No. 3.

On religious perseverance.
Isaiah XL. 34. But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.

The outline every impressively shews forth this declaration is taken, sets forth in strains of unsurpassed power, the greatness, the glory, the elevating doctrine of God. With this is connected the finiteness, the weakness, the transient, earthy existence of man. The proudest boast of man's strength ever many a fall; but, says the prophet, pointing us to the eternal source of all might, power, but "they that wait upon the Lord," in these beautifully descriptive words, is implied, that the who wait upon the Lord shall dwell in health, in their strength; in these words it is implied, that by presence they shall grow strong in the Lord, in the house of the Lord, shall therefore take occasion from the text to call attention to the subject of their preserved. 

Prov. xvi. 28. "Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee.

The character of man are not always more certain subjects of calculation, than their external condition. We may be as much deceived in forming expectations on the permanence of moral qualities, as in supposing that fortune will never cease to squander their gifts. Virtue seems sometimes to have raised her throne in a breast, to have exalted her passion; that had long been lurking in ambush, at last, a bear in open rebellion, and the calm which she spreads over the soul, is sometimes found to have been only the prelude to the tumult and tempest of vice. It is indeed too true, that the good passions and affections of many are but occasional, fugitive, and accidental; they are not rooted deep enough to withstand the fury of the storm, which the world will raise around them. We are willing to obey God's laws, as long as obedience is convenient; but when the path of righteousness becomes too narrow or too rough to be traveled with ease, we flatter ourselves that we can
not be very criminal, if we deviate with the
 determination to resume it, whenever we shall
 find it bordered with flowers, and surrounded
 prospects of pleasure. Nor is this the fault of
 the hapless only, or of the cold calculator more
 by engagement. Experience has evinced that facts
 may be sincere, and yet much interrupted; the
 virtue may be pure and secure, and yet of short
 duration. We may even dwell with the Sabines
 in Hesperia, and expect to take an interest
 on the instructions of the Bible, on the char-
 acter and history of our Lord Jesus; we may view
 with admiration in the firm, on the margins the
 future favours of the world, we may see him
 disputing with the doctors in the temple, and
 “wonder at the wisdom with which he spake:
 we may follow him as he goes from one place
to another “doing good,” dispensing love, health,
and blessings around him, and teaching the sons
of heavenly nature, with such simplicity
that none could fail to understand, and with
such majesty that all must reverence; and
bearing with patience the insults of the idle and
impatient, the scorn of the great, and the
persecution of the malicious; we may allow
him to Calvary, and afterwards affliction and
suspended in darkness at his death, we may say
with the centurion, “truly this was the son of
God!” — and yet after all, from this review, so
earnest and affecting as it is, we may turn away
and soon forget our admiration, hope, and great
zeal, submit perhaps to the tyrant, who first
captivates, and then enslaves.

Christianity has, doubtless, suffered from the enem-
ity of her followers. There are those who have
not been lovely, to take for reason any thought,
reduce, or are too weak to wish to find
religion true. To such persons the faults of christ-
ian error, occasional and infrequent, are subjects
of triumph. The blame is transferred from the evil
and vertical to the system he professes to believe on
because the followers of Jesus are not amable
able to err as other men, it is openly expressed,
unsurpassed, unsanctioned, that the instructions
which Jesus gave are imperfect or inconsistent. In this
sense, this name, whose by we are called.” How weak is this
reasoning, or rather how absurd is this rejection
of reason, it is unnecessary to show. But must
not this circumstance create as a strong moti-
ment to perseverance in the Christian course? Shall
we do not wish to hold on in the good habits, when we reflect, that whenever we step aside, we not only mar the inestimable consequences of transgression, but are in danger of dishonouring the cause of our Master. If we neglect the instruction of the word, we effectually lie the truth itself.

It is proposed to mention some of the reasons why we see so little perseverance in virtue, and to suggest some remedies for the evil.

1. We are sometimes flattered into seeming indulgence by the belief, that it will not be difficult, at any time, to return to the discharge of duty. We make the secret promise of being better at some time in the future, and atonement for the sins of the present occasion. There are few, we trust, of professing Christians, who would voluntarily wander from their God, and their Saviour, who would violate the solemn injunctions of religion, and bear the pain of a wounded conscience, did they not feel the consisting confidence of being able to be good and virtuous, just when they please; few, who would not shudder at the thought of being irrecoverably abandoned; few, who would wish to be led in "the wilder way of passion, regardless and careless of reformation. If there are such, admonition and warning seem to be almost lost upon them. For they must have dismissed that virtuous responsibility, which is necessary to give to the appeal of religion and duty their proper force and impress. As greater is the number of those, who deceive themselves, who are willing, and think it practicable, to submit occasionally to the chains of vice, till they become heavy or irksome and then to throw them off, and to enjoy Christian freedom. How willingly are we to say, if we may sin but this one, we will not sin again. The ambitious man would fain be allowed to practise his fraud, or to commence a rival, but for this time, and when he has gained the honour, for which he strived, he will be the most charitable and honest of men. The sinner, who thinks he may taste, without a carcere, the intoxicating cup of pleasure, for a moment; for immediately he will dash it from his lips forever. The cold and heartless Christian must needs be excused, for his indolence or indifference at present, because he intends hereafter to engage his earnestness in the duties of religion. To all such, we may address the mention of Scripture, "be not deceived." Let not those who this plead the cause of temptation, calculate too much on the strength that will be left them after vice has
laid his withering hand upon them. Are they quite certain, that they shall then seek to re-
turn to duty; that the criminal indulgence, for which they contend so earnestly, will not blunt
the edge of moral sensibility, will quench no virtuous emotion, suppress no pure motive, or
weaken no religious principle? Yet, as ever remem-
ber, how oppressive is the force of passion, when its claims are once allowed. We may not
think "to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season,"
and then recede to the pure delights of virtue, when, and to what degree we please. No vice
is too vicious, and too stubborn a friend, to be
sustained under such restrictions. When the
floodgate of inconstancy is raised, it cannot
always be easy for you to the waters, "Let
us flee from you, and no farther." Not
that, he who has taken the first steps in the
path of inconstancy, or even he who has trod it long,
is to resign himself to despair, as if it were
impossible to recover. Far from it. It is the glo-
ry of our religion, that it encourages the in-
tent to return to his God and his duty, and that
it furnishes him with motives and helps for re-
commencing a life of virtue. What have we more
to dread is the natural influence of vice on
the mind of the individual. May we not fear
that it will gradually render him callous to
the joys of felicity, and the hopes of religion? Will
be not continually feel less disposition to go ad
nemine on the bosom of Jesus, to seek for his face,
and resolve to return to his Master?

We may infer from the conduct of men, that
not unfrequently they find a satisfactory excu-
sion for depredations from the Christian course, in
the undue value which they attribute to sin-
ful acts of duty. They seem willing to suppose
that virtue may be an offset to vice: that obe-
dience may be sometimes an equivalent for base
sins: and that if part of their conduct
is governed by the law of God, the rest may
be regulated by the maxims of the world. They
have not learned that pure morality, which tells
us, that he who offends in one point is guilty
of all. Perhaps there are none, who openly avow
themselves of this subtle prevarication, who, unless un-
hesitating avow this to be their apology for turn-
ing aside to snatch those delusive pleasures,
which vanish under their grasp. Who would not
shrinks from the acknowledgment, that he finds in the discharge of duty a price to purchase the privilege of sinning? Yet is it not true, that we sometimes endeavor, in this way, to reason ourselves into the belief, that criminal indulgence is innocent? Is not a reprobating conscience sometimes silenced by the nought of seduction? The world too lends its aid to favor the deception. The shame of an innocent and innocent life is very easily redeemed by a few showy virtues of unsayable excellences. What, though you are found everyday treating the path of guilty pleasure, or passing among the low engagements of sense; what, though the scene and holy spirit of piety has never gone for chased the darkness and coldness which once has spread around your heart; what, though a god displayed in creation and providence, in a saviour kindled in the cross, have never awakened in you a sentiment of gratitude or an emotion of love: yet perhaps you have attracted the admiring gaze of others, you by the splendor of the usefulness of your actions, and your fellow men about their pleasure, and profit, or forget all your vices. Who can withstand this sweet and flattering approbation? Who will not easily find excuses for himself, when every one tells him, that there is no long

in his character any thing to be atoned for? The morality of convenience, which is so much the world's favorite, leaves to vice the strongest of her fortresses; the most convenient and efficacious part of her name is band, and requires her to resign only a few out works, which are of no importance to the security of her power. But after all, ask the man, who slumbers in this dream so pleasing yet so dreadfully delusive, whether conscience does not sometimes start and tell him, that though he may have done enough to satisfy the world, it is not enough to answer the demands of God; and he will probably acknowledge that the applause of the world is the only applause he enjoys, and that there are moments when this applause, however loud and overwhelming it may be, is but an empty sound, when it is even painful and terrible, because he knows it cannot be echoed back by conscience, and because he fears that God will judge for other causes than the world. Yes, my friends, the rule of duty is inflexible, and in spite of all the artifice of which imperfect obedience may practice to justify or excuse itself, there is a still small voice, which sometimes whispers a fearful alarm to the wavering and inconsistent Christian.
dental, so long as religion has no place in the heart. Hence, we may trace another cause of the inconsistency and insolvency of Christ's. It is lamentable to observe how readily the followers of Jesus submit to imposition of self-deception. Vanity of heart, deep interlaced with internal holiness, is the cornerstone of that religion which should so far forget the most prominent part and then shed around its holy influence. In the same character, as to suppose that any thing here could reconcile the thoughts and purify the feelings and virtue must become the habitual law of life, the mass of character will not be polluted by folly or guilt; and though sometimes temptation may draw himself in new charms to secure the victory, of may defraud the sentiments of the soul, and only seemingly deceive, and there must be accidents and dutiful perseverance and pious vigilance will be the ordinary characteristics of life. But if the heart has had no share, in what we are willing to call our goodness, if principles, the vital importance of which we slight, and distinctly first, are not the springs of action, in short, if we have called ourselves upon without truly repent, there is something so satisfying in attending to the consciousness of having faithfully attended to the ways real insecure, for we know not how long we may persevere in the ways of well doing. Dutress of
religious feeling, and hypothesizing of principle, are the true \textit{principles} of interrupted, infrequent, and forcible efforts of duty. You have not loved God; how then can you love man? You have not shown yourself in humility and sincerity before the foot of those mighty ones. Nor have you felt the arrows of gratitude to Him who created, and who bath redeemed you; and how, then, will you fulfill all the charities of life? how will you be ready to pardon what you cannot avoid, to respect the wants and wishes of others, to salve the troubled, and soften the anguish which you cannot prevent? Let us often recall it on serious and pressing occasions, the present of a monarch, whom perseverance had made wise, "Thou, my heart, with all thy diligence, for out of it are the issues of life.

11. But, by what means may that salutary object that perseverance in virtue, on which so much others is laid be best attained? To notice we have part taken of the causes of the inconstancy and sickness of our hearts, the whole of which may serve to suggest a few remedies on subjects which would be no languishing place in the soul, to which a fit may be attributed. Besides what may be drawn from these considerations previous thought, dryness of soul, and coldness of mind, we may observe that the human heart, in its natural constitution, is more susceptible of bad impressions than of good, and is more likely to be affected by the worst than by the best. It is the nature of man to be more affected by evil than by good; and this is very evident in the case of those who are not accustomed to good company.

1. That the habit of vigorous self-examination will do much towards giving vigour and habitual efficacy to our purposes of virtue. Perhaps this is nothing of which mankind are more afraid than their own hearts; nothing to which they turn with more reluctance than to self. Conscience, too often
be bad, he shudders with the horror of conscious guilt. Yet, how seldom is this discovery made. The lying flat,
liberal world, our own blindness, fear, and idleness,
show us the deceiver and our sins. But let it be remembered that our
full severity to ourselves is one of the strongest motives
of virtue. If virtues sensibly be not entirely dear
the consciousness of being bad must be an excitement
to become better. When you examine with fidelity
and candor the motives and views of your past life
and find that you have sometimes gone too much
divergent to the opinions of the world, or have too
unchristianly purchased many sensuous indulgences at the
price of a single virtue, on your most sincere and sincere,
that for the future your good principles shall be
more stern and invincible—your character shall
possess more that will not shrink from the gaze
of an omnipotent Judge. If you recognize yourself
be

The mind, which aspiringanne the heart felt grow,
And hates the form she knows to be her own,
will you not resolve that hereafter the features
shall be such as may be viewed with more complacent
confidence, that upon another examination there shall
be found more to give an honest and virtuous satisfaction?
If you have long deceived the world, deceived yourself, it is but to bring your thoughts
and motives under the judgment of the laws of
that Being "who cannot be deceived on who will not
be mocked," and you will soon own lived of cheat
ing yourself out of virtue; you will soon learn that
rigid perseverance in the ways of well doing is the
only sure method of obtaining peace of conscience and
the rewards of heaven.

4. Frequent recurrence to religious exercises will be
a powerful means of making virtue regular, constant
and habitual. The most common reason why those
whose usual behavior does honor to the name of
sometimes step aside from the path of rectitude, is
that the sentiment of duty is overpowered by the
strength of temptation. The seducing call of vice makes
the mind forget the fear of God, the good purposes, and holy
resolutions. It is not till after we have drunk the
intoxicating cup, that we awake, and find it to
have been a poisonous draught. Something, then, is
wanted, which shall punish the soul with arms
on the hand of fire, and prepare her to meet and
conquer her enemy. How shall this be more certainly
effectual, than by having recourse to the eternal
annals of life and light? to that God, who grants the
ears of his good spirit to those who ask for them?
Who is he, that can devoutly approach the throne
of grace, without being humbled with the conscious
ness of his sins, and animated with the nearest
leaves of virtue and holiness? If you frequently
come before the God of Heaven, to pour out your heart

with the conviction that you have often erred and strayed from his ways; that you have been an undutiful and rebellious child to a Father of boundless mercy and compassion; that you not rise from your devotion with the resolution, that your virtue shall not be the being of an hour, rising and falling with the influence of accident and occasion, but shall be the offspring of the habitual and vigorous efforts of an active soul, the continual streams of the heart to be pure and holy? For the same purpose let the word of God be read with seriousness and deep interest. Consider the character of the Creator as portrayed in the volume of inspiration; and you will see how much goodness you have abused, how much mercy you have slighted. Reflect on the repetitions of his holy law; and you will find that it demands the consecration of the heart, the unreserved submission of the thoughts and feelings to its sacred jurisdiction. And shall the mind dwell on all this in vain? Shall it all be merely the dream of serious things, which vanishes in the morning? In that sacred volume too are displayed the exactions and sufferings of him who died that sinners might live. Let his character be the subject of frequent and serious contemplation. Observe that unconditioned benevolence which was shed heavenly mercy on mankind that divine wisdom which communicated the tidings of salvation to a dark and guilty world, and that stainless example which sanctions every precept and confirmed every doctrine. From such a view can you rise and go forth to occupy the field of flesh by your own sons, and put him to open shame? Will the follies and vanities of the world come rushing on a mind which has just been engaged in such contemplations? The Bible presents a vast assembly of motives and means; for besides its divine instructions it has numerousensible appeals to feeling and to fear. Great, very great, is the use that may be made of these in telling us on the forthright course of virtue regardless of the allurements of pleasure, and fears of the bold attacks of hardened depravity. Remember the interwoven causes some of the remedies of sin. Can we ever forget the motives are to persevereance in virtue? They are certainly too obvious to be unheeded. For whom is the crown of life reserved? Not for him, whose nature and faculty the business of convenience of accident, and who divides his heart between the pleasures of the world and religion - but for the thorough xan, he whom constant musk and purpose is to be found in the ways of duty, who is not the occasional visitor, but the assiduous attendant of J—. Such is the disciple whom Jesus loves. And furthermore such is the character, no alone can form

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a sure basis for future happiness. The virtue of duty, on
which the rewards of the faithful live to be founded, must not
consist of a fort transient, however vigorous efforts, not of
mere resolutions however sincere, not of good feelings ex-
cited now & then, however lofty; but of principles deep,
permanent & incorporated into the soul, of devotedness to
good uniform, consistent, persevering. Perseverance there
is not itself a separate virtue, but it is that which
gives efficacy, worth, vital power to all the virtues
fits them to be sources of everlasting happiness. Whether,
therefore, you look at this life as the life to come, what
is so beautifully expressed by the prophet, you will find
to be another precious truth, "they who omit not the Lord
shall renew it."

Others whose strength alone gives us support,
without whom we must sink into darkness
& dust, -- to the one fixed an inspiring age,
& entreat thee to give us strength for our duty,
& to communicate the pure good purposes from
ness & constancy. Give us grace, Lord, to resist
the vileness of our passions, the corruption of our
hearts, to the allurements of the world, that
we may be enabled to walk in the path of
our duty without fear or revolving, "seeing we
have a great high Priest who is seated into the
heavens, if the Son of God, let us hold fast our
professions." O that we may persever in the
true course, i.e. hold fast our fidelity & al-
legiance to thee, our God, suffer us not to be seduced
from the service of our King by the
false allurements of earth, but fixing our minds
in him, who hath led the way through the grave
unto heaven, may we rejoice in the hope of eternal
glory & become better prepared for the trials of life &
the love of death, through Christ.,
At home, Aug. 22, 1819, forenoon.
At Waltham, Sept. 5, 1819 - afternoon.
At home, May 16, 1831 - afternoon.