

THE PRESBYTERIAN PREACHER.

Vol. III.

PITTSBURGH, MARCH, 1835.

No. 10.

SERMON XII.

BY FRANCIS HERRON, D. D.,
OF PITTSBURGH.

THE DUTY AND REASONS OF CHRISTIAN DILIGENCE.

PHIL. 2:12,13. *Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling: for it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.*

THIS exhortation was addressed by the apostle Paul to his beloved converts at Philippi. It appears, that during his residence among them, they were prompt in obeying the will of Christ, as made known by him, and he approved of their conduct in so doing; and now, with the tenderest affection, he exhorts them to continue to conduct themselves in the same manner; and thus work out their salvation with fear and trembling; "for it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure."

The language of the text expresses an important *duty*—and the *consideration* with which the duty is enforced. And these are the two points we shall endeavor to illustrate in the sequel of this discourse.

I. The *duty* expressed is to WORK OUT OUR SALVATION WITH FEAR AND TREMBLING.

What the apostle said to christians, nearly 1800 years ago, he now says, by the ministrations of his word, to all professing christians; "work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." The exhortation is not less seasonable *now*, than it was then. The instruction conveyed by it is not less important, or less necessary to

us than it was to the persons to whom it was originally addressed. Equally formidable are the difficulties that are to be surmounted. Equally great is the danger of disappointment in this arduous work. Equally imperious is the necessity of working out your salvation with fear and trembling. And therefore the exhortation may be considered as particularly addressed to all who have named the name of Christ. None else can be working out their salvation with fear and trembling. Our text presumes they have already entered upon the work, and are engaged in giving all diligence to make their calling and election sure. In such, God worketh both to will and to do of his good pleasure.

Let me therefore entreat you to consider, in the first place, that the duty of working out your salvation with fear and trembling denotes *its vast importance*, when compared with the littleness, and fleeting nature of all those things after which men of the world are laboring. What is the grand object to be effected? It is nothing less than the salvation of the immortal soul! Is not this an object of the first magnitude—the one and only thing needful? And will not its happiness, if secured by working out our salvation with fear and trembling, be great beyond conception, boundless in extent, and endless in duration. Immortality has stamped an amazing value on man. Weigh, in the balance of the sanctuary, against the salvation of the soul, the world which we inhabit, and what is it! “What shall it profit a man if he should gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?” Yet we see the people of the world all life and diligence in its pursuits. Their hearts, and heads, and hands, are all employed, whether they aim at the enlargement of business, the advancement of their families, the improvement of their estates, the acquisition of a great name, or the enjoyment of pleasure. Their favorite object is ever uppermost in their hearts, and first in their efforts: they are constantly on the watch for every favorable opportunity of promoting its attainment. Not a day nor an hour passes but some plan is formed, and some steps are taken for its accomplishment. Nothing which may be done to-day is deferred until to-morrow; and nothing which can be done is left undone. Oftentimes increasing and discouraging obstacles only quicken their efforts, and call forth greater exertions—such are the diligence and activity of the men of the world in their pursuits.

And now we ask, though eternal things be of transcendent value, are professed christians equally active and diligent in working out their salvation with fear and trembling? Does the truth compel us to say, with shame, they are not? Are we obliged to admit, that worldly people, who are following an object in itself fleeting, perishing, and

Comparatively worthless—an object which may never be attained—and which, if attained, would certainly disappoint their expectations, and must, at any rate, soon be taken away from them—must we admit, that they are more active, laborious, and diligent, than religious people, who are pursuing an object ever substantial, lasting, and of infinite value? an object which they may be sure of attaining; and when attained, will far exceed their highest hopes, and shall never, never, be taken away from them? Ah, Christian Brethren shall they, who are merely seeking a worldly treasure, show more diligence and activity, more foresight and circumspection, more decision and singleness of mind, in attaining their end, than we, who are seeking a heavenly treasure, and working out our salvation? Have we not reason to blush and be ashamed, to reflect that we, who possess such advantages, and profess to be striving for an incorruptible crown, and for glory and blessedness, to be less active, less earnest, and less anxious in our efforts to obtain it, than the people of the world are to obtain the things of this fleeting life? Ponder well the exhortation of the text, and let the inestimable value of our eternal salvation rouse us from this disgraceful sloth, and let it lead us to act more consistently with our profession, and infuse more life and spirit into all our religious exercises and duties.

But secondly: The duty of working out our salvation with fear and trembling denotes not only its vast importance, but also, *activity and diligence in the way prescribed* by God for the attainment of salvation. This consists, according to apostolic instruction, in working out our salvation with fear and trembling, which cannot be done otherwise than by an active and diligent attention to the means appointed by infinite wisdom. It will not be needful for me, at present, to state what those means are: you know what they are. And although these means cannot, or will not, of themselves, effect the salvation of sinners, yet it is God's usual method to begin and carry on his work in the hearts of his people *by the instrumentality of means*. He could indeed, at once, carry into immediate effect, and accomplish our salvation by the direct and exclusive energy of his Holy Spirit: but, *as a fact*, you are well aware, this is not his manner of doing it; for, He both begins and carries on this work by the instrumentality of means, which require time for their operation. This is a truth, abundantly confirmed by all the works and word of God, and exemplified by all our observation and experience. Therefore, it is nothing less than presumption to hope for salvation, either in the omission of means, or in the careless and formal observance of them.

There is nothing more obvious from the existing state and constitu-

tion of things, than that nothing useful or excellent can be obtained without labor and vigorous effort. We cannot acquire even the comforts of life, or its conveniences, without labor and diligence. We cannot arrive at distinction, either in wealth or literature, without labor or diligent attention. In a word, what is it in this world that is to be obtained without it? And of course, the men of the world spare no pains, decline no difficulty, and fear no hazard in their enterprizes, even though they have nothing more than probability to excite and encourage them. And if this be the fact, with respect to the present world, why should it be otherwise with respect to the world to come? Can we reasonably suppose the spiritual blessings are to be obtained and maintained without labor and diligence? Most unquestionably not. For the word of God plainly teaches us, that we must "work out our salvation with fear and trembling"—that we must "give all diligence to make our calling and election sure"—that we must "press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God"—and that we must "labor to enter into rest." Now, these are all scriptural injunctions and exhortations. They correspond with the declaration of our text, and plainly convey the idea of working out our salvation with vigorous effort on our part; every exertion must be used, every nerve must be strained, and all diligence must be exercised in God's appointed way.

There is no discordance between working out our salvation with fear and trembling, and the grace of God necessary to give effect or success to these efforts. We must work, and labor, and press forward, and use every exertion, just as if we were to accomplish all for ourselves, and yet, *depend as entirely* and simply on the power and grace of God, as if all were to be done for us. While we are therefore stating the duty expressed in the text, and illustrating the manner in which it is to be performed, remember all is to be done in God's appointed way, and in dependance on his grace. There is no other way of working out our salvation with fear and trembling, but in this way. If this way, or manner, is neglected or overlooked, all your efforts, in every other way, or manner, will be vain, and eventually ruinous. God's prescribed manner must be complied with. And his word requires us, to work out our salvation with fear and trembling, and likewise instructs us that all our success depends simply on the grace of God, who works in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure.

We are well aware, some have supposed there is an inconsistency between the necessity of using means, and at the same time ascribing all success to the agency of God's Spirit. But, I must confess, I see

no inconsistency. I must say, I see no more of it in the moral than in the natural world. I see a farmer plough his field and sow his grain in the expectation of a future crop, but he can no more cause the grain to vegetate, grow up and produce fruit than he could remove a mountain, for this is entirely owing to the agency of God in the natural world. The farmer sees and knows that both are necessary, and sees no inconsistency between them. Just so in the moral world, the Christian sees and feels the necessity of working out his salvation by a diligent attention to all the means of God's appointment, that it requires continual labor, unceasing watchfulness and prayer to make progress in the way to Heaven; and yet he is thoroughly convinced that all is in vain without the Spirit of the Lord is with him, and will work in him both to will and to do. This statement is plainly made in our text, clearly authorised by the general tenor of God's word, and fully coincides with the experience of real christians, whose testimony will go to show, that the Lord gives success to their efforts, whilst they are most diligently and actively employed in his prescribed manner.

Thirdly: The duty of working out our salvation, is to be done *with fear and trembling*. So says the apostle, who wrote as he was moved by the Holy Ghost. And, hence, it is to men of this character the Lord will look, and graciously vouchsafe his gracious presence, who are of a "poor and contrite spirit, and tremble at his word." Such is the result of correct views of the divine character, filling the soul with an affectionate fear and holy dread of offending God, and a deep, humbling view of ourselves as weak, guilty, and miserable sinners, depending entirely on the power and grace of God to renew us and work in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure.

It is, however, of importance to observe, that by working out our salvation with fear and trembling, we do not mean that *slavish fear* and dread of God that often arises from a sense of guilt, and mistaken views of the divine character. There is a class of people in whom slavish fear has produced all the religion they ever possessed; they have been alarmed, and their consciences coincide with the awful threatenings of a violated law, in denouncing death and damnation on all the workers of iniquity without exception. Providential dispensations fill them with terror of divine power. They know they cannot always live, they know they cannot escape from God, and they tremble to think what shall become of them after death.

Hence they engage in some of the duties of religion. Slavish fear not only awakens, but continues to govern them in the after-course of life. They lay down a legal system of obedience and self-righteousness, but they wear the yoke with great impatience. They do not

hate sin with all their hearts, but are afraid they shall be tormented for the commission of it. They do not love God with all their hearts, but fear him because they know they cannot resist him. They do not engage in his service with cheerfulness and delight as their choice, but groan under it as a heavy task or burden. Their hearts and affections are fixed upon present and temporal things, though they apply themselves in some measure to the duties of religion, for they know they cannot always live in this world, and therefore they submit to it as rather better and more tolerable than eternal misery. So that all the religion that some people have, is both begun and carried on by a slavish fear of God's wrath.

But such is not the fear and trembling contemplated in our text, it is not the fear which God promises to "put into the hearts of his people, that they shall not depart from him." For, says God, Jer. 32:40, "I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me." To the same purpose, says the apostle, "Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace whereby we may serve God acceptably, with reverence and Godly fear." This affectionate fear of God is produced by a believing view of his entire character, as exhibited by the mediation of Jesus Christ, where mercy and truth meet together, righteousness and peace embrace each other; where God appears in all the majesty of holiness and justice, and at the same time delighting in mercy. And it is the contemplation of this union of holiness and grace, of wrath against sin and mercy to the sinner, that produces in our hearts this affectionate fear, and makes it one of the most influential motives in working out our salvation.

While we are most actively and diligently employed in working out our salvation in the manner we have just stated, fear makes us jealous of ourselves with a trembling diffidence and caution, even while love "makes our cheerful feet in swift obedience move." *Our sorrow for sin, is at once the solemn dread of divine displeasure, and the melt-ings of love to an offended father.* The view of the cross, as a display of wrath and of mercy, inspiring both the one and the other. Fear makes us shun all that is displeasing to God, and fills us with a godly jealousy over ourselves, lest we should grieve the Spirit of God. We must therefore fear the commission of all sin, as well as its consequences. We must shrink from it as from the touch of pollution, as from the dagger of death, as from that which if unrepented of, as from that which if unwashed by the blood of Christ, is to separate us eternally from God our exceeding joy, and give us over to the worm that

never dies. This is the fear which is in our text combined with working out our salvation. It is a reverential awe of the majesty and perfections of God on our spirits, kindly regarding his authority, obeying his commands, and hating and avoiding whatever is sinful and displeasing to God.

What a contrast is this to the temper and conduct of multitudes among us, who have "no fear of God before their eyes," who serve him not "with reverence and godly fear!" They persist in their sin and ungodliness, notwithstanding "the wrath of God is revealed from Heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men." It makes no impression on their stony and hard hearts. These are the brave men of the world, who harden themselves against God. Unhappy men! Ignorance and blindness and stupidity, will not ward off the awful realities of a world that is yet to come.

Fourthly: The duty of working out our salvation with fear and trembling, denotes *perseverance* in this duty, otherwise the work will never be done. Many seem to set out with great zeal and activity in this all-interesting concern, and work well for a time, but after a while grow weary in well-doing, slacken their efforts, and sink down into indolence and security. How many in all ages have thus made shipwreck of their faith, and have returned to the world "like the dog to his vomit, or the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire."

Not so with those who are working out their salvation with fear and trembling. They dread every thing that tends to retard their progress, and guard against every thing which would seduce them from their duty. They count all present attainments as nothing in comparison of the immense field which is yet before them. They are pressing forward, eagerly seeking to know more of Christ, and of the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of his sufferings; resolving, through divine grace, never to slacken any exertions till death brings them to the enjoyment of their eternal salvation. Certainly not less than this is implied in the language of the text, as well as in many other parallel scriptural passages, and we judge of their importance from their frequency. We are commanded to "work out our salvation with fear and trembling," "to give all diligence to make our calling and election sure," "to run with patience the race set before us," "and so to run that we may obtain," "to fight the good fight of faith," "to watch and to pray," "to press forward," to have the loins of our minds girded about, "and our lights burning," to be "steadfast, immoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord," "and to grow in grace and the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ." The course demanded by these and such like exhortations, is to be persevered in throughout the

whole progress of our lives, for it is only "he that endureth to the end shall be saved." This is the principle assumed throughout the whole illustration of this subject, and is vitally important to the existence of real religion. There is no standing still, no lounging in the christian's work. He who is not pressing forward, and working out his salvation with fear and trembling, *must be* on the high-way to apostacy.

Moreover, brethren, we must assure you, that it is no easy matter to be continually engaged in this work. It demands constant watchfulness and prayer, while it requires a simple dependence on God to "work in us both to will and to do." It calls for laborious diligence, painful conflicts, habitual mortification of sin, denial of self, examination of the heart, and daily sacrifices to duty. But, what if we must labor and toil to work out our salvation with fear and trembling? What if the kingdom of heaven is to be taken by storm? What if the difficulties are many and great? What if it is through "much tribulation," long and sore, we must enter the climcs of glory and bliss? Yet, surely, the salvation of our souls—the rest that remains for the people of God, and the joys of that blessed kingdom, will more than compensate for all the difficulties and tribulations through which we are to pass on our way thither. And thanks to the name of God, there is no difficulty in the way, which may not be overcome; no obstacle but can be surmounted; no enemy but can be vanquished through Him who "loved us, and gave himself for us." In ourselves, indeed, we have not strength for the arduous labor; yet "in the Lord Jehovah is our everlasting strength." In the way prescribed; in the exercise of watchfulness, and fervent and importunate prayer, and in resisting the devil, and in dependence on the power and grace of Christ, we shall labor with success, and work out our salvation with fear and trembling, God working in us both to will and to do. We shall be strengthened in the inner man, we shall have power to overcome every obstacle, to endure to the end; and so, "an entrance shall be ministered abundantly unto us into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."

II. This leads me, secondly, to state, *the reason* with which the duty in the text is enforced—"FOR IT IS GOD THAT WORKETH IN YOU BOTH TO WILL AND TO DO OF HIS GOOD PLEASURE."

In illustrating the duty, we stated, there was no discordance between *working out our salvation with fear and trembling*, and *God's working in us both to will and to do*. It may be asked, how God works in us both to will and to do? If the question refers to the secret

manner of God's operation upon the mind, we say, we cannot tell; and it is enough for us to know, that he worketh in us. This is the *fact*, as stated in our text, and it is doubtless of such a nature as never to interfere with or set aside man's free agency, for He commandeth to work.

It is a principle, however, that pervades all the works of creation, and providence, and redemption, that God makes use of means for carrying into effect his plans. It is the hand of God that sustains the chain of causes and effects, and *his agency pervades* the worlds of nature and of grace. In the natural world, the farmer must till the ground, and sow the seed in season. But still it is God who infuses, preserves, and quickens the vital principle, and commands the clouds to rain, and the sun to diffuse its fertilizing influence. Without this, all man's labor would be in vain. Just so in the world of grace. God uses means to bring sinners to the knowledge of the truth, and to prepare and make them meet for heaven. But all will be in vain, if God deny the influence of his grace. The agency of God's Spirit is as necessary to fructify the word of his grace, and make it the seed of the sinner's conversion and sanctification, as his influences are to fructify the earth and promote vegetation. This is the grand truth taught by the apostle in the following passage; "I have planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. So then, neither is he that planteth any thing, neither is he that watereth, but God that giveth the increase."

While, therefore we say that God hath provided salvation, and it is freely offered, and enforced by the most powerful motives; and while we, as ministers of the gospel, enforce the use, and urge the necessity of means, we ought not to separate them from, or forget their subordination to God. It is not, therefore, merely by furnishing well adapted means, and by the disposition of his providence, giving them an opportunity of exerting their influence, that God works in them both to will and to do, but by an immediate and divine agency distinct from and superior to every second cause. In like manner, it is not by merely providing a Savior, offering salvation, furnishing well adapted means, and presenting motives to the mind, but by a *direct and saving influence on the heart*. Not indeed without means and motives but along with them, God works in his people both to will and to do. This agency of God does not destroy free agency, but puts it into operation, and guides and directs it in a proper way, so that they are made truly obedient to the will of God. For when God works in the hearts of his people "both to will and to do," *they also both will and do*.

We do not deem it necessary to enter upon a direct proof of this truth at present. We would remark, that perhaps it would be much the better mode to follow the scripture method, and never attempt to satisfy mere useless curiosity, or answer metaphysical questions, but press the practical use of the doctrine. Both parts of the text are stated, and the doctrines contained in them clearly taught, without once supposing any discordance, or any interference with each other in their practical influence. This is what we have most at heart in this discourse. When we therefore urge you to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, we do precisely what the apostle did; and we do *no more* than what he has done before us. And when, in addition to this, we teach you, that it is God who worketh in you both to will and to do, we still do what the apostle did, and no more than what he has done before us. And if either the one or the other had been revealed without its counterpart, certainly there would have been a great difference in the duties and obligations of man. If, for instance, God had told us that he would work in us both to will and to do, without requiring us to work out our salvation with fear and trembling, then, surely, we would not have been under the same obligation to have used the efforts now required. Our case would have resembled that of the Israelites upon the banks of the Red Sea. When the injunction was, "Fear not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will show you this day; for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to day ye shall see them no more for ever. The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace."

If, again, we had been required to work out our salvation with fear and trembling, without any reference to the grace of God, our duty would then be to encourage ourselves with such arguments as the Philistines used when the ark of God was brought into the camp of Israel; and the Philistines were afraid: and they said, "wo unto us! who shall deliver us out of the hand of these mighty gods? Be strong, and quit yourselves like men, O ye Philistines, that ye be not servants of the Hebrews, as they have been to you: quit yourselves like men and fight."

But, on the other hand, take the text as it stands upon sacred record, and all *similar* texts; or, if you please, unite both the doctrines; and let each of them occupy their proper place, and then the feelings of every christian will become like those of good Hezekiah when he gathered the captains of war together, and spake comforably to them, saying, "Be strong and courageous; be not afraid or dismayed for the king of Assyria, nor for all the multitude that is with him; for there are more with us than with him: with him is an arm of flesh,

but with us is the Lord our God to help us, and to fight our battles." Yes, and if the Lord "be for us, who can be against us." For he will work in us both to will and to do, and he will make his grace sufficient *for* us, and efficient *within* us, to every good word and work.

Although it be not possible for any finite mind to point out the precise bounds between divine and human agency, yet for any man to make and imagine an inconsistency between them, when we are clearly taught their correspondence and consistency throughout the word of God, is surely not acting either a wise or an humble part. Neither our text, nor any portion of the scripture, supposes, for a moment, there is any discordance between human effort and divine agency, in beginning and carrying on the work of salvation in our souls. They are perfectly consistent; and both indispensable in their proper place. Effort is ours, and the grace of God, propelling to the use of these efforts, is the causal influence of working out our salvation with fear and trembling.

From the illustration of this subject, let us learn to guard against error both on the one hand and on the other. There are two practical errors on this subject, that ought to be carefully guarded against; and they are both errors into which mankind are prone to run. *One* is, to ascribe the work to God in such a sense as to exclude the agency and efforts of man. The *other* is, to ascribe it to man in such a sense as to exclude the agency of God. These are both *errors*, and equally wide of the truth, and have been equally guarded against in the illustration of this subject.

We say, therefore, in the first place, let none ascribe the work to God in such a sense as to exclude the agency and efforts of man. This would be in direct opposition to the command of God, to "work out our salvation with fear and trembling." This is an error by no means uncommon, and ruinous to the souls of men, by encouraging their sloth and negligence; by hoping and presuming that God is to do all for them, they are to do nothing for themselves. If this be true, the language of our text, and a hundred more of the same nature, ought never to have been upon record. If this be true, the experience of lively, active, and zealous christians, is also a mere delusion: for it is their uniform testimony that they are comfortable in proportion to their activity and diligence in the cause, and service of the Lord.

It is therefore a most fatal mistake, for any man to flatter himself, that because God works in us both to will and to do, that we have nothing to do but to wait, in sloth and negligence, till God, in some mysterious way, will come and carry us along in the narrow way to

heaven, without any effort on our part. Now, we say, this is a most alarming case. Any thing rather than this repose in sin and sloth! Any thing rather than this graceless abuse of the grace and power of God, for encouragement in sin and heedless unconcern. This is the principle assumed by those who say, *if God has determined to save them, they shall be saved let them do what they will*, and therefore they may as well fold their hands and rest securely in sin as to seek their salvation. Are there any of my readers quieting their consciences in this way? If so, you are resting in a fatal error. Is this "working out your salvation with fear and trembling?" Is this "striving to enter in at the strait gate?" Is this pressing forward to gain the heavenly prize? Is this running the christian race, fighting the good fight of faith, and laying hold on eternal life? You may rest assured, you will never be saved without your own exertions. You must work if you would gain eternal life. You might as well refuse to eat and drink, and trust in God to preserve your life, as to refuse to work out your salvation, yet trust in God to save you. If God has determined to save you, you will not be carried to heaven in stupidity and in sin, you will and *must* be roused from your slumbers; you will find that you have much to do, and you will be disposed to do what your "hand findeth to do" with your "might." If God shall save you, he will save you by causing you to work out your salvation with fear and trembling. But so long as you are disposed to slumber in a state of spiritual apathy, you have no more reason to expect salvation than you have to look for grapes on thorns, or figs on thistles. And yet such is the delusion of multitudes.

The other error to which we have referred, is the opposite extreme, and so ascribes this *work to man*, in such a sense *as to exclude the agency of God*. This would be in direct opposition to the second clause of our text, "For it is God that worketh in us both to will and to do."

But it may be said, (for it has been said,) that all that is meant by this declaration, is, that God has made provision for the salvation of sinners, thrown open the door of Heaven for them, and invited them to enter in that they might obtain eternal life. But if this was all, the question at once occurs, how comes it to pass that some obey and others disobey the gospel? To what are we to attribute this difference? If all that God does is to prepare the way for sinners, and afford them reasonable opportunities and place suitable motives before them, why do not all comply or all refuse? They are alike free agents, and they are capable of being influenced by motives, why then do some yield to motives while others reject them? If God does *no more* to give ef-

efficiency to motives in one case than in another, why do not the same motives produce the same effects in all cases? Why did Peter believe in Christ, while Judas remained an unbeliever? Why did Paul become a disciple while multitudes of the Pharisees persisted in unbelief? Why did one of the thieves on the cross embrace Christ, while the other continued to revile him? And why is it, that wherever the gospel has been preached, some have believed while others have believed not.

Will it, in answer to such inquiries, be said, that some are more inclined to yield to the motives of the gospel than others? But this cannot be said with truth, "for as in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man." They are all by nature "children of wrath," and "dead in trespasses and in sins." And not only so, but there have been multitudes who have been distinguished for their wickedness and for their hostility to the truth, yet have been made the subjects of renewing and sanctifying grace. Paul testifies that he was the chief of sinners, and yet he obtained mercy, while many who manifested far less opposition to the gospel continued in unbelief. How is this fact to be explained? Besides, if God *only* presents motives to the mind, why is it that the same motives which have been long resisted have afterwards proved effectual? Why is a sinner sometimes converted, after having abused the means of grace and resisted every motive presented to his mind? If God does no more to render means efficacious at one time than at another, why were they not effectual upon the individual supposed, while his heart was less hard and his habits in sin less confirmed? These questions cannot be answered correctly, without admitting the immediate and direct agency of God, in working in him both to will and to do.

But closely associated with this error, there is another on this subject, and it is very common, because it is natural to the pride of the human heart. It is this, that all men have *some resource in themselves to work out their own salvation*. And therefore, they only need some additional aid from time to time to help them along. This is the idea which many have of God's working in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure, (and they quote the text for its confirmation,) that it is only some kind of assistance vouchsafed to a weak creature like man, who is able to perform a part but not the whole, and hence we find the exhortation predicated on this view of the subject, "Do the best you can and God will do the rest for you." They consider the language of our text as bearing them out in this idea, because it speaks both of God's working and man's working.

It is true, as we have already stated at large, that we must work out

our salvation with fear and trembling; but it is also true that it is God who worketh in us both to will and to do. And it is God's working in us both to will and to do, that inclines us to work out our salvation, and not any inherent disposition or native strength we have within ourselves. It is plainly on this principle, that the apostle Paul, after having observed that he had labored more abundantly than all the other apostles, declared, "not I but the grace of God." And elsewhere he says, "that we are not sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves, but our sufficiency is of God." Now the plain and obvious fact, is, that all real christians know and believe this to be true, for they pray to God to give them grace, and to impart to them his Holy Spirit for accomplishing all parts of their salvation. And, hence, all these errors are alike opposed to the sentiment of the apostle in our text.

2d. Let us learn from this subject, the danger of sloth and carnal security in christians. We are to work out our salvation with fear and trembling, as illustrated in this discourse. And if this be so, then surely this subject may serve to reprove the merely nominal professor, and show the vanity of his religion. The conscience of every such professor must tell him that he knows nothing of the activity and diligence of working out his salvation, which has been stated in this discourse. Such a professor may indeed believe in christianity, because he has been born in a christian country, and he may be decent in his external conduct, just in his dealings, amiable in his dispositions, kind to the poor, and attentive to certain religious observances, but if this be all, his hope will be in vain. If he has never felt himself a sinner before God, wretched, and helpless, and miserable; if he has never repented of sin, and despairing of help from every other quarter, come to Christ for pardon and peace through the blood of the atonement; if he has never seen the necessity of an entire change of heart, and under this conviction earnestly sought the influence of God's Spirit, to renew him in the spirit of his mind, and to sanctify him throughout the whole man; if he has formed no determination to work out his salvation with fear and trembling, and to press forward after higher measures of faith and love—after every holy and heavenly grace and spiritual obedience,—*then*, is he a christian only in name, a mere speculatist on the doctrines of the gospel, as a kind of abstract science; but knows not and feels not its heart-changing power and influence.

Let me then address you in the language of God's word. "Awake, thou that sleepest." We cannot exhort you to go on in this work, but we must exhort you to *begin* this work by repentance toward God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. And we urge you to remember,

that if you are not born again, you cannot enter the kingdom of God; and that without holiness no man can see the Lord's face in mercy.

3d. Learn from this subject, the *dependence* of christians on God to work in them both to will and to do. It is the office of God, the Holy Spirit, to begin and to carry on and to accomplish our salvation, not only by means, but also by an agency superior to every second cause. Let christians then learn their dependence upon God for all that they are, or have, or want. For what have they that they have not received? Have they been active and diligent in the service of their master? Who made them thus active and diligent? Have they been successful? Who gave them that success? Have they thus far persevered? Who has kept them from falling? It is God, and let christians realize that it is God who has done all in them and for them; for it is God who worketh in them and for them, both to will and to do of his good pleasure.

Finally. Learn from this subject the indispensable *necessity* of christians working out their salvation. It is the grand business of human life. It is really the one thing needful, and demands the first and best of our days, and the most vigorous efforts of our lives.

Let me then seriously ask professing christians whether you have made it the chief business of your lives to work out your salvation with fear and trembling? Have you lived, and are you now living in this world as those who really and practically believe that it is absolutely necessary? Has the awful importance of eternal things occupied your hearts more than all other things in the world? Have they been the objects of your eager desires and most vigorous pursuits? If such has been the fact with regard to some of you, yet is it not the melancholy fact with regard to others, that instead of improving precious seasons of working out your salvation with fear and trembling, and securing their eternal interests, they only abuse such precious seasons in such a manner as to enhance their final condemnation. Instead of laying up treasure in Heaven, and complying with the calls and invitations of redeeming love and mercy, they only abuse the goodness of God, neglect his offered mercy and grace, make light of the gospel, and treasure up wrath to themselves against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God. Instead of laying hold of eternal life, and striving for a crown of glory, they are only working out their damnation with all imaginable pains. Instead of denying themselves, taking up their cross and following Christ, they are only gratifying themselves in "the lust of the flesh" and in the "lust of the eye," and in "the pride of life." Instead of mortifying the deeds of the body, and crucifying the flesh with its affections and lusts, and grow-

ing in conformity to Christ in the temper and disposition of their minds, they are daily becoming more fitted for destruction, and preparing for the eternal abodes of moral impurity and ruin. Instead of aspiring to shine in the realms of glory with a distinguished lustre, they are only acting as if they were desirous of glowing more remarkably than others in the world of wo. Is not such the melancholy fact with regard to numbers? Men and brethren, what shall we say to you? What can we say to you but what has often been said? Shall we entreat you by all the powers of the world to come, to pause and consider, and begin immediately to act wisely and reasonably, and let *no* worldly considerations interfere with your eternal interests, remembering that the Saviour has said "work while it is day, the night cometh, when no man can work." John 9:4. And it is elsewhere urged, Prov. 9:10. "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave, whither thou goest!" And,

Therefore, in the conclusion, let me say to every professing christian, that as your time on earth is both short and uncertain, there is nothing of more importance to your comfort and safety, as christians, and more honorable to God and to religion, than to see you "working out your salvation with fear and trembling;" always active in your Master's service, and always employed in every good word and work. We live in a day when there is work enough for christians of every age and sex; and they may all be employed to good advantage in sustaining and furthering the interests of religion. None need be, and none should be *idle* in the Lord's vineyard. There is work enough for all, in their different stations and relations of life, without interfering with each other. And let me assure you, that it is as necessary for one, and all of us, to be as active and diligent in the service of our Lord and Master, as it is for the soldier to be valiant in the battle; as it is for the wrestler to be eager in the struggle; and as it is for the racer to reach forth with constant exertion after the prize. Let us also bear in mind, that the same grace which has made, and is still making other christians active and diligent in the cause of Christ, is as ready to be dispensed to us, as it was to them. His grace will be sufficient for us, and make us triumphant over every enemy. We therefore unite with the apostle in praying, "that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment," that ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ, being filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus, to the glory and praise of God." And may mercy, and grace, and peace, be multiplied toward you, and all who love our Lord Jesus in sincerity.