

**THE OBJECT AND MEANS OF THE
CHRISTIAN MINISTRY: A
SERMON, PREACHED AT THE
ORDINATION OF THE REV. CYRUS
A. BARTOL**

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The Object and Means of the Christian Ministry: A Sermon, Preached at the Ordination of the
Rev. Cyrus A. Bartol by Jr. Henry Ware

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JR. HENRY WARE

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THE OBJECT AND MEANS OF THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY.

A

S E R M O N ,

PREACHED AT THE ORDINATION

OF THE

REV. CYRUS A. BARTOL,

AS JUNIOR PASTOR OF THE WEST CHURCH IN BOSTON,

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 1, 1837.

BY HENRY WARE, JR.,

PROFESSOR OF PULPIT ELOQUENCE AND THE PASTORAL CARE IN HARVARD UNIVERSITY.

WITH THE CHARGE, THE RIGHT HAND OF FELLOWSHIP,
AND AN APPENDIX.

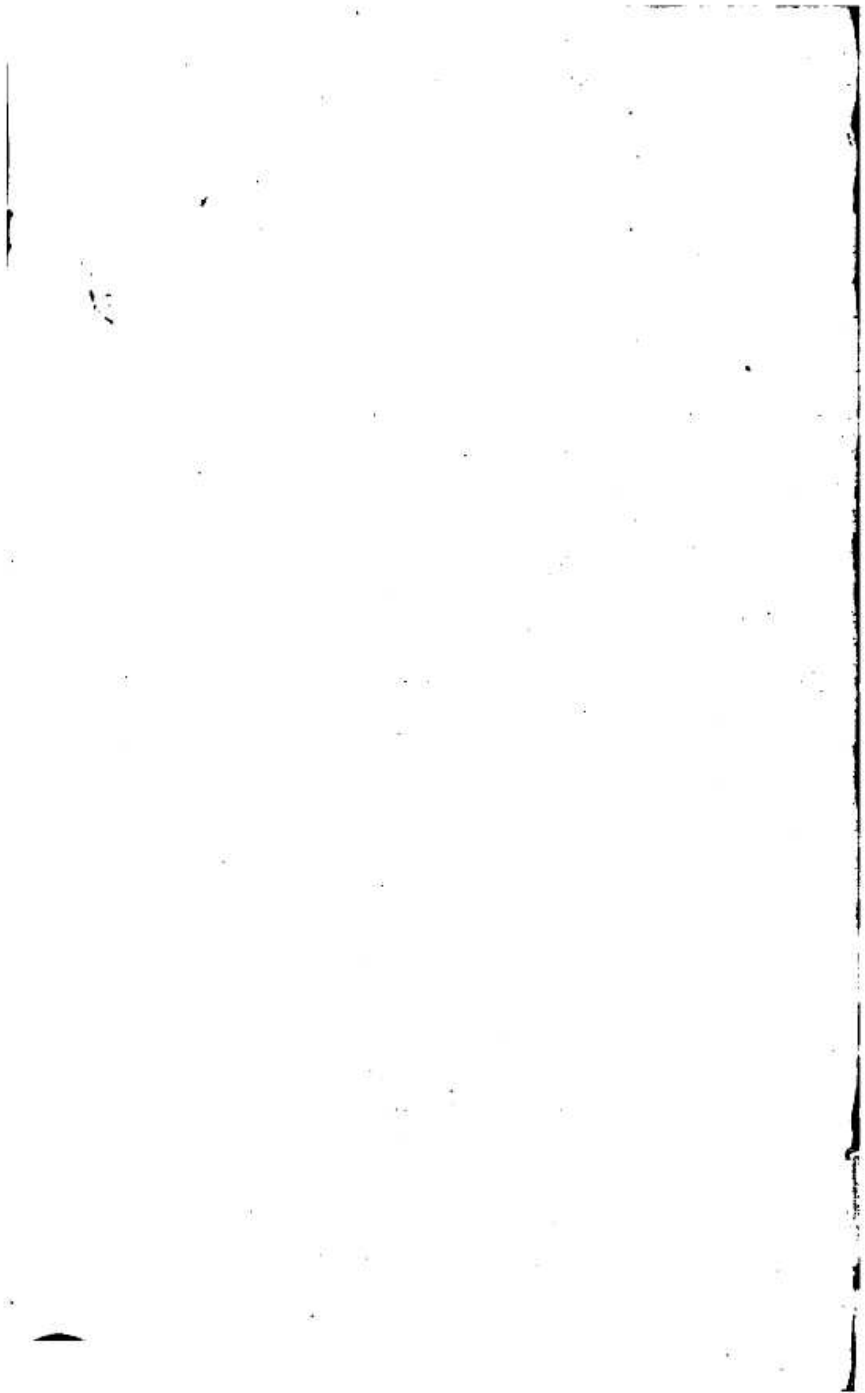
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1837.

(Bartol)
AN



S E R M O N .

COLOSSIANS I. 28.

"WHOM WE PREACH,—WARNING EVERY MAN AND TEACHING EVERY MAN IN ALL WISDOM, THAT WE MAY PRESENT EVERY MAN PERFECT IN CHRIST JESUS."

THE Apostle in these words makes a comprehensive statement of the object and the means of the Christian ministry, which may afford suitable hints for our meditation on the present occasion. Its *Object* is Human Perfection, and the *Means*, such a preaching of Christ that every man shall be taught and warned. "Whom we preach,—warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus."

I shall attempt nothing more than to develop and apply the ideas thus suggested. The Christian Ministry has for its OBJECT, Human Perfection, and for its MEANS, the Preaching of Christ.

Human Perfection; what is it? in what does it consist? where is it to be found?

Certainly it is not Divine Perfection. The finite and mortal does not compete with the infinite and immortal. But there is to the works of God as well as to Himself, a perfection appertaining, suitable to their own nature and end;—a perfection, which is impressed upon them at their original formation, or to which they are led by a process of development and growth. The beautiful order of the planetary worlds was probably made perfect when those worlds were first cast out upon their courses, and that light, which is the glorious emblem of its wondrous Former, burst into being in the fulness of its glory. But the plant that comes up from the bosom of the earth, and the animal that is to enjoy life amid its abundance and beauty, these, in all their tribes and orders, arrive at their perfection by an appointed progress. God has richly provided the means of that progress in the arrangements of his common Providence,—where the warmth and the moisture of the sun and the air, the revolutions of the seasons, and the fertility of the earth, carry forward to their destined perfection the vegetable and the animal races. These provisions would be

sufficient for Man, if he too like them. were merely the creature of this earth; but, as he has a higher nature, and is capable of a higher perfection than they, something further is needed, — an intellectual and spiritual Providence, — the sun and rain and dew and nurture of a spiritual life, — leading forward to a perfection in man, as superior to that of the animal, as immortal Mind is superior to decaying Matter.

This spiritual Providence, designed to effect for the soul what an earthly Providence effects for the body, is to be found in the operation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Not exclusively; — for the great Father never left his children without witness and without care. But the chief, the favorite, the all-comprehending Institution is that system of grace and truth which came by Jesus Christ, and which makes wise unto salvation; — the efficient instrument of whose operation is the ministry.

What then is this perfection for which man is made, in aid of which the Gospel is established, and for which all institutions of human origin had proved inadequate?

They had proved inadequate because of the inadequate notions of human perfection on which

they were founded. The leaders of society, the founders and guides of nations, the patriots, the lawgivers, the philosophers, who made men their study and their care, all failed of introducing a perfect social condition, because they misapprehended man, his capacity, his destiny. They regarded him as a creature of time, and as a component part of the state. They legislated for him, they educated him, they provided for him, simply as holding a certain place in the commonwealth, as having a certain part to perform in the machinery of society, to which he was to be precisely fitted as a moving wheel, or a stationary beam; and society was accounted perfect and prosperous, when, through this process, every thing was in orderly operation, and the engine of state "worked well."

This has been the idea of the worldly and the politicians in all ages; and it was inadequate, because it left out of view the two essential elements on which the true conception of human attainment rests, namely, the spiritual equality and immortality of all men. Hence, men have always been treated as having relation to time only, and without any regard to their capacity for progress. Provided the State was served and so-

ciety prosperous, no one cared for the condition of the individual. He might be a mere tool, a machine, a slave, an engine for working mines or making pins. His intellect and his character were matters of no consequence; and it was held as absurd to raise any from the accidental rank which their birth had assigned them, as to elevate the lower animals to an equal place with man. There was no recognition of the innate equality and immortality of the human soul. Christianity recognises both. It sees in every individual man, a partaker of the divine image, capable of infinite progress, certain of an infinite duration. It demands that perfection which belongs to the spiritual nature and the spiritual life; it would make each man perfect as an individual being; not in his relation to an accidental rank in this world, but absolutely; a thinking, self-governing, worshipping, heaven-destined creature; fitted for any position in society in this world, content with any that is allotted him, and dignifying the meanest, by carrying into it the disinterested rectitude and piety which adorn the highest.

This is the perfection which Christianity proposes, and of which it exhibits a pattern in Christ, the meek and lowly, the holy, harmless, undefiled,