

7. Sekundärliteratur

Memoirs of the life and correspondence of the reverend Christian Frederick Swartz. To which is prefixed a sketch of the history of christianity in ...

Pearson, Hugh

London, 1835

CHAPTER XIII.

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MEMOIRS
OF
THE REV. C. F. SWARTZ.

CHAPTER XIII.

Swartz as a Preacher—Extract of a letter, from Mr. Kohlhoff
to Dr. Buchanan, upon this subject—Substance of four MS.
Sermons of Mr. Swartz—Observations upon them.

THE conclusion of the letter in the preceding
chapter, in which Mr. Swartz, with so much
simplicity, mentions the disinterested liberality
with which he contributed to the fund for build-
ing a church for the native Christians in the
suburbs of Tanjore, may with propriety direct our
attention to his character as a preacher. His re-
ligious principles, and even his views of Christian
doctrine, have been already amply developed,
both in the extracts from his missionary journals,

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and in the letters to his friends in the former volume of this memoir. It may be useful, however, and interesting, to present a fuller and more distinct view of his ability and method, as a teacher of that gospel, which he so thoroughly understood, and so cordially loved, and of which he was so eminent and successful a minister. Swartz himself published nothing, either in the form of sermons, or any other religious instruction, except the Dialogues between a Christian and a Heathen, which have been already mentioned,¹ as translated into the Tamul language. His original destination, and his principal employment as a missionary, requiring chiefly catechetical instruction, and the simple exposition of Scripture, the elaborate composition of discourses for the pulpit never formed a part of his stated occupation. Though from the period of his residence at Trichinopoly he was engaged in preaching to the British troops in garrison at that place, and afterwards at Tanjore, it was only occasionally that he wrote his sermons at length. Such is the account given by Mr. Kohlhoff, in a letter to the late Dr. Buchanan, from Negapatam, dated February 7th, 1810, when transmitting, together with other materials for a memoir of his life, the only specimens which remain of his pulpit compositions.

¹ Vol. i. p. 319.

“I have the pleasure,” says this excellent man, “of sending you herewith two packets, containing four sermons of the late venerable Mr. Swartz, copied from those written by himself, and am sorry there are not more to be found among his papers. His work and labours would not allow him to write the whole of his sermons. He generally preached extempore, and only sometimes put down on paper the chief heads of his sermon, either in English or German. I have collected a good many of these from his papers, and shall transmit to you some of the former, by the next opportunity that offers.”

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The collection of notes, to which Mr. Kohlhoff refers, unhappily never arrived; but of the four sermons which Dr. Buchanan received, the following is the substance; and while it seems a sacred duty to rescue them from oblivion, their intrinsic excellence well deserves their insertion in this memorial of their revered author.

It was evidently his general practice to adopt some portion of Scripture which formed part of the service for the day, as the subject of his discourse. Thus two of the sermons which have been preserved, appear to have been preached on Christmas-day, from Luke ii. 1—14; the second lesson for the morning of that festival.

“The most superficial consideration,” observes

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the judicious preacher, "of this history, will convince us of two remarkable circumstances respecting the birth of Jesus Christ. There is an intimation of the deepest humiliation of our Saviour, and there are, at the same time, very visible evidences of his greatness. Both circumstances must be considered ; otherwise the birth of our Saviour will prove rather a stumbling-block to us than a divine means of raising our hearts to gratitude and praise.

"Jesus came into the world for a most extraordinary purpose,—to save that which was lost, to become the first-born, or head of the unhappy family of Adam. The consideration of this intention will clear up all our doubts, and convince us of the propriety of the humble circumstances in which he appeared ; and none are or ever will be offended at his humiliation, but those who forget that they are sinners."

The first indication of our Saviour's humiliation to which Swartz refers, is the enrolment at Bethlehem, in pursuance of the decree of the Emperor Augustus, which was a mortifying proof that the Jewish nation was no longer free, but that God had, as in ancient times, delivered his people into the hands of the Gentiles.

"If," he says, "we heartily believe the true dignity of Jesus Christ, who was the Son of God,

the Creator and Preserver of all things ; if we look upon him, as holy Scripture teaches us, as the heir of all things, and then consider how he appeared at Bethlehem, how his name was enrolled, we must acknowledge that he was made very low. The Son of God hid his glory, and condescended to be treated as the subject of a heathen emperor. 'He took upon him the form of a servant,' that we, as holy Zacharias prophesied, 'might be saved from our enemies and from the hand of all that hate us.'

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"A second proof of our Saviour's humiliation was his becoming a pilgrim, being born on a journey, as one who had no fixed habitation.

"Our first parents were placed in paradise, in the garden which God had planted for them. But Jesus was born as a pilgrim, at an inn, even in a stable, and laid in a manger, and thus became like ourselves who were turned out of paradise into the desert of the world. This, as it is a striking proof of his humiliation, so is it of his immense love to mankind. He had deserved to be in the house of his father amidst the joyful acclamations and praises of angels ; but moved with divine compassion, he chose our condition, that he might restore us to his father's house, even to a heavenly paradise. Again ; 'He was born in *the night*.' And what was our condition ? 'Behold,' says the prophet Isaiah, 'darkness

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shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people; but the Lord shall arise upon thee and his glory shall be seen upon thee.' Zacharias described in a similar manner the condition of the world at the coming of Christ, 'as sitting in darkness and in the shadow of death.' The Saviour appeared to procure for us 'the light of life.'

"The *poverty* which he suffered from the day of his birth was another proof of our Lord's deep humiliation. 'There was no room for him in the inn.' There was no provision made for him. He came, but none regarded him. Heaven and earth belonged to him as their maker and Lord; but though infinitely rich, for our sakes he became poor, that we through his poverty might be made rich—rich in heavenly, and even in temporal blessings, as far as is consistent with the welfare of our souls.

"O my brethren, here is a mirror of the transcendent love of your Redeemer. Look upon his poverty with the enlightened eye of faith; and how can you withstand his amazing love! Whatever blessings you enjoy, remember that you owe all to his meritorious poverty, by which he purchased for you all spiritual and temporal blessings. Lay, then, before him all your wants, trusting in his mediatorial power to supply them. You are poor, but behold, to those who acknowledge their poverty, and, sensible of their own inability to

help themselves, hunger and thirst after righteousness, the riches of his grace are offered.

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“At the same time, I entreat you to use every blessing, whether spiritual or temporal, to the glory of your Redeemer. If instead of thanking him for his bounty, you abuse it by rioting, drunkenness and intemperance, how will you answer for such heinous ingratitude?

“O that the view of our Saviour’s humiliation might destroy all the seeds of pride in our souls! O that it might be the divine means of bringing us to a true knowledge of ourselves, and consequently to a deep-rooted humility! Whoever cherishes pride is ignorant of his true condition; he denies the necessity of Christ’s humiliation, and becomes an unbeliever, who has no share in the merits of his Redeemer.

“Let us then entreat God to work in our hearts true humility from the consideration of that of our Lord, even from his very birth. Let us check all the sinful emotions of pride and haughtiness, and lay hold on the humility of Christ, as a part of the atonement made for our sins, that we may obtain pardon by it; and let us humbly thank and praise him for this his amazing love to mankind in redeeming them from all the effects of their pride and self-exaltation.

“Having considered the proofs of the deep humiliation which our blessed Redeemer suffered

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at his birth, let us now attend to the evidences of his dignity and greatness.

"These latter throw a most striking light upon the former, by teaching us how highly God was pleased with him, and consequently that the lowliness in which he appeared, was not on account of himself, but only of his being our mediator and surety. These proofs of the greatness of our Saviour dispel all our doubts, cheer and strengthen our faith in him, and make him appear in his divine brightness and glory, removing all the offence which without them we might take at the lowly circumstances of his birth.

"The first testimony of the Redeemer's greatness was the divine contrivance for gathering the whole nation of the Jews together. It is true, when we take a superficial view of it, we may think that there was nothing in the decree of Augustus which reflected honour upon the new-born Redeemer. But more mature consideration will convince us that the hand of Providence directed all these circumstances. Jesus was promised to the Jewish nation, as their king and deliverer from sin, from the power of the devil, and from eternal condemnation. It was therefore just and meet that the nation should be collected together at the time when their long-expected king appeared. Nor ought it to seem strange to us, since we know that God by his unsearchable

wisdom orders all the occurrences of civil government to the purposes of his glory.

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“A second proof of the dignity of Christ was the assembling of the angels, or children of heaven, to whom God manifested the riches of his mercy to a fallen world. The angels themselves were not so much concerned in the birth of Jesus as we are; but still we find it filled their hearts with joy and adoration. And ought it not to have the same effect upon us?

“Thirdly; the birth of our Saviour was immediately manifested to mankind, and that by the command of God, though at first only to a few, namely, to the shepherds who were watching over their flocks in the plains of Bethlehem. If you ask why the gospel of Christ was not proclaimed first to the high-priest, scribes and Pharisees, the answer is plain; because those priests were less qualified to receive the glad tidings of his birth. Their pride would have hindered them from perceiving the dignity of Jesus in the manger; but the humble shepherds were better prepared for the reception of that gospel, and therefore they were favoured with the intelligence of the newborn Saviour. ‘Wherefore,’ he saith, ‘God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.’

“Fourthly; the messenger who was sent to publish the glad tidings of the birth of Jesus, was

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an angel, who appeared in bright glory, speaking of him in a very lofty manner. 'Fear not,' said he, to the affrighted shepherds, 'for unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.'

"To-day God has begun to accomplish his divine promise concerning the salvation of mankind. The Saviour whom you stand in need of, and who has been promised by a merciful God, is Christ, who is able to save, being filled with the Holy Ghost; and not only so, but he is the Lord, our Lord and yours; he is truly God.

"That which the angel thus spake to the praise of Christ was not of his own mind, but by the command of God. From the day of the Redeemer's birth he began to glorify Jesus in order to attract our hearts to trust in him.

"'And suddenly a host' of heavenly spirits appeared, and fired with the love of God, sang praises to him, proclaiming the salvation which the divine Redeemer was born to purchase. 'Glory to God in the highest.' Now is the blessed time when the glory of God which has been concealed and darkened by sinful man shall be illustrated. The glory of his mercy, holiness, righteousness, and truth, shall be displayed, not only by the doctrine, but by the sufferings and atonement of the Redeemer, to the intent that all mankind may fear and love him.

“ ‘ And on earth, peace.’ Now is the time when peace, which men had lost by the fall, by which they became obnoxious to the wrath of God, shall be established by the Saviour, who came to bear the curse mankind had deserved, and to restore them to the favour and blessing of the Almighty. A new foundation will thus be laid for their happiness. By the tidings of this peace mankind will be comforted, and induced to believe in God, to accept his grace, and to rejoice in him. ‘ Good will towards men.’ As God will regard them with kindness, so will men begin to love God as their father. The image of God in which they were at first created will now be re-established. CHAP.
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“ This is the purport of that angelic hymn which those children of heaven sang that very night when Christ was born, by which they joyfully proclaimed the unspeakable blessing which should be purchased by Jesus Christ, and by which God glorified him as the divine Redeemer of the world.

“ Let us all, therefore, be animated to praise that blessed Saviour. His love towards mankind was truly great when he took upon him our nature. Our love to him should consequently be very lively, and show itself in all proper expressions. Let us draw near to him, adoring him for his inestimable loving-kindness ; and let us entreat him to grant us divine light, grace, and bles-

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sing, that by us, as always, so particularly on these days, God may be glorified, true peace and reconciliation with him may be enjoyed, and a filial disposition and obedience towards him may be excited in our hearts by the gracious operation of the Holy Spirit. Amen!"

The second sermon upon this passage of Scripture dwells chiefly on the angelic message and the anthem of the heavenly host.

"It was," he observes, "a most agreeable invitation to joy which was addressed by a heavenly messenger, first to the poor shepherds, and not only to them, but to all who are concerned in the wonderful event proclaimed by that angelic preacher.

"All mankind wish for joy—what pity is it that they too commonly mistake the true source and foundation of it. Let us consider them as disclosed in our text.

"The very first word spoken by the angel is a spring of joy. 'Fear not.' They were alarmed at the glory which accompanied his appearance. This was a plain proof that they were of the race of sinners. Fear, or the apprehension of a threatening evil, is a sign that we have lost our original innocence. No sooner did our first parents sin, than a fearful apprehension of punishment seized them. It is true, a wise and gracious

God may and does use and direct our fear as a method of awakening us from the impending storm; but when we recur to its first origin, we must own it to be the sad effect of the fall. This fear we all feel, if we reflect on what passes in our hearts. Nay even those who shamefully deny their Maker, saying, 'There is no God,' even they fear, and often where nothing is to be feared. So that all mankind are subject to this afflicting passion, because all are sinners.

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"Is it not, therefore, matter of joy when a merciful God sends a messenger from heaven, and bids us restrain our fear? How reviving is such an exhortation! It testifies of the tenderly compassionate heart of God towards us. He beholds us afflicted with fear; but he has provided an effectual remedy for curing it, and restoring us to true serenity and peace of mind.

"Behold," said the angelic messenger, 'I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people; for unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour which is Christ the Lord.' This is the gospel, the very essence and marrow of it, which God designed for the effectual comfort of mankind.

"The person of Christ is described by the angel. He describes him as David did in the 110th Psalm; 'The Lord said unto my Lord.' So majestic and divine a person has been sent.

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Well might the prophet call upon the world to rejoice. Of this divine person who was promised and foretold by the prophets, particularly by Isaiah, it is said that he *is born*—that he left the throne of his majesty, and stooped very low to rescue us from our misery. This is the divine doctrine which affords rich matter of the highest and purest joy—that a Saviour has taken upon him our nature, and out of mere love to mankind is concerned in the highest degree for their salvation. O what wonderful love must have been in the heart of our compassionate Redeemer! Blessed are we who have so clear and certain an assurance of this astonishing transaction, with the distant light of which many pious kings and prophets were obliged to be contented, and in the prospect of which they rejoiced. How much more should we rejoice, who have so much better an opportunity of knowing the personal glory of our Redeemer!"

He next refers to the lowly and suffering condition in which the divine Redeemer appeared, as illustrating and aggrandising his love to mankind, and on which he had enlarged in the preceding sermon, and then proceeds to the grand intention of his coming.

"There is not a sweeter name in heaven or

earth than that of a SAVIOUR. It is the source of all our peace and joy. The hymn sung by the angelic host contains nothing more nor less than the consolation comprised in that blessed name.

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“‘Glory to God in the highest.’ Now has that most delightful period arrived, when God and his adorable attributes and perfections shall be manifested and glorified. The Saviour is born to vindicate the glory of the wisdom, holiness, veracity, and love of his heavenly father, and at the same time to lay a solid foundation for the salvation of sinners. He is made obedient to the divine law, undertakes to endure its curse, and thus rescues mankind, and glorifies God. This was absolutely necessary. The knowledge of the mercy of God, without a deep impression of his holiness and justice, does not improve us, but rather tempts men to go on presumptuously in a course of sin. Look around you, my friends, and consider the reason of that general corruption which prevails amongst mankind, and you will find that the abuse of the divine mercy is one of its principal causes. Whereas, if we would devoutly consider the gospel, we should be convinced, that it displays at once the mercy, the holiness, and the justice of the Almighty.

“By this we perceive the divinity of the gospel. It does not soothe us vainly, but if used impartially it cures us effectually. Consider it

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always in this light, and let the evidence of the divine holiness and justice, as displayed in the humiliation and sufferings of Jesus Christ, awaken us all to true repentance. O let us not trifle with sin, but hate, resist, and oppose it, and that earnestly. Whoever does not abhor every sin, dishonours God, rejects his salvation, and frustrates the intention of the Redeemer's birth, turns his medicine into poison, and deprives himself of all the blessings which Jesus came to purchase. But every one who wishes to glorify God upon earth, will look upon the revelation of his glory in the nativity of Christ, as a source of the purest joy.

"The second part of the angelic hymn, and consequently the second blessing of our Saviour's coming, is 'Peace on earth.' Peace consists in the disposition of the Almighty to forget the injuries done to his law, and to love, protect, and bless sinners. The meaning, therefore, of the angelic anthem is this. Now is that happy time come, when a solid foundation of peace between God and men shall be laid. Peace which sinners had lost, shall and will be restored by that divine Saviour who has already begun to procure it. Rejoice in it, all ye who feel and lament your sinfulness, and fear lest a righteous God should frown at you eternally. Behold and rejoice. It is Jesus who came from heaven to restore peace

to you. Give not way, therefore, to despondency or anxiety. These glad tidings were published that you might enjoy peace. Do not think that you honour your Saviour by anxious fear. You honour him, *indeed*, by trusting and reposing in him confidently.

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“ But let me speak a word to those who desire peace, but look for it from their own virtues. Hear the divine gospel proclaimed from heaven. ‘Peace on earth,’ and that through the Redeemer. He has made peace, he offers, he bestows that blessing. Do you reject this ‘Prince of peace?’ Then be assured, you will never find it, either in time or eternity. Trust, therefore, no longer in yourselves, or your imperfect works; but come to the divine Saviour for pardon and peace. Remember the Jews of old, who desired righteousness and peace, but would not accept them at the feet of Christ, but as the reward of their own merit, and take warning from their unhappiness. The price by which peace was purchased was not your imperfect, but the absolutely perfect obedience and sufferings of Jesus Christ, your surety. Blessed will you be, if in poverty of spirit you seek it where alone it is to be found, namely, in Him. Thousands of real Christians have experienced it. O! try to have the happy experience in your own hearts.

“ The third part of the angelic hymn is, ‘Good

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will to, or in men.' For as the preceding clause declares the good will of God to us, this describes our good will both to God and one another. The meaning, I apprehend, is this. Now will men be rightly disposed towards God in consequence of the Redeemer, and of the love of God displayed in him. They will look upon God as their gracious Father, and will love, and honour, trust, and praise him. And being in that happy frame of mind, they will love one another also, because God has loved them. This is the true spring of all godliness, justice, charity, and goodness. In and through Jesus Christ, and his redemption, the love of God and his infinite mercy to sinners are so clearly revealed, that every one who receives the glorious light of it into his heart, cannot but be made unspeakably happy by it; and as soon as man knows and tastes the lovingkindness of God to him, he begins to love him in return. The conclusion which St. John draws, is very natural. 'We love him because he first loved us.' 'All that enmity which is naturally in our heart to God, arises particularly from want of true and saving knowledge of his love to us. Could the most wicked man be brought to a lively perception of that divine love of God towards him, he would lay aside his enmity, adore God, and love him with all his heart. Could the heart of the most sensual man be filled with

divine peace, so as even for a few moments to enjoy it, he would readily forsake, and disdainfully reject, all the temptations that were offered to draw him away from that sweet sense of the love of God. O let us all seek that good will towards our divine Benefactor. Let us meditate upon his infinite love. Let us pray for his enlightening Spirit, and for a comfortable sense of his lovingkindness to us, and so let us spend this feast, that we may rejoice in it after a godly manner. Let ours be Christian, not worldly joy. Rejoicing in Jesus will embitter to us all sensual and sinful mirth. For carnal joy and merriment dishonour God, and bring scandal upon that holy religion which we profess, and is, therefore, a high abuse of the glorious gospel of Jesus.

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“ And as rejoicing in the benefits of the nativity of our Saviour will incline us to have a good will towards God, so will it render us kind and charitable to our neighbour. Did the Son of God love you so as to become poor for your sake? How should this incline your heart to love your poor neighbour, and to make him a partaker of your joy !

“ In short, the joy which arises from the redemption of Jesus, will make us truly a good, holy, and charitable people ; it will make us happy, and all who live with us. May the

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XIII. of his name. Amen !”

The third relic of Swartz’s preaching, is on Luke xiv. 16—24 ; being the Gospel for the second Sunday after Trinity.

“ The Gospel of this day,” he observes, “ contains a parable which our blessed Saviour delivered in a Pharisee’s house, to which he had been invited. His all-piercing eye immediately perceived the pride of the guests, and he warned them against it by powerful motives. And observing how the host of that entertainment aimed at something which spoiled his charity, he advised him to be kind and charitable to the poor, because they being unable to reward him here, he might certainly expect a reward at the resurrection of the just. This occasioned a reflection on the part of one of the guests, by which he seemed to express his desire of spiritual and heavenly blessedness. Our Saviour replied by the following parable ; in which he shows, that it is entirely the fault of mankind, if they are not happy ; because God has done all that is necessary to make them so. He has prepared a feast for them, and has invited them repeatedly and earnestly to partake of it.

“ There are three great points to be considered

in this parable. The wonderful grace of God prepared and offered to mankind ; their astonishing indifference, and even contempt of that grace ; and the effect of their neglect of it.

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“ Our Saviour represents the wonderful mercy of God to mankind, under the agreeable image of a supper. ‘ A certain man made a great supper, and bade many.’ In another similar parable, he calls that man a king, and means God himself. A supper, a great supper he has prepared, a feast of the choicest blessings. For whether we consider the persons for whom it was prepared, the manner of the preparation, or the blessings which it provides, it may justly be called a great supper.

“ The persons for whom it was prepared, were far, very far from deserving it ; sinful and apostate creatures, who had lost their original righteousness, and were obnoxious to divine punishment. This aggrandises the mercy of God, and renders it truly adorable.

“ The method by which that great feast was prepared, speaks no less his infinite lovingkindness. Our Saviour has revealed it in the clearest manner, when he instituted the Lord’s Supper. ‘ This is the new testament in my blood.’ By his bitter suffering and death, the atonement was made, and all its inestimable blessings purchased. This teaches us how dear a price was paid by the

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Son of God for our recovery and salvation. Here the love of God the Father and of Jesus Christ shines in its divinest lustre. In such a degree God loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son. 'He spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all.'

"But what are the blessings represented by our Saviour, under the figure of a great supper? They are the same which St. Paul calls the 'kingdom of God,' viz. 'righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost;' or, as he elsewhere describes them, (1 Cor. i. 30,) 'wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.'

"By our fall into sin, we are become blind as to divine things. We know not the way to peace and happiness. But Jesus is 'the light of the world, and whoso followeth him, shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.'

"The word of God declares that there is no one by nature truly righteous. But God in mercy sent his Son to procure for us that spotless righteousness, which we all need. Of this our Saviour speaks at large, (John vi.,) where he says, that 'his flesh,' given for the atonement of our sins, 'is meat indeed, and his blood drink indeed.' Moreover, God is holy; and this is his will, even our sanctification. All nations, and even heathens, agree in this. But the word of God alone shows the infallible way in which we may attain

it. It is Jesus Christ who has not only made known to us the holy will of his heavenly Father, by his divine doctrine and example, but has purchased for us strength to fulfil it—that inexpressibly great gift of the Holy Spirit, to rectify and reform our hearts and lives. This is a glorious privilege, which Scripture frequently inculcates, to our unspeakable comfort. So is Jesus our sanctification—the author of all true holiness. Without him, we can do nothing,—nothing spiritually good and acceptable before God.

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“Further, we are but too well convinced that we are surrounded by numerous evils, bodily and spiritual. We feel them, we groan under them, and desire deliverance and redemption from them. But being unable to help ourselves, we are all brought to that weighty question, ‘Who shall deliver us?’ No man, no angel is able to do it. But, behold, Jesus is ‘made unto us redemption,’ the author and finisher of our deliverance.

“All these, and many more blessings, are prepared for us through Jesus Christ; not only that we may know and admire, but that we may enjoy and rejoice in them. This is the reason why they are shadowed forth under the provisions of a supper, and that a great one.

“This is not only prepared, but we are invited to partake of it. From the very time of man’s fall, the sweet promise of a Redeemer comforted

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our first parents in their misery ; and, by the sacrifices which they were taught to offer, they were invited to a participation of the blessing of reconciliation, to be afterwards effected, and enjoyed by penitent believers.

“ During the period of the Old Testament, the Almighty preached forgiveness to sinners by his prophets. Even that very persuasive representation of a feast or supper, which he would prepare for his people, we find mentioned in the 25th chapter of Isaiah ; and in the 55th, is the most gracious invitation to accept the promised blessings, ‘ without money and without price.’

“ In the New Testament, this invitation is still more clearly and strongly expressed. So Peter invited the Jewish nation, and all those who were present at the feast of Pentecost, to receive remission of sins, and the gift of the Holy Ghost ; and so St. Paul, as the ambassador of Christ, invited all to whom he preached to ‘ be reconciled unto God ;’ to accept of pardon and peace, of strength and glory.

“ These are convincing proofs of the grace of God towards mankind. Well might we exclaim, in the words of Moses, ‘ How doth the Lord love his people!’ How has he endeavoured to rescue us from misery, and to put us into the joyful possession of the richest blessings ! He has acted the part of a most tender father, in pro-

claiming mercy to those who had deserved his wrath. He has provided a sufficient remedy for those who were unable to help themselves. Truly, such rich and undeserved mercy should draw all our hearts to him, and fill our mouths with praise and thanksgiving.

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“ But we find an astonishing indifference, nay, contempt of that divine grace. ‘ They all with one consent began to make excuse.’ Deplorable blindness and stupidity, to prefer earthly and transitory things to eternal happiness and glory ! The excuses they all made, showed their criminal attachment to the world. They alleged things which in themselves are not sinful. They knew so much of morality as to despise them. But they suffered themselves to be drawn away by things lawful in their nature. Where, then, lies the fault ? Not in the objects themselves, but in overvaluing and preferring them to the grace of God in Jesus Christ. They were so blinded by the love of worldly things, that they did not see the excellence and glory of the feast to which they were invited. St. Paul says, ‘ The God of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ which is the image of God, should shine unto them.’ They could not value the blessings of the kingdom of God. To have a reconciled God, a delightful sense of the par-

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XIII. dren of God, to be guided by his Spirit, and to
partake of his favour, was not so dear to them, as
their of worldly possessions, and the enjoyment of
sensual pleasures.

“And by preferring these things to the grace
of God, how highly did they dishonour him, who
had prepared for them such inestimable bless-
ings! Nay, they treated the invitation to that di-
vine feast as a thing which, if accepted, would
injure them in their possessions and pleasures,
and therefore they desired to be excused. They
thought that they could be as happy without it;
there was, as they imagined, no absolute necessity
for coming to it. If they were diligent in their
respective callings, and honest in their dealings
with mankind, they might do as well as others
who accepted it. And what is this, but the height
of ingratitude and pride?

“This is a sad but true description of the con-
duct of the Jews of old, as we find it related in
the Acts of the Apostles. But is it not also the
lamentable behaviour of too many among Chris-
tians? Do they not too often prefer worldly,
nay, unjust gain to the grace of God? Are not the
pleasures of this world, and even such as are con-
demned in the word of God, the common impedi-
ment to true repentance and a lively application
to Jesus and his grace? Nay, do not many

among Christians imagine, that though they are not clothed with the righteousness of Jesus, their own virtue will bring them to heaven? Is not this plainly contradicting God and his word? Let us hear what Scripture peremptorily affirms. (Heb. x. 28, 29.) ‘He that despised Moses’ law, died without mercy: of how much sorer punishment suppose ye shall he be thought worthy, who has trodden under foot the Son of God, and has counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and done despite unto the Spirit of grace?’

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“Let us finally consider the divine sentence passed on all those who refused this gracious invitation—The master of the house was angry: ‘I say unto you, that none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper.’ This sounds, at first, as if the displeasure of the Almighty against the despisers of his grace was not very dreadful. But it is, in fact, fearful beyond expression. What! To have no share in the grace of God; never to taste his loving-kindness; to enjoy no pardon of sins; not to be numbered among the children of God; not to dwell with him; not to be received into glory—what is this but the ‘fiery indignation’ which shall devour all such presumptuous despisers?

“And, as our Saviour foretold, so we find it verified in the judgments of God, which came upon the Jews. Seventeen hundred years that

CHAP. XIII. nation has felt the dire effects of the anger of God, and feels it still. They preach to us in the strongest manner, and warn us not to be guilty of the same sin of rejecting the grace of God, lest we become partakers of the same judgments. 'Behold the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell,' and rejected the grace of God, 'severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off.'

"Let us then examine our hearts, and try how we stand affected to that wonderful grace of God in Jesus Christ, and his bountiful invitation to come to his great supper. We are invited to it as well as the Jews. We need it as much as they. 'Come, for all is prepared,'—'Be ye reconciled unto God,'—is the persuasive voice of the gospel. O that we all might hearken to that winning voice! O that we might come, even to-day! Who knows whether grace will be offered to-morrow? 'To-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.'

"Happy, thrice happy, are all those who, being sensible of the infinite mercy of God, and their absolute need of it, resolve manfully to reject every thing that would hinder them from coming to that heavenly feast. They enjoy here what all the world cannot bestow, and hereafter the fruition of the blessing will be final and complete.

“Let us then come sincerely, with a true and earnest desire after reconciliation with God. Disdain whatever would obstruct the way, and keep you back from coming unto Christ. ‘Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.’ To love the world, is to suffer it to come into competition with God, and is the very height of ingratitude. But above all, let us come humbly acknowledging that we are undone, except we have a share in Jesus Christ,—in his sacrifice, atonement, righteousness, and blessing. He is ‘the way, the truth, and the life. No man cometh unto the Father but by Him.’ Paul, though one of the greatest apostles, humbly acknowledged his utmost need of Christ, (Phil. iii.) ‘not having,’ he says, ‘mine own righteousness’—And the consideration of his own poverty, together with the riches of the grace of God, made him exclaim, ‘Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ!’ He is my greatest gain. If I have Him, I have every thing: pardon, peace, joy, reconciliation with God, eternal life. Happy was Paul in his choice, and happy shall we be if we follow him. May the spirit of Jesus incline our hearts to con-

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XIII. Amen."

The fourth of these valuable remains of Swartz is from the beautiful conclusion of the 13th chapter of St. Paul's 1st Epistle to the Corinthians. "And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three ; but the greatest of these is charity."

"In this memorable passage," he observes, "the apostle sums up the principal parts of real Christianity ; and gives a full answer to that momentous question, 'What must we do to be saved?' Three things are necessary.

"I. The first is faith, by which we understand an assent to all that is revealed by God in the holy Scriptures. But as the doctrine of a Redeemer is the main point of divine revelation, by faith we are principally to understand the assent which we give to the testimony of Scripture concerning a Saviour, and, consequently, dependence on him for every blessing."

He next proceeds to give a view of the natural condition of mankind, similar to that which occurs in the preceding sermons, as blind with respect to spiritual things, averse to what is good, and "inclined towards that which is evil." In respect of their affections of love, fear, hope—all gone

astray ; without strength to rise and do the will of God ; dead in trespasses and sins ; condemned by the divine law, which all have transgressed ; 'without comfort and without hope.'

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"Who shall rescue such wretched, forlorn sinners ? No creature in heaven or earth ; none but Jesus the Son of God." His divine nature, his spotless purity, perfect obedience, and painful and ignominious death upon the cross, are then declared to be the only foundation of all spiritual and heavenly blessings : "of which great salvation, the glorious God has given assurance unto all men, by raising him from the dead, placing him at his own right hand, and giving him all power in heaven and earth.

"But how," he continues, "a convinced sinner may say, shall I become a partaker of that divine salvation ? The apostle replies, By faith : 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.' Acknowledge thy sinfulness and corruption before Jesus Christ with the deepest humility. Turn away thine eyes from all creatures, for they cannot save thee. Turn unto him who has borne thy sins, and has made a full atonement for them all ; entreat him to have mercy on thee, to wash thee in his blood, to forgive thee all thy sins. Give thyself up to him ; receive him as thy prophet, to teach thee ; as thy high priest, to atone for thee ; as thy king, to rule

CHAP. and govern thee. If thou humblest thyself in
XIII. such a manner, despairing of thine own strength, and that of other creatures, and solely depending on Jesus for every blessing, then thou art a believer. How weighty a thing it is to believe; how humble do we become; how low do all creatures appear; how great, how glorious does Jesus appear in the eyes of a believer!

“Here let us pause, and ask ourselves, Do we believe in Jesus Christ? A question of the utmost importance. O let your conscience answer it sincerely. Have you ever been convinced of your sinful and lost condition, so as to see the necessity of a Redeemer? A proud man, who does not feel his blindness, and poverty, and corruption, may occasionally repeat the creed, but still he cannot be styled a true believer. Have you ever fled for refuge unto Jesus, and earnestly entreated him to pardon your sins, and to make you a sharer in the blessings of his salvation? Is there a sacred hunger and thirst in your heart after Jesus and his righteousness? Has your faith made you free from your idolatrous attachment to the creature, and from the love of the world? If it has, then are you truly believing. By this faith, a man is made truly happy. His sins, as the only cause of his uneasiness, being forgiven, he has peace with God, and access to the throne of grace.

“II. But some may be apt to say, ‘We have heard what has been said of faith, of its foundation and nature, and of the happiness annexed to it. Where, however, are these happy people? Even the best Christians cannot help complaining; and that argues no great happiness.’”

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“In order to remove this doubt about happiness, the apostle asserted the second principle which animates a true Christian, and that is hope. This consists in a well-grounded expectation of future blessings, and is highly necessary to every Christian, to cheer him in his way to heaven. For it cannot be denied that this life is, in many respects, full of misery, full of evil; for deliverance from which we pray in the Lord’s Prayer. Even the best of Christians is conscious of much ignorance, and blindness of understanding. ‘We know,’ says the apostle, ‘but in part.’ Our knowledge, as to its clearness, distinctness, and vividness, is very imperfect. Our will, though mended in some degree, is still too stubborn, and not so subject to the law of God as we could wish. Our desires, hopes, fears, griefs, are not so well rectified as they ought to be. Our bodies are subject to pain, sickness, death, and the grave; besides what we suffer from the folly and wickedness of our fellow-creatures. The apostle Paul had a good share, particularly in sufferings from wicked men.

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"Is all this true? may the worldly man say—
What becomes, then, of your glorying and happiness?

"The Christian still glories, notwithstanding all these things; because he has a lively hope of a consummate happiness prepared for him by his gracious Redeemer, and made lively in his heart by the Holy Ghost. So the apostle teaches us in the 5th chapter of his Epistle to the Romans. 'Hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us;' and Rom. xv. 3. 'Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.'

"Is the Christian afflicted with poverty? He knows that he shall possess eternal riches, laid up for him in heaven. Does he suffer reproach from an ungodly world? He does not repine. For besides the benefits he reaps from such treatment, he knows that Jesus Christ will shortly clear and vindicate his character, not in the eyes of a few, but in the sight of men and angels. Does he suffer pain? He is content, being convinced that his 'vile body shall ere long be made like unto the glorious body' of his Saviour. Nay, at last, when death approaches, he exercises his hope by looking forward to eternal life. In short, there is no affliction which can deprive him of his hope,

which he has conceived by believing in Jesus Christ. CHAP.
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“This hope which a Christian maintains in his heart, is not an idle speculation, but an active principle, from which flow many of his brightest actions,—his patience under all sorts of suffering; (Heb. xi.); his contentment with all the wise dealings of his heavenly Father; his care not to use unlawful means to help himself in afflicting circumstances; his constancy in doing the will of God, in spite of all the ingratitude he experiences from an evil world; for, what he does, he does for the sake of God, who will reward him abundantly, and that very soon.

“Here let me ask you again, have *you* such a hope of eternal blessedness? The greater part of us will be ready to say, ‘To be sure! We all hope to be happy!’ But let me ask you seriously, what is the groundwork of your hope? Hope is the result of faith in Jesus. Besides, what is the effect of your hope? The apostle St. John characterises the true hope of a christian very accurately, when he says, ‘Every one that hath this hope in him,’ viz. of seeing God, ‘purifieth himself, even as he is pure.’ So that, if a man does not purify himself, and become more and more like unto God, he has no solid hope, however he may flatter himself, of seeing him hereafter ‘as he is.’

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“III. Let us now represent a person truly believing in Jesus, and united to him, washed from his sins, strengthened by his Spirit, and cheered with a hope of an unspeakably glorious crown hereafter. Being endowed with such a precious faith and lively hope, what will he do? What will be the effect of such a faith and hope? Love towards God and all men. A person that is blessed with such faith and hope, cannot but love God and all mankind, and that from the bottom of his heart. He looks upon God as his Father, who has loved him in an unspeakable manner; who sent his only begotten Son into the world for his eternal happiness; who has called him out of darkness into marvellous light; who has blessed him with pardon, peace, and hope; and this heartily inclines him to love him sincerely and ardently. The conclusion which St. John draws from the love of God towards us is very natural. ‘We love him, because he first loved us.’ Such a Christian will esteem and venerate, adore and praise God, keep his commandments, honour his name, his sabbath-day, his word. Love will teach him all this. His soul and body he will present as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God, which will be his reasonable service. Such an one will not be conformed to this world, but transformed by the renewing of his mind, that he may prove what is

that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. Whether he eats or drinks, or whatsoever he does, he will endeavour to do it to the glory of God.

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“Let us seriously examine our hearts and lives, whether we have loved God in such a manner. Have we venerated him and his divine name above all? Have we delighted in him so as to renounce sinful pleasures? Have we endeavoured to glorify God, or to promote the honour of his name among those with whom we live? Have we worshipped him, privately and publicly, in such a manner as to inspire others with devotion? Have we kept the Lord's day in a holy manner?

“And as he loves God, so he will likewise love his neighbour; and that not only externally, but from his heart. The sense of the love of God will be to him instead of a thousand commandments. He will love the souls of his fellow-creatures; the ignorant he will instruct by word and example; the wicked he will endeavour to convert, and to lead them into the path of piety; the poor and afflicted he will assist, nourish, and comfort, according to the ability which God hath given him. He will take care not to offend or injure his neighbour, either in his fortune or his name. So that backbiting, envy, strife, malice, will be far from him; and all this will flow from a principle of faith and hope.

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“What a happiness it would be if all Christians were actuated by such love or desire of making others happy here and hereafter !

“Let me, therefore, ask you seriously, before that God who knows your heart and ways, Do you love your neighbour sincerely? Is it the bent of your lives, not only to honour your God, but likewise to make your fellow-creatures happy? Have you showed a tender regard to their eternal welfare? You see thousands before your eyes sitting in darkness and the shadow of death. Have you endeavoured, at least by your example, to convince them of the purity and excellence of your religion? Have you discouraged vice and wickedness, or have you promoted it, and so laid a stumbling-block before your ignorant and careless fellow-creatures? Have you assisted the poor and needy in their distressful circumstances, or have you been regardless of their misery?

“Let us examine our hearts seriously, and whatsoever we find in our behaviour to have been against the will of God, let us immediately repent of it, and beg forgiveness in the name of Jesus Christ. Cultivate these three principles,—faith, hope, and love; and you will glorify God, enjoy true happiness, and edify your fellow-creatures; which God grant!”

Such are the pulpit remains of this apostolic and persuasive preacher. They are, like every thing connected with his character, marked by the most perfect simplicity ; but, at the same time, by an energy of thought, and frequently by a vigour of expression, which prove at once the sincerity and the efficacy of his religion. One grand subject pervades his sermons, as it formed the prevailing theme of his correspondence and his ministerial labours—the gospel of Christ, as the only and all-sufficient remedy for the guilt and misery of fallen man ; the love of God, in sending his Son to save us ; the love of Christ, in dying for us ; pardon and peace through faith in the atoning blood of the cross, that faith “working by love” to God and man, purifying the heart, and overcoming the world ; producing, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, true happiness even here, and animating the Christian with a lively and joyful hope of perfect and eternal blessedness hereafter. Such was the cheering, intelligible, and scriptural view which Swartz invariably presented of Christian doctrine. The incidental references to his ministerial instructions, which occur in his letters and journals, show how diligently he laboured in filling up this outline with the details of principle and precept, and how wisely he adapted his exhortations to the peculiar character and condition of his hearers.

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There is one circumstance relative to his discourses, which is particularly deserving of attention. This is the sound judgment and practical tendency by which they are distinguished. Nothing visionary, doubtful, or enthusiastic, is to be traced in any part of them. The purest evangelical truths, and the most spiritual and exalted principles, are combined with the most forcible appeals to the conscience and the heart; and while the mercies of redemption are inculcated, as the exclusive ground of acceptance with God, and the most prevailing motive to obedience, the tenor of a holy life is insisted upon as the only satisfactory evidence of a state of salvation.

These were the leading features of his teaching: and, confirmed and illustrated as they were by his own eminent and consistent example, we cannot be surprised that they should be followed by the most striking and beneficial results, not only on the professed Christians, but on the various classes of idolaters and unbelievers, who surrounded him and listened to his instructions.

The very few of his surviving friends who remember Swartz in the pulpit, represent his appearance and manner as remarkably resembling the preceding specimens of his style—simple and unaffected, but energetic and impressive; using, like the apostle to the Gentiles, “great

plainness of speech," but speaking also like him, CHAP.
"in demonstration of the Spirit and of power," XIII.
and "by manifestation of the truth commending himself to every man's conscience in the sight of God;" while equally with the great apostle, "speaking the truth in love," out of the fulness of a heart penetrated by the mercies of redemption, and habitually glowing with Christian kindness, he succeeded in conciliating the confidence and affection of his hearers, and vindicated his claim to the character of true wisdom, by winning many souls to the faith and hope of the gospel.