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Also in Concord, of doctrinal part, April 14, 1799, on sabbath.
+ 05 - +. Harvard Cambridge Acton Waterford Winton
Presiq. obsolete. Lanaster Frammingham. Boston Old Brick Marlborough.
Practical Goodness explained, illustrated & recommended. Waterstown

1. Epis. Peter III Ch. 10, 11, 12, 13 Verses.

For he that will love life, and see
good days, let him refrain his tongue from
evil, and his lips that they speak no guile.
Let him eschew evil, and do good; let him
seek peace, and ensue it. For the eyes of the
Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are
open unto their prayers: but the face of the
Lord is against them that do evil. And who
is he that will harm you, if ye be followers
of that which is good?

In this epistle, the author of it recommends the
practice of universal goodness with much affec-
tion and zeal. The verses but now read con-
tain the most suitable and forceful motives
to this comprehensive virtue. "He that will
love life, and see good days, let him refrain from
evil

2 evil, and do good." The enjoyment of the comfort of this life is a consideration of ~~no small~~ weight.

"The eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers." By this the favor of God is intended, than which, nothing is of higher importance. "And who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?"

Defense against the malice of men is here presented, which is a matter well worthy of attention.

The doctrinal proposition obviously arising from our text is this, viz. The sincere practice of goodness the most effectually secures the comforts of the present life, engages the favor of God, and disarms the malice of wicked men.

This doctrine naturally divides itself into three branches. The first has respect to ourselves and the good things of this life; the second, to God and his favor ^{for the righteous} ~~towards us~~; the third, to our fellowmen and their disposition towards us.

In the present discourse, my design is, First, To give just ideas of that practical goodness, which is recommended by the ~~the~~ Apostle; Second-

Secondly, consider and illustrate the doctrine in ³
its several branches; and then make appli-
cation / adapted to the present occasion & assembly.
In the first place, I am to give just ideas of that
practical goodness, which is recommended by the
Apostle.

Very little attention to this Epistle is suffi-
ent to convince us, that S^t. Peter considered good-
ness in a general and comprehensive sense, as
it respects ^{the} Duty, mankind, and ones ^{own self}. We
are to view it equally extensive, as love, when
it intends supreme reverence and affection to
God, unfeigned benevolence and charity to men,
and personal sobriety and selfgovernment.
After recommending and enjoining faith
and hope in God, the fear and worship of him
by offering up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable
to him by Jesus Christ; honor to the King, or
the supreme authority of the State, submission
to the constituted magistrates and rulers, ^{respect} honor
to all men, love to the brotherhood, and point-
ing out the duties of some particular relations,
he sums up the ^{whole in the} following comprehensive
words

4 words, "Finally, be ye all of one mind, having
compassion one of another, love as brethren, be
pitiful, be courteous: not rendering evil for
evil, or railing for railing; but contrarywise,
blessing; knowing that ~~thereunto~~ ye are
thereunto called, that ye should inherit a
blessing." Our text follows in confirmation of
the sense and latitude above given to practi-
cal goodness.

We are then to be followers of that which is good,
by giving to God our heart, and revering to him
our first attention, our warmest affection, unlimit-
ed obedience, cordial worship and profound ador-
ation by Jesus Christ the Mediator. This implies
a firm belief in Christ, and sincere love to him
as the Son of God and Savior of men.

We must reverence the divine authority,
be obedient to ~~divine~~ ^{his} precepts, imitators of
~~the~~ ^{his} Son of God, submissive to his will, and in all
things conscientious observers of his holy word,
which is a great and glorious light sent from
God to guide the erring children of men to heaven.
We

We are also to be followers of that which is ³
good, by benevolence and charity to our fel-
low men. The express command of God to
this purpose, is, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor
as thyself." We must cultivate towards our nei-
bor the same kind of tender affection and ~~from~~
benevolent care, which we have for ourselves:
The quality must be the same, though the de-
gree may be less. This construction of the pre-
cept prevents insuperable difficulties, that
would otherwise arise, and does not weaken
the force, or defeat the purposes of the command.
Our Lord hath laugh'd by the ^{story} of the man, who
fell among thieves, that we are to esteem all
men our neighbors, whenever they need our aid
and friendship, and we have opportunity to do
them good. All men are made of one blood,
are the offspring of one universal parent, &
members of one great family, and are to
be loved, as brethren. The practice of goodness
to them ^{intends the} ~~is to~~ exercise of benevolence
to all mankind, fervent charity to ^{the} household
of faith, complacency to all the virtuous, distri-
bu

6 distribute charity to the needy, consolation to the afflicted, and the most ^{cordial} affection and sympathy for those, who are in particular relations, and endeared by the ties of nature, intimacy, and voluntary obligations. "Honor all men; love the brotherhood", saith the apostle. This expression clearly intimates the propriety & reasonableness of proportioning our affections to the nearness and dearness of connexions.

Goodness thus exhibited will engage us to do justly, to love mercy, to work righteousness, to speak truth, to seek peace, to love our country, honor our rulers, support our government, and to refrain from all evil: In a word, to do unto others as we would, that they should do unto us.

To be followers of that which is good intends farther, that we maintain temperance and self government. Our appetites and passions must be regulated by the rules of reason and religion. There is, perhaps, no branch of duty more difficult, than this, and no one more important and necessary to us. It is essential to our own ~~own~~ happiness, and to the vitals of

pure religion in us. However arduous the^y
task to rule our spirits and subject our animal
propensities, we fail of accomplishing it at our
peril and ruin. If our passions and appetites
reign in us, the love of God and goodness is
absent; and his servants we are, to whom we
yield ourselves servants to obey. We must,
then crucify the flesh with the affections & lusts,
renounce a carnal mind, which is death, and
imbibe a spiritual mind, which is life and
peace. // Thus having endeavored to give just
ideas of practical goodness in its nature, extent
and impiation, I proceed,

Secondly, to consider and illustrate the doctrine,
that the sincere practice of goodness the most
effectually secures the comforts of this life, en-
gages the favor of God, and disarms the malice
of wicked men.

1. It secures the most effectually of any thing, the
comforts of this life. For he that will love life,
and see good days, let him refrain his tongue
from evil, and his lips ^{that they} ~~from~~ speaking ^{no} guile.
Let him eschew evil, and do good; let him
seek peace and ensue it. ~~the~~ ~~desires~~
mean-

8 meaning is, a virtuous course of life is the most pleasant and happy. We are, however, to understand this branch of our doctrine with some exceptions and limitation. Very good people, ~~are~~ sometimes, have very great troubles, and, ^{comparatively} but few worldly comforts. The joys of life are embittered to them by day, and ~~by~~ they water their couch with tears by night. It may be said with propriety of some, "If in this world only they have hope, they are of all men the most miserable", or pitiable, as it may be rendered. But the fact is, in their distresses, they have the supports of an upright mind, of religion, of divine grace, which the wicked have not, when their worldly condition is equally wretched. But though man is born into trouble, and the faithful followers of that which is good, are often obliged to drink the cup of sorrow, yet they have the brightest prospects, and the best security of temporal enjoyments. The way of goodness, above all other, embraces the greatest portion of solid comfort, and gives the highest relish to rational happiness. In a ~~our~~ virtuous disposition and practice, we

we receive with gratitude and satisfaction
the various bounties and blessings of our hea-
venly Father. Our enjoyments are not poisoned
by consciousness of guilt, embittered by remorse,
diminished by repining, rendered painful
by excess, nor insipid by satiety.

Solomon, the wisest of Men, hath assured us, that
"Wisdoms ways, (which are the same as those of good-
ness) are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths
are peace", while "the way of transgressors is
hard". But a greater, than Solomon, is here,
even our Lord from heaven, whose remarka-
ble declaration in the 19th of Matt. coincides
with the sentiment now advocated. "And every
one that hath forsaken houses, ~~or~~ or brethren,
or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children,
or lands, for my names sake, shall receive an
hundred fold, and shall inherit everlasting life".
St. Luke saith, "manifest more in this present
time". By our Saviors words, we are, doubtless, to
understand, that the faithful followers of Christ
and goodness, shall enjoy, in the present life,
an hundred times, or manifest more real
comfort and satisfaction in relations, friends,
and the good things of the world, than the un-

10 unbelieving and vicious. Reason and experience confirm this truth. Would the time permit, I might adduce to our purpose impressive evidence by exhibiting a contrasted view of the life of the unbelieving sensualist, and the life of the believing ^{moralist} and good. But it is time to consider,

2^d That the sincere practice of goodness engages the favor of God. "For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: But the face of the Lord is against them that do evil."

The sincere practice of goodness is the greatest imitation of Christ, who is our pattern, and went about doing good, and the highest resemblance to the Deity, whose goodness he hath expressly exhibited, as his peculiar glory. The Lord will take complacency in his own image, and show his favor, which is life, and his loving kindness, which is better, than this life, to them who possess it. "His eyes are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers." How replete with favor and love, with protection and blessing, with grace and salvation are these words! We may ~~may~~ understand righteous, in the text, a term of

of the same import with good. But when we dis-¹¹
tinguish between the righteous man and the
good man, the latter hath superior excel-
lence. A righteous man is pious, and just, up-
right, temperate and faithful. But to all this,
the good man adds bounty and distributive
charity: He adds generosity to justice, liberati-
ly to rectitude, and like Deity bestows fav-
ors undeserved and unsought. His ^{heart} expands
with benevolence and universal ~~phi-~~ phi-
lanthropy, and while he distributes his chari-
ties freely, his unfeigned wishes far exceed
his ability. If there be any of the hum-
an race, on whom the God of love and goodness
looks with delight, and whom, in a peculiar
manner he cherishes ~~in~~ ^{the} by arms of his holy
protection, and whose prayers he hears with
approbation, and answers in mercy or love,
they are the sincere followers of that which
is good. If ~~Heaven~~ ^{there be} ~~hath~~ darlings among
the religious; if our heavenly Father have
favorites among his beloved children, they
are they, who are distinguished by the faith-
ful practice of goodness. (Such was ^{our thought} John
among the disciples; for he excelled in love,
which

which is the principal ingredient in goodness.)
 The ideas, ~~above~~ given of the good, are warranted by St. Paul, who saith, "Scarcely for a righteous man would one die, but peradventure for a good man would one even dare to die".
 But I need not dwell on this subject. The fitness and reason of things, the whole tenor of revelation, many express passages of scripture, and absolute promises of God, all unite to place good people under the favorable eye, the peculiar care, the tender love, and the richest blessings of Heaven, both in this world and in that which is to come. I add,

3. The sincere practice of goodness the most effectually disarms the malice of wicked men. "And who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good? This branch of our doctrine is not universally true. It is matter of fact & lamentation, that the most pure and useful characters, the most amiable and heavenly ~~exact~~ virtues have not always been a sufficient defense against the evil designs and passions of wicked men. He who was more in-

innocent and holy, than the best of men, and ¹³ ~~ex-~~
hibited perfect goodness and divine excellen-
cies, fell a prey to the malice of men, who were
blinded by prejudice and bigotry. Many, since
that time, of the most amiable and useful of
mankind, have been injuriously treated, cru-
elly persecuted, and inhumanly deprived of
life. But still it is a general truth, that prac-
tical goodness calms the rage, disarms the
malice, and ~~softens~~ ^{softens} ~~softens~~ the disposition of the
wicked. Its superior excellencies are acknowl-
edged by all persons, whose moral sense is not
benumbed, and whose intellectual faculties
are not perverted by habitual vice. In un-
affected goodness there is a kind of pleasing
charm, and commanding dignity. By a wise
exhibition of it our minds are ~~almost~~ impress-
ed, and our affections engaged. Without reason-
ing we approve; without design we love.
Even bloody persecutors have involuntarily
felt, and reluctantly acknowledged the
virtues ^{are}

14 mild, but mighty power of goodness. Their
ferocious minds have relented, and adaman-
tine hearts melted at beholding the piety
and patience, the benevolence and charity of
the bleeding victims to their vengeance.

"Who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers
of that which is good? Who is so stout to reason,
propriety and conscience, as to injure you, if
goodness be the great business of your life, the
sum of your character? Where is the monster
of wickedness, who will deliberately render
evil for good, curses for prayers, and cruelty
for love? Where is the witch, whose wrath
cannot be turned away by the soft words
of love, and whose malice cannot be
disarmed by benevolence and kindness?
Our text supports this sentiment, that these
virtues are the most effectual defence, and if
these will not disarm hatred and malice,
there is nothing in our power, that will
effect the purpose. O goodness, how amia-
ble, how foreful, how divine thou art! It

Improvement

15

1. We are very naturally led to reflect on the excellence and utility of religion. It is fraught with goodness and blessing. It includes the most divine and useful virtues, and ~~not~~ contains the most precious blessings and promises. (There are no doctrines more sublime and needful, no precepts more perfect, no morals more pure, no promises more precious, than those of revealed religion. Christianity is a divine system, with ^{which} no human institution can claim equality. It would be the height of arrogance to attempt an amendment, ^{of it} and the height of presumption to diminish from it. Religion is recommended to us by ~~a~~ glorious and commanding displays of reason and grace, of proffered mercy and blessedness.) It is worthy of all acceptance, and will infinitely compensate all who cordially receive and practise it.
2. We see the unreasonableness of objections against our holy religion. Such objections are

16 are against things the most amia-
ble and beneficial, the most ~~useful~~ and
consolatory and divine. What ground of
censure can be found against piety to ^{of}
God of our life, affection and reverence to ^{of}
Saviors of sinners, benevolence and charity
to men, and ^{the} assiduous cultivation of every
personal virtue? And this is religion.
Unbiassed reason and sound philosophy join
with revelation in condemning ~~and~~
the folly of rejecting and neglecting religion.

3. It ^{follows} ~~is obvious~~ that they are in a gross and fatal
error, who seek happiness and expect the di-
vine approbation in opposition to revealed
religion, ~~and~~ ^{or} in a careless indifference to it.

"The face of the Lord is set against them that
do evil"; and if God be against us, who can
be effectually for us? It is not ~~over~~ an arbi-
trary, but a most reasonable rational & per-
fect establishment of Deity, that the ways of
wisdom only ~~are~~ ~~ways~~ lead to happiness & glo-
ry, and that the way of transgressors is pain-

ful and destitute. Would we secure the ¹⁷
favor of God and be happy forever, we must be
virtuous and good - we must believe & obey of
gospel of Christ.

4. Having briefly set before you, my hearers, the
present advantage and future blessedness, ~~of w^h~~
by divine establishment and promise, are attach-
ed to the comprehensive duty, I have explained
& ~~re~~ recommended, let me now entreat everyone,
to secure the benefit by a cordial compliance wth of
duty. Let us endeavor to gain & retain an im-
pressive sense of these truths, that the Lord of hea-
ven & earth is engaged, by his nature and his word,
in favor of the righteous and good; and that his face
is set a^gain^t of wicked, them w^h do evil. These truths are
operative and applicable now in w^h present time, tho'
in many respects beyond our comprehension; And
they will be conspicuously so in future. When w^h
world shall be judged in righteousness, then w^h fav-
or or mercy of God will be gloriously displayed in
the salvation of the righteous, and his face will be
awfully and insupportably ~~set~~ against evil doers.
So which of these characters do we belong? This
is a very serious and interest^{ing} ~~quest~~ inquiry.
Let us make due application and self examinaⁿ.

18
— Let a consideration of the advantage of religion every way, induce us to embrace and practise it in every doctrine and duty. Let us most cordially relieve the will of God by Jesus Christ, and by faith in him, as of true Messiah, bring forth of fruits of love and goodness. We should attend not only to of actions of our life, but to of words of our mouth, and of thoughts of our heart. We must refrain our tongue from evil, and our lips from speaking guile, our hands from doing ~~any~~ wickedness, and our heart from vicious desires.

If, my hearers, ye will love life and see good days; if ye would enjoy this life & its comforts; if ye would have the eyes of the Lord continually over you in mercy and love, & his ears open to your prayers; if ye would have the friendship of the virtuous, and your enemies at peace with you, then, refrain from all evil, and be ye followers of that which is good. Thus, may the God of all grace incline us all to choose, and enable us to accomplish, through Jesus Christ. Amen.

15

It is agreeable to my plan of discourses now
to make application ~~to the~~ adapted to the present
occasion and assembly. The occasion is Masonry;
for the consecration of a Lodge, and the installa-
tion of its officers. These solemnities, we appre-
hend, are perfectly consistent with revealed re-
ligion. Christians and Masons may cordially
unite in religious instructions, in the sublime
doctrines of Jesus Christ, and the pure morals of
masonic institutions. Masonry pretends not to ri-
val, to improve, to supersede, or interfere with
Christianity. There are no doctrines more sub-
lime and needful, no precepts more perfect, no
morals more pure, no promises more precious,
than those of revealed religion. Christianity
is a divine system, with which no human in-
stitution can claim equality. It would be height
of arrogance to attempt an amendment of it, and
the height of presumption to diminish from it.
But though Masonry was not ^{at first} taught by im-
mediate inspiration, nor expressly enjoined
by divine authority, yet its leading principles
are coeval with creation, and coincident with
religion, and were reduced to system and ope-
ration as early, as the abilities of men permit-
ted, and ~~the~~ necessities ~~of~~ impelled. Masonry,
Doubtless

16 doubtless, had its origin in the exigencies of human nature, benevolence to fellow creatures, thirst for knowledge, reverence for Deity, love of virtue, and desires to secure, increase, and communicate human happiness. Whatever things, in the manners and morals of men, are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, and of good report, are im-
plied, and whatsoever things are contrary, excluded. The utility of our institution hath corresponded with its principles. On this head there is scope. But I desist. It is not a ~~an~~ history of masonry, nor an eulogy on it, that I have intended. If I shall be indulged in making application to the Fraternity of ancient, free, and accepted Masons present.

Much respected and beloved brethren,

We are instructed by the sacred scriptures, ^{we are profess to take, as the great light & rule of moral life,} and obligated by our voluntary engagements, to be sincerely, uniformly, and universally followers of that which is good. ~~Can we claim this character?~~ We cannot, then, without incurring self-reproach, and the displeasure of Almighty God, charge

and pursue an opposite course. We are obligated 17
to love and worship the one living and true God; to
honor all his Name, and keep all his command-
ments. We are bound to honor all men, to cher-
ish benevolence and philanthropy towards them,
and to love the brotherhood of Masons, and the
virtuous, with peculiar affection. Our love and
sympathy must have effect in real acts of good-
ness. We are obligated to love our Country, to
honor the constituted authorities, to strengthen
in the hands of good government, and encour-
age the hearts of faithful rulers. And as we
in this land, are remarkably favored with such
rulers & governments, every friend to his own
Country, every genuine Mason must feel his
obligations to support & defend them ^{against} all foreign
invaders and domestic enemies.

Our profession obliges us to be men of truth, hon-
or, honesty, industry and fidelity, to be faithful
in the discharge of relative duties, and the prac-
tice of social virtues. It engages us also to gov-
ern ourselves, and to be temperate in all things.
Let these virtues be in us & abound, that we may
not be barren nor unfruitful in the works of good-
ness. And if our lives thus correspond with our
principles

18 principles and profession, who is he that will harm us? who will retain his prejudices against the Craft? who will, and who can justly speak any evil thing of us? Nothing like a good & useful life will eradicate prepossessions, and disarm of enemies of our Order; and, like an opposite behavior of our own brethren, will procure reproach and strengthen opposition. He who will not respect himself and his own profession, will hardly gain of respect of others.

It is pleasing to deserve the triumphs of knowledge & candor over ignorance & bigotry. We congratulate one another, this day, on the progress of Masonry. With satisfaction we behold the efforts of Masonry & Christianity combined to enlighten the minds, reform the manners, alleviate the miseries, and enhance the happiness of mankind. In the pursuit of these desirable objects, let unceasing exertions be made. Let the ~~all-seeing eye~~ fear of God awe, and his love constrain us. Let reason & religion sit at helm, wisdom direct our steps, strength support our works, of love and beauty adorn the whole. If thus we lead and finish our course on earth, we shall finally, through the ^{mediator} ~~medium~~ of divine light and love, with all the pure in heart, in one vast & glorious Fraternity, be admitted into the Grand Lodge of the Uni-

Universe, where we shall eternally review in ¹⁹
effable beams of divine light and love, from
the adorable Builder and Master of all worlds!

This numerous & respectable assembly
will give me leave to apply to them the
subject of discourse, and recommend to each
one, the sincere practice of goodness. The
precepts and duties of religion demand our
first attention, and cannot be put off with
impunity. I have endeavored, my respected
hearers, briefly to set before you the present
advantage, and future blessedness, which, by
divine establishment & promise, are attached
to the comprehensive duty, ~~and~~ I have ex-
plained ~~it~~ and urged. Let me now entreat
you to secure the benefit by a cordial ob-
servance of the duty. If ye will love life,
and see good days; if ye would enjoy this
life & its comforts; if ye would have the
eyes of the Lord continually over you in
mercy and love, and his ears open to your
prayers; if ye would have the friendship
of

of the virtuous, and your enemies at
peace with you, then, refrain ^{from} all evil
~~in disposition, speech and behavior,~~ and
be ye followers of that which is good.

This, may the God of all grace incline
you to chuse, and enable you to accom-
plish, through Jesus Christ. Amen.