No. 50.

The happiness of virtue.
Isaiah 3:10. "Say ye to the righteous, it shall be well with them." 2.

What is the chief good of man? What is the grand purpose of his existence? This is a question, which has been in the mouths of men in all ages. In the earliest time, it was the favorite enquiry. Yet it has been received back by the voice of later days. No sooner do our faculties begin to be exercised in any considerable degree of maturity, than our powers of reasoning begin to compare themselves with the rest of creation, and to regard itself more directly than we can safely ask what we shall pursue what shall we regard as the object of most devoted attention? It is usual to answer this question by saying that happiness is the chief good of man. But what is happiness? For this too is an enquiry, with which we should be able to answer. And yet if we may judge of the
opinions of men from their practice, or no subject to
those a greater diversity of sentiment. - Will you give
the name of happiness to the thousand temporary jou-

enjoyments, which pass in the using? You might as
well expect to write a durable inscription in the fly-
ing cloud. Often when we are happy, we know not why
we are so; yet if we are able to state the reason, other
helps will render, that such a cause could produce
an effect. There are emotions of momentary pleasure, not
are expressed almost as soon as received, and pass over the
heart like the light shadows which chase each other over
field. Are these the chief good of man? Are these
pleasures? Have we no higher and more lasting satisfac-
tion expected as after? Most certainly we have. God has
provided for us a felicity far more elevated and durable.

What then is happiness? Where is it situated? How
are we to seek it, as the sole without us? Does it belong
to the mind? or does it belong to the body? But some-
ting that we can gain, and feel that are secure:
will last - or is merely an instance of pales us, then
leads us far afield. We consider health as a great blessing.
But health is not happiness. How many are there, who
are miserable in the midst of their vigorous strength. Is
we have felicity in wealth? If we do, we may be
shoutly disappointed, for almost ever the rich will
tell you with a sigh, happiness is not here. Does mis-
dem constitute healthiness, but the wise are not always
happy. With the most enlightened minds, with the not
profound reach of thought, they may have passions that
will not suffer them to be easy, and desires which may make
them the more ached in proportion as the objects of
gratification are more dignified and remote. Will you not
be the applause of the world, as the source of great felici-
ty? /But can this applause on give the tranquil with-
it? When the universe affections of the heart? /Can it silence
the voice of conscience and exalt conscience in the loss of
the voice of conscience?...
hearing. — Show us the man who has found in either of these courses the happiness and the nation of the inner world of man, and you will submit to his guidance, we will follow him in every step of his success or failure; what is that man to be found? Does not know that each of these paths has conducted thousands to disease, to unutterable anguish, to future death? Are we then destined to believe that all our enquiries must be in vain? Is happiness but a fiction, an empty dream, a delusion? Is it not true that there is a goal in the possession of the lost soul no longer bath anxious disquietude for some thing else? Do you not feel God does not thus instruct his creatures. The long views of the animal creation to enjoy all of life they are capable. Why then do the enjoyments of man so far below the standard of this creation? The reason is plain. We seek happiness in objects which were never designed to confer it. We attach our strongest affections to pursuits of gratifications which involve us in disappointment or wretchedness. Where then is the seat of happiness? Is man in the heart to attain it? Or is it the means of attaining it? Truly, a life of obedience to the will of God, every act of virtue, performed from a principle of obedience to the will of God, is a means of happiness. Virtue is a mean by that term set to the external forms of duty, but a vital principle seated in the heart. The truth considered in this case is simplicity. Well be my virtue considered in this case is simplicity. This is the truth, the consequence only of well doing. This is the truth — a truth which may be illustrated, to impress on your minds. The subject interests us one of his. All would be happy; all may be happy; if they will lead a life of devotion to the will of God. It shall be well with them. A truth which may be illustrated to impress on your minds. The subject interests us one of his. All would be happy; all may be happy; if they will lead a life of devotion to the will of God. It shall be well with them.
he hears our prayers; that all the events of his government are ordered by wisdom, and cannot err; by goodness, and cannot change. That every action performed with the desire of pleasing Him is accepted; and that the least act of approbation even on our part, if it be sincere, of conforming to his will, these most surely are sources of felicity, which we possess as we conclude with all others. The surest sources for us the approbation of God. And this approbation will make us rich in poverty, yea, shield us from all the slander of the wicked. If virtue then obtained for us no other good than the approbation of God, the certainty that He regards us with love, it would be our best possession, because it renders us most independent of the world, independent even of the good opinion of the times, even they may misunderstand us, bestow the right name or the wrong name, against the best intentions. It gives a perfect security, that whatever occurs is precisely what we ourselves should have chosen, could we have

"In this single view of its influence, therefore, who will not acknowledge that virtue is the best happiness of man even in this life? To be loved by God, to be assured that"
discerned all the purposes of God. It conveys all thoughts ultimately to Heaven. If there be happiness there, then is that happiness in virtue.

2. It shall be well with the righteous, because virtue secures them from the misery of senseless, irregular passions & improper desires. No lot this board ordered a trifling privilege, or a slight advantage. All one can claim it, so he has for a moment thought it is to be preserved by constant attention to both kind & care of vice. There is no want of simplicity as the porridge of wickedness. No condition so full of turbulence as that of the unrighteous. Look at a moment at the claims of passion & purely desire made upon those who are devoted to their service. & then you will confess that there is a bondage from whose yoke virtue alone can deliver you, & a freedom to those enjoyments of which the alone can introduce you. 

Who does commit the sin, says the text, is the servant of the Lord. to whom ye yield yourselves to. His servants ye are when ye obey. Hence we said, if ye claimed as at the commencement of this ministry, I am come to set ye liberty, that ye are bound. If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed. Is liberty a blessing? Behold them, & say, is this blessing in the rewards of virtue, & purity to God. By these we are enunciated from that eternal slavery which bowdorn the soul, & shackles it with burden & guilt. Observe the man whose heart is the fire of envy. See how the bitterness of malignant passion steals through his soul, & disfigurs the expression on every side. Mark how his eye burns unnaturally, as while he holds on the better fortune, superior wisdom, or even the more elevated virtue of Lavish. He labors to be murdered, & he ever meeting those occasions of murder, of passion end his feelings, around his heart the whole will always be unhappy, so long as he knows that there is one to whom he is unfur liberty. Now from all this passion accuses us, because it forbids us to be serious. Does the will not say, that it leaves us from a cheerful serenity of distress, while it suppresses the motions of envy, whet in the heart like the vitreous in the fire? — Look at the
revengeful man, and punish the hard slave, depriving all those about him, & in his turn that
to seek his insatiate passion against him. Whatever is despised by those on whom he is necessarily defiled;
ries does he sustain it to what changes does he expose it. from down earth, with all the cannot express, non-
selves, that she may gratify the thirst of it in man. To excesses, the destructive influence of his whole
beast! He must have full espousals for every part that can repair. But the virtue of the Gospel is not
real or imaginary, let it cost what it may. He is now
for a moment certain, that the inflexible tyrant possessed of
of his heart is not preparing for him some new work of ours from the heaven? the weakness of his soul.
men, is ever ready to take fire & explode. Will it now proceed with the illustration? Let me then fasten
touch of what he deems insult. But in contrast
with this we see the felicity of the righteous, who
the addresses us in the language of the Apostle—very
by being, avenges not yourselves, but rather give to
unto wrath ... for it is written, vengeance is mine, and
no gain, save the Lord! "Will you then call an enemy
then from the power of this passion an inscrutable
good? Do not be advanced for towards happiness, or
is relieved from so much misery? Most certainly be as
Therefore it is well with the righteous. Again, when
the proud man, if you will find him agitated on this
disappointment, wounded by modifications; attempate
the how of this world passeth away? But is unsee-
ning to go on with the disgusting feature of the slave
worth our time to mention these instances
to show the liberty & enjoyment which virtue gives us even
in this life, by recusing us from the unhappi
of the bondage of sin. In reducing to obedience the passions, from both arise by far the greatest part of the mis that attend our ears. If for the greatest part of the dejection & distress with which we meet in the intercourse of life, from how much misery does virtue defend us. It is the office of virtue to remove these tyrants into exile & it is one of the distinguishing privileges of good men that he is delivered from their dominion. He is placed on an eminence, from which he can look down on the scene beneath him & see it & feel its fury with- out fearing. The happiness of virtue consists with that of vice is the happiness of freedom compared with that of slavery, it is the happiness of independence compared with that of servitude. This is the holiest wish of our hearts. For to the righteoun, it shall long be
with him. No evil propensity shall ever his face. He shall be free to follow the guidance of the wise
in the use of knowledge. The doctrine of its duties is the utmost of tranquillity.

It shall be well with the righteous because right- eousness secures to them an appraising conscience. In conscience has been well called God's deputy & messenger, it is the soul's satisfac-
tion, whatever sentence it really passes is ratified in heaven. It is that awful to tremble as the Almighty
has reared in the human breast, & though we may sometime disregard its decisions, yet who does not know
the terrible are those decisions, when they change his
terrible are those decisions, when they change his
potentate to bear all before us its tremendous con-
eguished is long before us its tremendous con-
sequences. In the conviction of the approbation of
God, in the possession of well balanced passions & will,
governed appetites, what has man to fear? The hap-
iness, a rational & accountable being should pursue,
one's own is worthy of his exalted nature. Is the
happiness of feeling that he has accomplished is
furnishing the object of all he received his existence
is pursuing the design of all he received his existence
is dropping out of his various relations. And
the duties did grow out of his various relations. And
he secure to the past without remorse & looks to
the future without apprehension. His happiness is
a column resting on the mind of God. Where is the strong enough to shake it, while it is augmented by every act of virtue, every deed of piety? He has within his own breast a refuge, to which none from without can penetrate, a strength among the peace and honors there. In that self-approbation, self-sanctioned by the word of God, he can securely stand by the dashed of the waves around the rock on which stands, and looks to heaven. But a wounded spirit, a condemning conscience, a sense enduring it, yet too incorruptible to reform, and anticipating the fulness of grace, a conscience to a man?—Who in the solemn moment, in the consideration, would not forego every other possession for a conscience whole or of peace towards a man?—This likewise, surely, is the rich reward of virtue, if it is a happiness which belongs only to the virtuous. "The wicked is like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest; there is no peace to the wicked, saith our text is immortal, if virtue is immortal, if
what are the least sufferings we are gone through, and think of them, when compared with the crown of glory? If the life of the righteous man were full of praises, victories, and sorrows, still they would all be terminated at death. If the thought of a happiness in heaven, would be the object of our utmost joy, we must sacrifice the joys of a present life to obtain that future bliss. But what we have esteemed is not true. Virtue is not called extraordinary suffering in this life, but if it did. the compensation of that power might more induce us to meet the suffering with gladness. To our highest happiness in this world, it adds the prospect of an everlasting happiness in a future world. It sweetness belongs to its matchless immortality; but it is not till it has reached that immortality that it discloses the boundless treasures of felicity which it has reserved for its followers. Then it will appear in all grace, glory, and power.

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what are the
think of them
they be in
them
what men y as nations are hosses y trees
we are called y chiefly and I do
we pray that our hearts may be so
influenced by the spirit of our only
father which are may be prepared for
blessing hereafter through J C
honors shining outward in every grace & glory, 
while perfect complacency & felicity unalterable.

But what
not call us to
if it did, it
drive us to
our highest
enduring happiness
sings along on
it was rec
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for its for
At home, March 19th, 1800, forenoon.