

**A DISCOURSE ON THE  
LIFE AND CHARACTER  
OF REV. CHARLES HALL**

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A Discourse on the Life and Character of Rev. Charles Hall by Asa D. Smith

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**ASA D. SMITH**

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A  
DISCOURSE

ON THE

LIFE AND CHARACTER

OF

REV. CHARLES HALL, D. D.,

DELIVERED IN THE

CITY OF NEW YORK,

SABBATH EVENING, JANUARY 1, 1854.

BY

REV. ASA D. SMITH, D. D.,

PASTOR OF THE FOURTEENTH STREET PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.

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NEW YORK, JAN. 10, 1854.

REV. ASA D. SMITH, D. D.,

DEAR SIR,

At a meeting of the Executive Committee of the American Home Missionary Society, on the 9th instant, the following minute was adopted, viz. :—

"*Resolved*, That the thanks of the Committee be presented to Rev. ASA D. SMITH, D. D., for his Sermon, preached at their request, commemorative of the character and labors of Rev. CHARLES HALL, D. D., late Secretary of the Society, and that a copy be requested for publication."

In communicating to you this action of the Committee, you will permit us to express, for them and for ourselves, our deep interest in the Discourse, as a graphic and truthful delineation of the character of our lamented associate, constituting it a fitting and most acceptable memorial to be presented to the missionaries and friends of the Society.

Very truly, yours,

MILTON BADGER,  
DAVID B. COE,  
*Secretaries of the A. H. M. S.*

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NEW YORK, JAN. 16, 1854.

REV. MESSRS. BADGER AND COE,

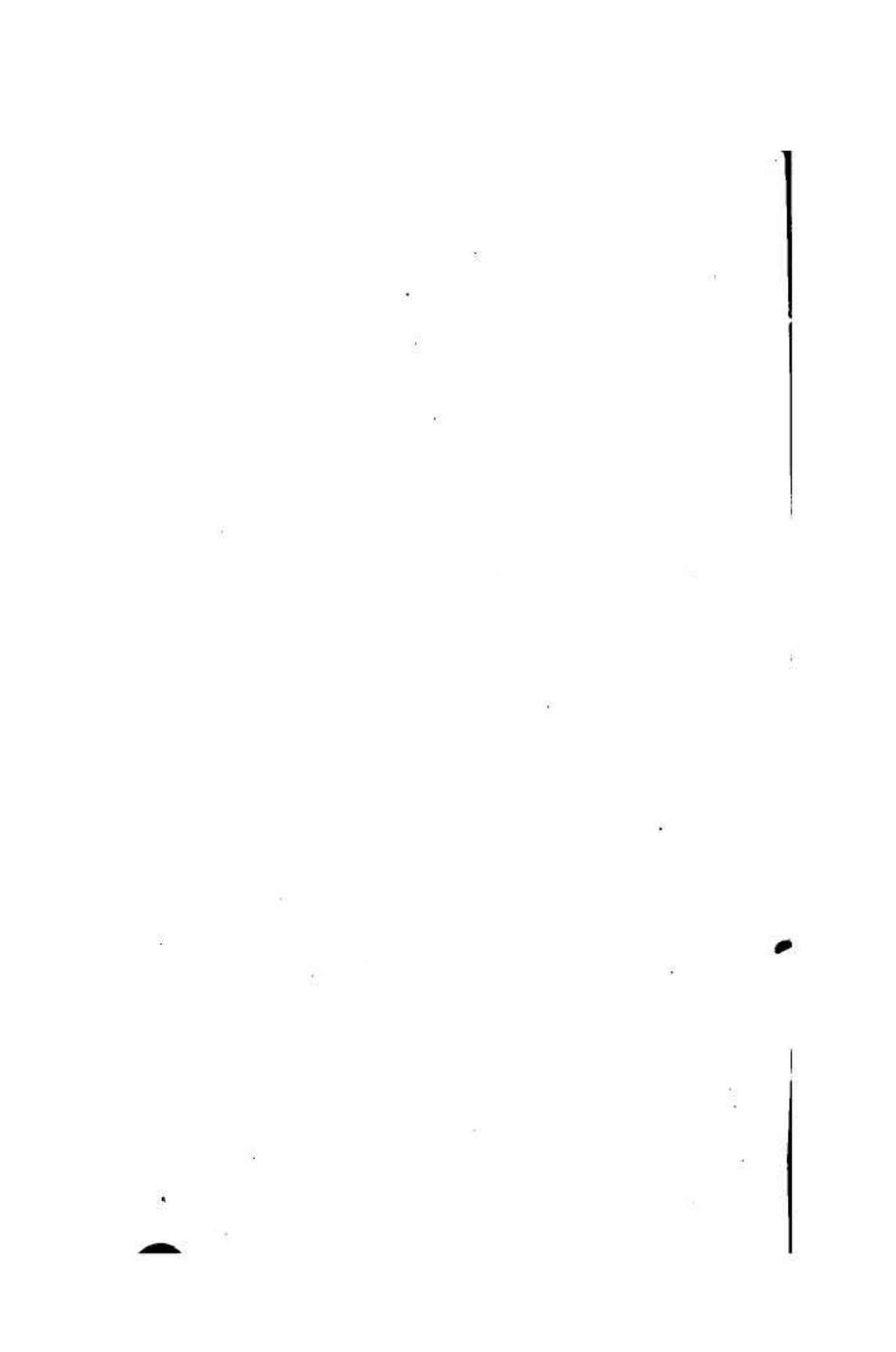
*Secretaries of the A. H. M. S.*

DEAR BRETHREN,

Gratefully acknowledging the kind terms in which you have been pleased to communicate the action of the Executive Committee, I herewith submit to their disposal the Discourse of which they request a copy.

Yours, very truly,

ASA D. SMITH.





## DISCOURSE.

MATT. 6: 22.

IF THEREFORE THINE EYE BE SINGLE, THY WHOLE BODY SHALL BE  
FULL OF LIGHT.

THE figure here employed is one of great beauty and expressiveness. A high place does the eye hold, in some respects a chief place, among our various physical organs. In the language of the context, it is "the light of the body." If it be "evil"—in other words, if disease fall upon it; if a film grow over it, so that through its exquisitely moulded casement but a glimmer of daylight steals; or if peccant humors pervade it, so that objects are duplicated to the view, or are blent together in perplexing and painful confusion; then, indeed, is the whole body "full of darkness." All its faculties are used to comparatively little purpose. The odors come to it as from an unknown land; that which the fingers touch is but half apprehended; the ear listens as to sounds from a realm of shadows; the tongue pours forth its utterances as into some cloudy abyss. The work to be done is hidden, and the hands falter at it; the path to be taken is obscured, and the feet stumble in it; the goal sought is wrapt in gloom, and the erring steps fail to reach it. Not so

when the eye is "single;" when in its sound and normal state it discriminates keenly, apprehending every thing in its true proportion and relations. Then have all the other faculties their most facile and effective play. Then is our work disclosed to us, and the way of our feet clearly revealed; and whatever mark or prize we propose to ourselves, stands distinctly forth in its own commanding shape, and secures our intensest and steadiest gaze. Our whole body, then, is "full of light."

What the eye is to the body, that the heart is to the soul. It was of the workings of the heart,—or of the chief desire or governing purpose of the mind,—our Lord had just been speaking; and it was for the further illustration and enforcement of his views, that he called to his aid the peculiar phraseology of the text. He had bidden his disciples beware of earthly affections, so corrupting and debasing in all their influence. He had enjoined upon them a supreme regard for heavenly things, a state of mind so conducive to all that is pure and exalted in character. In the words of the text, under the figure of the eye, the illuminator of the physical man, he represents the heart, considered in its purified state,—with the spiritual discernment which then pertains to it, and the high and holy unity of aim which results from such discernment,—as shedding a heavenly radiance over our whole moral being. Our thoughts are brought, then, by the passage before us, after whatever refinement of interpretation, to the very topic which the plainest reader would naturally find here, the excellence and blessedness of *a true singleness of purpose*,—or, as it is often expressed, of "an eye single to the glory of God."

This high Christian attainment is commended to us, in the first place, as a source of *joy*. Prone though we are to look for happiness to the outward, its chief spring is in our own bosoms. Of the soul it may be ever said,

"If right itself, then all around is well;  
If wrong, it makes of all without a hell."

Nay, when the seat of variant and contending affections, it is itself a hell. Of such affections it must ever be more or less the prey, while diverted from its proper center, God. Selfish desires and passions, while they war often with each other, must all unite in warring with conscience. A dreary sense of unrest there must be; distressful gnawings of remorse; and fearful foreshadowings of coming evil. Nor is all this limited to men of avowed worldliness. The hours of gloom and despondency which chequer the pathway of so many Christians, have their origin mainly in a secret consciousness of divided affections. He whose eye is single, on the contrary, cannot but experience the purest and profoundest joy. He may have many trials; in his peculiar mood of mind there may be little of boisterous exultation; the very framework of his physical being may be such, that raptures are hardly possible to him. But there shall be in his heart serene depths of bliss, infinitely dearer than all earthly gladness. Living *on* God, his soul must be satisfied. Living *to* God, he shall have the testimony of a good conscience. By no secret stings of self-reproach, by the thwarting of no selfish plans, by the dashing in pieces of no cherished idols, shall his peace be marred.

Nor is his "whole body" full of the light of joy alone. The radiance of *wisdom* is there. Nothing can be judged of aright, except as seen in its legitimate