

Righteousness and the Pulpit :

A

DISCOURSE

PREACHED IN THE FIRST CHURCH, DORCHESTER,

ON SUNDAY, SEPT. 30, 1855.

BY NATHANIEL HALL.

BOSTON:
CROSBY, NICHOLS, AND COMPANY,
111, WASHINGTON STREET.
1855.

BOSTON:

PRINTED BY JOHN WILSON AND SON,

22, SCHOOL STREET.

DORCHESTER, Oct. 2, 1855.

Rev. N. HALL.

DEAR SIR, — We, the undersigned, members of the First Parish in Dorchester, fully responding to the Christian sentiments expressed in your sermon of Sunday morning, Sept. 30, request, in behalf of ourselves and many others, a copy for the press, believing its publication will aid the cause for which you have so manfully contended; viz., the independence of the pulpit.

Very truly yours,

WILLIAM POPE, jun.
JOHN G. NAZRO.
THOMAS GROOM.
ELISHA T. LORING.
DANIEL DENNY.
SAMUEL DOWNER.
FLAVEL MOSELEY.

DORCHESTER, Oct. 3, 1855.

GENTLEMEN,

I have received your communication, containing a request for a copy of my sermon, of last Sunday morning, for publication. Confiding in your judgment, that its publication may serve, in some measure, a cause I have much at heart, I place its manuscript at your disposal. Its personal allusions the dictates of good taste would lead me to withhold from the public eye; but considerations, which I deem not unworthy, prevail with me to do otherwise.

With respect and esteem, yours,

NATHL. HALL.

To Messrs. WILLIAM POPE, jun.,
JOHN G. NAZRO, and others.

DISCOURSE.

Psalm xl. 9 : — “I HAVE PREACHED RIGHTEOUSNESS IN THE GREAT CONGREGATION.”

So spake the royal Hebrew, — expressing thus the chief theme and theatre of the minister of religion in all ages and lands. He is to preach “righteousness.” He is to preach it “in the great congregation.” The subject is given him as that pre-eminently of his sphere ; his sphere, for the sake pre-eminently of the subject. He stands as the servant of a righteous God, in the midst of an unrighteous world ; and his mission is, first and foremost, to show the one its departure from the other, — the evil and the guilt of it, — and to persuade to repentance and return. Let the pulpit regard its purpose as less than this, and by what could it justify its existence ? Let it preach unrighteousness ; or, what is in effect the same, let it be silent before the practised unrighteousness in the life around it ; the frauds and inhumanities ; the individual, the

social, the legalized injustice; the ways and instances innumerable in which men are violating the plainest of God's commandments, treasuring up thereby, for and within themselves, though they know it not, in a growing obliquity and depravity of the moral nature, a deeper evil than they can inflict on others: let it see all this, see it in the light of that righteous law intrusted to it to proclaim, and give no audible report of what it sees, pass no judgment, utter no protest; or let it proclaim the law in its abstractness only, refraining from that direct and especial application of it which alone can reach the evil and amend the wrong, — and what claim would it have on men's respect or toleration? nay, what less would it be, in the sight of Heaven and all holy men, than an impertinence and an offence? If the minister of religion cannot adopt the asseveration of the text, in its fullest and most uncompromising sense, as expressive at least of his determination and endeavor, he had better find for himself, forthwith, another occupation, where his dishonesty will be less mischievous. "I am to preach righteousness," do his most solemn obligations compel him to affirm. "It is imperative upon me. Whatever is questionable, this is not. I am to soothe the sorrowing, to encourage the disheartened, to strengthen the wavering, to re-assure the doubting, to meet and minister to the various needs of the human spirit; I am to exhort to gentleness,

patience, submission, trust, — each passive virtue, each spiritual affection, each lovely grace; I am to show forth the love and mercy of the infinite Father, the hopes and promises that irradiate his word; this, and more: but with all, and as the beginning and end of all, I am to preach righteousness. I am to set forth that eternal law which conscience enforces in every breast; which inheres in the nature of God; and by which he will judge, and is continually judging, the universe of souls. I am to show — not vaguely, but clearly — the actual violations of it; not those of another place and period, but those of the living world around me.”

Are there any limitations to the obligation thus affirmed? any considerations which excuse a minister of religion from preaching righteousness? which justify him in withholding his condemning protest — not his, but the Being’s whom he serves — against the iniquity he sees around him? Where and what are they? Will any one dare to bring them — except under cover of some specious sophism — from the regions of the politic, the prudential, the expedient? Will any one suggest that a distinction is to be observed by the pulpit, in this regard, between the several forms of unrighteousness around it, and that certain some are to be exempted from the directness of its rebuke? those, for instance, which have connection with the State, which are under the protection of

law, which have the sanction of the multitude, which are upholden by the wealth and station of society, which favor the increase of a material prosperity, which have become associated with political organizations, which are an exciting and disagreeable topic to some of a congregation. Will any one aver, that these considerations, one or all, constitute a reason, valid and worthy, for ignoring the existence, or palliating the enormity, of the unrighteousness to which they pertain ?

But let us come directly to the point we have all in mind. Here, within the national domain, is a large number of our fellow-beings forcibly withheld from the exercise and enjoyment of some of the dearest and most sacred of human rights, — rights bestowed by their Creator, and thus naturally and inalienably theirs, — and which we, as a people, have confessed to be so, on the forefront of the document which proclaims our nationality ; withheld, in and by this fact, from all power to realize any worthy development of their intelligent and immortal natures, any worthy enjoyment and use of life ; held and regarded and used as brute property, as human merchandise, as living mechanism ; subjected, without the means of resistance or redress, to the capricious tempers, the excited passions, the selfish and irresponsible wills, of those that claim them ; degraded to the rank of plantation “stock,” and valued and used as such for other and

viler purposes than labor ; with no accorded right to call themselves their own ; with no power to make good their claim to the breathing and pulsing, the thinking and feeling, life which God has given them ; with nothing that deserves the name of home ; publicly bought and sold, and separated one from another in utter disregard of the ties of nature and affection. Here is no exaggerated picture, but a calm and sober statement of what all must admit as facts. Am I told of here and there exceptions to its general truth ; of alleviations, of compensations, through the humanity of man, and the overrulings of a gracious Providence ? Of course there are these ; we should know there were beforehand ; for everywhere are human hearts that soften towards their kind, and God has gilded every lot with some gleams of brightness and of hope. But, substantially, the statement is one of facts ; and of facts not which incidentally adhere to the system, but which essentially inhere within it, — its necessary and inseparable constituents.

I heap upon the system no condemnatory epithets. I refrain from all intensified expression of my own deep abhorrence of it. I simply put it to your own moral judgments, whether it be, or not, a system of unrighteousness ; whether it be, or not, in violation of God's law and Christ's commandments. And, furthermore, I ask, why, in the name of all that is just and sacred, the *pulpit* should not declare it such, and echo

alike Heaven's verdict and the world's, — why it should not preach "*righteousness*," directly and distinctly, to the upholders of it, to the connivers at it, to the apologists for it, — ay, preach it "in the great congregation."

There are answers to this question; I hear them all around me; and circumstances, of which you are all aware, authorize, if they do not demand of, me to investigate before you their claim to our regard. I shall do it freely, but not, I trust, uncandidly; and I shall adduce, let me say, such only as have recently been addressed to me personally, and by implication reproachfully, by some among you.

It is said, and continually and everywhere reiterated, "The subject is a political one; and, as such, should be excluded from the pulpit." Would it not be better, because truer, to say, it is a great moral and religious subject, having political bearings and relations? The system of American slavery, as has now been shown, is most eminently and emphatically an unrighteous one; a direct infraction of the plainest commandments of the Almighty; a manifest violation of the precepts and spirit of the religion of Jesus; the offspring of selfish and sordid lusts, and the parent of evils, the least in whose lengthened train are those which fall upon the physical and dying man, — evils which attach to the moral and immortal nature, as

experienced both by its helpless victims and their lordly claimants. And, being this, its discussion belongs, most strictly and legitimately, to the pulpit, — yea, is bound upon it by Heaven-woven obligations. Say, if you will, that, in its political connections, it is unwise for the pulpit to attempt the treatment of it. It is saying what no one, so far as I know, is at all disposed, by word or practice, to contradict. Whatever may be true of other pulpits, I can speak confidently at least of one. And it becomes me to affirm, that in *this*, by its present occupant, however different an excited mind may apprehend the fact to be, the subject has ever been discussed in its broadest ground, with a direct reference of it to the great law of equity and mercy. All, I suppose, agree that political preaching — that which takes sides with a political party as such, and advocates its measures and course on political grounds and considerations — is to be deprecated and condemned. All agree that the preacher has a separate and peculiar, a higher and holier, work; namely, the enunciation and enforcement of eternal principles, with a showing forth of their practical relations to individuals and communities. But if, in doing this, it so happen that his views are coincident with those of a party, is he justly chargeable with preaching “politics,” in any opprobrious and unworthy sense? Would to God the principles and policy of political parties were so in unison

with the absolute right, that, in preaching the latter, one might seem to be pleading for the former! No: a false issue is presented, ignorantly or knowingly, with regard to this matter. The issue is *not*, whether political preaching is bad and wrong; whether party spirit in the pulpit, in relation to this as to every other subject, is bad and wrong. There is no controversy here. But *this* is the issue: whether the preaching of the pulpit is to have nothing to do with a great moral and religious subject, because it has come to have political bearings and associations. In other words, Is the preacher to ignore this evil of which we speak, — this crime against humanity and God; to go on, from month to month and year to year, as though it were not; to stand in his place, and see its portentous cloud spreading and darkening on his country's sky, with the rumble of distant thunder in its deepening folds; to see increasing millions — those whom God loves, those for whom Christ died — robbed by it of their birthright, neglected, despised, degraded; to see its corrupting influence upon those afar who cherish and those around who extenuate and defend it, — the gradual but sure debauchment of the public conscience, — the suppression in its favor, even in youthful breasts, of the holy instincts of freedom and the dear sympathies of humanity; to see the kingdom of heaven hindered in its advancement, more than by aught else, by its presence and power, — is he to see

all this, — to see it with God's open word before him, and his secret voice within, — and keep all unspoken their united condemnation? *This*, friends, is the question — stripped of its sophisms, seen in its nakedness — which circumstances have thrust between us; this, and this only. Say, merely, that the preacher should not be *continually* presenting the topic in question, — should not give it *prominence* among his selected topics: it is assented to. Say, further, that he should never present it with a view to *political and party ends*, — never with the spirit and tone of a partisan: it is assented to. But say that he should never present it at all; that it should be for him an interdicted topic: it is denied. The assertion is most preposterous. It is to be instantly and earnestly repelled. I marvel at the presumption that proposes the exclusion of this subject from the pulpit and the church, and its surrender to the politician and to party. Yet more do I marvel that the pulpit and the church, with any living sense of their responsibilities, should ever have consented to such surrender; as, in instances not a few, they have, and, in so doing, been manifestly recreant to their trust. If it may be so with *this* evil and wrong, then why not with any and every other? feeding, though they may be, on the very vitals of the community, and carrying wretchedness and degradation to uncounted homes. *They*, too, because legislation may have taken them up, and par-

ties been formed in relation to them, may be barred out from the circle of permitted topics, and Religion be left to look out upon them from her sacred places, and be dumb before them, — ay, give them the *approval* which silence, by implication, is. The very obvious fallacy which runs through much that is said and written about politics in the pulpit, in the connection spoken of, is the assumption that the subject of slavery is primarily and exclusively a political one, and that its discussion in the pulpit must necessarily be on party grounds and in a party spirit. Both of these assumptions being false, the conclusions drawn from them are therefore forceless. And, apart from all other considerations, one is disposed to but little respect for this outcry of “political preaching,” at every assertion of the unrighteousness of our country’s cherished institution, when he sees how many of those most forward to raise it are quite forgetful to do so in the hearing of preaching equally obnoxious to the appellation, as regards the subject-matter of it, besides being inhuman and atheistic, — the preaching, namely, that apologizes for this instituted oppression, and elevates its enactments above the statutes of the Almighty.

Again, it is said, “The subject should be excluded from the pulpit because it is an exciting one: it hurts people’s feelings; it stirs bad blood; it sets aflame the passions of the caucus-room and the polls. Men

enter the church in a pleasant, amiable mood, with all their good feelings uppermost, and leave it irritated and enraged." Here is, I allow, a most lamentable result, more especially so as viewed in connection with its cause. That a protest against unrighteousness, that a plea for humanity, should be thus productive, is the saddest part of it. But the result is actual; and the question is, what sort and measure of regard the pulpit is to have for it. Is it so far to consult human weakness and waywardness in the selection of its topics as to refrain from the discussion of those, whatever their intrinsic claim to attention and regard, which are supposed to be exciting and offensive to a portion of its hearers? Where would the acceptance of such a proposition take us? What, adopting it, would the pulpit be? Apply it to the case in question; and tell me, is it a reason, which God and conscience accept, for being silent in the presence of this gigantic wrong, that all rebukeful mention of it disturbs and angers a few, or many, of a congregation? May not the state of things thus indicated have come to exist through that very negligence on the part of the pulpit for whose continuance it is made a plea?

It would seem the thought of some, that the preacher is responsible for the ill temper thus excited; as if he created it, — as if he put it within the heart. But was it not all there, in its elements, before? Has he done aught but show it forth, — but

bring it to the birth? Beneath that bland and placid surface lay coiled those ugly passions, slumbering and silent, which, at the preacher's word, awoke, and forthwith spake in their vernacular. What great gain were it, if they had been allowed to slumber on, and their possessors had gone to their homes, unconscious of their presence, with unwarranted self-gratulation? The pity is that they are there, not that they were put into temporary activity. *That*, for its self-revelation, may prove a blessing. But the preacher, I hold, is not to concern himself about effects. They are not his guide to duty. He is a servant of the truth; and his foremost obligation, having prepared himself through its own consecrating influence, is to bear witness to it, — alike to willing and unwilling ears, to receptive and repellent hearts. He has a word given him, if he be a living man, which he must speak; in the exercise, of course, of a thoughtful wisdom as to times and modes. But speak it he must, whether men hear, or whether they forbear. Do you think the great Teacher of Nazareth withheld the truth that was given him because there were those in hearing whom it offended? On the contrary, I read that he drove men from his presence by his hated words; in the excitement of their wrath, seeking how they might destroy him. And where and what had we been, spiritually, if that holy brotherhood in the past, fellow-laborers with him for a

world's redemption, — apostles, confessors, reformers, — had retained the truth intrusted to them until no prejudice, and no selfishness, and no evil heart of unbelief, had offered it resistance? until, like the whispering breezes of a summer's evening, it had ruffled not a feather of self-complacency or self-love? And, if we will look at effects, let us look at all. Let us consider that there are those who gladly welcome what to others is offensive; those who are needing its utterance, — for the confirmation of a previous conviction, or the removal of a lingering distrust, or the awakening of a holier interest, or the incitement to a neglected duty, with regard to it.

But it is further said, "The introduction of this subject into the pulpit destroys the peace and harmony of a *society*; fomenting discords and animosities between its members, and ill feelings and distrusts towards its minister; hindering thus his influence, and lessening his usefulness." Admitting the truth of this, what, I ask, is a minister to do? With convictions which he cannot stifle in relation to slavery, — seeing, feeling its inherent wrongfulness and its resulting evils, — what is he to do? Regard policy? take counsel of expediency? and give or withhold his convictions as these — blind guides that they are — shall seem to direct him? Or, purging himself of all personal and worldly aims; casting himself, in humble confidence, — himself and all his interests, — upon a

spiritual Providence, shall he speak as God in that same hour shall teach him? assured, that, whatever the immediate effects, none other than good can ultimately ensue. Harmony in a parish is a good thing. But its value depends upon its quality, — upon the basis on which it rests. That harmony, methinks, is of but little worth whose continuance is conditioned upon the minister's repressing in aught his honest convictions, — which a manly, outspoken word can break. At any rate, the minister has a higher work than to keep peace. He was not ordained for that. He is to deal with truth. If the truth agitate, let it agitate. Agitation is not the worst of conditions. Nature teaches us better when she sends down her storms upon the stagnant peacefulness of her waters. Agitation is often a process, and the only possible one, in the moral as in the natural world, to purification; and the only peace the pulpit has a right to seek, as a specific aim, is that which comes of purity. "First pure, then peaceable." And as to a minister's influence being hindered by his faithfulness, I believe it not. It is a suggestion of the tempter. By a "Get thee behind me, Satan!" would I put it by. I believe in a Providence; I believe in man, and that, in the secret depths of each human soul, there is a respect for the honest and faithful man, however much his honesty and faithfulness may cause offence. Clouds of prejudice may, for a time, surround him, and the

sun of his influence seem hopelessly obscured; but sooner or later, while he is living or when he has gone, it shall again break forth, and all the brighter for its temporary eclipse.

Again, it is asked, "What *good* can the pulpit promise itself from a discussion of this subject? The harm is evident. Where is the good?" And where is it? I do not know; I do not care to know. Ask Him who formed the soul for truth, to find therein its sustenance and salvation, and whose kingdom is to come in the world only through his blessing upon the spoken and the manifested truth. Ask him who "for this end was born, and for this cause came into the world, that he might bear witness to the truth," and who bore witness to it against scoff and sneer, the frown of power and the threatening of hate, in the sublime faith that it would win for itself, at length, a universal triumph. Ask the thousands who, in a like faith, have lived and died for it, — lived in persecution, died in martyrdom; scattering as they went, on the world's bleak waysides, its celestial seed, to spring and bloom above their graves. O friends! if we really believed that that kingdom of God for which we pray were indeed to come only through the fidelity of individual man, we should not ask, of the simplest word, from the humblest lips, in the narrowest sphere, spoken from the fulness of a loyal heart, "What good will it do?"

Again, it is said, "The evil you thus force on our attention, however great, is a distant one. What have we to do with it? How can we reach it? Surely, there are evils enough that are near, and, as such, more nearly concern us. Why will not the pulpit keep itself to these?" The evil *is* distant as an institutional existence; but, as an influence and a power, is it not all around us? Yea, is it not enthroned as such in our republic, and feared and flattered and fallen before and worshipped, by tens of thousands, in every part of it? — What have we to do with it? Alas! it has much to do with us. But, were it not so, the question is heartless, is heathenish. There is no warmth in it of Christian faith or love. Have we not learned that the oppressed through all the world have claims upon us to the extent of our power to help them? claims, at least, for our sympathy, — the word, the plea, the prayer, which it shall dictate? — How can we reach it? Through the force of a Christianized public sentiment, in the want of which alone it has extension and existence, — a public sentiment which each individual helps to form. — Are there not evils nearer? Yes: and let the pulpit be faithful also with them as with this.

But it is said, "There is a great diversity of opinion in relation to this subject — as there always has been, and always will be — among those equally qualified every way to judge of it. How presumptuous in

the pulpit to dogmatize about it, — to think to throw any new light upon it, — to undertake to discuss what the most eminent statesmen have differed about !” There is a fallacy here, which is easily exposed. *What* does the pulpit undertake to discuss ? Not the ways of getting rid of slavery, about which men differ ; but the moral character of the system itself, about which, essentially, they agree, — and most earnest denunciations of which have come from some of those very statesmen, born and living in the midst of it. The charge against the pulpit of a dogmatic utterance of its opinions in the face of those who have an equal right to theirs, and are as competent to form them, has no meaning. The pulpit has no “opinions” on the subject. It but enunciates plain and incontrovertible truths and universally-admitted principles. Thank God ! among all that is uncertain, there are some things sure, which one can no more doubt than his own existence ; and, among them, *this*, — and it is all we care to oppose to slavery, — that there is a righteous God, and that his will and law is righteousness.

But here it is urged, “ If the pulpit has nothing to propose in the way of methods for abolishing slavery, why discuss it at all ? We are all right in sentiment with regard to it. We all believe, that, abstractly and in principle, it is wrong. We want to know what to do. When the pulpit can tell us this, it may, with

some reason, speak on the subject." Would that the almost universal profession of antislavery sentiment might be more substantiated by deeds! though the profession is worth something, as a hopeful sign and indication. But who can observe the course of political parties, and the tone of the secular press, without feeling that this community — even this — needs yet to be baptized into the true spirit of this reform? Men ask for methods. They know, in their secret hearts, that they are not ready to use them if they were proposed; they are not, at heart and in principle, — as their doings testify, — with the cause they have nominally espoused; they have not sworn fealty to it before high Heaven, to be maintained at whatever sacrifice; they love money more; they love distinction more; they love social position more. What comes of the indignant feeling that flames forth at each fresh outrage of the slave power? What? Words unbacked by deeds, vows that never see fulfilment. Could it be, if the feeling were based in principle? if the cause had been religiously embraced? And is it so, that, for the sake of the material prosperity it helps to foster, this Christian community is consenting to the continuance and growth of this enthroned oppression? consenting — yes — to crucify afresh the Saviour in the person of the slave? — Tell us what to do? Learn to sympathize with the oppressed; learn to hate oppression;

renew within you a declining love of freedom and appreciation of its worth ; study the first principles, drink into the spirit, of the religion of Christ ; cherish a reverence and love of righteousness, — until you shall have some adequate and feeling apprehension — which you have not now — of the essential character of this accursed system, and have a will for its removal. “ Where there’s a will, there’s a way.” Let statesmen discuss modes and methods : the pulpit has enough to do to create the feeling that would employ them.

Once more, it is urged, “ If a minister feels that he must speak on this subject, let him do it elsewhere than in the pulpit. Other places are open to him. Why insist upon that ? ” Because the minister of religion has the pulpit as peculiarly his sphere of action and influence. Whatever within him is pleading for utterance, as a matter of right and of duty, should have utterance there. Moreover, the pulpit stands before the community as the visible representative, the public organ, the accredited voice, of its religion. Should it fail of bearing testimony, openly and unequivocally, against this wrong, what would be the not unauthorized inference from such failure, — the natural language of it ? Would it not be, that religion, as such, had no rebuke for it, — had nothing to do with it ? No : the minister of religion is not only

to preach "righteousness;" he is to preach it "in the great congregation."

I cannot close this already too protracted discourse without a more direct allusion to that state of things among us which called it forth. After what has occurred within the last few weeks, and in the peculiar and trying position in which I have thereby been placed, I could not feel it right or well to be longer silent with regard to it. Knowing that I was misunderstood, or at least misrepresented; that feelings of displeasure and disapproval were cherished on the part of many of you towards me, — feelings whose expression has come to me in no scanty measure or equivocal tone; and that a barrier was thus interposed, here and elsewhere, to my access to your hearts, to my attempts at usefulness, — I felt that, in justice to myself, and yet more to a committed trust, I was bound to speak. Yet when to speak, and how, it has been most difficult for me to decide. Discarding, by an earnest effort, all personal considerations; putting a guard where I felt my weakness lay, — I have endeavored to yield myself to a higher than human guidance. And again and again, even at the approach of each returning sabbath, has a restraining suggestion prevented the doing of what I now have done.

Friends! as I look back to the time, not four months ago, when I returned among you from a long absence, and think how all was kindness and cordiality towards me, with not a whisper of disaffection from any quarter, and then contrast with it your present feelings, as indicated by the facts to which I have alluded, I am constrained to ask before you, What have I done? leaving it with yourselves to answer, as I leave with you also, and most confidingly, the judgment, whether the offence was deserving its visitation. I speak in no spirit of complaint. I come not to whine myself into your compassion, nor even to seek the return of a departed popularity. Let it be as it is. Having nothing to regret, but much to congratulate myself for, in what I have done, I cheerfully accept its consequences. Had I seen those consequences beforehand, — yea, had all that is adverse in them been aggravated to my foresight in a tenfold measure, — I should have done the same.

An impression, I learn, exists with some of you, that, in allowing the antislavery enterprise to find continued advocacy in this pulpit, I have been untrue to some expressions in the sermon at my return, — expressions which were understood, most strangely, to involve a confession of regret at my past course in relation to this enterprise, and the avowal of a purpose to avoid its repetition. I desire to say, that not the slightest shadow of such an idea ever entered my

mind. No! No! Among the things in the past which I regret, and they are many, this, believe me, is not one. Among the resolutions with which I crossed anew the threshold of my work, there was none of desistance from the advocacy of this holy cause. Its summoning trump, heard long years ago, — heard, and, I bless God, heeded, — wakes still its echoes in my soul; and, when I shall willingly be disobedient to it, may the earth miss me, and its befriending turf conceal me! Circumstances require that I should be explicit* in this matter. This, therefore, I desire to say, that I stand here in perfect freedom, or I stand not here at all; and that, in the exercise of that freedom, among the subjects that will be introduced here is that of “righteousness,” in its application to the great sin of the nation, — to American slavery.

Friends! let not a demanded plainness of utterance be deemed inconsistent with a due respect. Respect, be assured, I feel, as I look around on many a familiar face, many a manly and gentle spirit; yea, more than respect, — a grateful and affectionate regard. The memories of the past are with me. But you would not, I am sure, desire, as you could not expect, that, through any personal regard, I should be untrue to myself. Nor can I believe that it is the wish of most of you to have this pulpit other than a free one. The experience of the past forbids me.

And now, one word more, a hopeful one, for that

cause which many of you, I know, though with different degrees of feeling and different convictions of duty with regard to it, have truly at heart. Let us take courage in the assurance of its ultimate success. It is the cause of Christ and of God, and cannot fail. Does man think, by all his power, to restrain it? Let him first essay an easier task, and turn back, with his puny palm, the rushing waters of Niagara. Forces the most potential are enlisted in its behalf, — thought, sentiment, love, faith. It has an advocate in every generous breast, however prejudice and passion for a time may silence it. The literature of the age is in sympathy with it. The lyre of each noble poet is struck for it. Every exile that comes panting from the despotisms of the older world blesses it. The prayers of all the oppressed in all the earth go up for it. Heaven sends down to earth, and earth sends back to heaven, the prediction of its triumph.

