

# Great Southern Preaching

*Vital Christianity as Interpreted by the Sermons of Some of the Leading Contemporary Exponents of the Gospel Message in the Southern States*

Edited by  
**Charles M. Crowe**

With an Invocation by  
**Joseph Fort Newton**

UNIVERSITY OF  
PENNSYLVANIA  
LIBRARY

**New York**

**THE MACMILLAN COMPANY**

**1926**

*All rights reserved*

**COPYRIGHT, 1926,  
By THE MACMILLAN COMPANY.**

**Set up and printed.  
Published October, 1926.**

TO YOUNG  
AND  
OLD

**PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
BY THE CORNWALL PRESS**

## ROBERT FISHBURNE CAMPBELL

Robert Fishburne Campbell, M.A., D.D., is pastor of the First Presbyterian Church, Asheville, N. C. He was born in Lexington, Va., Dec. 12, 1858, and graduated from Washington and Lee University in 1879 with the degree of M.A. After teaching for three years he took his theological training at Union Theological Seminary in Virginia (D.D., Davidson College, 1893). Dr. Campbell served several churches in Virginia and North Carolina during the years prior to entering upon his present pastorate in 1892. The following pamphlets and addresses have come from his pen: *The Race Problem in the South; Classification of Mountain Whites; The Ideal and the Practical; Sunday Laws and Liberty; Union Seminary in the Pastorate* (Centennial Address); *The Synod an Evangelistic Agency* (Centennial Address, Synod of N. C.); *The Removal of Union Seminary* (Address at the twenty-fifth anniversary of the removal of the Seminary to Richmond).

## GOD AND MAN FINDING REST

Robert F. Campbell

*“And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion.” . . . “And God saw everything that he had made, and, behold, it was very good.” . . . “And God rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made.”* Genesis i. 26, 31; ii. 2.

### I

#### GOD'S REST IN MAN

We read here that God rested. When did God rest? And wherein consisted His rest? Rest is only another name for satisfaction. It is the quieting of the heart by the attainment of the heart's desire. God is a social Being. The fact that He has existed from eternity in three Persons testifies to the fact that He is in his essence a social Being. And so we read, “In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God.” The Greek word for “with” here used is not the ordinary word for “with”; it is a word which means, rather, “toward.”

Now, we can be with a person who is very uncongenial and still not be drawn toward that person. But we are told that the second Person of the Trinity was with the first Person of the Trinity in such a sense that they stood “toward” each other, face to face. They held close and mystical fellowship one with the

other. The Eternal Father, the Eternal Son, the Eternal Spirit constitute the blessed Trinity, One God in three Persons.

And yet God did not rest content in the satisfaction of His social being which flowed from His eternal existence in three Persons. He seemed to have a longing (of course, we speak in human terms, and we must speak very reverently, remembering our limitations, and that the ground on which we stand is holy ground); it seems to us, I say, that God did not rest content with what His own nature furnished in the triune fellowship, but He desired fellowship also with creatures of His own making. His infinite heart craved finite beings whom He could love and who could love Him, with whom He could hold communion, and who in turn could hold communion with Him, whom He could nourish and develop and bless.

And so, in the beginning He created the heavens and the earth with this end in view. And God's rest, as described in the text, consisted in this fellowship. The account of the creation records the steps that God took toward this rest.

There are three great preparatory steps that He took. He brought order out of chaos. The earth was without form and void. God shaped it and filled it. And then, in the next place, light took the place of darkness. There was darkness upon the face of the deep, and God said, "Let there be light. And there was light." But there was still a third step, and that step was imparting life to dead matter. And God said, "Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life. Let the earth bring forth the living creature." And so God gave life to a lifeless world.

And yet God did not rest. When did He rest? He rested only after He had made man. "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." Why did God want a being, a race of beings, in His own image, bearing His own likeness? Because spirit can hold fellowship with spirit alone. "The Father seeketh such to worship Him." It was desire for fellowship through man's worship and God's acceptance of that worship, it was this that moved Him to make man in His own image and after His own likeness. God could not rest in dead matter. It could not satisfy Him. God could not rest in the lower forms of life. He could not rest in the contemplation of the grass that carpets the ground, the flowers that beautify the earth, the fruits that adorn the trees. God looked upon these things and said, "They are good"—good as far as they go. In none of these forms of life, vegetable or animal, could God find that satisfaction which He sought, that rest toward which He was moving in the creation. He waited for the soul of man. He waited until He had crowned creation with the life of man, and had set man in His own image in dominion over all that He had created, to be, as it were, in the place of God over God's creation—to be God's vice-regent on earth; to think God's thoughts after Him; to enter into sympathy with God's plans, and to cooperate with God in the carrying out of these plans.

And so we read that on the sixth day God made man. And on the seventh day, after this creature had been made in His own likeness and after His own image, on the seventh day, and not until then, did God rest. Before the creation of man, "God looked upon all that He had made, and it was good"; but, after the creation of man, "God looked upon all He had

made, and behold, it was *very good*." The superlative indicates man's place as the crown of God's creation, and points to man's high dignity of fellowship with God. "The man who is My fellow," God says in His Word. "The man who is My fellow!"

And this Bible is full of the thought of the fellowship of God with man, and the fellowship of man with God. God's desire for companionship was not satisfied until He had made man. Then it was that God rested.

## II

### MAN'S ONLY REST IS GOD

Now, if it be true that God finds His rest in man, is it not also true that man finds his rest, and can find his rest, only in God? Whose image and superscription is this that man bears? He is a creature made in the image of God, a living epistle inscribed with the finger of God. "Render unto God the things that are God's." This likeness between man and God testifies to the fact that man belongs to God. And so we find that the happiness of Eden consisted in man's fellowship with God. God came down into the garden to talk with man, to hold fellowship with this being whom He had created for purposes of fellowship. I said a while ago that God could not find satisfaction in material things. No more can man. Some of you are trying to satisfy yourselves with that which is material: you might just as well expect the son in the far country to satisfy himself with the husks that the swine did eat.

God planted in man's breast a longing for higher things. There is one book in the Bible that is a record

of man's quest for satisfaction—the Book of Ecclesiastes. The experiment was made on a large scale with every advantage that a man could have, by the king in Jerusalem. He tried heaping up wealth. He tried surrounding himself with all the instruments and resources that could give pleasure—men singers and women singers, ivory palaces adorned with shrubbery and flowers, fountains and streams and singing birds. And none of these things could fill his heart. He turned to knowledge, to the pursuit of wisdom, but not even in this could he find satisfaction. And after all his experiments in this great quest, on this large scale, he declared, "It is all vanity and vexation of spirit!" "Thou hast set eternity in man's heart," he cries. Only eternity, only the infinite, can fill man's heart and satisfy man's longings. And so he reaches the conclusion of the whole matter: "Fear God and keep His commandments; for this is the whole duty of man." "This is the whole duty of man"—fellowship with God, man yielding his will to God, fearing God, keeping his commandments, walking with God.

Man ought not to be satisfied without realizing the whole of his destiny; man ought not to be content with a part. We cannot quench our longings with the material things of life, however abundant. "Our hearts were made for Thee, and they are restless until they find their rest in Thee." "My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God?" That is the cry of the human heart. Deep down in your heart is that muffled cry. That is the voice you cannot stifle. That is the hunger you are trying to feed with earthly things; but the heart was not made for these. It was made in the image of God, in the likeness of God, to feed upon



God; to be satisfied with God alone. And so man, even when sunk in sin, is reminded that he was made for something higher and holier.

### III

#### SIN MAKES A CHANGE

After the creation of man God looked upon all He had made and pronounced it very good. But, if you go on from the first chapter of Genesis to the sixth, you will find these words: "God looked upon the earth"—this same earth, of which He said, "It is good"—"God looked upon the earth, and behold, it was corrupt, and the earth was filled with violence, for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth. And it repented the Lord that He had made man on the earth, and it grieved Him at His heart, and the Lord said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the ground." What is the matter? What has wrought this change? What has brought discord into the music that rang out when the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy?

It is sin that has made the change; man, made in the image of God and for fellowship with God, was not satisfied to abide in this fellowship, to abide with God in obedience and faith. And so his heart went out after forbidden things. He saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, and he took the fruit thereof and did eat. Not content to hold communion with God in creaturely obedience, he aspired to be as God, the equal of God, as the serpent persuaded him he would be.

That was the trouble in Eden, and that is the trouble now. If you do not hold fellowship with God it is not because you were not made in God's image, or because God does not desire fellowship with you, but because you have fallen away from God. Not satisfied to rest in God, you are seeking rest elsewhere, and so you are restless. I say to every man who does not live in fellowship with God, that his life is a restless life. It is like the troubled sea which cannot rest; whose waters cast up mire and dirt.

"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee, because he trusteth in Thee"—and there is no other peace. Why should you go on this endless and fruitless quest? Where can rest be found? Only in fellowship with God: but the reason we don't find our rest there is because the restless fever of sin has taken hold of us. We want to be independent of God. We have committed two evils. We have forsaken Him, the fountain of living waters, and we have hewn out cisterns for ourselves, broken cisterns that will hold no water. No wonder that we cannot quench our thirst at these cisterns—we, who were made to drink of the river of the water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God in Paradise.

If you stop to think—you who have not sought your rest in God and are still restless—if you will stop to think a moment, will you not in your very restlessness lift your heart to God in thanksgiving for that restlessness, that He has so made you that you must be tossed to and fro until you find your rest in Him, and that God is denying you peace in the creature that you may find peace in the Creator?

## IV

## SIN HAS MARRED GOD'S IMAGE IN MAN

How is this image to be restored? How is God to find rest in man, and how is man to find rest in God? How are these two, alienated by man's sin, to be brought together again? "Christ hath made peace by the blood of His cross." He came to restore God's image in man. Christ came to efface the marks of sin, and to restore that fair likeness of God wherein man was created. He came to fashion man anew. He came to redeem from sin by the sacrifice of Himself. And God will not find His rest in man restored until that redemption is complete.

And so the Son of God said, "My Father worketh hitherto and I work." Not now the work of creation, but the work of re-creation; not the work of generation, but the work of re-generation. His work was to renew man after the image of Him who created him. "He that is in Christ Jesus is a new creature," a new *creation*, the Greek word means. And thus God takes this marred image—which man has defaced by his sin—God takes it, and He sends His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh; and in the incarnation of Jesus Christ God furnishes the pattern man, the ideal man, man as he was in God's purpose when He created him. Look then at Jesus Christ: He is our model. In Him is the fulfillment of God's high destiny for man. And God will not be satisfied until the redeemed awake in that likeness. "My little children of whom I travail again in birth until Christ be formed in you," cries the great Apostle, "until I see in you the image of God restored through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ,

and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost."

And this is God's purpose for us. "He hath predestinated us to be conformed unto the image of His Son." Then shall we be restored to the likeness of God in which we were created.

## V

## TWO SABBATHS

And so there have been two Sabbaths, both of them symbolizing God's rest in man and man's rest in God. We have the ancient Sabbath, the seventh day, when God finished the work of creation. When He looked upon His complete work and said, "It is very good," He rested from all His work; rested with satisfaction, in fellowship with man whom He had made in His own image. But soon that creature, through his own sin, broke away from that fellowship, and God began a new work, a work of redemption, and this Bible is the record of that work. "My Father worketh hitherto and I work"—and they work to one end, and that work is the restoration of man to the image and likeness of God.

And so, since the resurrection of Christ, which marked the completion of that work, we have a new Sabbath. Sayce tells us that according to the Babylonian etymologists that word "Sabbath" means "the rest of the heart," the heart's ease. What a beautiful thought that the Sabbath was intended to be the day of rest for the heart! Oh, the restlessness of the human heart! How it beats, and beats, and with what feverish haste! How it sends out its longings and its

desires, blindly feeling after, if haply it may find, that which will give satisfaction! And the Sabbath comes to bring God's rest to the restless heart.

We Christians, then, have another Sabbath—not the seventh, but the first day of the week. Very early on the first day of the week, when the women came to the tomb at sunrise, they found the stone rolled away, and the angel that sat there said to them, "Be not afraid, ye seek Jesus of Nazareth who was crucified. He is not here. He is risen." The Lord, who said, "Come unto Me and I will give you rest," rose on the first day of the week, very early in the morning. Isn't this the fit day to be the Christian Sabbath—the rest of the heart? "Ye shall find rest unto your souls!"

"From the creation of the world to the resurrection of Christ God appointed the seventh day of the week to be the weekly Sabbath, and the first day ever since to continue until the end of the world, which is the Christian Sabbath." And this is the day that some men would trample under their feet—this, the symbol and seal of God's rest in man, and man's rest in God. The hum of business must not cease, and the giddy whirl of pleasure must roll on. Man has not yet learned that he cannot find rest for his soul in material things, in trafficking or in trifling. And God's purpose is so far defeated and the Sabbath, "the rest of the heart," the heart's ease, after the toil of the week—that rest man puts away from him.

But, let us remember, we cannot gain this rest of the heart by keeping the Sabbath in a mechanical way. We cannot find this rest in the Sabbath of the Pharisee, restricting ourselves with petty rules and regulations and binding heavy burdens upon the shoulders of our fellow men which we will not lift with one of

our little fingers. In order to find that rest of the heart, we, like John on Patmos, must be "In the Spirit on the Lord's day," filled with the fellowship of the Holy Ghost—fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. And if we fill our hearts with thoughts of business or of worldly pleasure, we cannot be in the Spirit on the Lord's day. Oh, it is a day when the heart of man should be turned toward Heaven, that the sunlight may come in; the windows should be thrown wide open that the Spirit of God, the breath of the Almighty, which He breathed into man until man became a living soul in the image of His Creator, that this breath of God may come in and fill all the chambers of his soul! O man, seeking satisfaction elsewhere, God seeks His rest in you, and invites you to seek your rest where alone you can find it, in Him, in Him!

Praise be to God that He has made us in His own likeness, and after His own image. Praise be to God that He has "set eternity in man's heart," and that man cannot be satisfied with that which passeth away! And so let us rise to our high destiny. Let us rise to meet God in His own house and on His own day. He comes to meet us. He comes to walk with us that we may walk with Him. Shall we not enter into this fellowship to which God invites us to-day through Jesus Christ His Son?

Then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "The Lord thy God is in the midst of thee, a Mighty One who will save: He will rejoice over thee with joy, He will rest in His love, He will joy over thee with singing."