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AND JUDAS ISCARIOT

And Judas Iscariot

With Other Evangelistic Sermons

BY

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Introduction by

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INTRODUCTION

The sermons contained in this volume are published in response to numerous requests that they might be put into permanent form.

The author of these sermons needs no introduction to the Christian readers of America. His fame as an author, preacher and evangelist is more than national. As Director of the evangelistic work carried on by the General Assembly's Committee of the Presbyterian Church, he has achieved distinction as a preacher of the Gospel. Under his direction simultaneous evangelistic campaigns have been held in many of the leading cities of the land, and the Christian Church and the world have had an experience of a new, aggressive and emphatic evangelism that has stirred the Church, revived Christian service and been the means under God of turning thousands to a life of allegiance to Jesus Christ.

Therefore it is a privilege and pleasure to put into book form some of the sermons which Dr. Chapman has preached in his

evangelistic work and also as the Director of the Interdenominational Bible Conference at Winona Lake, Indiana. Thousands have borne witness to the profound impression and enduring influence of those messages. Especially is this true of "And Judas Iscariot" and "An Old-Fashioned Home." One can never forget the scene when the latter sermon was preached on Thanksgiving Day, 1905, in the great theater in Jersey City. Great numbers of men have confessed their sins and accepted Jesus Christ as a personal Savior following the preaching of "The Swelling of Jordan."

The book is sent forth with devout gratitude to God for his blessing upon the preaching of these sermons, and with a prayer that even the reading of them may be attended with deeper devotion to Jesus Christ, and increasing service to those for whom Christ died.

PARLEY E. ZARTMANN.

AND JUDAS ISCARIOT

AND JUDAS ISCARIOT

TEXT: "*And Judas Iscariot.*"—Mark 3: 19.

There is something about the name of this miserable man which commands our attention at once. There is a sort of fascination about his wickedness, and when we read his story it is difficult to give it up until we have come to its awful end. It is rather significant, it would seem to me, that his name should come last in the list of the Apostles, and the text, "And Judas Iscariot," would suggest to me not only that his name was last, but that it was there for some special reason, as I am sure we shall find out that it was. It is also significant that the first name mentioned in the list of the Apostles in this third chapter of Mark was Simon, who was surnamed Peter.

The first mentioned Apostle denied Jesus with an oath, the one last referred

to sold him for thirty pieces of silver and has gone into eternity with the awful sin of murder charged against him. The difference between the two is this: their sins were almost equally great, but the first repented and the grace of God had its perfect work in him and he was the object of Christ's forgiveness; the second was filled with remorse without repentance and grace was rejected. The first became one of the mightiest preachers in the world's history; the second fills us with horror whenever we read the story of his awful crime.

Different names affect us differently. One could not well think of John without being impressed with the power of love; nor could one consider Paul without being impressed first of all with his zeal and then with his learning. Certainly one could not study Peter without saying that his strongest characteristic was his enthusiasm. It is helpful to know that the Spirit of God working with one who was a giant intellectually and with one who

was profane and ignorant accomplished practically the same results, making them both, Paul and Peter, mighty men whose ministry has made the world richer and better in every way. But to think of Judas is always to shudder.

There is a kindred text in this same Gospel of Mark, but the emotions it stirs are entirely different. The second text is, "And Peter." The crucifixion is over, the Savior is in the tomb, poor Peter, a broken-hearted man, is wandering through the streets of the City of the King. He is at last driven to the company of the disciples, when suddenly there rushes in upon them the woman who had been at the tomb, and she exclaims, "He is risen, has gone over into Galilee and wants his disciples to meet him." This was the angel's message to her. All the disciples must have hurried to the door that they might hasten to see their risen Lord—all save Peter. And then came the pathetic and thrilling text, for the woman gave the message as Jesus gave it

to the angels and they to her, "Go tell his disciples—and *Peter*."

But this text, "And Judas Iscariot," brings to our recollection the story of a man who lost his opportunity to be good and great; the picture of one who was heartless in his betrayal, for within sight of the Garden of Gethsemane he saluted Jesus with a hypocritical kiss; the recollection of one in whose ears to-day in eternity there must be heard the clinking sound of the thirty pieces of silver; and the account of one who died a horrible death, all because sin had its way with him and the grace of God was rejected.

The scene connected with his calling is significant. Mark tells us in the third chapter of his Gospel that when Jesus saw the man with the withered hand and healed him, he went out by the seaside and then upon the mountain, and there called his Apostles round about him, gave them their commission and sent them forth to do his bidding.

In Matthew the ninth chapter and the

thirty-sixth to the thirty-eighth verses, we are told that when he saw the multitudes he was moved with compassion, and he commissioned the twelve and sent them forth that they might serve as shepherds to the people who appeared to be shepherdless. "Then saith he 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." And then he sent the twelve forth. As a matter of fact the Scriptures concerning Judas are not so very full, but there is a good outline, and if one but takes the points presented and allows his imagination to work in the least, there is a story which is thrilling in its awfulness.

The four Evangelists tell us of his call, and these are practically identical in their statement except concerning his names. Matthew and Mark call him the Betrayer; Luke speaks of him as a Traitor, while John calls him a Devil. The next thing we learn concerning him is his rebuke of

the woman who came to render her service to Jesus as a proof of her affection. In John the twelfth chapter, the fourth to the sixth verse, we read, "Then saith one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, which should betray him, Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor? This he said, not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein."

Next we hear of him bargaining with the enemies of Jesus for his betrayal. The account is very full in Matthew, the twenty-sixth chapter the fourteenth to the sixteenth verse. "Then one of the twelve called Judas Iscariot, went unto the chief priests, and said unto them, What will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you? And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver. And from that time he sought opportunity to betray him."

Then we are told of his delivering Jesus into the hands of his enemies, in Matthew, the twenty-sixth chapter, the forty-seventh

to the forty-ninth verses: "And while he yet spake, lo, Judas, one of the twelve, came, and with him a great multitude, with swords and staves, from the chief priests and elders of the people. Now he that betrayed him gave them a sign, saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he: hold him fast. And forthwith he came to Jesus, and said, Hail, Master; and kissed him." And then finally comes his dreadful end, the account of his remorse in Matthew, the twenty-seventh chapter, the third and the fourth verses. "Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood. And they said, What is that to us? see thou to that." And the statement of his suicide in Matthew, the twenty-seventh chapter, the fifth verse, "And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself."

I

The natural question that comes to every student of the life of Judas must be, "Why was he chosen?" but as Joseph Parker has said, "We may well ask why were we chosen ourselves, knowing our hearts as we do and appreciating our weakness as we must." It has been said that if we study the Apostles we will find them representatives of all kinds of human nature, which would go to show that if we but yield ourselves to God, whatever we may be naturally, he can use us for his glory. It was here that Judas failed. I have heard it said that Jesus did not know Judas' real character and that he was surprised when Judas turned out to be the disciple that he was; but let us have none of this spirit in the consideration of Jesus Christ. Let no man in these days limit Jesus' knowledge, for he is omniscient and knoweth all things. Let us not forget what he said himself concerning Judas in John the thirteenth chapter and the eighteenth verse, "I speak

not of you all; I know whom I have chosen; but that the Scripture may be fulfilled, He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me." Again, in the sixth chapter and the seventieth verse, "Jesus answered them, Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?" and finally, in the sixth chapter and the sixty-fourth verse, "But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him."

There were others who might have been chosen in his stead. The Apostles found two when in their haste they determined to fill the vacancy made by his betrayal. Acts 1: 23-26, "And they appointed two, Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias. And they prayed, and said, Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, shew whether of these two thou hast chosen, that he may take part of this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his

own place. And they gave forth their lots; and the lot fell upon Matthias, and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.”

It seems to me that there can be no reason for his having been called of Christ except that he was to serve as a great warning to those of us who have lived since his day. There are many such warnings in the Scriptures.

Jonah was one. God said to him, “Go to Nineveh,” and yet, with the spirit of rebellion, he attempted to sail to Tarshish and we know his miserable failure. Let it never be forgotten that if Nineveh is God’s choice for you, you can make no other port in safety. The sea will be against you, the wind against you. It is hard indeed to struggle against God.

Jacob was a warning. Deceiving his own father, his sons in turn deceived him. May we never forget the Scripture which declares, “Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap.”

Esau was a warning. Coming in from

the hunt one day, weary with his exertions, he detects the savory smell of the mess of pottage, and his crafty brother says, "I will give you this for your birthright," which was his right to be a priest in his household; a moment more and the birthright is gone; and in the New Testament we are told he sought it with tears and could find no place of repentance. But many a man has sold his right to be the priest of his household for less than a mess of pottage, and in a real sense it is true that things done cannot be undone.

Saul was a warning. He was commanded to put to death Agag and the flock, and he kept the best of all the flock and then lied to God's messenger when he said that the work had been done as he was commanded. He had no sooner said it than, behold, there was heard the bleating of the sheep and the lowing of the oxen. "Be sure your sin will find you out."

The New Testament has many warnings like these in the Old, but Judas sur-

passes them all. There is something about him that makes us shudder.

It is said that in Oberammergau, where the Passion Play is presented, the man taking the character of Judas is always avoided afterwards. He may have been ever so reputable a citizen, but he has been at least in action a Judas, and that is enough.

I was once a pastor at Schuylerville, N. Y., where on the Burgoyne surrender ground stands a celebrated monument. It is beautiful to look upon. On one side of it in a niche is General Schuyler, and on the other side, if I remember correctly, General Gates; on the third, in the same sort of a niche, another distinguished general is to be seen, but on the fourth the niche is vacant. When I asked the reason I was told that "It is the niche which might have been filled by Benedict Arnold had he not been a traitor."

The story of Judas is like this. He might have been all that God could have approved of; he is throughout eternity

a murderer, and all because grace was rejected. Numerous lessons may be drawn from such a story. Certain things might be said concerning hypocrisy, for he was in the truest sense a hypocrite. Reference could be made to the fact that sin is small in its beginnings, sure in its progress, terrific in its ending, for at the beginning he was doubtless but an average man in sin, possibly not so different from the others; but he rejected the influence of Christ. Or, again, from such a character a thrilling story could be told of the end of transgressors, for hard as may be the way the end baffles description. Judas certainly tells us this.

II

However much of a warning Judas may be to people of the world, I am fully persuaded that there are four things which may be said concerning him.

First: He gives us a lesson as Christians. There were many names given him. In Matthew the tenth chapter and

the fourth verse, and in Mark the third chapter and the nineteenth verse, we read that he was a betrayer; in Luke the sixth chapter and the sixteenth verse he was called a traitor; in John the sixth chapter and the seventieth verse he is spoken of as a devil, but in John the twelveth chapter and the sixth verse he is mentioned as a thief. To me however one of the best names that could be applied to him is that which Paul feared might be given to him when he said, "Lest when I have preached to others I myself should be [literally] disapproved" (1 Corinthians 9:27). It is indeed a solemn thought, that if we are not right with God he will set us aside, for he cannot use us. I have in mind a minister, who once thrilled great numbers of people with his message. Under the power of his preaching hundreds of people came to Christ. There was possibly no one in the Church with a brighter future. To-day he is set aside, for God cannot use him. I have in mind a Sunday

school superintendent, who used to be on every platform speaking for Christ, and then yielded to undue political influence of the worst sort, lost his vision of Christ and his power in speaking, and to-day is set aside. But of all the illustrations, I know of nothing which so stirs me as the story of Judas. He might have been true and faithful and he might have been with Christ to-day in glory; instead, he is in hell, a self-confessed murderer, with the clinking of the thirty pieces of silver to condemn him, and his awful conscience constantly to accuse him. It is indeed enough to make our faces pale to realize that, whatever we may be to-day in the service of God, we can be set aside in less than a week, and God will cease to use us if we have anything of the spirit of Judas.

Second: I learn also from Judas that environment is not enough for the unregenerate. It is folly to state that a poor lost sinner simply by changing his environment may have his nature changed.

As John G. Woolley has said, "it is like a man with a stubborn horse saying, 'I will paint the outside of the barn a nice mild color to influence the horse within.'"

The well on my place in the country some years ago had in it poisoned water. It was an attractive well with a house built around about it, and the neighbors came to me to say that I must under no circumstances drink from it. What if I had said, "I will decorate the well house that I may change the water?" It would have been as nonsensical as to say, "I will change the environment of a man who is wicked by nature, and thereby make him good." Judas had lived close to Jesus, he had been with him on the mountain, walked with him by the sea, was frequently with him, I am sure, in Gethsemane, for we read in John the eighteenth chapter and the second verse, "And Judas also, which betrayed him, knew the place: for Jesus oftentimes resorted thither with his disciples." He was also with him at the

Supper. But after all this uplifting, heavenly influence of the Son of God he sold him for silver and betrayed him with a kiss. Nothing can answer for the sinner but regeneration. His case is hopeless without that.

Third: Hypocrisy is an awful thing. The text in Galatians is for all such. "Be not deceived; God is not mocked." Those words in Matthew in connection with the sermon on the Mount are for such, when men in the great day shall say, "Have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out Devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?" Jesus will say, "I never knew you." If we read the commission in Matthew the tenth chapter the fifth to the twentieth verses inclusive, we shall understand that these Apostles were sent forth to do a mighty work, and evidently they did it. Judas had that commission, and he may have fulfilled it in a sense, but he is lost to-day because he was a hypocrite. The disciples may not have

known his true nature. In John the thirteenth chapter the twenty-first to the twenty-ninth verses we read, "When Jesus had thus said, he was troubled in spirit, and testified and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me. Then the disciples looked one on another, doubting of whom he spake. Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved. Simon Peter therefore beckoned to him, that he should ask who it should be of whom he spake. He then lying on Jesus' breast saith unto him, Lord, who is it? Jesus answered, He it is to whom I shall give a sop when I have dipped it. And when he had dipped the sop, he gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon. And after the sop Satan entered into him. Then said Jesus unto him, That thou doest, do quickly. Now no man at the table knew for what intent he spake this unto him. For some of them thought, because Judas had the bag, that Jesus had said unto him, Buy

those things that we have need of against the feast; or that he should give something to the poor." Which would seem to impress this thought upon us. Oh, may I say that it is a great sin to be untrue? The only time that Jesus is severe is not when sinners seek him out, nor when the woman taken in adultery is driven to him by those who would stone her with stones, nor with the thief on the Cross, but when he faces hypocrites; he can have no tenderness for them.

Fourth: I learn from Judas that sin is of slow progress. There may have been first just a natural ambition. He thought that the Kingdom of Jesus was to be a great temporal affair, and he desired to be a part of it. How many men to-day have wrecked their homes and all but lost their souls, because of unholy ambitions! It may be an ambition for your family as well as for yourself. Doubtless Jacob had such when he stopped at Shechem. The result of his tarrying was his heart-breaking experi-

ence with the worse than murder of his daughter. There are souls to-day in the lost world who were wrecked upon the rock of ambition.

Fifth: He was dishonest. It is a short journey from unholy ambition to dishonesty. The spirit of God Himself calls him a thief. But,

Sixth: Let it be known that while sin is of slow progress, it is exceedingly sure. In the twenty-second chapter of Luke and the third to the sixth verses we read that Satan entered into Judas. It seems to me as if up to that time he had rather hovered about him, tempting him with his insinuations, possibly causing him to slip and fall in occasional sins, but finally he has control and then betrayal, denial and murder are the results.

I looked the other day into the face of a man who said to me, "Do you know me?" and I told him I did not, and he said, "I used to be a Christian worker and influenced thousands to come to Christ. In an unguarded moment I de-

terminated to leave my ministry and to become rich. My haste for riches was but a snare. I found myself becoming unscrupulous in my business life and now I am wrecked, certainly for time—oh,” said he, “can it be for eternity? I am separated from my wife and my children, whom I shall never see again.” And rising in an agony he cried out as I have rarely heard a man cry, “God have mercy upon me! God have mercy upon me!”

III

There are but three things that I would like to say concerning Judas as I come to the end of my message.

The first is that he was heartless in the extreme. It was just after a touching scene recorded in Matthew the twenty-sixth chapter the seventh to the thirteenth verses, “There came unto him a woman having an alabaster box of very precious ointment, and poured it on his head, as he sat at meat. But when his disciples saw it, they had indignation, saying, To what purpose is this waste? For this

ointment might have been sold for much, and given to the poor. When Jesus understood it, he said unto them, Why trouble ye the woman? for she hath wrought a good work upon me. For ye have the poor always with you; but me ye have not always. For in that she hath poured this ointment on my body, she did it for my burial. Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also this, that this woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her." It was after this that Judas went to the enemies of Jesus and offered to sell him, and as if that were not enough, it was just after he had left Gethsemane, in Matthew the twenty-sixth chapter the forty-fifth to the forty-ninth verses, that he betrayed him with his kiss. "Then cometh he to his disciples and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take your rest; behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise, let us be going: behold, he is at hand that

doth betray me. And while he yet spake, lo, Judas, one of the twelve, came, and with him a great multitude, with swords and staves, from the chief priests and elders of the people. Now he that betrayed him gave them a sign, saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he: hold him fast. And forthwith he came to Jesus, and said, Hail, Master; and kissed him." The blood drops had just been rolling down the cheeks of the Master, for he sweat, as it were, great drops of blood; and I can quite understand how upon the very lips of Judas the condemning blood may have left its mark. But do not condemn him; he is scarcely more heartless than the man who to-day rejects him after all his gracious ministry, his sacrificial death and his mediatorial work of nineteen hundred years.

Second: His death was awful. Acts 1: 18, "Now this man purchased a field with the reward of iniquity; and falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out." I can

imagine him going out to the place where he is to end it all, remembering as he walked how Jesus had looked at him, recalling, doubtless, some of his spoken messages, and certainly remembering how once he had been with him in all his unfaithful ministry. All this must have swept before him like a great panorama, and with the vision of his betrayed Master still before him he swings himself out into the eternity; and then as if to make the end more terrible the rope broke and his body burst and his very bowels gushed forth. Oh, if it be true that the *way* of the transgressor is hard, in the name of God what shall we say of the end?

Third: I would like to imagine another picture. What if instead of going out to the scene of his disgraceful death he had waited until after Jesus had risen? What if he had tarried behind some one of those great trees near the city along the way which he should walk, or, possibly on the Emmaus way? What if

he had hidden behind some great rock and simply waited? While it is true that he must have trembled as he waited, what if after it all he had simply thrown himself on the mercy of Jesus and had said to him, "Master, I have from the first been untrue; for thirty pieces of silver I sold thee and with these lips I betrayed thee with a kiss; but Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy upon me"? There would have been written in the New Testament Scriptures the most beautiful story that the inspired book contains. Nothing could have been so wonderful as the spirit of him who is able to save to the uttermost, and who never turned away from any seeking sinner, and he would, I am sure, have taken Judas in his very arms; he, too, might have given him a kiss, not of betrayal, but of the sign of his complete forgiveness, and Judas might have shone to-day in the city of God as shines Joseph of Arimathæa, Paul the Apostle, Peter the Preacher.

The saddest story I know is the story of Judas, for it is the account of a man who resisted the grace of God and must regret it through eternity.

AN OLD-FASHIONED HOME

TEXT: "*What have they seen in thy house?*"—
2 Kings 20: 15.

If you will tell me what is in your own house by your own choice I will tell you the story of your home life and will be able to inform you whether yours is a home in which there is harmony and peace or confusion and despair. Let me read the names of the guests in your guest book, allow me to study the titles of the books in your library in which you have special delight, permit me to scan your magazines which you particularly like, allow me to listen to your conversation when you do not know that you are being overheard, give me the privilege of talking but for a moment to your servants, and make it possible for me to visit with your friends in whom you have particular delight—and I will write a true story of what you have been, of what you are, and of what you will be but for the grace of God,

even though I may not know you personally at all. In other words, whatever may be seen in your home determines what your home is.

I was a man grown before I visited Washington, the capital of the nation. I was the guest of a member of the President's Cabinet. Riding with him the first evening, when the moon was shining, we suddenly came upon the National Capitol, and I said to my host, "What in the world is that?" He said, with a smile, as if he pitied me, "That is the Capitol building, and that is the home of the nation." I am sure he was right in a sense, because the building is magnificent, and is in every way the worthy home of such a nation as ours; but I think I take issue with him, after careful thought, in his statement that the Capitol building is the home of the nation. I can recall a visit made to a home which was not in any sense palatial, where the old-fashioned father every morning and evening read his Bible, knelt in prayer with his household about him,

commended to God his children each by name, presented the servants at the throne of grace, and then sang with them all one of the sweet hymns of the church; and from the morning prayer they went forth to the day of victory, while from the evening prayer they went to sleep the undisturbed sleep of the just, with the angels of heaven keeping watch over them.

I recall another home in the State of Ohio where the father and mother were scarcely known outside of their own county. The size of their farm was ten acres, but they reared two boys and two girls whose mission has been world-wide and whose names are known wherever the church of Christ is known and wherever the English language is spoken. These, in the truest sense, are the homes of the nation, and such homes give us men and women as true as steel.

Napoleon once was asked, "What is the greatest need of the French nation?" He hesitated a moment and then said, with marked emphasis, "The greatest need of

the French nation is mothers." If you will ask me the greatest need of America I could wish in my reply that I might speak with the power of a Napoleon and that my words might live as long, for I would say, the greatest need of the American nation to-day is homes; not palatial buildings, but homes where Christ is honored, where God is loved, and where the Bible is studied.

A returned missionary, who had been for twenty-five years away from his home because he would not accept his furloughs, was asked after he had been in California for a little season what impressed him the most after his absence of a quarter of a century. The reporter expected him to say that he was impressed with the telephone system which bound houses and cities together, or that he was amazed at the wireless telegraphy, by means of which on the wave currents of the air messages were sent from one city to another; but the returned missionary expressed no such surprise. He said, "When I went away

from America almost every home had its family altar; now that I have returned I have watched very carefully and find that a family altar in a home is the exception and not the rule." Wherever this is true there is real cause for great alarm, for in proportion as the home fails the nation is in danger.

Hezekiah had been sick unto death. The word of the Lord by the mouth of the Prophet came to him, saying, "Set thy house in order, for thou must die." Then he recovered for a season. The King of Babylon sent messengers to him, and when the messengers had gone Isaiah asked him the question of the text, "What have they seen in thy house?"

The dearest and most sacred spot on earth is home. Around it are the most sacred associations, about it cluster the sweetest memories. The buildings are not always palatial, the furnishings are not always of the best, but when the home is worthy of the name ladders are let down from heaven to those below, the angels of

God come down, bringing heaven's blessing and ascend, taking earth's crosses. Such a home is the dearest spot on earth, because there your father worked and your mother loved. There is no love which surpasses this.

Some years ago, when the English soldiers were fighting and a Scotch regiment came to assist, the Scotchmen, strangely enough, began to die in great numbers. The skill of the physicians was baffled. They could not tell why it was that there seemed to be such a rapid falling away of the men. But at last they discovered the cause. The Scotch pipers were playing the tunes that reminded the Scotchman of the heather and the hills, and they were dying of homesickness. When the music was changed the deaths in such large numbers almost instantly ceased.

We are drifting away from our old-fashioned homes; fathers have grown too busy, mothers have delegated their God-given work to others. We have lost instead of gained. Wherever the homes are

full of weakness the government is in danger. The homes of our country are so many streams pouring themselves into the great current of moral and social life. If the home life is pure, then all is pure. I stand with that company of people to-day who believe that we are at the beginning of a great revival of religion, and I am persuaded that this revival is to be helped on not so much by preaching, though that is not to be ignored; nor by singing, though that in itself is useful; but it is to be helped or hindered by the condition of the homes in our land.

I

I have a friend, George R. Stuart, who says that when God himself would start a nation he made home life the deciding question. He selected Abraham as the head of the home, and in Genesis, the eighteenth chapter and the nineteenth verse, he gives the reason for this in these words: "For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him."

There are two great principles which must prevail in every home:

First: *Authority*, suggested by the word "command."

Second: *Example*, suggested by the expression, "He will command his children and his household after him."

In order that one may rightly command he must himself be controlled or be able to obey an authority higher than his own. It is absolutely impossible for one to be the father he ought to be and not be a Christian, or to be worthy of the name of mother and not yield allegiance to Jesus Christ. If we are to set before those about us a right example, we cannot begin too soon. Your children are a reproduction of yourself, weakness in them is weakness in yourself, strength in them is but the reproduction of your own virtue.

A convention of mothers met some years ago in the city of Cincinnati and was discussing the question as to when one ought properly to begin to train the child for Christ. One mother said, "I begin at

six"; another suggested seven as the proper age; another said, "I begin when my child takes his first step, and thus point him to Christ, or when he speaks his first word I teach him the name of Jesus." Finally an old saint arose and said, "You are all of you wrong; the time to begin to train the child is the generation before the child is born," and this we all know to be true.

But the responsibility does not rest simply upon mothers; fathers cannot ignore their God-given position. Judge Alton B. Parker and his favorite grandson, Alton Parker Hall, five years old, narrowly escaped death by drowning in the Hudson River. For half an hour the two played in the water. Then Judge Parker took the boy for a swim into deep water. Placing the boy on his back, he swam around for awhile, and then, deciding to float, turned over, seating the boy astride his chest. In this manner the judge floated a distance from the wharf before noticing it. Then he attempted to turn over again,

intending to swim nearer the shore. In the effort to transfer the boy to his back the little fellow became frightened and tightly clasped the judge about the neck. Judge Parker called to the boy to let go his hold, but the youth only held on the tighter, and, frightened at the evident distress of the judge, began to whimper. In a few moments the grasp of the boy became so tight that Judge Parker could not breathe. He tried to shake the boy loose, and then attempted to break his grasp. The boy held on with the desperation of death, however, and every effort of the judge only plunged them both beneath the choking waves. With his last few remaining breaths, Judge Parker gave up the struggle and shouted for assistance. The mistake that the distinguished man made was that he went too far from shore with the boy. There are too many men to-day who are doing the same thing. They are going out too far in social life, they are too lax in the question of amusements, they are too thoughtless on the sub-

ject of dissipation. Some day they will stop, themselves recovering, but their boys will be gone.

Example counts for everything in a home. If there is any blessing in my own life or others, if there has been any helpfulness in my ministry to others, I owe it all to my mother, who lived before me a consistent Christian life and died giving me her blessing; and to my father, who with his arms about me one day said, "My son, if you go wrong it will kill me." I was at one time under the influence of a boy older than myself and cursed with too much money. I had taken my first questionable step at least, and was on my way one night to a place which was at least questionable if not sinful. I had turned the street corner and ahead of me was the very gate to hell. Suddenly, as I turned, the face of my father came before me and his words rang in my very soul. If my father had been anything but a consistent Christian man I myself, I am sure, would have been far from the pulpit,

and might have been in the lost world. There are those who seem to think that the height of one's ambition is to amass a fortune, to build a palace or to acquire a social position. My friend, George R. Stuart, says you may build your palaces, amass your fortunes, provide for the satisfaction of every desire, but as you sit amid these luxurious surroundings waiting for the staggering steps of a son, or as you think of a wayward daughter, all this will be as nothing, for there is nothing that can give happiness to the parents of Godless, wayward children. Some one has said, "Every drunkard, every gambler, every lost woman once sat in a mother's lap, and the downfall of the most of them may be traced to some defect in home life."

The real purpose of every home is to shape character for time and eternity. The home may be one of poverty, the cross of self-sacrifice may be required, suffering may sometimes be necessary, but wherever a home fulfills this purpose it is overflowing with joy. One of my

friends has drawn the following picture which he says is fanciful, but which I think is absolutely true to life:

Back in the country there is a boy who wants to go to a college and get an education. They call him a book-worm. Wherever they find him—in the barn or in the house—he is reading a book. “What a pity it is,” they say, “that Ed cannot get an education!” His father, work as hard as he will, can no more than support the family by the products of the farm. One night Ed has retired to his room and there is a family conference about him. The sisters say, “Father, I wish you would send Ed to college; if you will we will work harder than we ever did, and we will make our old dresses do.” The mother says, “Yes, I will get along without any hired help; although I am not as strong as I used to be, I think I can get along without any hired help.” The father says, “Well, I think by husking corn nights in the barn I can get along without any assistance.” Sugar is banished from the table, butter

is banished from the plate. That family is put down on rigid, yea, suffering, economy that the boy may go to college. Time passes on. Commencement day has come and the professors walk in on the stage in their long gowns and their classic but absurd hats. The interest of the occasion is passing on, and after a while it comes to a climax of interest as the valedictorian is introduced. Ed has studied so hard and worked so well that he has had the honor conferred upon him. There are rounds of applause, sometimes breaking into vociferation. It is a great day for Ed. But away back in the galleries are his sisters in their old plain hats and faded clothes, and the old-fashioned father and mother; dear me, she has not had a new hat for six years; he has not had a new coat for a longer time. They rise and look over on the platform, then they laugh and they cry, and as they sit down, their faces grow pale, and then are very flushed. Ed gets the garlands and the old-fashioned group in

the gallery have their full share of the triumph. They have made that scene possible, and in the day that God shall more fully reward self-sacrifice made for others, he will give grand and glorious recognition. "As his part is that goeth down to battle, so shall his part be that tarrieth by the stuff."

This experience describes a home in the truest sense of the word better than all the palaces the world has ever known where love is lacking and the spirit of God is gone.

II

There are two great forces in every home. I speak of the father and the mother, not but that the children have their part in either making or breaking a household, but these two are the mightiest of agencies.

The mother stands first. There are certain things which must be true of every mother. She must be a Christian. The father may fail if he must, but let the mother fail and God pity the children. She must be consistent. The children

may forget the inconsistencies of the father but when the mother fails the impression is lasting as time and almost as lasting as eternity. She must be prayerful. I do not know of anything that lifts so many burdens or puts upon the face such a look of beauty as the spirit of prayer. And she must study her Bible. When we pray we talk with God, but when we read the Bible God talks with us and every mother needs his counsel.

A poor young man stood before a judge in a great court to be sentenced to death. When asked if he had anything to say, he bowed his head and said, "Oh, your honor, if I had only had a mother!"

A mother's love is unfailing. When I was in Atlanta, Georgia, in October, 1904, a little girl and an old mother came to see the governor. They had met on the train, and the child agreed to take the old lady to see the governor of the State. They entered the governor's office and she spoke as follows:

"I want to see the governor," was the

straightforward request of the little lady addressed to Major Irwin, the private secretary to the governor, as he inquired her errand.

“That is the governor standing there. He will see you in a moment,” replied the major, indicating Governor Terrell standing in the group. The governor went over to her. “What can I do for you, dear?” he asked. Throwing back her curls she opened wide her baby brown eyes and said:

“Governor, it is not for me; it is for this old lady. Her name is Mrs. Hackett, and she wants to talk to you about pardoning her boy.” This was said by a little lady of eleven, who spoke with all the grace and *savoir-faire* of a woman twice her age.

In a voice choked with emotion, Mrs. Hackett began her tearful, scarcely audible story and presented her petition for clemency for her boy.

“Governor, have mercy on me,” she began, and threw back her bonnet, showing a face wrinkled by age and furrowed and

drawn by suffering, "and give me back my boy."

Breaking down under the strain of talking to the governor, whom she had planned for months to see, the pleading mother gave way to her grief. The governor was visibly moved, and continued to stroke the curly hair of Mrs. Hackett's little guide. "Give me back my boy. I am an old woman, going on seventy-nine, and I cannot be here long. I know I am standing with one foot in the grave, and I do want to hear my boy, my baby, say to me, 'Ma, I'm free.' Let me go down on my knees to you and beg that you have mercy on a mother's breaking heart. During the last month I picked five hundred pounds of cotton and made two dollars to get here to see you. I got here without a cent, and this little angel gave me a dollar—her all. I don't care if I have to walk back home, for I've seen you and told you of my boy."

With unsteady voice the governor told her the law, and referred her gently to the

prison commission, assuring her that they would give her petition the most considerate attention. I am told that when the books were examined the crime was found to be one of the blackest on the calendar, and yet the mother loved him.

Her love always stimulates love. It lasts when everything else fails. A man cannot wander so far from God as to forget his mother, or go so deep in sin as to be unmindful of her sweet influence.

The following is a sketch, full of touching interest, of a little ragged newsboy who had lost his mother. In the tenderness of his affection for her he was determined that he would raise a stone to her memory.

His mother and he had kept house together and they had been all to each other, but now she was taken, and the little fellow's loss was irreparable. Getting a stone was no easy task, for his earnings were small; but love is strong. Going to a cutter's yard and finding that even the cheaper class of stones was far too expensive for him, he at length fixed upon

a broken shaft of marble, part of the remains of an accident in the yard, and which the proprietor kindly named at such a low figure that it came within his means. There was much yet to be done, but the brave little chap was equal to it.

The next day he conveyed the stone away on a little four-wheeled cart, and managed to have it put in position. The narrator, curious to know the last of the stone, visited the cemetery one afternoon, and he thus describes what he saw and learned:

“Here it is,” said the man in charge, and, sure enough, there was our monument, at the head of one of the newer graves. I knew it at once. Just as it was when it left our yard, I was going to say, until I got a little nearer to it and saw what the little chap had done. I tell you, boys, when I saw it there was something blurred my eyes, so’s I couldn’t read it at first. The little man had tried to keep the lines straight, and evidently thought that capitals would make it look better and bigger,

for nearly every letter was a capital. I copied it, and here it is; but you want to see it on the stone to appreciate it:

MY MOTHER

SHEE DIED LAST WEAK

SHEE WAS ALL I HAD. SHEE

SED SHEAD BEE WAITING FUR—

and here the boy's lettering stopped. After awhile I went back to the man in charge and asked him what further he knew of the little fellow who brought the stone. "Not much," he said; "not much. Didn't you notice a fresh little grave near the one with the stone? Well, that's where he is. He came here every afternoon for some time working away at that stone, and one day I missed him, and then for several days. Then the man came out from the church that had buried the mother and ordered the grave dug by her side. I asked if it was for the little chap. He said it was. The boy had sold all his papers one day, and was hurrying along the street out this way. There was a runaway team

just above the crossing, and—well—he was run over, and lived but a day or two.” He had in his hand when he was picked up an old file sharpened down to a point, that he did all the lettering with. They said he seemed to be thinking only of that until he died, for he kept saying, “I didn’t get it done, but she’ll know I meant to finish it, won’t she? I’ll tell her so, for she’ll be waiting for me,” and he died with those words on his lips. When the men in the cutter’s yard heard the story of the boy the next day, they clubbed together, got a good stone, inscribed upon it the name of the newsboy, which they succeeded in getting from the superintendent of the Sunday school which the little fellow attended, and underneath it the touching words: “He loved his mother.”

God pity the mother with such an influence as this if she is leading in the wrong direction!

It is necessary also to say just a word about the father. There are many pictures of fathers in the Bible. Jacob gives

us one when he cries, "Me ye have bereft of my children."

David gives another when he cries, "O Absalom, my son." The father of the Prodigal adds a new touch of beauty to the picture when he calls for the best robe to be put upon his boy. I allow no one to go beyond me in paying tribute to a mother's love, but I desire in some special way to pay tribute to the devotion and consistency of a father.

There are special requisites which must be made without which no father can maintain his God-given position. He must be a Christian. I rode along a country road with my little boy some time ago. I found that he was speaking to my friends just as I spoke to them. One man called my attention to it and said, "It is amusing, isn't it?" To me it was anything but amusing. If my boy is to speak as I speak, walk as I walk, then God help me to walk as a Christian.

He must be a man of prayer. No man can bear the burdens of life or meet its

responsibilities properly if he is a stranger to prayer.

He must be a man of Bible study. One of the most priceless treasures I have is a Bible my father studied, the pages of which he turned over and over, and which I never used to read without a great heart throb.

“I con its pages o’er and o’er;
Its interlinings mark a score
Of promises most potent, sweet,
In verses many of each sheet;
Albeit the gilding dull of age,
And yellow-hued its every page,
No book more precious e’er may be
Than father’s Biblè is to me.

“Its tear-stained trace fresh stirs my heart
The corresponding tear to start;
Of trials, troubles herein brought,
For comfort never vainly sought,
For help in sorest hour of need,
For love to crown the daily deed,
No book more precious e’er may be
Than father’s Bible is to me.”

He must also erect in his house a family altar. I know that many business men

will say this is impossible, but it is not impossible. If your business prevents your praying with your children, then there must be something wrong with your business. If your life prevents it, then you ought to see to it that your life is made right and that quickly.

My friend, George R. Stuart, one of the truest men I know, gave me the following picture of a Christian home. He said: "When I was preaching in Nashville, at the conclusion of my sermon a Methodist preacher came up and laid his hand upon my shoulder and said, 'Brother Stuart, how your sermon to-day carried me back to my home! My father was a local preacher, and the best man I ever saw. He is gone to heaven now. We have a large family; mother is still at home, and I should like to see all the children together once more and have you come and dedicate our home to God, while we all rededicate ourselves to God before precious old mother leaves. If you will come with me, I will gather all the

family together next Friday for that purpose.' I consented to go. The old home was a short distance from the city of Nashville. There were a large number of brothers and sisters. One was a farmer; one was a doctor; one was a real estate man; one was a bookkeeper; one was a preacher; and so on, so that they represented many professions of life. The preacher brother took me out to the old home, where all the children had gathered. As we drove up to the gate I saw the brothers standing in little groups about the yard, whittling and talking. Did you never stand in the yard of the old home after an absence of many years, and entertain memories brought up by every beaten path and tree and gate and building about the old place? I was introduced to these noble-looking men who, as the preacher brother told me, were all members of churches, living consistent Christian lives, save the younger boy, who had wandered away a little, and the real object of this visit was to bring him back to God.

“The old mother was indescribably happy. There was a smile lingering in the wrinkles of her dear old face. We all gathered in the large, old-fashioned family room in the old-fashioned semicircle, with mother in her natural place in the corner. The preacher brother laid the large family Bible in my lap and said, ‘Now, Brother Stuart, you are in the home of a Methodist preacher; do what you think best.’

“I replied, ‘As I sit to-day in the family of a Methodist preacher, let us begin our service with an old-fashioned experience meeting. I want each child, in the order of your ages, to tell your experience.’ The oldest arose and pointed his finger at the oil portrait of his father, hanging on the wall, and said in substance about as follows: ‘Brother Stuart, there is the picture of the best father God ever gave a family. Many a time he has taken me to his secret place of prayer, put his hand on my head, and prayed for his boy. And at every turn of my life, since he has left me, I have felt

the pressure of his hand on my head, and have seen the tears upon his face, and have heard the prayers from his trembling lips. I have not been as good a man since his death as I ought to have been, but I stand up here to-day to tell you and my brothers and sisters and my dear old mother that I am going to live a better life from this hour until I die.' Overcome with emotion, he took his seat, and the children in order spoke on the same line. Each one referred to the place of secret prayer and the father's hand upon the head. At last we came to the youngest boy, who, with his face buried in his hands, was sobbing and refused to speak. The preacher brother very pathetically said, 'Buddy, say a word; there is no one here but the family, and it will help you.'

"He arose, holding the back of his chair, and looked up at me and said, 'Brother Stuart, they tell me that you have come to dedicate this home to God; but my old mother here has never let it get an inch

from God. They tell you that this meeting is called that my brothers and sisters may dedicate their lives to God, but they are good. I know them. I am the only black sheep in this flock. Every step I have wandered away from God and the life of my precious father, I have felt his hand upon my head and heard his blessed words of prayer. To-day I come back to God, back to my father's life, and so help me God, I will never wander away again.'

"Following his talk came a burst of sobbing and shouting, and I started that old hymn, 'Amazing grace (how sweet the sound!) that saved a wretch like me!' etc., and we had an old-fashioned Methodist class-meeting, winding up with a shout. As I walked away from that old homestead I said in my heart, 'It is the salt of a good life that saves the children.' A boy never gets over the fact that he had a good father."

"What have they seen in thy house?"
If we are to help our children for time and eternity, our homes must be better, our

lives must be truer, our ambition to do God's will must be supreme. When these conditions are met it will be possible for us to answer the question of the text.

THE SWELLING OF JORDAN

TEXT: "*How wilt thou do in the swelling of Jordan?*"—Jer. 12:5.

High up in the mountains of Anti-Lebanon a famous river was born which was to play so important a part in the history of God's people that it would not have been strange if the birds of heaven had chanted their praises when first it began its journey. From four different places in the mountain the stream starts. Then the four streams become one, and in a single channel the river makes its way across the plain.

There are two chief characteristics which must be borne in mind. The first is that a part of its journey is through a rocky country, and caves are on either side of the river, sometimes one above another; frequently three caves are to be seen one above another. The other characteristic is that it overflows its banks in all

the time of harvest. These two things must be kept in mind if the text would teach its lesson.

There are certain people who will always remember the river Jordan—the children of Israel first of all, because it separated them from the Promised Land; and while scripturally Canaan does not stand for Heaven, yet in the mind of many it does, and the Jordan typifies an experience which stands between us and the future. Naaman will remember it, for when he came as a leper to the servant of God he was bidden to wash seven times in this river. At first he rebelled against the thought, finally he entered the stream, bathed twice, three times, four, five, six times, and was still a leper; but you will remember the word of the Lord, seven times must he bathe, and when the seventh plunge was taken, behold, his flesh was as the flesh of a little child! No man need expect to have light and peace and power or eternal life until he has fulfilled all the commands of God.

The wild beasts frequently make their way to these caves as a place of refuge. When the waters begin to rise they are driven out, when they go to the higher cave, and then to the highest of all, and the waters constantly rising fill this cave and they are overpowered and put to death. They are an illustration for us. Men of to-day are in caves of different sorts; some in the cave of dissipation, others in the cave of infidelity, and still others in the cave of morality. One day the waters of judgment will begin to rise, and it will be an awful thing to stand in terror before God, driven forth without refuge.

I

Dissipation. "I am in the clutch of an awful sin," wrote some one to me recently, whether man or woman I cannot tell, but this was the story:

Three years before the writer had been free, and then in an unguarded moment had gone down. Now came the pathetic cry, "I am helpless and hopeless." I do

not know what the sin was, but it makes no difference; any sin can bind us if we but yield to it. Under the subject of dissipation I do not speak of drinking as the worst of sins, because it is not the worst, by any means. I had a thousand times rather admit to my home the drunkard who has been cursed with his appetite than to admit there the man who is lecherous, who possibly stands high in society and in the business world, but whose sin is great and whose heart is vile beyond description. I speak of drinking because it is the most common of sins.

John B. Gough cries out concerning this sin, "I do not speak of it boastingly," said he, "for I have known what the curse of strong drink is; I have felt it in my own life and seen it in others, but I say the truth, let the bread of affliction be given me to eat, take away from me the friends of my old age, let the hut of poverty be my dwelling place, let the wasting hand of disease be placed upon me, let me live in the whirlwind and dwell in the storm,

when I would do good let evil come upon me—do all this, merciful God, but save me from the death of a drunkard.” When he would speak in such language, God pity the man who yields to such a sin.

It may be that gambling is your weak point. When I was in Colorado a young man who was a graduate of Harvard, the honor man of his class, and who had recently buried his wife, sat at the gambling table, staked his last dollar and lost it; then deliberately put up his little child and lost her; and then, in despair, blew out his brains and sent his soul to hell. When such a man of culture and training would go down under such a sin, God pity the man who yields to it.

Or it may be licentiousness, that sin which makes men lower than the beasts of the field, from which one can scarcely break away. I do not know what the sin may be that clutches your life, but if you have given way to it and rejected Christ, how wilt thou do in the swelling of Jordan, when the waters rise higher and

higher and you are without Christ and without hope?

II

Some are in the cave of infidelity. That there are honest skeptics in the world we all believe, and the honest skeptic is one who says, "I cannot believe as you do, and I do not know that I would if I could, but if your hope is any comfort to you, then cling to it and go down to your grave trusting in it."

The dishonest skeptic is the man who sneers at my faith, who laughs at the old-fashioned religion, who says that once he believed in it but has grown away from it, seemingly forgetting that the greatest men the country has ever produced have been humble followers of Jesus of Nazareth. Infidelity does not satisfy. It leaves an aching void in life and mocks us in death. Besides, it is deceiving and the talk of the infidel orator is deceiving. Said one of the most eloquent not many years ago, "When I think of the Christian's God and the Christian's Bible, I am glad I am not

a Christian. I had rather be the humblest German peasant that ever lived, sitting in his cottage, vine clad, from which the grapes hang, made purple by the kiss of the sun as the day dies out of the sky, shod with wooden shoes, clad in homespun, at peace with the world, his family about him, with never a thought of God—I say the truth I had rather be such a peasant than any Christian that I have ever known.” And when he said it the people cheered him. It was, however, but the trick of an orator. Let us change the sentences and give a new ring to the thought. “When I think of what infidelity would do I am glad I am not an infidel; how it would rob me of the hope of seeing my mother and meeting again my child; how it would take me in despair to the grave and send me away with a broken heart—I say I am glad I am not an infidel. I had rather be the humblest German peasant that ever lived, sitting in his cottage, vine clad, from which the grapes hang, made purple by the kiss of the sun

as the day dies out of the sky, clad in homespun, shod with wooden shoes, at peace with the world and at peace with God, his family Bible upon his knees, the look of ineffable joy in his face and singing that grand old hymn of Luther's, 'A mighty fortress is our God'—I had rather be such a German peasant than to be the mightiest infidel the world has ever known," and so I would, a thousand thousand times. God pity you if you allow yourself to put Christ out of your life and stand in the midst of the rising floods with no hope in him! How wilt thou do in the swelling of Jordan?

III

Some are in the cave of morality. It seems a strange thing to have a word to say against it, only when we remember that he that offends in one point is guilty of all, and when we remember God's word as he has declared, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all the things written in the Book of the law to do them."

Then the question for the moralist is this, "Have you ever offended in one point?"

A splendid steamer was launched on Lake Champlain. She made her way safely across the lake and started back, when a storm came upon her, the engines were disabled and she drifted to the rocks. "Out with the anchor," said the captain, and the command was obeyed, but still she drifted, and although the anchor was down she crashed against the rocks with an awful force, and all because the anchor chain was three feet too short. Your morality so far as it goes may be a good thing, but it does not reach the standard of God, nor can it until you are safely united to Christ; and if you have put him out of your life and stand alone in the midst of the rising floods, then how wilt thou do in the swelling of Jordan?

Sin is a terrible thing. It not only blights our hopes and prospects for the future, but it wrecks the strongest characters. One has only to open his eyes to see, if he will but look abroad, what dread-

ful havoc this awful evil hath wrought in the world, and yet the wonderful thing is that "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life," and no matter how dreadful the wreck or how awful the ruin, Jesus Christ comes seeking to save that which was lost.

Major Whittle used to tell the story of the aged Quaker named Hartmann whose son had enlisted in the army. There came the news of a dreadful battle, and this old father, in fear and trembling, started to the scene of conflict that he might learn something concerning his boy. The officer of the day told him that he had not answered to his name, and that there was every reason to believe that he was dead. This did not satisfy the father, so, leaving headquarters, he started across the battlefield, looking for the one who was dearer to him than life. He would stoop down and turn over the face of this one and then the face of another, but

without success. The night came on, and then with a lantern he continued his search, all to no purpose. Suddenly the wind, which was blowing a gale, extinguished his lantern, and he stood there in the darkness hardly knowing what to do until his fatherly ingenuity, strength and affection prompted him to call out his son's name, and so he stood and shouted, "John Hartmann, thy father calleth thee." All about him he would hear the groans of the dying and some one saying, "Oh, if that were only my father." He continued his cry with more pathos and power until at last in the distance he heard his boy's voice crying tremblingly, "Here, father." The old man made his way across the field shouting out, "Thank God! Thank God!" Taking him in his arms, he bore him to headquarters, nursed him back to health and strength, and he lives to-day. Over the battlefield of the slain this day walks Jesus Christ, the Son of God, crying out to all who are wrecked by this awful power, "Thy Father calleth thee," and if

there should be but the faintest response to his cry he would take the lost in his arms and bear them home to heaven. Will you not come while he calls **to-day?**

A CALL TO JUDGMENT

TEXT: "*I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing, therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live.*"—Deut. 30: 19.

Moses was a wonderful man; whether you view him as a poet or as a leader of men, he is alike great. This text was spoken by him to the people of Israel at the close of his career. The leadership of God's chosen people is now to be transferred to Joshua, and it is in order that he may speak to them as they should be addressed, and at the same time in order that he may free himself from judgment, that he speaks as he does.

I have two great desires as I present this message.

First, that I might myself be faithful, and that it might be said that I am free from the blood of all men, for I have not shunned to declare unto you the whole counsel of God.

Second, that I might help some one to the knowledge of Christ. This is no time for argument, for argument always calls forth discussion. It is no time for theory. Practical, every-day people of the world care nothing for mere theories. And it is no time for speculation, for to give such to the people is like giving a stone when they have asked for bread. But it is time for eternal choice. The audience of the preacher vanishes when he thinks of the text and its meaning and he is face to face with the Judgment when he shall be judged for the way he has spoken, and the people shall be called to account for the way they have heard. It is indeed a solemn word. "I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live."

I

Record. I desire to use this word

as if it were a noun for the time being, for it will bring to us the same truth. This leads me to say that every one is making a record, either good or bad. Deep down through the surface of the earth you will find the evidence of storms centuries ago; the record was indelibly made.

Two records are being kept. This is indicated in the twentieth chapter of Revelation, where it is said, "And the books were opened." Notice that it is plural and not singular. There is a record in heaven kept by the Recording Angel. If it were in the memory of God it would be an awful thing, for while God does not remember forgiven sin, he cannot, from the very nature of the case, forget unpardoned sin, and if that is the record one day we shall meet it face to face.

There is also a record upon earth. We have seen it in the characters of men who have gone astray, and in the faces of those who have been affected by their sins.

In an eastern city where I was preaching my attention was called to a young man of brilliant prospects. He was a member of a great wholesale grocery firm, and young men looked at him almost with envy; but he began to drink, and at the end of a year the senior partner called him in to say that he must change his conduct or retire from the firm. He made promises only to break them, and finally, going from bad to worse, he was forced to retire. One morning we read the news in the paper that his bloated body had been found floating in the Hudson river; and his old father, up to a few years ago, walked up and down the streets with bowed head, giving every evidence of an almost broken heart. Sin is an awful thing and makes its record on whatever it touches.

II

Two Ways. There are just two ways in this world along which men may

walk, and they are not parallel ways. I used to have that idea, but I am sure it is wrong. As a matter of fact, it is but one way; going in one direction is death, and in the opposite direction is life.

First: Away from God, away from his love, every step only leads us farther from Him—not because of anything he is, but because of what we have done ourselves.

A father in the South sent his boy to a northern university, and for seven years he was away from the restraints of his home. Then he came back with his diploma but with the habit of intemperance fastened upon him. It seemed impossible for him to break it, and his old father was fairly crushed. His mother broke her heart and died, all because of her boy. And yet the father loved him. One day the old father stepped from his carriage in the town in which he lived. The son was heard to make a request of him, and when evidently it was refused the boy turned

and struck him full in the face. The old father staggered and would have fallen to the walk except for assistance. He entered his carriage, drove back to his home, the servants saw him go out into the grove where his wife was buried, throw himself on the grave and shriek aloud. Some time later the boy returned and the father met him at the door to say, "You must go away; you have disgraced my name and killed your mother and broken my heart." This is the measure of a father's love perhaps in this one instance, but think how many times you have trifled with God, spurned his love, disregarded his Son, and yet he has loved you. And remember also that word which says,

"There is a time, we know not when,
A place, we know not where,
That seals the destiny of men
For glory or despair."

Second: *Towards God*. How easy a thing it is, therefore, to be saved if there is but one way and this way runs in oppo-

site directions, meaning either life or death. It is just to "right about face," as the soldier would say, by an act of the will and with the help of God to turn away from sin and from self. I am very sure we can do it, because it is commanded in this text, and God would not mock us with a command which could not be obeyed. I am equally sure that we must do it now, for God has plainly stated this in his Word.

III

Choose Life. As has been indicated, the text proves that we may choose life if we will, but I have more especially in mind the question, "Why should we do it?" and I answer, because it is the best sort of life and the only life.

One of my friends used to tell of a man whom he saw in Colonel Clarke's mission. The man rose for prayers and accepted Christ. Later on he saw him again in the mission. He went forward to testify. He had that look upon his face the result of sin, because of

which you could not tell whether he was young or old, and leaning up against the platform he gave his testimony. Among other things he said: "I came to Chicago some little time ago from my home in the east, my father having made two requests—first, that I should change my name because I had disgraced his; second, that I should go away and never return. I had fallen too low here for them to receive me even in the station house, and I was on my way to end it all when I heard the music of this mission and came in and found Christ. As I came down the aisle this evening I heard one man say to another, 'He is getting paid for this,' and I wish to say that I am. I have a letter in my pocket from my father, and he tells me that I cannot come home too soon for him. Boys, I am getting paid. I have a sister at home whose name I would hardly dare to have taken upon my impure lips, and she writes me that every day she has prayed for me and

that a welcome home awaits me. I am getting paid, for to-night I am starting back to my New England home.”

It is life which we may choose, and life of the very best sort. It is better than anything that this world can give. Men have tried other ways, and they have ended in despair and shame and death, but this way is the path of the just and shines brighter and brighter unto the perfect day. Therefore choose life and choose it now.

In St. Paul's cathedral in London it is said that under the dome there is a red mark, and I have been told that this mark indicates the place where a workman lost his life. He fell from the scaffolding and was dashed to pieces upon the floor. I have been told that in the Alps very frequently you will see black crosses where men have slipped into eternity as the result of an accident. But I suggest these stories in order that I may say that where you are at this present moment may be the black

cross of death, because there some one rejected Christ. If you feel this, choose Jesus Christ; choose him, and choose him now.

“I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live.”

A CHANGED LIFE

TEXT: “*And, behold, there was a woman which had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bowed together, and could in no wise lift herself up. And when Jesus saw her, he called her to him, and said unto her, Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity: And he laid his hands on her; and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God.*”—Luke 13: 11-13.

These verses present to us one of the most interesting stories imaginable—of interest to us first because it is one of our Lord’s miracles, and one has only to study these manifestations of his power to be persuaded of his divinity; interesting, again, because it is the account of a remarkable recovery from a great infirmity, for instead of bondage which had held this woman for eighteen years we behold her standing upright glorifying God. But it is all the more interesting to us because it presents a picture of what may be called the overflow ministry

of Jesus, of which there are many instances—as, for example, the account of the staunching of the issue of blood when the woman touched the hem of his garment. He was going upon another errand, but was so filled with virtue that when one of the multitude at his side touched him, by faith healing was the result. And, again, we have an illustration in the raising of Jairus' daughter, and once again in the rescue of the widow's son from death. He was on his journey across the country and beheld the funeral procession coming. Mr. Moody used to say that Jesus broke up every funeral he attended, and he stops long enough in this journey to restore this boy to his broken-hearted mother. Again, in the case of the woman of Samaria, when he is going about his Father's business, he stops by the wellside to rest, and even in his resting moments forgives a woman's sins, so that under her influence an entire city is moved. Would that we could learn that it is the overflow of our lives that gives

power to our Christian experience! This text is one of the best illustrations of this truth in the life of our Savior.

I

Many lessons might be drawn from this scripture, the first of which would be his power to uplift womanhood; but this is so well understood that it is unnecessary to take a moment of time to discuss it, except to say in passing that all that woman is to-day she owes to Jesus of Nazareth. She was as truly bound as this afflicted woman, and just as truly was she set free. But I prefer rather to let the woman of Samaria illustrate many Christians to-day who are bound in one way or another and so are shorn of power. For this suggestion I am indebted to my dear friend, the Rev. F. B. Meyer, a brief outline of whose sermon I recently had the privilege of reading.

She was a daughter of Abraham, as we read in verse 16, "And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham,

whom Satan had bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath day?" And therefore she was like many children of God whom we know. What it is that binds them we cannot always tell. With this person it is fashion, and with that it is earnings; with another it is pride, and still another selfishness; with this one it is the encouragement of some passion, and with still another it is the practice of some secret sin. It is not necessary to describe the bondage; it is true, alas, that many of us are sadly crippled in our influence because of these things, for this woman was just as truly bound as if she had been in chains. When Jesus entered the synagogue his eye saw her instantly, and he detected her difficulty. He is in the midst of us to-day, and while we are unconscious of the bondage of the one who is beside us, he understands it perfectly. That minister who has lost his old power and is therefore an enigma to his people, that church officer who is out of communion and whose tes-

timony has lost its old ring of genuineness, that young woman bordering on despair because in her heart she knows she is not right with God, and that young man whose character is being undermined by the cultivation of a secret sin—all these are known to him. He looks them through and through, and not a point of weakness is hidden from his gaze.

Note again, that she was powerless to help herself. I doubt not that she had tried again and again to lift herself up. She had been unable to turn her eyes upward to see the stars, her vision had been centered upon things below, and in this way she is like many a Christian attempting to be satisfied with earthly things and making life a miserable failure. The Scriptures declare that she "could in no wise lift up herself," and I have been told that this expression is the same word which is used in another place in the Epistle to the Hebrews, where Jesus is said to be able to save to the uttermost; so that really the Scriptures mean that she

tried to the uttermost to lift herself up and failed, and that she had gone to the uttermost in the matter of bondage, and then because Jesus is able to save to the uttermost he set her free; or, in other words, her need was met by his power. Oh, what an encouragement to know that the thing which has been your defeat and mine he may easily conquer! It is a striking picture to me; he laid his hands on her and said, "Woman, thou art loosed," and she stood straight and glorified God.

Some years ago there came into the McAuley mission, in New York City, a man who was, because of his sin, unable to speak and was bound down until, instead of standing a man six feet high, as he should have done, he was like a dwarf. He came to Christ in the old mission, and when kneeling at the altar he accepted him, as if by a miracle Jesus set him free also, and when he stood up the bonds were snapped that held him, and he had his old stature back again. His speech, however,

was not entirely recovered. It is the custom in the mission for one to observe his anniversary each year and to give a testimony. Whenever the anniversary of this man occurred he always had another read his lesson, then he would stand before the people bowed down as he had been in sin and suddenly rise before them in the full dignity of his Christian manhood, glorifying God in his standing. This was like the woman of the text, and oh, that it might be like some one reading this who, bound by an appetite or a passion, shall be set free by the power of God!

The difference between this woman in the one case bound and wretched and in the other straight and glorifying God is the difference between Christians bound by appetite, pride or sin and when set free by the power of Christ. It is the difference between the average Christian experience and what God means we should be.

Two things this woman had—first, his word, when he said, “Woman, thou

art loosed"; and, second, the touch of his hand as he laid his hands upon her. Both of these privileges we may have.

II

Have you really taken all that God meant you should have? Your life is the test of this question. If you are constantly failing at the same point, if you are dominated by a spirit of unrest, if you are lacking in spiritual power, something is wrong and you need the touch of the living Christ. The early disciples were an illustration of those of us who have not yet fully appreciated and appropriated our Savior. He had given them life, for in the seventeenth of John he declares that this is true. They had peace as a possession, for in the fourteenth chapter and twenty-seventh verse he says, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." They also had joy as a gift, for he said, "These things have I spoken unto

you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full"; and yet they quarreled among themselves, one of them denied him with an oath, and all of them forsook him. They were a weak, vacillating company of men, but suddenly there came a remarkable change. It was as if there had been two Peters. The first was a coward, the second a perfect giant in his fearlessness. The first was afraid of a little girl, the second faced a mob and fearlessly proclaimed the truth of God that condemned him; and the secret of this change is found in the fact that the Holy Ghost had fallen upon him and upon them. This is what we need. Jesus was God's gift to the world, and the Holy Ghost is his gift to the church. Have we failed to take both? A man over in England, telling his pastor about his experience, said that he had taken Jesus for his eternal life and the Holy Ghost for his internal life. This is certainly what we need to do more than anything else. We need the Holy Spirit of God in our lives. He would illuminate our

minds as we read the Bible, strengthen our faith as we appropriate Christ, transform our lives as he came to do, and enable us to live and preach in demonstration of the Spirit and with power. Have you ever stopped to think what is really associated with the full acceptance of the third Person of the Trinity?

First, *Power*. "Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost has come upon you."

Second, *Ability to pray*. "We know not what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself maketh intercession for us."

Third, *Victory over sin*. "For the law of the Spirit of Christ in Christ Jesus sets me free from the law of sin and death."

Fourth, *Cleanness of life*. "Ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit."

Fifth, *The representation of Jesus Christ*. Not imitation, but reproduction, is what we need.

Two artists are painting before a pic-

ture. The work of one is sadly deficient, the other an inspiration, for one is copying while the other is reproducing his own work. Oh, that we might be so filled with the spirit of God that men should take knowledge of us that we not only had been with Jesus but were like him! Two things we need, both of which we may have: *His word and his touch*. First, his Word. We surely have this. Has he not said, "Ye shall receive power"? But with this there is coupled a condition, "Come out from among them and be ye separate." Fulfilling this condition, we have only to step out upon his promise on the ground of the fact that he has said, "That ye might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith."

Second, we have the touch of his hand. This emphasizes his reality. One of the greatest dangers of the day, it seems to me, is the fact that we are so inclined to make him unreal. It also indicates his nearness. He can fill us so that his life may come throbbing into our very being, and this is the secret of victory

in the time of temptation. We must be empty to be filled, but no man can empty himself. Two ways may be presented for the emptying of a jar of air. First, use the air pump; but in this way it cannot be perfectly done. Second, fill the jar with water. This is the better way. When Christ fills our lives he empties us of self and sin. To some unknown friend I am indebted for four steps which we must take if we would be loosed from our bondage and stand straight in the presence of God and men.

First: What God claims I will yield; that is myself.

Second: What I yield God accepts. Since I have taken my hands off from myself I am not my own.

“I have not much to bring Thee, Lord,
For that great love which made Thee mine,
I have not much to bring Thee, Lord,
But all I am is Thine.”

Third: What God accepts he fills.

Fourth: What God fills he uses.

III

Mind you, it is not once and for all that we are filled with the Spirit of God; there will be a necessity for daily renewal, not only because we may sin but also because we may use the strength which he has imparted to us. Three suggestions may be made, therefore, for our constant infilling.

First: Make his word your daily portion. Count that day lost which passes without a portion of his word absorbed into your life.

Second: Make his will supreme. There can be no joy in the household when the children rebel against the parents. There can be no power in Christian experience when our wills are contrary to his.

Third: Make him the king of your life. His coronation will one day come, when he shall be proclaimed King of kings and Lord of lords; but while we wait for that we may crown him in our own lives.

When Queen Victoria had just ascended

her throne she went, as is the custom of Royalty, to hear "The Messiah" rendered. She had been instructed as to her conduct by those who knew, and was told that she must not rise when the others stood at the singing of the Hallelujah chorus. When that magnificent chorus was being sung and the singers were shouting "Hallelujah! hallelujah! hallelujah! for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth," she sat with great difficulty. It seemed as if she would rise in spite of the custom of kings and queens, but finally when they came to that part of the chorus where with a shout they proclaim him King of kings suddenly the young queen rose and stood with bowed head, as if she would take her own crown from off her head and cast it at his feet. Let us make him our King and every day be loyal to him. This is the secret of peace.

THE LOST OPPORTUNITY

TEXT: "*And as thy servant was busy here and there, he was gone. And the king of Israel said unto him, So shall thy judgment be; thyself hast decided it.*"—1 Kings 20: 40.

There is a very striking incident connected with this text. The great battle is raging, a certain important prisoner has been taken, and if you read between the lines you seem to know that upon him depend many of the issues of war. His skill in leading the enemy had been marvelous, his courage in the thick of the fight striking; and now he is a prisoner. The king puts him in the keeping of a Jewish soldier, saying, "Guard this man; if he escapes thy life shall be demanded for his." It is possible that they gave an extra pull to the thongs that bound the enemy and the guard was left alone with him. It is an important duty he has to perform. His life hangs in the balance.

He must have been impressed with it. But, as we read on between the lines, strange as it may seem, he becomes negligent, his bow is laid down and his spear is left standing against the tent. He becomes hungry and takes a few small cakes to eat, he is weary and lies down to doze and sleep. Suddenly there is a snap and a bound, and the guard arouses himself just in time to see his prisoner dash into the thicket, and he is gone. Now the king requires the prisoner at the guard's hand. Terror-stricken, he falls upon his face to cry aloud in the words of the text, "And as thy servant was busy here and there, he was gone. And the king of Israel said unto him, So shall thy judgment be; thyself hast decided it."

It is my purpose to show in this illustration that God is always placing opportunities within our grasp. In a sense they are bound, for they may be made to do our will if we rightly use them. And it is also my purpose to show that as saint and sinner alike we have permitted oppor-

tunities to slip away while we doze in weariness or give attention to matters of less importance. God save us all from the expression, "It might have been," when it is too late, for even God himself cannot reverse the wheels of time and bring back the lost opportunity. We see this all about us. I hold in my hands a piece of cold iron. I cannot bend it; if I put it in the fire it becomes pliant; if I take it out it is cold again. There is a point in time, however, where it is bent as easily as a piece of paper.

Years ago our nation sent astronomers to Africa to witness the transit of Venus. Preparation for this great sight had been going on for months. There was a critical moment when the sun, Venus and the earth were all in line. Every astronomer knew that at that moment his eye must be at the smaller end of the glass if he would see the planet go flying past the larger end. If he should miss that moment no power on earth could bring the planet back again. The world is full of these moments.

Galileo studied the eye of an ox and beheld the principle of the lens. Watts looked at the teakettle lid as it was lifted by steam, Columbus saw the wind's direction and knew there was land not far away. The difference between these men, to whom the world is indebted, and many others is this, that they have looked at the oxen's eyes and have been unmoved, have allowed the teakettle to boil without making an impression upon them, and the wind to blow without leading them to any shore. The opportunity for greatness is gone. There is not a person in the world but to whom at some time a great opportunity has been given, and for the use or abuse of it we shall be called to a strict account.

I

These opportunities for doing good come to the one who is a Christian.

First: I would not preach to others what I did not first preach to myself, but there are many of us as ministers like Chalmers, who was one day visiting an

old man seventy-two years of age, apparently in perfect health. They talked together about everything but Christ. The minister was inclined to speak about his soul, but did not. Before morning the old man was dead. Dr. Chalmers returned to the house, called all the old man's household about him, and offered the most touching apology and prayer. He spent the entire day in the woods, saying, "If I had been faithful this might not have been." I have no question but God would say, "So shall thy judgment be."

Second: You who are Christian workers have failed. A Christian merchant was told that there was a certain man with whom he had traded for years to whom he had never spoken about his soul. "I will speak the next time I see him," he said, but he never came, for while he was busy here and there the man was gone from him. Before he came again death met him. So shall his judgment be.

Third: You who are parents have failed. Years ago a young Scotchman from Fife,

in Scotland, was leaving home. He was not an active Christian. His mother went with him to the turn of the road and said, "Now, Robert, there is one thing you must promise before you go." "No," said the lad, "I will not promise until I know." "But it will not be difficult," said his mother. "Then I will promise," he said. And she said, "Every night before you lie down to sleep read a chapter and pray." He did not want to promise it, but he did. Who was that Robert? It was Robert Moffat, the great missionary, who, when he came into the Kingdom, brought almost a continent in after him. Many a mother has lost her opportunity to speak to her boy, and she has lost it because she has not lived as a mother should who would help her boy. So shall her judgment be.

II

These opportunities come to the unsaved. The Bible is full of men who have had an opportunity to be saved but are lost.

First: There is Herod. His face blanches as he listens to the truth, he is ready to forsake some of his sin; but more is required than that to be a Christian, and Herod fails.

Second: Look at Felix. As he gazes into the face of Paul the Apostle and hears his message, he trembles; a moment more he will be a Christian; but more is required than that to be saved, and Felix is lost.

Third: Behold Judas. See him at the feet of Jesus. Later he is full of remorse because he has sold him for thirty pieces of silver; but mere remorse never saved a soul, and Judas is lost.

You have doubtless heard of that young girl of whom the poet tells us. She had a string of pearls in her hand and her hand is in the water, the string is broken, and one by one the pearls slip away. So it has been with you who have been Christians. My hope is that there may be one pearl left yet. To-day is the accepted time; do not let the opportunity slip.

III

The Bible is full of men just the opposite who had opportunities to be saved and embraced them.

First: Zaccheus. There was just one day, one hour, one moment; when Jesus would pass by, and Zaccheus ran to the sycamore tree; but he made haste and came down, and that saved him.

Second: Bartimeus. There was just a moment when Jesus was near to hear the sound of his voice. If Bartimeus failed that moment he would be blind forever. I can see him quickly turning his sightless eyes in the direction of the Savior. He cried unto him and it was his earnestness that saved him. We must make haste while yet it is to-day.

Third: Coming down from the mountain, where he had preached his great sermon, Jesus beheld the leper. He was dead, according to the law, yet he had a napkin bound about his mouth. If one had called to him, "Your child is dead," he could not have gone to see the little one.

But he breaks through all of this and cries, "If thou wilt thou canst make me clean." It was his desperation that saved him.

Fourth: Look at the dying thief, so near that he could have touched Christ if he had been free. Here yawned before him the very brink of hell, here was judgment for his sins, for he acknowledged that he was justly punished. I can see him struggle to decide whether he shall speak or not, and at last he cries, "Lord, remember me." And Jesus said, "To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise." It was his last chance, and he took it. And this may be yours. God forbid that you should let the opportunity slip away.

But whether my message is to ministers, to Christian workers, to parents or to the unsaved, I call your attention to this fact: It was when the soldier was busy that the prisoner escaped. Many of you have been busy about pleasure, and some day it will mock you. You have been caught by the fascination of business, and it does not prevent your soul having been sur-

rounded by sin from which after a while you cannot escape, and if the opportunity slips away so shall our judgment be, for we must decide it. In a few years at the latest, possibly in a few months, perhaps in a few weeks—who knows but within a few days?—eternity shall be upon us. If it is an opportunity that is gone or a soul that is lost it will be a sad eternity indeed for us. To this end may God keep us watchful.

A GREAT VICTORY

TEXT: "*And they stood every man in his place round about the camp, and all the host ran, and cried, and fled.*"—Judges 7: 21.

Few things in this world are so inspiring to the traveler and at the same time so depressing as a city or temple in ruins. I remember a delightful experience in passing through the ruins of Karnak and Luxor, on the Nile in Egypt, and later passing through Phylae at Assuan on the Nile; and these two thoughts, each the opposite of the other, kept constantly coming to my mind. The loneliness is oppressive, and one would be delighted to hear the song of a bird, the bark of a dog, or the cry of a child. These ruins were once happy homes, or were temples filled with worshipers. Here little children played and gray-haired patriarchs worshiped their gods.

Akin to this picture is the one of the peo-

ple of Israel at the time of this story, and the alternating feelings of pleasure and sadness keep constantly coming and going. The condition of the land beggared description. Homes were there, but no children were about the doors; there were fields, but no crops to be harvested; pastures, but no cattle fed upon them; the hills were to be seen, but no flocks bleated on their sides; people were there, but they were found in the caves and hiding away on the mountain sides. When they had entered Canaan, these chosen people of God, he had said unto them, "And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe and to do all his commandments which I command thee this day, that the Lord thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth; and all these blessings shall come on thee, and overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God. Blessed shalt thou be in the city, and blessed shalt thou be in the field. Blessed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy ground, and

the fruit of thy cattle, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep. Blessed shall be thy basket and thy store. Blessed shalt thou be when thou comest in, and blessed shalt thou be when thou goest out. The Lord shall cause thine enemies that rise up against thee to be smitten before thy face; they shall come out against thee one way, and flee before thee seven ways. The Lord shall command the blessing upon thee in thy storehouses, and in all that thou settest thine hand unto; and he shall bless thee in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee. The Lord shall establish thee an holy people unto himself, as he hath sworn unto thee, if thou shalt keep the commandments of the Lord thy God, and walk in his ways. And all the people of the earth shall see that thou art called by the name of the Lord; and they shall be afraid of thee.”

We have here the Old Testament Beatitudes, and there is nothing like them.

The story with which the text is associ-

ated really begins in the first verse of the sixth chapter of Judges, "And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord; and the Lord delivered them into the hand of Midian seven years." But there must also be read in connection with this the last verse of the fifth chapter of Judges, "So let all thine enemies perish, O Lord; but let them that love him be as the sun when he goeth forth in his might. And the land had rest forty years."

It seems incredible that there could be such a difference in the experiences of God's people, and yet, as you study them in all their wanderings, you will find, if you turn over but one leaf of the Bible, the people who sing to-day are active in evil to-morrow, and the history of Israel is the history of one's self. Life is like a short ladder, as some one has said, and we spend most of our time going up to pray and down to sin. There is a striking picture in the second verse of the sixth chapter. The chosen people of God were dwelling in caves instead of their rightful

positions in their homes, and the same is true to-day; men who ought to be at the front are left behind because they are living selfish lives or lives of sin. Do not for a moment think that I am saying that because a man is living out of sight that he is doing nothing, for we have only to remember Gideon to know that this is not true. He was a hidden man doing an honest work, and the Angel of the Lord called him, saying, "The Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valor." To this Gideon makes a significant reply in the thirteenth verse of the sixth chapter of Judges, "And Gideon said unto him, Oh, my Lord, if the Lord be with us, why then is all this befallen us? and where be all his miracles which our fathers told us of, saying, Did not the Lord bring us up from Egypt? but now the Lord hath forsaken us, and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites." For the angel had said, "The Lord is with thee, Gideon," and Gideon had said, "If the Lord is with us, then how can these things be?" And

the angel did not say it. How often it is true that we miss the truth of God because we miss the grammar of the Bible. When Gideon had thus replied, we read in the fourteenth verse of the sixth chapter, "And the Lord *looked* upon him, and said, Go in this thy might, and thou shalt save Israel from the hand of the Midianites; have not I sent thee?" And the thing to pay special attention to there is that the angel *looked* at Gideon. Sometimes in translating a foreign language you come upon a word which you cannot express in your own language; so it is with us here, for the Lord looked Gideon into a new man and said unto him, "Go and thou shalt save the people," which leads me to say that one man right with God is mightier than a host against God. The seventh chapter of Judges opens with the significant word "then." You must have all that goes before in your mind to appreciate this word. God has a plan for every life, and all your sickness, your disappointment, your discipline, is for some-

thing. There must be a "then" for you. It is the call of God and the answer to it that makes real life. Compare Gideon the farmer with Gideon the soldier, and you will see the difference in a human life. Let one, however low or ignorant, but hear the voice of God and respond to it, and when such an one answers God's call for his country, for the church, or for Christ, the heroic in him is being stirred.

It is said that years ago there used to be a man in Mr. Spurgeon's Tabernacle who never had spoken in his social meetings, for the reason that he had a stammering tongue. One day he heard the great preacher say that the Lord could use even the tongue of the stammerer. It sent him to his home, and to his knees, and when he rose to his feet after having yielded himself wholly to God, as if by miracle God gave him the gift of speech, and I have been told that no one in the Tabernacle spoke more to the edification of the people or the praise of God than he.

Some years ago when John G. Woolley

was delivering his closing address on the commencement day at college a young boy heard him under peculiar circumstances. He had walked in from the country. It was a hot day, and to quench his thirst he had tasted the water of one of the springs. It made him very ill, and just to escape the heat of the sun he crept under the platform, which had been erected upon the college campus for the commencement exercises. While there he fell asleep and was awakened by the sound of a musical voice. Something that the graduating student said stirred his soul, and he there made a vow that he would be a preacher. It was God's call to him and his answer. He has since become one of the world's most famous preachers, and his influence has been as wide as the world itself. When the Midianites stood against the children of Israel God called Gideon to lead an army against them, and this text is part of this story.

The scene was remarkable. Thirty-two thousand people following Gideon's lead-

ership with the first flush of the battle upon them. They were ready to march, and God said when he looked at them, "The people are too many." They would seem to us to have been too few, for literally a multitude of Midianites stood against him. But we go wrong so often by applying human arithmetic to divine decrees. It is said that when Napoleon marched with his soldiers he was counted as being equal to 40,000 of his men, and so, after all, it is not a question of numbers with God, but of the few men whom he can use.

The test by means of which Gideon's army was decreased was remarkable. In Judges, the seventh chapter and the second to seventh verses, we read, "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. Now therefore go to, proclaim in the ears of the people, saying, Whosoever is fearful and afraid, let him return and depart early

from Mount Gilead. And there returned of the people twenty and two thousand; and there remained ten thousand. And the Lord said unto Gideon, The people are yet too many; bring them down unto the water, and I will try them for thee there; and it shall be, that of whom I say unto thee, This shall go with thee, the same shall go with thee; and of whomsoever I say unto thee, This shall not go with thee, the same shall not go. So he brought down the people unto the water; and the Lord said unto Gideon, Every one that lappeth of the water with his tongue, as a dog lappeth, him shalt thou set by himself; likewise every one that boweth down upon his knees to drink. And the number of them that lapped, putting their hand to their mouth, were three hundred men; but all the rest of the people bowed down upon their knees to drink water. And the Lord said unto Gideon, By the three hundred men that lapped will I save you, and deliver the Midianites into thine hand; and let all the other people go every

man unto his place." This test is going on now among men; by the way we walk and talk, by the way we listen and work, men form their judgment of us, and so does God. We may measure our spiritual state by the way we spend our leisure moments, by the way we spend our Saturday afternoons, by our rest days, and by the books we read. There is flowing past us the stream of literature and the stream of pleasure, and the question is whether we are going to fall down before these streams to drink or whether we are just going to dip up as we hurry along to fulfill our mission; or, in other words, whether we are to be so taken up with God's plan that we have no time to idle away and no disposition to turn aside.

"It does not so much matter how many members one may have in his church, for under the banner of a popular Christianity soldiers march. What if there should be a struggle ahead when to be a Christian would mean to suffer martyrdom, or dying at the stake, or contending with the beasts

of Ephesus like Paul, how then do you think it would be?" And yet all the time to-day the struggle is going on; both from within and from without the foe is assailing us, the Bible is being attacked, Christ is being denied, the resurrection is counted a myth, and the future is being questioned, and in every part of the church it would seem as if men thought that the life of the Christian was all a holiday, for people are idling, gossiping, buying and selling, marrying and giving in marriage, instead of being in the thick of the fight in the name of the Lord of hosts. Give us three hundred in the church right with God rather than the thirty-two thousand compromising with sin and the world, and we shall win the victory.

I

I am impressed in this story with the thought of how much may be accomplished without wealth, influence or material strength. We somehow seem to think that we cannot work as ministers

without a fine equipment. We have an idea that we must have a committee back of us to be assured of success, that if we are without influence we have a small mission in the world, forgetting that Michelangelo wrought the frescoes in the Sistine Chapel with the ochres which he dugged with his own hands in the garden of the Vatican; forgetting also that the greatest work in the world has been accomplished by men like Gideon, who delayed not for elaborate preparation, but just took firebrands and torches—indeed, anything they could lay their hands upon—and cried out, “The sword of the Lord and of Gideon,” and won the victory. The text is most striking, and presents an outline which any one ought to be able to see.

II

They stood. It is not so easy to stand as to march or to fight. I have been told that the most difficult service of the soldier is picket duty; and yet never until we learn to stand shall we be able to fight. In the

fourteenth chapter of Exodus, the thirteenth and fourteenth verses, we read, "And Moses said unto the people, Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will shew to you to-day, for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to-day, ye shall see them again no more forever. The Lord shall fight for you and ye shall hold your peace." And again, in 2 Chronicles, the twentieth chapter and the seventeenth verse, it is recorded, "Ye shall not need to fight in this battle: set yourselves, stand ye still, and see the salvation of the Lord with you, O Judah and Jerusalem: fear not, nor be dismayed; to-morrow go out against them, for the Lord will be with you."

Three thoughts are impressed upon my mind:

First: *Before any service, let us stand, giving God a chance with us.* Let him use you and not you use him so much. In the beginning of his Christian service Hudson Taylor, the China Inland missionary, was desirous of being used and

cried out for God to send him out into service. At last God seemed to say to him, "My child, I have made up my mind to save inland China. If you will come and walk with me I will do it through you," and the China Inland Mission was born.

Second: *Wait for orders.* In Ephesians the sixth chapter and the tenth to the thirteenth verses, we have the following description of a soldier: "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand." The striking part of that description is the sentence, "having done all, to stand." In other words, with

all our ingenuity and our planning, with all our preparation and equipment, we lack one thing: that one thing is the touch of the Almighty God.

Third: *Be willing to do the common thing.* It was rather interesting to march with thirty-two thousand, and a striking thing to break pitchers and cry aloud, "The sword of the Lord and of Gideon," but just to stand was a different matter, and not at all easy. If we were only willing to do the common things for Christ we should accomplish more in our lives.

The great Bethany Sunday school building standing in Philadelphia is a model in its perfect equipment. The mighty Sunday school held there is one of the wonders of the world. The building was begun not only in the mind and heart of the distinguished superintendent, the Hon. John Wanamaker, but when he appealed for funds as they were then needed one of the poorest children in the city made practically the first and best contribution. She gathered bones from

the alleyways, sold them and brought her few pennies to help make this wonderful work a success.

III

Every man in his place.

First: Let us remember that God has a plan for every life. Ephesians 4:8-13, "Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.) And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ; till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the meas-

ure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.”

Second: That which in our lives fits into God’s plans dignifies and strengthens in every way.

A few years ago there was a young man selling farming implements. He felt inclined to do Christian work, and later on became a Christian Association secretary. He became known locally because of his ability to sing in a male quartette. He was a good singer. Whether he was more than the average secretary I do not know. He one day felt the call to preach and shrank back from it because he felt he was without ability, then gave himself to God without reserve. He has since become one of the greatest preachers to men in our country, has possibly led more men to Christ than any other man of his day, and it was my privilege a short time ago to see hundreds of men under the power of his preaching come to Christ; and this was all because Fred B. Smith gave himself unreservedly to Christ.

Third: It may be a very ordinary service that God calls you to perform, but if you feel it your place your service will please him. Rev. Dr. Torrey tells the story of the poor mother who by hard day's work made it possible for her boy to attend college. The day of the graduation came, and he said to her, "You must go with me to the commencement." Naturally she shrank from it, for her clothing was of the poorest sort; but he said that there would be no commencement without her. He was the valedictorian of his class. Proudly he led her into the hall, and with beaming face she listened while the great throng applauded his brilliant speech. When he received his gold medal he walked down from the platform and pinned it upon her breast, saying, "This is yours," and she was as proud as any queen could have been. It was a very common thing to wash and iron for one's daily living, but to be honored thus was something any mother might long to experience. She simply did her

best in a humble way and pleased God.

IV

Round about the Camp.

First: Let it be remembered that we have a responsibility to others. Some years ago on the Irish Sea a terrific storm was raging. It was known that just off the coast a vessel was going to pieces. Suddenly two men, an old sea captain and his son, put out through the storm. Everybody tried to persuade them not to do so, for it seemed to be absolutely useless. Over the waves, which appeared almost mountain high, they pushed along until at last amid the cheers of the waiting throng they returned with their little boat filled with those who had been all but lost upon the ship. When the minister said to the old sea captain, "Why do you do this? Why take such a risk?" he answered, "I have been there myself, and I knew the danger." It is because we have been once in sin and now are redeemed by the precious blood of Christ that we say something to those who are about us.

Second: We are responsible for others. When Horace Bushnell was a tutor in Yale he was a stumbling block to all the students because he was not a Christian. He realized this himself, and yet he said, "How can I accept Christ or the Bible, for I do not believe in either one." And then the question came to him as from God, "What do you believe?" and he said, "I only know there is a difference between right and wrong." God seemed to say to him, "Have you ever taken that stand where you would say, 'I am committed to the right even if it ends in death'?" and he said, "I never have." Falling upon his knees he said, "O God, if Jesus Christ be true, reveal him to me and I will follow him." And he began to walk in the light, which constantly increased, and almost every student in Yale came to Christ. "No man liveth unto himself alone." We are responsible for the souls of other men. We are also responsible for their service; if we are half-hearted they will surely be.

V

“And the host ran, and cried and fled.”

What hosts are against us to-day?

First: As individuals there may be coming constantly to our minds a question of doubt, of pride, or of secret sin, and we wonder if these are evidences that we are not Christians. Not at all. They are but the fruit of our old nature, and are the hosts encamped against us. We have only to take our stand with Christ, right with him, and we shall win the victory.

Second: In the Church we meet with indifference, worldliness, infidelity, and we wonder how we may win the victory. The answer is simply, “We have but to be right with God and to walk with God,” and three hundred such followers of his could put the enemy to rout quickly.

Third: There is also a battle which those of us who are Christians are obliged to fight. It has to do with the unsaved man. Men are not Christians to-day not because they do not believe, not because

they are without interest in the future, but simply because they have put off and put off, and I know of no way to overcome this difficulty except by taking one's stand with Christ and with those who are like-minded with Christ. Having first concern for the lost, then his intense earnestness in their salvation, the procrastination of the sinner will flee away. For such a victory as this we plead and pray.



PAUL A PATTERN OF PRAYER

TEXT: *“If ye shall ask anything in my name I will do it.”*—John 14: 14.

Jesus testified in no uncertain way concerning prayer, for not alone in this chapter does he speak but in all his messages to his disciples he is seeking to lead them into the place where they may know how to pray.

In this fourteenth chapter of John, where he is coming into the shadow of the cross and is speaking to his disciples concerning those things which ought to have the greatest weight with them, the heart of his message seems to be prayer. What an encouragement it is to his disciples to pray when they remember that he said, “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. And what-

soever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son" (John 14:12-13).

Jesus was himself a pattern of prayer. He had prayed under all circumstances; with him the day was born in prayer, went along in meditation and closed in most intimate fellowship and communion with his Father. Under all circumstances, whether it be the raising of Lazarus from the dead, or the breathing in of the very spirit of God so essential to him in his earthly ministry, he prayed; and because he was a man of prayer himself, he could speak to his disciples with authority concerning this subject.

If we ourselves would know how to pray there are certain great principles which must be remembered when we come to him.

First: *We must believe that he is, and that he is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him.* If one has hazy or mystical ideas of Christ then from the very nature of the case prayer is impossible.

Second: *We must believe his word.* Mr. Spurgeon's statement that when he went to God he always went pleading a promise is the secret of his great success as a man of prayer. Earthly parents are not insensible to the pledges they make to their children and surely God cannot be.

Third: *We must confess and forsake our sins.* To confess sin is to arraign before us those sins of which we know ourselves to be guilty, and when they appear before us in solemn and awful procession we must heartily renounce them. If we do not we cannot pray. In another place in God's word we read, "Ye ask and receive not, because, . . ." and while in the verse the rest of the sentence is "Ye ask amiss," we might finish by saying, "We ask and receive not, because our lives are not right in God's sight."

Fourth: *We must exercise our faith.* The little child who prayed for rain and then wanted to carry an umbrella with

her when the sun was shining is an oft repeated illustration, but such faith as this is what every child of God must practice.

The text is exceedingly broad. "If ye shall ask anything in my name I will do it." It is broad enough to include temporal blessing and spiritual power, comprehensive enough to lead us to believe that God will direct our lives if we ask him and will bear our burdens even though they be almost insignificant in their weight. Thank God for the "anything" in the text!

It may be stated truly that God's promises to Israel are especially concerning temporal blessing and that his promises to the church have particular reference to spiritual possessions; and they both, the history of Israel and the history of the church, prove that God will give to us temporally as well as spiritually. These blessings are included in the "anything."

I have been greatly impressed with Paul as a pattern in prayer, and for the

outline of this message as well as for many of the suggestions I am indebted to an English clergyman, the Rev. E. W. Moore, who has written, "The Christ Controlled Life," and "Christ in Possession," and has recently sent out a little book entitled, "The Pattern Prayer Book."

I have noticed in studying Paul that the burden of his prayer was for spiritual blessing rather than for temporal power, and throughout the Epistles at least seven illustrations are to be found concerning this subject.

I

Prayer for Pentecost. Ephesians 3: 17-19, "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God."

Just what is the burden of this prayer of Paul's?

First: He is not asking for that indwelling which is ours at conversion; for this he would not need to pray, for at the moment of regeneration Christ is ours and eternal life (which is only another way of saying, "the life of the eternal") is our never failing possession.

Second: He is not asking for the bodily presence of Christ, as some have suggested, for in this scripture he states that it is by faith that Christ is to dwell with us.

Third: It is by no means a figurative expression, for if this were true there would be no comfort in it to God's children. Yet, as a matter of fact, this prayer of Paul's has been an inspiration to God's people everywhere. It is rather a special Pentecostal privilege for God's children concerning which Paul is praying. In Galatians 4:19 we read, "My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you."

And this is his petition. Let it be noticed that the tense of the verb in this connection denotes singleness of action, so that Paul's prayer may be answered not gradually but immediately. If this be true then let it be answered now for you and for me.

There are three blessings which would flow out of this answer to prayer.

First: *Constancy of experience*. "That Christ may dwell," pleads the Apostle. It does not mean that he is to come in a fitful experience, but the language of the hymn is true,

"Abide with me; fast falls the even tide,
The darkness deepens; Lord, with me abide;
When other helpers fail, and comforts flee,
Help of the helpless, oh, abide with me."

Second: *Strength will be our possession*, for the Apostle tells us that we are to be "rooted and grounded in him." As the roots of the tree take hold upon the ground and the giant oak withstands the storms of the Northern coasts, so we may withstand temptation and trial

and be more than conquerors if this prayer is answered.

· Third: *There will be cleansing*, for we are told that “as a man thinketh in his heart so is he.” We are told also that we must keep our hearts with all diligence, for out of them are the issues of life. It is easy enough to understand how our lives would be pure if Christ were only in possession.

II

Prayer for Perception. Colossians 1: 9-10, “For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God.” The need of this prayer was not that the Colossians were weak, or that they had been conspicuous in the failure of their Christian experience, for in the

third and fourth verses of the first chapter of Colossians, Paul says concerning them, "We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which ye have to all the saints"; and then in the face of this statement he prayed earnestly for them. The subject of his prayer was not that he desired anything, humanly speaking, very great for them; he did not ask honor, nor did he desire that wealth should be theirs, but merely states in the ninth verse that they might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding. I have been told that literally, this means that they might have full knowledge, not simply a passing opinion concerning him and his work.

If we study this particular scripture in which Paul is praying for the Colossians we will learn how this prayer is to be answered.

First: We must meditate upon God's

word. He makes himself especially known to his people in his word. There are certain great principles which we must remember if we would know God's will.

(1) *We must present our bodies to him.* Romans 12: 1, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service."

(2) *We must be delivered from this present evil age.* Galatians 1: 4, "Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father."

(3) *We must separate ourselves from the world.* 1 Thessalonians 4: 3, "For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication."

(4) *We must be thankful.* 1 Thessalonians 5: 18, "In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you."

(5) *We must continue patiently to serve and follow him.* 1 Peter 2:15, "For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men."

All of these things are God's will for us. If we but practice them the results can be only beneficial. As a result of such a study of God's word the general knowledge of God and his will shall be ours.

Second: The spiritual perception spoken of in this particular scripture may be ours, as we listen to the Spirit of God, for he will speak to us God's message and make known to us God's will. The purpose of this prayer of Paul's for the Colossians was that they might walk worthy to all pleasing. What a joy it is to know that we may please God! For this we should be grateful.

III

Prayer for Purity. 1 Thessalonians 5: 23-24, "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your

whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it.”

This prayer is also remarkable if we notice the spiritual condition of the Thessalonians, for of them we read that they had received the word of God with joy, and had turned from idols to serve the living God, and yet the Apostle prays for their sanctification. By this he does not mean sinlessness, and a careful study of his position would lead us to know that he does not teach that sanctification may be ever apart from growth. We must day by day come more and more into the likeness of Christ. There are three words which it would be well for us to remember in our study of this subject.

First: *Position*. If we would grow unto his likeness we must be where he can let shine upon us the light of his countenance. Frances Ridley Havergal had an aeolian harp sent to her which she tried to play with her fingers, and failed.

At last a friend suggested that she place it in the window, and the music as the wind touched the strings was entrancing. We must be where he can use us.

Second: *Purification*. Sanctification is necessary because God uses only that which is clean, never an unclean life.

Third: *Possession*. It is really Christ filling us, and he will fill us if we give him the opportunity. The extent of this work is made plain in Paul's prayer:

(1) The spirit is touched, and the spirit is that part of our nature which is capable of fellowship with God.

(2) The soul is filled, and the soul is the seat of all our intellectual faculties.

(3) The body is possessed, and since the body is just the servant of the higher powers of man, we can easily understand how necessary the work is. It is needful,

(a) For our peace, for the God of peace is to sanctify us.

(b) For our prayers. For Paul is talking about prayer when he praises.

(c) For our praise, for we are told that we must rejoice evermore.

IV

Prayer for Power. Ephesians 1:15-20, "Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power; which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places."

The Church at Ephesus was in every way remarkable, but to this people Paul wrote his most spiritual epistle, which in itself is a compliment to them, for as in another instance it was not necessary for him to write unto them as if they were carnal. With this people for the space of two or three years he labored, as we find recorded in Acts the nineteenth chapter and the tenth verse, "And this continued by the space of two years; so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks." Acts 20:31, "Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears."

There were no divisions in this church as at Corinth; there were no heresies as at Galatia, and no dissensions as at Philippi; and yet, for all that, he prays most earnestly. The natural question for us to ask is, just what is it for which he prays, and the question is easily answered.

First: For advancement in knowledge; he asks God that the eyes of their understanding might be enlightened. Under this general petition there are three special requests.

(1) *That they might know the hope of their calling.* We have but to study Paul's Epistles to realize that this calling involved:

A perfect vision, for one day it is Christ's promise and teaching that they shall see him as he is. The hope of this would keep them faithful.

It involved, in the next place, a perfect likeness, for, seeing him as he is, they would become like him, and the hope of this would keep them clean.

It involved, in the third place, a perfect union, for when this hope of their calling is fulfilled there is no possibility of anything coming between the believer and Christ; so the fellowship must be perfect.

(2) Paul also requests that they may know the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints. That is very

wonderful. He does not say the riches of the saints in him—that could be easily understood; but what an inspiration it is to know that he has glory in us, and that the mere possession of poor, frail creatures like ourselves is to him a perfect delight! We sometimes say that we could not get along without Christ, but how inspiring it is to know that he could not and he would not get along without us!

(3) The Apostle also prays that the church at Ephesus might know what is the exceeding greatness of Christ's power towards us. It is not simply a great power that is described but an exceedingly great power. There is absolutely no limit to what he can accomplish in and through us if we but yield ourselves unreservedly to him.

Second: Another question may naturally come to us, Why have we not this power of his? The answer is simply because the eyes of our understanding have not been enlightened. We have

been too much self-centered and too closely wedded to the world. We need a stronger vision. There are stars in the heavens to-day that have never yet been seen, not because they do not exist but because there has been no glass invented strong enough to take them in. Each new day brings a vision of new heavenly bodies. We also need stronger faith, for if we have become persuaded of the fact that he can do all things the victory is won when we take this position.

v

Prayer for Perseverance. Philippians 1: 9-11, "And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment; that ye may approve things that are excellent, that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ. Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God." Paul has a tender affection for this Philippian Church. Naturally

he would wish for them only the best things, and the burden of this prayer of his is,

First: That they might be able to persevere to the end, or rather to the day of Christ. Let it not be forgotten that he who said, "Nothing can separate us from the love of God," at the same time prays that those who are the object of this love may be faithful in their perseverance until time shall be no more. It is God's privilege to preserve us, it is our privilege to persevere; and if we study the words "preserve" and "persevere" we shall find that they are composed of almost the same letters with only a slightly different arrangement. We must be exceedingly careful in our walk and we must rely perfectly upon Christ.

Second: Paul prays for the purity of these Philippians when he asks that they may be sincere and without offence. I have been told that the word "sincere" sometimes means sunlight; which leads

me to say that our conduct as Christians should be such as to bear the clearest light of investigation. Possibly the use of this word grew out of the custom of the people who stored away their goods in the darkest corners of the bazaar where their defects could not be seen plainly. When the purchase had been consummated they were brought out into the sunlight. The word also means "wax." It is said that in the days of imperial Rome when a sculptor came to a flaw in the marble he filled it with wax to hide the defect, but when the hot days came and the wax was melted the defect was seen plainly. Paul is desiring for these Philippians that there may be none of this, but that their lives should commend themselves both to God and to men.

Third: He desires that they may be filled with the fruits of righteousness, not simply that they may produce fruit of one sort or another. It is not enough simply to bear fruit. "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit."

This is the overflow experience of the Christian and must be realized by us all.

VI

Prayer for Perfectness. Hebrews 13: 20-21, "Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen." The burden of this prayer of the Apostle is that his people may do the will of God. This is required in all times and for various reasons.

First: The glory of God demands it, and unless we are doing his will we are robbing him of his glory. Revelation 4·11, "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created."

Second: Our own happiness depends upon it. Let it not be thought for a moment that we are simply to do God's will when some sort of trial is upon us, but rather let us remember the scriptural expression, "I delight to do thy will, O God." What if God's will should be done for but one year in all things in any of our cities; would the result be anything else than perfect joy?

Third: Our safety depends upon it. We must lean hard upon God's will. In Switzerland at one of the most dangerous passes, where men used to travel with their faces white with fear, to-day any ordinary traveler can pass in safety because along the edge of the cliff there is an iron rail against which you may lean and have almost no danger beside you. This iron rail corresponds to the will of God for Christians. Paul also asks in this prayer that God's people may be made perfect to do his will. We need not be afraid of this word perfect, nor of Paul's prayer, for as Dr. Moore

has said, it is not a perfection of doing but a perfection to do, not a finality but a fitting. The same Greek word is used elsewhere, as for example,

“Fitted.” Romans 9:22, “What if God, willing to show his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction.”

“Prepared.” Hebrews 10:5, “Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me.”

“Framed.” Hebrews 11:3, “Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.”

“Restored.” Galatians 6:1, “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.”

“Mend.” Mark 1:19, “And when he had gone a little farther thence, he saw

James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, who also were in the ship mending their nets.”

The illustration has been used of a man with his leg out of joint. He cannot walk except with great pain, but when he puts himself without reserve into the hands of the doctor and the leg is set he can then rise and walk. He is not a perfect walker, but he is made perfect to walk. And the idea of all the verses above quoted is that we may be set with right relations to Christ that he may have his way with us, that we may stand where he willed we should stand; and as a result we shall be well pleasing in his sight.

VII

Prayer for Peace. 2 Thessalonians 3: 16, “Now the Lord of peace himself give you peace always by all means. The Lord be with you all.” Peace is most difficult to define. It is the opposite of unrest, confusion and strife; and this

peace for which the Apostle prays is, first, not the peace of indifference. Let this never be forgotten. Second: It is not the peace of prosperous surroundings. Some people frequently fail at this point but it is the very peace of God himself. The peace here prayed for looks in three directions.

First: Godward. "Being justified by faith we have peace with God." His pardoning voice we hear and he is reconciled.

Second: Inward. "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you; let not your heart be troubled."

Third: Outward. With such a possession we may meet trial and bear burdens and never be moved. How may we secure such a possession?

(1) By having confidence in Christ's work, for when he met his disciples and showed them his hands and his side, he said, "Peace be unto you."

(2) By submission to Christ's rule. "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace,"

or, as the literal translation is, “Thou wilt keep him in peace, peace, who trusteth in thee because his mind is set on thee.” This is our possession, and for that Paul prays.

A STARTLING STATEMENT

TEXT: "*The wicked shall not be unpunished.*"—
Prov. 11: 21.

There are very many passages of Scripture which ought to be read in connection with this text; as for example, "Fools make a mock at sin" (Proverbs 14:9), for only a fool would. Better trifle with the pestilence and expose one's self to the plague than to discount the blighting effects of sin. And, again, "The soul that sinneth it shall die" (Ezekiel 18:4). From this clear statement of the word of God there is no escape. Or, again, "Our secret sins in the light of thy countenance" (Psalm 90:8). There is really nothing hidden from his sight. We may conceal our sinful thoughts from men and sometimes even our evil practices; but not from God. Or again, "Sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death" (James 1:15). Here is unexampled progress

indicated from which there never has been the slightest deviation. But one of the sharpest texts in all the Word of God, and one which men somehow in these days seem to ignore, is Paul's expression, "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Galatians 6:7), and if we compare this reference in the New Testament to the text in the Old Testament the harvest indeed seems to be sure, for "The wicked shall not be unpunished."

There is a note of truth in all of these statements for both saint and sinner. Jeremiah the thirtieth chapter and the eleventh verse, "For I am with thee, saith the Lord, to save thee: though I make a full end of all nations whither I have scattered thee, yet I will not make a full end of thee: but I will correct thee in measure, and will not leave thee altogether unpunished." The old Prophet is speaking to the people of Israel; and while he tells them that they are God's people, nevertheless they shall not alto-

gether go unpunished, for if they sow to the flesh they must of the flesh reap corruption. In Deuteronomy the fifth chapter and the ninth verse, we read, "Thou shalt not bow down thyself unto them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me." It is a solemn fact that the sins of the fathers descend upon the children unto the third and fourth generation. It is more solemn that so blighting is the effect of sin that the fourth generation is the last. There is no fifth. Even though we be pardoned from sin forever, we shall not altogether go unpunished.

Certainly it is true that if one rejects Jesus Christ, punishment for him is absolutely certain. The other day in the city of Chicago the following appeared in the *Inter-Ocean* as an editorial under the title of "Preaching for Men."

"To those who look upon men as they

are it is simply astounding that so many preachers should act as if the hope of reward alone could be efficient to move average mankind to leave sin and follow after righteousness. In every other relation of human life every man is constantly confronted with the alternative: Do right and be rewarded; do wrong and be punished. The pressure of fear as well as the pressure of hope is continually upon him. He knows that he may conceal his wrongdoing from the eye of man, but he is always under the fear of discovery and punishment. But he goes to church, and in nine cases out of ten the preacher, while insisting that he can hide nothing from the eye of God, yet says nothing to arouse in him that fear of God which is the beginning of wisdom. If he turn from religion to science he finds science more positive of the certainty of punishment than of the certainty of reward. Science cannot, for example, assure him of a long life, even though he scrupulously obey hygienic laws. But it can assure him of a speedy death

if he wantonly violates those laws. Precisely this fact that the consequences of sin in punishment can be foretold more positively than the consequences of righteousness in reward is what makes fear the strongest influence dominating and directing human conduct. Yet many preachers deliberately abandon the appeal to fear and then wonder why their preaching does not move men to active righteousness. When more preachers recover from the delusion into which so many of them have fallen such complaints will diminish. For all human experience proves that the preaching that appeals to fear of punishment as well as to hope of reward is the preaching that is really effective—is the preaching of all the great preachers of the past and the present—is the preaching that moves.”

The statement of the text is exceedingly plain and the teaching is unquestioned. It is a good thing for us to-day to understand what sin is, for if we have a wrong conception of sin it naturally follows that we shall have a wrong conception of the

atonement. Without an understanding of sin there is no sense of guilt, and without the sense of guilt there is no cry for pardon. The best definitions that I have ever found for sin are written in the word of God.

I

1. "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law" (1 John 3:4). The word "transgression" means to go across. Does your life parallel God's law or cross it? Your answer to this question determines the measure of your sin. You have only to read the ten commandments and try to mold your life by them to find your answer. Better still, you have only to read these commandments in the light of Jesus' interpretation, where the look of lust is adultery and anger without cause is murder, to see how far short you have come; and if this is true certainly you are a sinner, and the text is for you. "The wicked shall not be unpunished."

2. "All unrighteousness is sin; and there is a sin not unto death" (1 John 5:17). Righteousness means right relations with God. You may make ever so strong a claim to right living and speak ever so vehemently concerning the good that you are accomplishing in the world, but the first question for you to settle is this, What is your relation to God and what have you to say with reference to your acceptance or rejection of Jesus Christ? It is a solemn thought that whatever we do counts for nothing if our relation to God be wrong, while the little that we may do may count for much if we have taken the right position before him.

3. "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin" (James 4:17).

Omission, according to this scripture, is sin; neglected opportunity is sin, shirking responsibility is sin, refusing to obey God is sin; and so when I ask you about being a Christian, if it is best and right and

you acknowledge that it is, then if you are not a Christian, this very fact is in itself sin, for when one knows the right and refuses to do it he is a sinner, and the text is true—"The wicked shall not be unpunished."

4. "And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin" (Romans 14:23). Active doubt is sin. If you have a doubt concerning the sinfulness of certain things, then to do those things is sin. If I have the least doubt concerning the amusements which may be questionable, or the position which may be doubtful, so long as a doubt or a question remains these things are sin; and the Bible states the fact that "The wicked shall not be unpunished."

5. "And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment" (John 16:8). Unbelief is the chiefest of sins. It is to reject Jesus Christ, it is to close in our own faces the door of hope, it is to trample the

blood of the Son of God under our feet, and it means also to insult the spirit of grace.

One morning in the city of New York a man dashed down the street and past three men standing on the pier. They could not tell how old he was, nor how he was dressed, but they saw him jump upon the bulkhead near by, strip off his overcoat, coat and hat, and, before they could stir to save him, plunge off the end of the pier. There was a short rope lying near by, and seizing this a man ran with his companions to the point from which the man had jumped. They threw the rope toward the struggling figure that they could just make out below them. The rope fell a foot and a half too short. Then they ran back to the gas plant and got a longer rope. The ice was running so thick in the river that the man's head and shoulders were still to be seen above the water when they returned. Taking careful aim they threw the rope squarely across the strug-

gling form, shouting, "Catch it and we'll pull you in." The unknown man, however, making a last effort, threw the rope aside and shouted back: "Oh, to h——with it! I'm through!" Then he sank out of sight. That is a picture of the man who, having offered to him mercy and grace in Jesus Christ, spurns all that God offers, and is therefore hopeless.

Sin separates us from God.

Sin separates us from each other.

Sin pollutes us and we become impure.

Sin deceives us and we are in danger and know it not.

A friend of mine - walking along the streets of Cincinnati early one morning saw a young girl standing upon the very edge of the roof of one of the highest office buildings. She was carefully balancing herself and every moment it seemed as if she would fall. The elevator was not running, but he made his way hurriedly to the roof of the building, walked carefully across it, seized her by the hand, drew her back and found

that she had risen in her sleep and all unconsciously was standing on the very brink of eternity. This is what sin does for us, and it is a solemn thought that for all such the text is true, "The wicked shall not be unpunished."

II

I do not make my appeal, however, on the ground that the punishment is all for the future, for that is indeed sure. I ask you the question, Do you believe in heaven as a place of rewards? If so, the same argument will prove the existence of hell. Do you reject hell, because it seems to you to be inconceivable? Then the same argument will blot heaven out of existence. What it is that awaits the wicked, I am sure I do not know—only that it is to be away from God, with the door of hope shut forever, and the Bible tells me that there is weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth, for the wicked shall not be unpunished. I lift my voice against the punishment here, for sin is so

sure in its deadly work, it is so insidious in its influence, that before you know it it is upon you; just one day of trifling and you are gone.

The people about Pittsburg will never forget the Cheswick mine horror in 1903, when one hundred and eighty-two dead men were taken from the mine. Under the direction of one of the mining engineers, a rescuing party started into the mine to see if there was any hope of saving the men who might be yet alive. The journey is described by one who volunteered to go with the engineer on his perilous journey. "When we got to the foot of the shaft, Mr. Taylor lighted a cigar. He blew out a great cloud of smoke and watched it drift into a passage. 'This way,' he said, 'The smoke will follow the pure air draught.' So we went on, Mr. Taylor blowing clouds of smoke, and we following them. Suddenly he wheeled and yelled; 'The black damp is coming!' The cigar smoke had stopped as though it had come to a

stone wall, and was now drifting over our heads. We ran with death at our heels, ran with our tongues dry and swelling and our eyes smarting like balls of fire. It seemed only a minute until Mr. Taylor shrieked and fell forward on his face. He crawled along for a while on his hands and knees, and then fell again and lay still. I stopped for a second, with the idea of carrying him. Then I realized how hopeless that was. We were still a quarter of a mile from the mouth of the pit. He was a very heavy man, and I, as you see, am small and weak. Again I ran choking and beating my head with my hands. I fell, cut my face, called upon God, struggled to my feet and fell again. So I plunged on, falling and fighting forward. Black madness came upon me. The horrible, sickening after-damp was tearing my heart up through my dry throat. My brain was bursting through my temples. Then a stroke, as though by a sledge hammer, and I knew nothing more. They found

me at ten minutes past one Tuesday morning. At first they thought I was dead. Then they saw my head rise and fall while I weakly pounded on a rock with a stick that I had caught in my delirium." This is to me a striking picture of what sin does for us. There is no one so strong but he may be overpowered by its awful influence. God save us from it, for "The wicked shall not be unpunished."

III

Oh, is there no hope? For it would seem from the message thus far as if nothing but despair was ahead of us. Two ways to escape from the power of sin have been suggested; one is man's way, the other is God's. Let us consider them both.

1. Man suggests reformation. But how about the sins of the past? They are still untouched. Man tells the sinner to do his best; but how about the will which has been weakened by sinful practices, and which seems unable to

act? Man tells the depraved man to change his surroundings; but how about the heart that is unclean? The fact is, man's way will not reach us.

In January, 1904, the American Liner New York left Southampton and came into the New York harbor with a sad story to tell. A sailor was suspended over the side of the vessel making repairs when an enormous wave tore him away, and he was very soon under the forepart of the ship. The waves began to carry him away, and a life line was thrown to him with a buoy attached. The sailor, sometimes visible and then obscured by the rising of a swell, grasped the line, and a cheer went up. He took a half turn with the line around his waist, was rolling himself over into the bight of the line and it looked as if he would be saved. The sailors on deck were just about to haul in. The poor fellow's hands and fingers must have been numb, for he suddenly rolled out of the half-formed bight, losing his grip upon the line.

None of the passengers could help the man, none of the crew dared jump to his rescue, no boat could live in such a maelstrom. The sailor, who was struggling and being whirled around and bobbing like a cork, his oilskins partially spreading out and sustaining him, kept drifting further and further away.

Aroused by the commotion, the second officer came on deck just as the sailor lost his hold. Tossing aside his cap, overcoat and jacket, he bade the seamen take a bowline hitch around his body and lower him away. The volunteer life-saver was cheered by the passengers as he went over. It was bitter cold, the sleet sharp and the swells ugly. A strong swim in the trough of the seas and over the crests and the officer might reach the seaman. It was his only chance.

He had no more than touched the spume before the waves hurled him against the side of the steamer again and again, bruising his ankle and knee, but he struck out bravely and gradually

drew nearer the sailor. For fifteen minutes the second officer struggled. During one of his brave spurts in the direction of the struggling man he looked up to the rail. The practiced eye of the seafaring man saw something that caused him suddenly to turn and breast his way back to the ship. The line was too short. The seaman holding the line attached to the officer had in his hands the mere end of it, and there was not another bit to pay out. It was a sixty fathom line, "all gone," and the officer yet only half way to the drowning man. It was too late to splice another. Had it been thought of in time the man might have been saved. A longer struggle was useless, and the officer allowed himself to be hauled aboard, leaving the helpless man to go to his last account. That is always the difficulty with man's effort to save the lost. It does not reach far enough and fails just when it ought to hold.

2. God's way. "The blood of Jesus

Christ his Son cleanses us from all sin," that is God's message. "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." This is God's invitation. "I even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins." This is God's pledge, and he has never failed to keep it.

In the old days, when England and Scotland were at war, the English came up against Bruce. They drove him from his castle and as he fled away from them they let loose his own bloodhounds and set them upon his trail. His case seemed hopeless. He could hear the bay of the hounds in the distance, and those who were with him had just about given up in despair; but not so with Bruce. He came to a stream, flowing through the forest, he plunged in, waded three bow-shots up the stream and then out

upon the other side. The hounds came up to the stream, stopped and sniffed; they had lost the track. They turned back defeated, and Bruce in time won the day. Is it not like this with our sins? Like a pack of hounds they are after me; wherever I flee they are close upon me. "The wages of sin is death," I am told, but I have found the way of escape. Here flows a stream which runs red with the blood of Jesus Christ, and I plunge in and am free.

"There is a fountain filled with blood,
Drawn from Immanuel's veins;
And sinners plunged beneath that flood
Lose all their guilty stains."

THE GRACE OF GOD

TEXT: "*I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins.*"—Isaiah 43: 25.

In looking over an old volume of sermons preached by H. Grattan Guinness, forty-five years ago, I came across the message which he delivered with this text as a basis. So deep was the impression made upon me by my first reading of the sermon that I have taken Mr. Guinness' outline and ask your careful attention to its development.

If one should enter a jewelry store and ask to see a diamond, or any other precious stone, the jeweler would first spread upon his show case a black cloth and then place the diamonds upon it, not only for protection but also in order that the black background might bring out distinctly the brilliancy and worth of the gems. So God gives this best of

all his promises with the dark picture of sin clearly and thoughtfully portrayed. In verses twenty-second to the twenty-fourth we read, "But thou hast not called upon me, O Jacob; but thou hast been weary of me, O Israel. Thou hast not brought me the small cattle of thy burnt offerings; neither hast thou honored me with thy sacrifices. I have not caused thee to serve with an offering, nor wearied thee with incense. Thou hast bought me no sweet cane with money, neither hast thou filled me with the fat of thy sacrifices: but thou hast made me to serve with thy sins, thou hast wearied me with thine iniquities."

In these verses God says that his people have not called upon him in prayer, they have not presented their offerings, neither have they presented unto him themselves. He also affirms that they have wearied of him, and that they have also wearied him with their iniquities, and then he exclaims, "I have not caused thee to serve with an offering, nor wearied thee

with incense," and with these clear statements he gives us the gracious statement of the text, "I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins."

Mr. Guinness gives us four beautiful thoughts in this text concerning our sins.

First: They are blotted out from God's Book.

Second: They are blotted out with God's hand.

Third: They are blotted out for his sake.

Fourth: They are blotted from his memory.

A more admirable outline of a text of Scripture I do not know, a more cheering message to a child of God I have never found.

I

Not long ago, in Chicago, a young man was induced to confess to one whom he thought was his friend the killing of his father and mother. As the confession was being made, as he supposed to but one person, it was all being taken down

by those who were near enough to hear him speak, and when he appeared before the court his own confession was used against him and sent him to a life imprisonment in the penitentiary. What was true of this young man is true of us. Every sermon the minister preaches is recorded, every word an individual speaks is put down. It is a solemn thought to realize, that at the judgment we shall give account for even our idle words.

Science has proven that our acts, our words and even our thoughts make their indelible record.

Not long ago in our home we came across a long-unused phonograph. We started it going, placing upon it one of the cylinders which had been packed away with the phonograph, and were startled to hear the voice of one who had been dead for years. We heard the message he dictated, the song in which he joined and the laugh with which he closed it, and yet his voice has long been silent

in death. There is not a sin of your youth which has not made its record, not a passion of your mature years that does not stand somewhere against you, not an act, a feeling or an imagination that has not been indelibly written; not all the changes of time, not all the efforts of man, can wipe these things out.

In the British Museum there is a piece of stone not larger than the average Bible at least four thousand years old, and in the center of the stone there is a mark of a bird's foot; four thousand years ago the track was made, and for four thousand years the record has stood. If these things are true of us—and they are, according to the Word of God—then what prospect is there for us but that of eternal punishment? For when we stand at the judgment there shall appear before us the sins of omission and the sins of commission, the sins we have forgotten and the sins we have but recently committed against ourselves, against our fellow men, and against God.

It is indeed a black picture, and with whitened faces and rapidly beating hearts we ask, Is there any hope? I bring you God's gracious answer to this important question: "I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins." Notice, it is the voice of God speaking. "I, even I," he exclaims, "will blot out your transgressions."

It is, first of all, a commercial term. We were in debt to God, hopelessly in debt, and our obligation has been canceled; over against our sin is placed the righteousness of the Son of God, and we are free.

"Jesus paid it all,
All to him I owe;
Sin had left a crimson stain,
He washed it white as snow."

It is also a chemical expression, for it is a picture of God applying the blood of Jesus Christ to every page of the written record. The sins of our youth long ago passed out of mind; the sins of our manhood, which have taken up every

part of our being, the sins of to-day—all have gone, for he himself has blotted them out. When we realize that we are forgiven of God it means more than if we were forgiven of men, for in the might of his forgiveness our past sins are gone, they shall not even be mentioned against us; the fear of judgment is taken away, for Jesus himself says, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life” (John 5:24). It is the Pass-over story over again, “When I see the blood, I will pass over you.” Thus are our sins blotted out.

II

It is with God’s hand that the work is done; and for very many reasons this is a great comfort to us.

First: Because it was God’s hand that made the record, he it was who put down all your sins. He never rested in his

work; week after week, month after month, year after year, the recording work was being done until your record became blacker than the blackest midnight; and behold the hand that made the record blots it out.

Second: It was his hand against which you offended. Your sin was against yourself. It is true it hurt your character, lowered your self-respect; but more especially was it against God, for you despised his authority, forsook his service, broke his laws, defied his justice; you grieved his spirit, and you crucified his Son. And behold it is the hand against which you committed all these offenses which blotted out your transgressions.

Third: It is the offended hand which blots them out. It was the hand that opened the fountains of the deep, and behold the floods came, the waters above and the waters below clasped their hands and destruction was everywhere save in the Ark. It was his hand that brought destruction upon the cities of the plain,

consuming them with a mighty flame, and it was his hand that opened the sea for the children of Israel and then closed the sea over the pursuing Egyptians. The very thought of the offended hand makes us tremble, but behold, it is this hand that blots out all our transgressions.

Fourth: It is the hand of justice that does the work. The same hand wrote, "The wicked shall not go unpunished," and wrote again, "The soul that sinneth it shall die," and wrote yet again, "The wages of sin is death." This hand is stretched forth in our behalf.

I doubt not the question has often come to us, "How can God be just and be the justifier of them that believe?" In the light of such statements as these just quoted I am sure it is for this reason—it is for the offering of the just for the unjust. He made him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. A man was needed for such an offering, and

Christ became man. The man required must be born under the law, so Christ came in the likeness of sinful flesh. The man born under the law must be without sin, so he was born pure. The man born under the law and without sin must be willing to die, and so he came saying, "I delight to do thy will, O God." And the man born under the law, without sin and willing to die must be able to provide an atonement which would make the wandering sinner and the love of God one, and so Christ at the command of God was thus furnished a sacrifice of sufficient power and magnitude to save the whole world. It is this hand of God that blots out our transgressions.

Fifth: It is the hand of the Supreme Being that does the work. What a word of encouragement this is. It was this hand that made the worlds and hurled them off into space. It was this hand that created man and made him in the likeness of God. It was this hand that formed the countless number of

angels, and has ever directed their heavenly movements. It was this hand that wrote the law upon Sinai. And it was this hand that holds the keys of the kingdoms of heaven and hell. He blots out our transgressions. From his decision there can be no appeal. With such a work as this, who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? Would God that justifieth do it, or Christ that died consent to it? In the light of such a thought the Apostle Paul says, "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" (Romans 8: 38-39).

III

Our sins are blotted out for his sake. God saves the sinner not alone because of pity for the sinner, and certainly not simply because he is in danger of hell, but in

order that he may glorify himself; and this is no selfish glorification, but rather in order that he may show to us now and throughout all the ages what he really is. God has made different revelations of himself. We have beheld his wisdom in creation, in his providences and in his word. We have seen his justice in that he gave his only begotten Son to die for poor lost men. We have seen his power in the working of miracles and the transforming effect of his grace. It remains for us to see his love in the story of salvation, for until we behold him as the Savior of the sinner we do not know him. It is this that shall make us not only rejoice here in time but rejoice with joy unspeakable in eternity. The Apostle Paul writes in Ephesians 2·7-8, "That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God."

IV

Our sins are blotted out from God's memory. The last of this wonderful text is the best. When we detect a failure of memory here in this world among our friends it is an evidence of weakness, but it is no weakness in God to forget. This is but another one of those expressions descriptive of God in which human language is used to describe a thought and in which human language is too poor an agency to convey all the depth of the meaning. It is just another picture of God stooping down to meet our weakness and it is God assuring us that our sins are gone completely. It is as if they never had existed, for they shall never stand against us and in the day of judgment they shall not even be mentioned. Our sins must have been a grief to him, just as the sin of an earthly child is the source of sorrow to an earthly parent; but they are so no longer, for he has forgotten. The Bible represents God as being angry because of our trans-

gressions, but if ever there was anger with him it is so no longer, for you cannot be angry with a person whose injury against you you have forgotten entirely. We do not in this world speak of what we have forgotten, nor will God speak of our sins. We do not punish what we have forgotten, nor will God permit us to be punished, for he has blotted out our transgressions and will remember them no more. There is no awaiting penalty for your sin, there is no judgment to meet at the great white throne, there is no hell for you at the last, for your sins, for Christ's sake, have been forgotten.

If you cast a stone into the water and it sinks away there is for a time a ripple, where the stone has gone down; but in a moment it has gone forever, you can see it no more. So God has cast our sins into the sea and the place where they have gone cannot even be found.

v

But what must I do to take advantage of all this gracious offer of God? I answer

according to the Scripture. There must be true repentance; repentance is a change of mind, it is having a new mind for God. There must be regeneration; regeneration is a change of nature, it is a new heart for God. There must be conversion; conversion is a change of living and a new life for God. If we would be born from above we must accept God's word.

Two friends were conversing one evening. One of them with a skeptical mind had just rejected the Bible because it did not tell him the things that he would know. He insisted on knowing how the worlds were made, and demanded that he should be told concerning the origin of heaven and why God permitted it, and because the Bible failed here he would have none of it. Just as his friend was leaving the skeptic said to him, "Here is my lantern. I want you to take it and it will light you home." But the lantern was refused by the Christian man, "for," said he, "this lantern will not light up the mountains in the distance, nor the

valley stretching away at my feet." His friend was amazed. "Man," said he, "take the lantern; it will make a road for you across the moor and light up your pathway home." "Oh," said his friend, "if that is true I will take it; but listen to me. So is the Bible not for distant paths of investigation; it is not so much to tell us concerning creation and existence—we shall know these things by and by. It is for the path at your feet and it will light you home a space at a time." The skeptical man saw it in an instant, he took God's word and came back again to the faith of his childhood.

So I offer it to you with its promises as of lanterns, if its commands are carefully received and followed out. You, too, may pass from darkness into light and you may claim from God this text of mine which says, "I even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins."

CONVERSION

TEXT: “*And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.*”—Matt. 18: 3.

Jesus Christ was the world's greatest teacher and preacher. Multitudes followed him because he taught them, not as the scribes, but as one having authority. He came to them with the deepest truth of God, but couched in such familiar expressions, and told in such a fascinating way, that all men heard him and went their way rejoicing that so great a teacher had come into the world as the messenger of God. He desired to speak to them concerning the kingdom, and seeing on the distant hillside a farmer sowing his seed, he gave them the parable of the sower; and every farmer in his company began to understand his message. He told them the story of a woman baking bread, and in the spreading of the leaven

every housekeeper had a vision of one of the deepest principles of the coming kingdom. He gave them the account of the boy who went away from his home, breaking his mother's heart, and, according to tradition, putting her in her grave; causing his old father to bow his head in shame again and again, and yet in spite of it all, his father loving him; and every listener learned from the story a lesson concerning the love of God which could have been given to him in no other way. He was acknowledged as the world's greatest teacher and preacher.

The text is introduced by the word "verily," and this is peculiar to Jesus. The word calls especial attention to the coming message. It was as if he had sounded a bell and said, "Stop and listen"; and wherever the word "verily" occurs the Bible reader would do well to give heed to the message of Jesus.

What hope is there for the moralist when Jesus said, "Except ye be converted"? What hope can there be for the man who

says God is so merciful that he will not allow him finally to be lost when Jesus said "Ye shall not enter into the kingdom, except ye be converted and become as little children."

It will be necessary for us to read carefully verses eight and nine in this eighteenth chapter of Matthew, if we would be impressed with the importance of conversion. There are solemn words here. "Wherefore if thy hand or thy foot offend thee, cut them off, and cast them from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire. And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into hellfire."

I have been told that there are two ways of reading this text. The first is as we have it in the King James version; the second would make it read thus: "Verily, I say unto you, except ye convert

yourselves and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." Those who hold to this second reading say that there is a difference between regeneration and conversion—that regeneration is God's part of the contract, while conversion is ours; that conversion is simply having the willing mind, while regeneration is God's imparting to us his own life; and to convert one's self is simply to be willing to be saved. And this is all-important, for even God himself cannot save us against our wills. But I prefer to use, in my treatment of the text, the generally accepted idea of conversion, and wish my message to center around the following questions: What is conversion? How may I be converted? Do I know when I was converted? How may I know certainly?

I

What is conversion? I own a piece of property, and you desire to purchase it. You pay me a price, and the property is

transferred from my ownership to yours. It is a converted piece of property. This is just a hint as to what conversion is. We were sold under sin; and if any should object to this expression, we have sold ourselves under sin. Jesus came and in the shedding of his own blood paid the price of our redemption. As a child of God, I am bought back from bondage to freedom. To be converted is to be turned about. Going away from God, I turn towards him. With my face set away from heaven, I deliberately turn and accept Jesus, who said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." To be converted is to cross the line which separates light from darkness, and may be done as easily as if one drew a line in the path before him and stepped over it. Both of these would be by the act of one's will; only it is to be remembered that when by faith we accept Jesus there is imparted to us a knowledge which comes from the Holy Ghost alone; while we seem to be acting in our own strength, yet

really it is in the strength of God. Let it be remembered, however, that no two people may have exactly the same experience. There is an illustration of this in the healing of the blind men in the New Testament. I can imagine them having a convention, and each giving his testimony. One declares that the only way to receive your sight is to have clay and spittle put upon your eyes and to wash in the pool of Siloam. Another ridicules this experience and declares that only the touch of the fingers of Jesus is necessary. Still another speaks and emphatically declares that even the touch of Jesus is superfluous, for at the command of Jesus he saw clearly. Another says that instantaneous sight is impossible, and describes his own experience, when he saw men like trees, walking. But when all have given their testimony, they finally unite in declaring that whereas they once were blind, now they can see; and after all this is the important matter.

A friend of mine described a number of

people who came to view "The Angelus" that celebrated masterpiece of Millet's. Some people admired the perspective; others, the figure of the man; others, that of the woman. One man simply stood aghast as he looked, and exclaimed, "What a marvelous frame that picture has!" and no two people expressed the same opinion concerning the masterpiece. How could we expect them to have the same experience in coming to Christ?

It may be that some will say, "Why insist upon conversion when my life is a moral one?" And my answer is that the difficulty with morality is that it is worked out according to men's standard and falls far short of God's.

In my first pastorate I had a blind man as one of my hearers. He used to walk about the village where I preached, generally without a guide, and apparently went as easily as a man with eyes. He had a little stick in his hands, with which he touched the trees and the fences, and seemed to know by the very sound where

he was. One day at noon, when he should be going home, I saw him walking rapidly away from his home. I finally convinced him that he was going in the wrong direction, and he asked me to set him straight, which I did. Going in the new direction, he used his stick in the same fashion, used his legs in the same mechanical way, but the difference between the man in the first instance and the second was this—that in the first picture he was going away from home, while in the second he was going homeward rapidly. The trouble with man's morality is that it is self-centered and not Christ centered if he is rejected.

II

How may I be converted? For from the text which says "Except ye be converted" it would seem as if some power outside of ourselves must be working in our behalf, and this is true. The foundation of it all is the atonement by Christ, his sacrificial death upon the cross. Reject-

ing this truth, there is no hope for us. In our sinful condition, the spirit of God rouses us, convicts us of sin, convinces us of our need of a Savior, and finally God, in his grace, gives us the strength to yield, and we pass from darkness to light.

Sometimes great need drives us to light, as in the case of Nicodemus; while again great sin compels us to come to him, as in the case of the thief on the cross. But whether it be need or sin, let us start with little faith, if we have no more, and God will meet us the moment we start. I once conducted services in a soldiers' home. The commanding officer told me, when the service was concluded, of a former inmate, an old sea captain, who came to the institution a confessed infidel. He refused to attend any of the services in the chapel; finally he was taken ill, and then the commanding officer entered his room, asking him to read the Scriptures, which he declined to do. Again he came suggesting that he

read the Bible to see if there was any part he could believe, and a bottle of red ink and a pen were left by his bedside, the officer suggesting that he mark any verse red if he could accept it. This appealed to the dying man and he said, "Where shall I read?" The officer said "Begin with John's Gospel." And he did so. He read through two chapters without making a mark, and through fifteen verses of the third chapter. Then he came to the sixteenth verse, which is a picture of the very heart of God, and he reached for his pen and marked the verse red. When this much of the story had been told we reached the old captain's room and passed the threshold to find the bed empty, for he was gone. "I wish you might have seen his Bible," said the captain. "I sent it to his family recently. There was not a page in it that was not marked red." Over his bed swung a pasteboard anchor; marked upon it were these words—"I have cast my anchor in safe harbor." For he had gone home.

III

Do you know when you were converted? That is, do you know the exact time? There are two extremes in experiences in this matter. I recall the experience of an old man who sat in my lecture room one Friday evening, and just as the hands of the clock marked the hour 9:30 he said "I will," and came to Christ. That was the moment of his conversion. But, as for myself, I have not had this experience; I do not know just when I turned to Christ. It must have been when I was but a small child. One of the best women I know has had an experience similar to mine, while one of the greatest preachers in the land has told me that he was a drunkard until he was 21 years of age, and then, on his knees, by his father's death bed, he came to the Savior. After all, it is not so much a question of the knowledge of the day, or the hour, or the month of one's conversion as "Do we now know Christ?"

IV

How may we know that we have passed from death into life? Certainly not with our feelings as a proof, for they change as the sands shift on the seashore. If our feelings be the foundation, then we may be in the kingdom and out of it a great many times a day. It is not always to be determined by a great change in one's life, for men who have not accepted Christ have had such an experience. There is only one sure way of knowing it, and that is on the authority of the word of God. John 5: 24, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation: but is passed from death unto life." And John 6: 47, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me hath everlasting life."

It is said that Napoleon while riding in front of his soldiers lost control of his horse, when a private stepped from

the ranks, seized the horse's bridle and saved the officer's life. Napoleon saluted him and called him captain. "But, sir," said he, "I am not a captain, only a private." "Then," said Napoleon, "I will commission you captain." And immediately he stepped into the company of those officers; they ordered him to the ranks, but he said, "I am a captain." "By whose authority?" they said. If then he had replied, "Because I feel like a captain," how ridiculous it would have been! Pointing to Napoleon, he said, "I am a captain, because he said it." Thus with God's word as a foundation we stand secure.

V

Do not forget to notice that we are told that we must come like little children. Not like the philosophers of the world, but like little children who always trust implicitly those who are about them. If we would be saved, we must be willing to be taught, and we must some

time make a beginning. Then why not now?

Some years ago John B. Gough visited a home in a New England city, and the heartbroken mother told him that her boy, who was an inebriate, was confined in an upper room in the house, which was much like a cell. The great temperance leader went to speak to him and said "Edward, why don't you pray?" and he said, "Because I don't believe in prayer." "But," said Mr. Gough, "You must believe in God." And he replied, "I do not believe in anything." "I am sure you are wrong in this," said he, "for I know that you believe in your mother." Then there came a new look into his face when he said, "Yes, I believe in her." "Well," said Mr. Gough, "you must then believe in love. Let us fall upon our knees and pray." And the young man began, "O love," and the spirit of God said unto him, "God is love," and he changed his prayer and said "O God," and then came the same spirit and said, "God so

loved the world that he gave his only begotten son," and he said "O Christ," and when he said this the deed was done. He immediately rose from his knees, and he has been free ever since.

FIVE KINGS IN A CAVE

TEXT: *“And it came to pass, when they brought out those kings unto Joshua, that Joshua called for all the men of Israel, and said unto the captains of the men of war which went with him, Come near, put your feet upon the necks of these kings. And they came near, and put their feet upon the necks of them. And Joshua said unto them, Fear not, nor be dismayed, be strong and of good courage: for thus shall the Lord do to all your enemies against whom ye fight.”—Joshua 10: 24-25.*

The history of the children of Israel is one of the most fascinating stories ever written. It abounds in illustrations which are as practical and helpful as any that may be used to-day, drawn from our every-day experience. God certainly meant that we should use their story in this way, for in the New Testament we read that the things which happened to them were as ensamples for us. The word “ensample” means type, or figure, or illustration.

To appreciate this text and the story of the five imprisoned kings we must go back a little bit to the place where the leadership of Moses had been transferred to Joshua. God is never at a loss for a man; his plans are never frustrated. If Moses is to be set aside Joshua is in preparation for his position. Doubtless Joshua may have felt somewhat restrained, as he was kept in a position of not very great prominence, but he certainly realized when he stood as the leader of the children of Israel that all things had been working together for the good of his leadership, and doubtless he praised Jehovah for his goodness to him. There are many incidents in connection with the immediate story of the children of Israel which should be mentioned here.

When they were ready to move towards Canaan Joshua told them that when the soles of the feet of the priests touched the water of the Jordan the water would stand on either side before them and they could pass dry shod into Canaan. Sud-

denly the marching began. They stood within three feet of the waters, which ran the same as they had been running for years; then two feet, then one, and then six inches, but there was no parting of the waters before them. Let us remember that God had said, "When the soles of the feet of the priests touch the water they shall separate." And it was even as he said, and on dry land the children of Israel passed over to the other side. It is a perfectly natural thing for one who is unregenerate to say, "Why insist upon confession, and the acceptance of Christ, and how can the mere acceptance of the Savior save me from the penalty and the power of sin?" But a countless multitude will rise to-day to say, "It was when we stepped out upon what we could not understand and what seemed as impassable and impossible as the parting of the waters of the Jordan that God gave us light and peace."

When once they were in Canaan what an interesting story that is in connection

with Rahab of Jericho! The spies had entered her home and a mob outside was seeking them that they might put them to death. Rahab promised them deliverance, only she exacted from them a promise in return that they would save alive her father and her mother and her loved ones; and when she let them down by means of a cord from the window of her home they said to her, "Bind this scarlet cord in the window and gather your loved ones here and they shall be saved." And when the children of Israel had marched about Jericho and the walls were about to fall, suddenly they lifted their eyes and they saw the red cord fluttering from the window, and while all else was destroyed Rahab and all her loved ones were saved.

What a little thing evidently stood between them and death—just a red cord! And yet as a matter of fact it is only a red cord that is between us and death—namely, the blood of the Son of God; for, as in the Old Testament times

when God saw the blood and the destroying angel passed over the home, so in these New Testament times the blood which has been received by faith insures us our safety and we are set free from sin's penalty and sin's power.

The story of Achan is a note of warning. It is rather singular that when the children of Israel had taken Jericho they failed at Ai, and yet not singular when we realize that one man had sinned in all the company. He had taken gold and silver and a Babylonish garment and had hidden the same in his tent, and this was in direct disobedience to the commands of Joshua. The sad thing about sin is that we cannot sin and suffer alone. Our friends suffer, our kindred must bear a part of the woe with us. When Achan sinned the children of Israel lost a victory. Sin is progressive. In the seventh chapter of Joshua and the twenty-first verse, we read, "When I saw among the spoils a goodly Babylonish garment, and two hundred shekels of

silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight, then I coveted them, and took them; and behold they are hid in the earth in the midst of my tent, and the silver under it." And you will notice that, first he saw, then he coveted, then he took. It is always thus; a sinful imagination will lead to outbreking iniquity, and a small sin encouraged will ultimately mean disgrace.

The story of the Gibeonites is also interesting. They had heard of the power of the children of Israel and were afraid of them; but they made up their minds to deceive them. So, lest the Israelites should think that they came from a near by territory and therefore should turn against them they put on old clothes, wore old shoes upon their feet and carried musty bread in their baggage. Then they stood before Israel and said, "We have come from a far country; look at our clothing, it is worn out; and at our shoes, they are in holes; and at our bread, it was fresh when we started, it is musty to-day."

And Joshua said, "We will make them hewers of wood and drawers of water," and they were saved from death but they served in bondage. Let this be remembered always that deception inevitably means bondage. One is in bondage to his conscience, for it constantly reproves him. He is in bondage to the one he has deceived, for he can never stand honestly before him. He is most of all in bondage to his sin, for he will surely be found out.

The Amorites were against the children of Israel and they were a great company. It is in connection with their struggle against this power that the text is written.

I

The Israelites started in this conflict with a mighty power against them, as we have seen. But so have we. There are first of all the tendencies of our old nature against which we must fight, for just as with the law of gravitation if I take my hand away from a book or a stone it falls to the floor or the ground because

this law pulls it downward, so there is a law in my members and has been in the life of every man since Adam's day pulling me away from the true to the false. It is for this reason that it is easier to do wrong than to do right, to be untrue than to be true. Then there is against us the very world in which we live. Its atmosphere, its business, even its social life is tainted with that which is sinful or to say the least questionable, and he who lives in the world and is in any sense of it has a hard battle to fight. But there are two special things which are against us.

First: The sins which we have encouraged. It may be in the beginning very small, but Satan is perfectly satisfied if he can have the least hold upon the life of the one whom he wishes to wrong. I read in a Chicago paper the story of a woman who was making a heroic struggle against an awful curse. She had become addicted to the use of morphine. For fourteen years she was a consumer of the drug. Apparently she could not

shake off the habit. Building up a resistance to the action of the drug, her system became accustomed to enormous quantities of it. She could not eat, nor sleep, nor work without it. Most of her scanty earnings went to purchase it. She was a seamstress, and by toiling many hours a day managed to get enough money to buy it. Some years back she had been a happy wife and mother. Her husband loved her; she was devoted to him and to their two children. She lost him; she lost the care of her children; rapidly she drifted away from them. The powerful narcotic helped to deaden her pain. When her anguish became unbearable a double dose of it would enable her to drowse away the hours.

“I will never again touch or taste morphine, so help me God!” she said. Immediately she discontinued the use of the drug wholly. She could get no sleep; she could not swallow food half the time or retain it. She was beset by horrible visions. She was racked by an inexpress-

ible longing. But she held on. Those who knew her and watched her agonizing battle with astonishment and sympathy told her that she was killing herself. "It may be," she would answer, "but I shall die true to my oath." "But," they would urge, "a habit like yours, which has obtained for years, should be broken gradually." "I will master it. I have blotted it from my life," she would answer. "I shall quit it this way even if I go into the grave. It has mastered me; it has cost me my home, husband and children; now I will master it." She started at shadows, her nights were nights of horror; she would bury her nails in the palms of her hands and compress her lips to keep from screaming. There was no rest for her. Still she tried to work and grew weaker. "You cannot give me that," she said, "I remember my oath. Give me any medicine you choose save opium. God would forsake me now if I forsook my promise to him." The physician remonstra-

ted with her, but in vain, so he gave her a substitute which failed of its effect, as he knew it would, and she died. Even when the hand of death had clutched her grimly, though her terrific sufferings would have been allayed by the poison, she refused to take it. Any person in the room would have bought it for her and administered it gladly, so that she might pass away in peace, but she would not prove traitor to herself. She was a friendless woman except for acquaintances recently made. Her life had been sad and hard. Held in the grip of an enemy that set its mark upon her, she was shunned and went her downward way alone. Those who were with her say that just before the end came she smiled, knowing that she had won her fight; and yet years ago she began to trifle with sin, and it had mastered her.

Again, we have against us sins which not only have been encouraged but have been committed again and again until they have become a habit of our lives, and he

who has such a sin as this finds himself in the grip of one who is a tyrant.

In a city paper the other day I came across the story of a man who once had some prominence in the world but began to go wrong, naturally drifted towards the evil and finally found himself surrounded by the lowest of companions. Because of his natural ability he easily assumed leadership.

The particular form of crime they practiced was administering chloral to those who sat at the bar in the saloon to drink. They did this by attracting the attention of the man who was to drink to something else in the room and then the deadly knock-out drops would be administered and they would rob the man. One night the dose was too strong and the victim died. The one who caused his death came before the city authorities recently to give himself up and pitifully ask that he might be quickly sent to death to pay the penalty of his crime for, said he, "From that moment my mind has

never been at rest. I wandered about town for two or three days trying to get rid of the sight of that fellow's face; but at night was when I suffered. The moment I dozed off I could see him in my dreams beckoning and laughing as he dragged me over some cliff, and I waked up cold with fear. No one knows what I suffered. I left the city. I went to Denver. I went to Butte. I traveled everywhere, but wherever I went night and day that dead man was hovering around me. I couldn't sleep and my mind began to weaken. One night I went into a gambling den. I thought the excitement might drive that vision out of my head. I played roulette. I bet on the black; the red won. And right before me I saw that printer's face just like I see you now, grinning as the dealer dragged in my money. I ran out of that club like a crazy man and wandered about town till I saw a freight train pulling out of the yards. I climbed into an empty box car and lay down in the corner to rest. For

a few moments the face was gone. Suddenly a flash of lightning lit up that car as bright as this cell, and there, just a couple of feet from me, I saw that man I'd killed plainer than I see you. He reached out and caught me by the arm. I screamed and jumped out of the car. They found me next day lying beside the track; and when they got me to a hospital, as I hope for pardon, that thing's black and blue finger marks showed on my shoulder. I've been in a lot of places since that but I never got over it. Finally it got so bad I couldn't stand it and I came back to Chicago to confess." And just as we have all these things against us so the children of Israel had the Amorites against them and the five kings were unitedly arrayed to fight them.

II

But there was a sure deliverance for Israel and there is a sure deliverance for us. God promised to be with Joshua and his people. Joshua 1:5, "There shall

not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee." Even the things that were impossible he helped them to accomplish. Joshua 6: 1-2, "Now Jericho was straitly shut up because of the children of Israel: none went out, and none came in. And the Lord said unto Joshua, See, I have given unto thine hand Jericho, and the king thereof, and the mighty men of valor." Even where men had failed him he gave them victory. Joshua 8: 1-2, "And the Lord said unto Joshua, Fear not, neither be thou dismayed: take all the people of war with thee, and arise, go up to Ai: see, I have given into thy hand the king of Ai, and his people, and his city, and his land; and thou shalt do to Ai and her king as thou didst unto Jericho and her king: only the spoil thereof, and the cattle thereof, shall ye take for a prey unto yourselves: lay thee an ambush for the city behind it." Even where the forces were

combined against them it made no difference. Joshua 10: 8, "And the Lord said unto Joshua, Fear them not: for I have delivered them into thine hand; there shall not a man of them stand before thee." So it is with us. God has promised to deliver us, and over our sinful nature, the atmosphere of the world, sins encouraged and sins committed, we may expect a complete victory. Everything is at man's disposal if only God is with him. In connection with the children of Israel even the day was made longer that they might fight their battles. Joshua 10: 12-14, "Then spake Joshua to the Lord in the day when the Lord delivered up the Amorites before the children of Israel, and he said in the sight of Israel, Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon; and thou, Moon, in the valley of Ajalon. And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed, until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies. Is not this written in the book of Jasher? So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and hasted not to go.

down about a whole day. And there was no day like that before it, or after it, that the Lord hearkened unto the voice of a man: for the Lord fought for Israel." The weak were made strong that the enemy might not triumph over them. "If God be for us who can be against us?" In this struggle with the Amorites Israel won the day.

III

The victory of the Israelites over the Amorites was like the general deliverance which God has given us from the power of sin, but there are certain sins which may pursue us, and from these we ought to be set free. When the children of Israel started from Egypt and had passed through the Red Sea certain of the Egyptians started after them, the waters of the Sea came together and they were put to death. The next day the Israelites camped upon the shore and they could easily go back. Doubtless more than one could say as he turned over the body of a dead man

to see his face, "Why, this is my old tax master who used to beat me. He will never have power over me again." Is such a deliverance as this from individual sins possible? I think it is. I can think of five sins which stand in the way of men and which may be likened to the five kings shut up in the cave.

First: Sinful imagination or secret sins. I doubt not but that almost every one whose eyes may light upon this sentence has been guilty at this point. He may have said again and again, "I will never do this thing again," and he has put the king into the cave and rolled the stone against the door.

Second: Impurity. It may be that some one who reads this sentence will plead guilty at this point, and he may have said, "This sin which is now my defeat began with only a suggestion of evil which I encouraged; but I will never be guilty again," and he puts the sin into the cave and rolls the stone against the door.

Third: Intemperance, not simply in the

matter of drinking strong drink, but it may be intemperance in the matter of dress, or eating, or pleasure; in other words, it is the lack of self-control. This has been the defeat of more men than one, and as you stop and think you say, "I will never lose control of myself again," and you put the sin within the cave and roll the stone against the door.

Fourth: Dishonesty; not simply in what you do but in what you say, for one may be dishonest in speech as well as in appropriating that which does not belong to him. If you should be condemned just here and have determined never to fail again at this point, by an act of your will you consign this king to the cave and close up the entrance.

Five: Unbelief, which is the greatest sin of all and is the last and greatest sin to be put into the cave. As a result of such an action there may be temporary relief, but not permanent, for the kings may break away from the cave and organize their forces against you once more and you

go down. Here comes in the power of the text. Bring the kings out, every one of them, and put your feet upon their necks and stand in all your right and dignity as Christian men, and expect deliverance not so much because of what you are but because of the fact that from the days of the first sin it has been said, "The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head."

Near Toledo, Ohio, there used to live an old doctor noted for his infidelity. He was violent in his opposition to the church. One day he called Robert Ingersoll to the town where he lived and paid him two hundred dollars, that he might by means of his lecture break up the revival meeting. Everybody was afraid of him. He heard of an old preacher back in the country who was a stranger to the schools but not a stranger to God, and he asked his friends to make it possible for him to meet him. Finally they met, and the infidel with a sneer said, "So you believe the Bible, do you?" and he said, "Yes,

sir; do you?" "And you believe in God, do you?" and he said, "Yes, sir." "Well, I want you to understand that I am an infidel, and believe none of these things." The old minister looked at him and said simply, "Well, is that anything to be proud of?" and it was an arrow that went straight through the unbeliever. He went back to his office and began to think it over. "Anything to be proud of," he said, and he finally realized that he was not in a favorable position. Then he thought of an old Christian he knew and said, "If I could be such a Christian as that I would come to Christ." He went to tell the minister, and the minister said to him, "Get down on your knees and tell God so," and he began to tell him, then broke down and sobbed out his confession of sin. His cry for deliverance was heard, and he rose up a free man in Christ Jesus. From that day till this he has been freed from every one of his sins, is preaching the Gospel and counts it his highest joy to contribute in every possible way to the

enlargement of the bounds of the Kingdom of God. So there is deliverance from every form of sin if we will but move in God's way.

DEFINITENESS OF PURPOSE IN CHRISTIAN WORK

TEXT: "*Salute no man by the way.*"—Luke 10: 4.

Luke is the only one of the Evangelists giving us the account of the sending out of the seventy. The others tell us that Christ called certain men unto him and commissioned them to tell his story; but in this instance after Jesus had said, "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head," he calls the seventy and sends them forth prepared to endure any sacrifice or suffer any affliction if only they may do his will. And when he had said unto another, "Follow me," but he answered, "Suffer me first to go and bury my father," Jesus said unto him (Luke 9: 60-62), "Let the dead bury their dead; but go thou and preach the kingdom of God. And another also said, Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go bid

them farewell which are at home at my house. And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God." From this expression of the Master we quite understand that no other service, however important it may seem to us, is to come between us and our devotion to him. And in the expression concerning the man having put his hand to the plow and looking back we have one of the strongest illustrations that Jesus ever used. He does not say that if any one puts his hand to the plow and turns back to some other form of service he is not fit for the Kingdom of God, but what he says is this: If any man has his hands to the plow and simply looks back he is not fit for the Kingdom; and this for two reasons:

First: Because no man could plow as he ought to unless he would keep his eyes straight ahead of him, and

Second: No man could plow if he has his mind fixed upon something else. Jesus wants his disciples to know that his work

is the important work, that nothing can surpass it. Not only is it wrong for us to turn away from him to any other service but it is a sin even to take our eyes off of him to gaze upon anything else. Under such sharp teaching as this he sends forth the seventy.

Let it be noted, first, that he sent them forth two by two. Perhaps one was sent because he was strong in the opposite direction from his fellow laborer. Who knows but one could speak and the other could sing? Certainly one was the complement of the other. And they went forth with burning hearts to give the message of Jesus. That illustration in the New Testament where four men brought the sick man to Jesus is along the same line. Two men might have failed utterly, three men would have found it difficult service, for four men it was easy.

I once made my way into the office of a doctor to ask him to come to Christ. The meetings were in progress in the church and I thought he was interested.

He received me kindly, but firmly declined even to talk of Christ and I left him, utterly discouraged. The next night the man gave his heart to Christ, and for this reason, I believe. We had made him in a little company of church officers a subject of prayer, and you cannot pray earnestly for one for any length of time without speaking to him concerning his soul's salvation. Without having had a conference four men determined to see the doctor, and they all called upon him within two hours of time. When the first came he laughed at him; when the second came his prominence in the business world at least commanded the doctor's respect; when the third came, having driven four miles in from the country, he began to be interested; and with the coming of the fourth there was awakened in him a deep conviction. He closed his office, went to his home and before the evening hour of service came had accepted Christ.

We have practically the same commis-

sion as the seventy. "As the Father hath sent me even so send I you," said Jesus to us. These conditions are as true to-day as in those days in the work of the seventy.

The harvest is great. There possibly never has been a time when more people are absenting themselves from the church than at the present time. These men and women are fit subjects for the Gospel. The seventy went as the messengers of peace, so may we go. There are troubled hearts all about us, there are those who are in despair, men and women who are saying, "Peace, peace," when there is no peace, while ours is the very message of peace. Jesus said to them, "Carry neither purse nor scrip nor shoes," for their dependence was upon him. So must it be to-day. Not upon method nor upon skill must we depend, nor upon the schemes of men, however successful they may have been in the past, but upon him. In those days the men were sick and troubled, in these days they are dead in sins and as his messengers we carry the message of love.

I

This expression of the text meant very much to the Oriental, for as a matter of fact the salutation of the Eastern people frequently took a half an hour of time, and sometimes an hour would be consumed. They touched their turbans, fell upon their knees, saluted one another with a holy kiss, talked together concerning their own interests. These things were a part of the salutation. Jesus says to the seventy, "Salute no man as you go." They were not bidden to be impolite—this is farthest from the spirit of the Christian—yet they were commissioned to be about the king's business and the king's business required haste.

The idea of the text is that there must be definiteness of purpose in Christian work. When Elisha kept his eyes fixed upon Elijah there came to him as the result the mantle of Elijah and he was clothed with power. When Gehazi followed Elisha's command and as he went

to the home of the Shunammite saluted no one he became the forerunner of life to the child. And when Paul said, "This one thing I do," and nothing could swerve him from his path of duty, he became the mightiest preacher in the world's history since Christ. But let it not be thought for a moment that we are advocating a gloomy religion; far from it.

I like the story of the little girl who went one day into her grandfather's room to ask him to read to her and found him asleep with his head upon the back of the chair, his Bible upon his knees and the sunlight coming through the window at the proper angle to cast about him a halo of glory, and she ran to her mother saying, "I have been in grandpa's room and I have seen God." If as a Christian the people of the world can have any thought other than this, that we at times at least remind them of Christ, something is wrong with our Christian experience.

There were two sides to the experience of Jesus. In one we see him at the wedding

rejoicing with those that did rejoice, making wine out of water and contributing to the happiness of all those who were present. In the other instance we see him upon the mountain side and crying out, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem!" with an almost breaking heart.

When Charles G. Finney was in Utica there came down to see him a woman who was concerned for the town in which she lived. She returned to her home and through days and nights found it impossible either to eat or to sleep because she realized the lost condition of those about her. At last when she was so weak that she could not pray, she had rest only when those about her prayed for her. When Mr. Finney reached that town one of the greatest revivals in his history as an evangelist was the result.

I was one day engaged with other pastors in an eastern city in a Gospel campaign. The ministers were preaching in turn each day and when it came my time to preach I could find in all the audience

scarcely one of my people. Up to that day the interest had been remarkable, but somehow from that day on, although people had been converted by the hundred, there was no perceptible spiritual impression. When the meetings had closed one of the prominent society leaders of my church came to explain to me why she was away from the service and she said, "I gave my afternoon reception and the people of our church were there." When I told her that I felt that as a result of that afternoon reception our own church had lost a blessing she seemed utterly amazed; and yet to this day I am firmly persuaded that hundreds of people might have come to Christ if we had not in that day grieved the Spirit.

II

The text means that those of us who are Christians shall show by our very faces that we are on the king's business and that it is solemn business.

One day a man knocked at the door of

my study, was admitted, sat down on the couch in the room and began to sob. He did not need to tell me why he had come. I knew, but finally when he sobbed it out this was his message: "I have come to ask you to bury my wife, and to ask if you will not go with me to comfort the children, for they are heartbroken." I knew by the very look of his face that he had lost a loved one. Do you think for a moment that those who gaze at us would imagine that we had the least conviction that people away from Christ were lost? I am sure they would not.

The text also means that we shall be desperately in earnest. A father and his boy heard a minister preach a sermon on the judgment and as they went to their home the father said, "My boy, it was a great sermon and you must think about it." And the boy did. He made his way to his room and threw himself on his bed only to hear his father downstairs laughing and singing; and he said to himself, "It is not true, for if my father believed

I was in danger of the judgment he could not laugh and he would not sing." That day was the turning point in the boy's life. He became a man of renown but never a believer in Jesus Christ as we accept him.

The text also indicates how we should pray, with an eye single to his glory but with a purpose that cannot be shaken. Pray as the Shunammite prayed, pray as the woman besought the unjust judge; such prayer brings victory.

III

Did you ever realize that you were standing in the way of the conversion of your friends? How about your living? If your testimony rings anything else than true to Christ you are a stumbling block in the way of some one.

How about your testimony? In the meetings to which I referred there came a young woman one day evidently greatly moved. First one pastor would speak to her and then another, and finally I was given the privilege. For a long time I

could not understand her words for her sobs and then she said, "I am a Christian, a member of one of the churches in this movement. I have been engaged to a young man for the last three years. He was not a Christian. Three weeks ago he was taken ill and a week ago he died. In all the time that I knew him I never spoke to him about Christ. I do not know that he even knew that I was a Christian, and now," she said, with a heart which seemed to be literally crushed, "he has gone and I never warned him." And the text means that no one could come within the reach of our influence without having at least a suggestion made by ourselves to them that we are the followers of Christ and that we long to have them know him who means so much to us.

THE MORNING BREAKETH

TEXT: "*Watchman, what of the night? The watchman said, The morning cometh, and also the night.*"—Isaiah 21: 11-12.

It is very interesting to note that, whether we study the Old Testament or the New, nights are always associated with God's mornings. In other words, he does not leave us in despair without sending to us his messengers of hope and cheer.

The Prophet Isaiah in this particular part of his prophecy seems to be almost broken-hearted because of the sin of the people. As one of the Scotch preachers has put it, he has practically sobbed himself to sleep. A great shadow has fallen upon the people of God and he is in despair because of it. They have sown to the wind and now they are reaping the whirlwind, a result which is inevitable. They are away from Zion with its temple,

and are deprived of the view of those mountains which are round about Jerusalem and to this day are clad with vines and olive trees. They are in captivity and are the abject slaves of the enemies of God. Isaiah's heart is well-nigh crushed, but in the midst of the despair he has a vision of the chariots coming and hears a cry which rejoices his soul, "Babylon is fallen." It is because of these tidings that he cries out in the words of the text.

What a night they had had of it! They had been in darkness that was ever increasing, and the song of thanksgiving which used to fill their souls because of the nearness of Jehovah had entirely departed from them.

The figure of the watchman is often used in the Bible, as for example when he stands upon the city walls and is told that if he sounds the trumpet telling of the approach of the enemy and the people hear and do not take warning their blood is upon their own heads, while if he fails to sound the trumpet and the people are

cut off, their blood is required at the watchman's hand. And again in the first chapter of Zechariah the eighth to the eleventh verses, "I saw by night, and behold a man riding upon a red horse, and he stood among the myrtle trees that were in the bottom; and behind him were there red horses, speckled and white. Then said I, O my Lord, what are these? And the angel that talked with me said unto me, I will shew thee what these be. And the man that stood among the myrtle trees answered and said, These are they whom the Lord hath sent to walk to and fro through the earth. And they answered the angel of the Lord that stood among the myrtle trees, and said, We have walked to and fro through the earth, and behold all the earth sitteth still and is at rest." For here the man standing in the midst of the myrtle trees is him of whom the prophets did speak, while the messengers are those who bring him tidings of the progress of his kingdom. But again where David comes to the watch

tower and sees the two messengers running, the second one bringing him tidings of the death of his son, and from this watch tower he staggers back again to his room crying out, "O Absalom, my son, would God I had died for thee!"

The poet usually sings of the night as a time of beauty. He sings of the moon and the stars; but in the Bible night always stands for that which is dark, foul, loathsome, sinful, cold and deadly. There are different nights mentioned in the Scripture, for the most part in the Old Testament. There was that night in Eden when sin blinded the eyes of Adam and Eve and a great darkness fell round about them. There was the night of the flood, all because the people had neglected God; and there was the night of the destroying angel passing over the cities of Egypt, all because of the indifference of those who knew not God. But even in these nights God does not leave his people without help, for in Eden we read, "The seed of the woman shall bruise the ser-

pent's head"; while in the flood behold the Ark; and in the Passover night we see the blood of the Paschal lamb sprinkled upon the lintels of the door.

There are different mornings mentioned in the Scriptures, and as a rule we find them in the New Testament.

The morning of his birth.

The morning of his resurrection.

The morning of his miracle when the empty nets are filled and the discouraged fishermen are made to rejoice.

The morning of his return, when, after the rising of the morning star, an endless day of blessing shall be ushered in.

It used to be the custom in Scotland, especially in Aberdeen, for the night watchman of the city guard as he paced the streets to cry aloud, "Twelve o'clock and the night is dark; one o'clock and the storm is heavy," and the restless sleeper would toss upon his pillow and listen for the tidings of the morning hour, "Two o'clock and the morning is starry." It is in this spirit that we listen to-day

to the cry of the watchman when he declares, "The morning cometh and also the night."

I

We are in a sense in the night in these days, even though we are Christians.

First: Because of the existence of sin. It is everywhere, in the heart as a mighty principle of evil pulling us down as the law of gravitation pulls material substances toward the earth's center. In the life as shown by our habits and practices, for these are the fruits of sin. In the very air we breathe sin is manifest, and sin has brought the night.

Second: I sometimes think that the darkness is increasing because as ministers we fail to preach concerning sin. We speak of it as an error or a mistake; we talk about the devil and call him his Satanic majesty; we preach about hell and call it the lost world, while it is true that in the olden days when men trembled under the word of the preacher the man of God spoke of the devil and hell

and sin in all their awfulness. But the morning cometh, for while it is true that sin is in the world and it has gripped many of us, yet because of Christ's death upon the cross we are free from the penalty of sin; we may be free from the power of sin, for the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus sets us free from the law of sin and death; we may be free from the practice of sin, for Christ is the secret of our deliverance. But the text tells us that while the morning cometh the night also appears. And so for those of us whose lives have been such a struggle we cry, "Is there no deliverance?" and I answer, yes, we shall one day be free from the presence of sin; and that will be at his return when we shall see him and be like him, and the new day which is never to close shall be upon us.

Third: We are in the night because of the existence of sorrow. Next to sin this is the greatest fact in the world, for men are born unto trouble as the sparks fly upward. And somehow the morning and

the night as they are fastened together in this text present to us the story of our lives, for we are first in the morning when everything seems peaceful, and almost immediately in the night when we are really in despair.

I journeyed from Naples to Rome over a fine piece of railway and found myself now in the darkness of a tunnel and almost immediately rushing out onto a fertile plain. That railroad is the story of many a life. But "Is there no deliverance that is complete?" and I answer, yes, there is a time coming when there shall be no sea and no tears and no night, for the former things are passed away.

Fourth: We are in the night because of mystery. Life is full of questions. "Why must I have this trial or pain or trouble?" So many of us are asking these questions, and there is really no answer, at least none for the present. And yet God has not deceived us, for he has said, "What I do thou knowest not now but thou shalt know hereafter." He tells us

that when we see him we shall know, but also declares that no one can see his face and live; and then, said the sainted Augustine, "Let me die that I may see him." It is true that we shall go on from light into darkness, from morning into the night, but is there no final deliverance? And I answer, yes, when we see him and become like him we shall know as we are known. Let us wait and believe until that day.

Have you ever seen a perfect rainbow—that is, a rainbow in a perfect circle? I never have. The most perfect one I have ever seen was on the plains of Jericho, but it was a half circle. However, in the Revelation we are told that in that day there shall be a rainbow round about the throne, when half circles shall be made whole and half things shall be made complete; that is the morning for which we long.

II

But there is another suggestion, "the morning cometh and also the night." There is the thought of the transition from

the one to the other. We certainly have been in the night so far as our living is concerned and our working, but now I feel sure there is coming a change and we are living in a critical time. May God help us to be faithful.

All truth is like a cycle and at different points in the circumference there are truths which must be especially emphasized.

The late A. J. Gordon once preached a sermon on the "Recurrence of Doctrine," in which he stated that while in one day justification by faith was the prominent truth for the church, in another sanctification was prominent, in still another the return of the Lord, and in still another the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. All this I firmly believe and it only proves to me that the prominent truth for to-day is every man for his neighbor, every friend for his friend, every parent for his child, the individual seeking the individual for Christ. God is calling us to action; let us not fail.

I have a friend who used to use an illustration of a sea captain, his first mate and his wife wrecked upon a rocky shore, huddled together upon a rock out from the shore but too far for them to escape by throwing themselves into the waves. The life-line is shot out to them and the captain puts it round his first mate and bids him jump and he is drawn to the shore in safety. Then he put the cord around the waist of his wife, but the current is running in such a way that she must spring at just the proper second or she will be thrown back against the rocks and be killed. And he shouts to her, "Spring!" but she waited to kiss him and waited too long, sprang into the sea and was thrown back against the rock and drawn shoreward lifeless. Whether that story is true or not I cannot say, but it is an illustration of the present day to me. God is saying, "Now is the day of opportunity." May he pity us if we fail!

III

While all that has been said is true concerning the morning of the Eternal Day, in another sense it is true that already a brighter day is breaking.

First: A better day for Bible study. This old Book which people have feared was going to pass away is better to-day than ever. It is the object of deeper affection, and there is no question but that more people are believing in it to-day as the inspired Word of God than for years; and all because they have tested it and it has stood the test.

Second: A better day of prayer is dawning. Fifty thousand people in Great Britain are banded together to pray and to pray until the blessing comes if that be for years. Oh, that God would teach us to pray! We do not half understand what it means to ask God for blessings.

A story of prayer which would seem impossible if I did not know it to be true,

for I have friends who have been in the town where it occurred and have met the descendants of the old sea captain, is the story of the captain who took his boy and others to fish and in the midst of the hurricane the boy was washed over board. Broken-hearted, he returned to the shore and the fisher wife, as was her custom, came down to meet them, only to sob her way back to her home because her boy was gone. They spent the night in the kirk in prayer, when the minister said, "Why not ask God to restore his body?" and they did. They put out to sea and journeyed sixty miles until he told them to stop and when they let over the grappling hooks they knew by the very tug of the rope that they had his body. They bore it back again to the broken-hearted captain and his wife, who had all the time been waiting in the kirk in prayer. May God teach us how to pray!

A brighter day is dawning, and while it may be that some of us cannot see it, while there may be skeptics who say it is

not exactly true, yet I know from what I have seen myself that the darkness is passing away.

In June, 1897, the steamer *Catalonia* at ten o'clock at night was found to be on fire. One of my friends has told me that he paced the deck and considered himself lost because the flames were burning fiercely. Finally the fire was under control and the people sang, "Praise God from whom all blessings flow." Telling me of the lessons that he learned on this awful journey, he said: "That night at twelve o'clock, when the pumps were being forced and the clouds of smoke were taking on new dimensions and we were wondering what the morning would bring us, the man on the bridge shouted, as he had at each midnight of the trip, 'Eight bells, all's well!'" Had the man down in a stateroom watching by the side of his sick wife heard the words, he might have said, "It's a falsehood," but that man's vision was restricted by the narrow walls of his stateroom. Had the

mother and daughter, sitting in the cabin, with their arms about each other, wondering why they had been allowed to sail on the *Catalonia* and leave their loved ones behind, heard it, they might have said, "The man is beside himself," but they could not see beyond the cabin. Had the lonely traveler who stood near the hatchway given it a thought he might have said, "It's a lie," but he could not see through the clouds of smoke at which he stared silently. But the vision of the watch swept the horizon, and there was no obstruction in the ship's path. He knew that each revolution of the *Catalonia's* machinery pushed the ship on her way to Queenstown. He had a right to say it.

I somehow seem to hear the sound of the goings in the tops of the trees and have evidence that God is coming to his church with blessing. It is true there is in some quarters indifference, in many places worldliness, but I can see no insurmountable barrier in the way of the progress of the Kingdom of God.

AN OBSCURED VISION

(Preached at the opening of the Winona Lake Bible Conference.)

TEXT: "*Where there is no vision, the people perish.*"—Proverbs 29:18.

It is not altogether an easy matter to secure a text for such an occasion as this; not because the texts are so few in number but rather because they are so many, for one has only to turn over the pages of the Bible in the most casual way to find them facing him at every reading.

Feeling the need of advice for such a time as this, I asked a number of my friends who knew me intimately and knew the occasion which was before me to suggest what in their minds would be an appropriate Scripture, and in their suggestions I have had the most singular indication of the leading of Providence.

One said, "Use Hosea 5:4, where God

in speaking concerning his people Israel says, 'They will not frame their doings,' which means that his people would not set before themselves the way in which they were going; or it might mean that they would not set up a plan for their lives which would be according to his will and which he might bring on to completion.

Another said, "Use Genesis 26:18," where we are told that Isaac digged again the wells of his father Abraham. This is a suggestive incident and has in it a message for to-day, for if there is one thing needed more than another it is that the old wells at which our fathers drank and were refreshed and which, alas! in these modern times have been filled in, at least to a certain extent, should be opened and men be summoned once again to drink of their living waters.

Another said, "Use Jeremiah 6:16, 'Ask for the old paths;'" for as a matter of fact we cannot improve upon the ways in which our fathers walked, so far as the

revelation of God is concerned or the doing of his will.

Still another suggested that I should use Isaiah 62:10, "Gather out the stones, lift up a standard for the people," in which the description is of a great prince coming and all hindrances should be removed that the journey might be robbed of its difficulties and dangers.

You will notice if you have watched the suggestions of these Christian workers that the texts are practically all the same, and then when I tell you that the line of thought they have indicated was the very line which God suggested to me weeks and months before the conference you will be impressed as I have been that this subject is not of my own choosing, and therefore must be a message from God. Neither is the text one of my own choosing, for God pressed it in upon me again and again and from it I was afraid to turn away.

I like the text because it is in the book of Proverbs. This book is not simply a

collection of wise sayings and affectionate exhortations, for you will remember that the Proverbs were put down after the event and not before its occurrence. This being true, Proverbs presents an established fact: here we find what the wise men in all the ages have learned to be truth. If they speak of sin and its penalty they do it in the light of their own experience; if they say the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge they mean that they have tried other sources of wisdom and all have failed but this. All this makes the text exceedingly valuable, for the wise men of other days must have tried to walk without the vision and not only failed themselves but have set the people astray.

By a vision we do not mean simply an imagination or dream which might come to some person who had little practical understanding of the ways of life, but we mean an appreciation of God's thought and approximate understanding of his plan and a desire to know his will.

The word "perish," does not mean destruction, but rather the idea is to "run wild"; so the literal rendering of the text is, "Where there is no revelation the people run wild"—that is to say, if God is put out of thought every man is a law unto himself and therefore is dangerous to the community in which he lives. He is like a ship sailing for a harbor without chart or compass and with utter indifference to the pole star. Whatever your impressions, convictions or purposes, they should always be squared by reverent, careful and profound study of God's will and word.

The first sentence of the Bible is this, "In the beginning God," and it must be the first sentence of every plan and of every purpose of the individual and the community or there is danger ahead.

I

There ought never to be an age without a vision, indeed without repeated visions. If there should be such a time

it might be a time of prosperity, but inevitably souls would be neglected. There ought not to be an individual without a vision. If there should be such an one he is missing the best of his life. If there be no vision the horizon of man may be bounded by his office, his store, his home, his own city or his native land, while as a matter of fact this is only a part of what God meant him to do and to be. God's plans are from everlasting to everlasting. The wonderful work he is doing in this world is only a part of the plan, for in the ages to come he expects to show forth the manysidedness of his grace and reveal to us the depth of his love to us in Christ.

John McNeill's friend had an eagle which he had reared in the farm yard with the ordinary fowl that lived there. This friend sold his property and determined to move to another part of Scotland. He could dispose of his horses and sell his chickens but no one wanted the eagle. What should he do with it? He

determined to teach it to fly, and threw it up in the air only to have it come down with a thud upon the ground. Then he lifted it and placed it upon the barn yard fence and was holding it for a moment when suddenly the eagle lifted its eyes and caught a glimpse of the sun. It stretched forth its head as far as it could, threw out one wing, then another, and with a scream and a bound was away flying upward until it was lost in the face of the sun. This is what we are needing to-day—namely, to lift up our eyes and see God's plan and try to understand his purposes. The eagle so long had held its head down that it had lost the vision of the sun; the first glimpse of it set him free. What we mean by a vision, therefore, is an appreciation of God's purposes and plans and a hearty yielding to him for service in the accomplishment of the same.

Joseph Cook when he was making a plea for China's millions said one day, "Put your ear down to the ground and listen and you will hear the tramp, tramp,

tramp of four hundred millions of weary feet." I have to say this morning, Lift up your eyes and look, open your ears and listen and you will both see and hear that God has a great plan for us which he will reveal to all if only we will permit him to do so. In proportion as a people loses its faith in a revelation from God it falls into decay. The student of history recalls vividly the story of the French Revolution, which is a proof of this statement.

God has always spoken concerning his plans and it has been to living men and women that he has granted visions. He came to Abraham and he saw Christ's day and was glad: he visited Moses and he endured as seeing him who is invisible: he was lifted up before Isaiah and he first confessed his sin and shame, then cried, "Here am I, send me." He granted Saul of Tarsus a vision of himself as he approached Damascus until he cried, "Who art thou?" and then began to walk in fellowship with him until like the hero that he was he mounted from the Eternal

City to that City which has foundations whose Builder and Maker is God. He stood before John as in apocalyptic vision he saw him with his head and his hair, white like wool, as white as snow and his eyes as a flame of fire.

But if you should say, "Oh, yes, but this is in Bible times and we are living in a different age," then hear me when I say that he has come to living men and women in our own day with a revelation of his will. He spoke to Zinzendorf and we have a mighty work among the Moravians. He revealed himself to the Wesleys and we have the mighty movement of Methodism. He talked with Edwards and we have the great Revival of New England. He revealed himself to Finney and we have the great manifestation of power in the state of New York. He walked and talked with Moody and we have the greatest evangelistic work of his day and generation with Moody as his instrument. These were all men with visions. He has come to great mission-

aries like Paton who saw the New Hebrides Islands evangelized while yet they sat in darkness, because he saw God. He has spoken to our own Fulton in China, who writes that the people are flocking to Christ. To him it is no surprise, for he knew that they would do it while others were still skeptical. He knew it because he knew God.

Let us remember that, however true it may be that God speaks in conscience, providence, through the church and by the preaching of his Word, his supreme revelation is in his own Word. This Book contains the revealed will of God and this Book is his Word.

II

Why are we not having revelations today as we know they have been given at other times? Why is not some one in our own land especially working out some of the great plans and purposes of God? The question is easily answered. The

difficulty is not with God. He is the same forever. We alone must be at fault. Without any spirit of harsh criticism and with a prayer to God that he will make my spirit as he would have it, permit me to say that I fear the visions are not being given to us for the following reasons:

First: Because of the disrespect shown to his Son. We have come to a time when men seek to limit his knowledge, and occasionally they are saying that he did not know concerning the things of which he spake. Such blasphemy makes us shudder. There is a disposition to misinterpret his teaching. They did it in Paul's day and he spoke by inspiration when he said, "If any man present another gospel than that which I have presented let him be accursed." There is a disposition to rob him of his deity. "Is Jesus divine?" was the question asked not long ago of one who called himself a minister, and he answered, "Yes, in the sense that Buddha is divine or Confucius is divine." Our faces grow white with

fear as we listen to such blasphemous statements in such an age as this. This helps to overcast the sky and God can hardly trust us with a vision in such an atmosphere.

Second: An irreverent criticism of the Word of God. That there is a reverent criticism all will allow, and that many who are walking these paths are devout believers in God and in his word I would like to be among the first to acknowledge. There are three kinds of critics to-day. First: Those who honestly want the best and who are studying carefully and prayerfully to know the truth. Second: Those who ape scholarship. Third: Those whose lives may not be right, and for them if any part of the Bible could be cut away they would be less condemned. We need not fear, however; our Bible is not in danger, for this is largely a question of scholarship. Some of you who listen to me may not class yourselves as scholars. I certainly do not put myself in that company, but one thing I know: I have seen

the Bible work as no other book has ever worked, and I have seen Jesus Christ save miraculously multitudes of poor lost sinners. I am not disturbed for the future; there are as great scholars as the world has ever known who still hold to your mother's Bible and who have lost not one whit of confidence in it.

Thomas Newberry, a devout English student, spent fifty years in study to give the world his Newberry Bible. He said, "I accept the theory of the plenary inspiration of the Scriptures. I have studied every 'jot and tittle' of the Word of God and after these fifty years I see no reason for changing my position." Scholars' names almost without number could be mentioned as believing in the Scriptures as the divinely inspired Word of God. For myself I would have great assurance in standing side by side with Dr. Paton, and I would not think of trembling so long as our sainted Dr. Moorehead walks courageously along life's journey as he nears its end with faith in God's Word

unshaken, with confidence in God's Son constantly growing. This blessed old Book has been railed at in all the ages. Men have professed to overthrow it, they have cut and slashed at it like Jehoiakim of old, but it is better than ever to-day. It is the Word of God. Heaven and earth may pass away but this Word, never.

Not long ago I attended a conference of Christian workers and was told by one of them that I could not appreciate the Bible except I read it with the thought of literary criticism in mind. My friend interpreted a portion of the Word of God for me in this way and it was beautiful. It reminded me of nothing so much as a diamond perfectly cut, kissed by the sunlight and throwing back its sparkling light to me as I gazed upon it.

Another said that I would never be able to understand the Bible until I read it from the standpoint of the elocutionist in the best use of that expression, and he read in my hearing the story of Joseph and his brethren and I felt that I myself had

never read the Bible before and really had never heard it read.

Still another came with his higher criticism and said that much of the Bible was mythical, that the stories I had loved were simply allegorical; and I listened to him and went back to my Bible to read, only to find that you may read it any way, spell it out in your youth letter by letter, read it through your tears as you reach middle life and your heart is aching, hold it against your heart when your eyes are too dim to read its pages, and it will yield to you a sweetness which is actually beyond the power of man to describe. This is a wonderful Book and in this Book God reveals himself. Handle it irreverently and you will have no vision.

Third: It seems to me that the church is not what she ought to be, and this being true the vision is denied. One of my friends said the other day that the difficulty with the church is that she has lost her interrogation point. At the day of Pentecost people were saying, "What do

these things mean?" To-day they never think of saying it. I have been told in a little pamphlet issued by an English writer that the church has lost her possessive case, which means that somehow she has gone on without realizing that the risen, glorified Christ is her blessed Lord. It is a great thing to say "Jesus"; infinitely greater is it to say "My Jesus." The church has lost her imperative mode. In days that are past it was possible for the church to stand in the presence of evil and say, "In the name of Almighty God this iniquity must stop." But to-day it is not possible. The church has lost her present tense. We are constantly looking for blessings in the future. God's promises are all written for the present. It is to the church on fire that God grants a vision.

Fourth: Some of the difficulty must rest with us as ministers of the Gospel. I fear that some of us have lost our message. It has loosened its grip upon us, and you never can move another man until you

are first moved yourself by the message you would give to him.

At a great gathering not long ago I heard a distinguished Eastern professor speaking. The topic of his lecture was "My Foster Children," and these foster children were some animals which he had had as pets, whose habits he had carefully studied. One was a Gila monster from the plains of Arizona, another was a horned owl, the third was a rat, and the fourth was an opossum. If you can imagine more uninteresting subjects than these you are more imaginative than myself, and yet he thrilled me and held three thousand people in breathless interest. Oh, my brethren, if I believe in Jesus Christ as the Son of God and as a Savior able not only to save to the uttermost but to keep through eternity, and that message grips me, I am a poor preacher if I fail with it to grip and move other men. I fear we have lost our boldness. I am a minister of the glorious Gospel of the grace of God and I have a right to de-

mand a hearing and to give my message, not because of what I am myself—God forbid—but because of what my Savior is. Some of us have lost our passion for souls; we mourn over it, we know that when we once had this it was the secret of a successful ministry. It is not wrong for me to say to you this morning that to the minister without a message, to the minister who has lost his holy boldness, to the minister who has anything less than a burning passion for souls, God cannot give his vision.

III

I know that I have your deepest sympathy in the longing which I now express for this great gathering—namely, that God would give to us a vision.

First: As to what the Bible really is. One of my friends told me the other day of a blind girl who could not read because she had been too busy and somehow had not thought that she could use the

raised letters which have been such a boon to God's blind children. I am told she learned that she might read while on these grounds last summer. It was made possible later on for her to have a teacher and she began to study little books until she could read quite fluently. One day unknown to her there was brought into her home a Bible with raised letters and without telling what the book was it was opened at the fourteenth chapter of John and she was bidden to read in it. She had no sooner touched the page, her fingers enabling her to read, "Let not your heart be troubled, ye believe in God, believe also in me," than with radiant face she exclaimed, "Why this is God's Word; the very touch of it is different." I would that we might have this vision.

Second: I wish that we might have a vision of Christ. He is the chiefest among ten thousand, and the one altogether lovely. He is a mighty Savior and a mighty helper. I cannot bring him a bur-

den too great, nor talk to him about a trial too insignificant. Oh, that we might see him as he is!

And finally, I wish that we might know what service is, for knowing this we would be instant in season and out of season. Some years ago Fannie Crosby, the blind hymn writer, was speaking in one of the missions in New York City. Suddenly she stopped and said, "I wonder if there is not some wandering boy in this audience this evening who would have the courage to step out from this audience and come up and stand by my side so that I might put my arms around him and kiss him for his mother?" There was a hush upon the audience; then a boy from the rear seat started and came to the platform, and with her arms around about him and her lips against his cheek for his mother's sake, Fannie Crosby said, "Oh, my friends, let us rescue the perishing." From this meeting she went to her home, and sitting in her room wrote:

“Rescue the perishing,
Care for the dying,
Snatch them in pity from sin and the grave,
Weep o’er the erring one,
Lift up the fallen,
Tell them of Jesus, the Mighty to save.”

Years afterward she spoke in St. Louis at a great meeting and related this incident. Before she had finished a man in the audience sprang to his feet and said, “Miss Crosby, listen to me. I am a prosperous merchant in this city, a husband and a father, a Christian and an officer in the church. I was that boy around whom you threw your arms.” Such an experience as that is worth a lifetime of service. I wish to put myself on record. I know that many of you are with me. I stand for nothing in these days that would in the least obscure men’s vision of the power of God, or their vision of the glorious majesty of the Son of God, and I count nothing worth while except to do that thing which would mean the winning of a soul to Jesus Christ.

I believe God is giving to some men in these days a vision as to what may be accomplished if only a mighty work of grace should be given to us. He certainly is ready to pour out his Spirit upon his own people, and it is only necessary that we should first of all realize our weakness, then understand his power, realize that souls are lost and dying and then know that he is able to save to the uttermost; and above all to realize that in all ages he has used human instruments for the accomplishment of his purposes, and realizing these things to see that our lives are right in his sight, to have such a victory for God as the world has never seen. For this day we hope and pray and cry aloud, "O Lord, how long, how long?"

THE COMPASSION OF JESUS

TEXT: "*But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion.*"—Matt. 9: 36.

The keynote of the earthly ministry of Jesus Christ was "compassion." You have but to follow him in his journeys by day and by night to find the proof of this statement. Whether he ministers to the sick of the palsy, turns aside to help the father whose child is dead, heals the woman with the issue of blood, drives away the leprosy from the man dead by law, stops to open the eyes of the blind man by the wayside, helps the beggar or wins the member of the Sanhedrim, he is always the same.

If you journey with him in the morning on the shores of the Sea of Galilee, or at noon rest with him as he sits on the well curb of Jacob's well; if you stop with him in the evening as he bares his side and thrusts forth his hand to the

doubting Thomas, or behold him as he is roused from his sleep in the boat to quiet the storm; if you study him on the mountain side at midnight or behold him in the garden of Gethsemane when no one beholds his agony but the eye of his Father—you will learn that he was always compassionate. You cannot discover him under any circumstances when this statement is not true of him.

This ninth chapter of Matthew is indeed remarkable. It can be appreciated only when we read the closing part of the eighth chapter, for it is here that the people, angry because of the destruction of the swine, besought him to leave their country; and it is here we see him taking his departure. Men have since that time driven him from their hearts and their homes for reasons quite as trifling. It is a sad thing to know that any one can drive him away if he chooses to do so.

The chapter is remarkable, however, because here we not only read the story of the calling of Matthew from his

position of influence, but find more specific cases of healing than in most other chapters of the New Testament. There is the healing of the sick of the palsy in the second verse, the significant part of which is he was healed when Jesus saw *their* faith; the picture of the father whose child was dead and then raised by him, in the eighteenth verse and the twenty-fifth verse; the account of the woman with the issue of blood, in the twentieth verse, and the picture of discouragement when all earthly physicians had failed changed into great joy when the virtue of the great physician healed her: the account of the dumb man, in the thirty-second verse, who was possessed of a devil as well; and then in the thirty-fifth verse a general statement concerning him to the effect that he healed all manner of diseases.

The chapter is also remarkable because these cases presented to Jesus were of the very worst sort. The man with the palsy could not come himself, however

much he wanted to do so, and four men were required to bring him; the child was dead and so beyond all human help; the two blind men were undoubtedly beggars and outcasts; the dumb man was possessed of a devil in addition to his dumbness; the group of people who were subjects of his healing power had every manner of disease, but while the people were different and the cases were desperate, Jesus was always the same.

There were six specific illustrations of healing: three of these came to Jesus for themselves, the two blind men and the woman; two others were brought to him, the man sick with the palsy and the man who was dumb; and for the other case the father came and took Jesus to the child. In all the general cases Jesus went himself to the suffering.

When all these subjects have been presented then comes the text, which is its own outline. There is first the picture of the multitudes, a great number of people. Then the statement that they had

fainted; literally it is, "they were tired." Then they were described as sheep, the only animal known which in its wandering cannot find its way home of itself. And finally it was stated that they had no shepherd, the responsibility for their wandering resting upon others rather than upon themselves. This is the outline of of this message.

I

The picture which Jesus beheld as he walked through his own country is repeated to-day on every side of us, and he is still moved with compassion because of those who are helpless and undone. It is true we have done something for him. The last census shows that the membership of the Protestant churches has increased more rapidly than the population. For this we should be thankful. It is also true that the church machinery of the day is well nigh perfect: the buildings and equipment with which we have to do

have never been excelled. Yet, counting the membership of both the Catholic and Protestant churches, there are forty million people to-day in our land who are not in the church and who evidently do not care for the church. With these people there seems to be a growing indifference to everything that is spiritual.

A man in an apartment house in New York, when asked the other day to do something for a poor family for the sake of God, answered blasphemously, "I do not care for the opinion of men, I do not even care for God himself; I am for myself first, last and all the time." As we walk the streets we ought to be impressed with the fact that men on every side of us are lost in the proportion of one to four. As we sit in a car we ought to be impressed with the fact that one in four have rejected Christ and are hopeless. In every city it is literally true that there are thousands of unchurched people without God and without hope in the world. Of them the text would be true.

“But when he saw the multitudes he was moved with compassion.”

II

When Jesus saw these multitudes he saw them fainting or literally “growing tired,” and this is the picture of lost people to-day. I am persuaded that they are tired of many things which follow in the wake of sin.

1. They must be weary of the hollowness of the world, for it cannot satisfy. I one day talked with a woman in Massachusetts whose opportunity to mingle with the so-called best people of the world had been unexcelled. She had been a chosen and welcomed guest in the homes of royalty and knew intimately every President of the United States since she had grown to womanhood. After her conversion I asked her if the life of the world had satisfied; her answer was, “It is hollowness and sham almost from beginning to end.”

2. The unchurched people must be

weary of an accusing conscience. There is no unrest like it. The man who sees the folly of his conduct and whose conscience will not let him sleep, the man who realizes the blighting power of sin and yet seems powerless to heed the call of conscience, is in a pitiful condition.

“And I know of the future judgment,
How dreadful so'er it may be,
That to sit alone with my conscience
Would be judgment enough for me.”

3. They must be tired of the world's sorrow, for it is on every side. We are born unto trouble as the sparks fly upward and I cannot but think that in all parts of our cities to-day the people away from Christ are saying, “Oh, that I knew where peace might be found.”

4. I know they are tired of the slavery of Satan. A man formerly prominent in social and political circles, the cashier of a bank, when he found that he was a defaulter took his own life and left a letter for his wife in which he said, “Oh, if some

one had only spoken to me when I so much needed help all this might have been different.”

III

In the Old Testament and New, God's people are represented by the figure of sheep. Especially it seems to me this must be a good figure, because sheep when wandering find it impossible to seek again for themselves their home, and in their helplessness they fittingly represent the one who wanders away from God. There are so many people to-day who are trying to find their way back without Christ. They are like wandering sheep. There are so many who are seeking to climb up some other way into the favor of God. These are on every side of us, and the time has come for us to present unto them Jesus Christ the Savior of the world.

IV

These people that Jesus saw were shepherdless. The responsibility for their

wandering therefore rested not so much upon themselves as upon the fact that the one who should have cared for them was not doing so. We are our brother's keeper, whether we are willing to acknowledge it or not.

In meetings in California one of the ministers went forth during the week to invite those who were away from Christ to come to him. He found an old white-haired soldier who said, "When I was in the army years ago I promised God that I would be a Christian. I have never kept my word. Yes, I will come to him now." And when he came his wife and children came with him. "All these years," he said, "I have waited for some one to ask me." He called upon another man who had been impressed in the meetings and this man acknowledged that he had long felt his need of help, that he had prayed the night before, "O God, if you want me to come to thee send some one to speak to me." When the minister came the man trembled when he said, "You must

be the messenger of God for whom I have been waiting," and he came beautifully to Christ. On every side of us people are waiting as sheep without a shepherd for us simply to do our duty.

v

The result of this vision which Jesus had was that he did an unusual thing. In the tenth chapter and the first verse we read, "And when he had called unto him his twelve disciples he gave them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease." Which leads me to say that we must have the same spirit. Our present day church methods reach not more than one-fourth the unsaved and many of these come from the ranks of our Sunday schools and from Christian homes where for one reason or another they have not made a profession of their faith in Christ. Three-fourths of the lost are left to wander farther and farther away simply

because they will not yield to our present day church methods. This is not as Jesus would have it.

In the twenty-first chapter of John the fifth and sixth verses we read, "Then Jesus saith unto them, Children, have ye any meat? They answered him, No. And he said unto them, Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find. They cast therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitudes of fishes." Although these disciples had toiled and taken nothing the results were all changed when they cast their net on the right side of the boat. May it not be that we have been fishing on the wrong side or fishing in our own strength, or, as some one has said, fishing in too shallow water, when we should have been casting our nets in the deep? The fact is, we need him and without him we can do nothing.

I have been told that of the forty distinct cases of healing in the New Testament only six came to Jesus by themselves. Twenty were brought to Jesus and

to the fourteen others Jesus was taken. I doubt not that the proportion is the same to-day, and if it is true then our methods of work must be changed and instead of praying for them to seek Jesus we must either take them to Jesus or bring the Master into their company. There can be no successful winning of the multitudes until the personal element enters into it all.

1. There must be prayer. When Jacob went forth to meet Esau he walked with fear and trembling, but in Genesis thirty-second chapter and twenty-eighth verse we read, "And he said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel, for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed," so that long before Esau was met victory was won. There must be no attempt to win the lost without first of all we have gained an audience with God in prayer, and if we pray as we ought to pray he will give us the assurance of victory before we start upon our mission.

2. There must be personal contact. It is said that a man recently went into a jewelry store to buy an opal and rejected all that were presented to him. One of them he rejected instantly. The salesman picked it up and closed it in his hand and finally in a casual way opened his hand and placed the opal upon the counter. "Why," said the customer, "that is the opal I want. I have never seen anything finer," and yet he had rejected it first. The salesman told him that it was a sensitive opal and needed the touch of a human hand before it could reveal its beauty. Oh, how many souls there are like this in the world!

I have read that when Robert Louis Stevenson visited the island of the lepers where Father Damien did his illustrious work he played croquet with the children, using the same mallets that they used; and when it was suggested that he put gloves upon his hands he refused to do so because, he said, "it will remind them the more of the difference between us." This

spirit must prevail in our work if we are to win souls.

Two things we may do to reach the lost.

(1) Speak to them. The power of human speech is simply marvelous. A Sunday school boy appeared in a Baptist Church to apply for membership and when they asked him about his conversion he said, "My Sunday school teacher took me for a walk one Sunday in Prospect Park and talked with me about Jesus and I gave myself to him." One of the officers of my church when an unsaved man was asked by his minister to attend special services in the church and then was urged by his wife to go with her. Both invitations were angrily declined. He at last agreed to escort her to the church but not to enter in. The biting cold wind of the night drove him into the church and he was just in time to hear the minister's appeal to the unsaved. All were asked to lift their hands who would know Christ and then he remem-

bered that when he was a boy and had been drowning in Lake George he lifted up his hand as high as he could and his brother took hold of it and kept him from sinking. Suddenly it came to him in the church that he was sinking in another way, and instantly he raised his hand and Christ took hold of it. I do not know of a more godly man among all my list of friends than he; and he says to-day that the invitation given to him and refused with anger led him to Christ.

(2) Write. The chief justice of the supreme court of a western state was not a Christian until a few years ago. He was a genial, kindly man, and naturally a great lawyer, but he had never confessed Christ as his Savior, and apparently had little real interest in the church. One day the pastor of the Presbyterian church determined that he would write him a letter, and then decided that so great a man would not receive his communication and destroyed it. But the pastor's wife had more faith and urged him to write again.

He did so, and sent the second letter and forwarded with it Spurgeon's "All of Grace." He received word almost instantly that the chief justice had been deeply impressed, and that as a matter of fact he was waiting for years for some one to speak to him. The letter moved him and the little book gave him the instructions needed. To-day he is one of the brightest Christians I know. His face is a benediction. He said to me one day that it was a wonderful thing to be a Christian; that he never allowed any one to meet him that he did not talk with him about his soul. Are there not hundreds and thousands of other men waiting, as the chief justice waited, for some one to speak or write?

3. There must be a personal consecration not only to Christ but to the work if we would be successful. The biography of Helen Kellar, who was released from her imprisonment by the devotion of her teacher, is an illustration along this line. This teacher must go to this girl sitting

in darkness and describe to her the commonest objects of every-day life. She told her about water, heat and cold and when something hurt her she told her with the language of touch that she loved her and Helen Kellar answered back, "I love you, too." The devotion of this teacher brought this noble soul to light and power. A work like this awaits many of us in bringing the lost to Christ.

When Elisha went down to raise the Shunammite's boy he put his eyes to the eyes of the boy, his hands to the boy's hands and his mouth to his mouth. Something like this we must do. We have friends who possess eyes and see not, we must have eyes for them; they have lips and speak not, we must speak to God for them; they have hands and reach them not out after God, and we must have faith for them. In other words, we must not let them go away from Christ. Such a spirit as this pleases God and such a spirit saves our friends. A friend told me that with the ship's surgeon of a vessel

he once crossed the sea. He said the doctor told him that one day a boy fell overboard and was rescued but the case seemed hopeless. The ship's surgeon casually passing along the deck said to those who labored with him, "I think you can do nothing more; you have done all that is possible," and then curiosity led him to look at the boy for himself. Instantly his whole spirit was changed. He blew into his nostrils, breathed into his mouth, begged God to spare him, labored for four hours with him before he could bring him back to life, for the boy was his own boy. What if we should not have this spirit with the lost!

"If grief in Heaven could find a place,
Or shame the worshiper bow down,
Who meets the Savior face to face,
'Twould be to wear a starless crown."

But on the other hand, what if we should simply be faithful? Then may the following be true of us:

“Perhaps in Heaven, some day, to me
Some sainted one shall come and say,
All hail, beloved, but for thee
My soul to death had fallen a prey.
And, oh, the rapture of the thought,
One soul to glory to have brought.”

General Booth of the Salvation Army describes a vessel making its way home from the Australian gold fields. The miners had struggled to get rich and at last every man had around about him his belt of gold. The ship lost her way in the ocean and, set out of her course, suddenly crashed upon the rocks of an island near by. Almost instantly she sank. As one miner stood looking at the shore he knew that he was strong enough as a swimmer to save his gold and save his own life; but as he was about to throw himself into the sea a little girl whose mother and father had been washed overboard came over to him to say, “Oh, sir, can you not save me?” It was then a choice between the child and the gold. The struggle was terrific but at last the gold was thrown

aside, the child fastened to his body and he struggled through the waves until he fell exhausted and fainting upon the shore. The great Salvation Army officer says that when this strong man came to himself the little child was by his side. Throwing her arms about his neck she exclaimed with sobs, "Oh, sir, I am so glad you saved me." "That was worth more to him than the gold," said General Booth. And if in heaven some day upon the streets of gold we shall meet just one redeemed soul who was once lost and in the darkness, and we know that that one soul is there because we were true, the streets of gold will be better, the gates of pearl will be brighter, the many mansions more beautiful, the music sweeter, and, if such a thing were possible, the vision of Christ more entrancing. Certainly it would be thrilling to hear him say to us, "Inasmuch as ye did it unto these little ones ye did it unto me."

SANCTIFICATION

TEXT: "*This is the will of God, even your sanctification.*"—1 Thess. 4: 3.

It is quite significant that the Apostle Paul writes explicitly concerning sanctification to a church in which he had such delight that he could write as follows:

"Paul, and Silvanus, and Timotheus, unto the Church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ. We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, because that your faith groweth exceedingly, and the charity of every one of you all toward each other aboundeth; so that we ourselves glory in you in the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure: which is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, that ye

may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer: seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; and to you who are troubled rest with us; when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels. In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day" (2 Thessalonians 1: 1-10).

No higher commendation than this could be paid to any followers of the Lord Jesus Christ, and yet unto such a people we find him saying, "This is the will of God, even your sanctification."

It reminds us of that other scene in the New Testament when Nicodemus

comes to Jesus by night. He was a member of the Sanhedrim, he was in the truest sense of the word a moral man, and yet Jesus, knowing all this, deliberately looked into his face and said with emphasis, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again" (John 3:5-7).

Both of these statements lead us to believe that God's requirements for his people are very high. These we may not attain unto at all in our own strength or the energy of our flesh or because of any inherited righteousness which we may possess. There is no way to reach his standard except by complete identity with Christ; and this is made possible by means of faith.

To know the will of God concerning anything is a great satisfaction. It is like food to our souls if we can say with Jesus,

“My meat is to do God’s will.” It is an indescribable pleasure if we can say with the Son of God, “I delight to do thy will.” It is the key to the highest form of knowledge, for we have found it true that “he that doeth the will of God shall know of the doctrine.” It is the promise of eternal life, for we are told in God’s Word, “He that doeth the will of God abideth forever.” There is possibly no place where God’s will for us is more clearly stated than in this text. Sometimes we may know his will by praying. How often revelations have come thus to us as if from the very skies concerning his desires for us! We may know it sometimes by thinking. If one would but yield his mind perfectly to God in his providences as well as in his word he would know God’s will concerning him. We may know it sometimes by talking to others, for not infrequently God gives a revelation to one child of his for the guidance of another’s life. But in this connection it is most definitely stated, “This is the will of

God, even your sanctification.” And the Apostle emphasizes his words,

First: By the use of the most affectionate expression, “Furthermore then we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more” (1 Thessalonians 4:1).

Second: He speaks on the authority of Jesus himself. “For ye know what commandments we gave you by the Lord Jesus” (1 Thessalonians 4:2).

Third: He emphasizes it by referring to the second coming of our Lord, for he well knew that if one was looking for the appearing of the Son of God he would turn away from fleshly lusts and abstain from that which was unclean, thus encouraging the work of sanctification. The Apostle Paul says to the Thessalonians after he has clearly set before them God’s will concerning their living, “But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that

ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven 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 the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words" (1 Thessalonians 4: 13-14). It was not enough for them, in his judgment, to abide in the faith; they must abound in the works of the Gospel. To talk well without walking well is not pleasing to God, for the character of the Christian is thus described, "He walks not after the flesh but after the Spirit."

The presentation of this subject impresses upon us the fact that we have lost many of the best words in the Bible because they have been misused and their teaching misapprehended. If you speak of holiness men look askance at you, and yet holiness is simply wholeness or healthfulness and is to the soul what health is to the body. Who, then, would be without it? If you speak of sanctification immediately your hearers imagine you are talking concerning sinlessness, and yet there is no better word in the Scriptures than sanctification, for in one way it means separation from sin, in another way it means an increasing likeness to Christ. There are six particular effects of faith.

First: There is union with Christ. It is true that we were chosen in him before the foundation of the world and that we are an elect people, but it is also true that we are by nature the children of wrath and it is necessary that we should make a deliberate choice of him as a Savior. When by faith we have taken Christ as a Savior we

are united to him. Faith is counting that which seems unreal as real, as untrue as true and that which seems not to exist as if it existed. Faith unites us to him. Without him we are as nothing.

Second: Justification. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (Romans 8:1). "He that believeth on him is not condemned; but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God" (John 3:18). As we believe in Christ we are clothed with his righteousness. Whether we can explain it or not, this righteousness answers every demand of God's justice. Thus it is that Romans the eighth chapter the thirty-third and the thirty-fourth verses becomes true for us. Let it be noticed, however, that in both of these verses the two words, "*it,*" and "*is*" are in italics, which would indicate that they were not in the original. Concerning those who are justified, there-

fore, the verses would read as follows: "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect." The rest of the verse is a question, "God that justifieth?" The thirty-fourth verse reads, "Who is he that condemneth?" and the answer is a question, "Christ that died, yea rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God who also maketh intercession for us?" and Paul here simply means to say that if God can lay nothing to our charge and Christ would not condemn us then we are free, and justification at least to the layman carries with it this thought:

1. The justified man stands as if he had not sinned at all. His record is clean.

2. The debt which sin had incurred is paid and instead of being afraid and trembling at the thought of sin we sing with rejoicing, "Jesus paid it all, all to him I owe."

Third: Participation of his life. Paul writes to the Galatians, "I live, and yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." And in the fifteenth chapter of John the first six

verses we read, "I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away; and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned." So faith unites us to him and his life becomes a very part of our being.

(a) It is like the principle of grafting. When the branch is grafted into the tree the life of the tree throbs its way into the branch and ultimately there is fruitfulness. If we only could sustain the right

relations to Christ we would have the cure for worldliness.

(b) Because of this participation and privilege we need not be concerned. I have heard of a man who grafted a branch into a tree and then went each day to take the graft out to see what progress it had made, and the branch died.

(c) Our life need not be intermittent—that is, hot to-day and cold to-morrow—but it may be all the time an abundant life; not because of what we are but because of what Christ is.

Fourth: Peace. Romans 5:1, “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” And peace arises from a sense of reconciliation. If faith is strong, then peace is abundant; if it is fitful peace partakes of the same character. That man who has faith in Jesus Christ as a personal Savior has the following threefold blessing—first, *Peace with God*; second, *The Peace of God*; third, *The God of Peace*.

Fifth: Sanctification. Acts 26:18, “To

open their eyes and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me." Of this we shall speak more at length a little later.

Sixth: Assurance. This is plainly written in God's word. Notice John 3: 16, "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." And John 5: 24, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation: but is passed from death unto life." The entire first Epistle of John also emphasizes the same truth.

I

Sanctification is therefore entirely by faith.

First: By faith we receive the indwelling of the Spirit and he makes Christ real

to us. Because Christ is real by faith we may walk with him; and that man who keeps step with Jesus Christ will find that he has come day by day to turn away from those things which were formerly his defeat. We may also talk with him. That hymn which we sometimes sing,

“A little talk with Jesus,
How it smooths the rugged way,”

has been true in the experience of many of us. We may also be so constantly associated with him that we may find ourselves actually like him; and to grow like Christ by the power of the Spirit is to have the work of sanctification carried on.

Second: By faith exercised in God the Spirit continues his work. We have only to remember the promises of God concerning him, the first of which is that the Spirit is here carrying on his special work in his particular dispensation. His second promise is that he is in us if we be children of God, and we need only to yield to his presence day by day to be delivered from

the power of sin. His third promise is that he will take of the things of God and show them unto us. Things which the world's people cannot understand he makes plain unto us. "Eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive the things which God hath prepared for those who love him," but the Spirit hath revealed them unto us. The fourth promise is that he will not leave us. We may resist the Spirit, we may grieve the Spirit, but we will not grieve him away. His power may be greatly limited in our lives, the work of sanctification under the influence of his presence be greatly hindered, but he is with us, "nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature can separate us from him."

Third: By faith we have a vision of things unseen and they become real to us. Faith is to the soul what the eye is to the body. The things of God become actually real, and becoming so they are powerful. Under the influence of this vision temporal

things are trifling. The Christian who is true to his position lives in heaven, breathes its atmosphere, is pervaded by its spirit and so becomes pure, tender, obedient, loving. No wonder that to these people whose lives were so attractive Paul wrote in the text, "This is the will of God, even your sanctification."

II

Justification and sanctification ought to be compared to appreciate the latter. The first is an act, the second is a work. We do not grow in justification. There is no distinction between Christians in this respect; the smallest child accepting Christ is as truly justified as the saint of a half century. So far as sanctification is concerned there is the widest possible difference. Justification depends upon what Christ does for us, sanctification depends upon what Christ does in us. First of all it is a supernatural work. In this respect among others it differs from reformation. Henry Drummond has said that in refor-

mation men work from the circumference, in sanctification they work from the center. The Triune God may really be counted upon as the author of this work. In 1 Thessalonians the fifth chapter and the twenty-third verse we have the work of the Father. "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." In Ephesians fifth chapter twenty-fifth and twenty-sixth verses we have the work of the Son. "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word."

In John the seventeenth chapter and the seventeenth verse we have special emphasis laid upon the work of the Spirit. "Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth." What folly, therefore, to think that we could carry on this work by ourselves!

Second: Just what, therefore, is this

work of sanctification? When we are regenerated we have given to us an entirely new nature. The old nature and the new are absolutely different; and the old and the new war one against the other. The Bible is full of the accounts of those who have met this inward conflict. Some of the most eminent people in the world whose names have been mentioned in the Bible and out of it have told the story of their backsliding, their falling, their repentance, and their lamentation because of their weakness. You have all read the seventh chapter of Romans. Whether this is the story of Paul's experience or not, it is the story of yours. Galatians the fifth chapter sixteenth and seventeenth verses gives us the same thought. "This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary, the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would." What is it, there-

fore? It is just the working day by day of the spirit of Christ in us. It is the growth of that spiritual nature which after a while controls our whole being. It is the bringing into subjection of the old nature until it has no more dominion over us. After Paul's struggle in the seventh chapter of Romans he comes triumphantly to the second verse of the eighth chapter of Romans and exclaims, "For the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death."

III

If God is the author, then certain things need to be emphasized.

First: We need only to be yielding day by day to his efforts and presence and power to become more and more sanctified. His life flows along the path of least resistance; if there is difficulty with us in the matter of temper, sharpness of tongue, an impure mind or an unforgiving spirit, give him liberty and the work is complete.

Second: We must learn that the least

thing may hinder his work in us. It became necessary for me recently to purchase a hayrake. I was told of two different kinds, one the old-fashioned kind where the prongs of the rake must be lifted by hand, the other an automatic arrangement where by simply touching the foot to a spring the movement of the wheels would lift the rake at the proper time so that raking hay was a delight. The first day the rake was in the field it was almost impossible to use it. It was too heavy to lift by hand and the foot attachment would not work. We sent for the man who had sold us the implement. There was just one little part of the attachment missing. Missing that, hard effort was required and poor work was accomplished. It may be that some little thing stands in the way of your blessing, or the lack of some little thing hinders your usefulness.

Third: We have only to remember the law of growth. We do not grow by trying. Who ever heard of a boy growing in this way? Who ever heard of a doctor who

had a prescription for growth? Our effort for Christian growth is just a succession of failures. How many times we have said, "I am determined to be better; my temper shall never get the better of me again"! We are beginning at the wrong end. Instead of dealing with the symptoms, let us see that we are in right relations with Christ and he will effect the cure. Let us, therefore, just observe the right attitude towards Christ and we have the secret.

Henry Drummond has said in one of his books that the problem of the Christian life is simply this: "Men must be brought to observe the right attitude. To abide in Christ is to be in right position and that is all." Much work is done on board a ship in crossing the Atlantic, yet none of this is spent in making the ship go. The sailor harnesses his vessel to the wind, he lifts his sail, lays hold of his rudder and the miracle is wrought. God creates, man utilizes. God gives the wind, the water, the heat, and man lays hold of that which God has given us, holding himself in posi-

tion by the grace of God, and the power of omnipotence courses within his soul.

IV

We are in this world slowly but surely coming to be like Christ. To be Christ-like is one thing—we may be in this way or that—but to be like Christ is entirely different. Wonderful transformations have been wrought in this world by education and by culture. I remember when I was a lad in Indiana being told of a celebrated Indianapolis physician who advertised for the most helpless idiot child and the most hopeless was brought to him. For weeks and months no impression could be made upon that child. He used every day to take the child into his parlor, put him down on the floor and then lie beside him with the sunlight streaming in his face. He said over and over one syllable of a word until at last the child caught it, and I remember as a boy seeing that same child stand upon a platform, repeat the Lord's Prayer and the twenty-third Psalm and sing a hymn to the praise of God. This

is wonderful; but more remarkable than that is the work which is going on in us day by day. We are becoming more Christlike; one day we shall be *like Christ*. "But *when?*" you say. This is the answer: "Beloved, now are ye 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."

AN UNHEEDED WARNING

TEXT: "*My Spirit shall not always strive with men.*"—Genesis 6:31.

For the truth of this statement one needs only to study his Bible and he will find written in almost every book of Old Testament and New a similar expression. At the same time in the study of God's word it will be revealed to him that God has a great plan which he is carefully working out. We must be familiar with the beginning and the unfolding of this plan and with the conclusion he reached. When after the rebellion of his people and their unwillingness to obey his precepts we find him saying, "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. And the Lord said, I will de-

stroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them.”

Then turning to the New Testament Scriptures we find almost a similar expression when Jesus reaches the climax of his compassionate and gracious ministry with the children of Israel. “He came unto his own and his own received him not”; and in the twenty-third chapter of Matthew and the thirty-seventh to the thirty-ninth verse, inclusive, we hear him saying, “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.”

From that day on his special ministry was to the Gentiles, and he has been seeking in every possible way to bring us to an appreciation of what it means to know him and to be filled with all his fullness. We have but to stop for a moment and consider to realize that by many his overtures have been declined, his Spirit grieved and his Son rejected. Men have lived as if they had no responsibility towards him at all and in many instances they have put him entirely out of their consideration. If we compare present day indifference and sin with the condition of things at the time of the flood, and then again compare them with the position of Israel when Jesus turned away from them with tears, it would seem almost as if the world of the present day had made progress both in the matter of indifference and rejection; and therefore it is not strange that such an Old Testament text as this would be applicable to people living about us. It is a solemn text. "*My Spirit shall not always*

strive with men.” It is along the line of those solemn words of Dr. Alexander :

“There is a time, we know not when;
A place, we know not where,
That seals the destiny of man
For glory or despair.”

Again we read, “Ye shall seek me and shall not find me, and where I am there ye cannot come.” That also is the spirit of the text. God tells us, “To-day if ye will hear his voice harden not your heart,” which simply means that if we neglect to hear the heart will become hardened, the will stubborn, and we shall be unsaved and hopeless. Again he tells us, “Now is the accepted time, and now is the day of salvation.” So for men to act as if they might come at any time and choose their own way of salvation is to sin against him, and to all such he speaks the text—“My Spirit shall not always strive with men.”

It is assumed that the spirit of God does strive with men. If he will not strive always, then he does strive at some partic-

ular time, and with many of us he is striving now. We may not be willing to confess it to our friends, but nevertheless it is true. In many ways he is bringing to our attention the eternal interests of our souls, and this is striving.

It is implied that men are resisting the Spirit of God. If this were not so there could be no striving, and the text indicates that men may continue so long to resist him and to sin against him that after a while the door of mercy will close and hope be a thing of the past.

I

What is the striving of the Spirit? I have no doubt but that many are asking this question seriously and fearfully and it is worthy of our most careful consideration.

1. It is just God speaking to us and causing us to say to ourselves if not to others, "Well, I ought to be a Christian; this life of worldliness does not pay." There is nothing but an accusing conscience, a

weakened character and a blighted life as the result of it. Do not for a moment think that this is just an impression that has come to you ; it is the voice of God and you would do well to hear it. This striving of the Spirit is simply the Spirit of God seeking to convince men that the only safe life is that which is hid with Christ in God, safe not only for eternity—the most of us believe that—but safe for time. Temptations are too powerful for us to withstand alone and trials are too heavy for us to bear in our own strength. The striving of the Spirit is just our heavenly Father graciously attempting to persuade us to yield to him, sometimes by providences.

When but a lad my old pastor used one night an illustration from which I never have been able to get away. It was the story of the old fisherman who took his little boy with him to fish and found that on his accustomed fishing grounds he was unsuccessful ; so, leaving the boy upon the little island, he started away to fish alone. The mists came down in his absence and,

missing his way, he lost his boy. He rowed everywhere calling him and at last he heard him in the distance, saying, "I am up here, papa; over this way." The fisherman found him, but not quickly enough to enable him to escape the cold night winds, and the boy sickened and died. The old fisherman said: "Every night when I stood at my window I could see his outstretching hands and always above the storm I could hear his voice calling me upward. I could not but be a Christian." My mother had just a few weeks before gone home to God, and I heard her voice as plainly as I could hear the voice of my friend at my side. Every vision of a mother in heaven, of a child in the skies, is a call of God. He seeks to persuade us by calamities. The Chicago theater horror, with its hundreds of women and children dead and disfigured, was God's call to a great city and to the world. This is the striving of the Spirit. Not with audible voice does he speak to us but by means of impressions and

convictions. Let us not think for a moment that these come simply because the preacher has influence and may possibly be possessed of a certain kind of genius or power. These are God's warnings to us. Be careful, therefore, how you resist them. Jesus said in John the sixteenth chapter the seventh to the eleventh verses, "Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness and of judgment. Of sin, because they believe not on me; of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged." The word "*reprove*" is a judicial word. When the judge has heard the testimony for or against the criminal and the arguments of the counsel, he himself sums up the case and lays it before the jury, bringing out the strong points or the weak ones in

relation to the criminal. This is reproof, and it is this that the Spirit does. He brings before us Jesus Christ and then presents unto God our treatment of him, and so it is easy to understand how the text could be true. "My spirit shall not always strive with men."

2. How may we know that he is striving? There are very many ways.

(1) If the attention is aroused and centered upon religious subjects and interests, then be careful how you treat God. The student who finds his mind constantly escaping from his books to the thought of eternity; the business man who cannot possibly escape the thought that he owes God something and ought not to slight him, these have proofs that the Spirit is striving.

After an evangelistic meeting which I recently conducted I received the following letter, which clearly indicates the striving of the Spirit:

"I had not attended the church for years until to-night, but being a visitor in

C. and hearing that you were from the East and a Presbyterian I determined to go. I was lonely and it may be the Spirit was calling me. I heard you speak of your little boys and of the sainted mother who has gone before and my proud heart was touched. I, too, have two darling boys back in the old state, a loving Christian wife and a dear old mother who in parting said, 'Dear son, I am old and I may never see you again on earth, but if I am not here when you return, remember, my son, my boy, we must meet in heaven.'

"How much that meant to her! I did not quite realize it then, but your talk to-night impressed me and I believe that her prayers are being answered together with those of a loving, courageous, steadfast Christian wife, and that I am at last, at the age of forty-two, beginning to see how great my opportunities to do good have been and how my example has been a great hindrance and stumbling block to others in the way of life. Admitting that

this life has no stronger emotion than our love for our families, how much more I am impressed to-night with my duty to him who gave his only Son to suffer that we might live in the life everlasting!

“In a busy business life and career I had drifted away from the safe anchorage of the church and Sunday school of my boyhood and had almost convinced myself that by charity and exercising good will and kindness in my business I could do almost as much good as if I were in the church; but I see my mistake. To make an army effective we must stand in the ranks, must be soldiers in the army of Christ ready and willing to do at all times whatever we see before us.

“I have written my dear old mother a letter to-night which I know will please her far more than if I had told her I had found a mine of California gold; her prayers, my wife’s, yours and those of other true Christian men and women have been answered, and I realize that now, (not next week, nor next month, nor when

I get my business finished and go back to the East) is the day and the hour to remember Christ and know that his love for us is greater even than the love that tugs at our heartstrings when we think of the dear little ones at home who lovingly call us father, and for whom we gladly endure the heartaches of separation when we know that our labors will contribute to their comfort and happiness.

“I realize from the standpoint of a business man how many there are in the world to criticise your best efforts and your work and how few who ever stop to say, ‘I thank you; you have done me good.’ I take time to-night to do more. I want to say that your message from the King of kings has not fallen on stony ground. I shall try to enter again the battle of life, not as only in search of the wealth of this world but in search of the wealth that the world cannot take away—life everlasting.

“You were right. Preach and pray the fathers into the Kingdom of God and the rest is easy, for all unconsciously our chil-

dren follow in our footsteps, watch our every word and action; then how much, how much it means if our example is wrong!"

II

(1) Whenever we are convinced especially of the sinfulness of sin we may be sure that the Spirit is striving with us. There are times when we may be thoughtless and sin with impunity; but not so when the Spirit is doing his work, for sin is an awful thing.

(2) Whenever we are impressed with the heinousness of unbelief be assured that the Spirit is at work, for the worst sin in all this world is not impurity but rather that we should not believe on Jesus Christ. To reject him is to sneer at God, to trample the blood of his Son under foot, to count his sacrifice a common thing and really to crucify him afresh. In all this impression God speaks.

(3) When we see the danger of dying in our sins he is moving us. It is a mystery to me how men can close their eyes in

sleep when they realize that any night God might simply touch them and time would give way to eternity and the judgment would be before them. As a matter of fact men are not indifferent to this, and the fact that they are not proves that the Spirit of God is opening their eyes.

(4) When he strips us of excuses be sure that he is working. The man who has said, "I will wait until I am better," begins to realize that his past sins must be taken into account and no future resolutions can touch them. The man who has said, "There is time enough," suddenly realizes that between him and eternity there is but a beat of the heart. The one who has claimed that hypocrisy in the church kept him out of it comes to see that hypocrisy proves the life of the church, for men never counterfeit that which is bad money but rather that which is good.

(5) Whenever we see the folly of trusting in any other word than Christ's then the Spirit of God is with us. Not reformation, for it does not touch the sins of the

past; not resolution, for this is too weak, and though we may seem better than others, this may be true only according to our own standard. When we see the folly of these positions the Spirit of God is doing his work; so be careful how you treat him.

III

What would be the consequences of the Spirit ceasing his work? We really could not express it in words. No man has power or energy to make it plain. We can only just hint at the condition.

1. There would be an opposition to religion, for whenever you find a man turning against that which has been the world's hope remember that the state of that man is awful in the extreme and will grow worse.

2. There will be an opposition to revivals, to all preaching and to the ministers of the Gospel wherever this spirit is made manifest. We ought to tremble for ourselves if this is our spirit, or for others if it is theirs.

3. Wherever men settle down into some form of error this is a description of one who has sinned against the Spirit of God, for there is a longing in every soul for something outside of and beyond one's self; and the things of the world cannot alone satisfy.

4. When men continue to grow worse and worse and seem to glory in their shame there is great cause for solemn thought. In the light of these suggestions the text is given, "My Spirit shall not always strive with men."

IV

Why should he cease his striving? Not because he is not compassionate, for he is; nor forbearing, for that is his character; not that he is without patience, for he is infinite in this grace; nor because he is without mercy, for his mercy is from everlasting to everlasting.

1. But because it will do the sinner no good to continue his pleadings. It is a known law of the mind that truth resisted

loses its power. Why should God continue when we only spurn his offers of mercy?

Agassiz, the great Christian scientist, tells of his work in the mountains when his assistants lowered him to his work by means of a rope and a basket. They always tested his weight before letting him down; and yet he said that one day when they had lowered him deeper than ever they found that they could not lift him, though they had tested his weight before he had been lowered. They must go away over the mountains to secure other assistance. "And then," said the scientist, "when they did lift me they found that their failure was due to the fact that they did not take into account the weight of the rope." Every time you refuse Jesus Christ as your Savior and God calls you again you must lift against that other refusal, and this is why it is so difficult for some to come to Christ.

2. Because to continue warning is to hinder the sinner. The more light we have

the greater guilt. Better would it be for the sinner when all hope is gone for the Spirit to leave, for he shall be called to account for warnings. Oh, the solemnity of the day of judgment!

3. Because to resist the Spirit of God is for men to sin willfully if the rejection is final. It is a sad thing to say "no" to God, and if we sin willfully there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins.

V

What is meant by the Spirit not striving? Not that he will be withdrawn from men in general, but rather from the individual.

1. He may not follow the sinner, who will be indifferent to preaching, to praying, to his own spiritual condition, for he has given himself over to error.

2. It simply means that we have come to the limit of his patience, for we have trifled with him in our continued rejection.

3. It also means that there is just some one point where he will cease to work. That point may be here and that day may

be now, and so the text is solemn. A long time ago an old woman tripped and fell from the top of a stone stairway in Boston as she was coming out of the police station. They called the patrol and carried her to the hospital and the doctor examining her said to the nurse, "She will not live more than a day." And when the nurse had won her confidence the old woman said, "I have traveled from California, stopping at every city of importance between San Francisco and Boston, visiting two places always—the police station and the hospital. My boy went away from me and did not tell me where he was going, so I have sold all my property and made this journey to seek him out. Some day," she said, "he may come into this hospital, and if he does tell him that there were two who never gave him up." When the night came and the doctor standing beside her said, "It is now but a question of a few minutes," the nurse bent over her to say, "Tell me the names of the two and I will tell your son if I see him."

With trembling lips and eyes overflowing with tears she said, "Tell him that the two were God and his mother," and she was gone.

I cannot believe that God has given any of you up. You would not be listening to this message, you certainly would not be reading these words if he had. He has not given you up. I beseech you therefore hear him. It would be a sad thing for you to say no to him at the last and have him take you at your word, and if he has not given you up I am persuaded that there is some one else in the world deeply concerned for your soul.

THE APPROVAL OF THE SPIRIT

TEXT: "*Yea, saith the Spirit.*"—Rev. 14:31.

The world has had many notable galleries of art in which we have been enabled to study the beautiful landscape, to consider deeds of heroism which have made the past illustrious, in which we have also read the stories of saintly lives; but surpassing all these is the gallery of art in which we find the text. Humanly speaking John is the artist while he is an exile on the Island of Patmos in the Aegean Sea. The words he uses and the figures he presents are suggested by his surroundings, and it would be difficult to imagine anything more uplifting than the book of Revelation if it be properly studied and understood. When John speaks of the Son of Man he describes his voice as the sound of many waters—undoubtedly suggested by the waves of the sea breaking at his feet. Locked in by the sea on

this lonely island he gives to us this Revelation for which every Christian should devoutly thank God. His eyes are opened in an unusual way and before him as in panoramic vision the past, the present and the future move quickly, and he makes a record of all the things that he beholds. His body is on Patmos but as a matter of fact he seems to be walking the streets of the heavenly city and gives to us a picture of those things which no mortal eye hath yet beheld. He describes the risen Christ. It is a new picture, for as he beholds him his head and his hair are white like wool, as white as snow; and yet it is an old picture he gives, for he is presented as the Lamb that has been slain, with the marks of his suffering still upon him, and these help to make his glory the greater, and if possible to increase the power and sweetness of the angels' music. He presents to us a revelation of the glorified church and of the four and twenty elders falling down at the feet of Jesus, casting their crowns before him

and giving him all adoration and praise. He cheers us with a knowledge of the doom of Satan, for in the closing part of the book he presents him to us as bound, cast into the pit and held as a prisoner for a thousand years, while in every other part of the Bible he is seen going about like a raging lion seeking whom he may devour. He gives to us some conception of the final judgment, and the great white throne is lifted up before us; the dead, small and great, stand before God, the books are opened and those whose names are not found written in the book are cast away from his presence forever; and then as a climax of the picture we have before us the new heaven and the new earth. Again I say, there is nothing so wonderful as Revelation if only we have the mind of the Spirit in its interpretation.

In this text John is speaking of those who die in the Lord and the whole verse reads as follows: "And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which

die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them" (Revelation 14:13). Ordinarily this text has been used only on funeral occasions, but literally interpreted the text which stands as the heart of the verse may be read as follows, "Amen, saith the Spirit." It would seem as if the Holy Ghost were giving his assent to the truth which has been spoken. "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord." It is like an old time antiphonal service, when choir answered choir in the house of God; or, to put it in another way, it is one of those remarkable interruptions several instances of which are found in the Scriptures.

One is in Hebrews the thirteenth chapter and the eighth verse, "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever." According to the revision this verse has an added word and reads as follows, "Jesus Christ the same yesterday and to-day, *yea* and forever." I call special

attention to the little word "yea." Somebody has said that it is as if the Apostle were saying that Jesus is the same to-day that he was yesterday, than which no thought could be more comforting. And it would seem at the closing part of the verse as if the angels of God had broken in upon his message to say, "Yea, and he is forever the same," which is certainly true. Could anything be more inspiring than to know that we have the approval of the Holy Ghost of the things we say or think?

There are many representations of the Spirit of God in the Bible. His love is presented under the figure of the mother love, as in Genesis the first chapter and the second verse; "And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God *moved* [or brooded] upon the face of the waters." In this text the Spirit broods over the world as the mother bird hovers over her little ones. We see him in the figure of the dove in Matthew the third chapter and the sixteenth verse:

“And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water, and lo, the heavens were opened unto him and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a *dove*, and lighting upon him.” And here we have a revelation of his gentleness. Again he is presented to us under the figure of the wind, “And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty *wind*, and it filled all the house where they were sitting” (Acts 2:2). Here we see his power. We catch a vision of him in the fire in Acts the second chapter and the third verse, “And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them”; and here we understand his cleansing influence. But here in this text we have his directing power. It is as if he were giving particular attention to all that John is saying and giving his approval to it because it is the truth. Since the day of Pentecost he has occupied a new position.

However, he has existed from all eternity. We behold him in his work in

the Old Testament Scriptures. But from the day of Pentecost the affairs of the church have been committed to him, its organization, its development, its services, whether it be the preaching, the praying or the singing. We cannot ignore him, for he has to do with all the work and with the preaching of the word. He convicts of sin. John 6: 44, "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day." He applies Christ to the awakened sinner, "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you." He helps to interpret the Word of God because he inspired men to write it. It is impossible to get along without him. I put no mark of disrespect upon scholarship. I know what it has accomplished; it has filled libraries with knowledge

which has made the world rich, it has weighed planets and given us almost a perfect understanding of the heavenly bodies. It has estimated the velocity of light until we have stopped to say, "Such things are too wonderful for us." It has read the tracings upon obelisks, and made the past an open book to us, giving us the secrets of men who have been thousands of years in their tombs, but I do wish to say that that which comes to us directly from the Spirit of God is beyond scholarship. Hear what Paul has said to us in 1 Corinthians the second chapter and the ninth to the fourteenth verses. "But as it is written, 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 God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.

Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."

There are certain great truths to which I am sure the Holy Ghost would say a deep amen.

I

The Bible *is* the word of God—not simply that it *contains* the word of God, but is that very word.

Peter tells us where we got our Bible. 2 Peter 1:21, "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." It is an inspired Book, and inspiration is the inbreathing of God

himself. This makes the Bible different from every other book. We cannot study it exactly as we study others. We may pick it up and say it is just paper, ink and leather, like any other book, but we have missed the power of it if we say this. We might say, "Jesus is just a man, eating, drinking, sleeping, suffering like a man"; but we have missed his power if we say only this, for the Bible is filled with God, and Jesus is God Himself. Jesus said, "Ye must be born again if ye are to enter my Kingdom," and this makes the difference in men. Because of this new birth one man sees the things of God to which another would be totally blind, and this makes the difference in books and leaves the Bible incomparably beyond all other books.

How may we know that the Bible is the word of God? Not simply scientifically, although the Bible is a scientific book; but not in this way any more than we could find life in the body by cutting it up with a knife. The Bible is like a sensitive

plant; approach it in the wrong way and it will close its leaves and withhold its fragrance. Come to it reverently and there is no blessing that it cannot bestow.

1. Accept it by faith and act according to its principles. If God exists, as we know he does, then talk with him; if Christ is here presented to us with all his uplifting teachings, then walk with him; if the promises of God are written here, as we know they are, then present them to him expecting him to keep his word.

General Booth of the Salvation Army once said in a great meeting where I was present that we were poor, weak Christians to-day because we were not living up to our privileges as Christians. He described a young man who had lost his position and had gone from one degree of poverty to another until at last he was on the verge of starvation. With his wife and little ones about him he sits in deepest gloom. There is a rap at the door and the postman brings a letter which is a message from a former employer who tells him

that he has just learned of his distress, that he will help him, and that in the meantime he incloses his check for a sum of money which he hopes may make him comfortable. A check is simply a promise to pay. The young man, says General Booth, looks at it a moment and then begins to rush about the room in great excitement. "Poor man," said his wife, "I knew it would come to this. His mind is giving way." Then he presents the check to her and says, "I know what I shall do with it. I will frame it and hang it on the wall." Then again he exclaims, "I shall take it to my friend and have him set it to music and sing it each day," and he might do both of these and starve to death. What he should have done was to present it for payment and live off of its proceeds. "We have been framing God's promises long enough," said General Booth, "and singing them quite long enough; let us now present them for payment, and we shall know that God is true."

2. Live its truth. Whatever God presents as a principle translate into your life and then believe that God will transform your living. It will support you in trial and it will comfort you in the deepest sorrow.

The world was shocked by that great railroad accident which meant the death of Mrs. Booth-Tucker, but when in Carnegie Hall Commander Booth-Tucker stood to speak great words concerning his noble wife he said: "I was once talking with a man in Chicago about becoming a Christian and he said to me, 'If God had taken away your beautiful wife and you were left desolate with your little children would you believe in him?' And," said the Commander before his great New York audience, "if that man is in this audience to-day let me tell him, God has taken my beautiful wife and I am here surrounded by my children, but I never believed in him more thoroughly and was never more confident of the truth of his Word."

II

Jesus Christ is the Son of God. To this truth I am very sure the Holy Ghost will add his amen. In John the fifteenth chapter and the twenty-sixth verse we read, "But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me." And if you would know that Jesus Christ is God's Son I would suggest,

1. That you simply test him; try him in heathen lands and tell me if any other story could thrill and transform as does the story of his life and death. Dr. Torrey says that whether the story was told in China or England, whether the story was told in India or Australia, it was always the same and never was without effect.

2. Try him in your own life. One day in a service in a western city an old woman was wheeled into the church in an invalid's chair. I knew by the expres-

sion of her countenance that she was suffering. When I met her after the service and asked her about her story she said as the most excruciating pain convulsed her body, "I have not been free from pain in twenty years and have scarcely slept a night through all that time," and then, brushing the tears from her eyes, and with an expectant face, she exclaimed, "but if I could tell you all that Jesus Christ has been to me in these twenty years I could thrill you through and through."

3. If you would know that he is the Son of God just lift him up and behold him as he draws all men unto him. This is the secret of the power of great preaching. It made Mr. Moody known wherever the English language is spoken and constituted Mr. Spurgeon one of the world's greatest preachers. As a matter of fact there is no other theme which may be presented in the pulpit by the minister with an assurance of the co-operation of the Holy Ghost. There may be times when he may feel obliged to preach con-

cerning philosophy, poetry, art and science, but unless these things lead directly to Christ we have no reason for believing that the Holy Ghost will add his amen to our message, and without this amen the time is almost lost.

III

The church is the body of Christ. I am persuaded that to this truth he will give his hearty assent. This is Paul's over and over. Notice the following verses.

Acts 2:41, "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized; and the same day there were added *unto them* about three thousand souls." The words "unto them" are in italics, so not in the original, and we ask "added to what?"

Acts 2:47, "Praising God, and having favor with all the people. And the Lord '*added to the Church*' daily such as should be saved." Here we are beginning to get the truth.

Acts 5:14, "And believers were the more added *to the Lord*, multitudes both of men and women." This is the truth.

You will see that Christ is the head, the church is his body and we are, as individual members of the church, just being added to him. One day the body will be completed and then the Lord himself will appear. If Christ is the head he must control the body. If his life is hindered and not permitted to flow through every part of it there is confusion, strife, unrest and loss of power.

There are certain things which we must do if we are to be in this world as he would have us.

He must control the preaching. If given an opportunity he will direct in the choice of a theme, he will quicken our intellect in the development of that theme, he will give us an insight into the best way to present it to our hearers, and putting faith in these preliminary conditions he will take care of the results. He must also dictate the praying in a church. There is much of it that is meaningless. It is too formal, too lifeless, and entirely too general in its character. In Matthew the eight-

eenth chapter and the nineteenth verse, we read, "Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven." It does not mean that if the two should agree together as touching any one thing, but agree with him, for wherever you find two in prayer there are three, and wherever there are three there are four, and the additional one present is the Spirit of God waiting to help us in our praying and to present our prayers unto the Father in the name of Jesus Christ.

He must inspire the singing of the church. In Ephesians the fifth chapter and the nineteenth verse we read, "Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord." One reason why there is such a lack of power in many churches in this country is due to the fact that the singing is simply used as filling for the services. Hymns are used in a haphazard way with little thought as to their

bearing upon the theme to be presented. I am quite persuaded that when the preaching, praying and singing are all submitted to his control, whatever may be man's opinion of the service, he himself will give to it his hearty amen.

IV

We are the sons of God. In Romans the eighth chapter the sixteenth and seventeenth verses we read, "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God; and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together." To this truth he will say amen. A careful study of the Scriptures will reveal the fact that,

1. We are heirs. If therefore this be true we have but to claim our birthright privilege, and there is no weakness in our lives but may be offset by the strength of his. Whatever Christ has received as the head of the church he has received in

trust for the body and we may have our possession in him if we but appropriate it.

A man in England died the other day in the poorhouse. He had a little English farm upon which he could raise no grain and he let it go to waste and died a pauper. His heirs discovered that on this little English possession there was a copper mine and they are living in luxury to-day in the possession of that which belonged to their ancestor all the time but was not appropriated and used by him.

2. Being sons of God, we are not free from trial; but there is this one thing to say about our Christian experience: "Our light afflictions which are but for a moment work for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory," and God's presence with us in trial is infinitely better than his absence from us in the time of prosperity. Our trials are but the discipline through which we must pass in order that we may one day be prepared to stand in his presence and do his bidding throughout eternity.

3. Being sons of God, we are sure one day of glory. The song which has been singing its way around the world in the Torrey-Alexander meetings presents this thought to us beautifully.

“When all my labors and trials are o’er
And I am safe on that beautiful shore,
Just to be near the dear Lord I adore
Will thro’ the ages be glory for me.

“When by the gift of his infinite grace
I am accorded in heaven a place,
Just to be there and look on his face
Will thro’ the ages be glory for me.

“Friends will be there I have loved long ago;
Joy like a river around me will flow;
Yet just a smile from my Savior, I know,
Will thro’ the ages be glory for me.

Chorus.

“Oh, that will be glory for me,
Glory for me, glory for me,
When by his grace I shall look on his face,
That will be glory, be glory for me.”

Whatever may be our limitations here, they shall be gone there; whatever may be our weakness here, it shall be lost there.

Dr. Charles Hodge in his "Lectures on Theology" has given us an imaginary picture of Laura Bridgman, the famous deaf-mute. The celebrated theologian has described her standing in the presence of Christ in that great day when we shall all be before Him, when Christ shall touch her eyes and say, "Daughter, see," and there shall sweep through her vision all the glories of the sky; when He shall touch her ears, which have been so long closed, and say, "Daughter, hear," and into her soul shall come all the harmonies of heaven; when he shall touch her lips, which on earth have never spoken a human word, and say, "Daughter, speak," and with all the angel choir she will burst into the new song. What Dr. Hodge has said concerning Laura Bridgman will be true of us. Our day of limitations will be past, the experiences of weakness be gone, and we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.

This, therefore, is a good outline of a creed for us to-day. We believe the Bible

is the Word of God, we believe that Jesus is the Son of God, we believe that the Church is the body of Christ, we believe that we are by regeneration the sons of God, and making such a statement we have a right to stop and listen and I am sure we shall hear as from the skies, "Amen, saith the spirit."

A REASONABLE SERVICE X

TEXT: "*I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.*"—Romans 12: 1.

There is perhaps no chapter in the New Testament, certainly none in this epistle, with which we are more familiar than this one which is introduced by the text; and yet, however familiar we may be with the statements, if we read them carefully and study them honestly they must always come to us not only in the nature of an inspiration but also with rebuke, especially to those of us who preach.

Paul's intellectual ability has never been questioned. Yet, giant though he was in this respect, he was not ashamed to be pathetic when he likens his care for his people to the care of a nurse for her children. He is not ashamed to be extravagant when he likens his sorrow and pain

at their backsliding to the travail of a woman for her child. He is not ashamed to be intense when in the ninth chapter and the first, second and third verses he says, "I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, that I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh."

We must also be impressed with the fact that he was not at all afraid of public criticism. He not only sat at Gamaliel's feet but the great lawmaker might well have taken his place at his feet, and yet he says, "I am willing to be counted a fool if only I may win men to Christ." He is not bound by custom. He not only preaches in the synagogue and in the places set apart for the churches of the early days, but he goes about from house to house entreating people to come to Christ. He is not ashamed to weep, for he sends his messages to the people and exclaims,

“I tell you these things weeping”; and here in this text he is strikingly unusual, for he is not a preacher speaking with dignity, nor an Apostle commending obedience, but a loving friend beseeching in the most pathetic way the yielding of themselves to Christ.

There are two things to remember about Paul in the study of such a subject.

First: He was a Jew and he knew all about offerings. Sacrifices were not forms to him and a living sacrifice was not a meaningless expression. He had been present on the great day of Atonement when the scapegoat bore away the sins of the people. He had heard the chimes of the bells on the high priest's robe as he moved to and fro before the entrance to the holy of holies, and he had waited with breathless silence for him to come forth giving evidence in his coming of the fact that Israel could once more approach Jehovah. The text to him was throbbing with holy memories and was full of significance.

Second: He received his instructions concerning these things of God, not from men, for when he writes to the Galatians he says: "But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man, for I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ" (Galatians 1: 11-12). And so, since he is a heaven-taught man, we must listen while he speaks and give heed to his entreaties.

I

The context. We shall not appreciate this striking text unless we take into account its setting.

The first chapters of Romans present to us a black cloud indeed, for when the first sentences are spoken we shudder because of their intensity. We read in the twenty-fourth verse that God gave the people *up* to uncleanness; in the twenty-sixth verse that he gave them *up* to vile affections, but in the twenty-eighth verse that he gave them *over* to a reprobate

mind. With this awful condition of affairs we start; and yet for fear that the man who counts himself a moralist might read these verses and feel that they did not apply to him, Paul writes in the third chapter and the twenty-second verse these words, "Even the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ, unto all and upon all them that believe; for there is no difference." But when the cloud is the blackest the rays of light begin to appear, and they are rays of light from heaven; looking on the one side at mystery and catching a vision on the other side of grace, Paul exclaims, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service" (Romans 12: 1)..

The word mercy is of frequent occurrence in the Bible. "From everlasting to everlasting is God's mercy," we read. This gives us some idea of duration. "New every morning and fresh every evening are his mercies." This reveals to us the

fact that they are unchanging. "He is a God of mercy." This is his character. "Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts and let him return unto the Lord and he will have mercy upon him." This is the invitation of God given to all the world! But Paul is not speaking of mercy in general; he goes on in his masterful argument outlining the doctrines of grace and on the strength of that he uses the text.

First: *We are justified.* The fifth chapter and the first verse, "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." In justification our sins are pardoned and we are accepted as righteous because of the righteousness of Christ, which is imputed unto us and received by faith alone. And yet to him this definition in every day language means that, being justified, we stand before God as if we never had sinned. No wonder that in the light of such a doctrine Paul could say, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God,

that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service" (Romans 12:1).

Second: *We are kept safe.* Romans 5:10, "For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life." Literally the closing part of this verse is, "We are kept safe in his life." A child in its mother's arms could not be so secure as we in his life. Underneath us are the everlasting arms and around about us the sure mercies of God.

Third: *We are baptized into his death.* "Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?" (Romans 6:3.) "The wages of sin is death." This is God's irrevocable statement, but Christ died for our sins and Paul's argument here is that we died with him, so the demands of the law have been met and we are to go free. No wonder Paul could say, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of

God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.”

Fourth: *We are alive unto God.* Romans 6: 11, “Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.” Not only are we justified and kept safe and crucified with him and buried with him but in the plan of God we are risen with him. What a wonderful mercy this is!

Fifth: *We have deliverance from the self life.* The seventh chapter of Romans is just the cry of a breaking heart and reaches its climax in the twenty-fourth verse, “O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” But the deliverance is in the eighth chapter, especially in the second verse, “For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.” What a mercy this is!

Sixth: *For those of us who believe*

there is no condemnation. Romans 8:1, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." Judgment is past because he has been judged. We have nothing to do with the great white throne; Christ as our substitute has met sin's penalty and paid our debts. What a mercy this is! No wonder Paul is thrilled with the thought of it.

Seventh: *No separation.* Romans 8: 38-39, "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." So that for time we are safe and our eternity is sure. Was there ever such a catalogue of mercies? In the light of all this the Apostle exclaims, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, accept-

able unto God, which is your reasonable service" (Romans 12: 1).

It is a good thing to study Paul's "*therefores.*" He is a logician of the highest type.

In Romans 5: 1, there is the "*therefore of justification.*"

In Romans the eighth chapter and the first verse there is the "*therefore of no condemnation.*"

In Romans the twelfth chapter and the first verse there is the "*therefore of consecration,*" and this as a matter of fact is the outline of the Epistle.

II

Present your bodies. This means the entire yielding of one's self to Christ. It corresponds to the Old Testament presentation of the burnt offering all of which was consumed. Back in the Old Testament times for fourteen years there had been no song in the temple, for it was filled with rubbish and uncleanness, but the rubbish was put away and the unclean-

ness vanished, the burnt offering was presented and the song of the Lord began again. If you have lost your song and have been deprived of the harmony of heaven then present your bodies a living sacrifice.

There is a threefold division in man's nature.

The Spirit, where God abides if we are his children. This is like the holy of holies.

The Soul, which is the abode of the man himself.

The Body, which is the outer court.

When Christ was crucified the veil of the temple was rent in twain and the whole was like one great compartment. I cannot but think that if we should come to the place of complete consecration, the acceptance in our lives of what was purchased for us when he was crucified, for us the veil of the temple would be rent in twain and not only would God abide in our spirits but he would suffuse our whole nature, look with our eyes, and speak with

our lips. This must have been what Paul meant when he said, "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me."

III

A living sacrifice. That is in contrast with the dead offering of the Old Testament sacrifice. Suppose for a moment that it would have been possible for an offering to have been presented in the Old Testament times and then after that for it to have lived again; it is inconceivable that this offering would have been put to any unholy use. I have many times tried to imagine the surprise of the son of the widow of Nain and the daughter of Jairus after their being raised from the dead. They certainly could not have lived selfish, sinful lives again, and I am sure that Lazarus when once he had been in the grave and was raised at the voice of the Master could never again have been worldly and unclean. But let it not be forgotten that we are a risen people; we were crucified with Christ, we died with Christ,

we were buried with Christ, we have risen with Christ! How then ought we to live?

In one of our western cities a minister told me recently of a young man who had graduated at a school for stammerers and came to see him one day. Keeping time with his fingers in the use of his words he said slowly:

“I — want — to — speak — to — you.” Without following his method of speech through I will quote what he said: “I have for a long time wanted to be a Christian and was ashamed to attempt to speak when it was so imperfectly done, but now I have graduated and I have the control in part at least of my speech, and I have come to you to-day to make my confession, for the first use I make of my voice must be the confession of him who loved me and gave himself for me.”

IV

Your reasonable service. It is a reasonable service,

First: Because God uses human in-

strumentality and he needs you, and it is therefore a reasonable demand to make, for we should place ourselves absolutely at his disposal.

In the guest book of a friend I saw recently a few lines written by Dr. John Willis Baer in which he said, quoting from another:

“God gave himself for us.

“God gave himself to us.

“God wants to give himself through us.”

But if our lives are inconsistent and our hearts are unclean he cannot do it. If we have not yielded ourselves altogether God himself is limited.

Second: It is a reasonable request to make because of what God has done for us.

One of the distinguished ministers of the Presbyterian Church told us the other day in a conference in a western city that a little boy who had been operated upon by Dr. Lorenz said as soon as he came out from under the anesthetic, “It will be a long time before my mother hears the

last of this doctor"; and then, said my friend, "I thought of an incident in my own life of a poor German boy whose feet were twisted out of shape, whose mother was poor and could not have him operated upon, and I determined to bring him to a great doctor and ask him to take him in charge. The operation was over and was a great success. When the plaster cast had been taken off from his feet my friend said he went to take him home. He called his attention to the hospital and the boy admired it, but he said, 'I like the doctor best.' He spoke of the nurses and the boy was slightly interested, but said, 'They are nothing compared to the doctor.' He called his attention to the perfect equipment of the hospital and he was unmoved except as again and again he referred to the doctor. They reached the Missouri town and stepped out of the station together, and the old German mother was waiting to receive him. She did not look at her boy's face nor at his hands but she fell on her knees and looked at his

feet and then said sobbing, 'It is just like any other boy's foot.' Taken into her arms, the minister said all the boy kept saying to her over and over was, 'Mother, you ought to know the doctor that made me walk.'"

Then my friend said, "There is not one of us for whom Jesus Christ has not done ten thousand times more for us than the doctor did for this boy, and we have never spoken for him, we have not yielded ourselves to him." It must have been with some such spirit as this that the Apostle said, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, which is your reasonable service" (Romans 12:1)..

THE TRUE CHRISTIAN LIFE

TEXT: "*My beloved is mine, and I am his.*"—Sol. Song 2:16.

"*I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine.*"—Sol. Song 6:3.

"*I am my beloved's and his desire is toward me.*"—Sol. Song 7:10.

These three texts should be read together, and the significant change found in each text as the thought unfolds should be studied carefully. They remind one of three mountain peaks one rising higher than the other until the third is lifted into the very heavens. Indeed, if one should live in the spirit of this third text he would enjoy what Paul has described as a life in the heavenly places, and his picture of Christ would be surpassingly beautiful. At the same time the three texts give us a complete picture of a true Christian life. The first text may be regeneration, the

second text consecration, and the third text sanctification.

The Jews counted this Book, the Song of Solomon, as exceedingly sacred. They hid it away until the child had come to maturity before he was allowed to read it, and it was to them the holy of holies of the Old Testament Scripture. These texts are also like the division of the ancient tabernacle. There was first of all the outer court where the altar of sacrifice was to be found—and this must be constantly kept in mind, for no one can say “my beloved is mine” until he has passed the altar of sacrifice. It is only by faith in Jesus Christ that we are adopted into the membership of the family of God.

The second division was the holy place, where was found the laver. Here the priests made themselves clean, and they could not minister in the presence of Jehovah until they had been made clean from all earthly defilement. This second text gives us the same thought, for here the writer changes the order exactly and says,

“I am my beloved,” instead of saying, “My beloved is mine.” This is consecration and the consecration of a clean life. God will not accept or use that which is unclean, and it is only as we come to the place where we allow him to have full control of our lives that we realize we are his.

The third division of the tabernacle was the holy of holies, where the high priest made his way once a year that he might stand in the presence of Jehovah. In this third text, where the writer says, “I am my beloved’s, and his desire is towards me,” we have come to the place in our experience where if his desire for us controls our living we are in the holy of holies indeed; where we can see him and enjoy his presence.

I

“*My beloved is mine.*” This is regeneration. A minister once preaching to his congregation said, “Let every one say Jesus,” and from all over the congregation there came the music of his name.

“Now,” said the minister, “Let all those who can, say ‘my Jesus,’” and the response was not so hearty. A line ran through the congregation separating husband from wife and parents from children. It is only by faith in Christ and by the operation of the grace of God that we can experience this first text. Two things are true concerning this point.

First: He wants to make better all that we have. Whatever may be our natural characteristics, he can make all that we have more beautiful.

One day in Colorado I wanted to make a journey to the summit of Pike’s Peak, only to find that throughout the entire day the train was chartered. I was turning away in despair when a railroad man said, “Why do you not go up at three o’clock to-morrow morning, for then,” he said, “you can see the sun rise, and the sight is beautiful.” So the next morning we started. Just as I was going on the train a railroad man said, “When you come to the sharp turn in the way as you go up, look over in

the Cripple Creek district and you will see a sight never to be forgotten." We climbed higher and higher, leaving the darkness at the foot of the mountain, until at last we came to the place indicated and I looked away, only to be intensely disappointed. The sight was almost commonplace. As we pursued the journey upward finally we came to another place, where I heard some one give an exclamation of delight. As I looked in the same direction there was a marvelous transformation. I could see before me a mountain which looked like a white-robed priest and another like a choir of angels and still another like a golden ladder reaching up into the skies, and all because the sun had risen upon the same scenery which a moment ago was uninteresting. If Christ could only thus take possession of our lives and become our Savior the transformation would be quite as great.

Second: He is ours to exercise in our behalf all that he is as Prophet, Priest and King. His office of Prophet relates to the

past, his office of King to the future when he shall be crowned King of kings and Lord of lords, but his office as Priest is now being fulfilled and he is my great High Priest to intercede for me with God and make explanation for all my weakness.

Adelaide Proctor has given us the story of a young girl who was in a convent in France, whose special work it was to attend the portal and keep the altar clean. The war swept over France, the battle raged near the convent, many of the soldiers were killed and a number injured. These were borne into the hospital that they might be nursed back to strength, and one of them was given to this young girl. Her nursing was successful, but he tempted her to leave the convent. They made their way to Paris, where she lost everything that makes life worth living. Then, just a wreck of her former self, she came back again to die within the sound of the convent bell. She touched the portal and instantly it was

opened, not by a girl such as she had been but by a woman such as she might have been—true and noble. She bore her in her arms to her old cell, nursed her back again to a semblance of her old strength, and then she slipped into her old place to answer the portal and keep the altar clean, and not a nun in all the convent ever knew that she had sinned. This is Christ's ministry in our behalf at this time. Making up for my weakness, answering for my defects, he is my High Priest.

II

"I am my beloved's." This is really better than the first text, because if he is mine, and faith is like a hand of the soul, then faith may grow weary and the result would be sad; if I am his and he holds me then that is different. In John the tenth chapter, the twenty-eighth to the thirtieth verses, we have a picture of the true sheepfold and of the place where the child of God may rest, held in the hand of

God and of his dear son. "And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My father, which gave them unto me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. I and my Father are one." What a joy it is to know that we are his!

First: His by redemption, for we are redeemed not with corruptible things such as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ. "Ye are not your own but ye are bought with a price."

Second: We are his because God gave us to him; in his wonderful intercessory prayer Jesus said, "Thou gavest them to me," and again, "Ye are not our own."

Third: We are his because again and again we have said so with our lips. How true the text is, then, in the light of the Scripture! If this is true then what is consecration? It is not giving God something, for how could we give him that which is already his own? Consecration is simply taking our hands off and letting

him have his way with us in everything.

The late George Macgregor used to tell the story of one of the bishops of the Church of England, who had an invalid wife and who never could surrender beyond a certain point. He was unwilling to say that he would give up his wife, for God might call him to some mission he could not perform, and she had been the constant object of his care. But at last he won the victory and rose from his knees to say to his friend that the surrender should be complete, and then they went into the room of his invalid wife to tell her. With a sweet smile upon her face she said, "I have reached the same decision and you can go to the ends of the earth if need be." That night the old bishop's wife died and when they went across the hall to tell the bishop there was no answer to their knock. When they entered the door they found the bishop with eyes closed, hands folded and heart still. He, too, had gone. God did not want to separate them. He wanted them to be united,

their wills surrendered to him and then he would send them in the same chariot up into heaven.

III

“I am my beloved’s, and his desire is towards me.” If we would know God’s desire for us we have only to study the Scriptures, and if we should fulfill his desires we would have an experience of heaven upon earth.

First: It is his desire that we should be holy. Ephesians 1:4, “According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love.” Holiness is not sinlessness, it is to the spiritual nature what health is to the physical life. In other words, God desires that we should be spiritually healthy, and this we cannot be with secret sins in our lives.

Second: It is his desire that we should be sanctified. 1 Thessalonians 4:3, “For this is the will of God, even your sanctifi-

cation, that ye should abstain from fornication.”

Sanctification is not sinlessness, it is separation. It is absolutely useless to think of pleasing God if we are in touch with the world in any way, for since the days of the crucifixion it has been against him.

Third: It is his desire that we should present ourselves unto him in the sense above suggested—namely, that we should take our hands off from ourselves and allow him to direct and to control his own possession. Romans 12:1-2, “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service, and be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.” Romans 6:13, “Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto

God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God." In these expressions the tense of the verb indicates that the action is to be definite and that it is to be once and for all. He has certain desires for us also expressed in the seventeenth chapter of John.

First: He desires that we should have joy. Joy is better than happiness; happiness depends upon our surroundings and circumstances, joy has nothing to do with these but rather is the result of centering our affections upon him.

Second: He desires that we should be one with him. By this I am sure he means that we should be one in our thought of sin, one in our desire for holiness, one in our efforts to reach the unsaved, and one in our longing in all things to be pure and true and good.

Third: He desires to make us the object of his love. In this seventeenth chapter of John he tells us that the same love which he had for his son he has for those

of us who are in his Son. Thank God for this. If he must open the windows of heaven to speak forth his love for that Son and then has the same for us, oh, what joy it is to be a Christian!

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