

To. My Friend

Mr. P. G. Mc Intyre
Christmas 1917.

With Gods blessings



WILLIAM G. NEVILLE, D. D. LL. D.

SERMONS.

BY

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PREFACE.

THESE sermons; selected from a large number of carefully prepared manuscripts, are intended as a memorial of a faithful and beloved pastor, who for more than a quarter of a century, as an ambassador for Christ, besought men to be reconciled to God. They will be read with a tender interest by hundreds who sat under his ministry in his several pastoral charges in South Carolina and Kentucky, and by very many others who were privileged to hear the gospel from his lips, in his frequent ministrations in other congregations in different parts of the land. They will vividly call to mind the instructions, the warnings, and the tender expostulations of one who was truly in earnest in the work of the ministry, so that he being dead will yet speak.

But these discourses will prove interesting not only to those who knew and loved the author, but to many others as well. They are sound, instructive, and eminently practical, and while sermonic literature is but little sought after at the present day, it is hoped that they will be read by many to their spiritual profit. They are not essays prepared by a recluse in his study, but were addressed to living men, to meet their actual needs, and hence they are eminently suitable to be read in the family circle, and in vacant churches, where the voice

of the living preacher is not heard. Among the many volumes of sermons now before the public, comparatively few are well adapted to this purpose, and it is hoped that this volume may in a measure meet this need.

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SERMONS.

SERMONS.

COME UNTO ME.

“Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”—Matthew xi. 28.

THE invitations of the gospel are very tender and heart-touching. They are addressed to us as wayward, unfortunate children. They do not come to us bearing the sentence of condemnation against us, as they might justly do. They come freighted with hope and encouragement and eternal life. “For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world, through him, might be saved.” The law condemns us; it says: “You have sinned; now you must suffer.” But it is quite different with the gospel. It comes bringing peace and pardon, rest and happiness. It takes us by the hand and leads us out of our difficulties and troubles. O how compassionately and tenderly does the Saviour speak to us. He uses no harsh language to drive us away from him. But his invitations to us are conveyed in the sweetest and most encouraging language. “Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters.” “And the Spirit and the bride say, Come; And let him that heareth say, Come; And let him that is athirst, come; And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.” “Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out.” *Welcome* is written over the portals of Christ’s kingdom, in letters that all can see and understand; and it is illumined most

resplendently by the Saviour's unsurpassed and unsurpassable love and hospitality. He extends a heart's *welcome* to all. "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

I. THE PROMISE IN THE TEXT. The Saviour promises *rest* to all who labor and are heavy laden. This promise is very comprehensive in its nature. It includes everything that is calculated to contribute to the soul's highest interest, both in this world and in the world to come. The imagination cannot conceive a single good which the gospel does not supply. It brings peace to the troubled, joy to the sorrowing, consolation to the bereaved, rest to the weary, salvation to the lost, life to the dead, and a blessed immortality to all who will come to the Saviour. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." This rest spoken of in the text includes:

1. *Relief from all things that are burdensome and grievous.* "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

The gospel either removes the burden, or enables us to support it. You remember the case of Paul. He tells us that there was given him a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet him. We do not know what this great temptation was; but we do know that it was almost intolerable; for the apostle compares it to a thorn in the flesh, and three times does he beseech the Lord to remove it. The Lord answers his prayer, but not in the way he expected. He does not remove the thorn, but he does give the apostle grace to bear it. He says: "My grace is sufficient for you." And it is thus in the experience of

every Christian. His prayers are always answered, but not every time in the way he expected. The Christian ought always to pray for that which will contribute most largely towards the advancement of God's glory. Everything else must be subordinate to this great end, and must be made secondary to it. The chief end of every man is to glorify God. He must subordinate even his own happiness to this end. This idea must permeate all the prayers of the Christian, and, in fact, it must run through his whole life. And God has made it so in the very constitution of things as far as the Christian is concerned, that whatever enhances his glory contributes to man's happiness. Hence, our Catechism links these two ideas together in its answer to the question: "What is the chief end of man?" "Man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy him forever." Yea, can we not say that glorifying God is enjoying Him? The Christian who glorifies God is obliged to enjoy Him; and he who enjoys Him properly must necessarily glorify Him. These two ideas are inseparable; they cannot be divorced. The highest happiness always, and necessarily, follows the performance of duty. God always rewards faithfulness and devotion to duty, it matters not when nor where exhibited. He knows what is best for us, and what will contribute to our highest interest. Oftentimes we do not know what we need, and we ask for the very things that we ought not to have. But there is a comforting thought in the truth that God knows what we ought to have. He does not remove our *burdens* every time, but He always gives us strength to bear them. He does not keep *temptation* from us all the time, but he always gives us *grace* to resist *them*. He gives us *rest*, which is relief from everything that is burdensome and grievous. Yea,

is it not often the case that Christ makes affliction and sorrow and bereavement contribute to our spiritual good and happiness? The Psalmist says: "Before I was afflicted I went astray: but now have I kept thy word. It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I might learn thy statutes." It is always the case that affliction is a real benefit to the child of God. Affliction purifies the good and consumes the bad. How often is it the case that our troubles and sorrows are blessings in disguise. Hence, the Christian can glory in his infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon him. But, my brethren, the time is rapidly approaching when we will not only have relief from all our griefs and burdens, but when there will be a complete separation between us and them. Then Christ will not only give us his *grace*, but he will also remove all the *thorns* out of our flesh. He will remove every burden and destroy every grief. There will be a complete deliverance for us. "Our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowler: the snare is broken, and we are escaped." Then there shall be no more burdens to bear, no more sorrows to experience, no more afflictions to endure. "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

2. This rest also includes that which gives complete satisfaction to the soul. This is the positive side of the promise. The gospel not only takes away those things which are detrimental to our happiness, but it also gives us those things which are conducive to our highest enjoyment. The gospel is not mere *pardon*—it is *freedom*. It not only makes us *citizens*, but also *sons*. For every fault that it removes, it puts a *virtue* in its place. It takes us out of the *dungeon* and puts us in the *palace*. It takes us from the *prison*, and put us upon the *throne*.

It finds us *slaves*; it leaves us *kings*. It comes to us on a stormy sea and finds us in the midst of a perfect and hopeless wreck; it leaves us in safety, sailing over the smooth and placid waters. It finds us in the darkness of death, surrounded on every side by the desolation of bleakness and barrenness; it leaves us delighting in the sunshine of eternal life, surrounded by everything that is calculated to make the soul happy and joyful. The soul has complete satisfaction in the gospel of Christ. This soul must be akin to God; for there is nothing in this world that can completely satisfy it. Men have tried every imaginable thing in this world to satisfy their souls, but it all has been in vain. They have tried to satisfy the soul in honor and fame, but only to find their utter emptiness and vanity. They have accumulated fortunes and revelled in luxuries; but they have found that these things bring with them corresponding troubles, anxieties and annoyances. Wealth, with all of its advantages, has also its disadvantages. Men have become intoxicated with the sensual pleasures of the world: but there came a reaction that left them in a worse condition than before. The soul is not of the earth, and there is nothing earthly that can satisfy it. It cries out for the living God. Is this not an earnest proof of the soul's immortality? Do not these upheavings of the soul, in its grasp for something higher, and nobler, and more God-like, tell us in unmistakable language, that this is not its home, but that it is striving for a more blessed existence in the world to come? Talk about death being an eternal sleep! This may do for souls that have been blinded by sin and covered up in the depths of depravity and iniquity; but it will never do for souls that have been illumined by the light of the gospel. There is nothing that

can completely satisfy the soul but the blessed God in Christ Jesus our Lord. He can accomplish this glorious result; and he does it in the gospel. Here, every desire is fully met, and every aspiration entirely satisfied. As Christians, my brethren, we need large experiences; we want the gospel to take a firmer hold upon our hearts and upon our lives. There are extensive fields of happiness in the gospel which we have never explored; there are depths of enjoyment here which we have never fathomed. The gospel is infinite in its resources and capacities to satisfy the soul. This is the glorious promise made in the text. Rest from toil, rest from trouble, rest from suffering, rest from affliction, rest from bereavement, rest, rest, rest. "There remaineth, therefore, a rest to the people of God." O what a glorious promise the gospel makes to the children of God!

II. *The persons to whom the promise is made.* The promise is made to all who labor and are heavy laden. "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." There is a universality about the text that includes all who feel the need of assistance. "They that are whole need not a physician, but they that are sick." Christ "came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Christ is always ready to help those who *need* help and who *want* help. There must first be the *necessity* and then the *desire*. Where these two things exist, there are no limits to Christ's invitations and promises.

I. *There are no limitations to the class of persons invited except the two just mentioned.* All classes and grades and conditions and nationalities of men are invited to the Saviour. If any one is excluded, he does it

himself. Christ excludes no one, and it is to him that you are invited to go. He says: "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Thus we have the assurance that Christ is acquainted with each individual case of the sorrowing members of the human family. He knows exactly what you need, and He makes the promise to you that He will satisfy this need. The king upon his throne is invited, the beggar in his hut is invited. The promise is made to all who labor and are heavy laden. Are you groaning under some heavy burden which seems to be almost intolerable? Then you have a special and urgent invitation to come. Cast thy burden upon the Lord. This promise is not addressed merely to *unbelievers*, but to *Christians* as well. God's own chosen people have their burdens and sorrows as well as others. Indeed, their crosses and trials oftentimes seem to be greater than other peoples. If there is a difference here, it will all be adjusted rightly hereafter. The heavier the cross, the brighter the crown. The path of triumphant victory leads through many and severe conflicts. In all of these trials, the Christian is directed to go to Christ. "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Are you loaded with burdens? then the promise is to you. Are you passing through the fiery furnace of affliction? then, the promise is to you. Are you troubled on every side by sore trials and strong temptations? then, the promise is to you. Are you passing through the inconveniences and trials of any kind of adversity? then, the promise is to you. Are you living under the heavy responsibilities of prosperity? then, the promise is to you. "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." All who are burdened, all who are sorrowful, all

who are troubled, all who are distressed, all who are be-reaved. Christ invites them all to come to Him, and He promises them rest.

2. *As there is no limitation as to the class of persons invited, so there is no limitation as to the kind of burden which Christ proposes to move.* No spiritual disease has ever yet baffled the skill of the Great Physician of souls. It matters not how heavy, nor how light, our burdens may be, Christ is able and willing to bear them for us. It matters not how great, nor how insignificant, our sorrows may appear, there is a relief for them in the gospel. Every person has his own peculiar, individual troubles. There is relief in the gospel for them all. There is a cure in this gospel for every spiritual disease. Do your troubles seem to be greater than other people's? Cheer up! Christ makes a glorious promise to you: "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." The promise in the text is made especially to those who are laboring under the burden of *sin*. There are none exempt from this burden; of course, some feel it more sensibly than others. But there is one thing certain: the whole race can be reduced to unity on this point. However widely we may differ in other respects, there is perfect agreement among us here. We are all sinners. There is no man completely sanctified in this world. Is it not the case, that the better we get, the greater our sins appear to be? When the brightness of God's holiness flashes upon our sins, they are greatly magnified, and their heinousness appears the more distinctly. Just because we feel ourselves to be great sinners, does not make our case hopeless. Why, this is the encouraging feature of the case; because unto such the promise is made. "Come unto me, all ye that labor and

are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Christ's special mission into this world was to deliver us from the power and dominion of sin. Do your sins crush you to the ground, and does your soul cry out within you, "Who shall deliver me from the body of this death"? Then, burdened soul, hasten to the Saviour. The promise is to you. There is abundant deliverance in the gospel for you. "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

III. *The Person who makes the promise in the text.* He is certainly no ordinary person. No merely human being could make such a promise and fulfil it. Why, the promise is that all who labor and are heavy laden shall have rest. Who is he that can make such a promise as this? It is Christ, the Saviour, the Lord of heaven, and the King of glory. He who makes this promise is the Theanthropos, the God-man, the Son of God, and the Son of man, embodying in his glorious Person both the divine and the human. Christ is fully able to make His promise sure to us. He possesses unlimited power. He can bring to pass all His promises. He knows exactly what we need. His promise is just as good as if it had already been fulfilled. He is everywhere present, and is always ready to administer to our wants. His resources to satisfy the soul are simply inexhaustible. He is an infinitely perfect Saviour. There is not a fault nor an imperfection to be found in Him. His perfection as a Saviour is absolute and inherent. He is perfect in His *character* and perfect in His *works*. He has made full provision in the gospel for our complete salvation. No improvements can be made upon Christ's work in redemption. It is perfect in adaptability to the human race, and in its power to remove all of our burdens and

satisfy all of our desires and aspirations. Thus we see that Christ is not only capable of making such a promise as that contained in the text, but also of fulfilling it. We are invited to a Person of infinite love and boundless resources. Christ says, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Christ invites us immediately to Him. "Come unto *me*." We are not to approach Christ through any medium. The day of representative priests has been done away with. Each person can be a priest now, and every place a temple. And, as there is to be no medium in our approach to Christ, so there is to be none through which the blessing comes to us. We go directly to Christ; the blessing comes directly to us. There is no third party about the matter. Christ says: "Come unto *me* . . . and I will give you rest." Christ does not conceal himself behind His throne, delegating His power to a set of priests, who are to run around over the country to remove people's burdens and pray their sins away. No, blessed be His name, the Saviour comes to the front and presents Himself in full view, exhibiting His great love for us and His burning desire to relieve us of everything that is burdensome and grievous. He says: "Come unto *me*, and I will remove your burden." "Come unto *me* and I will pardon your sins." "Come unto *me* and I will bind up your broken heart." "Come unto *me*, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light." It is Christ, the mighty Saviour, that makes the promise in the text. He is the Lord, who not only possesses the attributes of the God-head, but who is also bone of our

bone, who carries all the burdens and griefs of this life, except those which flow from an evil heart. Christ makes the promise; Christ is able to fulfil the promise; Christ will fulfil the promise.

IV. *The condition upon which the promise is suspended.* All we have to do to receive the blessing, is to go to Christ. He says, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." The condition upon which the promise is made is a very simple one, indeed. It is one that every person can fulfil. We do not save ourselves; we merely put ourselves in an attitude for Christ to save us. Salvation comes to us as a gift. Its origin and completion are altogether external matters to us; and its application to us must be effected by an outside party. Christ has perfected the salvation, and he would say to us: "If you will just come to me, I will give you the benefits of it." The work in redemption is done by Christ alone; all we have to do is just to receive it. "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Now, what is it to come to Christ? It is but another way of expressing our faith in Him, for certainly no one would come to Him as a Saviour, unless he had confidence in His ability and willingness to save. The man who comes to Christ must:

1. *Feel his need of a Saviour.* He must feel the weight and burden of sin. A man must feel that he is lost before he can be saved. As long as he apprehends no danger, he will put forth no effort to make an escape. A man does not send for the physician before he gets sick. Those who feel that they need no spiritual blessings are sure not to get any. Christ tells us that He did not come

to save the righteous, and He meant by this those who considered themselves righteous. It is a fearful and deplorable state for a man to get into when he does not feel the need of a Saviour. There is no better sign that he is on the sure road that leads to destruction.

2. *But a man to come to Christ must not only feel his need of a Saviour, but also his own helplessness to save himself.* If he thinks *he* can save himself, why, of course, he will not go to Christ. If he thinks his *morality* can save him, there will be no necessity of going to Christ. If he thinks *any human agency* can save him, he will lean upon it, and stay away from Christ. The man, to come to Christ, must feel that he is not only in a lost condition, but also in a helpless and hopeless condition. He must find out that everything in this world falls far short of his spiritual demands and necessities. He must feel every human prop giving away from under him. He must realize that he is lost and helpless and hopeless, if he has to depend upon his own resources. This will drive him away from self and all human help.

3. *Now he looks to Christ as one that is both able and willing to save him.* When we feel our need and our helplessness, then we are directed to Christ. Then we begin to put confidence in Him as a Saviour. Then we lay hold of the glorious promise which He holds out to us in His Word. Our spiritual necessities and our own inability to satisfy these necessities shut us up to come to Christ.

Am I addressing any who feel that they need a Saviour and who feel their own helplessness to save themselves? Then let me direct you to the blessed Saviour, who speaks to us in the text. His arms are thrown wide open

to receive you. He is the very Saviour that this world needs. And He says to all who labor and are heavy laden, "Come unto me, and I will give you rest." You secure this glorious promise of the text simply by coming to Christ. Will you not make it yours to-day? Will you not come to the Saviour and find rest for your souls?

WE ARE THE LORD'S.

"We are the Lord's."—Romans xiv. 8.

ONE of the most patent truths in all nature and history is that there is an intelligent, personal, superhuman, divine Being, manifesting Himself everywhere in nature and all along in history. In the furious storm and the terrible earthquake, we get some idea of his great power. In the delicate flower and the beautiful light which paints upon this flower all the variegated colors, we have the refinement of His feelings and the tenderness of His heart. In the mechanism of the human body and its adaptation to the surrounding world, are to be found the most wonderful manifestations of His designing wisdom and intelligence.

Then, if we will look through history, we will also see glimpses and traces of this divine Being. "A man's heart deviseth his way: but the Lord directeth his steps." There has not been an event in history which has not been governed and limited by this all-wise and almighty Being.

"Ten thousand ages ere the skies
Were into motion brought;
All the long years and worlds to come,
Stood present to His thought.
There's not a sparrow nor a worm
But's found in His decrees;
He raiseth monarchs to their thrones,
And strikes them as He please."

This exalted Being controls nature and shapes history. The divine is all around us and in us. There is not a sprig of grass, nor a drop of water, nor a ray of light

but that is akin to Deity. All things radiate from God; all things center in Him. "The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof; the world and they that dwell therein." We know by observation and history that all things do belong to God. How? By actual possession as manifested in His governing all things.

But it is not until we open the pages of Scripture that we get into the depths of the subject. Here the light breaks in upon our souls, and we see *God's* right to the absolute ownership of all things. Here we see that He has authority to rule all things, and we also see the character of His administration. As *Creator* of all things, God is *Owner* of all things; as *Owner* of all things, He is *Ruler* of all things. John, in his apocalyptic vision, says: "And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying: 'Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.' For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord: or whether we die, we die unto the Lord; whether we live, therefore, or die, *we are the Lord's.*"

We have in the text, *God's absolute ownership of us.* "We are the Lord's." We are the property of the Lord. We belong to Him; and, therefore, He has a divine right to do with us just as He pleases.

I. Let us consider *the ground of this ownership.* Why are we the Lord's? If we are the Lord's, He must have a right to own us; and this right of possession on the part of God to us must be grounded in principles of the highest justice.

1. We are the Lord's by creation. God is the Creator; we are the created. God is eternal; our lives are as the

vapor which soon passeth away. There was a time when only God existed. It pleased Him in the beginning to create out of nothing, by a simple word of His power, the heavens and the earth. God built the grand temple of the universe without any material to work upon. He created all the various parts of this magnificent temple out of nothing, and they were all drawn to their right places by a simple volition of God. He adorned and beautified this temple out of His own infinite wealth and possibilities. Last of all, He created *man* out of the dust of the ground, and breathed into him the breath of life, and he became a living soul, bearing the image of God. And thus it is that God creates every man. He makes the body out of the ground, and then He breathes into that body a living soul. You and I are being made every day out of the products of the ground. Every particle of matter in our bodies is dust of the earth. You see, then, we are a sort of *double* creation. And thus God is our *double* Creator, and has a *double* right to own us. He first made the ground, and then He made us out of the ground.

God not only created us, but He created all things—the earth, with its rivers and its mountains, its fields and its forests; the heavens, with its sun, moon and stars; the light and the air, the entire universe with its vast possessions. So, you see, there is nothing that belongs to us except in a secondary sense. All things belong to God, because He created all things. When you construct a machine, you claim it as your own, because you made it. You are entitled to that machine by every principle of justice and righteousness. How much more is God entitled to us, since He not only made us, but actually created the ground out of which we are formed!

2. Again, we are the Lord's because *He preserves us*. He not only gives us life, but He keeps this life a-going. It is in Him that we live and move and have our being. Were it not for God, our existence could not be continued for a moment. He feeds us and He clothes us. He shelters us from the rays of the scorching sun and the blasts of a stormy winter. Every good and perfect gift is from above. God exercises over this world not only a *general* providence, but also a *special* providence. He looks after us as individual persons, and provides for our individual wants and necessities. He preserves our lives not only by giving us those things which are necessary to perpetuate life, but also by keeping us out of danger. God is ever looking after the interests of His creatures.

How do you account for the fact that children make so many narrow escapes from death, if there is not a superintending Providence preserving their lives? Ah! how difficult it would be to rear a single child, if God did not interpose in its behalf. This is a task which few of us would undertake, and still fewer accomplish, if it were not for God's help and direction. It is He who wards off the danger when the life of your child is threatened. God takes special care of the children. Their lives are precious in His sight. He takes them in His bosom, as it were, and nurses them, thus protecting them and providing for them. But each one of us, it matters not how old, nor how young; it matters not how good nor how bad; each one of us can say from the depths of the heart: "The Lord has brought me thus far in life's journey. It is because of His will and power that I am alive to-day." It is as God wills that man lives. Whenever God lets loose of a man's life, then it ceases. As soon as God

neglects the pulse it refuses to beat. God has not only brought us into existence, but He perpetuates our existence. He made us and not we ourselves. He preserves us, and not we ourselves. For our existence does not depend upon our own will or existence. Indeed, and in truth, can we say, "We are the Lord's."

3. Once more I remark that *we are the Lord's by redemption*. This applies only to a part of the race, to those only who have experienced or will experience in their hearts the power and blessedness of the gospel. Here we must draw a line, for God's people are His in a very different sense from what the world is. All men belong to God, but they all do not belong to Him by redemption, because He does not redeem them all. God is not going to deal with His *church*, I mean the true, invisible church, as He does with the outside world. The church is His by redemption. In the plan of salvation, God gave His Son a *specific work* to do, which was the redemption of all God's people. Christ says: "I must work the works of Him that sent me while it is called to-day; for the night cometh when no man can work." And in another place He says: "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. For I came down from heaven not to do mine own will, but the will of Him that sent me. And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which He hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day." Christ gave Himself a ransom for the church, and thus he actually bought it. "For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." "We are the Lord's." He gave Himself for us, who are the church, that He might present it to Himself

a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. "Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as gold and silver, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, who, by him, do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God." The price which God paid for the redemption of His church was an infinite price, infinite in *worth*, infinite in *dignity*, and infinite in *efficacy*. O what strong bonds they are which unite us to the Head of the church! In no sense can we say we are our own. We are the Lord's; for He hath redeemed our life from destruction. He hath lifted our feet from the mire, and set them on an eternal rock.

" His sovereign power, without our aid,
 Made us of clay and formed us men;
 And when, like wandering sheep, we strayed,
 He brought us to His fold again.
 We are His people, we His care;
 Our souls and all our mortal frame;
 What lasting honors shall we rear,
 Almighty Maker, to Thy name!"

II. Let us consider, in the next place, *the extent of this ownership*. "We are the Lord's." All of our possessions belong to the Lord.

Our *time* is the Lord's; for it is by Him that we live. No man has the right to waste a single moment of time. Every moment that we live belongs to God, and we ought every one to give a record that will meet God's approba-

tion. O that men knew how to appreciate time! How are you spending the precious moments which God has given you? When you look back upon your lives, can you see where you have improved the time? or can your history be written in these few words: *Neglected opportunities and wasted moments?* Your time is not your own; it belongs to God; and He demands something in return for every moment that you live; and I call upon each one of you to-day, to consider how you are spending God's time. Are you spending it in His service, or in your own service, or in satan's service? What are you doing with that *soul* which God has given you? As the moments glide swiftly by, is your soul getting any nearer to God? Are you any better than you were a year ago? The moments of the past, where are they? They are gone to the judgment seat of Christ and have rendered in their account. All that you can do, and all that I can do, cannot change a single moment in the past. Oh! what a solemn thought, that our past history is *fixed*, beyond the possibility of a change, as far as we are concerned. O how this ought to make us improve the present moment, for it only is ours! We cannot live a moment in the past, nor a moment in the future. God gives us but *one moment* at a time, and thus He would teach us the great value of every moment and the great importance of improving every moment. He gives us but one moment at a time that every moment may be improved. God will take no excuse for spiritual idleness. Do you know, my hearer, that you are writing your own history? Every *hour* is a *page*, every *day* a *chapter*, and every *year* a *volume!* Remember, that for all these things God will bring you into judgment.

Your *talents* also belong to the Lord. He has given

each one of us a certain number of talents; to some He has given many, to others only a few. (Matthew xxv. 14-30.) The important question with us is, *not how many talents has God given us?* but *how are we using these talents?* Are we using them for the promotion of God's glory, or to accomplish our own selfish ends and ambitions? Are you using the worldly possessions which God has given you as a loan for His glory? No man has a right to engage in any business which does not tend towards the promotion of God's glory. The chief end of every man is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever. So, if any of you are pursuing a business which is not accomplishing this end, rest assured that you have not God's approval in the matter, and you will never receive His blessing in your work. You may prosper from a worldly point of view for a while; but, I tell you, your work will not stand the test of the future. "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ."

Again, God has given some of you children, and He is going to hold you responsible for their proper training. Do you act as if you were the Lord's? How are you behaving toward your children? If there is anything that will bring a man to a sense of his duty, it ought to be his children. These are precious talents which God has given you. What are you doing with them? Are you allowing them to rust and mould and decay in the service of satan? or are you keeping them bright in God's service? Have you made an entire consecration of *yourself* to God? *This is the first thing you are to do.* And what good, I ask you, in the name of common sense, can you ever expect of your children until you do this? Will they not follow in your foot-steps? Yea, will they not

be a great deal worse than you have been? For it is the very nature and tendency of sin to grow worse and worse. Perhaps you had some religious restraints and influences thrown around you when young; but if your children are without these, what outside of God's almighty power will keep them from going to the utmost bounds of vice and iniquity? After you have consecrated yourselves to the Lord, you are to consecrate your children to Him. What did God require of His people in the church under the Old Testament dispensation? He explicitly required that the rite of initiation into His church should be applied to every male child when eight days old, and every one of them was to be called holy and was to be consecrated to God's service. While the *form* of initiation into the church has changed, thank God, the *essence* remains the same. The child has just as much right in the church to-day as it ever did. Christ distinctly tells us that He came not to destroy, but to fulfil, and He says that not a single jot nor tittle shall pass from the law till all be fulfilled. Infant church membership was a blessing which God's people, under the old economy, prized very highly, and did Christ, by His coming, take this blessing from His people? It is a matter of rejoicing that the Word of God does not say so. The church of God has always been the same as far as *essence* is concerned; and, blessed be His name, it always will be the same. For the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. God first instituted His church in the family, and I call upon you, heads of families, that you still hold up to the world the ensign of God's church in your family, and that you never let the family die upon its altar. This church in the family is one of the most potent powers for good in the world. *Family religion!* That is the power which is to crush

satan's kingdom in this world. Would you give your children to the Lord? Then, I call upon you, if you have not already done it, to organize in your family immediately a church after the apostolic order.

III. *The importance of this ownership.* "We are the Lord's." This implies that *Christ is our Master, our only Master.* We bow to no other. He is the sole Head of the church. The ground of this absolute sovereignty over us on the part of Christ is His death and resurrection; for the verse which immediately follows the text says: "For to this end Christ hath died, and rose, and revived, *that* He might be Lord both of the dead and living." In matters of faith, we are responsible to no human being, nor to any human organization. Jesus Christ has freed the conscience. We have a divine right to our belief, and we have a divine right to publish this belief to the world. Loyalty to Christ is the greatest possible freedom. Christ has so ordered it that no human tribunal has the right to say what we shall believe. And we may rejoice that it is so; for, if it were otherwise, a great many of us would have to pay very dear for our beliefs.

In the verses preceding the text, the apostle speaks of one who believes that he may eat all things, and of another who eateth herbs. Then he says, Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath received him. For he says, "To his own master he standeth or falleth." Again he says, "One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind." "For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and

whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore or die we are the Lord's." Christianity condemns in the strongest terms all forms of bigotry; and he who loves his own system of belief better than the truth as found in the Word of God may rest assured that he has not the spirit of Christ. And he who loves his own denomination better than the true, invisible, elect church of God may rest assured that he is without the spirit of the Master. Of course, we must never give up devotion to truth; but, at the same time, we want catholicity of feeling. Christ is our only Master; and let us imitate Him in His broad catholicity. Be what you are to the very core of your heart, but at the same time remember that your brother has a right to be what he is. "For to his own master he standeth or falleth."

IV. How can we show that we are the Lord's?

We can do this, first, *by an unreserved consecration of ourselves to His service.* We are to put ourselves and all that we have into His hands. In other words, we are to take God at His word. We are not to trouble ourselves about the future. We are the Lord's, and He has promised to take care of us. All of our successes and our failures are in His hands. Whether we *live*, or whether we *die*, we are the Lord's. When we reach the point that we are willing to put our life and our death into God's hand and let Him dispose of them as seems best in His right, then we are showing that we are the Lord's.

But we can also show that we are the Lord's *by a life of good works.* Christ says: "Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?" It is simply impossible for a man to be a Christian and not do good works. If we are not *living* the gospel, all of our *professions* will amount to nothing.

It is the life that tells what a man is; for it is nothing but a public exhibition of the heart and character. How are you living? What are you doing? Where are your fruits? Are there any here to-day of whom the Master shall say at the last great day, *nothing but leaves?* Oh! my hearers, work while it is called to-day, for the night cometh when no man can work.

“ Lord, I am Thine, entirely Thine;
 Purchased and saved by blood divine;
 With full consent, Thine I would be,
 And own Thy sovereign right in me.

Thine would I live; Thine would I die,
 Be Thine through all eternity;
 The vow is past beyond repeal;
 Now will I set the solemn seal:

Here at that cross, where flows the blood,
 That bought my guilty soul for God;
 Thee, my new Master, now I call,
 And consecrate to Thee my all.”

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WHAT SHALL IT PROFIT?

“For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?”—Mark viii. 36-37. See Matt. xvi. 26.

THESSE are the words of One of whom it is truly said, “never man spake like this man.” They are the words of one who spoke with knowledge and authority. They are the words of our Lord Jesus Christ. He had been teaching His disciples and the people the conditions of true discipleship—self-denial, taking up the cross and following Him. “And when He had called the people unto Him with His disciples also, He said unto them, whosoever will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for My sake and the gospel’s, the same shall save it.” Then He adds, in the words of the text, “For what shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?”

In considering this text let us notice—

I. *The value of the soul.* “For what shall it profit a man if he shall gain *the whole world and lose his own soul?*” The soul is the spiritual part of man, that which thinks, feels, wills, and acts; that which constitutes him a person, the immaterial and immortal part of man; that which reflects the image of God and bears the stamp of Deity. In the text our Saviour institutes a comparison between the relative values of the *soul* and the *whole world*; and the value of the latter falls away into utter

insignificance. Just think of it, one soul worth more than the whole world. Men are considered wealthy when they possess only a small portion of this world's wealth. But every man, it matters not how poor he may be in this world's goods, has a treasure which is more valuable than the whole world. Heap up all the wealth of earth, dig into its bowels and bring forth all of its rich treasures: gold, silver, and precious stones. Add to this the *sun* with all of his satellites. Add on *star* after *star*, till the number is incomprehensible; take the whole material universe, and what is it compared to a single soul? Nothing, absolutely *nothing!* Every man is a millionaire in a much higher sense than earth's dictionaries give to the word. He has a soul which he may call his own that is worth more than the whole world. The priceless value of the soul may be argued—

1. From its *capacity for enjoyment and sorrow*. The truest and most unalloyed happiness is experienced by the soul: and the deepest sorrow and misery come from the same source. Those pleasures which are 'purely mental are much deeper and more lasting than the merely bodily. Even the pleasures derived through those senses which have the least to do with the body are the purest and the highest. For example, the pleasures derived through the eye and the ear are much nobler than those derived through the other senses—they have the requisites of real happiness to a greater extent; they are more lasting and more satisfying. Then if you will consider those exercises which are purely mental, you will find that there is a gradual rise in the scale. The pleasures of the mind approach nigh unto perfection at times, and its pains and sorrows sometimes are excruciating. But the pleasures and sorrows of the *soul* rise

still higher in the scale, because fraught with more momentous interests. The happiness which results from a sense of pardoned sin, who can know it but he who experiences it? Oh! what joy unspeakable and full of glory to know that God has accepted the sinner as righteous in His sight for Christ's sake, and that he is entitled to all the privileges of the sons of God! This is the very quintessence of happiness. But in this life it is only a foretaste of what it shall be hereafter. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him." But there is another side to this picture. There is not a *joy* of the soul but has its counterpart among the sorrows which may be experienced by the same soul. Oh! what deep sorrow, yea, even anguish, the soul will inevitably experience from fear, shame, apprehension of judgment, remorse, and finally despair. The soul separated from God and all that's good, with not even a possibility of ever being reunited to them, and suffering to the fullest the dreadful consequences of sin. This is sorrow which no human language can express and which no human soul can know except him who experiences it. Sorrow inexpressible and full of torments! The soul then is highly and necessarily valuable, because of its wonderful capacities in the directions which have just been pointed out. If you would know the real value of the soul, open the gates of heaven and behold the possibilities that are in reach of a redeemed soul; then open the gates of hell and behold the darkened career of a lost soul.

2. The soul is valuable, again, because of its immortality. The things of time and sense are transitory—they will soon pass away. But the soul shall live for-

ever. Herein consists the great value of the soul when compared with the things of this world. What boots it then if we gain none of the wealth and treasure of time, just so our souls are properly educated for eternity—just so they are saved? “For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out.” The great question therefore that ought to concern every man is the spiritual condition of his soul during life, and especially at the close of life, when he finishes his course on earth and in time. For as the soul enters eternity so shall it continue without ceasing. The life and immortality of the soul, which have been brought to light so clearly in the gospel, are wrapped up in one word, and that word is *eternity!* But this is a word whose meaning is so broad, so long, so deep, and so high that no finite mind can ever comprehend it. When we speak of *time* we have some idea what is meant. A *day* is twenty-four hours, the time occupied by the earth in making a revolution on its axis; a year is three hundred and sixty-five days, the time occupied by the earth in making a complete revolution around the sun; a century is one hundred years. I say, we know something about *time*. But *eternity*, who knows what it is? Do you say it is time extended indefinitely? This will not do, for the angel shall stand upon the sea and upon the land, and shall lift up his hand to heaven, and shall swear by Him that liveth for ever and ever that *time* shall be no longer. Time is but a narrow strip of land which separates between two boundless oceans of eternity—an eternity behind, an eternity before.

“Oh! the clanging bells of Time!
Night and day they never cease;
We are wearied with their chime,
For they do not bring us peace;

And we hush our breath to hear,
 And we strain our eyes to see,
 If thy shores are drawing near—
 Eternity! Eternity!"

In eternity the conditions of time shall be abolished. There shall be no *sun* for the *day*; no *moon* and *stars* for the night. In *that* world there shall be no *night*, for the Lord God Almighty shall be its everlasting *Light!* In *that* world there shall be no *light*, but blackness of darkness forever!

"Lo, on a narrow neck of land,
 'Twixt two unbounded seas, I stand,
 Secure, insensible;
 A point of time, a moment's space,
 Removes me to that heavenly place,
 Or shuts me up in hell."

These are the words of one whose statements are final, whose statements are axioms in the world of thought and truth.

About thirty-three years is the average of human life on earth. Every person who lives thirty-three years lives over a billion of seconds. Multiply this number by eighty-two million, and you will get the number of seconds all the people in the United States live in an age. Multiply this vast product by twenty-five, and you will have the number of seconds lived by all the inhabitants of the world in an age. Add to this exorbitant number, which has already become unmanageable, all the seconds lived by all the inhabitants of the world during the past ages; then multiply this tremendously enormous sum by itself and convert the product into *years* instead of *seconds*, and suppose it to be the life of a single individual; and he will only have commenced eternity—he

will only be on its shores. Vast and incomprehensible as this number is, it is nothing compared to eternity. The soul shall live through cycles upon cycles of ages like this! We can never know its value till we can grasp the infinite idea of eternity. There is but one mind that does know its value, and that is the Infinite Mind of God.

3. Again, I remark that the soul is incalculably valuable because *it took a Divine Sacrifice to redeem it*. As far as we know, nothing short of the blood of the eternal Son of God could redeem the soul. Christ knew what the soul was worth when He entered into the covenant of redemption with the Father before the foundation of the world. He knew the worth of the soul when He went through all of His humiliation on earth. Can you reach to the heights of glory from which He came? Can you stoop at the depths of suffering into which He descended? Ah! No. Neither can you know the value of the immortal soul. "We are not redeemed with corruptible things, such as gold and silver, but with the precious and priceless blood of Christ." He came from heaven, took upon Himself the form of a servant; spent a life of suffering on earth, sometimes spending hours in the deepest agonies; underwent a trial before a tribunal of poor, miserable worms of the dust, endured the agonies of the garden, and suffered death on the cross. He did all this rather than let the soul be forever lost. Such was the value the Son of God put upon the soul; and He knew exactly how much it was worth. The value of an article is often determined by the price it will bring in the market. Here is the soul selling for what? The world? Yes, and sometimes for much less, even for a "mess of pottage" of this world. But this is not really selling the soul; it is giving it away, yea, throwing it

away; it is merely losing it. But the soul was actually bought once. The price which the soul brought was an infinite one. It brought the precious blood of the eternal Son of God. The whole scheme of redemption, in its beginning, development, and final consummation, was originated by the value of the soul.

“What is the thing of greatest price,
The whole creation round?
That which was lost in Paradise,
That which in Christ is found.

The soul of man, Jehovah's breath,
That keeps two worlds at strife;
Hell moves beneath to work its death,
Heaven stoops to give it life;

God to redeem it, did not spare
His well-beloved Son;
Jesus to save it, deigned to bear,
The sins of all in one.”

II. In the second place, we learn from this text that *there is great danger of losing the soul in eternity; and from other passages of Scripture we learn that there is an absolute certainty of it if the soul is out of Christ.*

Death is the natural and inevitable consequence of sin. “The wages of sin is death.” Therefore, all who come under the category of sin are liable to death and all that is included in it. Sin necessarily separates between God and the sinner, and were there no counteracting power and influence, eternal and spiritual death would be the inevitable result. So the provision of a ransom to redeem the sinner is remarkably a gratuitous act on the part of God, and is pre-eminently out of His ordinary plan of providence. For it would be strictly according

to law and justice were we banished forever from His presence. The Christian dispensation, then, is entirely a new dispensation—it stands without a parallel in the whole economy of God—unique and alone.

But the provision of a ransom of the spiritual freedom of the sinner does not secure unconditionally his salvation. It only suspends the penalty of the law till the conditions are fulfilled. There are certain things for us to do before this salvation can be applied to us. There is something to do to save the soul; to lose it, we are to do nothing. The conditions of death have already been fulfilled. Therefore, to save the soul what has been done must be undone. Now Christ has paid the penalty of our sins on the cross. This puts us back where we were under the covenant of works, or where we were before the fall. But Christ has done more than this—His *sufferings* are not all of His work—He has lived and obeyed. The covenant of works said, “Do and live”; and no doubt if our first parents had lived in obedience for a certain length of time they would have been *justified, i. e.*, they would have been *confirmed* in holiness. They would have been beyond the power of a fall. This Christ has done for all His people. He kept every jot and tittle of the law. But to secure the benefits of Christ’s work there are certain things for every one to do. We must accept Him as our Redeemer, and trust Him as our Saviour. Faith in Him is an absolutely necessary condition of salvation. Simply neglect this and the loss of the soul will inevitably follow. To be lost, that’s all we’ve got to do—just to *refuse, or neglect*, to believe on the Son of God. Our Saviour Himself says: “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.” As by *faith* the sinner is *saved*, so by *re-*

fusing to exercise faith he is lost. Therefore, *unbelief* is the great cause of the danger of the soul being lost. As long as we are in a state of unbelief there is great danger. Why, then, does any one remain in this state of unbelief, since there is such great danger in it?

There may be various answers to this question. From the text we may infer that one great cause is the inordinate passion and craving thirst which men have for the things of this world. A man tries to gain the world, centers his affections on it, and hence neglects his soul. He grabs for wealth while falling into the jaws of death. It is related that near Richmond, Va., two men were fishing in the James river. They were standing upon some rocks which were above the water but in the main current of the stream. A few hours before a heavy rain had fallen above them. The waters soon begin to rise, but the men are so intently engaged that they do not notice it. All the rocks except the one on which they stand are soon covered. When they come to realize their perilous situation they give the alarm. A crowd assembles, and in it a man who offers a reward for the rescue of the unfortunate men. Some one says he will make the attempt. He gets him a skiff, but cannot go directly across to the men on account of the swiftness of the waters. So he is compelled to go above them and come down to them. Their only chance to be saved is to jump into the boat as it passes. It goes by and one of the fishermen jumps in and is saved; the other pauses for a moment to get his fishing tackle, and in this way loses his only opportunity to be saved. Thus it is with the sinner who bends all his energies to gain the things of the world and neglects to get into the ark of salvation which is bound for the shores of heaven and eternal deliverance.

Is there a man here who has an inordinate desire for the things of this world? Tell that man there is *danger!* But this is not the only source of danger. Is there a man here who is *fond of strong drink?* Tell that man to beware, there is *danger!* Is there a man here who *takes the name of the Lord God in vain?* Tell him there is *danger!* Is there a man here who is *willingly violating any known law of God?* If so, tell him to beware, for there is *great danger!* "Cursed is every one which continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." Is there a man here who is *dead in trespasses and sin?* Oh! sound it in his ears, sound it so loud that even the dead by the aid of the Holy Spirit will hear, *danger! danger!*

This danger of losing the soul is regulated by the probability of accepting Christ. Is there strong probability of accepting Him? Then the danger decreases. Is there little probability of accepting Him? Then the danger is increased. But there is great danger as long as man stays away from Christ. "He that believeth not is already condemned."

Therefore, the importance of the whole matter rests upon the question whether we believe in Christ or not. The sinner is on a sinking wreck, and there is only one life-boat in his reach. All he has to do to be secure is to jump into it. Oh! my friends, out of Christ, as long as you stay away from Him, there is alarming and increasing danger. *In Him you are saved; out of Him you are lost!* This is the difference between a *believing sinner* and an *unbelieving sinner*—but it is an infinite difference—*saved, lost!*

III. In the last place, I deduce as a lesson from this text, *that if the soul be lost in eternity it is irretrievably*

lost. "What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" This last part needs to be emphasized. "What shall a man give in exchange of his soul?"—*i. e.*, if a man barter away his soul in this life, with what shall he buy it back in eternity? If a man were to gain the whole world in this life, and lose his soul, in eternity he could not reverse the order by giving back the world for his soul. You have seen in this life what the world calls paupers; but there will be paupers in eternity with which the paupers here cannot be compared. In this world it matters not how deep a man may sink into sin and poverty; there are some things which he may call his own. But in eternity a great revolution is going to take place—such a revolution as has never been witnessed before. Kings and potentates will be abased; millionaires will become bankrupt; the out-cast and the down-trodden here will be exalted to thrones in yonder world; for they shall be kings and priests unto God; paupers here will be millionaires yonder, for all things shall be theirs. Oh! what a great, what a wonderful revolution! The proud shall be abased; the humble shall be exalted. The Bible clearly teaches that the state of things which now prevails is not going to last always. Time is going to be swallowed up in eternity. This great change is to take place at Christ's second coming. A voice shall be sent through all the earth, which shall move the living and awake the dead—*come to judgment, come to judgment!* "For the Lord Himself shall descend with a *shout*, with the *voice* of the archangel, and with the *trump* of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds,

to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with Him." Day of judgment—momentous day—day of destiny—great day of the Lord, against which all others sink away into insignificance! On that day the supreme court of the world will be in session. The whole world will be checked in its progress and unharnessed. Earth's countless millions will assemble. "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ." Oh! what a court that will be. The highest judicatory in the whole world. *Jesus Christ* will be the *judge*; *God and each man's conscience* will constitute the *jury*. The *Holy Spirit* will be the *advocate* for the true Israel of God. Those who have forgotten God will need no one to plead their cause, for they will be self-condemned.

There are *two characteristics* of this court to which particular attention ought to be given just here: 1. *All the decisions which shall be reached, and all the sentences which shall be passed, on that day will be in the highest degree righteous.* No mistakes will be made on that day. No guilty man will be justified; no righteous man will be condemned. Every man's soul will be weighed in the balances of truth and righteousness. A line will be drawn which shall separate the vast assemblage into two classes—the righteous and the wicked. To the former the Great Judge shall say, *Come!* to the latter, *Depart!*

Again, *the decisions on that day will be final.* There shall be no appeals from this court, no reversing its decision. These shall go away into *everlasting* punishment; but the righteous into life eternal. "What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" If you would see *despair* developed to its highest state of perfection, go among the finally impenitent—not a ray of hope, not a possibility of reform—sinners themselves and surrounded

by nothing but sin, where every tendency leads them in the direction of sin. Is it not according to fixed laws that, instead of getting better, they will grow worse and worse? Interminable despair! If the inhabitants of that dark region can utter one word in earnest, comprehending, to some extent at least, the world of meaning which is wrapped up in it, it must be the word *lost!* *Lost to God; lost to heaven; lost to happiness; lost to all eternity! Lost! Lost!! Lost!!!*

FOR WHAT IS YOUR LIFE?

“For what is your life?”—James iv. 14.

THE word *life* spoken of in the text is that part of a man's existence which he spends upon earth. We commence our existence here; but it is an existence that has no end. It goes on forever, a *beginning* without and *ending*, a stream that has a *fountain* but no *culmination*, for it flows on from time into God's ocean of eternity—it flows on forever.

The problem of life has furnished food for the ablest minds in all ages of the world's history. This momentous question agitated the brains of the heathen philosophers from the very earliest times. But with all the learning which they possessed they were not able to solve this problem. Life was to them a profound mystery. They could not comprehend the subject, for they were not in possession of all the facts in the case. A great many of them entertained very strange notions on the subject. While the most of them believed in the immortality of the soul, yet this glorious doctrine was covered over with so many doubts and clouds that there was not much satisfaction in it. Some looked upon life as not only *commencing*, but also *ending* here. They considered death the entrance into a state of annihilation and nonentity, and after the life was ended here it was never heard of again. There were those among this class who considered life a *burden*, taking a very pessimistic view of every thing, and they longed for death as a welcome visitor, who should remove all the burdens and sorrows of life, from the fact that it would destroy their existence.

There were others who believed in what is called the doctrine of the *transmigration of the soul*, which taught that the soul upon the death of the body passed into another order of being, either higher or lower; and thus there was a continual interchanging of souls going on from one generation to another. The soul of the individual who had lived uprightly and honestly passed into a higher and nobler order of existence, and the soul of him who had lived a wicked life passed into a lower and more degraded order of existence. Thus, as the soul passed from one order of existence to another in a state of virtue and honesty it could approximate the degree of absolute perfection; and as it passed from one stage of existence to another in sin and wickedness it would descend lower and lower in the order of being till it would get so far down in the depths of degradation that it would be past recovery.

It was not till the *gospel* came that the true philosophy of life was brought to light. Jesus Christ has brought life and immortality to light in the gospel. Without this knowledge which Christ reveals concerning our existence here and hereafter life in the main would be a great and inexplicable mystery. But this great Leader has scattered all the clouds and darkness which naturally hang around this interesting subject and has shed abroad upon it the brightness and the glory which emanate alone from His divine and sacred person. He has revealed the importance of this great subject, showing us that whatever is noble and praiseworthy and desirable here and hereafter is inseparably connected with it. The true philosophy of life has been developed and brought to light clearly in the gospel. Life is no longer a burden; but its issues are of sufficient importance to demand the

attention of the highest order of beings. It is very necessary, therefore, that we weigh impartially and earnestly consider the demands and issues of this superlatively important subject. Then what is your life?

1. *It is uncertain.* How constantly do we see this truth exemplified around us, and yet how difficult is it for us to profit by it! A man may be in perfect health one day and the next day he may be in the embrace of death. We cannot tell what a day may bring forth. Our existence may be prolonged for years, and, as far as we know, we may be standing upon the very threshold of the unseen world.

Why is our life uncertain as far as we are concerned? *It is uncertain, first, because we do not understand our own being.* We are fearfully and wonderfully made. Life in its essence is far above our comprehension. All the medical skill and scientific researches of the world have never been able to analyze life and tell us what it is. Even life in the vegetable world is to us a profound mystery. We know something about this life; we know that it will prosper under certain conditions, and under certain other conditions that it will die; but we cannot tell what life is in its simplest form. The chemist may take a grain of wheat after it has been crushed to pieces and rebuild it into a perfect grain again, as far as the judgment of man goes. This reconstructed seed may possess all the essential ingredients which go to make up a grain of wheat. But it hasn't got the power of reproducing itself under any set of surroundings, however favorable. It has no life in it, and the power to put life there simply transcends the ability of man, for man has never yet discovered what life is. If man does not understand life in its simplest form, how much less does he know it when

it exists in a *higher order of being*. If man knows nothing of the essence of life in a *vegetable*, how much less does he know it in a *man*. What a grand and irrefutable argument this is for the Bible doctrine of creation, and how absurd and utterly preposterous does the Darwinian theory of development appear under the light of these unmistakable facts! If man, the highest order of being on earth, both in power and intellect, yea, the only rational creature, if he hasn't got the ability even to *understand* life, is it not altogether out of the range even of the possible for a weaker and unintelligent agent to *produce* this life? If man, with all of his power and intelligence, under whose control are the very elements of nature and before whose feet all creation bows, if he has not the power to originate life in its lowest form, how much less is it possible for a lower order of being to produce life in a higher.

"A little learning is a dangerous thing"; or perhaps it should have been a *one-sided* learning is a dangerous thing. The education of the intellect without that of the heart is a disastrous weapon put into the hands of vice and iniquity. It is not the *little learning* that is a dangerous thing; but it is the education of one part of our being to the neglect of the others. Much learning is a dangerous thing as well as a little, if it be in the wrong direction.

My brethren, this modern theory of life and development is the grandest humbug of the age, and its conception is altogether unworthy of a man who bears upon his being the impress of Deity. It is an invention to destroy God. "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God," and now he has gone about to establish this assertion, *What is life?* While we cannot answer this question,

we can answer the one which asks, *Whence cometh life?* God is the source and fountain of all life. He is the very essence and perfection of life, and He alone can produce life. My friends, we can boast of a divine ancestry. God gave us our being; He breathed within us the breath of life. And is not this life which we possess that image of God which the Bible speaks of, that spark of divinity that dwells within us? No wonder, then, we cannot comprehend this great subject. The great majority of mankind know very little about the human body. They do not know the relation one part sustains to another. There may be residing somewhere in the body a disease unknown to the person which is soon to bring on premature death. There is none of us that has the power to perpetuate the life of the body, or to extinguish it, except by means. Therefore, from this very fact, our life here, as far as we are concerned, is uncertain.

But our life is uncertain, again, because we do not understand the forces and agents that are in operation around us. Sometimes we get glimpses of the great power in nature as exhibited in the thunder storm. If we were to come under the immediate influence of this great power, we would be consumed in a moment. The mighty oak, which has survived the storms of half a century, before the sweep of this power, is torn asunder and scattered to the four winds of the earth. These forces of nature are all around us, and under certain conditions and environments they will be developed and manifest themselves. Thus we see how helpless we are when we view the great forces and agencies of destruction that are to be found all around us; and thus we see how uncertain our life is, as far as we are concerned, since we have no control, or power, over these forces directly. There are a

thousand forces in our very presence, if developed and put into operation, that could destroy our lives in a moment; and there are a great many agents around us in the hands of our fellow-men that possess the power to destroy our life here. Every time we ride upon the railroad car, as far as we know, our life is in imminent danger of being brought to an immediate end. We do not examine the condition of the cars to see whether they are safe; nor do we know about the competency of the men who have control of the train. Every time we put ourselves under the treatment of a physician, as far as we know, our lives are subject to death. We put our life into the hands of these men, as it were; and the only thing that keeps us from anxiety and uneasiness in regard to the matter is our confidence in these men. If we could but see the narrow escapes, humanly speaking, we have made from death, it would make us shudder. Our life is often suspended upon a very weak and tender cord which can be broken almost with a breath. How fortunate is it that these things which dwell in us and by which we are surrounded, that subject our life to such great danger, how fortunate it is that these things are not known to us. Our life is very uncertain. We cannot see a moment in the future. We do not know what awaits us.

But there is One to whom there are no uncertainties. It is the Governor of the universe, in whom we live and move and have our being. Our life is in His hand. He knows all about it. While to us it is uncertain, it is not so to Him. There are no contingencies and uncertainties with God. He sits upon the throne of the universe and controls the destiny of all things. Although our life may be very uncertain with us, liable to be cut off any moment, there is not a hair of our head that shall perish unless He

permits it. He gave us our life, and He can perpetuate this life. He is the God of nature, and as such He can control the thunder storm. How essential is it then that we be reconciled to God, in whose grasp is all the power in the universe; so that whether our death comes soon or late, it may be the door which shall admit us into a state of existence far more blessed than this. "What is your life?"

2. *It is short.* "It is even a vapour that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away." Job says: "My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle." The child thinks it is a long time from one birthday to another. Months used to seem to us as long as years do now. The older we get the faster do we seem to live. Our velocity in time seems to increase in a geometrical proportion. And when we reach our three-score years and ten and look back upon our life, it seems but a very short time. The days have been swifter than a weaver's shuttle. Old age and childhood shake hands together as friends separated only for a short time; and they are not long in renewing their acquaintance, for it is said that the old person becomes a child again. Life at its very best is an exceedingly short period. And oh! how this thought ought to take hold of us and consume us with its importance. I tell you, my friends, we haven't got long to stay here, and what we do must be done quickly. This is but the initiatory period of our existence, and the first thing we know it will be ended. So I call upon you to *prepare* for the change which is soon to come over you. "Prepare to meet thy God"; *prepare*, not according to your own notion of things, but according to the only correct standard, the infallible Word of God. Your soul demands your immediate and undivided attention; and

oh! whatever you do, don't neglect the interest of this immortal soul for the trifling and the perishing things of this world. The interests of this soul rise above everything else, and ought to receive your attention, first in point of *time* and first in point of *importance*.

"A few more years shall roll,
A few more seasons come;
And we shall be with those that rest,
Asleep within the tomb."

Time is the period in which to prepare for the judgment and eternity. Then don't pervert the end of your being, and don't blast the prospects of an unending career of usefulness and happiness by neglecting to care for that soul which God has planted in your bosom. You can much better afford to see your merchandize, your farming interests—all of your worldly possessions—sink into bankruptcy and ruin than to neglect a single interest of the soul. You haven't got long to consider this matter. You cannot afford to defer it a single moment. This is the way a great many people are lost, by putting off the subject from time to time, and before they are aware of it, it is too late. There are some who act as if they were *too busy* to attend to this transcendently-important subject. Yes, they are too busy to look after the interests of their souls; they are too busy to listen to the voice of their God calling them to duty. What are you going to do when you come to die? Are you going to be too busy to die? You may think so, but I tell you death is not going to consult you to see whether you are too busy or not. When death comes you must go, whether you be busy or idle. There are some who expect to attend to their souls upon their *death-beds*. If there are any such here to-

day, let me warn you against this delusion. There is very little confidence to be put in death-bed repentances. When your body is racked with pain and disease, and your mind clouded and weakened because in sympathy with the body, and your heart hardened in sin, and your life full of wicked works and rebellion against God—under these adverse circumstances you propose to be reconciled with God. Beware, *beware*, of this delusive hope! To say the least of it, it is a very weak and uncertain foundation upon which to rest the salvation of your soul. I do not say it is impossible to be saved on the death-bed; but are the probabilities not very strong against such a thing? Let me, then, urge you again to look after the interests of your soul while it is called to-day, for the night soon cometh, when no man can work. "What is your life?"

3. *It is valuable.* The life here is valuable, because it is *connected with eternity*. The life here is valuable because it *determines our condition in eternity*. We lay the foundation here; in eternity we build the superstructure. The character of the foundation determines the character of the superstructure. To know the real worth and value of our life here we must raise the veil which hides the other world from this. When we look into the future world and behold the possibilities that are in reach of a human being, this life spoken of in the text rises up before our vision as the grandest and the noblest thing that comes within the range of our observation.

The life of every individual is valuable in itself. There is within the history of every human being a world of happiness or a world of sorrow. When we take this view of the subject we see how wonderful God has made us and with what capacities He has endowed us. Who can

tell the worth and the happiness and the possibilities that are wrapped up in a single life? Perhaps you can think of a man that is so poor that he has to beg for a living; he is so uncouth that he is rejected by decent society; but within the being of that man there is a gem worth more than the whole world and which is capable of shining forever in the firmament of God's redeemed. The life of a man here may be very limited and circumscribed, and it may be fraught with events which appear to be of very little importance; but whatever a man is worth to himself hereafter; whatever attainments he shall make in his boundless sweep through the eternal ages; whatever he shall be and whatever he shall accomplish will be determined by his life in this world. There is a jewel in the life of every individual whose intrinsic value is simply beyond computation.

What, then, is your life? Simply viewed in time, disconnected from eternity, it amounts to very little, for the things which are seen and temporal shall soon pass away; but when we consider the fact that the life here is linked on to eternity and destined to continue forever, either in beatific blessedness or inexpressible sorrow, then this life is worth everything to us. We are going through a moulding process in this life; this is the formative period of our existence; and when death comes, this preparation will have been completed; then the moulds will be taken from us, and we shall be introduced into our eternal and irreversible existence. As death finds us, so shall eternity receive us. Who is there now that can look upon life as a burden, or consider its issues of little importance?

But every individual's life is not only valuable in itself, but also as related to the lives of other individuals. We are not only carving out our own destiny, but we are as-

sisting to carve the destiny of others. There is no one but that has some influence over some one else. Who can tell the influence for good exerted over mankind by a consecrated and godly life? And, on the other hand, who can tell the influence for evil exerted over mankind by a wicked and vicious life? The day of judgment alone will reveal these things. Oh! how these things increase the solemnity of living! My friend, you are your fellow-man's keeper, and you owe it to him to live right. You owe it to him to be an honest man, truthful, sober. All mankind is but one great net-work, one great scheme; and every time one individual moves he influences and causes to move some other individual or individuals. A man can't pass through this life isolated and disconnected from every other man. It may be that every man strikes a chord in the life of some other man which shall vibrate forever. You are preparing your children, and your friends, and your acquaintances for the future world. Be sure that you do not exert an influence over them that will contribute to their everlasting punishment.

In conclusion, let me ask you again, "*What is your life?*" And I would say that, out of Christ, it is all wrong. Oh! what a dark future there is before such a life as this. *No hope* for the future world; *no Saviour* to bring a deliverance; *no relief* from pain and suffering; *no peace* and *happiness* to cheer and to comfort. Such a life is a complete failure. The only life that is worth possessing is the life that is hid in God with Christ. What, then, my friend, is your life? Is it wrapped up in Christ? Is His gospel embodied in this life? If so, your life is a complete success, and you have before you the grandest and most glorious career that can be conceived by the human mind. Men talk about *success*; but there is no

real and lasting success out of Christ. All the achievements and victories and possessions which really belong to this world will soon crumble to dust and perish. But that which we receive from Christ shall endure forever, and shall always be to us an increasing source of happiness and enjoyment. This is everlasting life. Oh! my friends, lay hold of this life as it is found in the Lord Jesus Christ. Then you will be prepared for His second coming; and He shall receive you into the everlasting habitations, where you shall enjoy the fruits of this everlasting life to all eternity. "Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh."

GOD : HIS EXISTENCE.

"Know therefore this day, and consider it in thine heart, that the Lord He is God in heaven above, and upon the earth beneath; there is none else."—Deut. iv. 39.

"Of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things: whom be glory for ever. Amen."—Rom. xi. 36.

A BEAN was planted in a rich, loamy soil, and when gathered in the autumn its yield, as counted, "was 1,515 perfectly developed beans from a single stalk. Now, if a single bean produces 1,515 beans, and each bean produces 1,515 more, the sum total of the second year's product would be 2,295,225, equal to 1,195 pounds, or 597 quarts—equal to eighteen and five-eighths bushels. This would be the product of the second year. Now, if we plant this produce and the yield is the same, we have a product of 5,268,058,800,625 beans, equal to 1,371,890 tons, or 42,871,572 bushels. This third planting would give the steamship *Great Eastern* ninety-two full freights."

WHO MADE THAT BEAN?

All the men on earth, with all their machinery and wealth, could not make one bean in six thousand years. They might make a pen-knife, but could they make a knife that would make *ten others*? Could they make a watch that, if buried in the damp earth, would divide itself into 1,515 watches just like itself, and each of these watches produce 1,515 more, and so on to the end of the world?

What is this mysterious power that works with such certainty, celerity, uniformity and persistency? "Law?"

What is law? and who made it, and who executes it?
What law can enforce and execute itself?

Beyond all the deep and mysterious operations of the natural world, we see the constant guidance of an overruling, all-controlling, and Omnipotent Hand. And yet men say "there is no God."

REFUGES OF LIES.

"We have made lies our refuge."—Isaiah xxviii. 15.

THE Bible gives us spiritual knowledge and information not only concerning the things of this world, but it has raised the veil of futurity and enlightened us on some of the things which are to transpire in the world to come. It tells us of a general judgment day, when God shall judge the whole world of mankind by his Son, Jesus Christ, according to the principles of His inflexible justice. It tells us of two places, and only two, in the future world, to which the souls of all mankind will be assigned on the general judgment day. One of these places is filled with inexpressible joy and happiness; the other with inexpressible pain and sorrow. Heaven is a place of love and purity and blessedness; hell is a place of strife and anger and intense suffering. These two places shall possess these characteristics forever; and there shall be no passing from one place to the other.

The Bible also informs us that, in a state of nature, we are not prepared for heaven; it tells us that we are not prepared to meet God, the great Judge of the universe. And our own hearts corroborate the testimony of Scripture on this point. We know that we need something, in addition to what we already have, to support us when we take our departure out of this world. When we come to the threshold of the unseen world, every human support gives away. Our friends and companions can go to the gate of death with us; but they can go no farther. After that point, we must travel alone, as far as any human society is concerned. This

idea necessarily throws around death a solemnity which few other subjects possess. The most frivolous and light-hearted, when brought face to face with death, are made to have serious thoughts and reflections.

Why is it that there is a natural dread in the heart of man against death? It is because he is a sinner and is not prepared to meet his God; it is because he knows he will meet the condemnation of a righteous Judge; it is because he knows that, unless his heart has been changed, he will hear the solemn sentence justly pronounced against him and all his class: "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." Ah! the soul of man needs something to lean upon as it marches through the valley of the shadow of death and as it goes up to the judgment seat of Christ. When the storm of God's wrath gathers over a wicked world, the soul will need something to hide under. What will become of the soul that is exposed to this furious storm?

"How will my heart endure
The terrors of that day,
When earth and heaven, before his face,
Astonished, shrink away."

This great subject has made an impression on all mankind. Even the wicked are anticipating the stern realities of the future world. Most of them will tell you that they have a hope of the eternal salvation of their souls. But, alas! alas! how often is it the case that this hope is a false hope, grounded on false principles! It is amazing and alarming upon what weak and tottering foundations some men will rest the salvation of their immortal souls. How many there are who have made

lies their refuge, and under falsehood have hid themselves! And in such refuges as these they imagine themselves to be secure.

Are there any here to-day who have made lies their refuge? Are there any here who are hiding themselves under falsehood? I call upon each one of you to examine your refuge and see whether, in the light of God's Word, it is secure or not. Upon what is your hope of salvation and heaven built? In view of the stern and awful realities of the future world, to which you are rapidly hastening, it becomes you to prepare for these realities. Stop, my friend, and take your bearings.

It will be my purpose on this occasion to notice a few of the lies which men have made their refuge; and the first refuge of lies which I shall bring to your attention, is:

1. *The Refuge of Universalism.* This refuge which men have made is sufficient, they think, to secure the salvation of the whole human race. There is no one opposed to the doctrine of eternal happiness in the world to come. It is the doctrine of eternal *punishment* that clashes with the carnal mind and the wicked heart. All men are willing to be saved—some on their own terms; none are willing to be damned. But there are a great many who want to be saved in their own way. So they have destroyed, in their wicked imaginations, the doctrine of eternal punishment, and have given to the world what they call a universal salvation, which saves every man. They take refuge in what they imagine to be God's goodness and benevolence. They maintain that God is too good and benevolent a Being to punish his creatures, or to see them suffer. They say those passages of Scripture which seem to teach the doctrine of

future punishment are mere figurative expressions, and that really there is no such doctrine taught in the Bible. These men have made lies their refuge, and the very first stroke of God's hand of justice will demolish forever this refuge of lies in which they think themselves secure. It is amazing how men will rest undisturbed in their carnal security, when such momentous interests are at stake.

The whole human race is tainted more or less with the doctrine of universalism. Or, at least, every man consoles himself with the idea that he is going to be saved, it matters not what he does. Even though he may be living in open rebellion against God, yet he eases his conscience with the delusive hope that he is not going to be lost. If you could take the census of this community on this subject, I expect you would find that every one expects to be saved. No one would have it down on his programme to be lost. And yet there are doubtless scores here who will be lost.

Now, my friends, the Word of God and the Providence of God are plain and explicit in denouncing this doctrine of universalism as a refuge of lies.

Let us hear what God's Word has to say on this subject. Psalm ix. 17, says: "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God." Again, Christ informs us, in Matthew xxv. 41, that He shall say to the wicked, and to those who have refused to be his disciples, on the last great day: "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels." Again, Christ says in Matthew xxv. 46: "And these (*i. e.*, the wicked) shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal." Again, Christ says, in Mark ix. 43-4: "If thy hand offend thee

cut it off; it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: where their worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched." Again, Christ says in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, in the sixteenth chapter of Luke: "The rich man also died and was buried: and in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue: for I am tormented in this flame. But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime received thy good things and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot: neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence."

Now, my friends, if language has any meaning at all, these passages from God's Word teach: 1. That there is such a place as hell; 2. That this place was prepared for the wicked; 3. The rejecters of Christ will be consigned to this place; 4. That the sufferings of those who go to this place will be unending, for the very same adjective in the original Greek which is used to express the duration of heaven, is also used to express the duration of hell. If heaven is an eternal place, so is hell. If the Bible teaches anything, it teaches the doctrine of future and eternal punishment. If this doctrine falls to the ground, the Bible must go with it.

But I would also point those who say God is too good to punish His creatures to the *providence of God*; and I would ask them if they can find any support here for

their refuge of lies. Take the case of the flood, where God punishes the whole human race, with the exception of eight souls. And how does He punish them? He destroys their lives by sweeping them from off the face of the earth. Take the cities of the plain, and what does the record say God did with them? The Bible says: "Then the Lord rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven: and he overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground."

Take one more example in the providence of God, which ought to remove all doubts and stop all cavillings respecting the doctrine of future punishment. I refer to the crucifixion of Christ. Go visit the Saviour in the garden, where he was anticipating the sufferings of the cross. He says: "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." "And he went a little farther, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me." Then follow the Saviour to Calvary, where he pours out his life-blood upon the cross and gives up the ghost. And remember that all this was done by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God. Now, here is the argument: If God would punish an innocent being, who did no sin, but was merely a substitute of the sinner: yea, if God would punish his only begotten and well-beloved Son, who was eternally the brightness of his glory and the express image of his Person, with such a violent death as that upon the cross, do you think he will be too good to punish the wicked, who have defied the living God and would none of his reproof? "The way of the transgressor is hard." This is the law of God Almighty as

seen in this life; it is only a prophecy of what it will be in the life to come. "Be not deceived; God is not mocked, for whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap."

The universalist has made lies his refuge, and under falsehood he is trying to hide himself. The very nature of God demands that he punish sin. God cannot permit sin to go unpunished without subverting the very principle upon which his moral kingdom is built. It will be unfortunate, indeed, for that man's soul who waits till the judgment day to find out that universalism is a refuge of lies.

II. Another refuge of lies which men have made is their *morality*. Let it be understood, once for all, that I am not speaking against morality as a system by which to regulate our conduct. The Bible enforces morality. It is impossible to please God without a sound, healthy morality. But I am speaking against men making morality the foundation of their hopes of salvation and heaven. Morality is a good thing in its place; yea, an indispensable thing, in its place. But, as a ground of our justification in the sight of God, it is a refuge of lies. Yet, there are thousands of souls resting in this delusion. They imagine that they are going to be saved, because they have been good citizens, good neighbors and honest men. They have been kind and benevolent, and have contributed to the support of charitable institutions. Perhaps they will tell you that they have no fears of death. They will tell you that they expect to be saved in heaven with God's people. And upon what is their hope of heaven grounded? Upon their morality. I tell you, my friends, that is a refuge of lies. These men are expecting to do something which no man has ever done

and which no man can possibly do—reach heaven without Christ. There is no Christ in the gospel of the moralist, and yet he expects to reach heaven, when the Word of God distinctly tells us that there is no other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved.

Yea, the moralist would seem to force his way into heaven in spite of God. He admits that God has directed us how to be saved—by Jesus Christ his Son; but he says by his actions that he is going to run an independent schedule in his salvation. What does he care about Christ as a Saviour? What does he care about an atonement for sin? What does he care about the work of the Holy Spirit? What does he care about the doctrines of regeneration, justification and sanctification? What does he care about the church of God?

My friends, if a man can be saved by his morality, the whole plan of salvation, as found in the gospel of Christ, is a consummate farce. If a man can be saved by his morality, God made one of the most egregious errors on record when he sent his Son into the world to die that men through his death might be saved. If man can be saved by his morality, the Bible is a pack of lies, and, instead of commanding our respect, ought to be committed to the flames. If man can be saved by his morality, Socrates and Confucius are far better teachers than Christ, for he tells us that without him we can do nothing. But rest assured, my hearer, that no man shall ever enter heaven by his morality. Some men may be satisfied with morality as a sufficient reason why they should be saved; but this will never satisfy God, and he is to be the Judge. When the moralist comes up to the threshold of heaven, he will be abashed and confounded, when he sees written over its portals: "And there shall

in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: *but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.*" But he goes on and knocks at the door for admittance. He is asked upon what ground he desires to be admitted. He answers, "Upon the ground of my morality." The porter refuses to let him in, because it is written, None shall obtain admittance here except those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life. The moralist appeals to God for admittance. He says: "I was a good citizen in the other world; I lived an honest and honorable life; and I fully expected my morality to save me. I made no other preparation; this was the refuge of my soul." God shall say to him: "Did I not give you my Word to read? Did this Word not tell you that all men were sinners by nature and by practice, and that the wages of sin is death? Did this Word not tell you that by the deeds of the law no man living should be justified? Further, did this Word not tell you that the blood of Jesus Christ, my Son, cleanseth from all sin? Did this Word not tell you to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, promising you salvation upon the ground of your faith in him? Did this Word not also tell you that he that believeth not shall be damned? And here you are, wanting to share in the glories and blessings of Christ's kingdom, when, in the other world, you spurned the offers of his gospel and turned your back upon his church. Here you are wanting me to violate my sacred oath and contradict my solemn word. I am God, infinite, eternal and unchangeable in my truth and justice; you cannot enter these portals. 'Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.'" O what a complete and disastrous wreck the refuge of the

moralist will be when the storm of God's wrath and judgment is poured upon it!

III. Another refuge of lies in which millions of souls are resting is *procrastination*. They will tell you that they expect sometime to attend to the subject of their soul's salvation. They think there is plenty of time yet. They expect to do great things—in the future, but it is always in the future. And their salvation will always be in the future, for God will sweep them away in their presumption and procrastination.

I have read an allegory which forcibly illustrates the spiritual condition of a vast multitude of the human race. "One evening," says the allegory, "a young man was sitting in his cottage, talking with his wife as to their future. He was poor as to money, but had the wealth of a good and strong constitution, and able and willing hands to work. He was blest with a good mind and full of energy and industry. Sitting in his lap was a little son, who had not numbered his first twelve months. The young mother was busy with her needle. Just then was heard a knock at the door, and a cordial invitation given to come in. A neighbor, thought the young couple. But much to their alarm, in walked *Death*. Fixing his eyes upon the young man, he said in an authoritative manner: '*Young man, I have come for you and shall make you a citizen of my silent kingdom.*' 'Have mercy!' exclaimed the young man. 'You have mistaken the house; you certainly must have come for my old rich neighbor.' '*I make no mistakes; I came for you; I respect neither age, circumstance, nor condition. Come, go!*' Said the young man in the terror of despair: 'Let me reason with you! Let me plead my case! Hear my petition for a longer life!' *Death* said: '*Speak on*

and let me hear your case. I do sometimes relent for a season, at least.' The young man said: 'In the first place, I think you have come too soon for me. I have just started life; and there you see my young wife, and here in my lap our little babe. Would you make her a widow so soon, and my child fatherless? Who will take care of them if you take me away?' Besides, here is my little home I have just bought. My prospects in life are fair and inviting. Would you blight all in a moment? Let me live to mature my plans, and see my boy grow up to man's estate, so that he will be able to take care of his mother. And the last reason I have is this: I have not made that preparation I should have made for so important a journey as you would send me on. I have neglected my soul's highest welfare in thinking of my temporal affairs. I am not prepared to meet my God.' Death arose from his seat and said: '*Young man, you have stated your case and condition fairly and with good reasons; I will leave this time without you; but mark me well, I will return at some future day, but will hear no reasons—you must go then. Before I come again, I will send you three messengers; each will tell you I am coming—take care that you heed them.*' 'I will,' exclaimed the young man, and thank you for your kindness in now going and your generous consideration in sending me notice.' Time rolled on. The young man grew to middle age; and soon old age came upon him. His life had been a success, so far as this world was concerned. Affluence and children had blessed his declining years. One pleasant evening, sitting at his ease and comfort in his elegant home, with a little grandson playing about him, he heard a ring at the door bell. Too old and stiff to go to the door, he called to the visitor to

come in. In stepped Death. 'What!' exclaimed the old man, 'come so soon?' 'Yes,' answered Death, who, eyeing his old acquaintance, added, '*I have come for you as I promised.*' 'Promised!' said the old man. Yes, you promised to send me three messengers before you yourself would come in person, and I have not seen one of them.' '*I sent them,*' said Death, '*and if you did not heed them, it was not my fault.*' 'When did you send your messengers, for I have not the faintest recollection of their coming?' rejoined the old man. '*I sent them,*' answered Death, '*and if they came quickly and gently reminded you in looks and by touches, you should have heeded their silent, but yet expressive, admonitions.*' 'Explain yourself,' said the old man, 'for I do not understand.' '*Easily enough done,*' said Death. '*When I first came, you were a young man; your hair was as black as the raven's wing—now it is gray, and your locks are thinned by age. That was my first messenger. Those eyes of yours were bright and undimmed by age; now I see you use glasses to aid your failing sight. That was my second messenger. That form of yours was stout and strong, unbent by years; now you totter as you walk and lean upon your cane for support. That was my third messenger.*' 'But, hear me,' said the old man, 'what you have said is very true, but my cares and business affairs have been so great that I have neglected to make preparation for so important and serious a journey. I have made no preparation to meet you, O Death; though I knew you were coming at some future time, but did not expect you so soon. I am not prepared to meet my God and Judge just now. Give me a little more time—just a few more years, will you not?' 'No,' answered Death; '*If you have failed to attend to so great a matter for so*

long a time, the fault is yours, not mine. I warned you, but you heeded not; you must go now unprepared, and the consequences be upon your own immortal soul. Come! and, laying his cold hand upon the old man, his soul departed."

There are thousands in the world whose experiences are very much like this old man's. There is no virtue in thinking on this subject. O ye procrastinators, Death is sending you messengers every day; how long are you going to put off the consideration of your souls' salvation? At the rate you are going at now, I can tell you, *Forever!* O, my friends, give up this refuge of lies, that you expect some day to become a Christian, and delay not a moment in accepting Christ as your Saviour. You have the opportunity now to secure the salvation of your souls. But the time is coming when this opportunity will be gone forever. Then, if this opportunity has not been improved, you will utter the sad and inevitable lamentation, Too late, too late!

In conclusion, my hearer, let me ask you again, upon what is your hope of heaven grounded? Let me warn you before it is too late against the refuges of lies which men have made. Beware of *universalism* as a refuge! Beware of *morality* as a refuge. Beware of that delusive, soul-destroying hope that you expect some day to attend to your soul's salvation; beware of this as a refuge. Hell itself is overflowing with good intentions.

Oh, what a sad disappointment, what an irretrievable calamity will befall those who have made lies their refuge! O my dying fellow-sinner, give up these refuges of lies, and take refuge in the eternal truth of God. Fly to Jesus Christ. He is the only safe and secure refuge for the soul in the whole universe. In him your conscience

will be eased; in him your soul will be saved; in him you will be beyond all possibility of danger. All other refuges are lies; but he is an absolute, secure refuge. In him the soul is securely sheltered from every storm. All the resources of omnipotence are enlisted in behalf of the soul that takes refuge in the Lord Jesus Christ. God would say of such a soul:

**“The soul that on Jesus hath leaned for repose,
I will not, I will not desert to his foes;
That soul though all hell should endeavor to shake,
I’ll never, no, never, no, never forsake.”**

Oh, immortal soul, make the Lord Jesus Christ thy refuge. Then you will have beneath you the everlasting arms of God to hold you up and to keep you.

THE DISASTROUS RESULTS OF BAD COMPANY

"Peter sat down among them."—Luke xxii. 55.

CHRIST had been delivered into the hands of the enemy, and was now arraigned before their judgment bar. This was certainly a trying period in the Saviour's life. If there ever was a time when his friends ought to have been by his side, this must have been the time. There he was on trial for his life, and his enemies were resorting to the basest means to condemn him.

Where was Peter, who had said, only a short time before, that he would die before he would leave or deny Christ. He was in the same hall with Christ; but he was in another part of it. The servants of the high priest had built a fire in the hall and had gathered around this fire to warm. In some way Peter had gotten into this crowd. Instead of being by the side of his Master, where his duty called him, and where he had promised to be, he was in another part of the hall, among the enemies of Christ. Peter had gotten into bad company. He sat down among the enemies of Christ, thus practically professing to be one of them. He was not in this crowd long till his religion was tried so severely that it was found wanting. The strongest disciple is in danger when he makes the avowed enemies of Christ his preferred companions. Bad company has caused many a Christian to deny his Lord and Master. Whenever you see a professing Christian seeking the companionship of the ungodly, it is a sure sign that his religion is at a very low ebb. It is a sure sign that he has already

wandered away from the Saviour, or that he soon will do it. It is hard for us to realize what a wonderful and extensive influence our companions exert over us. We are oftentimes unconscious of this influence; we cannot feel it, it comes upon us so gradually. But the first thing we know, it has us in its grasp, and it is hard for us to be delivered from its power. It is simply *appalling* what enormous sins a man's companions will cause him to commit! Thousands of promising young men have been brought to drunkard's graves by bad company; thousands of interesting young men have been led into the enormous and heinous sin of taking God's name in vain by their wicked and profane companions; thousands of young men have had their hopes blasted and their prospects in life ruined because they have been led by their wicked companions into some gambling saloon, which is the very gate of hell; thousands of precious youth among both sexes, have been led by their wicked companions into other dens of vice and wickedness, where they have lost their virtue and have committed the most atrocious crimes, not only against God, but also against man; yes, thousands upon thousands of immortal souls have been led over the precipice of eternal destruction by their wicked companions. I don't suppose there ever was a man who went to hell without carrying some one else with him. This is a fearful thought, and one that ought to cause us to try to exert an influence for good, and one that ought to cause us to be careful as to the character of the persons whom we choose as our companions in life. Every man influences, and every man is influenced. There is an influence that goes out from every man, and there is an influence that comes back to every man. It becomes us to keep our eyes on both of

these influences. Be careful that you do not exert an influence which will be for evil; and be careful that the influence which other men exert over you will not be for evil. God is going to hold you responsible for the influence you exert over your fellowmen, and he is going to hold you responsible for the influence which they exert over you. There is a double responsibility about this matter.

Let us examine Peter's case a little further. He got into bad company; he got into a crowd where the religion of the Lord Jesus Christ was despised, where it was fashionable to deny Christ and to curse and to swear. Peter sat down among these men and became one of them. Who would have thought that Peter would have been in this crowd of men, who were avowed enemies of Christ, especially when it was so manifest that duty called him to another place nearby? And who would have thought that Peter would have been guilty of the great sin which he committed while in the company of those wicked persons? Yet, if ye will consider the steps which led to this enormous sin, we will see that it is not so surprising after all. If Peter had followed the path of duty before he got to that hall, it is not at all likely that he would have been found in such bad company; and hence he would not have been tempted to deny his Lord and Master. One sin leads to another. A person does not become a notorious sinner in a day.

Let us look for a moment at the steps which Peter took before he reached his great sin.

1. *The first step was self-confidence.* Peter was beginning to think pretty well of his own goodness and his own spiritual ability. He did not think there was any possible chance of him ever forsaking the blessed

Master. After Christ had told him that he was going to deny him three times before the cock should crow, he said: "Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee." And after Christ had told the disciples that they all were going to be offended because of him that night, Peter said: "Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended." I tell you the strongest disciple is in danger when he begins to lean upon the weak arm of human flesh. That was Peter's first step in his wayward career. He was preparing the way for his fall when he was making those self-confident assertions.

2. *Indolence.* Christ was in the garden of Gethsemane with his disciples. He took Peter and James and John away from the other disciples, and he instructed them to watch and pray while he went on a little farther and fell on the ground under the heavy burden of sin, which was weighing so heavily upon his soul. After a while he returns and finds the disciples actually asleep. He singles Peter out from the rest and says to him: "Simon, sleepest thou? couldest not thou watch one hour?" And then he went away a second time, and upon his return he found them asleep again. Instead of doing what Christ had commanded him to do, Peter was taking his ease in sleep. He is getting ready to sit down among the enemies of Christ. Indolence and idleness are the parents of an innumerable posterity of sins. If the Christian wants to fall into sin, just let him become idle or indolent in the Master's vineyard. There must be *exercise* where there is *growth*. The way to *be good* and to *keep good* is to *do good*. The way to *keep right* is to *live right*. Indolence is the devil's work-shop where he manufactures all kinds of sins.

“What heart can think or tongue express
The harm that groweth of idleness !”

3. *Wavering Indecision.* He had declared more than once a short time before this that he would die before he would leave Christ; in a short time he forsakes Christ and then directly he follows him afar off. Vacillating and wavering! First on Christ's side, and then deserting the Saviour's cause altogether, and then making a miserable compromise by following him afar off. Now, we can see where Peter, the self-confident disciple, is going. First, self-confident; then, indolent; then, undecided. There is nothing that is to be detested more in the Christian life than indecision and a compromising spirit. It is the duty of the Christian to be as firm and immovable as the everlasting hills when matters of principle are involved. He is to make no compromises whatever with the world. If he becomes undecided in his adherence to Christ and commences to compromise with the world, there is no telling what his end will be. The Christian who would walk in the path of duty must be firm and decided. He must be decided *as to what he must do* and he must be decided as to what *he must not do*. It will not do for him to be like Peter—first on one side of the fence and then on the other side, and then on top. He must get on the Lord's side, and he must stay on it; for this is the only safe position that he can occupy.

4. Peter took one more step before he reached the precipice: *he ventured needlessly into bad company.* When a person gets off of the right track, it is a very easy matter to stay off of it; and when he gets off of the right track, there is very apt to be a wreck before he stops. Look at Peter. He got off of the right track by leaning upon the weak arm of flesh; then he went to

sleep when Christ told him to watch; then he followed Christ afar off; then he got into bad company; and then he came to the final fall, the cursing and the swearing and the thrice repeated denial. You see, this great sin was not born in a moment. Peter's heart had been preparing for it several hours. Peter kept on getting away from Christ, till he got among Christ's enemies, and after he got there he was prepared to commit any sin. Just consider how he developed in sin while he was in this bad company. When he was first accused of being one of Christ's disciples he said: "I know not what thou sayest." Upon the next attack he said: "I know not the man." Upon the third attack he commenced to curse and to swear, saying: "I know not the man." And this is Peter, the self-confident disciple, who had said a few hours before this that he would die before he would deny Christ! "Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee."

Thus we see what a great sin Peter was led to commit by being in bad company. He left Christ and associated with the enemies of Christ, and this was the occasion of his great sin. "Bad company is, to many, an occasion of sin; and those who needlessly thrust themselves into it, go upon the devil's ground, venture into his crowds, and may expect either to be tempted and ensnared, as Peter was, or to be ridiculed and abused, as his Master was; they scarcely can come out of such company without guilt or grief, or both. He that would keep God's commandments and his own covenant, must say to evil-doers, Depart from me."—MATTHEW HENRY.

If we will consider some of the aggravations of Peter's sin, we will see what an enormous sin it was.

1. *Christ had given him fair warning that this sin was*

coming. Christ had told Peter that he would deny him three times before the cock should crow. Peter ought to have been on the look-out; and instead of running into temptation as he did, he ought to have avoided it. As he gathered around that fire with those servants of the high priest, who were the enemies of Christ, he ought to have known that he would be tempted to deny his Saviour. He ought, therefore, to have kept out of bad company. He ought to have kept close to the Saviour's side.

2. *Another thing which aggravated Peter's great sin was the solemn promises he had made to Christ never to forsake him.* Just a few hours before the denial, Peter had told Christ that he would die before he would deny him. But when Peter got into bad company, he broke these promises all to pieces. I expect the other disciples thought that Peter was immovable when he was making those solemn promises to Christ; they thought almost as much of him, I expect, as the Romanists do to-day; they were almost ready to put him in the papal chair. But, after the denial, I reckon they were as far from such a thing as you or I. I tell you, Peter's conduct on this occasion is fatal to the Romish doctrine of papal infallibility.

3. *Another thing which aggravated Peter's sin was the fact that it was committed so soon after the institution of the Lord's Supper.* This great sin was committed the same night in which the Lord's Supper was instituted. When Peter denied his Lord so wickedly, he was right fresh from the communion table. He had received at that table an inestimable pledge of the Saviour's redeeming love; but during the same night he said with oaths and cursings, "I know not the man." Peter was

certainly advancing in sin very rapidly. Before he had hardly digested the bread and the wine which he had received at the Lord's table, he was cursing and swearing and saying that he did not even know Christ.

4. Again, *the fact that Peter repeated his sin so often was very aggravating.* Sometimes a man may be overtaken in a sin unawares, as it were, when he would have been far from such a thing if he had had time to consider the issues involved. But the fact that he repeats the sin, after he has had time to deliberate upon it, makes the sin more heinous in the sight of God. Now, look at Peter as he sat around that fire, among the enemies of Christ. Upon being asked if he is not one of Christ's disciples, at first he pretends that he does not understand the import of the question. But when the question is pressed upon him a second time, he plainly says that he does not know Christ. The question is put to him a third time. Peter begins his answer this time by cursing and swearing; then he denies again having any knowledge of Christ. Thus we see that Peter not only repeated this great sin, but made it worse every time he committed it.

I have spoken of this great sin of Peter in order that you may have some just conception of the deleterious effect his wicked associates had upon him. It does seem that Peter would have resisted such a temptation as this. He was an apostle of Jesus Christ, and had been intimately associated with him. But he yields to temptation which comes from the high priest's servants; yea, his courage fails him in the presence of a maid. Does this look like Peter, who had just a short time before been making solemn and uncompromising promises to the blessed Master? Yes, this is Peter, the true, the brave, and the confident! He yields before an insignificant maid, who

probably did not care whether he was a disciple of Christ or not. Peter had gotten into bad company, and like every other man who chooses bad company in preference to good, he suffered for it. If Peter had been with Christ where he ought to have been, there would have been no occasion for him to have denied Christ. No Christian is safe who chooses for his companions ungodly men and women.

Therefore, the Christian ought to exercise the greatest discretion in the selection of his daily companions. Of course, it is hardly possible for us to hold ourselves entirely aloof from the ungodly. In fact, this would not be desirable. We must have some dealings with them and some association with them. But we are not compelled to select them as our companions in life. Let me warn you against making those your associates who profane God's name, who break God's Sabbath, and whose breath is saturated with the odor that comes from the intoxicating bowl. I don't see how it is possible for a man to associate with such persons and keep himself unspotted from the world. Remember Peter's fall. His case stands out in bold relief as a warning to every disciple of Christ to beware of bad company. If you habitually associate with the wicked and the ungodly, your religious sensibilities are sure to become blunted. You will soon begin to look upon sin with less detestation than you formerly did. And after a while you will at least not condemn that which you once abhorred and shrank from. And as you go on with your wicked companions, you are constantly, though it may be unconsciously, being brought down to their level. You will think that profanity is not such a heinous sin after all; you will think there is very little harm in desecrating the Lord's day; you will think

there is certainly no harm in taking a social drink with your companions. This is exactly the way the matter works. When a man gets into bad company, his velocity in sin seems to increase in a geometrical progression. This thought is beautifully expressed by the poet :

“ Vice is a monster of so frightful mien,
As, to be hated, needs but to be seen;
Yet seen too oft, familiar with her face,
We first endure, then pity, then embrace.”

When the Christian begins to go wrong, no one can tell where he is going to stop. One of the easiest ways for a Christian to backslide is to associate constantly with men and women who make light of religion and the church. It requires all the watching and praying a man can do to live right when his surroundings are favorable ; but when he is in the midst of those who profane God's name and church, how can he live as a Christian ought to live? He will soon begin to lose interest in the church and after a while he will become identified with his wicked companions, even in their sins. The only safe course for a Christian to pursue is to obey the Bible injunction, which says : “Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you.” If you associate with evil companions, you are just as sure to interrupt your communion with God as the night follows the day. There is an irresistible power in evil companionship, which, after a while, will cause you to commit sins, the mere mention of which would have made you blush at one time. Remember what Peter, the apostle, did when he got into bad company ; he *lied* and he *cursed*, and he *swore*, and he *denied Christ*. And what

guarantee have you that you will not be guilty of these very sins, if you venture needlessly into bad company as Peter did.

It is not a matter of indifference, therefore, whether you choose bad men for companions or good men for companions. But it is your binding and scriptural duty to choose for your companions good men and good women. Let me impress this matter upon your heart with all the earnestness of my soul. I tell you, bad companionship will chill any man's religion. If you tamper with it, it will sap the very foundation of your Christianity. It will blight your hopes; it will weaken your faith; it will diminish your love; it will destroy your zeal; and it will arrest your growth in grace; it will paralyze all your efforts in the divine life. Bad company is disastrous to personal piety and vital godliness. Then let me beseech you to beware of bad company. Don't associate with the man who takes God's name in vain; don't associate with the man who desecrates the holy Sabbath day; don't associate with the man who has as his bosom friend the demon alcohol; don't associate with the man who gets behind the screen to violate the laws which bind communities together in their social relations; don't associate with the man who makes light of your holy religion. For, if you do associate with such persons, you are going to suffer for it, and the cause of Christianity is going to suffer for it. When you venture into bad company, it means that you are going out of good company; it means that you are subjecting yourself to a temptation which the strongest have not been able to resist. Don't forget what Peter did when he got into bad company, and it is not probable that you are any stronger than he was.

Let me urge upon you again the duty of using the greatest discretion in the selection of your daily companions. Be careful whom you select; be careful whom you reject. Associate with the good, and the true, and the pious, and the godly, and the sober, and the pure. Avoid the profane, and the impure, the skeptical, and the intemperate. There is an elevating and refining influence that goes out from the good and the pure. There is a hallowing influence in the very atmosphere of good company. But, on the other hand, if you are the right kind of a person, you will feel like doing exactly what Peter did, after having been in bad company; you will feel like going out and weeping bitterly. The tendency of bad company is always away from God and all that is good; it is hellward and only hellward. Therefore, what I said unto you before, I say unto you again, Remember Peter's disastrous wreck, and keep out of bad company.

A TRIED SAVIOUR.

"They watched him."—Luke xiv. 1.

THE enemies of Christ were ceaseless in their efforts to find something in him objectionable. They wanted to condemn him, so they adopted every imaginable measure to accomplish their wicked end. On the present occasion, Jesus had been invited into the house of one of the chief Pharisees. Perhaps this man had some insidious design in view in entertaining the Saviour. No doubt he thought that he would have a better opportunity to entrap the Saviour, while he was partaking of his hypocritical hospitality, than on any ordinary occasion. It is the very height of impoliteness to take advantage of one who is sharing your hospitality. It would be very unbecoming in you to condemn a man in your own house, after he had been invited there by you. This seems to have been the treatment Jesus received at the hands of the Pharisee. It appears that this man had invited several of his brethren to his house on this occasion. While they were all there in the house of the chief Pharisee, they watched the Saviour.

I. *The object of their watching.* They noticed every movement which he made and every word which he spoke. Why all this watching of Jesus on the part of the Pharisees? Is he a thief, whom they are to watch for fear he will appropriate for his own use some of their goods? Ah, no. Is he a murderer, who is ready when an opportunity affords, to bring into requisition his deadly weapon, that they should watch him so closely? Ah! no. Why, then, all this watching? It is because

they wanted to find something, either in his speech or conduct, for which they could condemn him.

This seems remarkably strange, when we first think about it, that they should desire to condemn a man so pure in life and so perfect in doctrine. But, if we will examine a little into the human heart and behold the secret emotions and workings of that heart, everything that is remarkable on the part of the Pharisees' watching such a perfect character as Jesus vanishes, and we see that it is perfectly natural that they should watch him. "The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked." Those Pharisees were doing nothing more than carrying out the promptings of the human heart, when they were watching Jesus, in order to find something in him to condemn. And these same promptings are to be found in every human heart in its native depravity. They may not, on every occasion, develop themselves; but, I tell you, they live in the depraved, human heart. Human nature is the same the world over, and in every age. There is nothing but the power of the gospel that has ever made any permanent change in human nature. The apostle spoke from experience and also from observation, when he said: "The carnal mind is enmity against God;" and, if we know the human heart, we can say the very same thing, speaking also from experience and observation. The human heart, in its native depravity, does not love the Lord Jesus Christ; and it is ever attempting to find something in him objectionable and worthy of condemnation. There is nothing negative in the influence which the character of Christ exerts over mankind. He elicits from every human being that forms his acquaintance the highest esteem and the purest love, or the strongest opposition and the most malicious hatred.

The Pharisees watched him, because they wanted to find something in him for which he could be condemned; and there are men in our midst and all over the country to-day who are watching Jesus just as closely as did the Pharisees, and for the very same purpose. See the combined efforts of infidel writers and infidel speakers to destroy the Bible and its sway over the hearts of men! See how the unconverted world is watching the disciples of Christ and the progress of his religion in the world! See how they have studied every sentence in the Word of God! See how they have watched the Church of God in her triumphant march through the world—how they have been chagrined when the Church was victorious, and how they have rejoiced when she was defeated! Why all this constant watching and untiring investigation of the religion of Jesus Christ on the part of the world? The answer is, *To find something in it to condemn.* Unconverted men do not love Christ, and they would rejoice in the downfall of his blessed religion. They want to find something to bolster themselves up in their wicked course. They know that the gospel of Christ, condemns them in their wicked course; and, since they love their wickedness and expect to adhere to it, they want to find something which can be condemned in the gospel. If Christ had come into the world in a very different manner from what he did, making contrary requirements from the ones he did make, then men in their sins and rebellion against God, would have been eager to have followed him. If he had come in pomp and splendor, erecting a magnificent temporal government, bestowing upon those who identified themselves with this government worldly honors and worldly wealth, then those proud Pharisees and their descendants who have been watching

Jesus ever since, would have gladly followed the great King. But as Christ's advent into the world was quite different from this, and as his religion was designed to revolutionize the human heart and society, requiring men to love that which they hated before, and requiring them to hate that which they had loved before—men, in their sins and iniquities, arrayed themselves against this religion and the Author of it. No doubt, too, to say the least of it, they felt the probability of the truth and divine origin of this religion which they despised. They could see the effects of this religion on the world. Wherever this blessed gospel goes, it wields a power over the hearts of some men, at least. And men, in order to be consistent in rejecting this religion, want to find something in it worthy of condemnation. O, how wicked men and infidels would rejoice if they could prove to their own minds and to the minds of others that Christianity is an imposture! But, thanks be to God, this they have never done, and this they can never do. "They watched him."

II. *The result of their watching.* Christ knows the secrets of the heart. He knew what was in the hearts of those Pharisees who were watching him. He knew their motives and purposes in watching him. Hence, he was fully prepared to meet all the objections which they might bring against him. There was a man in the presence of Christ and the Pharisees who had the dropsy, and Christ was desirous of healing him; but the Saviour knew what was in the hearts of those Pharisees; he knew that they were ready to catch at any opportunity to condemn him; and he knew if he were to heal this diseased man on the Sabbath day that they would condemn him for it. Thus he anticipates their objection, and he silences them by his overpowering logic, before he at-

tempts to heal the poor man who had the dropsy. He propounds to them this question: "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath day?" The record informs us that they held their peace. This question was too hard for them to answer. They could not answer *yes* to this question, for then they could not inform against him. Neither could they answer *no* to this question, for then they would condemn themselves, because they had done and would do again, if necessary, on the Sabbath day, works which were not near so commendable as this. Thus Christ defeated these Pharisees, his enemies, in their attempts to entrap and condemn him. "They held their peace;" Jesus healed the poor man and let him go. He "answered them, saying, which of you shall have an ass or an ox fallen into a pit, and will not straightway pull him out on the Sabbath day? And they could not answer him again to these things."

In every other case like this, when Christ was tried and tested by his enemies, he came out victorious. They tried every imaginable plan by which to condemn him; but every attempt was a signal failure. They tried to entangle him with their hard questions, whose answers would be self-condemning.

You remember the time when the enemies of Christ sent asking him this question: "Is it lawful to give tribute to Cæsar or not?" They expected to catch him this time; for, if he were to answer their question in the affirmative, that it was lawful to pay tribute to Cæsar, then the Jews would condemn him; and, if he were to answer their question in the negative, that it was not lawful to pay tribute to Cæsar, then the Romans would condemn him. And how careful they were to send as the ones to ask the question both Jews and Romans. There

were the disciples of the Pharisees, who were bold and strict advocates of Jewish liberty, there they were to stand as witnesses against Cæsar; and there were the Herodians, who were fearless and adherent advocates of the Roman government, there they were to stand as witnesses for Cæsar. After they had dealt in a few of their empty platitudes and compliments, they put their question to the Son of God. But the Saviour was ready for them, as he was for his enemies on all occasions. He says, "Bring me a penny." After they had given it to him, he asks them whose image and superscription were on it. They answered "Cæsar's." This answer was self-condemning on the part of the Pharisees, for it is a rule even in the Jewish Talmud, that "he is the king of the country whose coin is current in the country." After they had answered that Cæsar's image was on the coin, which they were obliged to do, Jesus said unto them: "Render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's." Thus Christ silenced his enemies by his matchless wisdom and irresistible logic.

When Christ was tried by a human court for his life, the verdict of the judge was: "I find no fault in him." After Christ had been crucified upon the cross, when there was a great earthquake and many other demonstrations of his mighty power, the centurion and those that were with him watching Jesus, being in great fear, cried out: "Truly this was the Son of God."

Judas, the traitor, after he had betrayed Christ, makes a remarkable confession. He says: "I have sinned, in that I have betrayed the innocent blood."

The enemies of Christ, in every age, have been unscrupulous in their efforts to condemn him; but as often as they have tried, so often have they failed. They have

scanned and reviewed his life; they have investigated and analyzed his doctrine. They have exhausted their ingenuity to find a mistake in his life, or to pick a flaw in his doctrine. But all of these efforts have been in vain, except to confirm the truth and divinity of the gospel and to place it on a firmer basis than ever before. The unanimous testimony of the ages, both among friends and foes, is that the religion of the Bible is the purest, and the noblest, and the best that has ever been offered to mankind. The Christian religion never suffers in the end by having to pass through fiery afflictions and stormy persecutions. Some of her noblest achievements have been won in these great conflicts; and some of her mightiest bulwarks and defences have been erected while passing through these struggles.

“It is a little cloud; it will pass away.” This was said by Athanasius of Julian the apostate, who, after a short reign of active hostility to Christianity, perished with a confession of utter failure. The same may be applied to all the recent attempts to undermine the faith of humanity in the person of its divine Lord and Saviour. The clouds, great and small, pass away; the sun continues to shine; darkness has its hour; the light is eternal. No argument against the existence or attack upon the character of the sun will drive the king of day from the sky, or prevent him from blessing the earth. And the eye of man, with its sun-like nature, will ever turn to the Sun of righteousness and drink the rays of light as they emanate from the face of Jesus, the Light of the world. With its last and ablest efforts, infidelity seems to have exhausted its scientific resources. It could only repeat itself hereafter. Its different theories have been tried, and found wanting. One has, in turn,

refuted and superseded the other, even during the lifetime of their champions. They explain nothing in the end; on the contrary, they only substitute an unnatural prodigy for a supernatural miracle, an inextricable enigma for a revealed mystery. They equally tend to undermine all faith in God's providence, in history and ultimately in every principle of truth and virtue; and they deprive a poor and fallen humanity, in a world of sin, temptation and sorrow, of its only hope and comfort in life and in death."

Ah! how these infidels and sceptics have watched the Lord Jesus! But in all of their efforts to retard Christianity and defeat its plans in the world, they have signally failed. In the midst of all these conflicts, Christ stands up as the triumphant Champion of the truth, marching on to universal victory. There is no hypothesis which gives a satisfactory explanation of the life and doctrines of Jesus, except the divinity of his character and the eternity of his Sonship. He is a divine Person! He is the eternal Son of God! Hence his religion has survived every attempt to destroy its existence in the world. The gospel has succeeded and conquered, because it is founded on the principles of eternal truth.

III. *A few practical lessons.*

1. *Let us remember that wicked men are watching Christ now just as they did when he was upon the earth.* And they are watching him for the express purpose of finding something in him worthy of condemnation. Sin and iniquity are just as much opposed to holiness and righteousness to-day as they ever were. Therefore, let us not be discouraged when we see wicked men arrayed against the Christian religion.

2. *As disciples of Christ, we may expect to be watched*

ourselves. The enemies of Christ not only watch him, but they watch his followers as well. In a certain sense, Christians are the representatives of the Christ. Men look at us as followers of the Saviour; they look at us as reflectors; and they look there to see the image of Christ. Men will judge Christ by those who represent Christ in this world. They watch us just as they watched Christ; they desire to find something in us which they can condemn. O how the world rejoices over the downfall of a Christian! They can't find any fault in the life or character of Christ, so they naturally turn to his followers to see if they can't find some fault in them. Men are taking knowledge of us, and whenever they can find a fault in our speech, or in our overt acts, they rejoice over the fact. The world knows a great deal more about us than we think they do. While they are watching us, let us watch them, but not for the same purpose, of course. Let us do as our Saviour did; he was always prepared to meet his enemies. He was thoroughly conversant with the Word of God, and he used this mighty weapon as his defence. If we would be successful as he was, we must do as he did.

3. *Let us watch ourselves.* Our enemies watch us to see if they can't find some fault in us. We ought to be like them in this respect. I don't mean we are to watch each other; but each Christian must watch himself, and he must do this to see if he can find any fault there. It is every Christian's constant duty to enter into a rigid and scrutinizing examination of his spiritual condition. The enemy is sure to find out where our weak points are, and right here he will make his attacks upon us. Let us, then, examine ourselves to see what our weaknesses are, so that we can go to Christ, the source of all spiritual power, and have our weakness made strength.

4. *Let us watch Christ*; not as the Pharisees, to find something in him to condemn; but to find something there to love and admire. He is an object of infinite beauty and attractive loveliness. He invites investigation. In speaking of himself and his gospel, he throws out this unconditional challenge: "Come and see." Christ will bear the test and scrutiny of the most rigid examination, if it is carried on with honesty and without prejudice. We have an open Bible; we have an exalted Saviour; we have a revealed gospel. "Come and see." Here is the wonderful Book, which tells of the wonderful Saviour, who brings us the wonderful salvation. Some one says: "The life of Jesus Christ was not spent in an obscure corner, but before the eyes of the people, before Pharisees and Sadducees, before Herod and Pilate, before Jews and Romans, before friends and foes, in Galilee, Samaria and Judea. His history was openly proclaimed again and again by eye-witnesses and pupils before the people and the Sanhedrim, from Jerusalem to Rome. It was believed by thousands of contemporary Jews and Gentiles, in spite of bitter persecution and death. It was sealed by the martyrdom of apostles, evangelists and Christians of every grade of society. It is better attested by external and internal evidence than any history in the world."

Jesus Christ comes to us to-day as a *tried* Saviour. He has been tested and tried for nineteen long centuries; and he has proven himself true and faithful. He is presented to us to-day as the very Saviour we need; and he is held up to us in the Word of God and in all history as the only Saviour of a lost world; and he embodies in his glorious and majestic Person every thing that the Bible and history claim for him.

“NOT BY MIGHT, NOR BY POWER, BUT BY MY SPIRIT.”

“Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.”—Zech. iv. 6.

THE immediate reference of this text is to the rebuilding of the temple. The people had been carried captives to Babylon. While they were away their sacred edifices had been destroyed by the enemy. Upon their return from captivity, under the leadership of Zerubbabel, they determine to rebuild the temple. But they are few and weak; and their resources are scant and limited. Under these adverse and discouraging circumstances, God comes to them with words of cheer and encouragement. “Not by *human* might, nor *human* power; *but by the might and power of God's Holy Spirit.*”

But the truth contained in the text has a much wider application than to the context. This truth applies to all church work, and to all individual Christian work in the church.

In order to illustrate and enforce this truth, I desire to use the incident of Gideon and his three hundred against the Midianites as recorded in the sixth and seventh chapters of Judges.

Great hordes of Midianites had invaded the land; they had pillaged the country and had subdued the people. The Israelites were discouraged and almost ready to give up in despair—they were so few and weak in com-

parison with their enemies. But God had before them a great history and a magnificent destiny. So he calls Gideon to the work of subduing the Midianites. God, in his providence, had prepared the work for him, and then he calls him to the work.

So God calls men oftentimes to a special work, not by an audible voice every time, of course. God works by secret operations and internal influences to bring to pass his plans and purposes. "Like Cincinnatus at his farm, and David among his sheep, and Cromwell in the flats of Huntingdonshire, and Washington on his plantation in Virginia, Gideon was quietly doing his humble task, not wishing or dreaming of a wider horizon or more conspicuous work, when the summons came to him, the divine Voice that dragged him from peaceful privacy and thrust him to the front."

So God calls each one of us to a work in the church; not to such a great and conspicuous work, perhaps, but to one just as far-reaching in the sweep of its influence.

In the incident before us, there is much to be learned by the church in this day.

I. *God's ways are not man's ways.* God says: "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts." This is clearly illustrated in the case of Gideon's conflict with the Midianites. He had sent out a call for volunteers to march against the Midianites, in response to which thirty-two thousand reported. A small number this seemed to be, to march against the Midianites, who were as the grasshoppers for multitudes. But God says there are too many—they can't gain a victory till the number is reduced. "The

people are too many for me to give the Midianites into their hands."

Strange, from man's point of view! Those who are conducting a campaign in an army want as many men as they can get. You remember how it was in the late war. The South, towards the close of the war, had to call for volunteers from among the old men and boys who had been exempt before this. They had to contend with such large forces on the other side that they needed more men. And at last the South was overpowered—not really conquered. As a rule, however, numbers have a great deal to do with the final issue in the contests among men. "Some cases there are in history where a general has proved victorious when fighting with only one-tenth, or even a smaller proportion to the numbers of his opponent, as in the case of Miltiades at Marathon, Themistocles at Salamis, Clive in India, and some English generals, in both North and South Africa, at the present day. But the circumstances in these cases were exceptional, and do not invalidate the maxim, that a successful issue is not to be looked for by employing a very small force against one that is very large. Leonidas and his three hundred Spartans were all cut to pieces at Thermopylae, notwithstanding their deeds of incredible bravery."

But in the case of Gideon's army, God says there are too many. Before they can gain the victory, the number must be *reduced*, not *increased*. A process of *rejection* and *selection* must be applied, so that the number may be reduced. The men are to be tested, and those who do not come up to the required standard are to be rejected. Two tests are applied:

1. *A proclamation is issued ordering all the fearful*

ones to depart from the army. All who are really afraid to stand before the enemy must leave the army. This carries away 22,000, leaving only 10,000. This was a wise move, though at first it may not have seemed so, because, if the fearful had remained, they would have been really a hindrance, instead of a help. In the midst of the battle they might have produced a panic, and, in this way, have caused them to lose the victory. The conflict was to be a hard one; they were contending not only against a great host, but against an army that stood upon victorious ground. Hence they needed only brave men. The 22,000 fearful ones could not be depended on. The army was better off without them than with them.

So in the Christian warfare, there is a pressing demand for only *brave* men. We are fighting against principalities and powers. The cause in which we are engaged demands men of true courage and Christian bravery. Men of this stamp have always been the ones who have really helped the cause. All others, the fearful, those who have been afraid to stand against the enemy, have been real hindrances.

2. *Second test.* God said, *Too many yet.* So he instructs Gideon to test them again. Bring them down to the water, and every one that lappeth with his tongue, as a dog lappeth, shall be chosen. All the others shall be rejected. Perhaps you have seen the dog running along by the water, or through the water, and catching it up as he goes with his tongue. He has no time to lose. He takes water, not simply to quench his thirst, but principally to help him in his chase. So with these men.

This test reduced the number to three hundred. No doubt God put it into the hearts of these three hundred to take their water as they did. They were *picked* men.

They were not chosen at random. "And the Lord said unto Gideon, *By the three hundred men that lapped will I save you.*"

Why was this test made? To teach us that those who have their own ease and comfort at heart more than the cause in which they are engaged, are not suitable. Such men cannot make good soldiers. They must be willing to forego personal pleasure and endure hardships. This is the rule in all war, but especially in Christ's war. His cause demands an unreserved consecration of all we are and all we have. When we enter this war, it should not be for personal ease or self-promotion; but we must be willing to endure hardness as good soldiers of the cross.

Those who come into the church for mercenary ends are real encumbrances to the cause of Christ. They are obstacles in the way, just so much dead weight which the church has to carry. They are parasites, drinking the very life-blood of the church.

This method of reducing the number in the army is God's way and not man's way. Men, as a rule, lay great stress on numbers. And let me say just here, that this policy has been ruinous and disastrous to the best and highest interests of the church. Have not men, in their inordinate greed for numbers, brought thousands into the church who have not been brought to Christ? Hence the church has been burdened.

This is not God's method. Here he inaugurates a revival of religion through Gideon; but it is very unlike the modern methods of many so-called revivalists. God's method of beginning a revival is to commence in the church; reduce the number; take away the rubbish. Many things standing in the way, enter the heart and the church upon a mission of destruction. Destroy everything that is in the way.

God looks more at the *heart* than at the *outward appearance*. He prefers *quality* to *quantity* every time. God preferred the three hundred to the thirty-two thousand and could do more with them.

This truth is illustrated in the case of Samuel going to the house of Jesse to select a king from among his sons. Eliab is brought out—a handsome, fine-looking fellow, king-like in appearance—there must be royal timber there. Even Samuel was taken in by his appearance. He said, “Surely the Lord’s anointed is before me.” But he is not the one God wants. All the rest, except David, are brought out; but no king is taken from them. Then David, a stripling of a boy, is brought out, and he is selected. Why? Because God was looking at the heart, at the intrinsic worth. He knew what was in David. “Man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart.” So with the three hundred.

II. *Why did God reduce the number?*

1. *To destroy their pride.* To keep them from putting too much stress on numbers. “And the Lord said unto Gideon, The people that are with thee are too many for me to give the Midianites into their hands, *lest Israel vaunt themselves against me, saying, Mine own hand hath saved me.*” It is natural for men to lay great stress on numbers. This was David’s great sin against God in numbering the people. There was no sin *per se* in numbering the people. This had been done under God’s direction; but when it was done for vain glory and to display the strength of the people, then it was contemptible in the sight of God.

In the case before us, God wanted to take all the pride and self-confidence out of Gideon’s heart and the hearts

of the people. And when the number was reduced from thirty-two thousand to three hundred, this end was certainly accomplished.

2. *To remove every obstacle that was in the way.* The fearful ones would be in the way; twenty-two thousand *obstacles*, burdens. So they are removed. Those who were not willing to deny themselves were in the way—*nine thousand, seven hundred encumbrances, drawbacks*; so they are taken away.

The three hundred brave, self-sacrificing, self-denying, consecrated men were really more efficient than the thirty-two thousand. God could do more with the three hundred than with the thirty-two thousand.

So with the church; *ten* active, earnest, consecrated members are better than *one thousand* careless, indifferent, worldly members. God can do more with the *ten* than with the *one thousand*. The real strength of the church does not consist in the *number* of her members, but in the *character* of her members. *One Elijah* was infinitely stronger than *four hundred and fifty of Baal's priests*. *One Hezekiah* was infinitely mightier than *one hundred and eighty-five thousand of his enemies*. One consecrated man of God is infinitely mightier than all of God's enemies. One reason why the church is not victorious a great deal oftener is because there are too many—*such as they are*. The indifferent ones are just so many stumbling-blocks, both to the active members and to the outside world. The church needs to be purified by God's process of rejection and selection. If the Church of God were to march forth in her grand work with a consistent and consecrated membership, her progress in the world would be simply irresistible.

3. *To teach them that they were entirely dependent*

upon God for victory. If they had gone against the Midianites with thirty-two thousand men and gained the victory, then they might have taken the glory to themselves. But when they had only three hundred to go against one hundred and thirty-five thousand—when they were victorious with this handful of men, then they would know that God had gotten them the victory. This would lead them to look to God at the very beginning and all the way through. This is the lesson which God purposed to teach them. "And the Lord said unto Gideon, By the three hundred that lapped will I save you."

There is no more important lesson for the church to learn to-day 'than this—that *she is absolutely dependent upon God for any real success in the world.* This is the great lesson for the church in every age. God said to his ancient people: "Woe to them that go down to Egypt for help; and stay on horses, and trust in chariots, because they are many; and in horsemen, because they are very strong; but they look not unto the Holy One of Israel, neither seek the Lord!"

The church is entirely dependent upon God. He would have us to know our own weakness and the weakness of all human help. For, until we realize this, we will never look to him for strength. Paul said: "When I am weak, then am I strong." So with each disciple. "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts."

III. *Gideon's preparation for his great work.* The record says: "*The Spirit of the Lord came upon Gideon.*" God prepared the *work* for *Gideon*, and then he prepared *Gideon* for the *work*. God selected Gideon for this work because he was equal to the occasion; Gideon arose to

the level of the crisis, because he was prepared for the work. The Spirit of the Lord had come upon him. As we would say, he had received a baptism of the Holy Spirit.

What did this involve?

1. *Consecration.* Embracing: *being, doing, suffering.* Entire consecration of *body, mind, soul—time, reputation, friends, property—all.* This was required, and Gideon reached the mark.

So ought every one who names the name of the Lord to do. The Christian enters into a solemn and sacred covenant to be the Lord's forever.

"The Spirit of the Lord came upon Gideon."

2. *Service.* Gideon put into execution his promises; he used the means at his command. He went forward in the face of many difficulties and reached an exalted plane of sacred service and heroic endeavor.

So should it be with every child of God. Each one of us should lay out all of his strength and energies in the service of God.

"The Spirit of the Lord came upon Gideon."

3. *Prayer.* Gideon communed with the Lord before he went into the fight, and he certainly did afterwards. The Spirit of the Lord comes in answer to prayer. "If ye then being evil," &c. And the continued presence of the Holy Spirit is conditioned upon our communion with God. If we would be equipped for the conflict that is before us, we must abide at the mercy seat. "The Spirit of the Lord came upon Gideon."

4. *Faith.* This was the controlling factor in Gideon's career. His was a strong, abiding, persevering, conquering faith. His name has been written in the catalogue of the heroes of faith by divine inspiration.

To conquer, we must have faith. This is absolutely necessary. We must have faith in our cause, faith in our Leader, and faith in our final victory.

IV. *The encouragements God gave him.* God gave him a pledge of victory. Gideon said his family was poor and obscure. But God chooses the weak things of the world, &c. "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts." God worked two miracles to encourage him and to assure him of success.

So, *we* have all of *God's promises* to encourage us; we have all of *Christ's miracles* to assure us of success. We go forth in no uncertain conflict. If we will rely upon God and do what he tells us to do, there can be no doubt about the final issue of this contest. If we are on God's side, we are just as strong as God himself. He can use simple means to accomplish great results. He is not dependent on numbers, nor human might and power. "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts." Really, God is above all means. He uses them, but he is not dependent on them; and this fact teaches us that he can use weak means to accomplish great results just as well as strong ones. The walls of a city fall down flat before the blowing of a few rams' horns. A thousand people are slain with the jaw-bone of an ass. God chooses the weak things of the world, etc.

And this is why *faith* is such a mighty factor in this great work. Faith works through God. True faith, therefore, is just as strong as God; it is omnipotent. Christ says: "All things are possible to him that believeth."

What is the great need of the Church? It is not eloquence and learning in the pulpit; it is not earnestness and liberality in the pew; it is not elaborate and artistic

music; it is not handsome edifices and lofty spires. However desirable and useful these things may be, they are not the great need of the church. *The great need of the church is spiritual power, power from on high, power of the Holy Ghost.*

This is a *sine qua non* with the church. It matters not what the church may have, without this she can never win the world to Christ. She may bring the world into nominal connection with Christianity without this; but without this she can never bring the world into a saving union with the Lord Jesus Christ.

The need of the Holy Ghost in the operations of the church has been admirably illustrated by Mr. Arthur in his "Tongue of Fire."

"Suppose," he writes, "an army is settled down before a fortress of granite, and told to batter it down. We ask them how they are going to do it. They point to a cannon ball. We reply: 'There is no power in that. It is heavy; weighs perhaps a hundred-weight; and if all the men in the army were to throw it against that fortress, it would make no impression.' 'No,' they say, 'look at the cannon.' Again we reply: 'There is no power in that. It is a beautiful machine—nothing more.' They bid us next look at the powder, and once more we reply: 'There is no power in that. A child may spill it, a bird may pick it up.' 'Yes,' they add, 'but put this powerless powder and that powerless ball into that powerless gun, and then apply one spark of fire; and, in the twinkling of an eye, that powder will become a flash of lightning, and that ball will become a thunder-bolt, and will smite as if sent from heaven.' We have in our church machinery, instruments for pulling down satan's strongholds; but, oh! for the baptism of fire. Oh! for the baptism of the Holy Ghost!"

Oh, for the Spirit's power and presence! There are many in the church who do not seem to feel the need of

the Spirit's power and presence, because they do not know his mission and his work.

Without this power of the Spirit, the church's work can never be successful.

How can we get this power?

1. *By united effort.*

2. *By prayer.*

} Day of Pentecost.

Brethren, will we have it? We can't succeed without it. If we would do any effective work in our *hearts*, or in our *homes*, or in our *church*, or in the *community* where we live, we must have this power of the Holy Spirit. "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts."

THE CHURCH A DIVINE INSTITUTION.

“And I say unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church.”—Matt. xvi. 18.

THIS verse of Scripture, perhaps, has caused more discussion and has been the occasion of greater results in the history of the church than any other single passage. For, as you know, the Church of Rome bases its claims of the papacy and infallibility on this verse. It is certainly a stupendous weight to hang on a single passage, especially when the verse, even taken by itself, has another meaning. Romanists assume that this Scripture is addressed exclusively to Peter and not to him in a representative capacity, and, further, that he is here declared to be the foundation of the church; and as the foundation must be as lasting as the edifice itself, they argue that the promise is to Peter and to the bishops of Rome as his successors. What a great fire a little spark kindleth!

There are several considerations which force us to conclude that these words were not addressed to Peter in the way in which Romanists say.

1. If they are addressed to him exclusively and individually, they confer on him a permanent superiority of rank and office. But the whole analogy of Scripture is overwhelming in its evidence against any such doctrine. The twelve apostles are often referred to as a body, with no personal distinctions whatever. In Matthew xix. 28, Christ, speaking to the apostles as a body, says: “Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the

regeneration, when the Son of Man shall sit on the throne of his glory, *ye* also shall sit upon *twelve* thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." There is no personal distinction here whatever. The Apostle Paul, in his letter to the Ephesians, sets forth the same idea. He tells the Ephesian Christians that they "are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone." Then, in the Book of Revelation, John, in speaking of the new Jerusalem, says: "And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the *twelve* apostles of the Lamb." It has been well said of this verse: "that if one of the twelve stones is to be displaced and put beneath the rest, the whole will fall to pieces."

Again, if Peter's exaltation is the main object of this passage, how can we account for the fact that the other two evangelists, Mark and Luke, omit this part of the conversation between our Saviour and Peter entirely? They record Peter's confession; but this, according to Romanists, is only the introduction to what follows. Therefore, as has been remarked by some one, Mark and Luke give the introduction and neglect to give that which it introduces. It is infinitely safer for the church to follow Mark and Luke than so-called infallible Romanists.

2. But I go still further and say that it is very probable that these words were not addressed to Peter, even in a representative capacity. Because, (1) The demonstrative *this* would not be used if such were the case. Christ would hardly say: "Thou art Peter, and upon *this* Peter I will build my church." Then, in the second place, the words Peter and rock in the original Greek, are in different genders, which is too abrupt a change for both

words to refer to the same subject. The word (*πέτρος*) translated Peter in the original, means a stone, according to classical usage; and the word (*πέτρα*), translated rock, means rock in the original. If Christ had meant Peter in this address in any sense, no doubt he would have used the very same word in both instances, or the personal pronoun referring to Peter. "Thou art Peter, and upon *thee* I will build my church." But this is not the language of Christ.

3. If the word *rock* does not refer to Peter, to whom or what does it refer? Not a few say it refers to the confession which Peter had just made, that Jesus was the true Messiah of God. This is certainly a very orthodox interpretation, for this confession is the whole sum and gist of the gospel. But the most plausible and, perhaps, the safest view, is to make *rock* refer to Christ himself. We know that rock is a very common appellation of God and his Son Jesus Christ, in the Scriptures. Christ is the *rock* of our salvation. "Thou art Peter, and upon this *Rock* (*i. e.*, upon my redemptive work), I will build my church." How beautifully this exposition harmonizes with that passage in Ephesians, to which reference has already been made. "Now, therefore, ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone: in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord." Christ is the only true foundation! "For other foundation can no man lay, than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." And any man or organization of men assuming this title is going directly contrary to Scripture and is dethroning Christ.

Let us look for a moment at the meaning of the word church. It has a variety of meanings, determined by the connection in which it is used. It may mean the believers in a certain family, as the church in the house of Nymphas; or it may mean the body of believers in a particular place or district, as the Church of Antioch, or the Church of Asia. It may mean any number of professing believers, united by a common standard of doctrine, as, for example, when we say, the Baptist Church, or the Methodist Church. Then we have a broader and more comprehensive distinction in the words *visible* and *invisible*. The invisible Church is the *real Church*. It is called *invisible*, first, because it is impossible for fallible man to know the human heart. He cannot tell absolutely who are the true people of God. Then, in the second place, the true church is called *invisible*, because we can only see a small portion of it. There is only a small proportion of the true people of God on earth at one time. There is a great body of them already saved in heaven, and we are led to believe that there is a vast number yet unborn to be saved. The invisible church consists of the elect of all ages and countries, it matters not of what name they may be called. It is that church which Christ loved, and for which he gave himself, "that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." The *visible* church is the *phenomenal* church, and consists of all those throughout the world that profess the true religion, together with their children, and is the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ, the house and family of God, out of which there is no ordinary possibility of salvation.

It will be my purpose on this occasion to speak of the visible or phenomenal church; and I desire to show that *the visible church is a divine institution*. "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock *I will build my church*." There is a marked significance in the meaning of the word translated church, which is *to call out*. The church, then, is that body of men called out from the world by Christ and united into an organized society for the preservation and promulgation of the true religion. It will not be my purpose to show the superiority of any branch of the church in point of orthodoxy; but there is, no doubt, that some are more orthodox than others, because more conformed to Scripture. Those branches of the church which rest upon Christ, as set forth in the gospel, are not essentially wrong; but, of course, in non-essentials, all cannot be right, as there are so many differences. The great and important question, which ought to be asked and answered by every branch of the church, is: Are we fashioned according to the pattern given in the Word of God?" If the church universal was not controlled by its infallible Head, we might have cause to mourn over the fact that there are so many separate organizations. This is an evil which God has overruled for the good of his kingdom.

The visible church can be traced back in the history of God's people as far as Abraham. God called him out from among the nations, and constituted him the head of his church. Thus, by a process of selection and rejection, the church assumed a national and visible form. Abraham was to be the head of an innumerable host of believers, who were to be as the stars of heaven and the sands upon the sea-shore in numbers. Since that time the church has been essentially the same. It is true, there

have been changes in the modes and forms of worship to suit the people as their outward circumstances changed. But, as far as essence is concerned, there is not a particle of difference between the church of the Old Testament and that of the New. The conditions of membership under the old Dispensation were exactly the same as they are now—a credible profession in the true religion, a promise of obedience and submission to the appointed rite of initiation. If any among the heathen nations desired to unite themselves with the people of God, they were received by fulfilling these conditions; and they were entitled to all the benefits and blessings of the Church. It was never the design of the church, under the theocracy, to confirm its blessings exclusively to Abraham's natural posterity. While it is true that it was formally organized with Abraham as its head, and was to be perpetuated by his descendants, yet it was distinctly and repeatedly set forth that this very church was for all time, all classes, and all nationalities. There is no truth more clearly taught in the history of God's people than this—that God's chosen people was never co-extensive with Abraham's natural posterity. For we have many specific cases where Abraham's descendants were excluded from the blessings of the church and where many outside were included in the covenant. Ishmael, the sons of Keturah and Esau were cut off. During Israel's stay in Egypt many were cut off, and many from without were taken in. A great excision occurred when our Saviour made his appearance on earth. In short, God never had one people under the old Dispensation and a different people under the new. His people have been the same in all dispensations. The doors of the church have always been open to every class

and nation. Multitudes from among the Gentiles did embrace the true religion under the old Dispensation. All of them might have done so if they would, and the reason why they did not, was partly their own fault and partly the fault of God's own people.

I have thus referred to the church under the Old Dispensation, to show you that it was a divine institution then; and, since it has ever been the same, it must still be a divine institution. But, let us come now to the New Dispensation. Here the light is more brilliant and abundant. Here we have undoubted proof of the divine origin of the visible church. It might be shown that Christianity, from its very nature and design, requires an organization and co-operation on the part of its subjects. There must be a bond of union; there must be a form of government; there must be a standard of doctrine, directory for worship. In short, there must be a church. It must live, move and act in the world. It must have an organized life and history. The religion of Jesus Christ is a brotherhood, a communion! Christians in all ages have been wont to mingle together and have flowed in societies. The communion of saints is a grand reality, and without this, that is, without the church, Christianity is a failure.

But we have more direct proof than this. As circumcision was the badge of membership and initiatory rite into the church under the Old Dispensation, so under the New, baptism is the same. Christ, the Head of the church, says: "He that believeth and is *baptized* shall be saved." Just as a change of heart is necessary to an entrance into the invisible kingdom, so baptism is necessary to an entrance into the visible kingdom. After Peter had preached his great sermon on the day of

Pentecost, many of the people were stirred up, and they "said unto Peter and unto the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, What shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent and be *baptized* every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call. Then they that gladly received his Word were baptized; and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' *doctrine* and *fellowship*, and in breaking of bread and in prayers."

The narrative goes on to say that the Lord added unto *the church* daily such as should be saved. Christ's great command to the people was that they should make a public profession of faith in him, by uniting themselves with his disciples. Indeed, he said that if they did not confess him before men, neither would he confess them before his Father and the holy angels in heaven. This confession was always made by uniting with the church through baptism.

Christ gave to his people another sacrament, which they were to observe and celebrate through all time—the Lord's Supper. "As often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do shew forth the Lord's death till he come." This sacrament was instituted immediately by the Head of the church, and the command is that this ordinance shall be observed till his second coming. And what has been the historical fact respecting these sacraments? We find that the whole of God's people, with very insignificant exceptions, have preserved and observed these ordinances ever since their institution. Now, since these

sacraments are given solely to the people of God, it is plain that they have something which does not belong to the people of the world. If these sacraments do any thing, they certainly draw a line between the world and God's people. If they signify anything, they certainly imply that God intended to establish a kingdom on earth, which he has called his church. These ordinances are not empty forms and meaningless actions; but they contain a great truth, and are full of moral force and efficiency. They are not only badges of Christian profession, but they are institutions of Christ, "wherein, by sensible signs, Christ and the benefits of the new covenant are represented, sealed and applied to believers."

Let us pass now to the officers of the church. The church must have a government. So Christ has instituted in it certain officers—such as that of bishop or minister, elder and deacon—who are required by the constitution of the church, to perform the functions which belong to their respective offices, and which are laid down in the Word of God. "And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers; after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues." The true minister of the gospel is commissioned and sent by Christ. He comes, not in his own name, but as an ambassador from the courts of heaven, and in the name of Christ. The church needs a divinely appointed ministry. Our Saviour said unto his disciples: "The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few; pray ye, therefore, the Lord of the harvest, that *He* will send forth laborers into *His* harvest." The ministry is an institution of Christ, and it ought to be filled by him. He commissioned his disciples to go into all the world and disciple

all nations. He has invested the ministry with the right to preach the gospel. Thus, not only the office of the ministry is instituted by the Head of the church, but also the functions of the office are given by the same Person. In a similar way, we might speak of the other offices in the church, but time will not permit.

The whole Bible, from beginning to end, is full of the truth, that the church is a divine institution. Take away the church, and what have you left of Christianity and the Bible? What is the Bible and Christianity but the history, life, constitution and principles of the church? What was the work of the apostles who were laboring under the immediate guidance of the divine Teacher? They went far and near, preaching the kingdom; and everywhere they went they established churches. Paul went through Asia Minor and a considerable portion of Europe, establishing churches in many of their towns and cities.

Now, what better proof could we have of the divine character and origin of the church? Here we have a written revelation from God containing a complete pattern of what the church ought to be; containing the conditions of membership, a complete constitution of the church and a description of the officers of the church. Moreover, we have the example and history of the apostles and early Christians confirming all of these statements with their life-work. But I do not desire to place so much stress on the *proof* of the proposition that the visible church is a divine institution as upon the *fact* that it is so, for I am persuaded that you are firmly convinced of the truth of the proposition.

Now, since this is an established truth, one which we have inherited from our fathers, let us attend to the prac-

tical part of the subject, and act as if we believed it. The church is God's institution; it is God's house, where he has promised to meet his people and bless them. It is his ordained means of saving a lost world. It is his organized army to war against vice and corruption; against principalities and powers. All the hosts of sin are drawn up in battle array to defeat man's salvation. God has instituted, equipped and sent forth his church, not only to conquer satan and overthrow his kingdom, but to redeem man by and through the truth of the gospel. The church is not a mere organization of man, growing out of the wants and necessities of human society. Nor is it an institution of the State, gotten up for the protection of its laws and the perpetuation of an advanced civilization. It is a divine institution, possessing divine sanction. Its promises are unlimited and steadfast; its commands are universal and unconditional. It has a right, a divine right, to every man's homage and service. And it is every man's binding duty to obey the demands which the church makes upon him.

In conclusion, I will make one or two practical remarks:

1. And let us consider what a great privilege it is to be connected with the church of the living God, and to live under its benign influences. This is a blessing which is so common that we are prone to lose sight of it. But let the church, with all of its privileges and influences be removed, then we can realize its worth and its power. Just think for a moment what an honor and distinction it is to be a member of Christ's kingdom! It connects us with *royal* blood, not with the kings and potentates of earth, but with the King of kings and Lord of lords. Oh, what an honor, to share with such an exalted Per-

son in his kingdom and possessions. Christ becomes ours and we become his. We are united to him by a living and indissoluble bond. We are made partakers of the great benefits of his redemption. We are exalted to kingly dignity and honor in Christ—covered, it may be, with poverty and ignominy in this life, but in the life to come, covered with glory and honor. Oh, what a crown of beauty and splendor awaits the believer in Christ! All this comes through the church. There is not a spiritual promise in the whole Bible to the wicked.

The church is the only depository of that truth which will make us wise unto salvation. It is a great blessing to be associated with God's people, to receive their counsel and example. What has the church done for our country? What has it done for our civilization? What has it done for our society? What has it done for our persons? Everything! What would we be without the church? Like our ancestors, barbarians and heathen! Shall we not love and appreciate the church, the whole church, all of its ordinances and enterprises, its preaching, its Sunday-school, its prayer meeting, its missionary society? Shall we not co-operate with the church with a willing mind and an anxious heart in all of its efforts to carry out its glorious designs? The church is our only hope and the hope of our children. This leads me to remark again, that:

2. There is a *work* for every one in the church. There is something more to be accomplished in the church than the salvation of our own souls. There are men and women around us who have immortal souls to be saved, and we are to work for their salvation. Christ never calls a man into his church to be idle. He says: "Son, daughter, go, *work* in my vineyard." He has a specific

work for each of his disciples. Each Christian is to come to Christ with the question, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" We need a working, living, active, energetic, growing church. Are not the people of the world, in many cases, wiser in their generation than the children of light? To illustrate my meaning: take the great political campaigns in our country, which come round every four years. Look how the people work day and night—no cessation from toil and arduous labor! The whole country, from the Atlantic to the Pacific, from the lakes on the north, to the great gulf on the south, the whole nation is thoroughly aroused and awake on the subject before them. O that the church would learn a lesson from the people of the world! O that she had such zeal and energy as characterize the institutions of this world! What a revolution would be brought about, not only within her own borders, but throughout the world! And why should we not be as enthusiastic and earnest as the men of the world? If they can afford to spend their time, energies, talents and means for those things which are only to benefit us in this life, cannot we afford to spend our time, talents and means for those things which are to benefit us forever? If they are willing to spend their lives for the State, for the body, and for time, shall we not much more be willing to spend our lives for the church, for the soul, and for eternity?

My brethren, there is no comparison between their work and ours. Do not understand me as depreciating their work—far from it. They have a noble work. But I do want you to understand me as exalting our work. For we have a work whose importance and magnitude can only be computed in eternity. We are engaged in a work which brought the King of Glory from his throne

in heaven to the cross of ignominy on Calvary. Our work is linked to eternity and unceasing happiness! What a privilege and honor to engage in such a work. Shall any of us go about it with indifference and unfaithfulness? It is true, we cannot do as great things as some; but we can all do something. There is no work in the vineyard of the Master that is small. A kind word, a fervent prayer, a sympathetic look, a warm grasp of the hand—these may seem to be insignificant acts, but they have a mighty influence for good. Why, our Saviour said that even a cup of cold water, given in his name, shall not be without its reward. Do not be discouraged; but go to your work with earnestness and energy, determined to do everything to the best of your ability, assisted by the grace of God. This spirit will bring the victory. Are we weak? Then let us go to Christ, for he will strengthen us. Have we fears that we cannot succeed? Let us go to Christ and he will give us faith. Are we few in numbers? Then there is greater necessity that each individual should labor faithfully and persistently. It is God's work that we are engaged in. He works through means; but it is none the less his work. Shall it come to naught just because we are unfaithful? He has given us the work and has promised his Holy Spirit. What more do we need? The *will* and the *heart!*

DOING A GREAT WORK.

“ I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down.”—
Nehemiah vi. 3.

THERE is not a character in profane or sacred history that is to be admired more than that of Nehemiah, excepting, of course, the perfect character of the Son of Man, who was also the only begotten Son of God. Nehemiah was a man with such devotion to duty that the strongest opposition could not turn him from that which was right. This devotion to duty was so real and intense that it gave him the most undaunted courage and the most sanguine expectations, even in the face of the greatest discouragements. Nehemiah was a *good* man; he was a *brave* man; he was a *patriotic* man; he was a *consecrated* man; he was a *great* man.

We first come in contact with this illustrious and remarkable man at Shushan, the winter resort of the kings of Persia. He was intimately associated with the royal family, for he was the cup-bearer of King Artaxerxes. While he was occupying this position of trust and honor, some of his countrymen, among whom was a near relative, came from Judea and gave him an account of the deplorable condition of Jerusalem and the residents of his ancestors' country. The walls of Jerusalem had been torn down, and the people had been scattered abroad. Although Nehemiah was occupying an important position in a prosperous government, yet he did not forget his own people and his own people's country. As soon as he was made acquainted with the dilapidated state of affairs at Jerusalem, he conceived the idea of

going there and making an effort to better the condition of his despondent and vanquished countrymen. It was not long till he got the king's consent to go upon this mission. The king appointed him governor of Judea, and gave him letters to the different authorities, permitting him to go to Jerusalem. The great work which Nehemiah had before him was the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem. He hastens on to the city and begins his work in the midst of the rubbish that surrounds it. In a very short time, this rubbish is removed, and the magnificent walls begin to encircle the city. Nehemiah was intensely in earnest, as the whole history of the work shows. All of his energies were concentrated in the work before him; and in spite of all opposition, the work goes on. His enemies resort to every conceivable measure of arresting the progress of the work. But they cannot entice him away from it, or shake his confidence in its final completion. He answers his enemies by saying: "I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down."

When we consider the work in which Nehemiah was engaged, we must conclude that he was right when he said he was doing a great work. It was no small undertaking to build a wall around such a city as Jerusalem. But the magnitude of the work was increased when we consider the small and weak forces with which Nehemiah had to operate. The people had been carried away into captivity. A few of them were left and a few had returned, it is true; but the forces were very small and weak when compared with the work before them. Yet, Nehemiah's courage never failed him. "I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down." When Nehemiah viewed the great work before him, and the weak

forces with which he had to operate, there was enough to discourage him. An ordinary man would scarcely have undertaken such a work; and, if he had commenced it, he would soon have abandoned it. But Nehemiah was not made out of that kind of material. He knew no such word as *failure*. If there was such a thing as defeat before him, he expected to meet it in the path of duty.

But this work of Nehemiah was "great" not only in itself and its immediate surroundings, but also as related to posterity. The good influences of that work are felt to-day by all the nations of the earth. There is not a people on earth but that has cause to thank Nehemiah for the great work which he did when he rebuilt the walls around the city of Jerusalem.

I. *In doing this, he was preserving the nationality of the Jews.* These people had been the favored people of God. He had blessed them as he had blessed no other nation on the face of the earth. But for their sins and rebellion against him, God permitted them to be carried into captivity and he permitted their enemies to destroy the walls around their city, which walls had been the protection to their national and ecclesiastical capital. Jerusalem was certainly in a deplorable condition, and, from all human appearances, the Jewish people themselves were soon to become extinct as a race, either from actual destruction or from absorption by the surrounding nations. But Nehemiah, by his great work, made it possible for the Jews to preserve their national identity. And it is simply impossible for us to overestimate the importance of this work to the future political and ecclesiastical prosperity of the Jewish nation. This people had before them a magnificent destiny; they had before them a prolific history, fraught with the most stupendous

events. Through them was to come the Saviour of the world, and they were to be the conservators of the true religion. They were to stand up before all the nations of the earth as witnesses for the only living and true God. The history of this people was so thoroughly incorporated into the prophecies of God that, in the development of this history, they clearly and forcibly demonstrated to the world the truth and the living power of our blessed religion. As far as we can see, if Nehemiah had not succeeded in his marvelous undertaking, the whole plan of redemption would have been a consummate failure. Who can measure the magnitude of Nehemiah's work when we consider the remarkable and extensive influence, both political and ecclesiastical, which the Jewish nation has exerted over the world since that time? That nation enjoyed peculiar religious advantages; from this very fact, they were destined to exert a mighty influence in shaping the history of the nations of the world. And the agent who was instrumental in preserving their national identity has been the means of transmitting to posterity a blessing whose value cannot possibly be overestimated. The Jews had fallen down into the depths of obscurity. We have no history of them, whatever, for a considerable time before this; and, as far as we can see, they were soon to be lost, as to their national identity, in utter oblivion. But Nehemiah, by his great work, elevated this nation to their former position of honor and pre-eminence among the nations of the earth. And thus the purposes of God upon the earth, with which this remarkable nation was so intimately associated, were brought to pass through the instrumentality of Nehemiah. While this remarkable nation was standing upon the very brink of destruction, and threat-

ened to be buried beneath the waves of oblivion, Nehemiah came to their rescue, and opened up before them a career of great usefulness and honor.

II. *The importance of Nehemiah's work is also seen in the fact that he was preserving the true religion.* And, as we look back to-day over the annals of history, we can bless the man who accomplished his great work in the midst of the rubbish of Jerusalem. Every nation can truly rise up this day and call Nehemiah blessed! The work of that great and noble man has been enjoyed by every nation and by every human being on earth. As we value the laws which bind us together as nations and societies, so we ought to value the work of this consecrated man of God; and as we love and appreciate our holy and blessed religion, so we ought to love and appreciate the work of this remarkably good and great man. The true religion had been entrusted to the Jews. To them had been committed the oracles of God; the law had been given to them; they possessed all the glorious and precious promises which God had made to his people for all ages; and the church was confined to the Jewish nation.

Hence, anything which tended to promote the temporal and spiritual welfare of the Jews, was calculated, from the very nature of the case, to advance and encourage the true religion. It has been ordered in the providence of God that our blessed religion shall be transmitted from one generation to another. As far as we can see, looking at the matter from a human point of view, the true religion was in imminent danger of being lost when the Jews had been so scattered and their capital city had been brought to ruins. But Nehemiah, by his great work, transmitted to all succeeding nations and ages the

inestimable blessings which come to us from the true religion. Every institution which elevates mankind and promotes their welfare, is a living monument to the great work which was done by Nehemiah. The laws upon which our government is founded and the laws by which it is administered, are built upon the laws which have been transmitted to us through the instrumentality of Nehemiah. The laws and principles upon which society is built and by which it is held together, come to us through the work of this brave and remarkable man. The Bible and the church, with all of their matchless blessings, come to us through the instrumentality of Nehemiah. It is simply impossible for us to overestimate the magnitude and importance of the great work of this good man.

III. *The greatness of Nehemiah's work can also be seen when we consider the strong opposition which he had to face in the prosecution of this work.* His enemies did everything they could to frustrate his plans and bring his work to naught.

1. *They tried to ridicule him and discourage him by making fun of his work.* They knew what an irresistible power there is frequently in sarcasm and ridicule. The record says: "But it came to pass, that when Sanballat heard that we builded the wall, he was wroth, and took great indignation, and mocked the Jews. And he spake before his brethren and the army of Samaria, and said, What do these feeble Jews? will they fortify themselves? will they sacrifice? will they make an end in a day? will they revive the stones out of the heaps of the rubbish which are burned? Now Tobiah the Ammonite was by him, and he said, Even that which they build, if a fox go up, he shall even break their stone

wall." But this does not in the least discourage Nehemiah. He goes on just as though everything was working in his favor. His enemies laugh him to scorn for commencing such a work; but his confidence in the success of his great undertaking is immovable. Let Sanballat become enraged, and let Tobiah make all manner of fun of the work, and let them both try to prejudice the people against the work, they cannot arrest the work in its rapid progress towards completion, because the invincible and courageous Nehemiah is leading on in the work.

2. Again, the enemies of Nehemiah resort to another method to bring his work to an end: *they tried to terrify him*. When the enemies of the truth do not succeed in their wicked designs by one method, they soon resort to another. When the ridicule of Sanballat and Tobiah failed, then they tried to terrify Nehemiah and to scare him away from the work. When they "heard that the walls of Jerusalem were made up, and the breaches began to be stopped, then they were very wroth, and conspired all of them together to come and to fight against Jerusalem and to hinder it." When the people of God begin to work, then the people of the wicked one also begin to work.

Failing in this attempt, they tried to terrify him again. Nehemiah says: "Then sent Sanballat his servant unto me in like manner the fifth time with an open letter in his hand: wherein was written, It is reported among the heathen, and Gashmu saith it, that thou and the Jews think to rebel: for which cause thou buildest the wall, according to these words." Nehemiah's enemies do not hesitate to stoop to the lowest means to accomplish their wicked end. They manufacture a straightout falsehood

to carry their point. If they can make him believe that the king will put some confidence in this report, they hope to arrest the progress of his work for a season at least. But they cannot move Nehemiah. "I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down." He sends his enemies an answer which they cannot possibly misunderstand. He says: "Then I sent unto him, saying, There are no such things done as thou sayest, but thou feignest them out of thine own heart."

3. Sanballat and his followers make one more effort to arrest Nehemiah's work: *they tried to entrap him by intrigue*. They were becoming extremely uneasy, for the walls were just about completed. They thought surely they could entice him away from the work, if they would flatter him a little. "Now it came to pass, when Sanballat and Tobiah, and Geshem, the Arabian, and the rest of our enemies, heard that I had builded the wall, and that there was no breach left therein; (though at that time I had not set up the doors on the gates:) that Sanballat and Geshem sent unto me saying, Come, let us meet together in some one of the villages in the plain of Ono. But they thought to do me mischief. And I sent messengers unto them, saying, I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down: why should the work cease, whilst I leave it, and come down to you? Yet they sent unto me four times after this sort; and I answered them after the same manner."

The enemies of Nehemiah were becoming desperate; they were certainly in a great strait. They saw the wall nearing completion, and they were very much distressed about it. So they made another effort to entice him away. They tell him of the reports that are in circulation to the effect that he is working in opposition to the

king, and then they invite him to come down and hold a conference with them on the subject. "Come now, therefore, and let us take counsel together." They pretend to have great confidence in Nehemiah's judgment. But Nehemiah stands as immovable as the stone wall which he is building. There is nothing that can entice him away from his work. "I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down."

In conclusion, let us make a personal application of this subject. You have, my hearer, just as great a work to accomplish in this world as Nehemiah had. God tells you to build a wall around your immortal soul. He has given you the *material*; and if this wall is not built, it will be your own fault. God has given you the *Bible* and the *church*; he has given you a *living ministry*; and *all the means of grace*. He has given you all these things, and now he tells you to build a wall around your immortal soul, which has been ruined by sin, and which is exposed to his wrath. God has given you the *plan*; he has given you every *encouragement* to stimulate you in this grand and noble work. After he has given you the salvation, and all the means of grace, then he says to you, with all the emphasis of his being: "Work out your own salvation." God promises to work with you and in you. You ought, therefore, to be encouraged to go on. Remember, too, that your everlasting destiny is to be settled by the interest you take in this work. You may expect to meet opposition. The enemies of your soul will *laugh you to scorn*; they will make all manner of fun of your efforts to do good and to become good. They will try to *terrify* you; they will magnify the obstacles which you are to meet in your daily walk and conduct. They will *flatter* you by telling you what great

things you can do, if you are not a disciple of Christ; they will hold out to you the honors and emoluments and pleasures and riches of this world. But let me beseech you to answer them in the words of Nehemiah: "I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down."

GLORIOUS THINGS ARE SPOKEN OF THEE*

"Glorious things are spoken of thee, O City of God."—
Psalm lxxxvii. 3.

THESE words were true of Jerusalem. This city occupied a prominent position in the history of God's ancient people. Many glorious things were said of her, and many glorious associations and hallowed memories cluster around her history.

But the text refers, in a broader and higher sense, to the church of God. Glorious things are spoken of thee, O church of God.

It is important to distinguish between the *visible* and the *invisible* church. The *visible* church is the *phenomenal* church, the church as we see it in this world. It includes all those who profess the true religion and are obedient to its outward forms, together with their children. The *invisible* church is the *real* church, and it includes *all who have been saved, and all who are to be saved, and only these*. It embraces all the children of God of every name, of every age, of every clime, and of every nation. The members of this church are born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

While the *visible* church is an institution of God, yet it is only a *means* to an end, and its mission is confined to this world. It has been organized, and is to be perpetuated in the interests of the *invisible* church, which is to continue forever. The *visible* church should be con-

*Preached at the dedication of Bowling Green Church, September 20th, 1896; and also at the dedication of Long Cane Church, September 30th, 1906.

formed as nearly as possible in its *membership*, in its *character*, and in its *practices* to the *invisible* church. The text, in its highest sense, refers to the *invisible* church, which is the bride and body of Christ. "Glorious things are spoken of thee, O City of God." These things are spoken of each part of this true, invisible, elect church of God. Hence, if you are a part of this church, these things are spoken of you.

Are you a part of the true church? Do you possess the marks of a true church? Are your doctrines and teachings based upon the Word of God? Do you possess in your hearts and in your lives the Spirit of God? Have you accepted Christ as your personal Saviour, and do you follow him as such? What are your claims to that truest, best, highest—yea, only essential and genuine apostolic succession? There is no efficacy, whatever, in an apostolic succession which is based simply and only on history and tradition. Do you hold to the *doctrines*, the *polity* and the *worship* which were ordained through the apostles? If so, you have a firm basis upon which to build your claims to apostolic succession, and you have a succession that meets with the approval of God. Having this, it matters not who may oppose or disown you. God is your Father, though Abraham be ignorant of you, and though Israel acknowledge you not. "Glorious things are spoken of thee, O City of God." These glorious things are spoken by him who sits upon the throne, the God of truth, whose words are sure and steadfast.

Let us notice some of the glorious things which are spoken of the church. We can consider only a few. I desire to bring to your attention three groups of sayings:

I. *The first group relates to the church's security:*

Isaiah liv. 17: "No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper."

Daniel ii. 44: "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever."

Matthew xvi. 18: "Upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

These Scriptures clearly and forcibly teach the *absolute security* of God's church. There is no possible agency that can destroy or defeat the church of God.

1. *Because the church is founded on the truth.* The truth is just as stable and unalterable as God himself. There is no power, or agency, that can defeat the final triumph of the truth. At times, the truth may seem to be defeated; but these things are only apparent. They are not, they cannot be, real. The truth is omnipotent, and it will prevail. That which rests upon falsehood is built upon a foundation of sand and can never stand the final test. That which rests upon the truth has nothing to fear, because it is built upon a foundation which is just as enduring as God himself. Hence, the church can never go down as long as the God of truth lives. That institution which goes forth armed with the truth, and based upon the truth, may have no fears of its final and complete triumph over every foe.

"Truth, though crushed to earth, shall rise again,
The eternal years of God are hers;
But error wounded, writhes with pain,
And dies among her worshippers."

The storms of adversity may blow, the fires of persecution may burn, the snares of the wicked one may

come; but the church of God will go on from victory to victory, to her final and complete triumph, "fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners."

" Firm as a rock thy truth must stand,
When rolling years shall cease to move"

2. *The church is secure because Jesus Christ is the chief corner-stone upon which she rests.*

Isaiah xxviii. 16: "Therefore, thus saith the Lord God, Behold I lay in Zion for a foundation a *stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone*, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste."

Paul, in speaking of God's children, the church, says: "They are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, *Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone.*" This is a *tried stone*; and, therefore, it makes the foundation upon which the church stands secure. This stone has been tried by the experience of God's people through all the ages; it has been tried by the searching ordeal of God's righteous judgment; it has been tried by the fires of persecution; it has been tried by friend and foe; it has been tried by God, by man, by satan; and still it stands forever secure, and still it will stand through all the ages.

" Unhurt amidst the war of elements,
The wreck of matter and the crash of worlds."

This is the only enduring foundation. "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, even Jesus Christ." All who build on other foundations will be compelled to say in the end: "We have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hid ourselves." But each child of God can say:

“On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand;
All other ground is sinking sand.”

A *stone*, or *rock*, stands for *solidity*, *strength* and *duration*. Look at our chief corner-stone. “Walk about Zion, and go around about her: tell the towers thereof. Mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces.” And you will see our corner-stone ever standing, solid, strong, enduring. The church of God, our beloved home, rests upon this everlasting foundation.

“Unshaken as eternal hills,
Immovable, she stands,
A mountain that shall fill the earth,
A house not made with hands.”

3. *The church is secure, because she is guarded and protected by the all-wise and all-powerful Providence of God.* Behind, before, on either side, above, beneath, are the everlasting arms. God completely surrounds his people as an everlasting *Protection*. When we consider *God's love* for the church, we can see his infinite *desire* to guard and keep her. When we consider the *Almighty power* of God we can see his *ability* to do this. When we consider the *truth* and *faithfulness* of God, we can see that he is *engaged* to do this. When we consider his *conduct* towards the church in the past, we can see that he *has always done* this. This has been the very law of his life, the invariable rule of his conduct. He has always been the church's everlasting Portion and Protection. And what he has done in the past is an infallible prophecy of what he is going to do in the future.

“Then let the world forbear their rage,
The Church renounce her fear;
Israel must live through every age,
And be the Almighty's care.”

The church is in the hand of the Almighty. Secure she abides in his omnipotent and tender grasp.

“The soul that on Jesus hath leaned for repose,
I will not, I will not desert to his foes;
That soul, though all' hell should endeavor to shake,
I'll never, no, never, no, never forsake.”

The enemy may try, as has been done, by error, by snares, by persecution, by flattery, by allurements—yea, in every possible way, to defeat the church, but she is absolutely secure.

“Zion stands with walls surrounded;
Zion, kept by power divine;
All her foes shall be confounded,
Though the world in arms combine;
Happy Zion,
What a favored lot is thine!”

“Glorious things are spoken of thee, O City of God.”

II. *The second group relates to God's love for the church.*

Isaiah xlix. 15: “Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee.”

Ephesians v. 25: “Husbands, love your wives, even as *Christ also loved the church and gave himself for it.*”

This love of God for the church is a peculiar love; by its distinct characteristics, it can be differentiated from every other love. “Christ loved the *holy angels*, but not so as he loved the church. Christ loved the *young man*, but not so as he loved each member of his church. Christ loved *Jerusalem*, pitied her, wept over her, but not so as

he did his church. His weeping love over Jerusalem was called forth just by those things in Jerusalem which showed she was not the church. Yet, whatever love there may be in Christ to others, it is not the same in kind, or in efficacy, as towards his church." This love of Christ for the church is the *purest*, the *best*, and the *strongest—the consummation of the choicest elements of every love*. It has been illustrated in this way: "If an angel were to fly swiftly over the earth on a summer morning, while the pearly dew of heaven rested on the flowers, and go into every flower-garden—the king's, the rich man's, the peasant's, the child's—and were to bring from each one the choicest, loveliest, sweetest flower that blooms in each, and gather them all into one cluster in his radiant hands, what a beautiful bouquet it would be! And, if an angel were to fly swiftly over the earth, into every sweet and holy home, into every spot where one heart yearns for another, and were to take out of every father's heart, and every mother's heart, and out of every heart that loves, its holiest flower of affection, and gather all into one cluster, what a blessed love-garland would his eyes behold! What a holy love would this aggregation of all earth's loves be! Yet, infinitely sweeter and holier than this grouping of all earth's holiest affections, is the love that fills the heart of our Father in heaven," and the heart of our blessed Redeemer for each member of his blessed church.

Some of the characteristics of this *love*:

1. *It was free*. It originated in the great heart of God. There was nothing in the sinner to call forth this love—no beauties of character, no virtues in the heart, no excellencies of soul to attract the love of God. It is not hard for us to love a person of intrinsic worth, who has

something worthy of our love, and who really *merits* our love. Such love as this would be natural, for there would be a sympathetic chord between two persons; there would be a harmony of affections. But, when we see an infinitely holy Being, whose eyes are too pure to look upon sin, lavishing all of his sweet and holy love upon a heart that is steeped in sin and iniquity, our hearts are filled with wonder and amazement, and we must say that such an act is supernatural—it is *divine*. *It takes an infinite God to love this way.* It would not surprise us to find Christ bestowing the infinite riches of his love upon the pure and holy angels in heaven, whose hearts have never been invaded by sin; but when he comes into this sin-cursed world and bestows this love upon a cruel Manasseh and a demon-possessed Magdalene, upon a blood-stained Saul and a dying thief, then we can see the divine character of this love, and we can see how free it was. Oh, isn't it wonderful—how could it be—that Christ should pour out this pure and holy love in an ever-flowing stream, into my sinful heart and into your sinful heart!

2. *This love is infinite.* It is altogether immeasurable. We can never fathom its depths; we can never scale its lofty heights; we can never embrace the boundless sweep of its compass and duration; we can never exhaust its blessed resources.

A minister of the gospel "was endeavoring to convey to his hearers, by a variety of illustrations, some idea of his conception of the divine love; but, suddenly casting his eyes towards heaven, he exclaimed, 'But I am unable to reach the lofty theme!' Yet, I do not think that the smallest fish that swims in the boundless ocean ever complains of the immeasurable vastness of the deep. So it

is with me: I can plunge, with my puny capacity, into a subject, the immensity of which I shall never be able to fully comprehend."

While this love of Christ can never be fully known by us, simply because a finite being can never grasp an infinite subject, yet we can know enough of this love to bring us eternal life and infinite blessedness and happiness. Still we can have little conception of the vastness and the boundless resources of this infinite love. "When one who has never sailed out upon the ocean stands on the shore and watches the trembling waves as they surge and break upon the sands, how little does he know of the majesty and grandeur of the great deep, of its storms, of its power, of its secrets, of its unfathomable chambers, of its unweighed treasures? He sees only the little silver edge that breaks at his feet. So we stand but where the Spirit of God breaks upon the shores of our world. We see its silver edge. We feel the flash of its waves upon our hearts. But of its infinite reaches and outgoings beyond our shores, we know almost nothing. Yet, blessed are they who even stand by the shore and lave their hearts in even the shallowest eddies of this divine ocean."

3. *This love of Christ for the church is an unchangeable love.* Being infinite, it must be *unchangeable*. *Immutability* is an essential element of infinity. The love of Christ changes not, it matters not how it may be tested. In the midst of all the fluctuating scenes in this life, this love remains the same—yesterday, to-day and forever. It is compared to a *mother's* love, which is everywhere proverbial for its constancy and faithfulness. Yet, it is possible for a mother's love to change. There are a few cases recorded on the pages of history where mothers have been so unnatural as to lose their affections for

their own children. But God's love for his children, his church, can never change. God, in speaking to his church, says: "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget, *yet will I not forget thee.*" If this pure, complacent, peculiar, infinite love of Christ has been bestowed on us, there is nothing that can stop its resistless flow. "Having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end." "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril or sword? . . . Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us; for I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

"Every human tie may perish;
 Friend to friend unfaithful prove;
 Mothers cease their own to cherish;
 Heaven and earth at last remove;
 But no changes
 Can attend Jehovah's love.
 In the furnace God may prove thee,
 Thence to bring thee forth more bright;
 But can never cease to love thee—
 Thou art precious in his sight;
 God is with thee—
 God thine everlasting light."

"Glorious things are spoken of thee, O City of God."

III. *The third group relates to the future glory of the church.*

Ephesians v. 26-7: "That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish."

I John iii. 2: "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is."

Revelations xxi. 10-11: "And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal."

The sacred writer goes on then to give us a description of the holy city, the eternal home of the triumphant and glorified church. He gives us the dimensions of the city. He tells us that the building of the wall is of jasper; that the city itself is of pure gold; that the foundations of the walls are garnished with all manner of precious stones, that the twelve gates of the city are twelve pearls; that the streets are of pure gold; that there flows through the city a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, and that on either side of the river was the tree of life, which bears twelve kinds of fruit every month in the year. "Glorious things are spoken of thee, O City of God."

What a grand and glorious destiny awaits the church of God! She will be stripped of all impurities and imperfections, and she will partake of the divine glory. The church *militant* is going to be merged into the church *triumphant*. *Crosses* and *burdens* are to be exchanged for *crowns* and *palms of victory*. Humiliation and sor-

row and suffering are to be exchanged for joy and exaltation and glory. Paradise is to be restored, and a better Paradise. Death will be destroyed, and the church will be brought into the most intimate fellowship and communion with Christ, her Head. The saints are to sit with Christ upon his mediatorial throne and share with him in the administration of his universal kingdom. What a glorious church she will be, when she will be presented at last to the glorified Redeemer, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing!

“Such are the visions of glory spread out by these precious promises to the longing eyes and hearts of all engaged in this spiritual conflict. Their brightness dazzles our feeble vision. It is unutterable. A whole new creation seems to sweep before us in unimagined beauty, purity and grandeur, pouring its treasures at the feet of the spiritual conqueror; but all this is the mere sign or token of that more mysterious bliss included in these promises, in which we see all the fulness of God pouring its unsearchable riches into his whole being. Blessed be our God for these revelations of it! Weary and sick, and wounded, and surrounded by darkness and storms, as we often are here, how cheering the glimpses of this coming glory, which ever and anon flash upon us, and assure our trembling hearts of the reality and glory of the invisible kingdom, and the heavenly prize. While thus we look, not at the things that are seen and temporal, but at the things that are not seen and eternal, we gather new strength for the conflict; and even the heaviest burdens and the most crushing sorrows appear but light afflictions, working out a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.”

“Glorious things of thee are spoken,
Zion, City of our God:
He whose Word cannot be broken,
Formed thee for his own abode;
On the rock of ages founded,
What can shake thy sure repose?
With salvation’s walls surrounded,
Thou mayest smile at all thy foes.”

May glorious things be said of this church, whose building we dedicate to-day to the solemn worship of God. Let this continue to be a place where there will always be a warm welcome for *every one*; where the *aged* can come and get encouragement in their declining years; where those in *middle life* can come and get strength to help them as they are battling with the stern realities of active life; where the *young* can come in their buoyancy and hope and get equipment for the arduous duties that are before them; where the *bereaved* can come and get comfort and consolation to sustain them as they are passing through the deep waters; where the *disappointed* can come and get hope to cheer and brighten the pathway before them; where the *high* and the *low*, the *rich* and the *poor*, the *educated* and the *illiterate* can come and feel that they all are at home in their Father’s house. May it always be said of this church that there is always a warm welcome here for all. The man who is deep down in the pit of sin and is seeking a way out; the man who has backslidden from his Father’s love and wants to return again; the man who desires more of God’s grace and wants to grow up more and more into the likeness of the blessed Redemer; let it be said that all may come and find a warm welcome here. Let *welcome* be written in large letters, that all can see over every door and over every pew!

A word to the pulpit: In the name of Jesus, the King of Glory and the Head of the church, we commission thee this day to enter upon thy grand and glorious work with renewed zeal and consecration. I charge thee to preach the everlasting gospel of the Son of God. I charge thee not to preach *science*, nor *political economy*, nor *metaphysics*, nor *human philosophy*, nor *literature*, nor *any branch of human learning*. In the name of the Head of the church and in the interests of mankind, I charge thee to preach *Christ* and *him crucified*. Preach the *gospel*, the *whole gospel*, and *nothing but the gospel*. Preach the *hard* doctrines, as well as the *pleasant* doctrines. Preach *the terrors of the law*, as well as *the promises of the gospel*. Preach the *justice* of God, as well as the *love* of God. Preach the *torments of hell*, as well as the *glories of heaven*. I charge thee to put a rigid quarantine on anything and everything which is in any way inimical to the truth as found in the Word of God.

Go, now, church of the living God, upon your noble mission of love and redemption, to instruct, to warn, to encourage, to comfort, to strengthen; and may the *peace* of God, which passeth understanding, and the *love* of God, which passeth knowledge, and the *communion* of the Holy Spirit forever abide in the hearts of all who worship in this house of God.

“WHO IS SUFFICIENT FOR THESE THINGS?” *

“Who is sufficient for these things?”—2 Cor. ii. 16.

“Our sufficiency is of God.”—2 Cor. iii. 5.

I WISH to make a plea for a higher standard in the gospel ministry—a higher standard as to Christian experience and living—a higher standard as to equipment and preparation—a higher standard as to work and endeavor. As we are interested in the welfare of the church, as we love Christ and his kingdom, as we love our fellowmen, so should we be interested in this all important subject. The church cannot accomplish her mission in the world without the existence and exhibition of this exalted standard. The spiritual welfare of each Christian and the highest interests of the kingdom of Christ are involved.

“Like priest, like people.” The ministers of the gospel are the leaders of the people—they are moulders of religious thought and life among the people to a very great extent—they are examples to the people—teachers, both theoretically and practically. The work committed to the ministry is far-reaching in the sweep of its influence and magnitude. This work is great in itself—it is great in its results. The minister is an ambassador for Christ. He stands between the living and the dead.

He is to declare the unsearchable riches of Christ to a dying world. He is to preach the gospel, the whole gospel, and nothing but the gospel. The everlasting destiny of immortal souls is involved in his work.

*Baccalaureate sermon, Theological Seminary, Columbia, S. C., May 5th, 1907. The last sermon written.

He is to comfort God's people. There are so many kinds of troubles and so many kinds of people, that you can see at once how complex and delicate his work is. In order to do this work successfully, he must be a man of deep sympathy and large-heartedness. He is to weep with those who weep and to rejoice with those who rejoice. He is to go from the wedding, with its joys and its hopes, to the funeral, with its griefs and its sorrows.

He is to lead sinners to Christ. "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God."

He is to superintend and direct many of the organized efforts to build up the kingdom of God in the world. In a sense, his parish is the world. His work is as extensive as the human race, and as deep as the necessities of the human heart.

"'Tis not a cause of small import
 The pastor's care demands;
 But what might fill an angel's heart,
 And filled a Saviour's hands.
 They watch for souls, for which the Lord
 Did heavenly bliss forego;
 For souls, which must forever live
 In raptures or in woe."

The *responsibility* involved in this great work is stupendous. Paul refers to it in the context: "For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish: to the one we are the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life." When confronted with this responsibility, it is not surprising that Paul exclaims in the language of one of our texts, "Who is sufficient for these things?"

When we look at the *work* and the *responsibility* and at *ourselves*, we are compelled to exclaim, "Who is sufficient for these things?" How, then, are we to meet this responsibility? How are we to overtake this work? Just as Paul did: "Our sufficiency is of God." In ourselves, we can never reach the standard held up to us in the Word of God—as far as our own resources are concerned, we are absolutely impotent; but when we take a broader view of the situation, we can exclaim in the triumphs of the gospel: "Our sufficiency is of God."

How can we reach this high standard? What are the necessary qualifications of a gospel minister? Here are some of them:

I. *Conversion.* "Ye *must* be born again." The minister must be a child of God, a regenerated man, not only on his own account, but on account of his work. Without this, his whole life is a gigantic failure and falsehood. He must have not only a theoretical knowledge of the gospel, but he must have an experimental knowledge of it. He must know the gospel not only in his head, but also, and especially, in his *heart*. This is a *sine qua non*. The absolute necessity of this qualification cannot be emphasized too much. This is at the very foundation. Every man who has the work of the ministry in view ought to stop and settle this question: *Am I a child of God? Am I a converted man? Have I been born again?* He should not take another step until this question is settled, and settled in the right way. It is simply absurd to think of God calling an unconverted man into the ministry. How can such a man do the work of a minister? A man's soul and heart and mind must be in this work. The *man himself* must be in this work, not simply as other men are in their

work; but there must be a living, personal, saving union between him and his work. Before he can show others how to be saved, he must be saved himself. He must know Christ as his personal Saviour. He must know Christ in his power to comfort, to instruct, to sustain and to satisfy.

You can hardly conceive of a greater calamity befalling the church, than to have an unconverted ministry thrust upon her. God grant that our beloved church may be spared such a calamity.

A prominent minister in our church, now living in Virginia, and who was educated in Columbia Seminary, in an address before Union Seminary several years ago, said that, when he entered Columbia Seminary as a student, he was asked this question by one of the professors: *Are you a Christian?* The question made a profound impression on him and was a great help to him in his Christian experience and life. This question clung to him and caused him to take his bearings again. Are you a Christian? The simple telling of this incident so impressed one of the students in Union Seminary that he resolved to go to Columbia Seminary the next year. He said, if that is the standard held up in Columbia Seminary, I want to get the advantages of it. The young theological student was, no doubt, surprised when asked the question, Are you a Christian? He probably was taking too much for granted in his Christian experience and life.

We must take absolutely nothing for granted here. We must *know*. Young men who are studying for the gospel ministry, be sure of your ground here. One of the great and universal and everlasting needs of the church is a converted and godly ministry. This need

should be emphasized by our church and people, in our pulpits, in our pews, in our homes, in our religious press, in our institutions of learning—especially in our theological seminaries.

Such a ministry will be used by the Spirit in bringing souls to Christ and in building them up in Christ. Such a ministry will make a profound impression on the world and will be a mighty incentive to God's people to live upon a higher plane of Christian experience and Christian endeavor. Oh, for men of faith, and prayer, and love, and hope in the gospel ministry!

A minister approached a stone-cutter, who was on his knees trimming a block of granite. The minister said he wished he could break human hearts as easily as the stone-cutter was breaking the block of granite. The stone-cutter replied by saying: "Perhaps you could, if you would work more on your knees."

"When we are on our knees, then light flashes; then the intellect is clarified; then the conscience is aroused; then the spiritual sensibilities are quickened; and we can learn more of our duty and of his will than in hours of argumentation. So Jesus learned by prayer, and all he derived from men and nature was clarified and illuminated when the divine light came down as he was holding communion with his heavenly Father."

Spurgeon asked the question: "What is wanted?" Here is his own answer: "The Holy Spirit is able to make the Word as successful now as in the days of the apostles. He can bring in by hundreds and thousands as easily as by ones and twos. The reason why we are not more prosperous is that we have not the Holy Spirit with us in might and power as in early times. If we had the Spirit sealing our ministry with power, it

would signify very little about our talent; men might be poor and uneducated, their words might be broken and ungrammatical; there might be none of the polished periods of Hall, or the glorious thunders of Chalmers; but, if the might of the Spirit attended, the humblest evangelist would be more successful than the most learned of divines or the most eloquent preachers. It is extraordinary *spiritual* power, not extraordinary mental power, that we need. Mental power may fill a chapel, but spiritual power fills the church; mental power may gather congregations; spiritual power will save souls. We want spiritual power. O Spirit of the living God, we want thee; without thee we can do nothing; with thee, we can do everything."

II. *A call to the ministry.* The man who is a candidate for the gospel ministry ought to have a deep-seated feeling that he is called by the Lord to this work. Our church has always had an exalted standard on this subject. God forbid that we should ever lower this standard or drift away from it. Of course, we do not believe that God calls to this work with an audible voice, as he spoke to Samuel. Nor do we believe that any mysterious Providence is necessary in connection with this call. But we do believe that a man who enters this exalted service in the church and kingdom of God ought to feel that God, by his Spirit, is calling him especially to this work and office. We must hold up a high standard on this subject, in order to keep unworthy men out of the ministry, but especially for the reason that it is right. God has committed to us a sacred trust. Let us show that we appreciate this trust by being faithful in the proper use of it. God grant that our beloved church may be kept from a cold, perfunctory profes-

sonalism in her ministry. One of the great needs of the church in this age, and every age, is a divinely called, a divinely trained and a divinely commissioned ministry. While piety is absolutely necessary, something more than this is demanded. We need a ministry that has the seal of God's approval upon it.

III. *Consecration.* There must be a spirit of consecration. There must be consecration to Christ, to his Person, to his truth, to his kingdom. There must be consecration to the office and work of the ministry. This service of consecration is urgent and pressing. It should come, *first*—first in point of time and first in point of importance. It must be a *willing* service. "Who then is *willing* to consecrate his service this day unto the Lord?" God does not want a forced service. He wants a service that comes from the heart and carries the heart with it. This consecration must be *entire*. Nothing is to be held back or reserved.

Let us take Christ as our example. There never has been such a spirit of consecration as was manifested in his devotion to his life-work. He presented all that he had—his body, mind and soul, his time, influence and talents—a living sacrifice. He kept absolutely nothing back. Self was completely eliminated from his service. He came not to be ministered unto, but to minister and to give his life a ransom for many. "I am among you as one that serveth." As his followers and ambassadors, let us try to catch at least some of his spirit of consecration.

"If we are going to have the true secret of Christian leadership, we must study that Leader of Christian leaders, Jesus Christ. There we find the secret that he came not to be ministered unto; he went about as one

that served; he taught that he who would be greatest must be the servant of all; that is the secret of enduring leadership in things spiritual."

This spirit of consecration brings great blessings into our hearts and lives, and prepares us for their reception and enjoyment and use. This spirit prepares our hearts for service and power. Oh, how we can work and serve and suffer when we are completely under the influence of this spirit! "When men come and say, 'Here we are, our interests, our business—everything,' then the windows of heaven are never shut—never. When our all is upon the altar, then the windows of heaven are open and the blessing descends." Without this spirit of consecration, your ministry will be cold, formal, lifeless, barren; but with it, there will be life, service, joy, blessing, success.

It is said of one of the prominent ministers of our day that, after years of barrenness, he sought for spiritual power. The Lord said to him: "If you will give up the idol of literary applause, and give yourself to the rescuing of the perishing, I will give you souls." The minister answered, "I will do it." He yielded to God; he let God strip him of all ambition for literary distinction. In eighteen months the Lord gave him more souls than in all the eighteen years before..

As ministers, we ought to pray earnestly and importunately for a deep and all-pervading spirit of consecration. Let us pray that God will make us what he would have us to be—*pure in heart*; and that he will cause us to do what he would have us to do—to *work faithfully in his service*; and that he will enable us to *suffer what he would have us to suffer—resignation to the divine pleasure*. Oh, may this spirit of being and

doing and *suffering* the will of God take complete control of us and consume us with its vital importance.

IV. *Knowledge*. God does not call ignoramuses into the ministry, nor does he call imbeciles into this office. While it is not necessary for us to know everything, yet it is necessary, *absolutely necessary*, for us to know something. How can a man, who is not equipped with knowledge and intelligence, be prepared to preach the blessed gospel of the great God? The minister must know God and man—he must know Christ and him crucified. He must know how to present the gospel to men and to reason with them about eternal things.

There is an urgent demand in this age for ministers of intelligence and intellectual equipment. The masses of the people are better educated to-day than ever before. So, in order to meet the demands of the case, our ministers must be educated. They ought to be thoroughly equipped. Many ministers fail because they are not thoroughly prepared. Hence, instead of selecting "short cut" roads to the ministry, our young men ought to give themselves the very best advantages in the way of preparation. Time spent in preparation is not lost, but wisely used. Moses spent eighty years profitably in preparing for his life-work of forty years. The Son of God spent thirty years profitably in preparing for his life-work of three years. The man who is well prepared can do more work and better work than the man of limited preparation. A preacher who is without knowledge is like a mariner who is ignorant of the sea and of the science of navigation.

The preacher's great lesson should be *Christ*. The Saviour says: "Learn of me." He is the *Teacher* and he is the *lesson* to be taught. "*What kind of men does*

Christ call for? He calls for men, in the first place, who will let him train them for the crisis. The word 'saint' has many unfortunate associations connected with it; but, if you will go back to the original term, you will find that it meant simply a man who set himself sacredly apart to be used by God for the accomplishment of his purposes in human society. I say, the first call is for men who will place themselves under the training of Christ, to be fitted by him for the great crisis, for men, who, in the discipleship of Jesus Christ, by the laws of personal association, shall become like him in the fundamental qualities of his character."

"That I may *know him*." This was the one inspiring, supreme, controlling ideal which Paul ever kept before his mind and heart. Many things appealed to him—literary attainments, worldly honors and ambitions, the applause of men—but he discarded all these and counted them as refuse. The supreme aim and purpose of his life was to know Christ and him crucified.

So it should be with us. Here, in this blessed Book, we have our inexhaustible and sufficient text book. The central theme of this book is *Christ*. He is the Alpha and Omega of this book. There are fields here which the ablest minds have never explored, and there are depths here which the profoundest intellects have never fathomed. Study other things, if you please—literature, science, philosophy, government, sociology—but let this sacred volume be the one Book that towers above all the others—let it be first in point of time and first in point of importance.

V. *Enthusiasm*. Be in earnest. Many fail just at this point. It is remarkably strange, but it is true. When we consider what is involved in this blessed work, this

exalted service, how can a man engage in it with indifference and apathy? If there is anything that ought to stir a man to the very depths of his soul, and call into exercise all the powers of his being, it does seem to me that it ought to be the work which has been entrusted by the Saviour to the gospel minister. His very soul and life ought to be filled and thrilled with an enthusiasm that is all pervading and consuming. Zeal is the spiritual *steam* which moves the gospel train. What is a train of cars worth without steam? It is impotent and worthless. You may have a magnificent train of cars—engine, passenger coaches, engineer, conductor and passengers—but what does it all amount to without steam? *Nil*.

The gospel ministry is working, not only for time, but for eternity, and *especially* for eternity. Oh, how zealous he ought to be! How earnest, how enthusiastic! God does not want a man to enter this high and sacred office with a half-hearted service. Of course, the minister must be sane, intelligent, prudent and equable; but, at the same time, he must be mightily in earnest. He should possess a zeal, and be possessed of a zeal, that is all pervading and consuming—a zeal that controls and dominates. Outside of the grace of God, this is one of the very best assets the gospel minister has. And, by the grace of God, this inestimable asset is in reach of all. All do not have marked native ability; all may not have extraordinary gifts and attainments; but all can have a *deep* and an *abiding* and an *aggressive interest* in the great work. All can be in earnest. This is one of the mightiest forces in the minister's life and work.

Shame on the minister of the gospel, the ambassador of Christ, who is trying to do his work under the pres-

sure and burden of a lifeless indifference. He is to be pitied. Such a condition as this creates and encourages the "dead line" in the ministry. There is no dead line before the man whose heart is on fire for Christ and souls, whose being is filled with earnest zeal and intelligent push, and whose life is dominated with a spirit of consecrated service and heroic endeavor.

And, yet, there are some who condemn zeal. They admire enthusiasm in other departments of life; but they condemn it in the kingdom of God. Of course, we ought to pray to be delivered from a blind and aimless zeal, a zeal that is not according to knowledge. But where there is a deep piety, a broad intelligence and a conscious feeling that God has called us to this work and is with us in it, there is certainly no danger of having too much zeal.

It is simply impossible for us to overestimate the real worth of enthusiasm as a living force in the world. It has wrought wonders in the hearts and lives of men. John Ruskin takes the position that enthusiasm is the main condition of success in any calling of life. With piety and intelligence, there is absolutely no danger of having too much enthusiasm. It is simply impossible for us to be too much in earnest. There is so much before us to be done, and it is a work of such stupendous significance, and the time in which this work is to be done is so short, that it becomes us to place ourselves and all we have on the altar of service and sacrifice, of earnestness and enthusiasm. We must never sit down at ease and be satisfied with past attainments. We must undertake great things, and still greater things, for God and man. Our vision of work and possibility should constantly be enlarged. We must press forward.

The work is great; the time is short; the responsibility is stupendous. We should always be held in the omnipotent grip of an all-pervading and deathless enthusiasm. Oh, let us be in earnest!

There are two great forces in connection with this high calling that ought to be mighty incentives urging us on in our great work. One is *Christ*, the Head of the church, who says to us, *Go*; the other is our *fellow-man*, who says to us, *Come*. May these mighty forces be living, controlling, supreme factors in our experiences and in our lives. Let us be like Paul, who hazarded his life for the cause in which he was engaged, who was willing to make any sacrifice and to endure any hardship in the work of the Master.

Let us be like *Christ*—earnest, honest, sincere, consecrated, zealous. He felt the pressure of a divine oughtness and urgency resting upon him to do his work and to do it in a given time. “I *must* work the works of him that sent me, *while it is day*: the night cometh when no man can work.”

“Who is sufficient for these things?”

“Our sufficiency is of God.”

AGENCIES: DIVINE AND HUMAN*

"And Moses said unto God, Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?"—Ex. iii. 11.

GOD'S WAYS are not man's ways; nor are God's thoughts man's thoughts. God's ways are infinitely better than man's ways; and God's thoughts are infinitely higher than man's thoughts.

God sees the end from the beginning. He knows every possible contingency that may arise, and he has provided for every emergency. In fact, there are no contingencies and emergencies with God. These truths certainly stand out conspicuously in the life of Moses, and have been signalized in his work and in his preparation for this work.

In the providence of God, and by the providence of God, Moses had been prepared for a *special work*. God had prepared the *work* for *Moses*, and now he prepares *Moses* for the *work*. The two—the *work* and the *man*—are both in the hands of God; *Moses*, from his birth, and *his work* long before he is born. Everything connected with the *work* and the *man* was under God's immediate control and direction.

The work. God had before his people a glorious history and a magnificent destiny. They were to be delivered from Egyptian bondage and carried to the promised land. They were to be carried through a long period of instruction and discipline. Moses was to be the leader, and in the hands of God, the *creator* of much of the history of God's people.

*Preached at the installation of Rev. E. E. Gillespie as pastor of the Presbyterian Church, Yorkville, S. C., July 16th, 1905.

The man. God prepares *Moses* for this great work. "Moses was," as some one says, "of God's special preparation, the resultant of many forces. Wrought upon by inspiration, he was able to be legislator, statesman, leader, poet, saint, because he was so variedly trained. An exceptional man in original gifts, he was equally exceptional in his opportunities. To be of Hebrew extraction, and, therefore, by descent, to share in the glorious hopes of his race, was to have a grand start Godward. To be the adopted child of Pharaoh's daughter, to breathe 'the atmosphere of courts,' to be acquainted as an equal with the nobility of the land, was to gain an intimate knowledge of statecraft from the best exponents of it. To be trained for the priesthood, initiated into the holy mysteries, learned in all the learning of the Egyptians, was to be theoretically furnished unto religious service. To be exiled and compelled through many years to eat 'the bread of carefulness,' to be a keeper of sheep and a dweller in tents amid the sublimity of Sinaitic scenery, was to have time for reflection and communion with God. Thus when, at eighty, he returned to Egypt, he was able to debate with scholars and to sympathize with slaves. He towered above all his brethren. He was alone in the loneliness of his genius." Thus God had prepared this man so wonderfully by natural gifts, and by a long and eventful training for his life-work. Having prepared *this work* for *Moses*, and having prepared *Moses* for *the work*, God brings the two together. God calls: "*Moses, Moses,*" and *Moses* answers: "*Here am I.*"

The divine call came to *Moses* as he approached the mountain of God, Horeb. This call came from the burning bush. *Moses* was filled with consternation and

great astonishment. It is not surprising that Moses shrank from this work, when we look at it from a human point of view. He knew some of the difficulties in the way; and when he took a calm and dispassionate view of them, he thought the work was too great for him. "And Moses said unto God, Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?"

Let us look at some of these difficulties.

I. *His own unworthiness.* "And Moses said unto God, Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?" What am I compared to such a work? How can I liberate two million people from one of the most powerful and magnificent governments on earth? Moses knew something about the strength of this government. He also knew the people who were to be liberated. He did not feel equal to the present crisis and undertaking. "And Moses said unto God, Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?"

II. *Second Difficulty: To convince the people of the true nature, power and authority of the God who had sent him.* "And Moses said unto God, Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is his name? what shall I say unto them?"

"And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM; and he said, Thou shalt thus say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you." His name! What shall I say? What answer shall I make? Moses knew that the people were acquainted with the many gods of the

Egyptians. He knew they would want good evidence of the fact that he had a personal knowledge of the only living and true God. He did not know how to meet this difficulty. So when he gave serious consideration to it, he shrank from the work that would bring him face to face with this difficulty.

III. *Third Difficulty: To convince the people that their covenant-keeping God had sent him on this mission.* "And Moses answered and said, But, behold, they will not believe me, nor hearken unto my voice; for they will say, The Lord hath not appeared unto thee." This work to which Moses had been called would bring about a great revolution in the history of the Hebrew nation. Tremendous issues were at stake. Moses knew that he must be able to prove to the people that God had commissioned *him* to be their leader before they would follow him. He was afraid that they would look upon him as an *impostor*.

IV. *Fourth Difficulty: His lack of eloquence.* "And Moses said unto the Lord, O, my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since thou hast spoken unto thy servant; but I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue." He was slow of speech and of a slow tongue. While he might have the *arguments*, yet he did not think he could present them with sufficient force to carry conviction.

These are some of the difficulties which confronted Moses as he contemplated the great work to which God had called him.

Let us see, in the next place, how God removed all of these obstacles, every one of them.

I. *Personal unworthiness.* God removes this difficulty by saying: "*I will be with thee.*" If God is with a

man, his own personal worthiness, or unworthiness, as the case may be, is a matter of very little consequence. "What am I?" This is a question of very little importance. The important question is: "*Who is with you?*"

"Just and holy is thy name;
I am all unrighteousness;
Vile and full of sin, I am;
Thou art full of truth and grace."

"If God be for us, who can be against us?"

"I am with thee"—God, in all of his infinite *love* and *wisdom* and *power*, in all the inexhaustible resources of his being. As the *burning bush* has been subservient to the divine will and pleasure, without being consumed, so Moses might know that he could execute his commission, God being with him, without personal harm or danger.

Again, God uses the *promises* he had made as a means to remove this difficulty. He says: "This shall be a token: 'When thou hast brought forth the people out of Egypt, ye shall serve God upon *this* mountain.'" God makes *two kinds* of promises: one *conditional*, the other *unconditional*. He who bears to others the *former* may be in constant dread, because he may fear that the people will fail to fulfil some condition. It may have been so with Moses. He may have been afraid of the unbelief of the people—afraid they would fail in consequence of their unbelief to comply with some condition.

But nothing ought to discourage the man who brings an unconditional promise, because the certainty of the event ought to strengthen him against every obstacle. Here God makes an *unconditional* promise to Moses: "*Ye shall serve God upon this mountain.*" God not only

promises, but he actually *fortells*—not only tells that they shall be *delivered*, but the *very spot* where they shall worship God after their deliverance. It matters not how much unbelief there may be in the hearts of the people; it matters not what difficulties may arise; “ye SHALL worship God upon THIS mountain.”

What comfort and encouragement! And how completely it must have removed this obstacle! God not only tells Moses that he will be with him, but that he will make him *victorious*.

So God comes to every worker in his cause. “I will be with thee.” Promise of success.

II. *Second Difficulty: To convince the people of the true nature of God who had appeared unto him.* How did God solve this difficulty? “And Moses said unto God, Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is his name? what shall I say unto them?”

“And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you.

“And God said moreover unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, The Lord God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you; this is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations.”

A name that denotes:

1. *What he is in himself.* “I am,” from verb *to be*.

(1) *Self-existent*; (2) *Eternal*; (3) *Unchangeable*.

2. *What he is to his people.*

“The Lord God of your fathers.”

(1) *This would revive true religion.*

(2) *This would raise expectations.* Hope.

Thus God removed this difficulty by giving Moses a religious and theological equipment that would demolish all the forms of false religions and convince the people of his personal knowledge of the true religion.

So God comes to the worker to-day with his *word*—with its *truths, doctrines, promises*. “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect thoroughly furnished unto all good works.”

III. *Third Difficulty: To convince the people that God had commissioned him to do this work.* Although he may be very well posted on the doctrines of the true religion, yet he must prove that *he* is commissioned by the Lord to do *this work*. How does God handle this difficulty? He removes this difficulty by giving Moses power to work miracles. (See Exodus iv. 1-9.)

So God comes to the discouraged worker to-day and confers upon him the power to work spiritual miracles. Christ says: “He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father.” This is so.

IV. *Fourth Difficulty: Not eloquent.*

How did God remove this difficulty? God said: “I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say.” (See Exodus iv. 11-17.)

God promised to be with his mouth, and to teach him what to say and how to say it. God can make the dumb to speak, and the stammering tongue eloquent in his cause. True eloquence consists in real earnestness. If a man has a just *cause* and *his heart is in it*, he can make a worthy appeal to any jury.

God also promised to send Aaron with Moses to assist him in the great work. So with us. God makes us eloquent. He gives us Aaron. Thus God removed every obstacle, and so he will in the life of each one of us.

The great trouble with Moses seemed to be this: *he was looking at the whole matter altogether from a human point of view.* It was right for him to look at this side; it was right for him to take a calm and dispassionate view of the human side, but he ought not to have stopped here. There is another side, *a divine side*, and until the worker fully takes in this view, he always will be confronted by apparently insurmountable difficulties. We must never lose sight of God as a living, controlling and an ever-abiding factor in our work.

God revealed to Moses the *divine side* in the great work to which he had been called; and the power and brightness and encouragement of this revelation scattered to the four winds all the difficulties which seemed to be in the way.

There are several instructive lessons which we may learn from this incident in Moses's life.

1. *Every man has a work.* So with Moses, so with the Israelite; so with each of us.

2. *God never calls a man to a work which he cannot perform.* It was so with Moses, although he thought not, but he did the work, and he did it magnificently.

God is honest in the matter. He knows the *work* and the *man*. In fact, he prepares the *one* for the *other*—the *work* for the *man*, and the *man* for the *work*. God will help. He has the grace, strength, wisdom. There will be *difficulties*, for the preacher, the teacher, and the Christian worker. Each has his work and his difficul-

ties to confront him. The only condition to success is this: *We must use the means which he has given.*

3. *We ought to leave results with God.* Our business is to *obey*, to do the will of God, to do the work which he has given us to do. If, after having done this, we worry about results, we are simply wasting our strength and resources, and are putting our judgment above God's judgment. If we do what God tells us to do, we have made a grand success—it matters not what the visible results which follow our efforts may be. Success in God's sight is frequently a very different thing from what it is in the sight of men. God will take care of the *results* of our work, if we are walking in the path of duty. And he will take care of *us*. Sometimes we are discouraged, because we can see no immediate fruit of our labors. This is wrong if we are obeying God.

4. *It is right for us to feel our own weakness.* In fact, this is a necessary condition of success in the Christian life and in Christian work—*sine qua non*. When we do feel our weakness, this very *weakness* becomes an *element of strength* and a *source of power*. Why? Because then we look to Christ. God says: "Not by *might*, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord." Paul says: "God hath chosen the *weak* things of the world to confound the things which are mighty." Again he says: "When I am *weak*, then am I strong." In the Christian life we can never become *strong* until we first become *weak*. Our very *weakness*, by the grace of God, becomes an element of strength and *power*. We must first be *emptied of self*, before we can be *filled with Christ*.

So it was with Moses. His very weakness became a source of strength and power. Realizing his own weak-

ness and unworthiness, he looked to God for help and direction; and God came to his relief with divine power and wisdom. And was it not so, that the very difficulties which stood in his way became, in the hands of God, aids to his success? Every obstacle became a stepping stone to victory. These things, at first, were great, steep, impassable mountains; but faith could say, and it did say, to each mountain: "Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea," and it obeyed.

When we prostrate ourselves in our weakness at the foot of the cross, it is that we may be electrified with the dynamite of the gospel; and when we rise, we come forth clothed upon with the strength and power of Christ. "I can do all things through Christ, who strengtheneth me." So it will be with us, if we fulfill the conditions.

5. *If we can't do things perfectly, we must be willing to do them as best we can.* How many do nothing, because they say they can't do perfect work. Moses made mistakes. We all make mistakes. God alone does perfect work. If we stand back because we cannot do perfect work, we will do nothing. Yea, it is that we may be filled and thrilled with the truth.

In conclusion, we need:

1. *Faith in God's wisdom.* He knows what is best; he knows *us* and *our work*; he knows all things. He knows exactly what he is doing. It is simply impossible for him to make a mistake.

2. *Faith in God's power.* Though we may be very weak; yet God can take us, weak as we are, and bring to pass his mighty plans and purposes. Faith in God's power makes us as strong as God.

3. *Faith in God's grace.* His all-sufficient grace, to

restrain, to constrain, to sustain, to direct and to encourage. Faith in his grace to save to the farthest limits of sin; and faith in his grace to keep us unto completed salvation.

4. *Faith in God's promises.* They cover every case and condition of life. They are for us—for our comfort and encouragement; and they are sure to be accomplished, every one of them. They have been tested and tried; and if we will let our faith rest upon them, they will bring us joy and peace and strength.

Going forth with such equipment as this—God's *wisdom*, God's *power*, God's *grace* and God's *promises*—*we are sure to succeed.*

TO OBEY IS BETTER THAN SACRIFICE.

"To obey is better than sacrifice."—1 Sam. xv. 22.

SAMUEL, the prophet, addressed these words to Saul, after Saul's victory over the Amalekites. God issued this command to Saul: "Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass." Saul obeyed a part of this injunction, but not all. He marched against the Amalekites, as he was commanded to do, and gained a complete victory over them; but he did not utterly destroy them and their goods, as he was commanded to do. He destroyed everything which he considered vile and refuse; but the choice things he saved. The record says: "But Saul and the people spared Agag, and the best of the sheep, and of the oxen, and of the fatlings, and the lambs, and all that was good, and would not utterly destroy them: but everything that was vile and refuse, that they destroyed utterly."

God now says to Samuel: "It repenteth me that I have set Saul to be king: for he is turned back from following me, and hath not performed my commands." Let us bear in mind, just here, as has been said by Matthew Henry, that "repentance in God is not, as it is in us, a change of his mind, but a change of his method or dispensation. He does not alter his will, but he wills an alteration. The change was in Saul." God can never change. He is immutable.

Samuel was very much grieved over the disobedient course of Saul. After spending a whole night in crying unto the Lord, he went to Saul. "And Saul said unto him, Blessed be thou of the Lord; I have performed the command of the Lord." Then Samuel put to him this heart-searching and heart-crushing question: "*What meaneth, then, this bleating of the sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?*" Saul replied by saying: "They have brought them from the Amalekites, for the people spared the best of the sheep and of the oxen, to sacrifice unto the Lord thy God; and the rest we have utterly destroyed."

"Then Samuel said unto Saul, Stay, and I will tell thee what the Lord hath said to me this night. And he said unto him, Say on." Then Samuel reproves Saul for disobeying the command of God. But Saul, strange to say, professed to have followed the command of God. He said unto Samuel: "Yea, I have obeyed the voice of the Lord, and have gone the way which the Lord sent me, and have brought Agag, the king of Amalek, and have utterly destroyed the Amalekites. But the people took of the spoil, sheep and oxen, the chief of the things which should have been utterly destroyed, to sacrifice unto the Lord thy God in Gilgal."

You see from this, that Saul attempts to place his sin of disobedience upon the shoulders of the people; and then he tries to justify his wicked act by saying that those things which had been reserved were to be *sacrificed unto the Lord*. Thus it is seen to what subterfuges a guilty conscience will resort in order to exonerate or justify itself.

Samuel replies to this device of Saul by saying: "Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacri-

fices as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams." "To obey is better than sacrifice." Obedience is more acceptable to God than sacrifice. Why is this so?

I. *Because obedience alone acknowledges God's right to reign over us.* That God has such a right cannot be questioned, except by the most avowed infidel and skeptic. From what we know of God in nature and revelation, this right is grounded in the highest justice and righteousness. He has the absolute right to reign over us and over all we have. This involves God's right to all our service; and this involves our duty to render a cheerful obedience to all of God's commandments. If we belong to God in the highest and truest sense, as the Bible says we do, then God has the right to command us, and it is our duty to render unto him the homage and service of our hearts.

The person who has a sincere desire in his heart to obey the commandments of God, and who puts this desire into execution in his life, recognizes in the best possible way, God's right to reign over him; and in this way he puts his endorsement upon this right.

He who refuses to obey God's commandments, denies by this very act, the authority which God has to reign over him. He antagonizes the government of God in the world, and in this way is guilty of the great sin of rebellion against God. Without obedience you cannot be a loyal subject in the government of God. *Obedience* acknowledges God's right to sit upon the throne of the universe; but *disobedience* would dethrone God and demolish the very principles upon which his government is founded. *Obedience* says that God has the *right* to

command, and that his *commandments* are *right*; but *disobedience* says that God has no such right, and that his commandments are unjust, and, therefore, tyrannical. Thus it will be seen that anything less than obedience to God's commandments is subversive of all true religion. *True obedience* is the very essence of all *true religion*. Without this, all religion is a mere sham. Yea, without this, true religion is impossible. A man may have a *show* of religion without this, as Saul had; but the essence of the matter will be altogether lacking in the heart. Saul pretended to make a show of religion by maintaining that the spoils which he had reserved, contrary to divine command, were to be offered in sacrifice to God. The Lord had ordered him to destroy everything which he might take from the Amalekites. But he reserved the best of the spoils. And when Samuel reprov'd him for his disobedience, he tries to justify himself by saying that these things were to be sacrificed unto God. In refusing to follow the commandment of God, Saul ignored God's right to reign over him. More than this, he seemed to act as though a man could *pay his way* in religion. Although he had violated God's commandments, and in this way, had thrown contempt upon God's authority to govern him; yet, he expects, by his sacrifices, to appease the wrath of God which had been caused by his disobedience. He acted just as though he had the right to contravene the commandment of God, provided he would go through with a little religious service in offering a few sacrifices to God. In other words, he acted just as though the approval of God was something which was for sale, and that all a man had to do to secure it was to offer a few sacrifices. But Samuel told him that sacrifice could not

possibly take the place of obedience in the sight of God. "To obey is better than sacrifice."

No sacrifices can be acceptable in the sight of God without obedience. Yea, all sacrifices that are intended to take the place of obedience are abominations in the sight of God.

Yet, how many men there are like Saul, who try to cover their meanness with the cloak of religion! In the name of religion, they commit their sinful deeds; and they expect to atone for their sins by the service which they render in the cause of religion. Every man is duty-bound to follow the commandments of God with implicit trust and confidence. A man's motives may be ever so good, yet this fact cannot possibly justify him in going contrary to God's commandments. The fact that Saul expected to offer in sacrifice to God the spoils which he had reserved, could never justify him in his disobedience. The very first step in all true religion is *absolute submission* to God's *absolute sovereignty* over us. Without obedience, therefore, it is impossible to please God. Just to the extent that we obey the commandments of God, just to that extent do we approximate the standard of discipleship held up to us in the Word of God.

One of the chief elements in every sin is *disobedience*. "Sin is any want of conformity unto or transgression of the law of God." Had there been no *disobedience*, there would have been, there could have been, no *sin*. If we would please God and render unto him an acceptable sacrifice, we must obey his commandments.

II. Again, *obedience is better than sacrifice in the sight of God, because obedience acknowledges God's superior wisdom in reigning over us*. When we obey the com-

mandments of God, we express our confidence in the wisdom of these commandments. By this act, we not only say that God has the *right* and the *authority* to enforce these commands, but we also say that there is *intrinsic righteousness* in the commandments themselves. Obedience not only acknowledges the righteousness of God's reign, but also the *wisdom of its administration*.

But when we disobey the commandments of God, we express a lack of confidence in the *wisdom* of God. We say by this act that we know better than God. Was this not the door through which the great adversary of souls led our first parents, when he tempted them to commit their first great sin? God commanded them not to do a certain thing, announcing death as the penalty attached to the breaking of this commandment. But Satan maintained that he knew better than God, that death would not follow a violation of this commandment. Our first parents yielded to the temptation, and by this course they expressed a lack of confidence in the wisdom of God. They virtually said by this act, that God did not know what he was talking about when he said that death should be inflicted as a penalty for a violation of this commandment. For, if they had believed God as to what was involved in this disobedience, they would certainly never have yielded to the temptation of the wicked one.

All of God's commandments are founded in the highest wisdom. We may not be able to see this wisdom, but, if we could see things as God sees them, then we could see an infinitely wise purpose in every commandment of God. Therefore, it is incumbent on us to follow all the commandments of God to the very letter. It is true, we may say, as we often do, *What is the use?*

Where is the good? But all such conduct as this expresses a lack of confidence in the wisdom of God. If we are sure the commandment comes from God, we ought so to educate ourselves as to ask no questions whatever in regard to its wisdom. God not only has an infinitely wise *purpose* in every one of his commandments, but he also knows every possible emergency which may arise in connection with these commandments. It is far better for us to obey, although we do not see God's reason for the commandment. Saul could not see why God ordered a complete destruction of all the spoils taken from the Amalekites; he thought he knew better than God; so he refused to obey.

We are sinning against God when we question his wisdom in any of his commandments. Although another way may seem better and wiser to us than God's way, yet we must submit to God's way, because *it is God's way*, and, being his way, *it is the wisest*.

It matters not how good our intentions may be, if we are in the path of disobedience we are in the path of sin. Perhaps you remember the case of *Uzzah*, as he and his brother were moving the ark of God. The ark was on a cart drawn by oxen. It seems that the oxen stumbled, and the ark was in danger of being overthrown. *Uzzah* reached forth his hand and laid hold of the ark to save it from this fall. But for this act God smote him, and he died there by the ark of God. Now, *Uzzah's* intentions may have been good in trying to save the ark, but, in doing this, he was going directly contrary to an explicit commandment of God, by which he was forbidden to touch the ark.

In the case of *Noah* we have a beautiful example of obedience. God told him that he was going to deluge

the world with a flood, and directed him to make an ark for the saving of himself and family. God gave Noah all the directions as to how he should build the ark. The record informs us that Noah followed all of God's directions. Doubtless his cotemporaries laughed at him; they told him that such a thing as a flood had never been sent upon the earth, and that such a thing was impossible. But, notwithstanding these scoffs and jeers, and notwithstanding his own judgment in the matter, he followed implicitly the commandments of God.

III. Again, I remark that *obedience is better than sacrifice, because obedience alone is a genuine test of our love to God.* The man who says he loves God and then deliberately violates the law of God, simply tells what is not so. If a person has no delight in obeying God's commandments, he may justly have serious cause to doubt whether he is one of God's children or not. The Bible gives obedience as one evidence of our love to God. Christ says: "If ye love me, ye will keep my commandments." If we truly love God, we will love his commandments, and if we love these commandments, we will obey them. It is mere *bosh* for us to stand up in the church on the Lord's day and say that we love God, and then go out on Monday and trample his holy commandments under our feet. There is no better way of proving that we love God than by obeying him. In fact, without this obedience we certainly have poor evidence in the light of God's Word, to prove that we do love God. "There is an absolute repugnance between love to him and despising his commands. Love inclines the soul to obey all God's precepts; not only those of easy observation, but the most difficult and distasteful to the carnal appetites." Love and obedience are necessary concomitants of each other.

IV. Again, *Obedience is better than sacrifice, because obedience alone will command God's blessings upon us.* Just as sure as we obey the commandments of God, just so sure will we be rewarded for this obedience. And just as sure as we go contrary to the commandments of God, just so sure will we be punished for this disobedience. The man who deliberately violates the law of God, expecting to escape punishment, is going to be disappointed in the end. God is bound, from his very nature, and from the very principles of his government, to *reward* the *obedient* and to *punish* the *disobedient*. These rewards and punishments may not seem to be distributed justly in this world; but in the world to come it will be manifest to every one that such is really the case. The man who deliberately violates the law of their God, will be blessed to all eternity, and the wicked, who have refused to obey the voice of their God, will be punished to all eternity. Obedience to God's commandments necessarily brings down upon us the approbation of God; and disobedience to his commandments brings down upon us his condemnation and displeasure. Saul had to suffer for his disobedience—he offended his conscience and lost his throne. All *Scripture*, all *history*, and all *experience* are verifications of this statement. We know it is so, because God's Word says so; we know it is so, because every case recorded in history says so; we know it is so, because our own experience says so. "To obey is better than sacrifice." If it is our desire to please God, and render unto him an acceptable service, we must obey his commandments in our daily lives.

Let us notice for a moment, in conclusion, *three of God's commandments*, which cover the scope of our obligations to him in this life; and then let us measure

ourselves by these commandments and see whether we have reached the divine standard.

1. "And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment."—1 JOHN iii. 23. Here God *commands* us to *believe in Christ*. This is the *first step* in the Christian life. Faith saves, unbelief damns. Do you believe in Christ?

2. "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you."—2 CORINTHIANS vi. 17. Here God impresses on us the duty of making a *public profession* of our religion, or *faith*. We must come out and identify ourselves with God's people.

3. "And now, Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to *walk* in all his ways, and to *love* him, and to *serve* the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, to keep the commandments of the Lord, and his statutes, which I command thee this day for thy good."—DEUT. x. 12, 13. Here we have *service*. Our duty to serve God with the whole *heart and life*. 1. *Faith*; 2. *Profession*; 3. *Service*. How do you stand?

“REMEMBER THE SABBATH DAY, TO KEEP IT HOLY.”

“Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.”—Ex. xx. 8.

“The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath.”—Mark ii. 27.

IN DISCUSSING the subject before us, let us consider:

I. *The divine authority for the observance of the Sabbath.* It is *God* who says: “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.” There are some who maintain that there is now no binding obligation upon us to keep the Sabbath law. They argue that the Sabbath was a part of the ceremonial regimen, and that it was abolished with the Old Testament dispensation. This position is not only *un-scriptural*; it is also *anti-scriptural*. The Sabbath is a *divine institution*, and its *proper observance* is of *perpetual obligation* on all mankind. The law of the Sabbath is not a *ceremonial law*; it is a *moral law*; and hence it can never be abrogated. We are just as bound to keep this law as we are bound to keep any other law of God. The Sabbath, therefore, is a *moral necessity*.

Let me call your attention to some reasons why we are obligated to keep the law of the Sabbath.

1. I think we can get a strong argument for the perpetual obligation to keep this law, if we will consider *the time when the Sabbath was instituted*. This day was not instituted *after the fall of man*; it was instituted *in man's innocence, immediately after man's creation*. As soon as man came into existence, the Sabbath was a

necessity. The wording of one of our texts clearly implies that this was not a new law which God was giving to the people. "*Remember* the Sabbath day, to keep it holy." The people knew of this day long before the giving of the law on Mt. Sinai. The law of the Sabbath cannot be classified with ceremonial laws of the old dispensation; because the Sabbath was instituted before there was any necessity for a ceremonial law.

Now, if the Sabbath was necessary for man in his *innocency*, how much more is it necessary for him as a *fallen* and *sinful* being? If a Sabbath is necessary for the promotion of God's glory among *pure* and *holy* beings, how much more is it necessary for the promotion of his glory among *imperfect* and *sinful* beings! When we consider the fact that the Sabbath was instituted even before the fall of man, we are forced to the conclusion that it has no connection whatever with the ceremonial law, as far as *essence* is concerned. The Sabbath commences with *man*; and God would have this day incorporated into the very history of man as long as he has a history.

2. The *manner*, as well as the *time*, of the institution of the Sabbath, teaches us the importance of observing this day. How was this day instituted? This question is answered in the second chapter of Genesis: "And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made." Thus we have, not only the *precept*, but also the *example*, of God to enforce the observance of the Sabbath. If *God* was obligated to keep the Sabbath, how much more are *we*

obligated to keep it! God not only *speaks* in this matter, but he also *acts*. We have both *divine precept* and *divine example* to impress on us the importance of observing the Sabbath. God has set us an example in Sabbath observance. He kept the first Sabbath, and he gives this as a reason why we should observe the day.

3. Again, *we are obligated to keep the Sabbath day holy, because this law is found in the decalogue*. God put this law into the *very heart of the Ten Commandments*. You cannot do away with the Sabbath without mutilating the moral law of God. The very same God who says, "Thou shalt not *kill*," also says, and in the same connection, "*Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy*." The very same God who says, "Thou shalt not *steal*," also says, and in the same connection, "*Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy*." If it is a sin to *kill* and to *steal*, then it is a sin not to keep the Sabbath day holy. God himself has placed these laws upon the very same level by incorporating them into the Ten Commandments, and thus binding them together by a *moral chain*, which can never be broken. All of these commandments are held together in the omnipotent grip of God's unchanging and unchangeable law. The *Sabbath breaker* is just as guilty before God as the *murderer*, or the *thief*, or the *profane swearer*, or the *idolater*, or the *liar*. This may not appear to be true in the eyes of men; but man's ways are not God's ways, and man's thoughts are not God's thoughts.

God has put this law of the Sabbath in the very midst, yea, in the *very heart* of the *moral law*, guarding it on the one side by such commands as, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me," and "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain;" and guarding it on

the other side by such commands as "Thou shalt not kill," and "Thou shalt not steal." Thus God would teach all the nations, through all the ages, that the Sabbath is to be kept forever and everywhere holy.

4. Again, *we are bound to keep the Sabbath day holy, because the New Testament does not repeal this law.* If the Sabbath had been a part of the ceremonial law, as some maintain, then, doubtless, the New Testament would have abolished it. But what are the facts in the case? Instead of abolishing this law, the New Testament *confirms* it. The teachings and practices of Christ establish this law. It is true, the Saviour says the Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath. He does not mean by this statement, as some would have us believe, that man can make any disposition of this day which he pleases. He means that this day was intended to advance the highest and best interests of man. He did not mean to abolish the Sabbath; his purpose was to clear away the rubbish which the Pharisees and scribes had piled upon this law, and to show us the true nature and end of this law. Christ's object was to sweep away the cob-webs; his purpose was not to tear down the house. The Sabbath was made for man—for man's highest, best, largest interests. There is almost as much danger in perverting the true purpose of the Sabbath as there is in abolishing it altogether. Christ would teach us that the works of necessity and mercy are perfectly legitimate on the Sabbath; and not only this, but that there is a solemn obligation resting upon us to do these works on this day. The Sabbath was made for man—it is not an *end in itself*, but a *means to an end*. Christ would teach us that the Sabbath, in its true and original purpose, is still binding upon us.

The practice of the Christian church, as recorded in the New Testament, goes to prove that the Sabbath was still binding upon men. The fact that the Sabbath was changed from the *seventh* to the *first* day of the week, has nothing to do with the *essence* of the matter. The *gist* of the requirement is that *one-seventh* of our time constitutes the Lord's day. God has the right to say what day in the week shall be set apart for his day. Since he has changed the Sabbath from the *seventh* to the *first* day of the week, it is our duty to observe the first day of the week as the Sabbath. The New Testament merely changes the day; it does not abolish it.

5. Again, there is a strong argument for the perpetual obligation to keep the Sabbath in the *practical need of the day*. If you will glance over the history of the church, you will see that *the true worship of God* and *the proper observance of the Lord's day* have always gone hand in hand together. There is nothing that will destroy the vitality of true religion more effectually than a universal desecration of the Lord's day. This day of sacred rest, this day of religious worship, has been in all ages of the church, the impregnable bulwark of true religion and vital godliness. Go into a community where the Sabbath is made a day to frolic in, simply a day of recreation and pleasure, and you will see a very low standard of religion, both in the hearts and lives of the people. But, on the other hand, go into a community where the Sabbath is made a day of rest and religious worship, where the Sabbath is remembered and honored and properly observed, and you will be impressed with the high standard of piety and Christian living that prevails in that community. The proper observance of the Lord's day is a religious necessity. This assertion can

be verified by history. "When the dark ages began, and for many centuries, Christendom was overwhelmed with a flood of ignorance and superstition; the Sabbath suffered like every other part of scriptural religion. It was practically superseded by man-made feasts and festivals, and holidays, and its right use, like that of the Bible, dropped out of sight. It is a curious fact, and one worthy of remembrance, that the Church of Rome, since her first departure from the faith, has rarely proved herself a friend to Sunday." Look at *Germany*, the birth-place of the Reformation, a country which has enjoyed signal blessings and exalted privileges from a religious point of view. The people in that country have held very low views on the Sabbath law. They have made the Lord's day, to a very great extent, simply a day of pleasure and recreation. Even the great church of Germany has a very low standard on this subject. What has been the result upon vital godliness in that country? The very life has been taken out of their religion to an alarming extent; and while they still have a *form* of godliness, yet they are ignorant of its *power* and its *real preciousness* to a very great extent.

Look at *France*, which, also, enjoyed unusual privileges and advantages in the days of the Reformation. But she perverted and desecrated the Lord's day, and we all know what the result has been. That nation has drifted away from God and true Christianity, until now there is scarcely a nation on earth which is more skeptical and atheistic than she.

Then, on the other hand, look at *Presbyterian Scotland*, where true religion and vital godliness have lived and flourished in the hearts and lives of the people since the days of the Reformation, where the people have read

God's Word and honored it and practiced it. Why has this been so? Do we not find one potent reason in the fact that the people of Scotland have honored the Lord's day by keeping it holy?

The first great Synod in modern times which declared the true, scriptural doctrine of the Sabbath was the Westminster Assembly of Presbyterian divines. We have, in the standards of this Assembly, a full and scriptural exposition of the law of the Sabbath. And there is no body of Christians on earth who have been more orthodox in doctrine and purer in life than those who have held to the Westminster standards.

Yes, the proper observance of the Sabbath is inseparably connected with whatever is pure in life and doctrine in the church. The Word of God and the enlightened conscience of God's people emphasize the necessity of the Lord's day in connection with true religion and vital godliness. It is true, religion does not consist in the keeping of days and seasons; and it is also true, that in an important sense every day is to be kept holy and is to be the Lord's day; but *Revelation* and *conscience* and *history*, all teach us that there must be a *Lord's day* in a *special* and *peculiar* sense. There *must* be a *Sabbath day*, a day of *sacred rest* and *religious worship*. If we would hold up the standard of true religion, the law of the Sabbath must be cherished and honored and observed. The enemy of the Lord's day, whether he be in the church or out of the church, is an enemy to God's law and true religion.

II. *The design of the Sabbath.*

1. *To keep in mind the fact that God is the Creator of all things.* God made the world and all things in it in six days, and on the *seventh day* he rested from all his

works. And when we observe this day, the truth is held up distinctly before our minds that *God made this world and all things in it*. This world did not come into existence by *chance*; it is not a *bastard*; it is not *creatorless*. *God is its Creator*. Therefore, this world *belongs to God and he is its Ruler*. This truth is *vital* in religion. And every time we remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy, we celebrate God's creative power. We say by this observance that *God made this world*, that *God owns this world*, and that *God rules this world*. God would have us stop on life's journey one day in every seven and think about these things.

2. *We are to observe the Sabbath, so that we may keep in remembrance the great doctrine of Christ's resurrection*. Of course, this was not the design of the Sabbath from the beginning; but it certainly is now; because the day has been changed from the *seventh* to the *first* day of the week *for this very purpose*. On the first day of the week, Christ conquered death and burst asunder the bars of the grave, and declared to the world his *resurrection power*. The doctrine of Christ's resurrection is so *fundamental* in the Christian religion, that God would have us commemorate it *one day in every seven*. Instead of having *one Easter Sunday a year*, Christ would have us to enjoy *fifty-two*. *Every Lord's day is a resurrection day*. The resurrection of Christ is essential to the very life of Christianity. Hence this doctrine must be kept constantly before the minds and hearts of the people as a *living reality*. On the Lord's day, Christ arose triumphant over the grave, conquered death, established his divinity upon a basis which can never be moved, and laid the topmost stone upon his work of redemption. Some of the most magnificent achievements of Christianity

cluster around the resurrection of Christ. How appropriate is it then, that the resurrection of our Saviour should be inseparably connected for all coming time with the *Sabbath*, which is *the Lord's day* in a *high and peculiar* sense. Every Lord's day we can look back to the time when the doctrine of the resurrection was exemplified in the case of our Saviour, and every Lord's day we can look forward to the time when this glorious doctrine shall be exemplified in our own experience and history.

3. *The Sabbath is designed to be a perpetual type of the eternal Sabbath day.* The Sabbath is *prospective*, as well as *retrospective*. It looks *back* to the resurrection of Christ; it looks *forward* to that rest which remains to the people of God. *Sabbath* is a Hebrew word, which signifies *rest*. This blessed day is an *earnest*, an *infallible prophecy* of the *eternal rest* which awaits us in heaven. Here, we have many conflicts and trials. This life is full of toil and strife and disappointment and bereavement. There is no absolutely perfect rest in this life. But that rest which remains to God's people in the immortal life which is to come, will be *perfect*. The *toil* is *here*; but the *rest* is *yonder*. The *conflict* is *here*; but the *victory* is *yonder*. The *cross* is *here*; but the *crown* is *yonder*. The *sorrow* is *here*; but the *happiness* is *yonder*. God gives us one day in every week in which to think especially about these things. Every Lord's day this *perfect rest*, this *final victory*, this *complete happiness*, this *glorious reward* should be brought prominently before the Christian's mind and heart.

4. *The design of the Sabbath is to furnish time for the public and private worship of God.* In this busy world, men have not time even to worship God. Their

business has a stronger hold upon them than their God. There are many even in the church, who are so absorbed in their business that they have not time to spend ten minutes a day with their families in worshipping the God whom they have vowed to serve. God calls upon the world to *halt* in its pursuit of business and pleasure one day in every seven and spend the time in his worship. Were it not for the *Sabbath*, men would *forget* God and would soon cease to engage in his worship. A great many do forget God as it is. We are to work six days; but God says we must not work on the seventh day. This is, in a peculiar sense, *God's day*, and the time must be spent in the public and private worship of his name.

5. *The Sabbath is designed to give us rest from the labors and cares of this world.* Oh, what a blessing the Sabbath is to the laboring man! The *body* needs rest, and the *mind* needs rest. The Sabbath is a *physical* necessity and a *mental* necessity, as well as a *spiritual* necessity. The best authorities on this subject tell us that our bodies demand at least one-seventh of our time for rest. And then we need rest from the cares and anxieties of this life. Gladstone maintained that the secret of his long life was the fact that in the midst of all his public cares and duties, he never failed to observe punctiliously the Lord's day. God has wisely given us the Sabbath, and he would say to us: "Let your bodies rest on this day, and let your minds be free from worldly cares and anxieties." On the Lord's day, our *manual* labor is to cease, and our *mental* labor, as far as it relates to our worldly business, is to cease also. On this day we are to draw in our minds and our thoughts from the things of this world. This is the *Lord's day*, and we have no right to use it in conducting or planning our own business. You

are to be faithful in conducting your own business during the week, so that the Sabbath can be devoted to God's business and God's service.

III. *How is the Sabbath to be observed or sanctified?* This question is answered so fully and so scripturally by our Shorter Catechism, that I will give its answer: "The Sabbath is to be sanctified by a holy resting all that day, even from such worldly employments and recreations as are lawful on other days; and spending whole time in the public and private exercise of God's worship, except so much as is to be taken up in the works of necessity and mercy." This answer tells us what *to do* and what *not to do* on the Sabbath.

1. *We are to rest all the day from our worldly employments and recreations.* This is a day of *rest*. We are sinning against God when we are conducting our business on the Lord's day. It is wrong for us to plan for our business on this day. How can we justify ourselves in getting our *mail* on the Lord's day? Is this not a part of our business? And, as far as *principle* is concerned, is it not just as bad to get your mail and read your business letters on the Lord's day as it is to open your place of business on this day?

Again, how can you reconcile the habit of reading the Sunday newspaper and travelling on the train on Sunday with the requirements of God's Word in connection with the Sabbath law? If you were going to buy a bill of goods in New York, what would be the difference, as far as *principle* is concerned, between your buying the goods on Sunday and travelling there on Sunday, to buy the goods on Monday or Tuesday? Isn't one just as bad as the other?

How can our bodies and minds get the rest they need

when we spend the time on the Lord's day in reading the Sunday newspaper, a document that is thoroughly dominated by and saturated with a spirit of business and worldliness? The Sunday newspaper is a great enemy to the Lord's day.

2. *We are to spend the whole time in the public and private exercise of God's worship, except so much as is to be taken up in the works of necessity and mercy.* We are not only required to let our worldly employments and recreations alone on the Lord's day, but the whole time is to be spent in worshipping God. We are to worship God on this day in *his house with his people*; we are to worship him in *our homes with our families*; we are to worship him *privately in our closets*.

Social visiting on the Lord's day is wrong. Such visiting is disastrous to personal piety. You have no right to visit your neighbor, in a social way, on the Lord's day. You are doing him a positive injury; you are injuring yourself; and you are cheating God out of his time. The Sabbath is *God's day for visiting*. He would come to you especially on this day to talk with you about the interests of your souls, and he doesn't want any intrusions or interruptions.

Again, *the Lord's day is not to be spent in idleness*. God did not give you this day to loaf in, to do nothing in. How many spend the precious hours of this day in meeting together to gossip and to talk about those things which are purely worldly and temporal! This is a profanation, a desecration of the Lord's day which is fraught with incalculable harm.

The whole day is to be spent in worshipping God, or in the interests of things pertaining to our everlasting welfare. It is your duty to be found in the Lord's house

on the Lord's day. It is your duty to read God's Word on the Lord's day. It is your duty to enter into a rigid examination of your spiritual condition on the Lord's day and see how you stand towards God. Of course, I do not mean to say that it is not your duty to do these things on other days, but I do mean to say that it is pre-eminently your duty to do them on the Lord's day.

In conclusion, let us remember that the Lord's day is not to be a gloomy day. We are not to feel, or act, on this day as though we were in prison. The Lord's day should be to us the *best*, the *brightest*, the *happiest* day of all the week. It should be a day of special rejoicing and thanksgiving. If our Sabbaths were indeed such days to us, what a blessing they would be to us. What an uplift they would be to us in the Christian life. How they would bring us nearer to God and nearer to heaven—how they would equip us for life's duties and for life's work.

“A Sunday well spent
Brings a week of content,
And health for the toils of the morrow;
But a Sabbath profaned,
Whatso'er may be gained,
Is a certain forerunner of sorrow.”

THE DUTY OF LIVING IN THE PRESENT.

"Forgetting those things which are behind."—Phil. iii. 13.

"Take therefore no thought for the morrow."—Matt. vi. 34.

"Redeeming the time."—Eph. v. 16.

"Redeeming the time"—"Buying up the opportunity."
Making the best of existing circumstances. Living in the present.

"Time, indeed, is a sacred gift, and each day is a little life."

THERE are some people who live, to a very great extent, in the *past*.

I. *Some among this class spend much of their time in mourning over the past.* They mourn over lost opportunities, or over mistakes that have been made in the past. Like Mary and Martha, after the death of their brother: "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died."

This is a great mistake. It can do no good; but it does much harm. It makes matters worse, instead of making them better. "The only way to get rid of a *past* is by getting a *future* out of it." This can be done only by *living in the present*.

The past is *fixed* beyond the possibility of a change. How foolish, therefore, to worry over the past! How foolish and childish to sit down and waste precious time by saying: "*It might have been otherwise,*" or "*if I had done so and so, it would have been different.*"

"Wise men ne'er sit and wail their woes,
But presently prevent the ways to wail."

2. *Others build on what they have done in the past, or on what their ancestors have done.* They sit down in a state of self-satisfaction, permitting the most precious opportunities to go by unimproved.

How foolish! Yea, how sinful! The fact that we have done well in the *past* will not, and cannot, justify us in doing nothing in the *present*. The *past* stands for itself and on its own merits. The *present* must answer for itself. God will hold us responsible for every moment of time and for every opportunity. Thus we see that our neglect of the present cannot be justified either by the *mistakes* of the past, or by the *virtues* of the past.

It is our duty to leave the *past* in the hands of the Lord, where it is and where it properly belongs.

It is our duty *to live in the present—to improve the opportunities of the present.* This requires a life of *faith and consecration and service—of trust, earnestness and work.* This will save us from many a trouble in connection with the past. Some one has said: “Never indulge at the close of an action, in any self-reflective acts of any kind, whether of *self-congratulation* or of *self-despair*. Forget the things that are behind, the moment they are past, leaving them with God.”

Oh, that each of us would adopt the apostle’s motto and make it our own: “This one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.”

3. *Still others draw comparisons between the past and the present to the detriment of the present.* They say: “The former days were better than these; the world is going to the bad; everything is on the downward tendency. Instead of trying to make the *present better*,

they fold their arms and bow down as worshippers of *the past*. They do all they can to make their doctrine true—that the past was better than the present.

Even granting that the past was better than the present, it is folly to act in this way. We should make an effort to improve on the past. This can be done *only by living in the present; only by seizing and improving the opportunities as they go by*. Those who live in this way will have no time to waste in eulogizing the past at the expense of the present.

It is right to live in the past, in a certain sense. It is our duty to properly estimate and appreciate the past. The achievements of the past come to us as a *sacred trust* and a *priceless heritage*, and our duty is to use these things as stepping stones to still greater achievements. We have the accumulated labors and experiences of the past to assist us in our life-work; and, in this way, we have a great advantage over those who have lived before us. Therefore, this age ought to be the very best age in the world's history; as compared with the past, this ought to be the *golden age*; and it should be our constant and earnest effort to make it such. Every age ought to be better than every preceding age. This can be only by using the past as a *means*, and not as an *end*. In this way the past will become an indispensable *help*, instead of a degrading *hindrance*. This is the way to make the world better. But let us guard against living in the past, to the neglect and depreciation of to-day's *duties, opportunities and possibilities*.

“Let the dead past bury its dead!
Act—act in the living present!
Heart within, and God o'er head!”

Again, there is a class of people who live, to a very great extent, in the *future*.

1. *There are those among this class who expect to do great things in the future.* They do very little in the present, because their time is taken up in arranging to do something in the future.

It is right for us to *plan* for the future; it is right for us to *prepare* for the future. The *providence* of God, as well as the *Word* of God, teaches us that this is our *duty*. But how can we plan and prepare for the future? Only in one way, and that is by *living in the present* and *properly using the resources of the present*.

2. *There are others among this class who do very little in the present, because they are waiting for something to turn up in their favor.* There they sit, like Mr. Micawber in *David Copperfield*, dreaming that something is going to happen which will place them on the wave of prosperity and sweep them into the harbor of success. They never do anything, because that for which they are looking never happens.

How foolish to waste precious time and opportunity in this way! The way, and the only effectual way that I know of—the way to make something advantageous turn up—is to *live in the present and properly use its opportunities*. Something will turn up one of these days to these people; but it will not be the thing they are looking for—it will be the *judgment day*! Yes, that day will turn up, and it will turn these people up, too.

3. *There are others who are crippled in their present usefulness because they are constantly expecting some kind of trouble to happen.* Oh, how much worry and anxiety they have on account of trouble that never comes—which dwells only in the imagination. In their

imagination, they build a bridge somewhere in the future, the crossing of which incurs pain and involves danger. In their minds, they are constantly crossing this bridge. How many *real* troubles people have which come from things that have no real existence, but are to be found only in the imagination!

How easy it is to borrow trouble! And how foolish it is! How it paralyzes our energies! How it completely unnerves us! And, in this way, how it effectually disqualifies us for the duties and responsibilities that are right before us. "No man ever sank under *to-day's* burden. It is when *to-morrow's* is added, that we give way." Christ says: "Take no thought for to-morrow." It is wrong for us to go about weighed down with *to-morrow's* burdens and anxieties. "As thy days, so shall thy strength be."

By living a life of faith and prayer, putting our trust in God for the present in every *plan* we form, in every *step* we take, in every *act* we do; by living thus in the *present*, we will be relieved of much anxiety in regard to troubles, which, in all probability, will never come. "Never trouble trouble, till trouble troubles you."

The present has enough troubles of its own, without borrowing from the *past* and the *future*. "Never bear more than one kind of trouble at a time. Some people bear three—all they have had, all they have now, and all they expect to have."

In thinking of the *past* and the *future*, let us remember that we cannot *really live* either in the *past* or in the *future*. Such living is only in the *imagination*. *We can really live only in the present*. All other living is nothing more than a travesty on true, noble, successful living. It is, therefore, wasting time and energy to attempt to live either in the past or in the future.

It is right to think about the *future*, and to prepare for it. It is right for us to think about the *past* and to draw from the experience of those who have gone before. *But we are to live in the present.* This is a duty *doubly emphasized*—not only in the Word of God, but also in the experience and observation of all the wise people who have ever lived in the world.

Inferences:

1. *We cannot succeed in this life except by living in the present.* Thousands fail simply because they do not live in the present. They let their opportunities go by unimproved. The way to make life a success is to live in the present, to improve the opportunity as it goes by, to do faithfully the duty which is right at hand. Each moment of time is freighted with precious opportunities, solemn obligations, stupendous responsibilities and tremendous possibilities. The beating of the pulse is solemn when we realize that it marks not only the passing of a moment of time, *but also the passing of a great opportunity.*

“In accomplishing your day’s work, you have simply to take *one step* at a time. To take that step wisely is all that you need to think about. If I am climbing a mountain, to look down may make me dizzy; to look too far up may make me tired and discouraged. Take no anxious thought for the morrow. Sufficient for the day—yes, and for each hour in the day—is the toil or the trial thereof. There is not a child of God in this world who is strong enough to stand the strain of to-day’s duties and all the load of to-morrow’s anxieties piled upon the top of them. Paul himself would have broken down, if he had attempted the experiment. When

the morrow comes, grace will come with it sufficient for its tasks and for its troubles.”

Only by living in the present, can we properly utilize the achievements of the past; and only in this way, can we prepare successfully for the future.

2. *God gives us grace only for to-day's duties and responsibilities.* We do not need strength to-day for to-morrow's burdens. God has promised to give us grace and strength for every trial as it comes. He says: “As thy days, so shall thy strength be.” If we want to be happy and useful, we must take God at his word. By placing our hand in our Father's hand, by using the means at our command, by exercising faith in God and faith in God's Word, we will find grace for every trial and grace for every duty.

We have in Richard Baxter, who was, during his whole life, a sufferer, a noble example as to how one should live in this world. He was deeply impressed, and but for the grace of God would have been *oppressed* with the value of *his little time*. He says:

“Still thinking I had little time to live,
My fervent heart to win men's souls did strive;
I preached as never sure to preach again,
And as a dying man to dying men.”

Note these lines as an example:

“I asked my soul, how shall I live
The greatest blessings to receive,
And greatest good to others give?
The answer this, as I conceive:

Seek earnestly
And prayerfully
God's will to know,
God's will to love,
God's will to do.

These precepts three,
 If faithfully
 Observed, will be
 For you and me
 A guide to immortality."

3. *Only by living in the present can we redeem the time, or buy up the opportunity.* The *present* is ours, and *only* the present. The past is irrevocably *gone*; it is *fixed*, and we can have no possible influence over it or claim upon it. The *future* is God's.

"To-morrow, Lord, is thine,
 Lodged in thy sovereign hand,
 And, if its sun arise and shine,
 It shines by thy command."

The only possible way to redeem the time is to live in the *present*. Lost time can never be recovered. "*Lost wealth* may be restored by *industry*; the *wreck of health* may be regained by *temperance*; *forgotten knowledge* may be restored by *study*; *alienated friendships* may be smoothed into forgetfulness; even *forfeited reputation* may be won by *penitence* and *virtue*; but who ever looked upon his vanished hours, recalled his slighted years, stamped them with wisdom, or effaced from heaven's record the fearful blot of wasted time?"

How much precious time is wasted by not living as we should in the present!

"Time was, is past; thou canst not it recall.
 Time is, thou hast; employ the portion small.
 Time future, is not, and may never be.
 Time present is the only time for thee."

4. *Thus we see the importance of the present in our lives and characters—yea, in our very destiny.* Oppor-

tunities will come—this life is full of them. Only by *living* and *acting* in the *present* can they be improved.

Not only do opportunities come to us, but we *can make them*; and it is our duty to do this. We can never rise to the full measure of our duty and our opportunity along these lines except by *living in the present*. And we can never tell what is wrapped up in an opportunity until it is improved and developed. How much of good there is in it—how it is to uplift and bless the sons and daughters of men, if properly developed and improved—how it lifts us into a better and higher world!

“ Who welcomes me with swift embrace,
 Shall meet me always face to face;
 But the stern truth is known of yore—
 Neglected once, I come no more!”

Once gone, these opportunities are gone forever! How imperative, therefore, the duty to live in the present, to redeem the time, to improve the opportunities that crowd upon us. May the Lord impress on each of us the importance of *To-day*.

“To-day is, for all that we can know, the opportunity and the occasion of our lives. On what we say or do to-day may depend the success and completeness of our entire life-struggle. There is to us, in fact, no other time than to-day. The past is irrevocable. The future is unavailable. Only the present is ours. It is for us, therefore, to use every moment of to-day as if our very eternity were dependent on its words and deeds.”—Sunday-School Times.

Let us remember, that it costs something to redeem the time, to buy up the opportunity, to live as we should in the present. It costs *thought*, and *application*, and *energy*, and *labor*, and *perseverance*. An opportunity

is worth something; it is infinitely *valuable*. We must pay its price. It requires *surrender, sacrifice, service*. The days are evil. There are evil influences at work. They must be overcome. There are *battles* to be fought. Life is a *constant, unceasing, persistent struggle*. There is no *crown* without a *cross*, no *victory* without a *fight*, no *true rest* without *persistent toil*, no *Canaan* without a *wilderness*.

This is the time to buy the opportunity. *This is the opportune time.* (Especially with the young.)

“There is a tide in the affairs of men,
Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune;
Omitted, all the voyage of their life
Is bound in shallows and in miseries.”

Says some one: “I shall pass through this world but once. Any good thing, therefore, that I can do, or any kindness that I can show to any human being, let me do it *now*. Let me not defer it, for I shall not pass this way again.”

The kindly deed that I may do,
Oh! let me do it now!
Some gentle touch of tenderness,
To soothe an aching brow.

To-morrow comes, perchance, no more,
To-day is all my own;
Oh, let me do this kindly act,
Before the day is gone.

The helpful words that I would speak,
I fain would speak to-day;
Some heart that longs for sympathy
I'd comfort while I may.

SERMONS.

Be swift, my hand, in kindly deeds,
Bind up the heart that bled;
Oh, haste, my tongue, in kindly words,
Before to-day is fled!

“THOU MAYEST ADD THERETO.”

“And thou mayest add thereto.”—1 Chron. xxii. 14.

BY THE GRACE of God, and in the providence of God, David did a magnificent work for the people and for the church of God. He made an impression on mankind, and on the history of the world, that will be felt through all coming time and through eternity.

But he commenced one work, at least, which he was not able to finish. His heart was in the building of a grand temple for the worship of God, which would reflect credit on the true religion. He had the plans for this house of God; he had actually commenced its construction; but he was not permitted to complete this great work.

Just before he closed his earthly career, he gives to Solomon, his son and successor, a farewell message, a loving charge. Then he commits to him his unfinished work. He says: “Now, behold in my affliction I have prepared for the house of the Lord an hundred thousand talents of gold, and a thousand thousand talents of silver; and of brass and iron without weight; for it is in abundance; timber also and stone have I prepared; and thou mayest add thereto.”

David’s work, as far as his personal connection with it was concerned, is done. He now lays down the trowel, the sword, and the pen. Solomon’s work, in his independent connection with it, now commences. Where David’s work terminates, there Solomon’s work begins. But it is all the Lord’s work, and, in an important sense,

is the same work. "God's workmen die; but God's work goes on."

Here is a transition period. The past, the present, and the future are involved. We see the past in David and his work. We see the future in Solomon and his work. They are connected and held together by the present. The connection is vital, one in which much is involved. "And thou mayest add thereto." David's work made Solomon's work possible. Solomon's work made David's work complete. One is the completement of the other. Neither is complete without the other. In the plans and purposes of the Almighty, they are essential, the one to the other. There is an interdependence. What would David's work be without Solomon's added to it? A huge failure. What would Solomon's work be without David's? An impossibility. The foundation without the super-structure is useless. The super-structure without the foundation is worthless. There is really no independent work in this life, in the sense that it is complete in itself. We add to the work which has been done by those who have gone before. Those who come after us will add to our work. Paul plants and Apollos waters. There is an unbroken continuity in man's work from generation to generation. The unfinished work of our fathers has been transmitted to us; and we will hand down to our children our unfinished work.

Living as we do, in the very last days of the nineteenth century, and standing on the very threshold of the twentieth century, we are forcibly reminded of the fact that we are indissolubly connected with the past and the future. We are connected with the past in our thinking and modes of thought, in our habits and manner of life, in our doctrines, principles and policies, in the unfinished

work of our fathers, and in all of our environments. We are, to a very great extent, what the past has made us. We are connected with the future by our hopes and aspirations, but our works, which are to follow us, and by the impression these works are to make upon the generations which are to come after us. The future is to be, to a very great extent, what we are going to make it.

Hence, the full sweep of a man's influence and life can never be known by us until the end of time. Thus we can see the propriety and justice of waiting till the last day for the general judgment. Not till then will all the facts in connection with a man's life be in, and not till then can a just estimate be formed of that life.

Your influence goes on and on till the end of time. It is impossible for you to trace it out in all of its different ramifications; but the omniscient eye of God keeps up with it.

Thus, as we stand here to-night, with the past stretching out behind us and the future stretching out before us, we feel like taking off our shoes, for we are standing on sacred soil. The blessed dead are in the past—they have gone to an infinitely better and happier world; but their works do follow them. They have transmitted to us their unfinished work. "And thou mayest add thereto."

The glorious future, potential with grand possibilities, looms up before us to-night. As we stand here in the midst of the solemn issues that crowd upon us, we are forcibly reminded of our indebtedness to the past and our obligations to the future. We do not appreciate as we should, our indebtedness to the past; nor do we realize, as we should, our obligations to the future. We

are the beneficiaries of the faithful work of those who have gone before us; and we are the custodians of many of the blessings that are to be enjoyed by those who are to come after us.

There are many important inferences to be drawn from this general subject.

I. *The work of our fathers comes to us as a priceless blessing.*

Though their work may come to us in an incomplete form, yet they added to what others had done, and transmitted to us the work in better condition. Thus they have made our work easier, and they have increased our possibilities for usefulness and happiness. They toiled, not simply for themselves, but for others, for generations unborn; and we to-day are enjoying the fruits of their faithful labors. Every blessing which we possess and enjoy has come down to us through the toils and tears, through the struggles and sacrifices of those who have lived in the past. "The great thoughts that warm our hearts and inspire us to noble living, are the fruit, many times, of pain and struggle."

We do not enjoy a blessing, or a comfort, which has not come to us at great cost to somebody. These blessings and comforts have come to us through the toils and tears, through the sorrows and sacrifices, through the efforts and energies of those who have lived before us.

This is seen in every department of life.

In the material and industrial world. In the houses we live in, in the sanctuaries we worship in, in the clothes we wear, in the food we eat.

Our forefathers had to contend with the forests and the deserts; but they have left us our fruitful fields and comfortable homes. How they had to struggle to secure

what we now possess and enjoy! They toiled hard when they laid the foundation for our modern civilization. Every achievement in science, every invention and discovery in the material world is a monument to the faithful labors of those who have lived in the past.

In the civil and political world. As we rest serenely under the American flag, enjoying the blessings of liberty and good government, our minds ought to go back, occasionally, at least, to the trials and conflicts through which our forefathers had to pass in achieving these blessings for us. How they had to endure hardships of war under peculiarly trying circumstances! How they had to contend with the elements in nature! How they left their humble homes, their loved ones exposed frequently to the enemy and the hardships which were characteristic of those times! How many of them poured out their life-blood on the battle field! How they all consecrated themselves and all they had upon their country's altar! They had to do all this, in order that their posterity and succeeding generations in this country might inherit the blessings of good government, and be free from the tyranny which had so oppressed them.

In the educational world. The log school-house, which served its purpose nobly in its day and generation, has been replaced by the beautiful academy, or graded school building; the colleges and universities are scattered all over our country. The blue-back spelling book, which, in its day, was one of the greatest blessings ever bestowed on the human race, after holding its grasp on the human mind for so long a time, has paved the way for something better.

See how the appliances in the school-room have been improved and multiplied! How the methods of teaching

have been advanced! How the opportunities for getting an education have been increased! How the facilities for diffusing a good literature have been multiplied!

Every school-house, every good book, every appliance in the school-room, every printing press—they all remind us of our indebtedness to the past; for they all come to us as rich blessings from those who have labored in the past.

Especially in the religious world. All the accumulated blessings of religion which we enjoy come down to us through the toils and sacrifices of those who have lived in the past. We have in our possession all the achievements of past generations. We are enjoying to-day the fruits of the labors of all the good people who have lived before us. "Their works do follow them." Blessed are the sainted dead! They are blessed in that they have blest us through their faithful labors. They sowed the good seed, and we are reaping the harvest of their wise and judicious sowing.

How precious these treasures are which have come down to us through the past! How costly they are! Oh, how those faithful ones, who have gone before us, had to strive and struggle in order to achieve, conserve and transmit to us the blessings we now enjoy in the Kingdom of God! They were persecuted; they were tortured; they were imprisoned; they were slain. They had to pass through all of these experiences in order to hand down to us the priceless blessings which we possess and enjoy.

And when we survey the life and work of our divine Lord and Saviour, we see this truth reaching the very climax of its realization. See how he had to pass through the exhaustive sufferings of the garden and the cross;

how he sweat great drops of blood; how he drank the very dregs of that cup of intense suffering! He endured all this in order to secure for us and transmit to us the inestimable blessings of the gospel. Oh, how Jesus toiled and suffered for us! And it was a willing sacrifice on his part. He preferred the garden of Gethsemane to the paradise of God; he preferred the cross of Calvary to the throne of heaven; he preferred the scoffs and maledictions of a wicked and gain-saying world to the admiration and homage of the intelligent hosts of heaven. For it was only in this way that he could secure for us the blessings of eternal life. These blessings come to us at infinite cost.

When we contemplate these priceless treasures which come to us at such great cost and sacrifice; which have come to us through the sufferings and death of our blessed Redeemer, and through the lives and death of his disciples; which are baptized with the blood of Jesus and the martyrs; we feel something like David did when the three brave men brought him water from the well by the gate of Bethlehem, having cut through the line of the Philistines in order to get the water to him.

David was so impressed with the bravery of these men and the danger to which they had exposed themselves, that he would not drink the water which they brought; but he poured it forth as an offering to the Lord. He said: "Be it far from me, O Lord, that I should do this. Shall I drink the blood of the men that went in jeopardy of their lives?" Even though he was so thirsty, this water was too sacred, and it came at too great a cost for him to drink it. It could be properly used only as an offering to the Lord.

As we sit here to-night and contemplate the unnum-

bered and priceless blessings which have come to us as an heritage through the toils and tears, the sacrifices and sufferings of our fathers, may the Lord help us to appreciate properly these blessings, and, at the same time, to realize our indebtedness to the past. "Thou mayest add thereto."

II. Again, *the work of our fathers comes to us as a sacred trust.*

Our fathers toiled and struggled—they laid the foundation for our work and made it possible. We are not only to conserve what has already been achieved, but we are to add to it. "And thou mayest add thereto." This is to be done in view of our connection with the future. "The only sure way of getting rid of a past is by getting a future out of it." We are to turn our eyes to the future, as well as to the past. The past is gone; it is irreversibly fixed. The future is before us; it is yet to be made; it is filled with grand and glorious possibilities. We are to be living factors in the development of the future. The past has given us a sacred trust; we are the custodians of all the priceless treasures of the past; we have all the accumulated wealth of all the ages that are gone. What an exalted privilege, and, at the same time, what a tremendous responsibility! The future is dependent on us for the blessings which she is to possess and enjoy. Shall we meet our obligations to future generations by transmitting to them the blessings which have come to us from the past? It is our duty not only to hand these blessings down to those who are to come after us; but it is also our duty to enlarge them and to increase their number. Let us, therefore, embalm these blessings in our good works and transmit them to future generations. "And thou mayest add thereto."

We constitute the connecting link between the past and the future. Let this link be a golden link, binding together the good works of the past with the good works of the future. God forbid that we should break the continuity of good works. May the stream of good works, as it passes through our lives, be moral, healthy and natural, becoming wider and deeper in its onward flow, until at last it shall empty itself before the throne of God, bearing upon its bosom much of the precious freight of the Kingdom of our Redeemer.

If our work is acceptable to God, its nature is imperishable. Every noble thought, every kind word, every act of self-denial for Christ's sake, record themselves in the sounding board of eternity, and never die away. Our work may be very imperfect in this world; it may be very incomplete; but, if it is done in the name of Jesus, and for his sake, it will stand every test and will last forever. There is an element of immortality in every noble thought and impulse, in every kind word and smile, and in every good deed and work. These thoughts and words and deeds are embalmed in the hearts and lives of those who come after us, and they are transmitted from one generation to another.

What shall the message of our lives be to those who are to come after us in the regular line of the world's history? Shall it be: We transmit to you the sacred trust which we inherited from our fathers; we have cherished the inheritance and have been blest by it; we have used it for the glory of God and for the advancement of his kingdom; we have added to it; we give it to you intact and in an enlarged form; and may you ever be faithful to the trust? God grant that this may be our message to future generations.

III. Again, *the work of our fathers should be to us a mighty incentive to nobler and better living.*

When we consider the difficulties and obstacles with which they had to contend, and when we consider how much they did, we ought to lay out all of our energies and undertake greater things. The work which they accomplished ought to be to us an incentive, and, at the same time, an encouragement. Many important and useful lessons do they teach us in their lives and experiences. Look at their traits of character as displayed in their lives and labors.

Consider *their reverence for God*. Thoroughly convinced of the doctrine of God's sovereignty, they placed the Almighty upon the throne and they kept him there in all of their thinking and living.

Notice *their courage*. Being impressed with the omnipotent power of the truth, and feeling that they were in the grasp of the divine purpose, they had the courage of their convictions and the fortitude to stand up in the face of all the opposition that was arrayed against them.

Look at *their contentment*. When a man realizes that God rules, that God has a plan which covers his life, and a purpose that runs through his history as the warp runs through the cloth, that God is making all things work together for his good—if this doctrine does not lift him above the cares, anxieties and disappointments of this life, then there is no doctrine that can do it.

Witness *their devotion to God's truth*. Holding that the Bible is the Word of God; that it is not only the only infallible rule of faith and practice, but that it is a sufficient and perfect rule; relying solely on this Word for their system of doctrine; realizing that the Scriptures come not only as a revelation from God, but also

as a revelation of God; they were ready to die for this blessed truth, and thousands of them did seal their devotion to God's Word with their life-blood.

Behold *their hopefulness*. Knowing that God sits upon the throne, and that his kingdom rules over all; knowing that God's plans cover all events and agencies, and that his purposes run through them all; knowing these things, they realized that all the powers of darkness and sin combined were impotent to thwart the plans of the Almighty, or to defeat his purposes. This gave them a hopefulness born of Almighty God.

How these things ought to encourage us and to act upon us as a mighty incentive in our lives! "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith."

Our part in the great work committed to the church is an important one, important because it forms a part of God's plan. We add to what has already been done. Do we want to see in God's own time a completed, symmetrical work? Let the prospect of that completed work be an incentive to us.

Says some one: "I do not see the cathedral as yet, when I go into the confused quarry-yard and see there the half-wrought stones, the clumsy blocks that are, by and by, to be decorated capitals. But when at last they are finished in form and brought together, the mighty building rises in the air, an ever enduring psalm in rock. I do not see the picture yet, when I look upon the palette with its blotches and stains and lumps of colors. By and by, when the skillful brush of the

painter has distributed those colors, I see the radiant beauty of the Madonna, the pathos of the Magdalene; I see the beauty of the landscape spread out upon the canvas, with meadow, and hill, and winding stream, and the splendors of the sunset crowning the whole. I do not see yet the perfect kingdom of God upon earth, but I see the colors which are to blend in it. I see the already half-chiseled rock, out of which it shall be wrought; and I am not going to despond now when so much has been accomplished." The sure hope of a perfect church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, ought always to be an inspiration, an encouragement and an incentive to us.

A practical question arises: *How are we to be equipped for our part in this great work?*

We need the very same equipment which David recommended to Solomon.

I. *God's presence.* David said to Solomon: "The Lord be with thee." Moses said to God: "If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence." God's presence is necessary—his blessing, his guiding influence, his protecting care.

What is the great need of the church to-day? It is not eloquence and learning in the pulpit; it is not earnestness and liberality in the pew; it is not elaborate and artistic music; it is not handsome edifices and lofty spires. However desirable and useful these things may be in their place, they are not the great need of the church. The great need of the church is spiritual power, power from on high, the power and presence of the Holy Ghost, a baptism of God's Spirit. This is a *sine qua non* with the church. It matters not what the church may have, without this she can never win the

world to Christ. She may bring the world into nominal connection with Christianity without this; but, without this, she can never bring the world into a saving union with the Lord Jesus Christ.

2. *Consecration.* David says to Solomon: "Build the house of the Lord thy God." Consecrate yourself to your work, and lay out all of your strength and energies in it. Let nothing prove to be an insuperable obstacle in the way.

So it should be with us. If we would do our part in this great work, we must consecrate ourselves to God's service. Oh, for an all-consuming and all-comprehensive consecration! In order to accomplish the greatest possible good, there must be an entire consecration of body, mind and soul, of time, friends, reputation, property—all.

3. *Prayer.* David said to Solomon: "Only the Lord give thee wisdom and understanding." "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him."

A life of prayer and communion with God is absolutely necessary. Take Christ as an example. When the troubles of life threatened to overwhelm him, he went to God in prayer. After he had restored to life the man's withered hand, the people were filled with madness and were planning how they might get rid of him. What did Christ do? He withdrew himself from the people and went out into the mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God. And when the burden of a world's sin was resting upon him as he stood upon the threshold of the crucifixion, what did he do? He went to the garden, and there he withdrew himself even from his most intimate disciples, and poured

out his soul in earnest prayer to God. In fact, his whole life was truly and eminently a life of prayer and communion with God.

So it must be with us. Without this living communion with God, there can be no real success.

THOU SHALT NOT GO OVER THITHER.

“Thou shalt not go over thither.”—Deut. xxxiv. 4.

THE Israelites had practically completed their long journey from Egypt to Canaan. The wilderness, with its cares and its trials, its deprivations and its hardships, was behind them. They were now on the very threshold of the promised land; they were ready to cross over the river and take possession. How anxious they must have been, and how their hearts must have leaped with deep joy and exhilarating expectancy!

But every *sweet* in this world has its *bitter*; every *joy* has its *sorrow*. Moses, who had been the *leader* of this ~~people~~—their *teacher*, their *prophet*, their *lawgiver*, their *ruler*—could not go over the river with them.

Here the people are, in the plains of Moab. God appears on the scene, and asks Moses to go up into the mountains of Nebo with him. They begin to ascend. They are soon lost to human view. At last, they reach Pisgah's summit. Here, there is a magnificent view of the *promised land*. Here, the Lord showed the land to Moses. He sees its beauty and its grandeur. He sees its inexhaustible resources and its infinite possibilities. Here, in this small country, is an epitome of all countries—God's gift to his own chosen people. As Moses viewed this land from Dan to Beersheba, from the river Jordan to the great sea, how his heart must have leaped for joy! He had been journeying, and toiling, and struggling for *forty years* to gain this prize. Now, he is standing on its very borders; now, he sees it with his

own eyes. Oh, what an uplifting sight! What a blessed prospect!

But God says to Moses: "*Thou shalt not go over thither.*" Then we have a short, simple account of the death of Moses—all in one verse.

Then the record tells us that *God himself buried* Moses, and that no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day.

"And had he not high honor?
The hillside for a pall,
To lie in state, while angels wait,
With stars for tapers tall;

"And the dark rock-pines, like tossing plumes
Over his bier to wave,
And God's own hand in that lonely land
To lay him in the grave."

"Thou shalt not go over thither."

But what a sad disappointment this must have been to Moses! There seemed to be just one step between him and complete success. Right on the verge of this full and triumphant consummation of his life-work, his earthly career is ended. His life on earth goes out before he places the cap-stone on his grand and noble work. "*Thou shalt not go over thither.*"

Why was he not permitted to enter the promised land? Because he transgressed against God at the waters of Meribah. God told him to *speak* to the rock; but he *struck* the rock with his staff. He had to suffer for this transgression. Even his *prominence* and *purity of character* and his *great achievements* in the past did not exempt him from the bad results of disobedience. By this striking incident in Moses' life, God would hold up to

all men everywhere a warning against disobedience. "Thou shalt not go over thither."

UNREALIZED HOPES.

Moses' life seemed to be crowned with disappointment. His fond hopes were blasted. He died in full view of the promised land—in the very presence of victory—with the goal almost in his grasp. He did not attain that in this life for which the energies and efforts of a life-time had been expended.

I. *Consider this remarkable experience from Moses' point of view.*

1. *He was in robust health.* Although he was one hundred and twenty years old, yet his physical strength was unabated; his mind was unimpaired; his eye was not dim; nor was his natural force abated.

If he had been *weak in body* and *feeble in mind*, it would not have been so sad. But here was Moses still in possession of his magnificent endowments and faculties, both physical and intellectual. He was still equal to a great work.

2. *His work did not seem to be completed.* He had not reached the end for which he had been striving. His great life-work was to carry the children of Israel from Egypt to the promised land. The people had not reached this land. Jordan was still between them and their destination.

Think, too, of the fact that these people were right on the *threshold* of the promised land. The time had come for the cap-stone to be laid on this noble and magnificent work of Moses. But Moses was not permitted to give the finishing touches to this grand and glorious work; nor was he permitted to witness these finishing strokes.

If *men* had been at the head of this enterprise, Moses would never have been separated from it just at this juncture. "If the story of Moses had been of man's invention, we should have heard how Moses brought the Jews into the land of Canaan, and reigned over them, and died in great glory."

But God orders it differently. By divine providence, Moses is separated from his work right on the eve of what seemed to be its glorious consummation. Just as the people were getting ready to sing the peans of their victories and to celebrate the realization of their hopes, Moses disappears from human view. All alone with God, in the solitude of the mountains, he is led by the divine hand off the stage of activity and service in this world into the untried realities of the other world. Just as the fruit of the tree of his own planting and culture was getting ripe and ready to be plucked, he forever disappears and leaves this fruit to be gathered and enjoyed by others.

How sad, from a human point of view! "Moses drank very deeply of the bitter cup of disappointment. And it seems to have been his constant prayer that God would reverse or mitigate his sentence. 'Let me go over, I pray thee, and see the good land that is beyond Jordan, that goodly mountain, and Lebanon.' No poet could have painted that land with more glowing colors. He dipped his brush in rainbow tints as he spoke of that good land—that land of brooks and fountains and depths; that land of wheat and barley, of vines and pomegranates and figs; that land of oil, olives and honey. And no patriot ever yearned for fatherland as Moses to tread that blessed soil. With all the earnestness that he had used to plead for the people, he now pleaded for

himself. But it was not to be. 'The Lord was wroth, and said unto me, Let it suffice thee; speak no more unto me of this matter.' The sin was forgiven; but its consequences were allowed to work out to their sorrowful issue. There are experiences with us all in which God forgives our sin, but takes vengeance on our inventions. We reap as we have sown. We suffer where we have sinned."

As disappointment crowned the life-work of Moses, so we are frequently called upon, in the providence of God, to face and experience disappointment. We plan, we toil, we hope, but sometimes all of our purposes are brought to naught. We pass through the hardships of the wilderness, and just as we are about to emerge out of its barrenness and its monotony into the realization of our hopes, just as we are getting ready to cross over the Jordan and take possession of the promised land, God leads us through the mountains of Nebo to the summit of our Pisgah, and there, in the very ecstasy of delight, with the coveted goal right before us, where, from earth's point of view, "every prospect pleases," God tells us that we can't go over. The burden is so heavy that it seems like it is bound to crush us.

II. *But there is a divine side to this picture.* Let us look at this side for a while. We must see this side before we can form a just estimate of the disappointments of life. There are two sides to the Christian's disappointments—a *dark* side and a *bright* side.

Let us look at the *bright* side of Moses' disappointment.

I. *Moses saw the land.* From Mount Pisgah, he viewed the promised land with his own eyes. God did not give Moses this revelation for the purpose of tan-

talizing him, but for the purpose of encouraging his heart.

Two things were revealed to him by this sight:

(1) *The fact that the land was a good land.* He had heard of its beauty, its wealth and its possibilities; but now he sees these things with his own eye.

(2) *The fact that this land was soon to come into the actual possession of his people.* This sight was an infallible prophecy that the people were to go over and possess the land. In some way, God assures Moses that the people would soon inherit this land. Moses had spent his life for these people. He had practically done everything that he could possibly do for them. Now, God shows him the victory. While he is not permitted to go over and take the land with the people, yet God shows him the glorious *success* which is soon to crown the noble efforts which he has put forth in behalf of the people. God assures Moses that his labors were not in vain.

So with our plans and hopes. They seem to come to naught; and, when we look at these things from earth's point of view, we are cast down; but God comes to us and leads us up to the top of some Pisgah, and shows us the other side of this picture.

“Thy saints in all this glorious war
Shall conquer, though they die;
They see the triumph from afar,
By faith they bring it nigh.”

God gives us his blessed word, through which we can get a telescopic view of the future. When we look at our disappointments through the precious promises of God, we can see how God converts these things into real blessings to our souls.

“Sir Humphrey Davy said that his most important discoveries had been suggested by his failures, which he conquered.”

So it should be with us in the Christian life. Our very *difficulties*, when we have mastered them, become the means of achieving greater victories. Our very *disappointments*, when we see them from God’s point of view, become stepping stones in the divine life to higher attainments and greater victories. Our very *weakness* becomes an element of strength. Because, like Paul, when we are weak, then are we strong.

2. Again, *Moses knew that a worthy successor had been appointed*. The work could not suffer in the hands of *Joshua*. “Moses had laid his hands upon him.” Yes, and God himself had called, equipped and commissioned Joshua to be the successor of Moses. Joshua was to take the work up right where Moses laid it down. There was to be no break in the work. Men may die, men may prove unfaithful; but there is no contingency that can break the continuity in God’s plans and purposes as they are connected with the establishment of his kingdom in this world. Moses seemed to be a *necessity* to this great work. His death appeared to be an *irretrievable calamity*. But these things are only appearances. Moses was not a necessity. *Moses* dies, but God has a *Joshua* to take his place. God is not dependent on any man; nor on any set of men. His *workmen* die; but his *work* continues to live. *David* dies, but there is a *Solomon* to take his place. *Elijah* is carried to heaven in a chariot of fire, but God has an *Elisha* ready to take his place. The following inscription is on the Wesley Memorial in Westminster Abbey: “God buries the worker, but carries on the work.”

In preaching the sermon of Jabez Bunting, a distinguished English Wesleyan, the minister said: "When Jabez Bunting died, the sun of Methodism set." A man in the audience shouted: "Glory be to God, that's a lie."

The *work* is above the *workman*. Let us ever keep this truth fresh in our minds and hearts.

We may be deeply anxious about the future of God's kingdom and work in this world. Let us remember that God is at the head of affairs. He will steer the ship of Zion successfully over the rough seas of this life.

3. Again, *it is better to die in the vigor of manhood and strength, while the work is prospering, than to waste away in weakness and let the work drag and suffer.*

If Moses had continued at the head of this great work till he was dismissed by natural death, he probably would have been an injury to it. When a man is burdened with the infirmities of old age, he is sometimes an obstacle to the work. It is much better to die in harness, in the full vigor of a strong manhood, than to continue until we are altogether incapacitated by weakness and other infirmities.

It is better to give up and let others come in. God will take care of his own work. It is sad to see a man trying to accomplish that which is impossible. He becomes a burden to the work. It is better, infinitely better, to die, than to outlive our day. God knows when a man should leave the stage of action in this life. A man is immortal till his work is done. God's great clock of time never strikes too soon, nor too late. And when that clock strikes, it is time for us to go. *Moses* was the man for the *wilderness*; but *Joshua* was the man for *Canaan*. When the Jordan was reached, God's clock struck for Moses. It was God's time for him to retire.

“Success is not the chief nobility of life. The chief blessedness of life is capability of service. It is a blessed thing to die when the work has been so far done that it justifies the worker, demonstrates his character, vindicates his nobleness; so that he is not ashamed to leave it for completion; so that his friends are proud of its unfinished fragments. The formal denial of our hopes may be the means of perfecting our characters.”

The work, in an important sense, is never finished in this life. There will always be something to do. It is our business to do our part of the work faithfully. Then God will take us to our reward and raise up others to carry on the work when we are gone.

4. Again, *Moses had God*. He was with God. Hence he was absolutely safe and should have been supremely happy. When he left the field of action here, he went away with God. He was wrapped up in the divine companionship.

When we contemplate his life and see how near he lived to God, how he delighted in God's presence and rejoiced in God's being, we can see how he could give up every human hope and prospect, and experience no *permanent* disappointment. God has his abiding place, for he could say, and did say, in the ninetieth Psalm: “Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations.” God was his strength, his hope, his portion and his all. God's presence converted every disappointment into a real blessing. Moses saw the *type* of heaven in the *promised land*; but when God raised the veil and showed him the *real heaven*, no doubt his soul was filled with infinite rapture and delight. “Behind him, a long and glorious life; before, the ministry and worship of the heavenly sanctuary. Here, the Shekinah; there the

unveiled face. Here, the tent and pilgrim march; there, the everlasting rest. Here, the promised land, beheld from afar, but not entered; there, the goodly land beyond Jordan entered and possessed. What though it was a wrench to pass away, with the crowning-stone not placed on the structure of his life; to depart and be with God was far better."

When Moses saw the *real heaven*, he had no eyes for the *earthly Canaan*.

"There is a land of pure delight,
Where saints immortal reign;
Infinite day excludes the night,
And pleasures banish pain.

"There, everlasting spring abides,
And never with'ring flowers;
Death, like a narrow sea, divides
This heavenly land from ours.

"Could we but climb where Moses stood,
And view the landscape o'er,
Not Jordan's stream, nor death's cold flood,
Should fright us from the shore."

Now, if we can just get into such close touch with God, if we can always feel the blessedness of his presence and the infinite consolation of his approval, then our hopes can and will be realized in *him*. Disappointments may come, our hopes, from earth's point of view, may never be realized; but, if we can say that *we are God's* and that *God is ours*, then it will all be well with our souls.

"Jesus, to whom I fly,
Will all my wishes fill;
What though created streams are dry,
I have the fountain still."

HE THAT OVERCOMETH SHALL INHERIT ALL THINGS.

“He that overcometh shall inherit all things.”—Rev. xxi. 17.

THE text brings directly before our minds three thoughts: The Christian's *Conflict*, his *Victory*, and his *Reward*. Let us notice these in their order.

I. *The Christian's Conflict*. “He that overcometh shall inherit all things.” The Christian is engaged in a warfare in this life, against foes many and mighty. He has a multitude of enemies in this life, and they are doing all they can to defeat his salvation.

1. The Christian has an *inward* conflict. We are born in sin and brought forth in iniquity. We possess corrupt natures. We have evil dispositions, appetites and affections. At our conversion, there is a principle of holiness implanted within us. But there still remains in us an element of sin. Now, between these principles there is a conflict going on all the time. Oh! how the Christian has to struggle against these inward foes! Sometimes he is driven back in the conflict, and he feels like giving up in despair. My Christian friends, have you not experienced this struggle in your hearts? You have had, at times, an earnest desire to be nearer to Christ; but, at the same time, there was something which kept you back. Christian experience is the same the world over, and in all ages. We experience the very same things which the apostle experienced. We have to contend with the very same enemies which were arrayed against him. He said there was in his members a law of sin warring against the law of God. So it is with

us. He who never has these struggles may have serious cause to doubt the genuineness of his conversion unto God.

“There is an unseen battle-field
 In every human breast,
 Where two opposing forces meet,
 And where they seldom rest.
 That field is veiled from mortal sight—
 ’Tis only seen by One,
 Who knows alone where victory lies,
 When each day’s fight is done.”

This inward conflict will continue in the Christian’s life as long as he remains in this world. The Christian’s experience is not all sunshine in this life. While he has seasons of joy and exultation, he also has seasons of sadness and depression. To-day he may be on the Mount of Transfiguration, beholding the Saviour face to face, enjoying the light of God’s countenance; while to-morrow he may be in the valley of doubt and despondency, hid from the Sun of righteousness by the clouds of his sins. One day he may exclaim with confidence and assurance: “I know that my Redemer liveth;” while, the next day, his heart is filled with doubts and uncertainties. One day he can sing the triumphs of redeeming love; while the next day he can appreciate and appropriate the lines of Newton:

“’Tis a point I long to know,
 Oft it causes anxious thought;
 Do I love the Lord, or no?
 Am I his, or am I not?

“If I love, why am I thus?
 Why this dull and lifeless frame?
 Hardly, sure, can they be worse,
 Who have never heard his name.”

Don't think, my brethren, because you have these seasons of declensions, that you have never been accepted by the blessed Lord. These clouds are almost sure to make their appearance in the firmament of your Christian experience. And the fact that these struggles and conflicts do come in the experience of the professing Christian, is strong evidence of the genuineness of his religion. Let us put forth every effort to attain perfect assurance of the pardon of our sins and the acceptance of our persons with the Lord; and let us try, by the grace of God, to abide upon this exalted plane of Christian experience. Let this prayer arise from each heart in our times of doubt:

"O! drive these dark clouds from my sky,
Thy soul-cheering presence restore;
Or take me unto thee on high,
Where winter and clouds are no more."

2. The Christian also has an *outward* conflict. There are foes within and there are foes without.

The Christian has to battle with the *world*. There are the *sinful pleasures* of the world. Oh, how they would allure us from the path of duty! They entice us and give us flattering promises to draw us from our God. The world generally makes a strong attack upon the young Christian through this channel. The Christian does not have to live long to know that this world is not a friend to grace. These pleasures tend to destroy all of our seriousness and piety. They may pacify for a moment the wicked passion and the sinful appetite; but they leave a sting which smarts to the very core of the heart. Oh! how the Christian has to struggle against these allurements!

Again, the world opens up a conflict with the Christian through its *wealth*. The very nature of man seems to be in love with money, and "the love of money is a root of all evil." Money is a good thing, and it wields a mighty influence for good when properly controlled. But there is an inordinate desire for wealth which withers our spirituality and destroys our vital godliness. It kindles the flame of selfishness and keeps it burning. It alienates us from God and leads us into the sin of idolatry. As Christians, we have to struggle against this inordinate desire for the wealth of this world.

We have to struggle also against the *honors* of this world, the applause of men. It is a great temptation to be on the popular side. It is a difficult matter to speak out for the truth, when we know we will not receive the applause of men. The world holds out to us its honors and its laurels, and it is hard for human nature to resist these proffered gifts. But what are these things? How empty they are!

"Honor's a puff of noisy breath;
 Yet men expose their blood,
 And venture everlasting death,
 To gain that airy good."

Another outward enemy of the Christian is *Satan*, the great adversary of the soul. He is called "the prince of this world," and, as such, he has a direct influence upon all the affairs of this world. In the providence of God, he wields his sceptre over the minds and hearts of men. He leads men about captive at his own will. He works through the three great attractions of this world; he works through the evil hearts and imaginations of men. He is the great general, both in the inward and outward

conflict against the soul. The Christian, in this life, is never delivered entirely from his influence and power. You remember how he tempted the blessed Saviour; and so he tempts all of the followers of Christ. He has a thousand channels through which to reach them; he has a legion of soldiers to fight his battles for him. He does not hesitate to stoop to the lowest device to accomplish his diabolical designs. If need be, he would come to us clothed in a garb of virtue and as an angel of light. As he is a liar and the father of lies, he has no hesitancy in making promises which he knows he cannot fulfill. His supreme object is to frustrate and defeat God's plans to save his people. This great conflict, in which the Christian and the wicked are engaged, is no imaginary affair; it is a solemn reality, as the Word of God teaches. Let us, therefore, be on our guard, for we are fighting against principalities and powers, against our own sinful natures, the flesh, the world, and the devil.

“ My soul, be on thy guard,
 Ten thousand foes arise;
 And hosts of sins are pressing hard,
 To draw thee from the skies.”

3. Again, the Christian's is a *daily* conflict. As there are no cessations from toil and labor, so there is no time for play and idleness. It is struggle after struggle—one continual conflict. The enemy is never idle, and so we should never be. Wherever we go, we find the enemy posted. Sometimes he makes his attacks publicly, sometimes secretly; but, rest assured, that he is always ready to take advantage of our idleness, or indifference. We should never let our arms become rusty; but let us keep them bright in the service of our divine Lord and

Saviour. We should ever bear in mind that this struggle is to be a perpetual one in this life, and that, therefore, eternal vigilance is required of those who would come up to their highest possible efforts in this struggle.

II. *The Christian's Victory.*

1. The *certainty* of this victory. "He that overcometh shall inherit all things." The conflict is severe and the struggle sharp; but the victory is sure to come. Christ says to each one of his disciples: "Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." We are not fighting in our own strength; if we were, we would certainly be defeated. We are fighting in the name and strength of the Lord God Almighty. All the resources of omnipotence are enlisted in our behalf. Jesus, the Christ, who has conquered sin, and the world, and the flesh, and the devil, and death, and hell, is the Captain of our salvation. Therefore, let none of us be discouraged. We are battling for truth and righteousness, and they are sure to prevail. We may have to undergo temporary defeats and suffer temporary losses; but it is only a question of time as to our final victory. The truth, from the very nature of the case, is bound to triumph ultimately. The church is God's army and he is leading his church on to victory. The enemies are now falling before the triumphant march of the church. No undertaking of the mighty God shall ever be defeated. He has fore-ordained that his church shall ultimately triumph over every enemy and he has likewise fore-ordained that every member in this church shall be victorious.

2. Let us consider the *completeness* of this victory. The Christian shall triumph over every enemy. All of our enemies, both inward and outward, shall most certainly be conquered. There shall be a complete triumph

over sin and iniquity. We shall be delivered from its power, from its influence, and from its very presence. The world, with its wealth, and honors, and pleasures, shall be destroyed, as it now exists. The Christian's conflict with death will be the last engagement upon the battlefield of sin, and it will be the immediate fore-runner of that grand and final victory which shall be gained by every one of Christ's disciples. Christ has conquered death, and through his triumph we shall be victorious. At the last, even the weakest disciples of Christ can exclaim in the triumphs of the gospel: "Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But, thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your work is not in vain in the Lord."

The completeness of this victory shall consist, not only in the complete triumph over every enemy, but also in the fact that it shall be an *everlasting* victory. These enemies of God and man shall arise no more forever to trouble and annoy us. We will not have to be on our guard all the time, expecting an attack from our enemies. We shall rest from all these struggles and conflicts in the eternal home of the redeemed.

III. *The Christian's Reward.* "He that overcometh shall inherit all things." In the Book of Revelation there are seven rewards promised to the seven churches of Asia. In each instance it is: "To him that overcometh." To *Ephesus* is promised the tree of life; to *Smyrna*, deliverance from the second death; to *Perga-*

mos, the hidden manna and the white stone; to *Thyatira*, dominion and the morning star; to *Sardis*, the white raiment; to *Philadelphia*, to be a pillar and to receive the new name; to *Laodicea*, a seat on Christ's throne, a share in the administration of his government. Now, the sacred writer in the text would sum up all of these rewards and heap them upon the head of each victorious Christian. "He that overcometh shall inherit *all things*." Paul, in speaking to the Corinthian Christians, says: "All things are yours: whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's." There is *victory* awaiting the Christian, when he has fought all the battles of this life. There is *rest* for the Christian, when all the toils and cares that come upon us here are over. There is *joy* and *happiness* for the Christian, when all the sorrows and disappointments here are done. There is *life eternal* for the Christian after he has passed through the valley and the shadow of death. The Christian has a home in heaven, a building of God, an house not made with hands eternal in the heavens. The text says that the Christian inherits all things. He is a son of God, and when he reaches his majority, he shall come into actual possession of these things. We have foretastes in this life of the things we shall hereafter enjoy. But these foretastes cannot compare with the actual realization of these great blessings. "Now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him." One of the greatest rewards which the Christian shall enjoy will be uninterrupted communion with his blessed Lord and Saviour. Here, there are many things to interfere with

this communion. All of our enemies strive to destroy the intercourse between Christ and the disciple of Christ. But when our salvation is finally perfected in heaven, this communion will be direct, intimate and uninterrupted. Then we shall know even as we are known. Whatever is desirable, whatever is needful shall be ours. "He that overcometh shall inherit all things."

In conclusion, let me say that we have everything to encourage us. Time is rapidly drawing us on to our final victory and everlasting reward. As we get nearer the prize, let us renew our strength and increase our efforts in the divine life. There are many things to stimulate us—the glory of God and the salvation of our own souls and the souls of our fellowmen. Let us not allow our enemies to cheat us out of any of the glory and happiness that await us in the blessed hereafter. "He that overcometh shall inherit all things." O what glory and blessedness await the Christian in the eternal world! He shall be crowned a victorious conqueror by him that loved us and washed us from our sins, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father.

How is it that a man can refuse to be a Christian when such great inducements are held out to him? The Saviour calls on each one of you to-day to lay down your arms of rebellion, which you have used for the destruction of his kingdom. He calls upon you to enlist in his service, promising to bring you out triumphantly over every enemy, and to place upon your brow a crown of eternal life. Come to-day and be one of his disciples.

AS THE EAGLE STIRRETH UP HER NEST.

“As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings: so the Lord alone did lead him, and there was no strange god with him.”—Deut. xxxii. 11-12.

THIS beautiful and expressive metaphor,” says some one, “is founded on the extraordinary care and attachment which the female eagle cherishes for her young. When her newly fledged progeny are sufficiently advanced to soar in their native element, she, in their first attempts at flying, supports them on the tip of her wing, encouraging, directing and aiding their feeble efforts to longer and sublimer flights.

So did God take the most tender and powerful care of his chosen people; he carried them out of Egypt and led them through all the horrors of the wilderness to the promised inheritance.”

For safety, the eagle builds her nest among the loftiest and most inaccessible rocks and cliffs. When her young have reached a certain age, she stirs them up—flutters over them—pushes them out of the nest—bears them upon her wings.

I. This conduct on the part of the eagle was an evidence of her love for her young.

The eagle is noted for her love and tenderness to her young. Every act towards her young is an act of love. Everything is done out of consideration for the best and highest welfare of the young. She stirs up the nest, pushes her young out of the nest, because she loves

them. This may not seem to be so at first sight. It has the appearance of harsh and cruel treatment. It looks like exposing them to great danger among the high cliffs and rocks. But it is all prompted by the deepest love, and it is all done for the highest interests of the young.

So with God's treatment to his children. It may, at times, seem to be cruel. The burdens which he places upon us may be heavy; the afflictions which come from his hand may be sore and severe. But all of these things come from a Father's hand; from one who loves us with an infinite love; and if we could see these things in their proper light, we would see in them the strongest evidences of his love to us. "Whom the Lord *loveth* he *chasteneth*, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth." God has a wise purpose in all his dealings with his children, and this purpose is founded in infinite love and tenderness.

"Our times are in Thy hand,
Why should we doubt or fear?
A father's hand will never cause
His child a needless tear."

The *parent* chastises the child because he loves the child. He has a deep and an abiding interest in the child. The evidence of this is the fact that he chastises the child. So with God, our heavenly Father. When he chastises us, it is not a mere exercise of an arbitrary power, but it is done out of love for our best and highest good. "Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them that are exercised thereby." Here is the *great purpose* in all the afflictions which come upon us in this life; and the love of God is

manifested in it all. He sees the *end* from the *beginning*, and has provided for every possible contingency that may arise. In all of his dealings with his people, we have an exhibition of his infinite love and tenderness towards them. "The Lord's portion is his people." *God* is *their* portion, and *they* are *his* portion. The interests, therefore, of both are indissolubly bound together, so much so that they are *one*.

This love is shown in God's care for his people, in his ever-abiding presence with them.

1. *To encourage them, to stimulate them to action.*

As the eagle encourages her young to effort, to a higher and broader endeavor, so God encourages his people to more earnest activity in right living and doing. The eagle may push her young off of the cliff, she may drop them from her wings, but all of this is done to incite them to self-exertion and self-reliance. The eagle is ever present to assist in an emergency. So with God. He is always present with the infinite resources of divinity to do whatever an emergency may demand. Are we about to fall? Then he is there to hold us up. He is ever present with his divine sympathy and encouragement to cheer our hearts and to urge us on to grander victories and sublimer attainments.

2. *Again, God is ever present to direct and instruct.*

As the eagle *flutters* over her young in order to excite and teach them by her own example how to fly; so God teaches us how to live godly lives in this present evil world. He was with his ancient people in the howling wilderness, to direct them in their journey there. No place needs a guide like a *desert* or *wilderness*. There is constant danger of going out of the right way. As we are passing through the wilderness of this world, from

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the Egypt of spiritual bondage to the heavenly Canaan, we need the guidance of God's omniscient eye every step we take. *We are ignorant*, as to *sin*, its true inwardness, its infinite impossibilities of evil; ignorant of *ourselves*, as sinners in God's sight, as to the obligations that rest upon us as responsible beings; ignorant of *God*, in his infinite perfections and absolute sovereignty; ignorant of the *gospel*, in its plan of salvation and as to the broad basis which it gives, upon which to build Christian life and character; ignorant of *Christ* as a personal Saviour, and as a Person of infinite worth and excellencies. We need instruction all along these lines, and without divine guidance we must forever grope our way in the thickest darkness and the densest ignorance. Now, God comes to each one of us and says: "If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth liberally and upbraideth not." More than this, Christ has come into the world as our *Teacher*. He teaches by *precept* and also by *example*. He says, "Learn of me." All of his doctrines have been vitalized in his life. As the eagle flutters over her young, and, in this way, teaches them by her own example, so Christ has come into this world and lived a life of spotless purity, thus teaching us by his own example how to live. Every precept has been exemplified in the life of Christ.

Does he require us to *submit to God's will*? See how he did this. Does he require us to *be merciful*? See how richly this grace dwelt in his heart and life from the manger to the cross! Does he require us to *give*? See how he freely gave up all. Does he require us to *forgive*? See how he forgave those who were inflicting excruciating tortures upon him: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Does he require us to *love our enemies*? See how he died for his.

He was made flesh and dwelt among us, in order that he might set us an example. "For it is obvious that he could not have been our example and have gone before us, in the exercise of any of those graces, or the performance of any of those duties, which imply dependence, submission and suffering, unless he had become incarnate." So he was made flesh and dwelt among us. The divine Teacher, the incarnate God, spent a life of over thirty years in this world. "Here was the visible Image of the invisible God." The King and Sovereign descends from the throne and lives among his subjects as one of them, to excite them to obedience, to instruct them in the mysteries of God, and to allure them on to noble achievements in the divine life. He *obeys*, in order to teach them how to obey; he *suffers*, in order to teach them how to suffer; he *dies*, in order to make them fearless of death. In his whole life he says: "Follow me."

3. Again, *God is ever present to protect*. The eagle bears her young upon her wings. In this way, she carries them far above all danger, and when they are exposed to danger, she always puts herself between her young and the danger. She is not like other birds, which carry their young in their talons. The eagle flies beneath her young; so it is impossible to inflict an injury upon the eagle's *young*, without first inflicting it upon the *eagle*.

In this way, God protects his people. It was so with the Israelites as God led them out of Egypt through the Red Sea. The pillar of cloud and fire which was the token of God's presence, interposed itself between the Israelites and their enemies. It was impossible for the Egyptians to reach the Israelites except through God. There God stood between his people and their enemies as a wall that could not be thrown down, nor scaled, nor

penetrated. And so God stands around his people in every age as an omnipotent Protector. He guards them and protects them as the apple of his eye. No possible harm or danger can do them any permanent injury. They are just as secure as God himself.

“The soul that on Jesus hath leaned for repose,
I will not—I will not desert to his foes;
That soul through all hell should endeavor to shake,
I’ll never, no, never, no, never forsake.”

What an encouragement! What a solid ground of hope!

II. *Why is it necessary for God to stir up his people?*

1. *Because they are naturally indolent.* The natural tendencies of the flesh are to spiritual lethargy. It requires effort and exertion to reach the standard held up to us in the Word of God; and it requires eternal vigilance to continue to live upon this standard. The Christian life is a *race*; it is a *conflict*, a *struggle*, a *warfare*. It is a life of self-denial and self-sacrifice. Hence the Word of God abounds in commands, urging us to a life of energy and activity. “*Strive* to enter in at the strait gate.” “Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and run with patience the race that is set before us.” “I count not myself to have apprehended, but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” The gospel calls us forth to a perpetual struggle, and to a life of ceaseless activity. God pronounces woe upon those who are at ease in Zion. The Christian life calls forth all of our energies and resources. It is an uphill business, because it is all against the natural tendencies

and inclinations of the human heart. The young birds in the nest have no energy to excite them to action; they have no desire to leave the nest. So with us; we have no natural desire to stir ourselves in the spiritual world; we would much prefer to be let alone. God has to stir us up. He knows the natural tendencies of the human heart. There is ever present a strong proclivity in the human heart towards declension in virtue, in grace, in duty; and if God did not constantly interpose and stir us up, we would "slide back by a perpetual backsliding;" we would "settle down on our lees" and rest at ease in a state of spiritual stagnation.

2. Again, *God has to stir up his people, because they are naturally satisfied with the things of this world.* The birdlings in the nest, as long as they are fed and watered, are satisfied and perfectly contented. They don't want to leave their resting place; they don't want to be disturbed. They don't know that they have a higher purpose to serve and a grander destiny to fulfill. So the eagle has to stir them up and push them out of their resting place.

So with us. There are so many things in this world to minister to our temporal wants and to tie us down to earth; there are so many things here to attract our attention and to engage our energies, that we are disposed to think that we can get satisfaction out of these things. We are tempted to live as though we were going to remain in this world always, as though we had reached the ultimatum of our destiny in this life. It is necessary for God to stir us up, to show us that we have a sublimer destiny before us, to teach us the childishness of the things of this world as compared with the things of the world to come—to show us the infinite superiority of *heavenly* things over *earthly* things.

Look at the little eagle in the nest, helpless, circumscribed, unattractive. If this is to be its final abode and ultimate destiny, it is an object of very little interest. There is nothing here to attract, for there is nothing here to be admired. But when you look at the majestic eagle as he soars aloft in the heavens to such sublime heights, there is something here to elicit our highest admiration, and we can see here the grand possibilities which were wrapped up in the little bird as it lay at one time helpless in the nest, and we can see how, by being stirred up and excited to action, these possibilities were made real.

So with us. If this life is all of our existence, if this world affords all for which we were created, then our existence is really a matter of very little importance. For we soon spend our little time, and then we leave the field of action and are soon forgotten. But when we consider the fact that this life is only the *commencement* of our existence—the nest, so to speak—that we are destined to live forever; and when we contemplate the grand possibilities of a redeemed soul in glory, when we look at the redeemed spirit as it soars aloft until finally it rests in the presence of God's throne in the heavenly world; then we can understand why it is that God stirs us up and breaks our hold upon earth and earthly things.

3. Again, *God has to stir up his people in order to give them the experience which they need—in order to test them and to develop them.* This experience is necessary, for, without it, we can never be prepared for our grand and glorious destiny. There are some things which can be learned only in the school of experience. There was nothing that could take the place of the discipline and tuition of the wilderness with the Israelites. They learned lessons there which they could never have

learned elsewhere. "The purpose of life is development; the process of development is discipline; the result of discipline is a full and many-sided manhood."

The young birds could never learn to fly by *remaining* in the *nest*. They must be stirred up and thrown on their own resources. There is only one way to learn to fly, and that is just *to fly*. There is no other way. The old bird knows this; hence she stirs up the nest—the nest has served its purpose—the time to fly has come now, so she destroys the nest and pushes her young out to *fly*. The only way to learn to *swim* is just to get into the water and *swim*. You can't learn away from the water.

The way to learn to be a Christian is just *to be one*. There is no other possible way. You can't learn by *theory* or by *observation*; you can't learn from the experiences of others. Each person must pass through the experience for himself. If we would be fully prepared to *rejoice* with Christ in the life to come, we must *suffer* with him in this life. In order to enjoy the *victory* fully, a man must pass through the *battle* himself. If we would be prepared to *wear* the *crown* hereafter, we must *bear* the *cross* here, and the heavier the cross the brighter the crown. The larger the *experience*, the larger will our capacity for enjoyment be. The Apostle Paul had a larger experience as a disciple of Christ than the thief upon the cross; and no doubt he is capacitated for a larger enjoyment.

III. *How does God stir up his people?*

1. *By his providence, as to their outward condition.* "As the eagle stirreth up her nest." "When the time for the young to leave the nest has come, she moves it with gentleness and affection; she sees them sleeping and

unwilling to leave their first home; makes a noise, strikes her wings against surrounding branches, and then, having awakened them, disturbs them still further, and finally 'stirreth up,' turns the nest inside out, and compels them to take to crags of rocks or boughs of trees." So God stirs up his people. The *Israelites* were comfortably settled in Egypt at first; the government was kindly disposed to them; and, if the government had continued favorable to them, doubtless they would never have wanted to leave for the wilderness. But God, by his providence, stirred them up. He changed their outward condition by his all-wise and powerful providence. A governor arose who was not favorable to these people. He made their lives a burden. They were reduced to the most abject slavery. God was stirring up their nest.

So with *Manasseh*, the son of good Hezekiah. By *power, wealth and pleasure*, he seems to have lost every religious instinct and principle. He became proverbial for his wickedness. At length God stirred up his nest by laying the hand of affliction upon him. He looked to God and prayed to him, and put his trust in him, and entered his service.

So with the *prodigal son*. God stirred up his nest. After he had lost everything and the famine had come, then he came to himself and returned to his father's house.

So with the *Psalmist*. He says: "Before I was afflicted, I went astray. It is good for me that I have been afflicted."

So with *us*, if we are God's children. God stirs up our nest in his own good way; and it is all done for our highest spiritual welfare. Every affliction, every sickness, every loss, every disappointment, every adver-

sity—they are all sent by a loving Father to stir up our nest and to prepare us for our glorious destiny hereafter.

2. Again, *God stirs up our nest by his Word and Spirit*. He works upon the *heart*, the internal experience. He stirs up our nest by speaking to the *conscience*. He disturbs the self-righteous confidence which we have by nature. We want to rest undisturbed in our carnal security. Satan encourages us in this by lulling the conscience to sleep. But God comes and stirs up the nest. Perhaps we have been crying *peace, peace*, when there has been no real peace. The conscience is convinced of sin—the insecurity of a carnal security is revealed to us—we are brought to repentance and to God. Our nest is stirred up, and, in this way, we are brought to salvation.

So the Spirit stirred up Saul of Tarsus. He was self-righteous; he believed that he was an eminent servant of God; he thought that he was on a divine mission when he was on his way to destroy the church of God. But the Spirit stirred up his nest on the way to Damascus. That nest which had been feathered so with self-righteousness, is stirred to its profoundest depths; and he who starts for Damascus as a persecutor, enters that city as an earnest advocate of the very religion which he intended to destroy.

So with every person in a state of sin upon whom the Spirit operates. My friend, has your *conscience* troubled you on account of sin, righteousness and judgment to come? Then, God is stirring up your nest. - It is the voice of God calling you to salvation. So God works by his grace and Spirit upon his own people when they go astray. He stirs up their nest. So with *David*, and *Jonah* and *Peter*. So with us, if we are his children.

Every providence is intended by an all-wise and loving

God to draw us nearer to heaven. God wants to make earth less attractive and heaven more attractive to his children. Then,

“Rise, my soul, and stretch thy wings,
Thy better portion trace,
Rise from transitory things
Towards heaven, thy destined place.”

FOREIGN MISSIONS.

“And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.”—Matt. xxiv. 14.

THERE are a great many people in the world who do not believe in Foreign Missions. This is not at all surprising, because there are a great many people in the world who don't believe in the Bible. There are a great many people in the world who profess to believe in the Bible that don't believe in Foreign Missions. As for that matter, there are a great many people who profess to believe in the Bible that don't believe in the Divinity of Christ; there are a great many who profess to believe in the Bible that don't believe in the doctrine of future punishment. It is not so surprising, therefore, that there is so much skepticism in the world on the subject of Foreign Missions, since there is such a wonderful misapprehension on the part of many in regard to many of the vital doctrines of Christianity.

There are a great many people *in the church* who don't believe in Foreign Missions. They may *say* that they believe in Foreign Missions, but when the real test is made, it is clearly seen that their professions are nothing more than a pack of lies. They say by their *words* that they believe in Foreign Missions, but they say by their *acts* that they do not believe in Foreign Missions. And we know that actions speak more correctly than words. How many men and women do you suppose there are in the church who do not give a single cent to carry the gospel to the perishing millions in heathen lands? How many professed disciples of Christ there are who don't

raise one little finger towards carrying out the great commission which Christ gave to his church: "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel." The members of God's church in this world give ten times more to gratify their own foolish and useless appetites than they do for the universal spread of the gospel. Brethren, it will not do to ease our consciences by saying that we are doing more in proportion than other churches and that our denomination is doing more than other denominations. There is an obligation resting upon us to carry the gospel to the heathen world, which is not affected by what others do or fail to do. There is entirely too much indifference in the church on this subject.

If we will examine the Bible with an unprejudiced mind, we will find that these Holy Scriptures are thoroughly permeated and saturated with the spirit of Foreign Missions. Take Foreign Missions out of the Bible and you take the very substance from it, leaving nothing but the shadow. Destroy Foreign Missions, and you destroy the very plans and purposes of God to save a lost and ruined world. Do away with Foreign Missions, and you overturn and demolish the great work of Christ in redemption. Why, this is the very heart, the very substance of the gospel, and is the great work of the church in all ages. "Go ye into *all* the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." When you have preached the gospel to this man, and that man, and to this nation, and that nation, go to other men and other nations. Do not stop the grand work of propagating the gospel till the glad tidings shall be proclaimed on every shore and in every land. Christ continues to say to the church: "Go, and as you go, *preach* the gospel to *every creature*." There is no subject which lies any nearer the centre of

Jesus' heart than the subject of Foreign Missions. This subject was the motive principle which guided and controlled the Saviour in his wonderful work of salvation. This subject was born in the mind and heart of God. "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life." Jesus Christ was the first foreign missionary that was ever sent out. He came into this foreign world upon a most foreign work; he came from the shining courts above to this sin-cursed world to bring salvation to those who were lost, and hopelessly lost to all human appearances. I tell you, my friends, when you touch the subject of Foreign Missions, you touch a subject that is very near the heart of Jesus. The text which we have selected as the basis of our remarks to-day substantiates this assertion. Christ says: "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations, and then shall the end come."

There are two interpretations to this passage. One makes it mean that the gospel shall be preached in all the then known world, and then the end of the old dispensation would come; the gospel shall be preached throughout the civilized world, so that the new dispensation may be firmly established, and then Jerusalem, the headquarters of the church under the old dispensation, would be destroyed. And we have the best authority for coming to the conclusion that the text as thus interpreted was remarkably fulfilled. The apostles went in every direction, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and this glorious gospel was preached to the then known world. The Apostle Paul is authority for this statement. A learned divine of modern times says: "It appears

from the most credible records, that the gospel was preached in Idumea, Syria and Mesopotamia, by Jude; in Egypt and other parts of Africa by Mark, Simon and Jude; in Ethiopia, by Candace's Eunuch and Matthias; in Pontus, Galatia and the neighboring parts of Asia, by Peter; in the territory of the seven Asiatic churches, by John; in Parthia, by Matthew; in Scythia, by Philip and Andrew; in the northern and western parts of Asia, by Bartholomew; in Persia, by Simon and Jude; in Media, Carmania and several eastern parts, by Thomas; through the vast tract, from Jerusalem round about unto Illyricum, by Paul, as also in Italy, Gaul and Britain, in most of which places Christian churches were planted, in less than thirty years after the death of Christ, which was before the destruction of Jerusalem." Thus it will be seen that the text, as interpreted just now, was remarkably fulfilled. The gospel of the kingdom was preached in all the then known world as a witness to every nation, and the end of the old dispensation came.

But we are not warranted in limiting the text to this narrow interpretation. There is another interpretation which is universal and all-embracing, that we must give to the text. The boundary lines of our text are not to be hemmed in by the boundary lines of the Roman Empire; but it is co-extensive with the human race. The gospel of the kingdom is to be preached to every nation under the sun, whether civilized or barbarous, whether educated or illiterate. The great commission says: "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every nation."

Let us notice the expression, "*gospel of the kingdom.*" When the ambassador of Christ stands up before the people, he has a message of vast importance to deliver

to them; he has something to preach; he has all the infinite resources of God to draw from; the everlasting fountains of divine truth are always springing up before him. When we send the gospel to the benighted heathen, we have the assurance that we are sending them something which will be of everlasting benefit to them; we are sending them something which will do their souls good; we are sending them a deliverance from everlasting destruction; we are sending them the gospel, which brings the glad tidings of great joy, which is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; we are sending them a gospel of *convictions*, a gospel that reveals the only living and true God in his triune personality, as Father, Son and Holy Ghost, a gospel that reveals the enormity of sin and the stupendous reality of its punishment, a gospel that reveals the immortality of the soul and that brings to the sinner eternal life and everlasting happiness. This is the gospel which the church is called upon to send to the immortal souls that are engulfed in heathen darkness and enthralled in heathen bondage. You see, we are sending them something which will indeed do them infinite good. The very best religions among the heathen cannot satisfy the aspirations of the immortal soul. There is nothing but the gospel that can make the human heart what it ought to be. Without the gospel, the soul must be forever lost. A Chinese Christian, it is said, thus described the relative merits of *Confucianism*, *Buddhism* and *Christianity*: "A man had fallen into a deep, dark pit, and lay in its miry bottom groaning and utterly unable to move. *Confucius* walked by, approached the edge of the pit and said, 'Poor fellow, I am sorry for you; why were you such a fool as to get in there? Let me give

you a piece of advice: If you ever get out, don't get in again.' 'I can't get out,' groaned the man. *That is Confucianism.* A *Buddhist priest* next came by and said: 'Poor fellow, I am very much pained to see you there. I think if you could scramble up two-thirds of the way, or even half, I could reach you and lift you up the rest.' But the man in the pit was entirely helpless and unable to rise. *That is Buddhism.*

Next *the Saviour* came by, and, hearing his cries, went to the very brink of the pit, stretched down and laid hold of the poor man, brought him up, and said, 'Go, sin no more.' *That is Christianity.*"

Oh, my brethren, when we contribute of our means to send missionaries to the foreign field, we are sending to the benighted heathen the only thing that can lift them out of the mire of sin and the pit of eternal destruction. These missionaries whom we send and support are carrying to the heathen world the only thing that can save their souls. There is no power in *Confucianism* to save the soul; there is no power in *Buddhism* to save the soul; there is no power in *any of the heathen religions* to save the soul; there is no power in *philosophy* or *science* to save the soul. But there is power in the *gospel of Christ* to save the soul; this gospel is itself the power of God unto salvation.

This gospel which we are commanded to send to the heathen world is called the gospel *of the kingdom*. "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come." A kingdom necessarily implies that there is a *king*. Jesus Christ is the King; he is the sole Head of the church. He is the intellectual and spiritual power that governs and directs the church. The gos-

pel which we preach is the gospel of the kingdom, and Jesus Christ himself sits upon the throne of this kingdom. Christ is the King of kings and Lord of lords, and we preach his gospel. It is the gospel of the kingdom of *grace*; the gospel of *righteousness*, the gospel of *power*; the gospel of *love*; the gospel of *truth*; and the gospel of *glory*.

Since this gospel which we preach is the gospel of the *kingdom*, we conclude that it is the gospel of *law*. Every kingdom that has in it the elements of success, must be built upon *law*. Now, since this is the gospel of *God's* kingdom, it is built upon *God's* law. It is true, this is a gospel of *love* and *mercy*; but it is also a gospel of *law*. If you will examine the gospel in its wonderful development and execution, you will see how it magnifies and honors the law of God. The principles of the gospel are not a set of lawless principles; but they rest upon the immutable and inexorable law of God. There is nothing in the world more *lawful*, more *full of law*, than the gospel of Christ. *It is law from beginning to end*. It is the law of God that gives the gospel its power and its efficacy. The great salvation, in its wonderful development, did not deviate one iota from the requirements of God's immutable law. This law said: "The soul that sinneth, it shall die;" and "The wages of sin is death." Did not Christ satisfy this law when he *died* in the sinner's place on the cross? Therefore, God is not acting contrary to his truth, and justice, and righteousness, and law, when he gives eternal life to the sinner that puts his trust in the Lord Jesus Christ. Yea, can we not say that the *truth* of God, and the *righteousness* of God, and the *justice of God*, and the *law* of God demand the salvation of the sinner who puts his trust

in Christ? The law of God can have no possible claim upon the sinner who looks to Christ for salvation. "There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." Jesus Christ, in his *life* and *death*, has wrought out a perfect righteousness, and the sinner that is clothed upon with this righteousness stands acquitted and justified before the judgment bar of God. The divine law brings God under everlasting obligations to save the sinner who accepts Christ as his Substitute. This gospel which we preach is eminently the gospel of law.

Let us bear in mind, that while the law of God demands the *salvation* of the *sinner who accepts* Christ as his Saviour, it, at the same time, demands the *eternal condemnation* of the man who rejects the Lord Jesus Christ as his Saviour. This is the gospel of law. The law of God says: "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." The *believer* has already died in Christ; hence the law has no claims upon him. The *unbeliever* has no interest in the death of Christ, hence he stands for himself, and must suffer the penalty of sin, which is eternal death. Looking at the subject from this point of view, we can see very clearly the absolute necessity of preaching this gospel of the kingdom to those who are sitting in heathen darkness. They are under the condemnation of God's law, and without the gospel, they must be forever lost. The law of God *demand*s their eternal condemnation, because they are sinners. "The soul that sinneth it *shall* die." The gospel cannot save a soul contrary to law. He that is saved, must be saved lawfully. The law of God will accept none but Christ as the sinner's Substitute, and this Substitute must be accepted by the sinner himself. How, then, can the heathen be saved,

when they are absolutely ignorant of Christ? The truth of the whole matter is just this: The law of God *demand*s the salvation of the sinner whose faith rests in Christ, and the law of God *demand*s the eternal condemnation of him who does not believe in Christ. Faith saves; unbelief damns. And the believer is saved lawfully, and the unbeliever is damned lawfully.

Again, since this gospel is the gospel of the *kingdom*, we conclude that it is the gospel of *authority*. This gospel comes to us clothed in the garments of divine authority. It is just as authoritative as God himself. We have already seen that Christ sits upon the throne of the gospel's kingdom. Let us look for a moment at the *extent* of his *power* and *authority*. The apostle, after speaking of the deep humiliation of Christ, says: "Wherefore God hath also highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father." The same apostle says in 1 Corinthians, that Christ must reign till all enemies are put under his feet. Unlimited power and universal authority are invested in the Lord Jesus Christ. It is true, he is a *Saviour* of *infinite tenderness* and *compassion*; but, at the same time, he is a *King* who sits upon the throne and sways the sceptre of universal dominion. When he speaks to the church, he speaks with divine authority. Just before his departure from earth to heaven, he said to his disciples with divine authority: "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son,

and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen." This is the gospel that the church is to preach, the gospel of authority, because it is the gospel of the kingdom. Let us bear in mind, that when Christ commands the church to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature, he speaks as the *King of the church with divine authority*. This gospel speaks to us, and it *commands* us unconditionally to go into all the world and preach the gospel.

Brethren, we have our orders; they come directly from the seat of authority; they issue from the throne; they come from the lips of the King. These orders require us to go into all the world, and they require us to preach the gospel as we go, and they require us to preach this gospel of the kingdom to every creature, and they require us to preach this gospel with authority as the commissioned ambassadors of heaven. And you will please notice the *encouragement* which *precedes* this commission and the *encouragement* which *follows* it. Christ says: "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye, *therefore*, and teach all nations, . . . and, lo, *I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.*" The church that obeys the authoritative orders of her King by going and preaching the gospel of the kingdom to those who are sitting in heathen darkness, such a church as this is surrounded by the embattlements of omnipotence, and such a church is led on to victory by the far-seeing eye of Omniscience; such a church as this is backed by the almighty power of God, and such a church is guided by the all-wise providence of God. Jesus Christ, the church's Head, dwells in such a body

as this. Therefore, we can afford to go and preach the gospel of the kingdom to the perishing members of the human race, since all power in heaven and in earth has been given to the Lord Jesus Christ, and since he has promised to be with us always, even unto the end of the world.

“Glorious things of thee are spoken,
Zion, City of our God;
He whose Word cannot be broken,
Formed thee for his own abode;

“On the rock of ages founded,
What can shake thy sure repose?
With salvation’s walls surrounded,
Thou mayest smile at all thy foes.”

O brethren, let us have a church that *believes* in Foreign Missions, a church that *gives* to Foreign Missions, a church that *prays* for the success of Foreign Missions, for, if we have such a church as this, we may rest assured that the great Head of the church is with us to guide us and to protect us. But, if our church is not pervaded with the missionary spirit, what right have we, in the light of the gospel, to claim to be a true church? Remember that this gospel is the gospel of the kingdom, and, therefore, the gospel of *authority*. We know what it has *commanded*, and what it has *promised*; but let us bear in mind that we must obey the command before we can enjoy the promise. It is the church’s duty to preach the gospel, the whole gospel, and nothing but the gospel, and it is the church’s duty to preach this gospel to every creature on the face of the earth.

The gospel of the kingdom. The text declares that this gospel shall be preached *in all the world*. It matters not what may come, this gospel of the kingdom shall be

preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations. The enemies of Christ may unite all their efforts to retard the progress of the gospel and to defeat God's plans to save his people, the church may become indifferent towards the cause of evangelizing the world, the people of God may be persecuted and put to death—all these things may happen; yet, in spite of them all, the gospel is to be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations. The cause of Foreign Missions is just as sure to succeed as Christ sits upon the throne. Those who are opposing the universal spread of the gospel are arraying themselves against the church of God, and against the *truth* of God, and against the *purposes* of God, and against *God* himself. And all such persons are just as sure to be defeated as that God is true. It is simply preposterous to entertain the idea for a moment that any power, or any combination of powers, can in the least interfere with God's plans and purposes to save his people. God has fore-ordained that this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world; and without a doubt, this great end is going to be accomplished. Christ *shall* see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied. And God has fore-ordained that this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world *by the church*. You may refuse to do your part in the great work, but still the work is going to be done through human instrumentalities.

This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world *for a witness unto all nations*. This gospel of the kingdom must ascend the witness stand of every nation and testify for God. This gospel must be preached to every nation, so that they may know the real mind and will of God respecting man's salvation.

This gospel must be preached in all the world, so that the true character of God may be revealed to all the nations of the earth. This gospel must be preached in all the world so that all the nations may know the justice of God, and the righteousness of God, and the mercy of God, and the love of God. This gospel must be preached in all the world, so that the nations may know that God hates sin with a perfect hatred, and that he loves the sinner with a perfect love. This gospel must be preached in all the world, so that all the nations may know its saving power and the boundless riches of its grace

The text says, "*then shall the end come.*" After the gospel of the kingdom has been preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations, then shall the end of this dispensation come; then shall the kingdom be delivered up to the Father. When this gospel shall be preached in all the world, then the reign of universal peace shall dawn upon the earth; then sin shall be conquered and Satan shall be dethroned; then all the enemies of Christ shall be defeated, and every knee shall bow to Jesus, and every tongue shall confess that he is Lord to the glory of God the Father; then the whole world shall fall at the feet of Jesus, "and crown him Lord of all."

My hearer, are you longing for this glad day in the world's history to come? Do you want to see the day when Christ shall be crowned by the whole world as Lord over all, blessed forevermore? If so, remember what is to be done before this universal triumph shall dawn upon the world. "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come."

The interest which you take in the universal spread of the gospel is the true index to your feelings in the

matter. You show by what you are doing for Foreign Missions how much you are interested in the final and universal triumph of the gospel. Will you not resolve to-day to do more for the cause of Foreign Missions than you have ever done before? Remember that this is the great work of the church. "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come."

We have some just conception of the stupendous and gigantic magnitude of this work, I hope, when we consider the startling fact that about two-thirds of the human race have never heard the glad tidings of salvation. There are about *fifty thousand* immortal souls going down through the gates of death every day from heathen lands without a knowledge of Jesus Christ, who is the only name under heaven given among men where-by we must be saved. How can we be indifferent to the cause of Foreign Missions under the pressure of these startling facts? O brethren, for the sake of Jesus Christ, whom we profess to love and serve, and for the sake of the millions of priceless souls that are pouring into the pit of eternal destruction from heathen lands, let us be stirred to our profoundest depths on this supreme question. By the grace of God, let us give the heathen nations a chance; they are shut out from the light of the gospel. We have the gospel; let us send it to those who have it not. By the grace of God, let us obey the command which comes from the Captain of our salvation with divine authority; let us do what our Lord and Master has told us to do. He says: "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and *then* shall the end come."

CHRIST THE SAVIOUR OF THE LOST.

"The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."—Luke xix. 10.

MANY of the great truths taught by our Saviour, to all human appearances, seem to have been brought out incidentally. It was so with the great truth of the text. Christ had passed through Jericho, followed by a great throng of people. There was a man there who was very anxious to see Jesus. His curiosity was excited to a high pitch. He had heard a great deal about Jesus, and he was curious to see him—just as we are oftentimes when a great man passes through our section of country. We want to see him, just out of curiosity. I suppose that was why Zaccheus wanted to see Christ. So, curiosity is not such a bad thing, after all. It is a good thing, because God put it within our very being. The reason why it appears to be a bad thing, sometimes, is because it is directed in the wrong channel. It can be put to a bad use, just like any other good thing. A man is a perfect drone in society and the world's history, if he hasn't got any curiosity. I don't mean curiosity to find out little trifling things which he has no business looking into. I mean curiosity of the higher type, that desires to find out the truth. I mean the curiosity that investigates, that dives down into the depths of truth and aspires to its lofty heights. I am inclined to think that when this quality of our being is perfectly sanctified and saved in heaven, that it will be one of the most prolific sources of enjoyment and happiness that we will have. Now, it was a right difficult matter for Zaccheus to gratify his curiosity. He wanted to see Christ, but

there was such a great crowd around the Saviour, that he could not get to him for the press; and Zaccheus was such a low man, that he could not look over the heads of the people and see the wonderful man. His inventive powers were put into operation, as is generally the case when a man's curiosity is excited. He decides upon a plan to accomplish his object, and he puts this plan into execution. He runs on before the crowd and climbs up into a sycamore tree. There he sits, waiting for Jesus to pass by. All he wants is just to get a glimpse of the Saviour, but that was by no means all that Christ wanted him to have. Directly the Saviour comes to the place where Zaccheus was, and he looks up and seeing him, calls him by name, inviting him to hasten down; "for," says he, "to-day I must abide at thy house." Zaccheus makes haste and comes down, and he receives Christ joyfully.

The record informs us that those who accompanied Christ murmured, saying: "That he was gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner." Not only the religious sensibilities of those Jews were shocked, but their pride must have been humbled. Christ left them to be the guest of a man whom they would not associate with. No doubt the dissatisfaction on the part of those who accompanied Christ, was the cause of Jesus uttering the great truth of the text. Christ says that he came to seek and to save the lost. The Pharisees must have believed this publican to have been a lost man, for they distinctly call him a sinner. Therefore, the Saviour proves, according to their own position, that he was carrying out the object of his mission to this world when he was associating with such men as Zaccheus and trying to save him. By their own utterances he condemns

them. They say Zaccheus is a sinner, therefore you ought not to associate with him. Christ would argue, if he is a sinner, then that is the very reason why I ought to bring him in contact with my gospel; for I came to save sinners.

Jesus said, on another occasion somewhat similar to this, in silencing the objections which the Scribes and Pharisees brought against the disciples for eating and drinking with publicans and sinners, "They that are whole need not a physician; but they that are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." Christ announces himself in the text as, *The Saviour of the lost*, "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."

1. *Christ then is a present Saviour.* "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." He *is come*, that is, he is here now. He *is come*, that is, he is going to continue to remain here as long as there are any demands upon him as a Saviour. He *is come*, that is, he is to be found right among those who need him as a Saviour. He is not a Saviour that is afar off, but he is a Saviour that is very near to us, who are lost; for he has found us, and he is remaining with us. Of course, as God, he is everywhere present and at all times; but, as a Saviour, he is only present where there are those to be saved. "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."

Christ is the most social and friendly Being in the whole universe. It is true, he is a Divine Being, who is to be worshipped by all the hosts of heaven; but at the same time, he comes into this world and equalizes himself with his creatures by associating with them, not his obedient creatures, but his rebellious creatures. Christ

was sinless, but he associates with sinners. "This man receiveth sinners." Blessed be his name, he not only receives them, but he *hunts them up*; he visits them; he goes to their homes; he eats and drinks with them; he sits in the family circle and converses with them; he accompanies them when they go forth to meet the stern realities of active life; he is close by their side as they are summoned to the battlefield to wage war against the great adversary of the soul and his army. Yes, Christ is right in the presence of his disciples when they are called upon to pass through the fiery furnace of affliction and bereavement. His sweeping promise is: "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee."

"When through the deep waters I call thee to go,
The rivers of woe shall not thee overflow;
For I will be with thee, thy troubles to bless,
And sanctify to thee thy deepest distress."

Christ is a Saviour that can be enjoyed by his people; for, whithersoever they go, there he is with them; and he is there in the capacity of a Saviour, with all the resources of his gospel. He is there ready to do whatever an emergency may demand. Are we about to fall? then he is there to support. Are we about to yield to temptation? then he is there to drive away the tempter and to shield us. Are we almost ready to give up in despair when we look at the weakness of our own strength? then he is there whispering in the ear: "Thy sufficiency is in God." Are we bowed down under the weight of some affliction which seems to be almost intolerable? then Jesus is there and he says: "Your light affliction, which is but for a moment, shall work out for you a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." Does every-

thing seem to be adverse to your success, and are all your plans frustrated and your hopes blighted by things over which you have no control? then the exceeding broad and precious promise, which covers every conceivable case, comes to you in your trouble: "All things work together for good to them that love God." Christ is the very Saviour that every man needs; for he comes to us in our childhood and he follows us in our youth and manhood, and he does not forsake us in our old age. When we need the Saviour, we do not have to run about here and there and yonder to find him; he is right by our side. Yea, is it not the case that he sees our spiritual necessities before we do ourselves? and does he not anticipate us in attending to them? He came into this world as a Saviour uninvited on man's part, for man was lost. Without this voluntary coming of Christ into the world as a Saviour, we would have been without a salvation. He brings his gospel to us. He *seeks* and he saves the lost. The case of Zaccheus is a striking one to the point. The Saviour requests him to hasten down out of the tree, "for," says he, "to-day I must abide at thy house." Zaccheus came down and received him joyfully. They started for the home of Zaccheus. He is Christ's associate; Christ is his guest. That's material for the artist to make a picture of—the *King of heaven associating with a sinner*; Christ and Zaccheus wrapped up in each other's companionship. Christ was no nearer Zaccheus than he is to every man in this house to-day. He is here to-day, right now, and to every individual, with all the fulness and blessedness of his salvation. "Whosoever will, let him *take* the water of life freely." Jesus Christ is the bosom Friend of every sinner on earth, and he is the best and most

enduring Friend that the sinner ever has had or ever will have. "There is a Friend that *sticketh closer* than a brother." Our earthly friends may leave and forsake us when we most need them, and they often do this; but Jesus Christ is no such Friend as this.

2. Again, *Christ is a theanthropic Saviour*; that is, he is a *divine-human Saviour*. This word *theanthropic* is composed of two Greek words, *Theos*, meaning God, and *anthropos* meaning *man*. Therefore, a theanthropic person is a God-man person. He is one that partakes both of the nature of God and of the nature of man. Such is the Person of Christ. Thus we have another aspect of the perfection of Christ as the Saviour of the lost. He comes into the world as the Mediator between God and man, and how fitly qualified he is for this part of his work in redemption! The knowledge which he possesses of the two parties to be reconciled is not mere abstract and theoretical; it is *personal* and *experimental*, for he is God. He knows God by experience, for he is God; he knows man by experience, for he is man. As God, he knows what is required and what is to be done to save the lost; as man, he knows how to apply this salvation to the hearts of men. As God, he requires an infinite sacrifice to justify the ungodly; as the God-man, he becomes the Substitute of the sinner and offers up himself as this perfect sacrifice. Christ, as a divine Person, possesses all the attributes and perfections of the God-head. "In him dwelleth all the fulness of the God-head." He is limitless in the extent of his power and wisdom, and in the sweep of his duration. He is without beginning of years or end of days, from everlasting to everlasting. He is infinite, eternal and unchangeable in all of the divine attributes.

But Christ was *human* as well as divine. He was a man. In the text he calls himself the Son of man. This seems to have been his favorite appellation of himself, and this implies his divine origin; for, where was the necessity of the Saviour continually calling himself the Son of man if he was merely a man? Would it not be useless and foolish for a mere man to be continually insisting on the fact that he was human? It was different in the case of Christ. He was divine, the Son of God, equal with the Father; and at the same time, he was human; and he wanted to impress this truth upon the hearts and lives of the people. So he went about calling himself the Son of man. "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."

In the humanity of Christ, we have the *catholicity of his brotherhood*. He is not tied down to any sect, or any race, or any nationality; he rises above all these, for he is akin to all humanity. He is the Son of man. There is nothing imprinted more indelibly upon the minds and characters of men than are their national customs, prejudices and peculiarities. Christ was free from all these blemishes. He is born of a Jew, but he is not a Jew. He is no dearer nor nearer to the Jew than to the Greek. He is no more akin to the German than the Englishman. In him are concentrated all the excellencies and virtues of all nationalities. In his universal brotherhood; he takes in the whole human race. He has a human heart that is akin to every other human heart. As such, he comes to save the lost wherever they may be found. He is your Brother, and he is my Brother, and he is every man's Brother.

As Brother of all mankind, Christ *sympathizes* with them all. O the depth and infinite fulness of the resi-

dum of Christ's sympathies. We are very narrow and limited in our sympathies, but Christ throws open his arms and takes to his bosom every son and every daughter of the human family. God has made of one blood all nations of men, and part of this blood flows through the human veins of the Divine Saviour. The sympathies of Christ are not merely drawn out into fine-spun theories, but they are reduced by him to an eminent practicability. He is sorry, and he shows us by his life-work how much he is sorry. There is no aristocracy and no plebeianism among the human race with Christ. He would do just as much to save a *beggar* as he would to save a *king*. Christ was not too good to stoop to the lowest depths of iniquity in order to snatch an immortal soul from destruction. The wretched, the infamous, and the polluted, and the outcasts crowd around him to catch the wonderful words of life which he speaks. "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." O the depth, and height, and breadth, and length of Christ's brotherhood as expressed in his sympathies for a lost race. He is pre-eminently inter-national in the depth of his feeling, and in the extent of his salvation. Being thus related to all mankind by blood and by sympathy, he can, in good faith, carry his salvation to all grades, and classes, and conditions, and nationalities of men.

3. *Christ is an efficacious Saviour.* There were certain insuperable barriers which stood in the way of man's salvation, as far as human wisdom and efficacy were concerned. There was *God's law*, which the sinner had broken, and the justice of God demanded that he should be punished for it. "The wages of sin is death." There was likewise *the truth of God*, which stood in the way of

the sinner's salvation, as far as man was concerned; for God had said: "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." To all human appearances, man, by nature, was not only in a lost condition, but also in a hopeless condition. But God can bring order out of chaos and light out of darkness. He has brought salvation to the hopeless and the lost, in Jesus Christ, his Son. His wisdom settled upon a plan to save man; and his power put this plan into execution.

As we have already seen, Christ became a man, thus actually relating himself to humanity. Through this bond of union, which connects us to Christ, the salvation comes. Christ became the Substitute of the sinner, and suffered in his stead. His divinity gave to his work infinite power and efficacy. Christ has brought salvation to the lost, and he has done this consistently with the truth and justice of God. So now God can be just, and at the same time justify the ungodly. Pardon and justification and glorification are possible only on the ground of Christ's work as Mediator.

The efficacy of Christ as a Saviour consists in the fact that his salvation can save all. Christ can save to the uttermost all that come unto God through him. He saved the *thief* upon the cross; he saved *Saul of Tarsus*, a bold persecutor of the church; he saved *Zaccheus*, the publican. As far as the objective conditions of salvation are concerned, the salvation of every man has been made possible. There is a sufficiency in the work of Christ to save all and of every class. There is no danger of ever exhausting the infinite resources and possibilities of this blessed salvation. The lost sinner can always be addressed in these cheering words, "*whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.*" There will always be

a sufficiency of this life-giving water. "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which is lost."

The case of Zaccheus is a remarkable one, showing the efficacy of Christ's gospel. There were *two prominent barriers* in the way of his salvation. There was his *wealth* and there was his *occupation*. Christ had taught his disciples that it was easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to go to heaven. The truth which Christ would teach his disciples is the impossibility of those being saved who trust in riches. A man can't serve God and mammon at the same time. And how natural it is for wealthy men to love their riches. They love their wealth often better than they do their God; often they love it better than they do their souls. They will imperil the eternal interests of these souls for a few dollars and cents. Such is the grasp which wealth oftentimes has upon its possessors.

Now, Zaccheus was a rich man; but his *occupation* was also a hindrance to his salvation. He was a publican, a tax-gatherer. People, as a general thing, are not very fond of paying their taxes. And a great many of them will break the ninth commandment before they will pay what they ought to. Especially are people constitutionally opposed to paying taxes when they are not in sympathy with the government to whom they are asked to pay tribute. I suppose if any man in a community was more unpopular than another, it would be the man appointed by such a government to collect the taxes from the people of that community. Why, the little children would hiss at such a man and deride him as he passed along the streets. That is human nature. Whether it is right or not is altogether a different question. Now, Zaccheus was a tax-collector, appointed by

the Roman government to gather the taxes from the Jewish people; and you know, the Jews were not at all in sympathy with this government. It seems that they tried to heap all their venom and calumny and vituperation upon these tax-gatherers as the representatives of this government. The whole community looked down upon them with scorn and disgust. They were ostracized by society. A man that considered himself respectable would not associate with one of these publicans. Considered a degraded class, these men became such. It is a difficult matter for a man to live above the moral level upon which he is placed by his fellow-men. The first step downward is for a man to fall in the estimation of others, and the next and fatal step is to fall in his own estimation. Now, considering these two facts in the case of Zaccheus, first, his wealth; and second, his occupation, the antecedent probability is against his salvation, humanly speaking. But all things are possible with God. Our wisdom is folly in the sight of God; and oftentimes his wisdom is foolishness to men. Christ left the respectability to carry salvation to that despised publican. "For the Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost."

But the efficacy of Christ as a Saviour consists also in the fact that he accomplishes all the results in salvation which he intended. When a man is converted, it is not a surprise to Christ. He knows exactly what is going to be the effect of his gospel on every man's heart. There are no unforeseen emergencies arising in his redemptive providence which he did not expect, and which he did not provide for. He did not come into the world merely to make the salvation of men *possible*. He came to make the salvation of his people *certain*. He came

to save. There is no haphazard feature about the matter. He says: "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me. And him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out." Christ is a *saving* Saviour; he comes to save, and he saves. Some men are called doctors, but they do not practice medicine. They have given up their profession. Christ has never given up his profession. He is not only a physician, but he is a practicing Physician, and he never will give up his practice as long as there is a sin-sick soul to be healed. "For the Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost."

Christ shall never be defeated in his plans to save the lost. He came to save. Why, that was the very design of his coming into this world; and he is going to save, on the divine side, every one that the Father gives him, and on the human side, every one that goes to him. "All that the Father giveth me *shall* come to me;" there you have the divine side; "And him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out"—there you have the human side.

Christ certainly verified his assertion in the text in the case of Zaccheus. Unasked, he goes to this publican's house; and, as far as we know, unasked, he saves him. One thing we do know: he saved Zaccheus. When the Saviour found that poor man, *he was lost*; but when he left him, *he was saved*. And he showed that he was a changed man, for he gave the half of his possessions to the poor. Pretty good, that, for a publican. More than this, he said; if he had wronged any one, he would restore him fourfold. Christ's gospel has a wonderful influence over a man, when the Saviour saves him. It moves him; it liberalizes him; it enlarges him. It opens his heart and life.

Let me close these remarks by making a personal ap-

peal to each one of you. I ask you individually, *Has the Saviour saved you?* If so, you have much to make you thankful and to rejoice over. You are redeemed from the pit of destruction. But if you have never felt the power of Christ's salvation in your soul, then you are lost. I have glorious news to bring you. I come to introduce to you a Saviour. He is Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and the Son of man, of whom you have heard before. He is the very Saviour you need. "The Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost." O how glad and inexpressably full of joy is the wrecked mariner out at sea, who sees the ship rapidly approaching to rescue him! And, Oh, how glad you ought to be since Christ, the Saviour of the lost, is come! Like Zaccheus, you ought to hasten to him and receive him joyfully. Oh, that men could realize the exceeding great peril of being lost, even in this world. Then they would be crowding around the Saviour to be delivered from their lost estate. And Christ would hear their cry and save them. "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."

OUR INDEBTEDNESS TO THE PAST*

"Their works do follow them."—Rev. xiv. 13.

THAT IS, their works follow them into the other world, or their works follow them in this world, or both. I shall consider the passage to-day in the sense that their works follow them in this world. "Their works do follow them."

And our works will follow us. Man dies and passes off the stage of action in this world, but his work continues to live and his influence goes on to the end of time. Those who once lived where we now live are gone—their faces and forms are seen no more, but their works are still living. The places that know us now will soon know us no more forever, but our works will remain here and they will be felt by those who come after us.

Thus we are indissolubly connected with the *past* and the *future*. We are connected with the *past* in our thinking and modes of thought, in our habits and manner of life, in our doctrines, principles and policies, and in all of our environments. We are simply what the past has made us. We are connected with the *future* by our hopes and aspirations, by our works which are to follow us, and by the impression these works are to make upon the generations which are to come after us. The future is to be what we are going to make it.

Hence the full sweep of a man's influence and life

*A sermon preached at the Centennial Celebration of Concord Church, Bethel Presbytery, South Carolina, Friday, October 16, 1896.

can never be taken in until the end of time. Thus we can see the propriety and justice of waiting till the last day for the general judgment. Not till then will all the facts in connection with a man's life be in, and not till then can a just estimate be formed of that life. Your influence goes on and on till the end of time. It is impossible for you to trace it out in its different ramifications, but the omniscient eye of God keeps up with it. He knows every chain of events and influences with which your work is connected. He knows all that is involved.

Thus, as we stand here to-day, with the *past* stretching out behind us and the *future* stretching out before us, we feel like taking off our shoes, for we are standing on sacred soil. The blessed dead are in the past—they are gone to an infinitely better and happier world, but we can think of the hallowed associations which cluster around their memories and which crowd upon us to-day as we are engaged in these memorial services. "Their works do follow them." And we can feel the influence and power of these works to-day. We feel like we are in the company of those who have died in the Lord, for we are compassed about with a great cloud of witnesses. We feel like Concord's sainted dead for one hundred years are hovering over us to-day. If this is so, blessed dead, we welcome you here to-day, and we congratulate you upon your blessed estate. The sainted dead are blessed because of their *rest*. They have quit the toils and turmoils of earth and have entered into heaven's rest. They are blessed because of their *service*. They have entered upon a higher, nobler, sweeter service. They are forever freed from the weariness, drudgery and disappointments which are incident to our service here. When they were in the flesh, they could sing:

“ Dear dying Lamb, thy precious blood
 Shall never lose its power,
 Till all the ransomed Church of God
 Be saved to sin no more.

“ E'er since, by faith, I saw the stream
 Thy flowing wounds supply,
 Redeeming love has been my theme,
 And shall be till I die.

“ Then, in a nobler, sweeter song,
 I'll sing thy power to save,
 When this poor lisping, stammering tongue
 Lies silent in the grave.”

This prophecy which they sang on earth has been fulfilled in their experience and lives in heaven. They are singing in a sweeter, nobler strain the song of Moses and the Lamb.

They are blessed because *their works do follow them*. These works follow them in bearing witness to their faithfulness. They tell us how they toiled and suffered—how they sacrificed and made self-denials. These works follow them, and in this way, they continue to do good. The blessed dead have in these works a kind of permanent investment which is perpetually bearing a dividend towards increasing their happiness and joy. These good influences which they put into operation before they left this world are still going on, and they are streams of happiness which continue to flow into their hearts.

The glorious *future*, potential with grand possibilities, looms up before us. As we stand here to-day on this neck of land which separates between the *past* and the *future*, we are forcibly reminded of:

Our indebtedness to the past and our obligations to the future. This will be my theme for this occasion. We

do not appreciate, as we should, our indebtedness to the past; nor do we realize, as we should, our obligations to the future. We are the beneficiaries of the faithful work of those who have gone before us. They toiled, not simply for themselves, but for others, for generations unborn, and we to-day are enjoying the fruits of their faithful labors. Every blessing which we enjoy has come down to us through the toils and tears, the struggles and sacrifices of those who have lived in the past. "The books we read, and whose pages give us so much pleasure and profit, are prepared for us oft-times at sore cost to their authors. The great thoughts that warm our hearts and inspire us to noble living are the fruit, many times, of pain and struggle. Men had to pass through darkness and doubt to learn the lessons of faith and hope which they have written in such fair lines for us. They had to endure temptations and fight battles in which they well-nigh perished, that they might set down for us their bright, inspiring story of victory and triumph. They had to meet sorrows in which their hearts were about broken, to learn how to write the strong words of comfort which strengthen us as we read them in our times of grief. We do not know what some of the glad hymns of faith and hope cost those who first sang them. They learn in suffering what they teach in song."

Go back in imagination beyond the limits of memory and think of the time when your mother watched by your little cradle. You were without care, but you were your mother's care. You were helpless, absolutely so; but your mother's strength was always in reach and at your service. Think how your mother, like a ministering angel, guarded and nourished you. Think how she laid out all of her time and energy and strength for you.

Think how she spent perhaps many a weary and sleepless night for you—how, when others all around were unconscious in sleep, she sang to you those beautiful nursery rhymes and those sweet hymns of praise. If what a man's mother has suffered and done for him is no incentive to him to make something of himself, then there is certainly nothing good in the man. How we are indebted to those gone before!

"We exult in our civilization, our advancement, our refinement, our knowledge, our culture, our arts, our Christian society, the pleasant things of our modern life. Do we remember that all this comes to us from the toils and sacrifices, the study, the thought, the invention, the sweat and the pain of thousands who have gone before us? There has not been a true life anywhere in the past, however lowly, that has not contributed in some degree to the good we now enjoy." "Their works do follow them." We do not enjoy a blessing, or a comfort, which did not come to us at great cost to somebody. These blessings and comforts have come to us through the toils and tears, through the sorrows and sacrifices, through the efforts and energies of those who have gone before. This is seen in every department of life.

In the material and industrial world. In the houses we live in, in the sanctuaries we worship in, in the clothes we wear, and in the victuals we eat. Look at science, and agriculture, and mechanics. See what has been done in each of these departments. Consider the labor-saving machines and contrivances by which one man can do now what it took five, or ten, or twenty men to do a few years ago. See the comforts and conveniences which we now enjoy and which come down to us through the labors of the past.

Our forefathers had to contend with the forests and the deserts; they had to contend with the inconveniences of travel which existed in their times; but they have left us the fruitful fields and our beautiful homes; they have left us the railroad and other comfortable and expeditious modes of transportation. How they had to struggle in order to secure what we now possess and enjoy! They toiled hard when they laid the foundation for our modern civilization. Every achievement in science, every invention and discovery in the material world is a monument to the faithful labors of those who have lived before us. "Their works do follow them."

Our indebtedness to the past is also seen in the civil and political world. As we rest serenely under the American flag, enjoying the blessings of liberty and good government, our minds ought to go back, occasionally at least, to the trials and conflicts through which our forefathers had to pass in achieving these blessings for us. How they had to endure hardships of war under peculiarly trying circumstances. How they had to face the foe; how they had to contend with the elements of nature; how they had to pass through many a cold night, through the snow, the sleet and the rain! How they left their humble homes, their loved ones exposed frequently to the enemy and the hardships which were characteristic of those times! How many of them poured out their life-blood on the battlefield! How they all consecrated themselves and all they had upon their country's altar! Noble and costly sacrifice! They had to do all this, in order that their posterity and succeeding generations in this country might inherit the blessings of good government and be free from the tyranny which had so oppressed them.

Our indebtedness to the past is also seen in the educational world. The log school house which served its purpose nobly in its day and generation, has been replaced by the beautiful academy, or graded school building. The blue-back spelling book, in its day, was one of the greatest blessings bestowed on the human race, and God forbid that I should ever say any thing against it. Mankind would do a great work if they would erect a monument to the author of that book. But that monument has already been erected in the hearts and lives of the millions who were assisted by that grand and noble book in their first steps towards getting an education! But this book has gone—it has served its purpose, perhaps. Yet, its works do follow. After holding its grasp on the human mind for so long a time, it paved the way for a greater blessing.

See how the appliances in the school-room have been improved and multiplied! How the methods of teaching have been advanced! How the opportunities for getting an education have been increased! How the facilities for diffusing a good literature have been multiplied! At one time only the wealthy could own books, and only a few at that; for there were not many extant! But now a good book can be bought for only a few cents! The whole Bible can be bought for twenty cents, and a copy of the New Testament for five cents! See the large and ever increasing stream of literature as it pours into our midst. These things come to us at great cost to those who have gone before. Every school house, every good book, every appliance in the school-room, every printing press—they all remind us of our indebtedness to the past.

Our indebtedness to the past is seen especially in the

religious world. All the accumulated blessings of religion which we enjoy come down to us through the toils and sacrifices of those who have gone before. These blessings have been growing and multiplying, every day better and larger than the day before. We have in our possession all the achievements of the past. We have the fruits of their labors and even their experiences. We are enjoying to-day the fruits of the labors of all the good people who lived in the past. We are enjoying the fruits of the labors of Noah, and Abraham, and Moses, and David, and Daniel, and John, and Peter, and Paul, and Augustine and Luther, and Calvin, and Knox, and Wesley, and Spurgeon. "Their works do follow them." Blessed are the sainted dead! They are blessed in that they have blest us through their labors. They sowed the good seed in their trials and conflicts and persecutions, and we are reaping the harvest of their wise sowing. If they can only see the fruits of their labors—and why can't they?—they are now rejoicing as never before in their sowing. Ah, if Paul can see what his works are still doing in the world in comforting, strengthening and inspiring God's people, he is rejoicing as never before in those perils and stonings and ship-wrecks and that nakedness and hunger which he endured while on earth. It was hard while he was passing through them, but now he can thank God as never before for those crosses and trials and thorns in the flesh, and he can rejoice as never before in his infirmities that the power of Christ may rest upon him. They have worked out for him, and are still working out for him, a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

How precious those treasures are which have come down to us through the past! How costly they are!

What a stream of conflicts and trials the religious blessings we enjoy have come through! Oh, how those faithful ones who have gone before had to strive and struggle in order to achieve, conserve and transmit to us the blessings we now enjoy! Some were sold into slavery and carried into captivity; others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; and others had trials of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover, of bonds and imprisonment, they were sawn asunder, they were stoned, were tempted, were slain with the sword; they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented—(of whom the world was not worthy)—they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens, and caves of the earth. They had to pass through all of these experiences in order to hand down to us the priceless blessings which we possess and enjoy.

And when we survey the life and work of our divine Lord and Saviour, we see this truth reaching the very climax of its realization. See how he had to pass through the exhaustive suffering of the garden and the cross; how he sweat great drops of blood; how he drank the very dregs of that cup of intense suffering! He endured all this in order to secure for us and transmit to us the inestimable blessings of the gospel which we now enjoy. Oh, how Jesus toiled and suffered for us! And it was a willing sacrifice on his part. He preferred the garden of Gethsemane to the paradise of God; he preferred the cross of Calvary to the throne of heaven; and he preferred the scoffs and maledictions of a wicked and gainsaying world to the admiration and homage of the intelligent hosts in glory. For it was only in this way that he could secure for us the blessings of eternal life. These blessings come to us at infinite cost.

When we contemplate these priceless treasures which have come to us at such great cost and sacrifice; which have come to us through the death of our blessed Redeemer, and which have come to us through the lives and death of Christ's disciples, which are baptized with the blood of Jesus and the martyrs, we feel something like David did when the three brave men brought him water from the well by the gate of Bethlehem, having had to cut through the line of the Philistines in order to get the water to him. David was so impressed with the bravery of these men and the danger to which they had exposed themselves, that he would not drink the water which they brought, but he poured it forth unto the Lord. He said: "Be it far from me, O Lord, that I should do this! Shall I drink the blood of the men that went in jeopardy of their lives?" Even though he was so thirsty, this water was too sacred, and it came at too great a cost for him to drink it. It could be properly used only as an offering unto the Lord.

As we stand here to-day on this historic spot and contemplate the unnumbered and priceless blessings which have come to us as an heritage through the toils and tears, the sacrifices and sufferings of those who have lived and are now dead, may the Lord help us to appreciate properly these blessings, and at the same time, to realize fully our indebtedness to the past.

Our obligations to the future. The *past* is gone, and irreversibly fixed. The *future* is before us—it is yet to come. It is filled with grand and glorious possibilities. We are to be factors in the development of the future. The past has given us a sacred trust. We are the custodians of all the precious treasures of the past. We have all the accumulated wealth of all the ages that are

gone. What an awful responsibility! The future is dependent on us for the blessings which she is to possess and enjoy. Shall we meet our obligations to future generations by transmitting to them the blessings which have come to us from the past? Let us embalm these blessings in our good works and hand them down to those who are to come after us.

The future is, in a certain sense, the result of the past. We can assist in shaping the future. We have a certain control over the agencies and influences which have been put into operation in the past. As we touch these things which pass through our hands and lives, what kind of an impression will we make on them? Are we turning them into channels of influence and usefulness, and are we going to keep them there as long as we have any control over them?

We are the link between the past and the future. Let this be a *golden link*, binding together the good works of the past with the good works of the future. God forbid that we should break the continuity of good works!

In all probability, each one of us will strike a chord in somebody's life which will vibrate forever. In this connection, let me call your attention to the imperishable nature of a good deed. Every really good deed will last forever. Every noble thought, every kind word, every act of self denial for Christ's sake, record themselves in the sounding-board of eternity and never die away. Our work may be very imperfect in this world, and it may be very incomplete; but, if it is done in the name of Jesus, and for his sake, it will last forever and it will stand every test. Our good works are as imperishable as the everlasting truth. There is an element of im-

mortality in every noble thought and impulse, in every kind word and smile, and in every good deed and work. These thoughts and words and deeds are embalmed in the hearts and lives of those who come after us, and they are transmitted from one generation to another.

What shall the message of our lives be to those who are to come after us in the regular line of the world's history? Shall it be, "We transmit to you the sacred trust which we inherited from the past; we have cherished the inheritance and have been blest by it; we have used it for the glory of God and for the advancement of his kingdom; we give it to you intact, and may you ever be faithful to the trust?" God grant that this may be our message to future generations.

Go on then, Concord, with renewed strength and energy, on thy mission of love, to instruct, to strengthen and to comfort all who shall in the future make this their spiritual home. Having completed one hundred years of thy record on earth, be thou faithful to the end. Then Christ will confess and reward thee and all thy faithful sons and daughters before an assembled universe. The books will be opened and the roll will be called. The book of life will be opened and the roll of the sainted dead will be called. What profound silence and interest will prevail! No sound, except the voice of the angel who calls the roll, will be heard. He calls from the Lamb's Book of Life: Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Joshua, David, Daniel, Peter, James, Paul. Christ will say: "I confess them." Then the angel will come on down through the ages, calling the roll: Luther, Calvin, Melancthon, Knox, Wesley, Spurgeon. Doubtless Christ will say: "I confess them." Many names will be called which have been forgotten on earth.

How our hearts will be thrilled with interest when the angel comes to Concord's roll! The names of the pastors and the supplies will be called: Robert B. Walker, William G. Rosebro, Robert McCullough, James B. Stafford, John Douglass, James A. Wallace, James R. Gilland, William J. McCormick, G. W. Boggs, T. W. Ervin, T. M. Lowry, John C. McMullen, C. R. Hemphill, S. R. Hope, William G. Neville, Robert P. Smith, M. R. Kirkpatrick. God grant that we may hear the voice of Jesus saying, "I confess them."

Then the names of the elders will be called, some of whom are: George Miller, William Douglass, John Douglass, A. B. Douglass, W. W. Brice, J. E. Craig, J. M. Blain, W. B. Thompson, R. G. Miller, S. G. Miller, S. D. Patrick. May we hear the voice of Jesus saying, "I confess them."

Then the names of the deacons will be called, some of whom are: John A. Stewart, E. D. Mobley, George L. Kennedy, John C. Mackorel, Thomas W. Brice, Alexander Macdonald, J. N. Caldwell, J. H. Allen. May we hear the voice of Jesus saying, "I confess them."

Then the long list of private members will be called. Will Christ say, "I confess them?" May it be so!

MOSES' BETTER CHOICE.

"By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward."—Hebrews xi. 24-26.

THIS was a *turning point* in the life of Moses. Whether it marks the time of his regeneration and change of heart, or not, we are not able to say. He may have been a changed man before this. His heart may have been beating with loyalty to the principles of the true religion long before this. However this may be, we know that the present occasion was a *crisis* in the life of Moses. Just what occasioned this crisis, we cannot say. There was some event, however, or perhaps several events together, in the providence of God which brought Moses to a *public stand* for Christ and the truth. He may have been a secret disciple before this; but now his stand is known to all men. He has reached the point where he is forced to an *open* choice for the truth. And he seems to be glad to be able to make this choice.

This text furnishes us the theme for our discourse to-day.

MOSES' BETTER CHOICE.

What was this choice? The text says: "Choosing rather to suffer afflictions with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the

reward." Moses chose the religion of the only living and true God, rather than the religion of the heathen gods. He preferred to identify himself with the Israelites, the chosen people of God, rather than to identify himself with the Egyptians, the avowed enemies of God. He preferred to suffer affliction with the people of God, rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. He esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt. *Poverty, with Christ*, was far more desirable than *riches, without Christ*. Moses preferred to be reproached and scorned and calumniated as a disciple of Christ, rather than to be honored and promoted and made much of as a rejecter of Christ. The worship of Jehovah was far more enjoyable to Moses' heart, than the false and empty worship of heathen idolatry and the allurements and honors and pleasures of the world. Jesus Christ was to Moses the chiefest among ten thousand, and the one altogether lovely. He could truly say, "Whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none on earth that I desire besides thee."

This choice of Moses has been embodied in a beautiful hymn, which was written hundreds of years after Moses was carried to heaven. Although this hymn did not refer primarily to Moses' choice, yet he could have used it with peculiar force and appropriateness to express his own experience:

"Jesus, I my cross have taken,
 All to leave and follow thee;
 Naked, poor, despised, forsaken,
 Thou from hence my All shalt be:
 Let the world neglect and leave me;
 They have left my Saviour, too;
 Human hopes have oft deceived me;
 Thou art faithful, thou art true.

“ Perish, earthly fame and treasure,
Come, disaster, scorn and pain;
In thy service pain is pleasure;
With thy favor loss is gain;
O 'tis not in grief to harm me,
While thy bleeding love I see;
O 'tis not in joy to charm me,
When that love is hid from me.”

Let us consider now some of the essential elements of this choice.

I. *This choice of Moses was a deliberate choice.* It was made after thoughtful, prayerful, and mature deliberation. Before Moses made his choice, he had counted the cost—he had weighed the results in the balances of his enlightened judgment. He was not carried to his decision by any wave of spasmodic excitement. He did not allow any such pressure to make any impression on his heart and judgment. Moses reached his decision coolly and deliberately, with all the facts before him. In making this noble choice, he knew exactly what he was doing. He knew exactly what he had to give up, and he knew exactly what he had to endure. *The world*, with all of its honors, and pleasures, and riches, was presented to Moses in its best light; and *Christianity*, with its crosses and adversities, as well as its blessings and rewards, was also presented to him in its true light. After a thorough consideration, Moses freely and joyfully chose the gospel in preference to the world. The cross of Christ was far more desirable to Moses than Egypt's royal diadem. Moses did not espouse the cause of truth in a light and haphazard manner, as a great many seem to do; but his conclusion was reached after serious consideration and mature deliberation, with all the facts before him. He settled this question, not only in the light of *time*, but also in the light of *eternity*.

II. Again, *this choice of Moses was a decided choice.* It was a deliberate choice, and, therefore, it was a decided choice. There was a great deal of decision in the make-up of Moses' character. Whatever undertaking he went at, he was always so decided in the purpose of his heart that he was ready to stand by the right until death came. When Moses reached the choice that is expressed in our text, his decision was based upon conscientious convictions. And these conscientious convictions were based upon the everlasting truth of God. And not only this, but Moses knew in his own heart, that he was standing upon this immovable and everlasting foundation. When he chose to suffer affliction with God's people, rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season, he knew that he was right when he made this decision. I tell you, my friends, when a man knows that he is right, he also knows that he is standing on solid ground.

And not only this, but it is a man's *duty* to be decided and immovable in his conscientious and religious convictions. When he is standing upon God's truth, he ought to be persuaded that he is standing upon a foundation which can never be moved. If a man is not standing upon the truth, and knows that he is not standing upon the truth, how can he be firm and decided in the position which he is occupying? He may assume a kind of decision; but it is all assumption and not reality. A man to be firm and decided, must know in his own heart that he is right. Truth leads to conviction, and conviction leads to decision. The man who is walking conscientiously in the path of duty as marked out by the Word of God ought to be firm and steadfast in his convictions, because he is standing upon God's truth.

Now, Moses knew when he made the choice expressed in the text that he was walking in the path of duty and right, as marked out in the Word of God. He had the approbation, not only of his own conscience, but he also had the approbation of the God of truth and righteousness. Standing upon so firm a foundation, with such assurances as these, it is not surprising that Moses was so decided and immovable in this position. There he stood upon this foundation of truth, steadfast and immovable! All the strong temptations by which he was assailed could not allure him from the path of right and duty. He refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, thus relinquishing his good chances of ascending the royal throne of the Egyptian government, in order to take a decided stand among the people of God. Moses was after the truth; and when he found it, he was willing to die by it. If he had lived in apostolic times, what a grand record he would have made! If he had lived then, he certainly could have endorsed Paul when he said: "I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." There are some persons who are so vacillating in their religious views, that they are carried about by every wind that blows over the firmament of their Christian experience. Moses was not that kind of a man. The rains descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon the house of Moses' religious experience; and it fell not, for it was founded upon a rock.

III. Again, *this choice of Moses was a wise choice.* Doubtless there were a great many who thought that

Moses had gone crazy and ought to be sent to the insane asylum, when he refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, casting in his lot with the people of God, the despised Israelites. They could not understand how it was that a sensible man could refuse to encourage the bright prospects of wealth and power and honor which lay before him, especially when he was exchanging these prospects for prospects of poverty, and affliction, and reproach, at least so far as this world goes.

But Moses had made a wise choice. His decision was a wise one, not only from the fact that he chose to suffer affliction with the people of God, rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season, but also from the fact, that he refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter. Doubtless a great many would have advised him to continue his connection with the royal family. No doubt, this is the kind of advice the devil would have given him; and I expect he did give Moses this very advice and argued the case with him. By continuing his connection with the royal family, some would have said that Moses could, in this way, exert a good influence over them. They would maintain that Moses could be connected with the Egyptian government, and, at the same time, be identified with the people of God. But Moses had too much sense to be influenced by such sophistry as this, because he was guided by divine wisdom. The only safe thing for Moses to do was the very thing which he did, to sever himself completely from the Egyptian government. He could never have accomplished his great work, as the leader of God's people, if he had continued his connection with that government; because he would then have been so embarrassed by this connection that he would have been

nothing more than a mere figure-head as a leader of God's people. Moses did the wise thing when he refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter. A compromise, at this time, on the part of Moses, would have been fatal to his success in the work to which God had called him. There was a deep-seated hostility between the Egyptians and the Israelites; and the only wise thing for Moses to do in espousing the cause of the latter was to separate himself completely from the former. If more of our professing Christians would do like Moses, the church would be a great deal better off. The trouble with too many is that they have come *into the church* without having come *out of the world*. They are not refusing to be called the sons of Pharaoh's daughter.

I tell you, my beloved brethren, this policy of compromising with the world on the part of professing Christians, is drawing the very life-blood out of the church, and is chilling all of the efforts of God's people to extend the Redeemer's kingdom on the earth. The church needs to be completely severed from the world in her *membership*, in her *doctrine*, and in her *work*. The church of the present day needs more men like Moses, who deliberately refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter—that is, he refused to form any alliances with this world.

But when we take a broader view of Moses' choice, his wisdom in that choice becomes more conspicuous. There are two phrases in the text which throw great light on the choice of Moses in giving us his reasons for making this choice; and they also exhibit to us the great wisdom of Moses in making the choice he did. These phrases are: 1. "Esteeming the reproach of Christ

greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; and 2. "For he had respect unto the recompense of the reward."

By the power of faith, Moses was enabled to put a very different estimate upon many things from what he did when he was guided solely by his carnal mind, and human heart, and natural reason. Faith illumined his darkened understanding, and he was thus enabled to see things very differently from what he had once seen them. Faith changes our views of *self*, of *sin*, and of *God*; because faith changes *us*, so that we can see these things as they really are. Faith so changes us that we love the things that we once hated, and we despise the things we once loved.

As some one has said: "Faith is the great unveiler. It takes off the mask, or veil, or covering from every object, and shows them to us as they are. There are two kinds of veils or masks on everything here—*bright* and *dark*. The former hides deformity, and makes objects appear fairer than they are; the latter hides beauty, and makes objects appear uncomely. Faith removes both of these. It takes off the bright veil, (1) *from earthly pleasure*; (2) *from worldly riches*; (3) *from human learning*; (4) *from royal glory*. It shows the dark interior—the hollowness of all these. It does not misrepresent them or belie them, but simply removes the unreal attractions which deceived and misled us. It does not under-estimate, yet it does not over-estimate. It takes off the dark veil, (1) *from Christ*, and shows him to us as altogether lovely; (2) *from holiness*, and shows us what a blessed thing it is to be holy; (3) *from the kingdom to come*, and shows what a recompense of reward it is; (4) *from the church of God*, showing us what a glory belongs to her, though it doth not yet ap-

pear what she shall be; (5) *from reproach and affliction*, showing how good it is to be afflicted, how honorable to be reproached for Christ, and as he was."

Faith did all this for Moses, as it will do for every child of God. Being thus enlightened by faith, Moses could see the vanity and emptiness of all earthly things when compared to things that are heavenly and divine. Thus he could cheerfully exchange *the crown of Egypt for the cross of Christ*, and *the pleasures of sin for the afflictions of God's people*, and *the applause of men for the reproach of Christ*. "For he had respect unto the recompense of the reward."

"Tis by the faith of joys to come,
We walk through deserts dark as night,
Till we arrive at heaven, our home,
Faith is our guide, and faith our light.

"The want of sight she well supplies;
She makes the pearly gates appear;
Far into distant worlds she pries,
And brings eternal glories near."

"For he had respect unto the recompense of the reward." Ah, my hearers, Moses knows a great deal more about that glorious reward now than he ever could on earth. He can realize now, as he never could while in this world, that the decision which he made in "choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season," was the wisest decision he ever made in his life. What does Moses care about *the crown of Egyptian royalty* now, since he has upon his brow *a fadeless crown of eternal life*? What does he care about *the riches of earth* now, since he has come into actual possession of

the unlimited wealth of heaven? What does he care about *the pleasures of sin now*, since he is experiencing *the infinite joys of glory and of God?* "By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward."

In conclusion, let me ask you, my hearer, if you have made the wise choice which Moses made?

If so, let me encourage you to be firm and decided in this choice. Remember that you are standing upon solid ground. If Christ is secure, then you are secure. If you are a disciple of Christ, then you are a member of his body; and, if you are destroyed, then a member of Christ's body is destroyed, and that body becomes mutilated, which is absurd.

But if you have not made Christ your choice, let me urge you to do so to-day. If you continue to reject him, then the time is coming when he will reject you. You may not see the necessity of attending to this matter now. It is very likely that you are over-rating the things of this world and under-rating the things of the heavenly world. The truth of God with its stupendous realities seems to make no impression upon your heart and life. It will not always be this way.

"Not so your eyes will always view
Those objects which you now pursue;
Not so will heaven and hell appear,
When death's decisive hour is near."

CHRISTIAN GIVING.

"I have shewed you all things, how that so laboring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive."—Acts xx. 35.

"Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come."—1 Cor. xvi. 1-2.

"But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully, shall reap also bountifully. Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver."—2 Cor. ix. 6-7.

THERE are some, even in the church of God, who do not like to hear the subject of Christian Giving discussed in the pulpit. In the majority of cases, the reason of this is, they are not doing their duty in the matter. They have quieted their consciences, and they do not like to have them disturbed. They are holding back that which belongs to God, appropriating it to themselves; and consequently they do not enjoy themselves, while the enormity of their sin is being portrayed in the pulpit.

Now, it is the duty of the gospel minister to declare the whole counsel of God, regardless of the opinion and criticisms of men. He has no option in the matter. He comes as an ambassador from the court of heaven to declare the message which the king has given him. This message is found in the Word of God. And, if he fails to declare this message in its completeness, he stands

condemned before the court of heaven. There are a great many truths in the Word of God which are obnoxious to many people. The ambassador of Christ who conforms his preaching to the desire of these people in this matter, proves himself to be a coward, and he degrades the sacred office of the gospel ministry.

I desire to bring to your attention to-day the subject of *Christian Giving*.

1. *The duty of Christian Giving.* It is not left optional with man whether he shall give or not. If the Word of God is clear on any point, it must be on this. From beginning to end, these Holy Scriptures tell us in unmistakable language that we are duty-bound to give a certain portion of our income towards the support and promulgation of the true religion in the world. And, if any one comes to any other conclusion in regard to what his duty is in this matter, it is because he is so selfish and so circumscribed by the love of money, that he does not want to know his duty. God calls upon us to give of our substance towards the upbuilding of his kingdom in this world; and, if we disregard this call, the consequences must rest upon our own heads. A certain portion of our income belongs to God; and if we neglect to give him that which is his, we are guilty of breaking the Eighth Commandment. We are guilty of stealing, just as much so, as if we were to go in the midnight hours and break open one of those stores and appropriate for our own use that which did not belong to us. I tell you, my friends, we are committing an awful sin when we appropriate for our own use that which belongs to God. "*Will a man rob God?*" Yes, there are thousands of them who are doing this very thing. My friends, let us examine our accounts with

God and let us see whether we are paying him the debts which we justly owe him. When we refuse to give God that which really belongs to him and that which he demands of us, we are exposing our souls to great danger. It is a fearful thing for a man to keep for his own use that which God demands of him for his use. Let us be careful how we trifle with this solemn obligation. It will be far better for us to give *more* than God demands of us than less.

And let us bear in mind that the duty of Christian Giving rests upon each one of us, it matters not how poor we may be. There is no one who is so poor that he cannot give something, and there is no one who is so poor that God does not demand anything of him. I tell you, my friends, we cannot afford to cut ourselves out of the blessings which flow from Christian giving; and this is what we are doing when we refuse or neglect to give that which God demands of us. Each one of us can give something, it matters not how poor we may be. Yea, each one of us can give what God demands of us; for he does not demand of us impossibilities. In this connection, let me call your attention to the case of a certain poor widow recorded in the twelfth chapter of Mark. The record says: "And Jesus sat over against the treasury, and beheld how the people cast money into the treasury: and many that were rich cast in much. And there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two mites—(four mills, not quite half a cent)—which makes a farthing. And he called unto him his disciples and saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That this poor widow hath cast more in than all they which have cast into the treasury. For all they did cast in of their abundance: but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living."

Every person is duty bound to give something to the cause of Christ and religion. This is a duty which God requires of us, and we cannot evade the issues which are involved in this solemn duty, without sinning against God.

2. Let us look for a moment or two at the *privilege of Christian Giving*. It is not only a duty, but also a privilege. How few people there are in the church even who consider giving to the cause of Christ a *privilege*? If they considered it a privilege, which it is, it would not be like drawing their eye teeth to get money from them for the cause of Christ. Do you tell me that a person considers it a privilege to give to the cause of Christ when you have to go to that person time and again to get the smallest pittance from him? Do you tell me that members of the church consider giving to the cause of Christ a privilege when they hold their money with the miser's grip and give what little they do give under protest? There are too many of us who have contemptible views on this subject, and I am afraid our practices are more contemptible. We are not living up to our privileges in the matter of Christian giving. Thank God, there are some in the church who consider it a privilege to give to the cause of Christ. Why, my brethren, just consider what a privilege it is! By performing this duty, we are made co-workers with God in the salvation of immortal souls. The money that we give brings glory and honor to the blessed name of our King and Saviour. The money that we give is instrumental in lifting our fellowmen out of the depths of sin, and misery, and degradation. Is it not a great privilege to engage in such a glorious work as this? God is not dependent upon our contributions to accomplish

his purposes in this world, but we must ever bear in mind that this is his ordained method; and we must also bear in mind what a privilege he affords us in this method.

Brethren, let us live up to our privileges in this matter. If we are not afforded an opportunity of giving to the cause of Christ, let us seek an opportunity. This is a privilege which we ought to appreciate. We ought to thank God that we are permitted, in his providence, to assist in the establishment of his kingdom on earth by our contributions. How few of us realize that it is more blessed to give than to receive! And, yet, that is what the Word of God has to say about the matter.

3. Again, let us consider the *way* in which we should give.

We should give *cheerfully*, that is, *willingly*. One of the texts says: "God loveth a *cheerful* giver." Unless our contributions come from a willing heart, we need not expect them to result in any blessings upon our souls. A contribution that is given with reluctance is an abomination in the sight of God. How can we expect such a contribution to meet with God's approval? We must not give grudgingly, or reluctantly, but, we must give cheerfully from the heart, if we expect our contributions to result in blessings upon our souls. There is no contribution acceptable in the sight of God unless the heart goes with that contribution. And, my friends, if your hearts do not go with your contributions, if you give those contributions reluctantly, you need never expect to hear from them again as far as any blessings may be sent upon your souls are concerned. I tell you, money that has to be drawn out of men's pockets against their wills and against their hearts, is not worth a row of

pins to the ones who give it. Paul says: "Though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing."

Dr. Strong says: "O that men would accept the testimony of Christ touching the blessedness of giving! He who *sacrifices* most, *loves* most; and he who loves most is most blessed. *Love and sacrifice* are related to each other like *seed and fruit*; each produces the other. The *seed of sacrifice* brings forth the *fragrant fruit of love*, and love always has in its heart the seeds of new sacrifice. He who gives but a part is not made perfect in love. Love rejoices to give all; it does not measure its sacrifice. It was *Judas*, not *Mary*, who calculated the value of the alabaster box of ointment. He who is infinitely blessed is the infinite Giver; and man, made in his image, was intended to find his highest blessedness in the completest self-giving. He who *receives*, but does not *give*, is like the *Dead Sea*. All the fresh floods of Jordan cannot sweeten its dead, salt depths. So all the streams of God's bounty cannot sweeten a heart that has no outlet; is ever receiving, yet never full and overflowing.

"If those whose horizon is as narrow as the bushel under which they hide their light, could be induced to come out into a large place and take a worthy view of the kingdom of Christ and of their relations to it; if they could be persuaded to make the principle of Christian giving regnant in their life, their *happiness* would be increased as much as their *usefulness*."

Again, we are required by the Word of God to give *statedly*. Paul, in addressing the Corinthian Christians, says: "Now concerning the collection for the saints, as

I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come." Here, the Corinthian Christians were required to give their contributions every week, on the Lord's day.

Unless we have some system and regularity about our giving, it won't amount to much. It may not be altogether convenient to practice the rule laid down by the apostle; but, if we expect to make our giving a success, we must have some rule and system about it. If there is no regularity about our giving, we will be very apt to cheat the Lord. Those churches that have practiced system in their giving have been blessed in a wonderful manner by the great Head of the church. And just so has it been in regard to individual persons. We must be regular and systematic in our giving, if we ever expect to reach a high standard in this Christian grace. We ought to make an effort to give a contribution to the cause of Christ on every Lord's day.

In advocating the plan of systematic giving to the Lord's cause, A. J. Gordon, D. D., of Boston, Mass., relates the following incident of a man who, in his later years, was famous for his munificence.

Many years ago a lad of sixteen years left home to seek his fortune. As he trudged along, he met an old neighbor, the captain of a canal-boat, and the following conversation took place, which changed the current of the boy's life:

"Well, William, where are you going?"

"I don't know," he answered; "father is too poor to keep me at home any longer, and says I must now make a living for myself."

"There's no trouble about that," said the captain. "Be sure you start right, and you'll get along finely."

William told his friend that the only trade he knew anything about was soap and candle making, at which he had helped his father at home.

"Well," said the old man, "let me pray with you once more, and give you a little advice, and then I will let you go."

They both kneeled down upon the tow-path; the dear old man prayed earnestly for William, and then gave this advice: "Some one will soon be the leading soap-maker in New York. It can be you as well as anyone. I hope it may. Be a good man; give your heart to Christ; give the Lord all that belongs to him of every dollar you earn; make an honest soap; give a full pound, and I am certain you will yet be a prosperous and rich man."

When the boy arrived in the city, he found it hard to get work. Lonesome and far from home, he remembered his mother's words and the last words of the canal-boat captain. He was then led to "seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness," and united with the church. He remembered his promise to the old captain, and the first dollar he earned brought up the question of the Lord's part. In the Bible, he found that the Jews were commanded to give one-tenth; so he said, "If the Lord will take one-tenth, I will give that." And so he did; and ten cents of every dollar were sacred to the Lord.

Having regular employment, he soon became a partner, and after a few years his partner died, and William became the owner of the business.

He now resolved to keep his promise to the old cap-

tain; he made an honest soap; gave a full pound, and instructed his book-keeper to open an account with the Lord, and carry one-tenth of all his income to that account. He prospered; his business grew; his family was blessed; his soap sold; and he grew rich faster than he had ever hoped. He then gave the Lord two-tenths, and prospered more than ever; then he gave three tenths, then four-tenths, then five-tenths.

He educated his family, settled all his plans for life, and gave all his income to the Lord. He prospered more than ever.

This is the story of Mr. William Colgate, who has given millions of dollars to the Lord's cause, and left a name that will never die.

Again, we must give *without ostentation*. Paul says: "He that giveth, let him do it with simplicity." Our Saviour says: "Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father, which is in heaven." There are a great many who are governed in their contributions by the contributions of others. We ought never to be governed by such a standard as this. Our obligations to God do not go up to him through our fellowmen. We are bound to give so much of our income to God, irrespective of what our fellowmen give. They may not give what they ought to give. We cannot justify our failure to do what is our duty in this matter by the failure of others. We ought to bear in mind that we are not to be judged by our fellowmen—God is to be our Judge. And he is perfectly competent to be our Judge; for he is altogether acquainted with us and with our condition. He knows the rule by which we are governed in our contributions, and he knows the motives

which prompt us in these contributions. It is simply impossible for us to deceive God. He knows whether we are giving with a pure motive or not. He knows whether we are giving to be seen of our fellowmen or not. If we desire the blessing of God upon our giving, we must make our contributions without ostentation.

4. Let us notice *the rewards of Christian giving*. Christian giving is like prayer, it has a two-fold blessing: the contribution not only blesses the person to whom the contribution is made, but it also blesses the person who makes it. And our Saviour says: "It is *more* blessed to give than to receive." The blessing for the *giver* is greater than the blessing for the recipient. This may appear to be strange doctrine to some; but nevertheless, it is true. God says in his Word: "There is that scattereth and yet increaseth; there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty. The liberal soul shall be made fat, and he that watereth shall be watered also himself."

The blessings which come to those who engage in liberal giving are *direct* and *indirect*.

Let us notice the *indirect* blessings. If a man cultivates the grace of Christian giving and grows in the grace, he is sure to feel the power of this grace in his heart and in his Christian experience. The man who makes his contributions to the Lord's cause with a cheerful heart and with pure motives feels that he is blessed by the very act of giving. Giving with such a heart and with such motives has, from the very nature of the case, a refining influence upon the soul. The man who participates in this Christian grace with an enlightened mind has the consciousness that he is doing good to his fellowmen, and that he is performing a duty which God

requires of him. This is certainly a great reward to the man who gives as he is directed by the Word of God. The man who gives according to his means, with a cheerful heart and with Scriptural motives, has a record in this matter of which he may be proud, because he has a conscience void of offence before God.

Then there are the *direct* blessings which are bestowed upon the person who practices this Christian grace. The Word of God is pledged in regard to the promises which it makes concerning the blessings that are to be bestowed directly upon the person who participates in the grace of Christian giving. Just as sure as God is true, there are liberal blessings in store for the person who contributes of his substance towards the support of true religion in the world. The person who gives God that which really belongs to him, is going to get back a great deal more than he gives. Why, Christ tells us that even a cup of cold water given in the name of a disciple shall in no wise lose its reward. Just listen here what glorious promises God makes to the liberal-hearted giver. "Honor the Lord with thy substance, and with the first fruits of all thine increase: so shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine." Again, God says, Give, and it shall be given unto you—good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure you mete withal it shall be measured to you again." Then again, God says: "Every man as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loveth a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work."

Now, my friends, let us bear in mind that these are the very words of God and that they are just as sure to be fulfilled as God sits upon the throne. God's Word is absolutely true, and that Word is going to be verified beyond the shadow of a doubt. Now, my hearers, let me ask you this question: *Where are the rewards promised to those who refuse to honor the Lord with their substance?* Ransack these Holy Scriptures from beginning to end, and point me to a single blessing, if you can, that is promised to the person who refuses to make any contribution for the support and extension of Christ's kingdom in this world.

A great many debate in their minds the question whether they can afford to give to the cause of Christ, when the question ought to be, whether they can afford *not* to give. I tell you, my friend, you are cheating your soul out of blessings and rewards which that soul needs, when you refuse, or neglect, to give to the Lord's cause. If you desire to receive a rich reward from the hand of our God and King, it will be well for you to return unto God that which belongs to him and that which he demands of you. If you ignore God's claims upon you while in this world, you have no right to expect a reward from him in the world to come. The question is not whether we shall reach heaven *by* our contributions; but the question is whether we can reach heaven *without* these contributions. Let us ask God to enlighten our minds and our hearts and our consciences on this great subject. Let us ask God to give us the grace and the Christian liberality to perform our duty after it has been revealed to us. May God bless us and give us more of the Spirit of Christ, who, though he was rich, yet, for our sakes, he became poor, that we, through his poverty, might be rich.

BURDEN BEARING.

"For every man shall bear his own burden."—Gal. vi. 5.

"Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ."—Gal. vi. 2.

"Cast thy burden on the Lord and he shall sustain thee."—Psalm lv. 22.

IN THESE passages of Scripture, there seems to be a contradiction; it is said, in the first passage, that every man shall bear his own burden; in the second passage, we are commanded to bear one another's burdens; and, in the third passage, we are commanded to cast our burdens upon the Lord.

If we will carefully consider these Scriptures, we will clearly see that there is no real contradiction here. The Bible is everywhere consistent with itself. There is a beautiful and perfect harmony running through the whole book. If we will only follow the rules and laws of interpretation, which are just and right, when we are trying to find out the meaning of God's Word, we will always see that there is a perfect consistency in this book from beginning to end. Truth is necessarily consistent with itself. The Bible is truth; and, therefore, the Bible cannot contradict itself. And, if we will carefully consider these passages of Scriptures which *seem* to contradict each other, we will find out, that, instead of contradicting each other, they establish and confirm the truth of each other in a remarkable manner.

In giving an interpretation to such passages as we have before us to-day, which seem to contradict each

other, we must take a survey of the whole scope of Scripture and carefully analyze the meaning of each word in its own place. Scripture must be interpreted by Scripture. The only infallible commentary of the Bible is the Bible itself. The meaning of a word is not always the same in every connection. The word, *burden*, for example, in its scope of meaning, does not necessarily include the same things in each of the passages which we have before us; and there are different ways of *bearing* this burden, each passage giving a way peculiar to itself. There is a sense in which every man must bear his own burden; there is also a sense in which we are bound to bear the burdens of others; and there is a sense in which our burdens are borne by the Lord.

Let us notice each of these passages.

I. "*For every man shall bear his own burden.*" I shall notice three or four senses in which this Scripture is true:

1. *Every one must bear the burden of personal responsibility.* This is a burden which rests alike upon every son and every daughter of the human family. It is simply impossible for us to avoid, or escape, the issues of this momentous question. Our friends may take our places in some things; but we must stand for *ourselves*, as far as the issues of this question are concerned. We are personally responsible to God for what we *are* and for what we *have done*, it matters not through what agents and processes our characters and lives have been formed. It is true, there may be a responsibility resting upon others in this matter; but this does not relieve us. There may be a double responsibility in the matter. For example, the great sin committed by our first parents was the cause of all the innumerable sins committed by

their posterity; and, no doubt, they were, in some sense, responsible for all of these sins. Yet, this does not, in the least, relieve mankind. There is a *personal* responsibility resting upon the shoulders of every one, which he cannot possibly throw off. Every man has a *character* of his own, and he is personally responsible to God for this character; every man has a *life* of his own, and he is personally responsible to God for this life. Every person must stand before the judgment bar of God, in his own individuality, and must pass through the trying and searching ordeal of the judgment day for himself. There is no possible escape from the stupendous issues that are involved in personal responsibility. The sins of other men will afford no palliation for our sins. We cannot hide ourselves under the crimes and iniquities of other people. Every person must stand the test for himself. Every person stands before God in his own individuality and personality. He always preserves his own identity and is always subjected to the searching omniscience of God. "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ: that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." And our own consciousness corroborates the Scriptural testimony to our personal responsibility. Every man feels and knows that he is personally responsible to God for what he is in his conduct and in his character. He may try to throw this burden off; but all of his efforts will be in vain. This is a burden which every man must bear for himself. "For every man shall bear his own burden."

2. Again, *There is the burden of certain moral obligations which must be borne by every person for himself.* There are certain laws of God which are binding upon

all men, in all places and at all times. This is only a different phase of the burden which we have just been considering, as it gives the scope and extent of our responsibility to God. Every person is a citizen in the moral kingdom of God, and he is bound to obey the laws of this kingdom. The very idea of responsibility implies that there are laws and regulations to be observed and followed. There is, therefore, a moral obligation resting upon every responsible being to keep the law of God. Every person belongs to God by every principle of justice and righteousness. Therefore, God has the right to put us under law; he has the prerogative to say what laws he shall put us under; and then he has the authority to demand of us a complete observance of these laws. Every man is duty-bound, from every consideration, to obey God. The disciple of Christ is no more obligated to obey the commands of God than the man who makes no professions of Christianity, as far as duty is concerned. We may refuse to obey the commands of God; yea, we may go exactly contrary to these commands; we may ignore God's authority to reign over us; but the obligations are still resting upon us. There is no possible chance of getting out from under these obligations. A refusal to perform the duties growing out of them must necessarily be followed with the infliction of sufficient punishment. God not only has the right to command us, but he does command us; and we are duty-bound to obey all of his commands. Every responsible being is solemnly obligated to obey every command of God. We cannot get around this, without uprooting the very principles upon which the moral government of God is founded; yea, we cannot do this without destroying our own consciousness and

the fundamental beliefs of our nature. Every man knows that the commandments of God are right; and every man knows that there is a solemn obligation resting upon him to obey these commandments. This is a burden which rests upon every man, and it cannot be thrown off. "For every man shall bear his own burden."

3. Again, There is the burden of personal work, which must be borne by every one for himself. *God has given to every person a special work to do in this world, and he is going to hold each one responsible for the proper performance of this work.* It is *your* work, and God has placed the duty of performing this work upon *you*, and not upon another. This work cannot be done by another, because each one has his own work to do. Another person cannot do your work without neglecting his own. In this matter of personal work, every man must bear his own burden. God has sent each one of us into this world upon a certain mission; and each person is duty-bound to accomplish the end of his mission. This is a burden which you must bear for yourself. You can't throw it off. You may run away from your *work*; but you can't run away from the *responsibility* to do this work. You may shirk your *work*; but you can't shirk your *duty*. "For every man shall bear his own burden."

4. Again, *God in his all-wise providence, has placed another burden upon each one of us in this life—the burden of affliction.* Every one has his own peculiar thorn in the flesh. The object of this burden, as far as the Christian is concerned, is to chastise and purify the person upon whom it is placed. And, to accomplish the end in view, the burden must be borne by the person himself. "For whom the Lord loveth, he chasteneth, and

scourgeth every son whom he receiveth." Every person has a cross of his own, a cross which has been placed upon him by the hand of God; and he must bear that cross himself, if he would be true to the cause of Christ and true to his own spiritual welfare. There is great happiness in this kind of burden-bearing. The happiness may not come at first; but it is sure to come by and by, and by the grace of God. "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." Every burden which God places upon us is for our real good. He knows exactly what it will take to bring us into complete sympathy with himself. When God places these burdens of affliction upon us, it is our duty to bear them with a spirit of perfect resignation to the will of God. He not only *knows* what is best; but he *does* what is best. Then, let us bear in mind that God never places a burden upon us, without, at the same time, giving us grace and strength to bear it. Every burden comes from a Father's hand, and with every burden comes a Father's strength, a Father's love, a Father's encouragement. When we think we are going to be crushed beneath the heavy burden which is resting upon us, then God places his everlasting arms beneath us and holds us up. It matters not how heavy the burden may be which the Lord places upon us, he will enable us to bear it. He says to each one of his children: "My grace is sufficient for thee."

"When through fiery trials thy pathway shall lie,
My grace all-sufficient shall be thy supply:
The flames shall not hurt thee; I only design
Thy dross to consume, and thy gold to refine."

II. Let us look at the second passage, which says: "*Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.*" It is our Christian duty to do all we can to help others to bear their burdens. This is the law of Christ; and we are bound to keep this law. The very object of Christ's mission into this world was to remove the heavy burdens which were resting upon the people and to make them more happy. He says to a burden-bearing world: "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." When he was upon earth, he went about everywhere doing good, removing people's burdens and filling their hearts with gladness and contentment. This was the very law of his life, the invariable rule of his conduct. As disciples of Christ, it is our duty to follow his example in this matter. "*Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.*" Every Christian is bound, by the very laws of Christianity, to lend a helping hand to every other Christian. We cannot be the disciples of Christ, unless we do bear one another's burdens. It is true, there are some burdens resting upon our brethren which we cannot bear for them; but we can help them to bear all of their burdens, and it is our Christian duty to do this.

How can we bear one another's burdens?

I. *By sympathy.* There is a chord which binds all the disciples of Christ together into the most intimate relationships; it is the chord of sympathy. Without this sympathy one for another, we cannot possibly fulfill the law of Christ. Oh! what a power there is in sympathy to make our burdens light and to strengthen our hearts! Sometimes we would be crushed to the ground by the heavy burdens which are resting upon us, if our friends

did not help us to bear these burdens by their deep and genuine sympathy. When you know that your friends enter into your sorrows and disappointments, making these sorrows and disappointments, in a certain sense, their own, then you can feel the power of this sympathy, both in making your burdens lighter and in strengthening your heart to bear them. But when you feel that you are without the sympathy of those around you, when you can feel nothing but the cold and lifeless touch of humanity, then your burdens are almost intolerable, and you are almost ready to give up in despair. Brethren, there is too little sympathy, one for another, among the disciples of Christ. We don't enter into each other's sorrows and disappointments as we should do. Oftentimes we are so indifferent to the trials and misfortunes of our brethren apparently that it is hard to tell whether there is any sympathy in our hearts at all, or not. We seem to be so cold and lifeless. I tell you, this is not the law of Christ; this is not the spirit of the gospel. The law of Christ requires us to weep with those that weep, and to rejoice with those that rejoice. If we would bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ, there must be a common feeling, a bond of sympathy between us. Oh! what a bright and cheerful world this would be, compared to what it now is, if every heart was full of sympathy for every other heart that needs sympathy! "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ."

2. Again, *We can bear one another's burdens by encouragement.* Sometimes a brother is almost ready to give up in despair, when he confronts the trials and disappointments to which he is subjected in this life. What that brother needs is the hearty encouragement of those

around him. It is frequently the case that a man enters upon a grand and noble work, but, for lack of proper encouragement, he abandons his work and gives up in despair. How many young men have failed in life, simply because no one has given them any words of encouragement! There is entirely too much selfishness even in the church. We are not interested, as we should be, in the welfare and success of each other. Instead of making each other's burdens lighter, we oftentimes increase the weight of these burdens; if in no other way, simply by failing to show an interest in each other's welfare. If we would fulfil the law of Christ, we must show our friends and brethren that we appreciate their trials and difficulties. We must take them by the hand and try to lead them through these trials and difficulties. We must give them words of encouragement. By doing this, we will be bearing their burdens for them. We cannot tell how much good may be accomplished by a few words of encouragement addressed to a person who is laboring under the weight of some heavy burden.

Only a word; but it put new life
Within a drooping heart;
It nerved afresh the hand for the strife;
And healed the spirit's smart.

—Samuel Allen Harlow.

Sometimes a brother has to live and struggle under some peculiar and trying temptation. Everywhere he goes, this temptation meets him face to face. We do not know what that man has to contend with. We may be ready to condemn him, if he yields to the strong temptation; when he is victorious a great deal oftener perhaps than we would be, if we had to pass through

the same conflicts through which he has to pass. When that brother is overtaken in his sin, it is our duty to go to him as a brother and give him all the words of encouragement we can. It is our duty to be as indulgent to his infirmities and weaknesses as we can, consistently with truth and righteousness. Paul says: "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual restore such an one in the spirit of meekness: considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ." If we had more words of *encouragement* for each other and fewer words of *harsh judgment* we would get along a great deal better.

"Teach me to feel another's woe,
To hide the fault I see;
The mercy I to others show,
That mercy show to me."

Of course, we must not justify sin in each other; but we must try in every possible way to assist one another to gain a complete victory over sin. We must speak words of encouragement to each other. These words can often be given in the form of *advice*. It is our duty to advise our brethren and warn them against the dangers to which they are exposed. And, if we will live consistently with our Christian profession, our brethren will be glad to receive this advice. We must go to them in a Christian spirit, in the spirit of meekness, in the spirit of love, assuring them of our deep interest in their welfare. Oftentimes we need each other's advice and we want this advice. Sometimes we do not know what to do, nor how to do. Under such circumstances as words of advice from a friend in whom we have confidence would be words of encouragement indeed, and

would help us out of the difficulty. Let us, therefore, resolve that, by the grace of God, we will try to encourage one another under the various ills and disappointments of life, lending each a helping hand to another. Let us bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.

III. Let us consider briefly the remaining passage, which says: "*Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee.*" When all others fail to help us and to give us relief, then God comes to our rescue.

When are we warranted in casting our burden upon the Lord?

1. *When we have done everything we can do.* God is willing to help those who help themselves. When we have done all that we can, and find that our burden is too heavy for us, then we are encouraged to cast this burden upon the Lord. But, if we sit down and fold our arms, refusing to use the means which God has given us, it is presumption in us to cast our burden upon the Lord. If we are willing to do our part, God is more than willing to do his part. But, if we are not willing to do what we can, then we do not deserve to be helped. The psalmist says: "Offer the sacrifices of righteousness, and put your trust in the Lord." After we have done what we can, then we are to leave the rest with God.

2. *Again, We can cast our burden upon the Lord, if we are putting our trust in him.* If we have accepted him as our Father, then we have a right to cast our cares upon him. Yea, we are *commanded* to do this, if we are his children. But the man who ignores God's authority over him and refuses to become his child, has no right whatever to cast his burden upon the Lord. It is the person who puts his trust and confidence in God that is commanded to cast his burden upon the Lord.

And he is commanded to do this at all times. When the billows of adversity are rolling over him and threatening to overwhelm him, then he is directed to cast his burden upon the Lord. In times of great weakness and severe trials, the Christian is directed to cast his burden upon the Lord. God promises to sustain him by his almighty grace. While God does not always remove our burdens, or even bear them for us—what is far better, *he bears us*. We can throw *ourselves* upon the Lord with the assurance that he will bear us up. “Cast thy burden upon the Lord and *he shall sustain thee.*” Our burdens may be still resting upon us in this life; but, if we are Christians, *we ourselves* are resting upon the Lord. It matters not, therefore, how heavy our burdens may be, they can never crush us, since we have beneath us the everlasting arms of God to hold us up.

What burdens can we cast upon the Lord?

1. *The burden of sin.* This is a burden which rests upon every member of the human race; because we are all sinners. The Lord Jesus Christ came into this world to be our Saviour and to take away our sin. He is the great sin-bearer. He has become the substitute of the sinner in the sight of the law; and he who puts his trust in Christ, or accepts him as his Saviour, is freed from the curse of the law and delivered from the power of sin. We cast our sin upon Christ and he places his righteousness upon us. “Cast thy burden upon the Lord.” Yea, this precious command is so extensive in its sweep that it includes all of our liabilities as sinners; he assumes all of our legal responsibilities.

“I lay my sins on Jesus,
The spotless Lamb of God;
He bears them all and frees us
From the accursed load.”

2. Again, *We are to cast the burden of our sorrows upon the Lord.* If we are the children of God, then we can bring our cares, and our sorrows, and our trials, and we can cast them all upon the Lord. God has promised in Christ a Saviour that can and does sympathize with us in all of our sorrows. He goes down into the very depths of our hearts and he makes our sorrows his sorrows. When we are sorely tried, if we would find relief, we must go to the Saviour and cast our burden upon him. He will sustain us.

In conclusion, let me ask you, my hearer, what is your experience in burden-bearing? Are you bearing the burdens which have been placed upon you, in the providence of God, with the resignation and fortitude which should characterize all those who are under the authority of God? This is your duty, and until you perform this duty, you can never be a happy person.

Again, Are you helping others to bear their burdens? Are you fulfilling the law of Christ by making life easier and happier for others? If you would cheer the hearts of others and do a great deal of good, you must help those by whom you are surrounded to bear their burdens.

Finally, have you ever cast any of your burdens upon the Lord? Have you ever tried him as a burden-bearer? If so, you know what a relief it is, and how much happiness there is to be derived from doing so. But, if not, you are standing in the way of your own happiness. Let me beseech you to try the Lord as a burden-bearer. Your sin will carry you down to the bottomless pit, if it still rests upon you. Cast your burden of sin upon the Lord and he will sustain you. Christ came into the world to bear the sinner's sin. If you continue in the attempt to carry that sin, it will crush you and finally destroy you.

Cast your sin and all the troubles and sorrows which come from that sin upon the Lord: then you will experience and enjoy a rest which is sweet and gratifying, a rest which the world can neither give nor take away.

RIGHT KIND OF IDEAL IN LIFE.

"Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."—Phil. iii. 13-14.

WE ARE inclined to look upon an ideal as something visionary, which exists only in the imagination and lies outside of the possible. This is a great mistake. The right kind of an ideal, such as Paul had in his mind, is something which can be made real in the life.

It is the duty of every one, and especially of every young person, to have an ideal, or a purpose, in life, that can be made real. The advantages of such an ideal are simply beyond computation.

Here are two boys starting in life. They have the same natural ability; they have equal opportunities. One has a purpose, or an ideal, in life. The life of the other is purposeless. Watch the course of these boys. See how their paths in life diverge. The course of one leads on surely, naturally and inevitably to success. Every step which he takes enables him to take another and a longer step towards success. The path of the other leads in the opposite direction. His resources are wasted; his talents are misapplied. He has before him no definite purpose in life, no formulated plans. He goes on in a haphazard kind of way, borne on by the resistless hand of time, yea, by the inexorable decree of an immutable law, to failure.

Why this difference? The answer is, one has a purpose in life, while the other has not. One has an ideal before him, and applies his energies and resources in the direction of making this ideal real in his life; while the other has had no ideal before him, and, consequently, has wasted his energies and resources.

Thus we see the great difference between a purposeful life and a purposeless life.

Life, to a very great extent, is what we make it. As a rule, and in an important sense; "Every man is the architect of his own fortune." There is not so much difference among men as to intellect and opportunities. But there is a vast difference in the way in which these things are used; and, consequently, there is a conspicuous and striking inequality in their lives. There is no royal path to success: the way is open to all. Success depends on the man; and the purpose which he has in his heart is the man. The ideal which he has before him becomes a part of his very being, and is not only inseparably connected with his own identity, but actually shapes his very destiny. In fact, the ideal is the real man. Just as the tree is in the acorn. The tree is the acorn's ideal. The tree is wrapped up in the acorn; and all of the latent and inherent energies of the acorn are developed in order that it may reach its ideal. The tree is the acorn's destiny; it is the purpose which the acorn has in its very being; and, therefore, the tree is the natural, legitimate and inevitable outgrowth of the acorn.

In order to see what is in a man, you must see his future as it lies in his own heart and mind. What are his purposes in life? What is his ideal? Tell me what a man has before him in his mind, and I will tell you

what the man is going to be and what he is going to do. A man can't rise above the course which he has projected in his own mind; he can't rise above his own ideal. A man's ideal is the real man, the real self. As a man thinketh in his own heart, so is he. Some one says: "One's real self is himself at his best, in the direction of his aspirings and strivings; it is himself as he wants to be, and as he is trying to be, rather than himself as he now is. Browning's David gives the real measure of every man's nobler self: "'Tis not what man does which exalts him, but what man would do! This is the self which a man ought to be and to seem to be, and this is the self which others should desire a man to be and to seem to be."

The man who has a real ideal before him will use his energies and resources to make that ideal manifest itself in his life, as it dwells in his mind. It furnishes the standard by which he is controlled in his conduct and living. The life is the natural outgrowth of what is in the heart; and what is in the heart will come out in the life, sooner or later. The life is the tree; the heart is the acorn. The secret of a man's life is in his heart, in his ideal. You may not understand much that is in a man's life; but, if you will give me the key which unlocks his heart, if you will reveal to me his ideal, I will show you that life with all of its mysteries solved. The life is in the heart.

This thought has been forcibly illustrated as follows: "A cold fire-brand and a burning lamp started out one day to see what they could find. The fire-brand came back and wrote in its journal that the whole world was dark. It did not find a place anywhere in which there was light. Everywhere there was darkness. The lamp,

when it came back, wrote in its journal: Wherever I went it was light. What was the difference? The lamp carried light with it, and when it went abroad, it illuminated everything about it. The dead fire-brand carried no light, and it found none where it went."

There is a cause for every effect. When you see a successful life, you may know that there is an adequate and reasonable cause for it. It is the natural outgrowth of what is in the man.

"Only a rail-splitter," might have been said, at one time, of Abraham Lincoln; "only a news boy," of Thomas Edison; "only a blacksmith," of Elihu Burritt; "only a boot-black" of George Whitefield. But the statesman was in the rail-splitter; the electrician was in the news-boy; the philanthropist was in the blacksmith; and the great preacher who electrified thousands with his eloquence was in the boot-black. You can't get more out of a thing than is in it.

Thus we see the necessity of having the right kind of an ideal before us. A person, to get the greatest possible good, and to do or give the greatest possible good, must have before him a high standard, a noble purpose in life.

The apostle holds up before us in the text the only perfect Ideal, and, therefore, the Ideal that each one of us should have. "Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

Let us notice *some of the positive advantages of having the right kind of an ideal in life.*

I. *It reveals to a person his limitations, his weaknesses and imperfections.*

The student who sits under some great teacher, takes his teacher as his ideal; and, by studying this ideal, he can see how little he knows, how ignorant he is himself. This revelation is absolutely necessary to any progress in knowledge. Unless the student knows there is something yet to be learned, he thinks he knows all things, and hence it is impossible for him to make any progress. He is ignorant of his own ignorance; and this is the most appalling, and, in its very nature, the most conceited and the most stagnant of all kinds of ignorance. It effectually shuts out all possibility of making any progress in knowledge.

As the student lays himself out by the side of his teacher, he not only sees how little he knows; but he also sees how much there is that he does not know; and, in this way, he sees the necessity of making progress. Sir Isaac Newton had before him such an ideal. Hence he realized the limitations of his own knowledge. Although he had made so many attainments in the fields of research and science, yet, he said that he felt like a little child, standing on the shore of the vast and illimitable ocean of knowledge which stretched out before him, picking up here and there a pebble.

It is so in every department of life. In order to attain the greatest possible success, a person must have a high and broad purpose always before him, a purpose higher and broader than the one which has already been accomplished. This purpose will show him that he has not reached the acme of his endeavors. There are other attainments to be made, other trophies to be won.

This purpose to rise higher in the scale of being and activity should be so intimately connected with the man's thinking and with all of his endeavors, that it will really

become a part of his very being. In this way, there will be an attractive power about the ideal, drawing the man on to it. He can see in his ideal his destiny. There is his natural course; and he will strive to bring himself up to his purpose.

How true is all this with the Christian in relation to his Ideal, Christ Jesus! When we see Christ as he really is, we can and do see our own ignorance, our own weakness and our own sinfulness. A true conception of Christ on our part brings with it an explicit revelation to us of our own deep spiritual necessities. How fortunate this is; for only in Christ can these necessities be satisfied. Thus we have in Christ an Ideal that not only reveals to us our own limitations, but also one that breaks down and destroys these limitations.

II. *An ideal, if it is the right kind, will show a person his possibilities.*

Each one of us is travelling over ground which we have never explored; and we do not know what can be done by us in these new fields of activity and endeavor.

The student sees in his teacher what can really be done. There is in his teacher a revelation of his own possibilities. There was a time when his teacher knew as little as he knows. He can see that his teacher has overcome the same difficulties with which he has to contend, that he has mastered science after science. These things seem to be beyond his ability when he looks simply at himself. But he can see in his ideal, his teacher, that they are within the range of his own possibilities.

It is so in every department of life. We use the achievements of others as stepping-stones to greater achievements ourselves. What others have done, we can do. Yea, we ought to be able to do more than they

have done. Their achievements not only reveal to us our possibilities, but they also open to us larger fields than were opened to them. Thus we can use the experiences of the past to great advantage.

“ We rise by things that are under feet;
By what we have mastered of good and gain;
By the pride deposed and the passion slain,
And the vanquished ills that we hourly meet.”

Just consider what has already been done.

In the material world. See how many advances and improvements have been made; how many labor-saving machines have been invented, so that one man now can accomplish what it took ten men to do a short time ago. Railroads, telegraphs and telephones have covered our land and brought everybody and everything near together. In this way, the forces and resources of the nation may be moved from one place to another as necessities demand. The forces of steam and electricity are so completely under the control of man now that power itself may be transmitted from one place to another, so that the mill may be placed above the dam and operated just as successfully as if it were below the dam, a thing which, at one time, seemed to be an absolute impossibility, because it seemed to be contrary to the laws of nature.

Look into the civil world. See how the science of government has been advanced! How avenues of power and usefulness which were absolutely barred to our forefathers, have been opened up to the people in this field! How the way has been opened for the masses to be elevated in the government and really by the government, a thing unheard of in ancient times! How the

people now, instead of being slaves, have been exalted to the high plane of a noble citizenship! How the government is for the people, and not the people for the government!

Glance at the educational world. See how the methods have been improved and how the opportunities to get an education have been opened to all the people! How the common-school system has taken hold of our very government and being as a nation, so that it seems inseparably connected with our very destiny! How that high-school advantages and even college advantages are practically in reach of all!

Look into the moral world. See how the fields for usefulness have been opened up here! How, in these modern times, charitable and reformatory institutions have been multiplied! How the idea of elevating the race has taken hold of the people as never before!

So, when we contemplate all of these facts and the glorious opportunities and possibilities which are opened up by them, we conclude that we are living in the very best possible age of the world's history. We are in possession of all the accumulated attainments and achievements of the generations that have gone before.

"We are living, we are dwelling,
In a grand and awful time;
In an age on ages telling;
To be living is sublime."

Who can measure the grand possibilities that are opened up before the young women and young men of our country to-day? With the many forces of nature at our command, with the blessings of a government placed upon the broad basis of humanity's welfare in

our possession, with all the advantages of a common-school education and even a higher education, in our grasp, and with so many doors of moral usefulness opened up before us, we can see that the field which stretches out in front of us is simply illimitable.

The young person who has in his heart fixed and noble principles, with high and worthy aspirations, will have some of these possibilities revealed to him and placed within his reach. This will give us broader views, broader plans, broader purposes, and hence a broader life and a broader destiny.

Thus it becomes us to properly appreciate the achievements of the past and to properly use them. They come to us as a priceless heritage and as a sacred trust. With the eye of hope and aspiration on the future, and with the hand of sacrifice and service on the present, we can go on, trusting God, from victory to victory:

Nor deem the irrevocable past
As wholly wasted, wholly vain,
If, rising on its wrecks, at last
To something nobler we attain."

When we get a comprehensive view of Christ Jesus as our Ideal, we can see the illimitable sweep of our possibilities in him. With enlarged capacities and with broader fields of service and happiness, we can have no just conceptions of what we can do in him. The Apostle Paul exclaimed in the triumphs of the gospel: "I can do all things through Christ, which strengtheneth me." And Jesus himself says: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father." In Christ Jesus, our per-

fect Ideal, we can go on, and on, and on, from one achievement to another, from one degree of perfection to another, never satisfied with present attainments, but ever grasping for something higher and nobler and more Christ-like; forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, we can press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

III. *The ideal will show us how to realize these possibilities.*

A high and noble purpose knows no such thing as failure. This purpose becomes an incentive to us, urging us on against all opposition; it becomes an encouragement to us, drawing and attracting us to the goal that is before us. In this way, difficulties which seemed to be unconquerable are overcome, and obstacles which seemed to be immovable, are borne away.

The Ideal which we have in Christ Jesus is different from all others; it is presented to us not simply in a theoretical way, but also in a practical way. It comes bearing on its very being the stamp of a living Personality, and it comes with all the force of this Personality. Christ Jesus comes to show us our possibilities in him, and to show us how to realize these possibilities. He comes as a real Help. Every precept of the gospel has been vitalized and made real in the life of Christ. Hence he takes us by the hand, and says to us: "Follow me." He not only furnishes us with a chart to direct us how to sail successfully over the sea of life; but he takes hold of the vessel himself and steers it through the voyage, until at last it enters the port of everlasting rest in safety and triumph.

This does not discourage our own efforts; but it acts

as a healthy stimulus upon them. So it was in the case of the apostle, and so it should be with every disciple of Christ Jesus.

There should be *singleness of purpose*. "This *one thing* I do." Paul did other things: he made tents; he sailed on seas. But he was not a tent-maker; he was not a sailor. These things were secondary; and not only this: but they were done to enable him to do the one thing better. So it should be with each of us. "This one thing I do."

There should be *energy*. "*Reaching forth*." "I *press* toward the mark." There is such strong opposition; there is so much involved: that it becomes us to lay out all of our resources and energies in the field of such noble endeavor.

There must be a *casting away of hindrances*. "*Forgetting those things which are behind*." Paul did not allow his past attainments, his noble labors and his rare experiences, to stand in the way of his triumphant and progressive march in the divine life. When he could not use these things as stepping stones, he looked upon them as real obstacles. Hence his unalterable purpose was to cast these things away as real hindrances, when they could not be used as helps. "Forgetting those things which are behind."

There must be *persistence*. "This one thing I *do*." He means to do this one thing, and he means to keep on doing it. There is nothing that can turn him from this persistent and unalterable purpose. So it should be with each one of us. "This one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

IV. *Benefits of an ideal to others.*

In blessing us, it blesses others. The higher your purpose, the greater will be your usefulness. The most beautiful life is the most useful life. I have read this story: "Four beautiful maidens in the woods argued with one another who had the most beautiful hands. One held hers up after she had bathed it in the stream which ran at her feet, and said, Mine is the most beautiful hand. Another had been gathering violets, and with the perfume on her hands, she said, This is the most beautiful hand. Another had been picking strawberries, and, with the flush on her fingers, said, There is the most beautiful hand. Just then, before the fourth spoke, an old beggar woman came along in her homely garments and with her bowed form, asked alms. The fourth held out her hand and gave the poor woman all she had. The other three rebuked her for giving her money. Just then they resumed their discussion about who had the most beautiful hand, and finally determined to refer it to the old lady. They put the question, Which has the most beautiful hand, do you think? And she answered, She that hath made sacrifice of alms. Just then her faded garment fell away, and she stood before them an angel of light, with authority to decide."

A noble mechanic by the name of Wardsworth, filled with a Christian zeal and earnestness for doing good to everybody by word and deed, adopted these mottoes:

"Look up and not down;
Look forward and not backward;
Look out and not in, and lend a hand."

Says some one: "At his funeral, ten persons whom he had helped to nobler lives by what he was and by what he had said and done, agreed that they would

adopt his mottoes and seek to repeat his spirit and work. Edward Everett Hale told the story, with the spice of fiction added, in "Ten Times One Make Ten." Many, no doubt, who have read that book have adopted the mottoes for themselves. Multitudes have been led by these watchwords to 'look up' to God and not down to discouragement. Such looking up is Faith. They have been led to 'look forward' with earnest purpose, and 'not backward' in vain regrets. Such looking forward is Hope. They have been led, instead of looking 'in' at self, their own aches, their own interests, their own imperfections, to 'look out' in earnest search for opportunities to do good, and 'lend a hand' to comfort the sorrowing, help the needy and lift up the sinful. That is Charity." And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity."

If you would exert the greatest possible influence for good, you must take Christ Jesus as your Ideal. You must adopt the motto of the text as your own: "This one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." This will enable you to shed abroad an influence that will prove to be a blessing and a benediction to your fellowmen, an influence that will be felt and appreciated through all coming time. This stream of influence will get deeper and wider; it will flow on, and on, and on, until at last it empties itself before the throne of God in heaven, bearing on its bosom much of the precious freight of the kingdom of our Redeemer. With such a glorious hope before us, we can say:

"The best is yet to be,
The last of life, for which the first was planned."

“THESE ARE PARTS OF HIS WAYS.”

“These are parts of his ways.”—Job xxvi. 14. Read Psalm cxxxix.

THE emphasis should be placed on the word *parts*. “These are *parts* of his way.” This emphasis is brought out in the Revised Version, “These are *but the outskirts* of his ways.” The Book of *Job* is one of the most interesting and instructive in the whole Bible. It has a great deal to say about *God’s works* in *nature*, in *providence* and in *grace*. It has much to say about *God’s dealing with his children in this life*. It lights the veil of futurity and gives us a spiritual insight into the other world, and teaches us the immortality of the soul and the everlasting bliss of the soul that is saved in heaven. But, of all that has been said about the wonderful works of God as they are manifested to us in nature, in providence and in grace—after all that has been said about God’s dealings with his children, the sacred writer was forced to say: “These are but the *outskirts* of his ways.” The *extremities*, the *ends*. “Only the *extreme boundaries*” of his ways.

I. *We can see and know only parts of God’s ways in this life*. It matters not how much we may see and know here, we can always say, “These are parts of his ways.” God’s ways are so extensive, so far-reaching, so complicated in their relations, that it is simply impossible for us to see and know all.

1. *Look at nature*. The *earth*, round. Once thought to be flat and square. Its treasures: The *sun*, *moon* and *stars*. We can see thousands (six or eight thousands) of stars. How many we cannot see? Supposed

to be at least one hundred millions. Their vast distance: "It has been estimated that a cannon-ball moving with the velocity of five hundred miles an hour, and leaving our earth at a certain time and travelling in the direction of the nearest fixed star, would not reach it in less than four million, five hundred thousand years; and there yet are stars in the heavens, and visible only through telescopes, that would require a cannon-ball, moving with the same velocity, at least five hundred million years to reach them. It is said by the elder Herschell that it would require light, travelling at the rate of one hundred and eighty-five thousand miles a second, two millions years to come to the earth from the remotest luminous vapors within reach of his forty-foot telescope, and yet, whatever may have been the efforts of astronomers to bring the starry heavens as a whole into view, even with the most powerful reflectors, they have, so far, proved to be futile.

The laws of nature. Take the laws of gravitation. How much more we seem to know than the ancients! And yet, how little we know.

Look at the wonderful *discoveries in science*. Consider what has been done with *steam* and *electricity*, telegraph, telephones, phonograph.

WIRELESS TELEGRAPHY.

Transmitter and receiver must be in tune with each other if the message shall pass between them. They have come to that point of discovery in wireless telegraphy. Ah! must dull copper and carbon and brass be brought into harmony if we should have it sensitive to electric impulses, and shall human hearts expect to understand and be moved by the great impulse of the

divine heart above, save as they bring themselves and keep themselves in harmony therewith? The most ancient wireless telegraphy is from heaven to earth, but we cannot expect to be sensitive to it until we who receive are in spiritual harmony with him who sends. The thrills of spiritual desire, the throbs of spiritual affection, the promptings of divine impulses may pass by unnoted and unfruitful if our spirits be not in sensitive harmony with them. There is a heavenly teaching that flashes from God to man, but only those men hear it whose hearts and lives are in accord with the spirit of the Teacher. Is not that what Jesus meant when he said, "If any man willeth to do his will, he shall know of the doctrine?"

And yet, how little do we know! Edison is reported to have said not long ago that he knew nothing about electricity. I suppose he realized there was so much that he did not know, that what he did know was practically nothing to what he did not know. "These are parts of his ways."

2. *Look at providence.* We can see and know only parts of God's ways here. We have intimations of God's infinite wisdom here—his intelligent designs. All things are included in his comprehensive providence. Every grain of sand, every drop of water, every blade of grass, every insect, every sparrow, every event, every person, every nation—all things. But how little can we really see and know! How much there is we cannot understand of his plans and purposes, of the relations that permeate all his providences and holds them together. How little do we know of the real philosophy of providence! "These are parts of his ways."

3. *Look at the work of redemption.* How little can

we see and know here! God gives us intimations of his infinite goodness, and mercy, and justice, and love. But we see and know only parts of his ways here—the outskirts of his ways.

Take *the life of Christ*. How *short*, and, in one sense, what a meagre record! and yet, how much is crowded into that life. *Depths* that have never been fathomed; fields that have never been explored. There are great *pointers* here: *Bethlehem*, *Mounts of Temptation* and of *Transfiguration*, *Gethsemane*, *Calvary*, *Mount Olivet*; *miracles*; *teachings*. Here are *manifestations* and *evidences*. But how little do we know of what occurred in the councils of eternity! “These are parts of his ways.” *Decrees*. Simply on the shore, with the boundless ocean before us. So in nature; so in providence, so in grace. It is certain that we can see only parts of God’s ways in this. “These are parts of his ways.” Therefore, *We can’t know much of God’s ways in this life*. We are finite, circumscribed on every side. After all that we see and know, we are forced to say: “These are parts of his ways.” Therefore, how foolish for man to sit in judgment on God’s ways! How unreasonable and how unjust to judge by a part!

(*Evidence in court. Artist and his outlines.*)

Just think of *finite* man, who can see and know only parts of God’s ways, the merest outlines of his ways, sitting in judgment on the plans and purposes of the infinite God, who knows the end from the beginning! God’s plans and purposes run from the beginning to the end. Your life is intimately and inseparably connected with purposes that lived and events that transpired a thousand years ago, and it is connected in the plans of God with events that are to transpire a thousand years

hence. Take Joseph going down into Egypt. Many things we cannot understand, simply because we can see and know only a part.

Take *sin, pain, affliction*. What we see and know about these things are but the outskirts of his ways. We can't understand some of the *doctrines* of the gospel. Therefore, how foolish to make our *understanding* the limit of our *faith*, either in the field of nature or providence. "These are but parts of his ways." "But how little a portion is heard of him!"

II. *How infinitely great God's ways must be!* If what we can see and know constitute *only parts* of parts of his ways, and simply the *outskirts* at that, what must they *all* be, and what must they be in the full sweep of their relationships!

God, himself, is infinite, eternal and unchangeable. Job xi. 7, 8: "Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? It is as high as heaven; what canst thou do? deeper than hell; what canst thou know?" As God is incomprehensible, so are his ways. The Apostle Paul, as he was confronted with this great question, exclaimed: "Oh, the depths of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments and his ways past finding out!" God himself says: "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts."

III. *It will be right when we do see and know more of God's ways.* While we will never see and know all of God's ways, we are going to get far enough along to see the absolute righteousness and benevolence of these ways. God assures us of this in his blessed Word. Christ says: "What I do thou knowest not now, but

thou shalt know hereafter." John xiii. 7. Romans viii. 28: "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." 1 Corinthians xiii. 12: "For now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known." The time is coming when all events, and all agents, and all intelligencies will "assert eternal providence and justify the ways of God to men."

"God nothing does, nor suffers to be done,
But thou thyself would'st do, if thou could'st see,
The end of all events as well as he."

Take *Job's case* as illustrating this general subject. Look at his *afflictions, property, children, health*—all taken away. Hard to understand. His friends could not understand it, and therefore they charged him with *hypocrisy*. The explanation is in the text: "These are but parts of his ways." And here is the solution of many a difficult problem in life. Just wait for the development of the divine plan. God has an infinitely gracious purpose in all of his dealings with Job, a purpose founded in infinite love and infinite wisdom. Just wait. Time will vindicate the divine plan. All these mysteries will be solved in God's own good time, and in his own gracious way.

"His purposes will ripen fast,
Unfolding every hour;
The bud may have a bitter taste,
But sweet will be the flower.
Blind unbelief is sure to err,
And scan his work in vain;
God is his own interpreter,
And he will make it plain."

God certainly revealed his wisdom and goodness in the case of *Job*. This affliction was sent upon him for a wise purpose. I think God had at least three purposes in view:

1. *He wanted to give Job clearer conceptions of the Divine Being.*

2. *He wanted to prepare Job for larger blessings.*

3. *He wanted to make Job a blessing to all future ages.*

1. Job did not have clear conceptions of the Divine Being. He had been judging God by the things which he had received, instead of judging the things received by his God. He had looked upon his afflictions as a matter of course—in a kind of stoical way too much. Now, God would have Job to come up higher, where his vision shall not only be *broader*, but also *more accurate*. So he strips him of all encumbrances. God wants Job to get closer to him. So he takes away his *property*. How often does a man's property stand between his soul and his God! But God wants Job to get still closer to him; so he takes away his *children*. How often do we let our children come between us and God! But God wants Job to get closer still; so he takes away his health. When we are in health and strength, we sometimes forget God.

This experience gives Job "a new and more distinct apprehension of God, a more vivid and powerful impression of his glorious nature. It was not the perception of one attribute isolated from the rest, or exalted above the rest, which led him to exclaim: 'I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: *but now my eye seeth thee.*' All his previous conceptions of God were faint and distant compared with the intimate and thorough conviction of his exalted being which now possessed his

soul. It was as that which is learned by distant report compared with that which stands revealed with the clearness and evidence of eyesight. This points to no partial, imperfect, one-sided view of God, in which certain attributes are made prominent at the expense of others, and some are hidden altogether, but to a complete and true conception of God in his real character."

Job's impatient utterances, under the pressure of his afflictions, were due to a defective apprehension of the glorious character of God. Now that he sees God as he truly is, he is abashed and confounded that he ever could have spoken as he did or indulge such feelings as he then had. His vision is not only enlarged, but it is also intensified. He now occupied a position where he could *see all* the attributes of God standing out in their right relations, in their proper proportions, and in their real beauty and glory. What a wonderful change!

2. *God wants to prepare Job for greater blessings. Temporal blessings.* God gave Job twice as much as he had before (xlii. 10.) This is God's rule. When he takes away *one* blessing, it is to prepare his child for *two*.

Spiritual blessings. God enlarges Job's experience. He strengthens his character. He purifies Job in the furnace of affliction. Job comes out a better man, a wiser man, a stronger man, a purer man.

"When through fiery trials thy pathway shall lie,
My grace all sufficient shall be thy supply;
The flame shall not hurt thee; I only design
Thy dross to consume, and thy gold to refine."

3. *God wants to make Job a blessing to all future ages.* God's plans and purposes are very comprehensive and far-reaching. What a comfort Job has been to all of

God's children through the ages! Oh, the good that Job has done! His works do follow him. Who can measure the stream of influence for good which has ever been flowing from that man's heart and life! It has been getting deeper and wider through the ages; and it will continue to flow on, and on, and on, until at last it shall empty itself before the throne of God, carrying on its bosom much of the precious and priceless freight of the kingdom of our Redeemer.

So, my friends, when God lays on us the hand of affliction, it is for a wise purpose; it is to give us clearer conceptions of himself; it is to prepare us for larger experiences and larger blessings; it is to equip us for larger usefulness and to make us a blessing to others.

We don't know all of God's purposes, they are so broad and far-reaching. So, when we are tempted to *doubt*, as we *will* be, or to *disbelieve*, as we *may* be, or to *condemn* us as we *can* be, let us remember the words of the text: "These are but parts of his ways." We need a stronger faith—faith in *God*, in *God's Word*, in *God's providence*, in *God's kingdom*.

"Our times are in thy hand,
 Oh, God, we wish them there;
 Our life, our friends, our souls we leave
 Entirely to thy care.

Our times are in thy hand,
 Why should we doubt or fear?
 A Father's hand will never cause
 His child a needless tear."

A gentleman who was walking near an unoccupied building one day saw a stonemason chiseling patiently at a block of stone in front of him. The gentleman went

up to him. "Still chiseling?" he remarked, pleasantly. "Yes," still chiseling," replied the workman, going on with his work. "In what part of the building does this stone belong?" asked the gentleman. "I don't know," replied the stonecutter, "I haven't seen the plans." Then he went on chiseling, chiseling. Now, that is what we should do. We have not seen the great plans of the Master Architect, but each of us has his work to do, and we should chisel away until it is done.—*Michigan Adv.*

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