it, but as

to the substance of it. And now, although you will never again see among you that manly form, nor meet the glance of that radiant eye, nor listen to the tones of that musical voice, nor be inspired by the soul-stirring thoughts that often emanated from that mighty mind, let him not be forgotten, nor let his instructions be buried with him in the tomb.