

REV. A. M. FRASER, D.D.

# Doctor Fraser and His Sermons

EDITED BY  
REV. WILLIAM E. HUDSON  
Staunton, Va.



NEW YORK

CHICAGO

Fleming H. Revell Company

LONDON AND EDINBURGH



Copyright, 1920, by  
FLEMING H. REVELL COMPANY

*Printed in the United States of America*

New York: 158 Fifth Avenue  
Chicago: 17 North Wabash Ave.  
London: 21 Paternoster Square  
Edinburgh: 75 Princes Street

## CONTENTS

### I.

#### PERSONALIA AND APPRECIATION

	PAGE
I. BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH — REV. WM. C. WHITE . . . . .	13
II. THE BELOVED PASTOR OF THE FIRST CHURCH, STAUNTON, FOR MORE THAN TWENTY-SEVEN YEARS—MR. R. D. HAISLIP, CLERK OF THE SESSION . . . . .	20
III. A GREAT PREACHER—REV. J. E. BOOKER, D.D. . . . .	23
IV. A CONSECRATED MAN — REV. HOLMES ROLSTON, D.D. . . . .	27
V. A PEERLESS DEBATER—REV. F. J. BROOKE, D.D. . . . .	32
VI. A DISTINGUISHED CITIZEN—REV. H. W. McLAUGHLIN, D.D. . . . .	35
VII. A POTENT INFLUENCE FOR GOOD THROUGHOUT THE SOUTHERN PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH—REV. W. W. MOORE, D.D., LL.D. . . . .	39



II.

SOME OF HIS MESSAGES

	PAGE
I. THE CONVERTED THIEF . . . . .	45
Text:—"And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on Him, saying, 'If Thou be Christ, save Thyself and us.' But the other answering, rebuked him, saying, 'Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this man hath done nothing amiss.' And he said unto Jesus, 'Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom.' And Jesus said unto him, 'Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with Me in paradise.'" Luke 23:39-43.	
II. HOW TO BE SAVED. FIRST PART . . . . .	59
Text:—"What must I do to be saved?" Acts 16:30. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." Acts 16:31.	
III. HOW TO BE SAVED. SECOND PART . . . . .	71
Text:—"What must I do to be saved?" Acts 16:30. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." Acts 16:31.	
IV. LOT IN SODOM . . . . .	86
Text:—"Just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked."	
V. RESTORING THE BACKSLIDER . . . . .	100
Text:—Galatians 6:1.	
VI. THE SECURITY OF THE BELIEVER . . . . .	115
Text:—"What shall we then say to these things?" Romans 8:31.	

VII. THE TITHE . . . . .	130
--------------------------	-----

Text:—"The tenth shall be holy unto the Lord." Leviticus 27:32.

VIII. THE HEAVENLY HOME . . . . .	149
-----------------------------------	-----

Text:—"In My Father's house are many mansions." John 14:2.

IX. HYMN . . . . .	159
--------------------	-----

Text:—"We have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin." I John 1:7.



## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

	<i>Facing Page</i>
REV. A. M. FRASER, D.D. . . . .	Title
THE MANSE—DR. FRASER'S HOME . . . .	14
This building was erected in 1846-47 under the pastorate of Dr. B M. Smith. Other pastors occupying this building preceding Dr. Fraser were Dr. Jos. R. Wilson, Rev. Wm. E. Baker, Dr. John P. Strider and Dr. D. K. McFarland. Woodrow Wilson, the President of the United States, was born in the room on the lower floor, facing the street, to the left of the entrance.	
FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, STAUNTON, VIRGINIA . . . . .	26
THE SUNDAY SCHOOL BUILDING . . . .	34
This building is one of the most complete and best adapted to Sabbath School purposes to be found in the United States.	
MARY BALDWIN SEMINARY . . . . .	82
Dr. Fraser has been for many years Chaplain and President of the Board of Trustees of this Institution. The Chapel, which was formerly the First Presbyterian Church building, shows in this picture. It was erected in 1818.	



## PREFATORY NOTE

**B**Y kindness, sympathy and fair play Dr. Fraser won the admiration and love of the writer twenty years ago. That admiration and love has deepened as association with him has become more intimate.

He is, no doubt, one of the greatest men of his generation, if greatness is measured by unselfish service, humility, purity of life and statesmanlike ability.

After his distinguished career is ended, beautiful tributes to his memory will be published, but the writer, as a mark of gratitude for having his life enriched by contact with Dr. Fraser's, wanted to have some of these beautiful flowers given to him during his lifetime. Moreover, he also had a desire to put into printed form some of Dr. Fraser's remarkable sermons in order that they might be preserved to future generations, thus giving the people in the Church at large an opportunity to read them.

With these motives in view, the plan was suggested to a few of Dr. Fraser's friends who gladly made the undertaking possible. These men will



have the joy of knowing that the sermons which have helped to mold their characters will be preserved to bless many other lives through generations to come.

It should be understood that this volume is published entirely upon the initiative of Dr. Fraser's friends.

We trust that these sermons will be read by Elders in vacant pulpits, used at the family altar and widely read by the members of the church at large. They are printed, substantially, as originally preached by Dr. Fraser in the First Presbyterian Church, Staunton, Virginia.

Staunton, Va.

WM. E. HUDSON.

## PART I.

## PERSONALIA AND APPRECIATION



## I

### BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

ON June 14th, 1856, in Sumter, South Carolina, there came to the home of Judge Thomas B. Fraser and his wife, Mrs. Sarah Margaret (McIver) Fraser, of the same city, a son, whose entire life-work has been and still is closely linked with and interwoven in the history of the Presbyterian Church in the United States, and, who, himself, was destined to become one of the great leaders of this Church.

This son has combined in his name, Abel McIver Fraser, the names of these two distinguished families of South Carolina. His father, the "just Judge," was a lawyer of great eminence in Sumter where he practiced his profession for many years, and served, with great distinction, in both Houses of the Legislature of his State. He was Captain in the Confederate Army, and, in those stirring days of reconstruction following the close of the war, he was one of the committee of eight, who in 1876 managed the Democratic Campaign in South Carolina by which General Wade Hampton was elected Governor and the State delivered from "carpet-bag" rule.



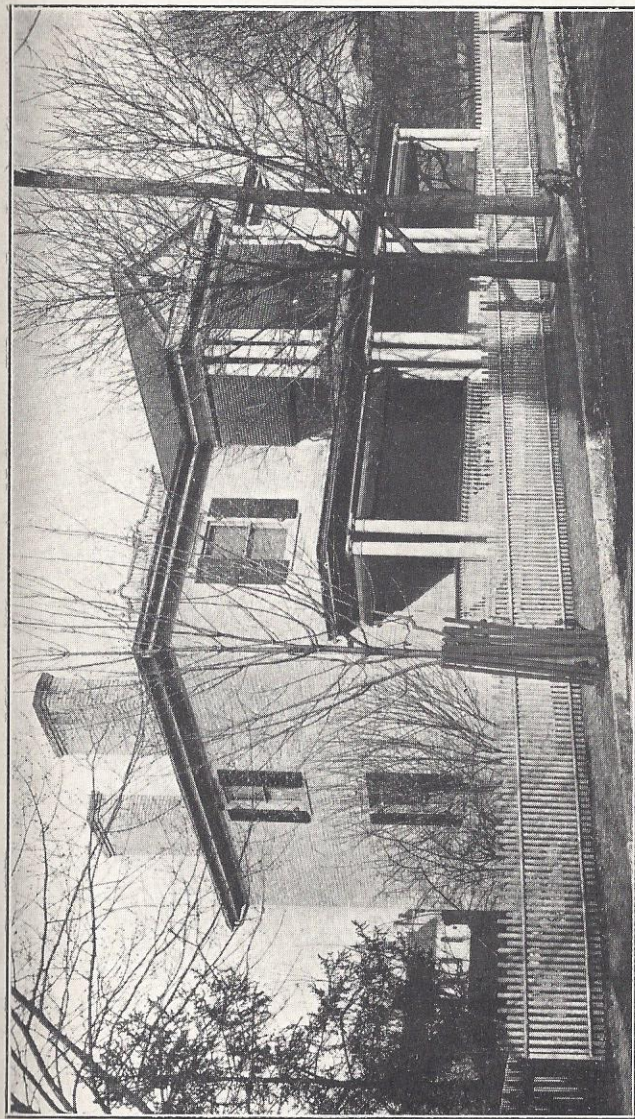
He was for sixteen years Circuit Judge and served as a member of the Constitutional Convention of 1895, and as Chairman of the Committee on "Order, Style and Revision" was largely responsible for the logical order and literary style of the new Constitution.

He was an honored Elder in his church and as such became a Director of Columbia Theological Seminary. He was Moderator of his Presbytery and several times a member of the General Assembly.

One of his sons is now an Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of his State and a Ruling Elder in his Church—the fourth generation of Elders.

Thus the childhood and early youth of the subject of this brief sketch was spent in a Christian home surrounded by all the refinement and culture of such a home, and, being "a child of the Covenant," naturally his attention was early directed to the great duties of life and at a very early age, being "tenderly nurtured and carefully trained" in the great things of God, he felt the deepest interest in religion and was led to a clear realization of his personal acceptance of Jesus Christ as his Saviour when he was fourteen or fifteen years of age.

He was prepared for College in a private school in his home town and at sixteen entered Davidson College from which he was graduated in 1876 at twenty years of age.



THE MANSE—DR. FRASER'S HOME



In his Freshman year he made a public profession of his Faith and became a member of the Davidson Church.

No other calling in life than that of the Gospel Ministry was ever seriously considered from his early youth, but it was not until his Junior year in College that the call was fully recognized and his life work definitely settled.

In his work at College and the Seminary he was always punctual, diligent, prepared and regarded by his fellow students as easily one of the best all-round men in his classes, among whom was President Woodrow Wilson.

After teaching a year at Little's Mills, North Carolina, he entered Columbia Theological Seminary, September, 1877, and was graduated in 1880.

He was licensed by the Presbytery of Harmony, in the Spring of 1879, and ordained by the Presbytery of West Lexington, Ky., when he became pastor of Mt. Horeb Church, in May, 1881.

His first work in the Ministry was at South Frankfort, Kentucky, where he endeavored to gather the Southern Presbyterians into a church and, although he was there only three months, this effort resulted in the purchase of a lot on which the church and manse now stand and the gathering together of the nucleus of what is now an honored church.

In May, 1881, he became pastor of Mt. Horeb



Church, in Fayette County, Kentucky, and for twelve years this happy and fruitful pastorate continued, having the churches of Walnut Hill and Bethel united with it for part of the time.

In 1893, he was called to the pastorate of the First Presbyterian Church of Staunton, Virginia, and installed in May.

Here has been his great life-work, in a pastorate of over a quarter of a century, in a pulpit of commanding influence and power throughout the entire Church—a pulpit where such men preached as Dr. Benjamin M. Smith, for so long Professor in Union Theological Seminary and Dr. Joseph R. Wilson, for many years stated Clerk of the Assembly, the illustrious father of his illustrious son, Woodrow Wilson, President of the United States. Rev. Wm. E. Baker, Dr. John P. Strider and Dr. D. K. McFarland also filled this pulpit and left an abiding mark upon the community.

Dr. Fraser's work has been of such a strong constructive character throughout his entire Ministry that it was soon recognized and his Presbyteries, Synods and the General Assembly have placed their highest confidence in his sound and discriminating judgment and bestowed their highest honors upon him.

And not only has his Church thus recognized his great worth and his splendid powers of mind and heart, but Colleges and Seminaries have vied

with each other in laying their greatest honors at his feet.

In 1896 Central University, Kentucky, and Davidson College, North Carolina, both conferred the Degree of Doctor of Divinity upon him.

In 1909 he was elected (for the third time) President of Columbia Seminary and accepted the honor, but the Presbytery declined to release him from his pastorate—the wisdom of which action has been clearly proven.

In 1904 he was elected Secretary of Foreign Missions, "with chief charge in the field," but did not accept the position.

He has been a member of the Board of Trustees at different times of Davis and Elkins College, Hampden-Sidney College, Washington and Lee University, Mary Baldwin Seminary (twenty-seven years and President of the Board for eleven years) and the Synod's Orphans' Home at Lynchburg.

He has been a member of six General Assemblies, and Moderator of the one meeting at New Orleans, Louisiana, in 1919; a member of the Pan-Presbyterian Council which met in New York in 1909 and a Delegate to the Synod Hall Conference—a part of the World's Missionary Conference—which met in Edinburg in 1910.

He is a member of the Western Section of the Alliance.

He has been on several very important *ad in-*



*terim* Committees of the Assembly and is, for the third time in succession, on the Closer Relations Committee (Elected by his Synod) of which he is now Chairman.

The Church has showered her honors upon him by placing him in positions of greatest responsibility and where they need the clear decisions of his keen intellect and sound judgment.

On the 14th of July, 1881, about two months after he was installed as pastor in his first charge, he was happily united in marriage to Miss Octavia T. Blanding, a daughter of Leonora McFadden Blanding and Col. James Douglas Blanding, who practiced Law for fifty years in Sumter, South Carolina, and was an honored Elder in that Church.

To the sweet influence and constant help of this devoted wife who encouraged him in his difficulties and rejoiced with him in his successes, is no doubt due in large measure the great achievements of his life, and no one would be more prompt to render this tribute than Dr. Fraser himself.

To brighten their home and to cheer their hearts have come from this union three daughters—Leonora Blanding, Margaret McIver and Jean Blanding, and three sons—Thomas Boone, Douglas DeSaussure and one who died in infancy, Abel McIver.

Rev. Donald McQueen, D.D., a boyhood friend, in speaking of Dr. Fraser said: "Bright

and precocious, he was easily a leader in his class at school and was recognized as such. Strength and beauty marked his character and are still the pillars which uphold the structure. Strength of conviction and yet withal great modesty of demeanor stand out as cardinal virtues. Crowning these two pillars of his character, there is the Lily work of purity, gentleness and love."

WM. C. WHITE.



THE BELOVED PASTOR OF THE FIRST  
CHURCH, STAUNTON, FOR MORE  
THAN TWENTY-SEVEN YEARS

**D**R. FRASER was suggested as Pastor for the Staunton First Church by a prominent and highly esteemed minister of a distant State, who knew Dr. Fraser well, knew his character and his capabilities. Invited to visit the congregation, he complied and won its favor and came to be our Pastor. That was more than 27 years ago. His immediate predecessors, the Rev. Dr. John P. Strider and the Rev. Dr. D. K. McFarland, Godly, sweet-tempered men, had prepared the ground for him. He was received on faith, and he soon satisfied the congregation that no mistake had been made. Modest to the point of shyness, never exalting but always humbling himself, and yet standing firm when principle was involved, he soon gained a leadership in the congregation that has strengthened with the years. This leadership has been due to his instinctively correct judgment, his tender and sympathetic nature, his readiness at all times cheerfully to sacrifice himself, his steadiness of purpose, his Godly

example, and his power to present with great force the "Glorious Gospel of the Blessed God." He won the love of the congregation and has held it unbroken through all the years. Who can say how influential in developing a great preacher is a sympathetic and loving congregation?

Dr. Fraser's ministry with the First Church has in many respects been notable. His success demonstrates what may be expected when a preacher of natural strength confines himself to preaching pure religion. The writer of this has sat under his preaching from the first day of his ministry in Staunton, and he has for the first time to hear Dr. Fraser discuss from the pulpit a political or secular question. From any utterance of his from the pulpit no man could ever guess his political tenets, and in this he has simply followed the example of the Master, whose politics if he had any, and whose views on human Government were unknown to the people of his day as they are unknown to the people of the present day. Christ longed to make good citizens by making men good, by transforming their lives, and Dr. Fraser has the same longing.

Not a word has Dr. Fraser uttered in all these years in criticism or derogation of other branches of the Church of Christ on earth. On the contrary his every utterance has breathed the spirit of Christian fellowship, which has disarmed by its sincerity and unaffectedness the most narrow of



sectarians. Not once has he ever boasted of what Presbyterians are doing as contrasted with what other denominations have done or are doing. If any member of any church in Staunton or in this section has had any criticism to make of Dr. Fraser's attitude toward other Christians, it has never come to the knowledge of the writer.

From the very beginning Dr. Fraser appealed to his flock to worship the Lord with their substance, naming the tithe as the least that any true follower of the Lord Jesus Christ should be content to bring to His House, and as a result the members of his congregation have with the years grown more and more generous, have become more and more free with their offerings, and depended less and less on getting the Lord's money from other sources than themselves.

The relations between Pastor and people are the most sympathetic and trustful. The humblest member knows to whom to take his sorrows, his misfortunes and his joys, confident that he will find genuine sympathy and encouragement, and all the aid that one who walks close to the Master can give him. It would be difficult to find a Pastor and people bound more closely together, sharing more in common, and looking to the future with greater confidence.

R. D. HAISLIP.

### III

#### A GREAT PREACHER

**T**HERE are not very many great preachers. Dr. Fraser is one of them. A few reasons are:

1. He is a great preacher because he preaches God's Word. Absolute fidelity to the Scriptures is his aim. It is a "thus saith the Lord," which always rings out, and in no uncertain tones. No one can be a great preacher who sidetracks God's Word for every passing whim.

He shuns the "Topics of the Day" and avoids "the Great and Absorbing Questions of the Times". He shuns the first because he believes that if the masses were saturated with the Gospel of Christ, these "topics of the day" will be permeated with the Spirit of Christ, and he bends every effort to teach the public Gospel truth.

He avoids the second because he knows that the most important question of the day is how to redeem a lost world, and that no time must be wasted on side issues.

2. He is not sensational. His greatness as a preacher does not depend on this. He is really too great to be sensational. He is not obliged to be spectacular to get a hearing. He never poses.



The tricks of the demagogue are totally foreign to him.

He knows that God's Word rightly interpreted and preached with the unction of the Holy Spirit is the only way to reach the heart; is the only "power of God unto salvation". He knows that the preaching of "Christ and Him crucified" is the panacea for all political and social problems, and he sticks to that remedy. The "great unrest of the world," in his view must be solved by bringing the world to Him who says, "Come unto Me and I will give you rest," and all of his energies of mind, and body, and soul are bent to that one end—and he is great in the way he does it.

3. He is great in his simplicity. The child as well as the scholar can understand him. He is clear, and this clearness is that of the sun's rays, not that of a block of ice. No one ever leaves the pew asking, "What did he mean?"

One of the best tests of a clear sermon is that you can pray it!

I have never heard a sermon or a prayer meeting talk from Dr. Fraser that could not be prayed from beginning to end.

Clearness is one of the marks of a great preacher, and Dr. Fraser is clear.

4. Only a great preacher can hold a large congregation of intelligent people for over 25 years, with increasing power.

Dr. Fraser has done that, and in the estimation

of his people, has grown every year. His many intelligent hearers return each Sunday, year after year, knowing they will find food for the mind and nourishment for the soul.

5. He is a great preacher because he practices what he preaches. He adorns "the doctrine of God our Saviour" both in the pulpit and out of it. Dr. Fraser lives the gospel that he preaches with power.

In one of his lectures on Pastoral Theology, Dr. Dabney once said to his students: "Young gentlemen, you may become great preachers, but if you do not live what you preach, you had better get out of the pulpit and go to splitting rails, or breaking rocks on the turnpike." Judged by this standard, Dr. Fraser does not need to be a rail-splitter or a builder of turnpikes.

6. Dr. Fraser's greatness as a preacher is due to his brain and heart, not to an imposing physique, or a melodious voice, or any kindred thing. His loving friends, and he has many, and his greatest admirers, and he has many, cannot accuse him of having an imposing physique.

7. He is great in his fearlessness—in his courage as a preacher. He is as gentle as a woman, and as fearless as a lion. When he has looked all around a subject, and all through it, for he does both, in the light of God's Word, there is no question of expediency that can swerve him from the right.



I have seen him when the semi-political pot was boiling in the city and state, and when he stood out in his city almost single-handed against dragging these semi-political things into the pulpit. Did this lessen his influence, or impair his prestige? Not a bit of it! By his courage he has done more than any one I know, to enlighten the public conscience in essential Christianity—which, after all, is the best way to solve political and social questions.

For he preaches not himself, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and himself as your bondservant for the sake of Jesus. And so far as he himself was concerned he came to you in conscious feebleness and in fear and in deep anxiety. And his language and the Message that he proclaimed were not adorned with persuasive words of earthly wisdom, but depended upon truth which the Spirit taught and mightily carried home; so that your trust might rest not on the wisdom of man but on the power of God.

For Zion's sake he will not hold his peace, and for Jerusalem's sake he will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth.

J. E. BOOKER.



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, STAUNTON, VIRGINIA



#### IV

### A CONSECRATED MAN

**T**HE title of this Chapter leads at once to the real source of power of this strong and greatly beloved man of God. He has fine native ability. Some one has said that genius is but the ability for hard, persistent work. What he is today is the result of these two things, some fine native gifts and an abundance of persistent, painstaking, and accurate training in all the finer things of heart and mind.

He has a mind richly stored with truth as well as an unusual memory. I heard him speak of an incident he wished to use as an illustration. He said he could not recall where he got it, but he knew it came from a reliable source or he would not have so carefully stored it in his memory. This reveals his habit of discarding the worthless or doubtful, and of storing his memory only with what is useful and true. Through careful reading and close observation his mind has been richly stored with truth, and his memory being given only a worthy task to perform, does it marvelously well and gives him ready access to all this fund of truth.

He has clearness of vision and statement. He



never jumps at conclusions, and when he takes hold of a subject he goes carefully through and through it and gathering all available information discards the worthless. He looks at it from every possible point of view, he goes through the reasons for and against, he brings his rich experience and store of truth to bear upon it, and finally, presents his conclusions in statements as clear as the sparkling water of a mountain stream.

Many a long debate has been avoided when he has done such work as this on a subject about which there was great diversity of opinion among his brethren. He has presented the whole matter so clearly to them that there was nothing to do but approve his conclusions.

He is a master of the Scriptures, not only of the theology they teach, but of the very words of the book. He is called upon to preach many funeral sermons. He usually preaches a sermon of ordinary length, and in all of these he uses nothing but accurate scripture quotations carefully woven together. These sermons, judging by the many I have heard, are all different, yet he never hesitates or seems the least uncertain. It is difficult to understand how he has gotten such possession of the words of the Bible, but it can be only through years of patient and loving study of the Book, and feeding upon it.

He is a consecrated man. I have mentioned some of his fine gifts and attainments which might

be considered the source of his preeminent service, only to say that in none of these things is the secret of his power. This lies in his consecration, his passionate love for and intense devotion to God. I have no words that can describe this, but as I think of it a certain picture arises in my mind. We are at a meeting of Presbytery, and he is asked, without previous notice, to preach. He replies, "Yes, if you will allow me to repeat a sermon I have just preached to my people." His text is, "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" As he reaches the climax of this great sermon, he pictures the mighty Son of God dying on the cross, in agony looking to his Father. In that supreme moment in the life of his Son, the Father turned his face from him wringing from our Saviour the cry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me," leaving him to die as the rebellious sinner dies and in his place. Here the speaker's words seemed wholly inadequate to express the overmastering passion of his soul, and he seemed to feel that he was that very sinner for whom the Father showed such unspeakable love. This is but a faint description of that wonderful scene. The whole house seemed filled with the presence and power of the Spirit, giving us such visions of the Father and the Son in their marvelous love and sacrifice for us sinners, that we could hardly refrain from crying out our praise



and thanksgiving to God. His are no uncertain views on the atonement. He knows that his Saviour died in his place, and feels that he can never pay the debt of love he owes. All who know him or come in contact with him can never question this one thing, that his heart is the Lord's. Someone has said that the Lord is waiting to flood that man's life with power whom he can trust to use it wholly for Him. The Master is finding his heart so loyal that He is trusting him with a large measure of his power. I believe his friends will agree with me that this is the source of the power that is making his life count for so much in God's service.

This draws him to those who are seeking to know God. This has made him a great pastor to his own people who love him devotedly and trust him implicitly.

It has made him a pastor to many vacant churches which need service or counsel. It has made him a pastor to many pastors when problems arise in which they can not see the way, and they feel they must go to someone to help them find the will of God.

How he has attained this coveted grace is left largely for us to conjecture, but it can only be through close fellowship with God, by walking and talking with Him. He must feed constantly on the Word of God, the Living Word. His devotional life must be his real, constant, daily life.

George Adam Smith says, "Prayer is not the preparation for the victory, but prayer is the victory." His victories for self and others are won at the throne of Grace. His joy, his hope, and his power for great service are found here, where he not only agonizes in prayer but where he must linger long and lovingly and where "heaven comes down his soul to greet, and Glory crowns the Mercy Seat."

HOLMES ROLSTON.



## V.

## A PEERLESS DEBATER

AS a debater Dr. Fraser has few equals and fewer, if any, superiors. His strength as a debater lies in several qualifications which fit him preeminently for the forum. First among these should be mentioned courtesy. Dr. Fraser is a gentleman in its fullest sense and his kindness of heart and his christian rearing make it impossible for him intentionally to offend his opponent. Any one who knows him knows that much.

Second, he is perfectly fair, always giving his opponent the full benefit of all he has on his side and being most careful not to misrepresent either the man or his argument. He never attacks the man, but hits his argument or his general position sledge hammer blows.

A third qualification is his splendid mental ability. This enables him to take a comprehensive view of the question under discussion in its relation to other subjects that are affected by the matter in hand. He sees a mile ahead of him. He sees both sides and can put himself on the opposite side and reason from that point of view, which enables him to form his own arguments with clear-

ness to meet the opposition. His grasp of a subject is wonderful.

Another great advantage he has over most men is his remarkable memory. He not only remembers the arguments of his opponent in the order in which they have been made, but he remembers the very form in which they have been stated and can quote him verbatim. This gives him the power to analyse the points to be met by him. It also enables him to put his own arguments in the exact language he wishes to use when he is preparing the debate. Few men can think a whole paragraph out, or many paragraphs, and then hours afterwards express the thought in exactly the same language he had framed beforehand. He can do this. He does do it in sermonizing. I venture to say he can, with great accuracy, state the position and arguments of nearly every opponent with whom he ever debated.

He is a master of Logic. If you admit his premise it is impossible to resist his conclusion. The character of his mind is logical. He thinks in straight lines. This makes it impossible also to deceive him with a fallacy. He detects it as by intuition. Many men know an argument is fallacious but do not know exactly where the fallacy is and so can not answer it. Dr. Fraser knows and so is armed for the conflict. You can write Q. E. D. after his speech every time.

Again, he possesses power over himself. He



is always calm and collected. You can not "rattle him". He is always earnest, but never excited, never angry, but perfectly self-possessed. Others lose their heads, he does not. So he avoids the confusion of thought that arises from excitement, temper, or other distracting circumstances.

Again, his judgment is good. He rarely, if ever, espouses a cause that you can not approve; and even if you can not approve, you are bound to appreciate his sincerity. His mind and heart are well poised. This gives him an advantage in the start. The writer once heard one of the ablest ministers in our church say he would rather follow Dr. Fraser blindfolded than any man he ever saw; and the writer always questions his own position if he finds Dr. Fraser disagreeing with him.

Perhaps the most essential qualification for a debater is, he must impress his auditors that he is speaking from conviction, that he is sincere. This Dr. Fraser always does, because he is too honest to do otherwise. He does not debate to beat an antagonist, or simply to gain a point. He argues because he believes from the bottom of his soul that he is right and what he is after is the truth. The writer has known and loved him as an intimate friend, as a brother, for more than forty years; but he believes this estimate of his friend as a debater is just and unbiased.

F. J. BROOKE.



THE SUNDAY SCHOOL BUILDING ERECTED UNDER DR. FRASER'S PASTORATE



VI

A DISTINGUISHED CITIZEN

THE hill town of the Shenandoah Valley is no mean city. To be prominent where dwell able jurists, proficient physicians, large-visioned business men and celebrated educators is a distinction worthy of note.

In all the departments of modern life, there are leaders of thought and action who live in Staunton, Va.

However if it were put to the vote of his fellow citizens, there is little doubt that the one they would crown as the First Citizen would be the modest man who lives in "The Little White House," where Woodrow Wilson was born.

Dr. Fraser is not a politician, in fact he is a champion of the doctrine of the separation of Church and State, yet no one has exerted a more potent and wholesome influence on the lives of those who shape the policies of the city than he.

He is not a man of affairs, but most of the leading business men of the city have known Dr. Fraser since boyhood, and many of them consider his influence as preacher and man as a dominant factor in shaping their careers. One of the leading young



business men writes as follows: "It seems to me that it ought to be a very easy thing to write a book about Dr. Fraser, for I certainly regard him as the ablest man that I have ever known intimately. I believe there is no other man in all of this community whose opinion is as much sought after and as highly valued as his.

"He is absolutely the finest diplomat that I have ever seen, and to me his ability to handle a delicate situation is perfectly wonderful. He would certainly make a great Secretary of State.

"Of course every one who knows him knows of his wonderful ability as a preacher, but to me, what is greater than that, is the man's humility. I think his humility is remarkable, and I feel sure I am correct when I say that there is no man in Staunton whose opinion of him would be as low as his own."

He is not a school teacher, and yet the great educators of the City respect his opinion on all subjects, and the large number of youth who gather from every quarter of the land love to sit at his feet as a wise counselor and teacher.

One closely identified with the life of Mary Baldwin Seminary writes: "Dr. Fraser has been closely associated with Mary Baldwin Seminary as a member of the Board, and Chairman for a long time, as well as Chaplain. As a member of the Board his fidelity, judgment and love for the school have made him its most valuable member. As Chaplain we can never reckon or conceive of

the religious influence his ministrations have brought into the lives of the hundreds of girls and young women who have been pupils and teachers of this Institution."

There is no class of people in his City who have not felt directly or indirectly the results of his beneficent power, but probably his greatest influence has been exerted on the professional men who, through his long career of twenty-five years as pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of Staunton, have been closely associated with him. Doctors, lawyers, preachers and other educated men have looked upon him as a thinker second to none, and his wise counsels have often been sought and his decisions regarded as the best.

A prominent professional man who has been acquainted with him for a great number of years writes: "No man that I have known is so fully endowed with all the qualities that combine to make one of God's most noble examples of what the human life should be. He is the most unassuming, gentle, Christ-like man I have ever known. His appreciation and consideration of the right of others is wonderfully characteristic of his make-up. 'To do justly and to love mercy' is his creed. As a thinker he is strong and clear, always impartial in his conclusions, even though he stands alone. The words of the Psalmist, 'The meek will he guide in judgment' seems fulfilled in him."

Dr. Fraser is a firm believer in separation of



Church and State, and has never been openly active on political questions, nevertheless, "no one citizen of our city has had a more beneficent influence on the thinking people than he."

As an illustration of his leadership in the movements which concern the highest welfare of his city, he was Chairman of the Citizens Committee for raising the funds for the construction of the magnificent Y. M. C. A. building which cost over \$100,000, at a time when building was inexpensive. It is remarkable how the whole city rallied to his leadership. He was also chosen by the citizens of Staunton to introduce President Wilson on the occasion of his visit to the city.

There are few busier men. He makes as many visits as the average physician, he writes as much as the average editor, he makes as many addresses as the average lawyer, he is at the head of an institution that collects and disburses as much money as the average business establishment, he is personally responsible for as many people as the average college president.

He has stood in his place doing the full work of a man and great citizen in the town of his adoption these twenty-seven years, loved and honored by all.

H. W. McLAUGHLIN.

## VII

### A POTENT INFLUENCE FOR GOOD THROUGHOUT THE SOUTHERN PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

**A**N American writer has said that if a man can write a good book, preach a good sermon, or make a good mouse-trap, though he build his house in the woods, the world will make a beaten track to his door. It is a striking statement of the inevitableness of the general recognition of merit however modest. If a minister is a man of sterling character, sound judgment, consecrated talents, ample knowledge of the history, doctrines and work of the church, and power of clear thought and clear statement, then no matter how little he may desire prominence the church at large will seek him out and place him in positions of responsibility and influence. Dr. Fraser is universally honored and loved in his own community, but it was impossible that the influence of a man of his character and gifts should be limited to his own town or his own presbytery or his own synod. It has been felt and felt powerfully throughout the church.

Self-seeking is foreign to his nature. He has



not sought places; places have sought him. More than once colleges and theological seminaries have called him to professorial or administrative positions, and, while he has always felt obliged to decline such invitations and to continue his ministry in the pastorate, these calls to educational work afford striking proof of the wide reach of his influence and the estimation in which he is held by representative institutions of the church.

In other ways, however, he has been an important factor in educational work, having served on various college boards and committees, and having always been himself a liberal contributor and active leader in campaigns for the endowment of church institutions, while as chaplain of Mary Baldwin Seminary he has touched hundreds of young lives which have carried the influence of his pure character and strong teaching to every part of our land.

With his pen also he has exercised a far-reaching influence. Though daily pressed with the thousand and one things which in a large pastorate claim the minister's attention, he has found time to contribute to the church papers and reviews occasional articles on subjects of importance in connection with the doctrines of Scripture and the work of the church which are always characterized by cogent reasoning and clear expression. One of his tracts entitled "What is to be your Life Work? Why not the Ministry?" has had a very wide

circulation among the young people in our schools and colleges and has doubtless influenced many of them to devote their lives to religious work.

In the courts of the church he has long been recognized as a man of rare wisdom, poise and power. With none of the propensity for publicity and controversy which afflicts some ecclesiastics, he is always a man to reckon with in a deliberative body, and under constraint of conscience and zeal for truth he nearly always takes part in the debates that are precipitated on really important questions, especially those which touch the sphere and functions of the church. Whenever he takes the floor he is listened to with profound respect, alike by those who agree with him and those who differ with him, because all know that he is absolutely sincere and absolutely free from personal ambition and intrigue. The authority with which he speaks is the authority that goes with unquestionable purity of motive and unyielding independence of thought. Moreover he is a model of courtesy in controversy. There is never anything petty or personal in his contribution to a discussion however heated on the part of others. He discusses principles not men. He argues not for victory but for truth. I do not mean that he is always right; that would be too much to claim for any man. And I do not mean that he always carries his point. As was said of a great English statesman, he has often been on the losing side:



sometimes perhaps on the wrong side: never on the side of wrong. He is

True as a dial to the sun,  
Although it be not shined upon.

He values the approval of other men of course, but when he believes he is right and is expressing his matured convictions popular approval is not considered. "They say. What say they? Let them say." His loyalty to truth as he sees it, his purity of character, his earnestness of purpose, taken with his power of broad comprehension, his gift of lucid statement, and his never-failing sweetness of spirit and courtesy of speech have made him an honored figure in all our councils and a power for good throughout the church—all of which has been fittingly recognized in his election to the highest honor within the gift of the church, the moderatorship of the General Assembly, a position which he now occupies—and adorns.

W. W. MOORE.

## PART II.

### SOME OF HIS MESSAGES



*In furnishing the sermons for this book I dedicate the publication of them to my wife, my comrade in the ministry—in its task, its trials and its joy.*

A. M. FRASER.

## I

### THE CONVERTED THIEF

*“And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on Him, saying, If Thou be Christ, save Thyself and us. But the other answering, rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss. And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with Me in paradise.” Luke XXIII. 39-43.*

THE crucifixion of Jesus was the most awful thing that ever happened on the earth. Human artists have never considered their genius sufficient to do justice to this scene. And yet a man of the feeblest intelligence who reads the story must have some mental picture of it. The mocking, excited rabble; little squads of soldiers, indifferent to scenes of suffering and blood, suspecting nothing unusual in the present case, dividing amongst themselves the spoils of the prisoner; and a small group of sorrowing women, are among the minor objects that set off the picture.

Outlined against the strangely blackened sky of morning, are three upright crosses, each bearing



a human victim in the throes of a terrific death. It is the central figure with which we are most familiar. That is the Son of God, suffering for the salvation of the human race. He is the greatest sufferer of the three, for while He does not suffer the pangs of remorse for sin which the others are suffering, He has those greater pains which an innocent man must feel when he is suffering for the sins of others, and when he is in close contact with sin. And when His soul, weary with its anguish, turned to God, panting for divine sympathy and support, it was all cut off, and there was only the blackest darkness in that direction.

But there were two other men crucified with Him, and who are they? It had been foretold of Jesus that He would make His grave with the wicked. Accordingly they are two malefactors who are crucified with Him, the one on His right and the other on His left. The one cried out from the jaws of death for pardon and peace and received them. The other continued to scoff and died impenitent. As if in this picture, destined to influence the world so greatly, God intended to present not merely the death of Christ, but the two effects of that death. To some, the death of Christ acts as a savor of life unto life. To others it acts as a savor of death unto death. An illustration of each is given, and the three crosses are combined in a single scene and committed through the Gospel to the world.

There is the impenitent thief. Some pictures of the scene cast a dark shadow across the form of the impenitent thief. Truly he is a dismal object to think upon. There he hangs, with all the events of his past wicked life crowding thick and fast through memory. There he hangs, in full view of all the horrors of the life beyond. He hangs in arm's length, so to speak, of the fountain of salvation. He has the benefit of his companion's exhortation. He sees the success of his companion's prayer for mercy, but notwithstanding all, he not only holds out against the chances of mercy, but joins the railing of the multitude below, saying, "If thou be Christ, save thyself and us."

But I ask you now to turn away from both of these dark parts of the picture and look at the one bright spot on all the face of that dark day. Let us catch the one cry of faith and hope, arising from the midst of all that was despair and gloom; let us turn to the dying penitent thief. Let us examine his confession and notice the reception it received at the hands of Christ, and see if we cannot trace in his confession the outlines of every confession that is acceptable to God and that saves the soul.

I. *The Confession*—When we examine the confession of the dying thief we find that it consists of two parts, a confession concerning *himself*, and a confession concerning *Christ*. These are



the two parts of every genuine and saving confession of faith.

1. *His confession concerning himself.* His first words are addressed to his companion sufferer, the impenitent thief, "Dost not thou fear God?" These words shows what this poor wretch was thinking about in this dreadful hour. He was thinking of God and was afraid of God. A little while before he had been following a reckless course of sin. Some think that he had even joined his companion and the multitude in reviling Christ. However that may be, the terrible circumstances in which he now finds himself admonish him that he has but a little time to prepare for the great unknown, on the brink of which he is trembling. On the evening before the first battle of Manassas, a Confederate soldier, who was to get his first experience of battle on the following day, sat gloomily on a stump in the middle of the camp, with his chin resting in his hand, his elbow on his knee, and his eyes upon the ground. His companions, who were engaged in all kinds of sports, bantered him to join them in their games. With a mournful wave of the hand he said, "You may play if you wish, but I am thinking of God and eternity now." So this poor wretch, when the shadow of death crept over his soul, began to think of God and eternity and his long neglected spiritual interests. In doing so, he took the first step that is always taken by the sinner in coming back to God.

It is that of an awakened interest in his soul.

[This awakening may be sudden or gradual. It may be violent or quiet. It may be followed quickly or slowly by the other steps in conversion. Saul of Tarsus was awakened by a blinding light and a voice from heaven coming suddenly upon him in the midday. The Philippian jailor was awakened by an earthquake at midnight. The Ethiopian eunuch was quietly riding along the highway reading the Scriptures. Cornelius the Centurian seems to have been, for a long time, in a state of awakened interest. But whatever may be the special circumstances of the awakening, whether sudden or gradual, violent or quiet, rapid or slow, it is always the first step. A man must call himself to account at some time. He must ask himself the question, Are my relations with God what they ought to be? Am I prepared for eternity? And if not, why not? Seeing that this step must inevitably be taken at some time, if you are to be saved at all, may I ask, why not take that step just now?

His next words are a confession of sin. He is still speaking to his companion. "Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds." He acknowledged that his punishment was just, that he received the due reward of his deeds. Now remember just what the man was suffering. It was the most ex-



cruciating form of physical torture of which we have any knowledge. He had nails driven through his hands and his feet, through the exquisitely sensitive collections of nerves found there. His whole body was hanging from the cross by those nails. As great as that suffering was, however, so soon as death should come to put an end to it, it would usher him into all the horrors of the world of the lost. And now as he hangs there enduring this torture, with all the events of his past life crowding through memory and in full view of the horrors of hell, he said, "My punishment is just. I receive the due reward of my deeds." He did not entertain any of those ideas of sin which we find so common amongst men to-day. He did not regard sin as an evil merely because it brought physical and temporal suffering. He did not say that sin is a trifle which an infinite and loving Deity ought to overlook. He did not cry, "Eternity is too long to suffer for this short life of sin." (May I turn aside for a moment here to say that the Bible does not necessarily teach that eternal suffering is the punishment of our earthly sins. If a man dies in sin he does not cease to be a sinner. He will continue to sin in the future state of existence, and as long as he is a sinner he will be a sufferer.) The thief did not deceive himself with any false theories of sin. He must have seen something of the exceeding sinfulness of sin. And so, when he saw all that

anguish cast into the scales with his sin and the two were evenly balanced, he pronounced it just. He said, "I receive the due reward of my deeds." Thus it is with all sinners when they come to estimate sin at its true value. They do not complain of the injustice of future punishment, but flee for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before them in the Gospel.

2. *His confession concerning Christ.* He is still addressing his fellow sinner. "Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this man hath done nothing amiss." He expressed his conviction of the spotless innocence of Jesus as a man. We do not know where he got his information concerning Christ. Possibly he was one of the crowd that followed him about the land and heard him preach and saw his ministry of love and healing. However that may be, he now says, and says with confidence, "This man hath done nothing amiss." It is a very courageous testimony when we consider all the circumstances. It was the Jewish Sanhedrin, the most venerable religious tribunal on earth, that had prepared the verdict against Jesus and had induced Pilate to pass sentence upon Him. It was a Roman Governor who pronounced the sentence and they were Roman soldiers who were executing that sentence. They represented the most powerful political government the world has ever



seen. And yet this dying thief brands the whole procedure with injustice. It was said at a time when there was no other voice to speak it. Christ's disciples had fled, and although John returned and took his place amongst the weeping women beneath the cross, there seems to have been no expression from them at this time. It was left to the dying thief to have the honor of being the only one to make public confession of Jesus in the hour of His greatest humiliation and his greatest need. How could an innocent man suffer within the dominion of a just God? All other suffering of moral beings in the history of the world may be traced directly or indirectly to sin. Sufferers are sinners. But here is a sufferer who is innocent. How, then, could an almighty and perfectly just God permit a man to suffer who was perfectly holy and innocent? The only explanation lies in the fact that Christ, though not Himself a sinner, had offered Himself as a substitute for sinners and was suffering in their stead. He was made sin for us. He bore our sins in His own body on the tree. "He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all."

But the thief did not merely believe that Christ

was an innocent man. He must have believed also that He was God. He addressed Him as "Lord". It is true this word had other meanings, but evidently this is the sense in which it is used here. For, listen! He said, "Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom." Is this helpless disgraced outcast a "Lord"? Is this dying man, who is even now suffering the extreme penalty of the law as a criminal, a "King"? "Lord" and "King"? Evidently these words have no reference to any relation between these two men that was merely temporal and earthly. So far as he could see at that time, in a very few hours they would both be done with all things earthly and temporal. The dying thief, however, saw beyond his death. From the high vantage point of the death struggle he could see over into the spirit world. He saw Jesus exalted to the throne of the universe. And so in the language of confident faith, he calls him "Lord" and speaks of His "Kingdom".

But that is not all, he did not simply believe in the innocence of Christ and in His deity. If that had been all, he would have shrunk away from Him in abject terror, or he would have joined his companion and the crowd below in railing against Christ. If he had merely believed in the innocence and deity of Jesus, that would not have saved his soul. Pilate believed that much, but it did not save the soul of Pilate. There was



more than that in this man's faith. He saw that in the fearful experience of death that lay just before him he could depend upon this man for help, though He Himself was dying. And so, with an element that was borrowed from the heart, he believed in the infinite kindness of Jesus, and asked a favor of Him, "Remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom." Is it not strange that he was not afraid to make such a request of the Son of God? What if Jesus had turned upon him with a rebuke like this, "Remember you, you who have just confessed My holiness and My divine authority, you who have just confessed your own wickedness and your rebellion against Me? Have you the effrontery to tell Me all this and in the same breath to ask Me to help you?" He had no fear of any such repulse as that. He saw there was plenteous redemption in the heart of Jesus, and so with heart-felt love, adoration and trust, he said, "Lord, remember me when thou comest into Thy kingdom."

I ask you to observe further the humility of the request. He said, "Lord, *remember* me." It was only "remember" me. He did not ask for a place at the Lord's right hand or His left, as John and James had done. He felt sure that if such a being as that would only think kindly of him when He came into His kingdom, that would insure his safety and protection, and the privilege of serving Him, even though it might be at the most menial

post. "Make me as one of thy hired servants," the prodigal son thought to say to his Father. He was willing to hew wood and draw water, even to go back and feed swine if need be, if he could only be somewhere in that well provided establishment of his father, where he could daily see his form and hear his gracious voice. So should it be with us when we come to Christ. We should not come feeling that we are placing Him or His church under any obligation by our coming. We should not come into the church demanding to be recognized and given some place of honor or distinction. We should come with humility, thankful to God for any place, even the lowest place in His service. David said, "I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness."

I do not mean to imply that the dying thief studied and analyzed the whole subject and decided that a saving confession must have each of these elements in it. He had no time for such analysis. The time was short and the case was desperate. But it is very interesting to us, when we sit down calmly and study and analyze the confession he made, to find all these elements in it. He had gotten the right view of himself and the right view of Christ, and any utterance that he might make would be sure to contain the whole substance of saving faith.

II. *Christ's Reception of the Thief.*—In re-



sponse to this confession of the dying thief, Christ said, "Today shalt thou be with me in Paradise." When we looked at it from one point of view, it seemed a daring thing for such a sinner to ask such a favor of the Son of God, but how far beyond the request of the thief was the answer of Christ! It is as if He had said to him, "Only remember you? I have better things for you than that. You have owned Me in My darkest hour, I will own you in My brightest. You alone have drunk from the same cup with Me, you alone have been baptized with My baptism. And so today, when I go back to Paradise and 'heaven's resounding mansions ring' with shouts of welcome to the returning conqueror, you will be My only companion." With what an overwhelming welcome did Jesus receive the penitent thief! It is said that only once in the Bible is God represented as running, and then he runs to meet the returning sinner. "When he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him." The prodigal came back hesitatingly, but the father ran to meet him. He broke down in the little speech he had prepared to make. He could only say, "I am no more worthy to be called thy son." He didn't add, "Make me as one of thy hired servants." Nevertheless there was music and dancing in the home that night, and the fatted calf was killed,

and the prodigal son, dressed in the finest robe, led the festivities of the occasion.

There is more in God's love than we have ever dreamed of. He Himself has said, "O taste and see that the Lord is good." It is said that there is "Joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth." If there could be joy in heaven while the Son of God was in the agony of His soul on earth, there must have been more than the usual joy at this time, as they saw Him to whom they had so often ministered, to whom they had looked as the Redeemer of men and the Lord of glory, apparently sinking under the weight of sin and the assaults of hell, arousing Himself in response to the cry of a penitent sinner and forgetting His own sufferings, reach out to comfort and save a lost soul, snatch him as a brand from the eternal burning and kindle the blazing glory of God upon him. Was it not a glorious spot on the face of that dark day, when the dying Son of God, turned from His own death agony to speak a word of comfort and hope to a dying sinner?

There are two other thoughts I wish to suggest. This thief was received at the end of a long and wicked life. Some one has quaintly said, "It is the only instance of a death bed conversion mentioned in the Bible." He adds that God has given us one that no man might ever despair and only one that no man might ever be tempted to delay. The other suggestion is that the thief was received



*just as he was.* He had no opportunity for reformation. He had no time for baptism even. He must be received just as he was or not at all. So if you are ever to be saved, you will be saved just as you are at the time of that salvation. If you are waiting to make yourself better than you are before coming to Christ, you will never succeed. The longer you stay away from Him the more your sins will accumulate. You must at last consent to be saved just as you are, by the forgiving, transforming and cleansing power of divine grace. If then, it is true that you must be saved just as you are, why not accept salvation today? "Now is the accepted time and now is the day of salvation." "Today if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts."

## II

## HOW TO BE SAVED

*"What must I do to be saved?"* Acts XVI:30.

*"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."* Acts XVI:31.

**T**HIS is *the* question and this is *the* answer. God give me grace to be faithful, and "If any man have ears to hear, let him hear."

Of all the myriads of questions which it is possible for the human mind to ask, there is none that will bear comparison with this one, "What must I do to be saved?" And of all those answers to this question which can be invented, this is the only true answer, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."

There are three mysteries about our being with which human thought has always concerned itself, the mystery of our origin, the mystery of our nature and the mystery of our destiny. Wherever in the world you have found men thinking, you have found them asking these three questions: Where did I come from? What am I? And whither do I go?

But these three questions which seem to be



equally difficult are not equally important. The question of what is to become of me towers above the other two like a mountain above mole hills. "To be or not to be," that is not the question. For the very statement of that alternative, "to be or not to be," leads one at once to ask, "Can I cease to be?" When this strange revolution takes place which we call "death," what then? Do I pass into nothingness, do I cease to feel and think? Do I cease to be? Or will there be another state of existence? If another, will it be better or worse than this? If better, will it be perfectly good? If worse, will it be perfectly evil? Or will there be that same admixture of good and evil that we see in this world, only mixed in different proportions? Whatever that future may be, will it be eternal, or may we look for other changes? And finally, is there anything I can do while I am here on earth to determine what that future life will be?

Pending the answer to such questions, all other questions may be adjourned. We would like to know what are the possibilities of electricity. We are very curious to find out the secrets of those planets which seem to us to be habitable. We are keenly alive to suggestions which come from medical sources, of the discovery of means by which human life may be indefinitely prolonged. But the interest in all such questions subsides in the presence of the one greater question, "What is to

become of me when I die?" The very possibility of an immortality forces this question upon us and gives it precedence over all other questions, "What is to be the character of that immortality, and how may I affect it by my present mode of life?" The questions of our origin and of our nature shrivel into insignificance before such a question as that, except in so far as they may help us to answer it. Such a question not only silences all other speculations, but arrests all human enterprise and activity till it is settled. It acts like a death-bed in the family. If a member of the family is thought to be dying, the plow is stopped in the furrow, the stock turned out to graze, the hands gather in idle groups and talk in whispers, one almost forgets to take his necessary food, till this great question is decided whether our loved one is going to live or die. So when we truly realize the issues involved in this great question of our future, it paralyzes every movement of the soul until it is settled. For, "What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?"

When, therefore, we open the Bible and read this incident of the Philippian jailer, a poor fellow mortal supposing himself to be about to die and crying, "What must I do to be saved," we cannot treat it lightly. We may not treat it as an expression of an effete superstition, or an unmanly fear, or an undignified and unpractical sentimental-



ity. The intense moment had forced this wretched man into a region of thought where the greatest thinking of the human race has been done. He is asking the question that the wise and learned of all ages and nations have asked. Anyone who could have given a convincing answer to it would have achieved an immortality of fame. And when the answer comes from the accredited messenger of God, when it comes from one who claims to see behind the veil and to know all the facts, that claim demands our respect, if we at all respect ourselves. The mightiest intellects have treated that claim with respect; Shakespeare, Bacon, Milton, Carlyle, Hamilton, Washington, Gladstone, Webster, an endless list. Mr. Huxley does not deny this claim. He simply says it is not proved to his mind. The possibility of the claim's being genuine forces him and every serious person to treat it at least with respect. I am persuaded there is not one who does not, in his serious moments, think on this question and keenly long for its solution. What would you not give at this moment, my friend, to have some friendly and all-powerful being to translate you into the Church of Christ, with every doubt relieved, every question answered, and with a clear, sure hope of the Christian's Heaven? I speak for you. You do wish to know the correct solution of the problem of the future life.

Now, the question of the Philippian jailer im-

plies the solution of a great part of that problem, and it asks for the solution of the remainder. It implies that he believes there is another life after this, that for each individual it is inevitable that life shall be either perfectly happy or perfectly unhappy, that there is something we can do while we live to determine whether we shall be happy or miserable in the hereafter. The only point left unsolved and concerning which he cries for light is, "What is that all important thing we can do now to decide the hereafter?" "What must I do to be saved?" So there are three things which stare out at us from this incident, one is that there is a lost state, another is that there is a saved state, and the third is that there is a means by which in this life we may escape the lost state and be saved.

1. The very fact that the jailer asked what he must do to be "saved" implied that he felt that he was *lost*. It would make but little difference what the jailer might think, if it were not for the fact that the inspired apostle used the same language, "Thou shalt be *saved*." The use of the words "saved" and "salvation" implies by contraries a lost condition. When a house is burning and you remove a part of its contents to a place of security and say you have "saved" that much, you mean that all that was not removed was lost, and you mean that what you saved was lost but for your saving it. When a vessel is wrecked at sea and some of the human beings escape to land



or to another vessel, and you say they are "saved," you mean that those who remain are lost. "Lost" and "saved" are the correlatives of each other and the one implies the other, in the Bible use of words. "The Son of Man is come to save that which was lost," Matthew XVIII:11.

What then is meant by being "lost"? For one thing it means slavery to sin. The Apostle says, "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?" Rom. VI:16. The Psalmist, praying with the same thought in his mind, said, "Keep back Thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me," Psalm XIX:13. At another time, praying in the same frame of mind, he said, "Let not any iniquity have dominion over me," Psalm CXIX:133. "Servants to sin," "Dominion of sin," "Bondage to sin," these are familiar expressions and ideas to readers of the Bible. No man can commit sin and be the same man afterwards that he was before. There is no natural law by which his integrity can be regained, no natural process by which he can recover his lost innocence. A permanent disturbing influence has been introduced into his nature, a coloring matter that colors all his moral character and affects all his future experience. He can never do a right thing in the future that will be as right as it would have been had he not sinned.

He can never think a thought or have a feeling perfectly free from all taint of sin. Every such sinful act, every such moral taint will be a new center for the multiplying and distributing of similar corruption. This is in accordance with the law that whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap, if he sow to the flesh he shall of the flesh reap corruption. The consequence is one that a man cannot escape. A man who has sinned cannot prevent this degradation from following in the trail of his sin. Think what must be the evolution of sin in a man with such a law working in him! It multiplies at a greater rate than geometrical progression. I freely admit that we do not see as bad effects of sin as we would expect from the natural operation of such a law as this. One cruel act does not beget as many more cruel acts as we expect. One impure thought does not breed as much impurity as we look for. But the explanation is that, whilst we cannot prevent such dreadful consequences of our sins, God can. His merciful hand is interposed, so to speak, to restrain these effects, so as to allow a period of probation, in which we may avail ourselves of His provision for reclaiming us entirely. But the time is surely coming when, if we do not embrace the opportunity, it will be withdrawn, and we will pass from this state into the future state. If by that time we have not availed ourselves of God's converting grace, His restraining hand will be removed, the



dam will be broken, and all the pent up furies of degradation will flow down upon us in an awful and resistless torrent.

Then a new era will begin, one in which it will not only be impossible to be perfectly holy any more, but it will be impossible to be anything else than perfectly wicked. You see that distinction. Now, every act and state of mind is defiled, though there may be some mixture of good desires and actions with the evil in our lives. In the other life, there will be no mixture, but all will be unalloyed sin, without a trace of virtue to relieve the dismal slavery of sin. This then is one thing meant by being lost. It is to be a slave to sin. It is to lose the power of being perfectly good and the prospect of going to a world where we will lose all power of mingling any good whatever with our evil.

Another thing that is meant by being "lost" is to become a slave of suffering, or to be in bondage to pain. God has, so to speak, married holiness to happiness so that they cannot be separated. No man can be happy, genuinely and permanently happy, outside of a holy life. One of the shrewdest things Satan has ever done is to create the impression that he has divorced happiness from holiness. He has succeeded in getting men to associate pleasure altogether with sin, and to believe that it is sin and only sin that can please. But this is an adroit deception. That pleasure which comes from sin is only a hideously disfigured re-

flection of true pleasure. Sweeping as the statement may be, I believe it is true that the pleasure we take in breaking the laws of God is but a ghastly imitation of another and infinitely greater pleasure that we might have had lawfully by walking in the paths of righteousness. Yes, we have lost the power of being perfectly happy any more, because we have lost the power of being perfectly holy any more. It is not in the power of sin to give true pleasure. That is not its nature. We might as well look for grapes on thorn bushes as to look for real happiness in the pursuit of sin. We have become the slaves of suffering.

And yet it is true of the slavery to suffering, as of the slavery to sin, that our present condition is not the final one. The sufferings of this present life are but a foretaste of the sufferings of the world of despair. God is keeping back a part of the pain, as He is keeping back a part of the degradation, in order to give us a chance. The same distinction must be made here as in the case of slavery to sin. Now, we have lost the power of being perfectly happy. If we are not saved, we will at last lose the power of being happy at all. Now we lose the power of being perfectly happy, then we will lose the power of being anything else than perfectly wretched. The time will come when, having passed from this period of trial, God will no longer keep back the furies of His infinite indignation. His hand will be lifted, the flood-gates



of sin and suffering will be broken and the pent up waters will descend upon us.

God have mercy upon us that such thoughts make so little impression upon us! Mere words they are to us, words, words, only words! We sit here and talk about these things in cold blood as if it were only the question of making or losing a little money. The idea of intelligent creatures treating such prospects with indifference! We are not dealing honestly with ourselves. For us, the future is a land overshadowed with a horror of great darkness. We come up to the border, look across and recoil. We are stupefied or terrified by the vision. Whenever a man faces the truth of infinite and eternal misery, he will do one of three things. Either he will go back to the lusts of the flesh and try to blot out the vision in sensuality, or he will stand his ground, and fight it like an infidel and say it is too horrible to be true, or else he will rest his tired mind on Jesus. The mind cannot support the thought. O but, if we cannot even bear to think of it, how are we ever going to endure the reality? "Where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?" I. Peter IV:18. "What shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?" I. Peter IV:17. "If they do these things in the green tree, what shall be done in the dry?" Luke XXIII:31.

II. On the other hand, the saved state is the opposite of all this. It is to have both the de-

grading and the painful effects of sin removed. No longer will Satan lead us captive at his will, entangling us in the snares of suffering. The blessed Spirit of God will be given to us to lead us into paths of rectitude, so that we can say, "He maketh me to lie down in green pastures." All that dread of future punishment which hangs like a pall over our lives will roll away. As a cloud that has overcast the sky all day may roll itself up in the evening and float away, leaving a clear sky behind it, so does this dreadful pall pass away and we have no more horror of everlasting misery. The sunshine of a bright and certain hope takes its place, a hope of everlasting felicity, basking forever in the glory of God's reconciled, loving and delightful presence. God is no longer to us a dreadful, terrifying and angry tyrant, but a gracious all-loving, all wise, all powerful Father.

But that is not all. It is not simply a relief from pain. It is deliverance from slavery to sin also. We use the word "Salvation" in too narrow a sense. We limit it to a salvation from the pains of hell. But that is not half of what it means. To be "saved" is to be saved not only from the pain and punishment of sin, but to be saved from sin itself. It is to have the Spirit of God to come and live in us, to create right thoughts and feelings and desires in us, to help us to do right and to conquer temptations and to persevere unto perfection. "It is God that worketh in you to will



and to do of His good pleasure." When the angel told Joseph what name to give to the infant Saviour, what reason did he assign for naming Him "Jesus"? "Thou shalt call His name Jesus." Why? Because He shall save His people *in* their sins? Not at all. Because He shall save His people from their sufferings? No. "Because He shall save His people *from their sins.*" No man has a clear idea of salvation who looks on it only as a matter of getting rid of punishment. To be saved is not only to escape the pains of sin, but to escape from sin itself. When God says, "Be ye therefore perfect," it is not a mockery of our helplessness. He would not have said it if he had not provided some agency by which we may become perfect. So long as we live, if we are God's children, we will gradually approach that perfection and at death the work will be complete and we shall awake with the perfect likeness of the Master. Meanwhile we shall be cleansed also from all the pollution contracted through our sins. "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God. \* \* \* Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as He is pure." I. John III:1-3.

## III

## HOW TO BE SAVED

## (Second Part)

"What must I do to be saved?" Acts XVI:30.

"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." Acts XVI:31.

LET us turn aside here to ask the important question, Who are the lost that need to be saved? Do you think that only a part of the human race are lost and need salvation? Are they only murderers, drunkards, thieves, gamblers, profane swearers, adulterers, etc., who are lost? If that is your conception, it is a woeful mistake. Those who are lost are not the exception. It is not enough to say that they are the rule, for that might imply that there were exceptions. No statement will contain the whole truth except this: All men are lost without the gospel. The rule is universal, without exception. There is not one who is not lost. "The scripture hath concluded all under sin." Gal. III:22. "There is none that doeth good, no, not one." Ps. XIV:1. "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."



Rom. III:23. "There is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not." Ecc. VII:20. Do you think the Philippian jailer cried, "What must I do to be saved," because he was a hardened, outrageous sinner, and that if he had always done his duty, lived a respectable life and treated his prisoners humanely, there would not have been any need of his being so frightened at the prospect of death as to cry out in that cowardly manner?

Well, now, let us see about that. There was another and a very different sort of character who went to Jesus with a very similar question, "Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" Jesus told him to keep the commandments. He said that he had done that, that he had kept them all from his youth. I see no reason to doubt his sincerity. He was not consciously trying to deceive Christ about it. If he had been a hypocrite, he would have known better than to come to the searcher of hearts with such a boast. No, as well as he could see, he had kept all the commandments, yet he seemed to feel there was a deficiency in himself somehow. Jesus pointed out that deficiency to him, "Sell whatsoever thou hast and give to the poor and thou shalt have treasure in Heaven." "He went away sorrowful." Why did he go away sorrowful? Because he had failed to get eternal life. Mark you, *he failed to get eternal life*. In other words, he had eternal death, or was lost. So far as that interview was concerned,

he was lost. Here then we have the two extremes of life, the one, the Philippian jailer, an illiterate, degraded, desperately wicked man, the other, the rich young ruler, the very pink of integrity, the flower of culture and virtue and a certain sort of religiousness. And they are both *lost!* All have sinned, and the wages of sin for all is death. It is true our Saviour once used language to the Scribes and Pharisees which seemed to imply that they were righteous enough not to need His salvation. They had complained of His keeping company with publicans and sinners, a low class of people. He said, "They that are whole need not a physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance." He only meant, however, that if they were truly righteous, as they supposed they were, then they really did not need this salvation. He was far from conceding that they *were* righteous. If you wish to know what He thought of the Scribes and Pharisees and of their chances for Heaven, it will not be hard to learn. Hear what he says of them: "Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the Kingdom of Heaven." Matt. V:20. Hear what He says to them: "Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?" Matt. XXIII:33. Here are the very cream of the cream of the religious leaders of the day going to the "damnation of



hell". In the parable there were ten virgins, five wise and five foolish, but no third class; in the judgment scene there were righteous and wicked, sheep and goats, but no third class; on Calvary two thieves were crucified with Jesus, one penitent and saved, and one impenitent and lost, but no third class. We must be *saved*, else we are *lost*. "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God." I do not deny that there will be degrees of punishment and reward. All I say is that it will be perfectly good or perfectly evil with everyone in the life to come. There is no middle ground between a state from which all evil and pain are excluded and one from which all good and pleasure are shut out. Between these two there is a great gulf fixed.

This is no game of chess, my friends, in which the whites win and the blacks lose, and we criticise it by the rules of the game and then there is an end of it. It is not a description of a battle in some history, which we read with interest, applaud the manoeuvres of one general, saying, "I am glad he won," and criticising the other, saying, "He was a bungler and ought to have lost," and then let the subject pass out of mind. The man in the pew with you is going to hell or going to Heaven. It comes closer home than that. "*Thou art the man.*" It means you, and me. We are going to Heaven or Hell. Just think of that! Let us pause to take in that thought. You can look at your body,

your hand, and have such thoughts as these: Here are wrinkles and blotches, warts and deformities, but these shall all be smoothed out and disappear entirely. This body shall be spiritualized, beautified, glorified and become my companion in all the glories and the joys of Heaven. On the other hand, you may reason thus: There is something here to admire in this body of mine. It has its beauties and its graces, but if I am not saved all these attractions will disappear, all the ugliness in it will be developed and I will be like a hideous devil and never lose that shape forever. Which of the two will it be with you, lost or saved, a saint in light or a hopeless demon?

The inhabitants of the City of Johnstown, Pennsylvania, thirty years ago were living under the menace of a great catastrophe. In the valley above the city there was a large artificial lake formed by a dam across the ravine. The dam had been condemned. For a while the people had been nervous about it. They had often been alarmed by rumors that the dam had broken, till at last they grew indifferent to the danger. One day the dam did break. A man, coming down the valley at break-neck speed on a horse white with foam, called out a warning to the people in a loud voice. There was no time for explanations. Thousands of lives depended upon his speed. He must save himself likewise. As the people heard his loud cry of warning, at first they were startled, then they



laughed and said, "We have heard that story before," and turned back to their work. In a few moments several thousand souls were engulfed in death from which there was no escape. Shall we treat Heaven's warning of an infinite doom with like indifference? In the days of Noah men were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, scornful of Noah's warning till the flood came and none escaped but those who had believed. Thus many of us go on heedless till God removes His restraining hand and sudden destruction sweeps down upon us like a flood.

"When Thou, my righteous Judge, shalt come  
To take Thy ransomed people home,  
Shall I among them stand?  
Shall such a worthless worm as I,  
Who sometimes am afraid to die,  
Be found at Thy right hand?"

Let me among Thy saints be found,  
Whene'er the archangel's trump shall sound,  
To see Thy smiling face;  
Then loudest of the crowd I'll sing,  
While Heaven's resounding mansions ring  
With shouts of sovereign grace."

IV. Then, "What must I do to be saved?" I am coming to you with an answer to this question fresh and warm from the lips of God's inspired servant. Suppose I were to tell you that there is a box of gold buried at a certain spot on the place on which you live, what would you do? Most likely you would pay no attention to it. A few

years ago a man was dying in Texas. He called his uncle to his bedside and said, "If you will look at a certain spot on the old family property, you will find a box of treasure buried, and here are some papers giving instructions as to how this box may be found. My grandfather (your father) buried it there and he had reasons for concealing it." The uncle took the papers and threw them aside and forgot all about the matter. It was not long afterwards that he read in the papers of how a man digging on the old farm had found a box of treasure at that spot. This reminded him of the papers he had thrown aside. Upon examining these papers he found that they described the very spot where the stranger had found the treasure. If I were to tell you there is a box of gold buried on your place, what would you do? You probably would not give it a moment's thought. But suppose I should tell you in such a way as to give you every pledge of my sincerity. You might have a great deal of confidence in me, but hardly enough to credit my story. You would think I might believe it, but that I was mistaken. And yet, my conviction of its truth would so impress you that you would at least go and see. Now I do tell you just that very thing, that there is treasure hidden in the lot where God has placed you in life, the unsearchable riches of Christ. Do you believe me? Will you not go and see? I am going to tell you how to find it.



Then, "What must I do to be saved?" I take the answer fresh from the lips of Paul and Silas. The human mind is very ingenious in framing answers of its own. But the point is not to get *an* answer, but *the* answer. One man will go and hear a minister preach some hobby of his own and say, "Well, that suits me; I like that way of salvation, I'll join that man's church." Another will go yonder and hear another doctrine and say, "That is the easiest road to Heaven I ever heard of. I will go that way." But friends, friends, it is not a question of what suits you, nor of what is the easiest way, but what is the true way. It is not what pleases you, but what pleases the sovereign God. What has God to say about this important matter?

As an illustration of the way people trifle with these dangerous matters, a lady once said to me, "I don't believe in those doctrines of yours about regeneration and faith. I believe religion is all a matter of good character." Well, it is all a matter of character, if you will only put character in its right place in the chain, if you will only realize that character is the end of salvation and not the means of salvation. You do not send your children to school because they are educated; you send them there to become educated. So you do not have character in order to be saved, but you must be saved in order to get the right character. To try to be saved by one's good character is reversing God's order for the saving of sinners. Of course,

if a man could be absolutely holy he would need no salvation, but would be entitled to Heaven on the ground of his own holiness. I am now, however, discussing only those who are not perfectly holy, and that takes in all men. What must people do to be saved who have not a perfect character to build their hopes upon? What sort of character did the jailer have to get to Heaven on? What sort of character had the disciples? They unflinchingly tell us of their own sins and imperfections. Even after all Peter's education from Jesus and daily association with Him for three years, when Jesus was standing His trial, Peter cursed, and swore that he did not know Jesus. What sort of character had Saul of Tarsus, breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the followers of Christ, as if every breath was a hot blast to consume a Christian? What sort of character had the thief on the Cross, or what chance to get any character? The very word "saved" implies that it is not character that is going to help a man. Saved men are those who had been lost. If sinners can be saved by their own character, why did an intelligent God sacrifice His Son to save them?

Now and then you hear a man say, "Yonder is my neighbor who never took a dollar of any other man's money in his life, never swore an oath, never told an untruth, nor touched a drop of intoxicants. He is a clean, upright, honorable man, commanding the respect of all who know him. It



is true he is not a professor of religion, but you cannot make me believe he will be lost. If I were as good as he, I would not be afraid of failing to reach Heaven."

Now, then, I accept that as a fair case. The question is well stated. Will that man be lost without Christ? Let us see. Suppose you bring up a child. You have wept and prayed over the rearing of that child. No one but God and yourself knows how you love him. You toil and sweat to give him an education. You try to instill proper principles in him and teach him to be industrious and thrifty and worthy. You make him a comfortable settlement in life. You have the pleasure of seeing all of this result in your son's being a steady, sober, industrious, successful and honorable man. He has but one fault in the world that people can see and that is he never loses a chance to treat you with disrespect, or to insult you, *you*, his *father*. He will not come to see you. If you go to see him, he will make no secret of leaving the home because you have come. You send him presents, and he sends them all back again. You meet him on the street, and he turns his back upon you and walks away. Now what have you to say about such conduct as that? You simply say this, that that one outrageous failure in filial duty cancels all the rest of his good deeds and causes him to forfeit the respect of everybody. Now, how about that neighbor of yours of the high character?

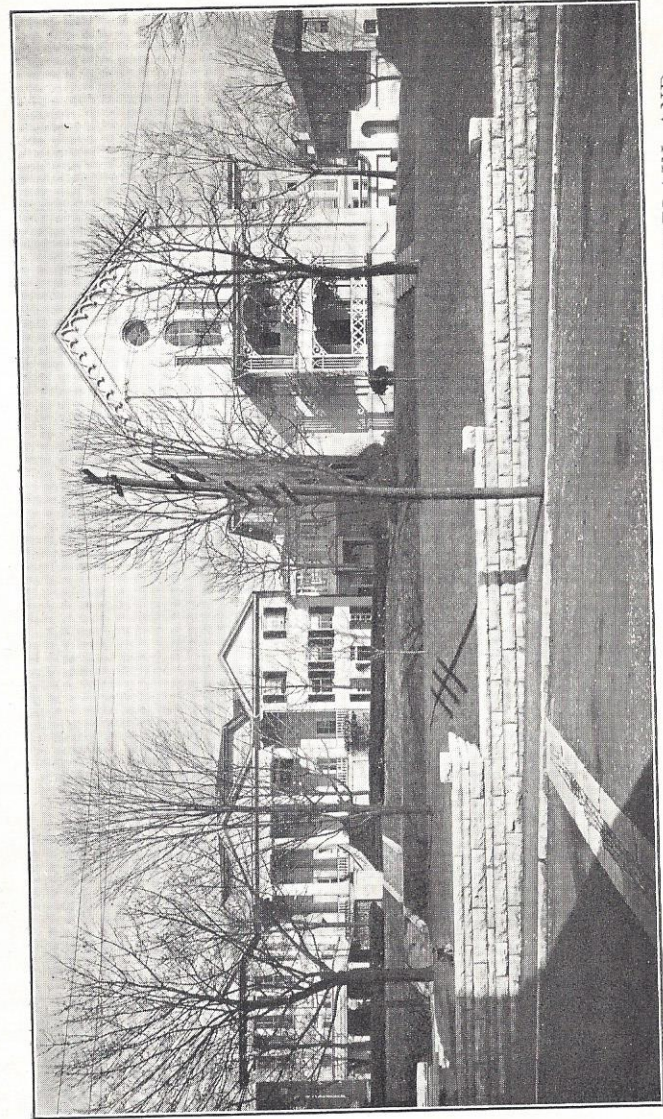
Whatever else he may do or be, he dishonors God by the grossest neglect. God has taken care of him, has daily loaded him with blessings, has given His Son to die for him, has sent him messages of love by ministers of the gospel, by neighbors and by members of his family, but he has spurned every overture of God. However much good he may seem to do, he has never done one single thing out of love to God. He has done it all for self-respect and pride and not a thing with a view to obeying and loving God. Shall we not apply the same rule to such a man as to the ungrateful son, and say that his failure in this one particular cancels the merit of everything else? Doubtless if we could see into his heart as God does, we would see very much more that is offensive to God's holy nature.

To shorten the matter, what does Paul say about it? "What must I do to be saved?" Oh, you know what he says. Praise the Lord, everybody who has heard the gospel knows this much, "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Yes, that is it, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." Only believe, and you will be saved. He does not say believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and go on sinning. That is a horrible misrepresentation. But believe, and thou shalt be saved, thy sins shall be forgiven, the penalty re-



moved and the blessed Spirit of God living in your heart will help to make you a new man. All of this for believing. All this if you accept Jesus Christ as the Son of God and the Son of Man, whose life and death were God's own and only plan for saving sinners from the guilt and misery, the pollution and power of sin—Prophet, Priest and King, All in all, who is over all, God Blessed for ever, Amen.

Some people tell us that the answer of Paul to the jailer is only a partial one, that it describes only a part of the way of salvation, and that if we will look elsewhere in the Bible we will find the other parts of the way, or will find other ways. That might do if Paul had written out this instruction only to be put in a book where men could take time to study it. As a matter of fact, he spoke it for the benefit of a dying man, or one whom he supposed to be dying. The jailer was in great straits. There was an earthquake going on. He was in a hurry. He had no time to lose. He must know it all and know it all at once. It was not a slight earthquake or such a one as would shake a few loose stones from the wall. Suddenly at midnight there was "a *great* earthquake," so that "the foundations of the prison were shaken," all the doors were opened, and the prisoners' bands were loosed. Paul and Silas and the jailer are down in the basement, in the dungeon, below the level of the ground. By the light which the jailer



MARY BALDWIN SEMINARY OF WHICH DR. FRASER IS CHAPLAIN AND  
PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES



holds in his hand he can see the huge, damp, slimy stones in the wall and he knows that there is solid earth on the other side. The stones are loosened and misplaced, they still seem to move and slip in their places as he glances at them and the light flickers. You can hear him cry, "O, this house is going to fall on me, tell me, tell me quickly, leave off all that is unnecessary, condense all redemption into one word." Blessed be God, Paul did it. Yes, here is the whole plan of salvation in a nut-shell, a medallion edition of the gospel. It is so small you can wear it in a locket. Here is the whole story in a form convenient for emergencies. In this form you can carry the whole of salvation to a man gasping for his last breath. It is a genuine "extreme unction" edition of the whole gospel, the soothing, saving, blessed gospel in so small a compass that you can take it to a man in the very article of death. Trust in Christ. Look to Jesus. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."

Some one else will say, "Well, that is one way of salvation, but it is not the only way. It was the way for the Philippian jailer, but there are other ways for other men. A few texts of Scripture will entirely dispose of that theory. "God so loved the world, that he gave His only begotten Son, that *whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*" "He that believeth on Me hath everlasting life." "He that



believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned." "By grace are ye saved through faith." "The just shall live by faith." "What doth hinder me to be baptized? . . . If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest." "As many as were ordained to eternal life, believed." "Without faith it is impossible to please Him."

You ask me what there is so great in a little act of faith that makes it do such wonders, that Heaven and hell turn on it as on a pivot. I tell you from the bottom of my heart I do not know. I thank God He does not require me to know. All He requires of me is that I shall take Him at His word and believe. "Except ye be converted,"—changed in your ways of looking at things, take your thoughts off of principles and character and penance and ceremonies and all the thousand and one human devices,—“Except ye be converted, and become as little children,”—willing to take God at His word, not trying so much to understand these things,—“Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.” “Here, Lord, I give myself to Thee, ’tis all that I can do.” “Lord, I believe, help Thou mine unbelief.”

We talk of visions of beauty and power and glory and riches, the soldier’s dream of peace and home and love, the dream which comes to the tired and thirsty traveller of rest and a banquet.

But no such dream as this one ever yet entered mortal brain of all the splendors and delights and holiness that might be had for BELIEVING. It differs from all other dreams in that it is the most extravagant of them all. It differs from all other dreams in that it is not a dream at all, but a blessed and glorious never-fading reality.

I have read of bright mansions in Heaven,  
Which the Saviour has gone to prepare;  
And the saints who on earth have been faithful,  
Rest forever with Christ over there;  
There no sin ever enters, nor sorrow,  
The inhabitants never grow old,  
But not half of the joys that await them  
To mortals has ever been told.

I have read of a Christ so forgiving,  
That vile sinners may ask and receive  
Peace and pardon from every transgression,  
If when asking they only believe.  
I have read how He'll guide and protect us,  
If for safety we enter His fold;  
But not half of His goodness and mercy  
To mortals has ever been told."



#### IV

### LOT IN SODOM

*"Just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked." 2 Peter 11:7.*

THE whole sentence reads thus: "And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked: (for that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds.)" When a Christian moves his home into a new locality and finds customs there that are strange to him, customs concerning which he has conscientious scruples, what attitude should he assume toward those customs; for instance, when a student goes to college, or when a family removes from one community to another? I wish to discuss this question this morning and upon the basis of Lot's experience in Sodom.

When Lot separated from Abraham, for selfish reasons he chose the green pastures of the Jordan Valley and pitched his tent toward Sodom. It is not long before we find him in Sodom itself, amidst the awful wickedness there. The text says of him that he "vexed his righteous soul." He did

not vex others, but only vexed himself. He did no more than vex himself. He did not remove from those disgusting scenes. He did not sanctify himself to testify against wickedness and win his neighbors to a better life. He merely vexed himself and did nothing else. *What would you have done if you had lived in Sodom?* What course would you have pursued? How would you have withstood the social strain, the business pressure and all the influences of corruption? What effect would this environment have had upon your character? What sort of person would you have become? How would you at length have met the summons when it came, "This night thy soul shall be required of thee"? And where would you have been now if, like Lot, you had lived in Sodom?

To answer these questions one must know more about Sodom and more about himself. We cannot learn much about Sodom, because it was so completely destroyed. By pick and spade, we can uncover the remains of Babylon and Nineveh and other ancient cities, but we do not know even the site of Sodom. We would not know where to dig for it. All we know of Sodom is what is contained in the few brief references to it in the Bible. But from these few references we may infer much. As the man of science may take a single bone of an extinct species of animal and by a satisfactory process of reasoning reproduce the entire



skeleton, so from these few references to Sodom which we find in the Bible, we may in imagination reconstruct the city with sufficient completeness to answer the ends of moral lessons, which is our chief object in this study.

We know that Sodom was a city, and that implies much. It implies a degree of civilization. The inhabitants were not cave dwellers nor nomads, but lived in a city. They had solved the problem of living together in a community life. That implies some intellectual development. It also implies some of the common arts of life. There was architecture in Sodom. They builded houses, and the houses, we learn, had doors, doors that could be so securely fastened as to keep out undesired people. The houses had also substantial walls, else the strong doors would have been useless. The city had walls, because it had gates, and of what avail would gates be if there were no walls at least as strong as the gates. In imagination we see homes, palaces, houses of business, and public buildings. Spinning and weaving and sewing, planting and reaping and cooking there must have been. Decorative arts, we are sure were there, for this belongs to the earlier stages of human development. There were decorations of walls, of homes and of public buildings. There was fine needle work, etc. There was property too. Lot owned his home. This means accumulation of property. The accumulation of property was suffi-

cient to attract the cupidity of the four kings of the East who came a long distance, across poorly supplied stretches of country, and took all the chances of battle to get the booty of Sodom. If there was accumulation, there was trade and business and interchange of commodities. There was therefore some sort of moral ideas, a measure of integrity. Truth and honesty and a confidence in the truthfulness and honesty of one's neighbors, lie at the foundation of civilization and distinguish civilized people from barbarous and savage ones. When people have no confidence in the truth or honesty of their neighbors, there is no encouragement to accumulation or to self-improvement. We may not reason because Sodom was grossly immoral in some particulars that it was without any ethical standards at all. Our observation of human nature teaches us that people seek to conceal or atone for irregularities of one kind by scrupulous correctness in other particulars. There must have been some code of conventional integrity in Sodom. There were social life and manners and customs. Marriages were recognized. They had government, a king, judges, (Lot was one of them), and military discipline. Along with the other four neighboring kings they met the four kings of the East in battle. They did not flee. They did not fight as a mob, but as an army, and in co-operation with allied armies. There was religion here too. There is always some form of



religion. It may be ignorant, depraved, scandalous, aesthetic, wrong, but there is always religion. And so there were houses of worship, in keeping with the architecture of other houses.

Now Sodom, with all of this civilization, displayed corruption of the last stage of unnaturalness, degeneracy and repulsiveness. As it was with Naaman as a man, so was it with Sodom as a city. All Naaman's popularity with the people, his influence with the king, his genius for war, his gold braid and costly clothing, his fine horses and chariots and his lavish use of money could not cover up the fact that on his body there was a plague spot, insidious, spreading, putrid, incurable, fatal. So all Sodom's wealth, its crowded markets, the throngs in its halls of worship, its art and culture and social life and government and religion could not conceal the fact that it was honeycombed with a desperate and peculiarly revolting kind of wickedness, which in all subsequent ages has borne the name of Sodom. This shows that mere civilization without the redeeming and transforming power of the true religion is not proof against the vilest corruption. The age in which we live has shown another illustration of the same fact on a large scale; learning, science and culture carried to the highest state of development with rejection of Christ, resulted in a monstrosity of arrogance and treachery and cruelty. This lesson is worth remembering.

*Then what would you have done if you had lived in Sodom?* You would have done exactly what you are now doing with the same evil on a smaller scale. Human nature is the same in all ages, and in all parts of the world. It is susceptible of almost unlimited development in either good or evil. In one direction, it can produce an Abraham, a Moses, an Elijah, a Daniel, a Job, a Paul, a Peter, a John, a Luther, a Calvin, a Knox, a Samuel Rutherford, if it be under the control of divine grace. Abandoned by divine grace, it may produce a Pharaoh, an Ahab, a Jezebel, an Athaliah, a Judas Iscariot, a Pilate, a Nero, a Borgia, a Philip the Second, an Alva, a Claverhouse. It can produce the man who on this free American soil can stand up in cold blood and shoot to death a political opponent, for no other reason than that he stands in the way of his own ambition. Human nature can produce vile communities as well as vile individuals, like the world before the flood, like Sodom, like Jericho, like the French people were in the midst of their Revolution, like the slums of our cities are sometimes. Sodom was Sodom, because Sodom was already in the human heart. Human nature is the same to-day that it was when Sodom flourished. No degree of Christian civilization can prevent any degree of depravity from coming into a community, or can prevent prurient crowds from thronging to do homage to indecency. I have seen the streets of a city



thronged with orderly crowds, with eager burning interest, seeking admission to the tabernacle where a minister of the gospel of world-wide reputation was to preach. On another occasion, in the same city, dense crowds gathered around the door of a play house and almost fought for admission, for the privilege of seeing a woman whose only claim to notoriety was her shame. There is no fashion of dress so shameless that there will not be some to adopt it who move in respectable society. There are no social customs so vile or so dangerous but that they will find recognition in polite society, provided they are gradually and adroitly introduced by social leaders.

"Know thyself," said the heathen Oracle. "Who can understand his errors," said the Psalmist. Though he had written, "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly," and, "He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake," he was startled and overwhelmed by the revelation of the depravity in his own heart when in a fatal moment he yielded to temptation. "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?" said the preacher of righteousness. O what smouldering, unsuspected, fires of passion and of sin lie in human nature, what embryo of Sodom, what seed of hell! Men who are virtuous, are so, not because there is no sin in them, but because they have resisted the beginnings of evil, or because

having begun wrong and having caught a vision of the horrible end and of the possibility of being saved, they have faced about and have gone back to right paths, or else they are virtuous because Divine grace has reached down and snatched them out of the toils of sin. This is not the language of puritan narrowness, nor even the teaching of the Scriptures only. Does not the poet and moralist say the same:

"Vice is a monster of such hideous mien,  
That to be hated needs but to be seen.  
But seen too oft, familiar with its face,  
We first endure, then pity, then embrace."

*Then what would you have done if you had lived in Sodom?* There are several things that different members of Lot's family did that are an illustration of what your human nature and mine may do under similar circumstances. 1. The two married daughters of Lot represented one possible attitude toward a sinful environment. They entered fully and heartily into the social life of Sodom. They found conditions there agreeable. There are people who are respectable only because they have been sheltered by a respectable social life about them, but who, if introduced to a corrupt environment, find it at once to be the very thing their natures crave, their only congenial atmosphere. You may raise a water fowl on the dry land out of sight of water, you may keep it away from the



smallest pool, and yet however old it may be when it first comes to water it will at once go in and swim as if it had been used to it all its life. That is its nature. There are people essentially degenerate who adapt themselves to a vile life with eagerness whenever it presents itself. If there should be such degenerates here today, I trust that they will not feel that their case is hopeless. I thank God I have a gospel for the "chief of sinners". Thank God, the degenerate, who is lost to all moral suasion and all natural possibilities of reformation, may become a regenerate, and by the grace of God may be made fit for the inheritance of the saints in life. Read the 6th chapter of First Corinthians, see the apostle's account there of the seemingly hopeless degeneracy of some who had been converted, and hear him say to them, "But ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." Hear how he tells them that they are "called to be saints," that they shall be "judges of angels," and that they are "the temple of the Holy Ghost". "Though your sins be as scarlet they shall be as white as snow. Though they be red like crimson they shall be as wool." The last thing done by Lot before he left Sodom was to make an offer of mercy to these degenerate children. Let us never forget what the Samaritan woman had been and what Rahab had been, before they were converted.

2. Lot's wife and his unmarried daughters represent another class. They represent those who are possibly shocked at first by social excesses, but who for considerations of social ambition, or for lack of moral stamina, decide to tolerate those excesses. They act upon a wrong application of the maxim, "When you go to Rome you should do as the Romans do." They think that they can discriminate between what is safe and what is dangerous, that they can get all the good out of the situation and guard themselves against the evil. How foolish such a hope is and how disastrous the real result may be, is shown by the experience of these three women. Lot's wife, as she eagerly and longingly looked back at the doomed city, was turned to a pillar of salt. Her daughters lived, but they were morally contaminated, these same women who as little girls were nursed in the arms of Sarah and petted upon the knees of Abraham.

There are two plausible reasons for such an attitude toward dangerous social customs.

(a) The first is that if we do not take part in these popular amusements we will be "left out of everything". (b) The second is that if we do not take part in them we shut the usual avenues to marriage. These are powerful considerations, and within limits they are proper considerations. Man is social and he was made so by the Creator. It was intended that he should mingle with his kind and enjoy the social intercourse. The married state



is, under normal conditions, the ideal one, and it is by natural instinct that the young and those who love them should look forward to their being married. But if we are to choose between being shut out from society and from the state of matrimony on the one side and social and personal degradation or a polluted marriage on the other side, no Christian can long hesitate. And yet, there are even mothers, with real motherly and modest impulses, who will stifle those impulses in their own hearts and bring great pressure to bear on their daughters to crush their instincts of modesty, and induce them to take part in objectionable practices, for fear of their being left out or of their being destined to a single life.

3. Then there was Lot. His whole soul revolted and heart and conscience protested against what was going on in Sodom, yet he never did anything but vex himself. He said nothing and did nothing but suffer in silence or groan in solitude. It may be he salved his conscience by saying, "If I just could think of something to offer these people as a substitute for all of this! I would be so glad to testify against their practices, but I must not be merely negative and say, 'You must not do thus and so,' unless I have something equally as attractive to put in its place." No man who believes in a correct life and in God and eternity will hesitate to quit a wrong thing, even if no substitute is offered. Poor Lot! "How are the mighty fal-

len and the weapons of war perished!" Lot was once the intimate of mighty Abraham, the friend of God. Lot sat in the gates of Sodom as a Judge. But it cannot be said of him, "by faith Lot sat in the gates of Sodom". He has no place on the roll-call of Scripture worthies who triumphed over temptation, whose names are given in the 11th chapter of Hebrews. When angels came to warn Lot of the fast coming doom of Sodom, they would not so much as go into his house, but preferred to "abide in the streets". What a reproach to Lot that the angels of God would not sleep over night in his polluted home! When the mob gathered around Lot's door and he at last found voice and remonstrated with them, his words had no influence or effect. They would have run over him and trodden him under their feet, "Who are you, one man, a stranger among us, to come and reprove us!" When he besought his daughters and their husbands to leave Sodom because of the coming destruction, they thought he was jesting. Had there then been nothing in Lot's life or speech before this time to show that he had any real convictions about God and righteousness and purity? A gentleman in Chicago, who had long been a nominal Christian was converted under Mr. Moody. With a glowing heart and a beaming face, he left the church, saying he would go to all his children, who were married and lived in homes of their own, and he would bring them to Christ.



The next night he came to Mr. Moody overwhelmed with grief. Mr. Moody asked him if he had lost his sense of acceptance with Christ. He said No, but that when he had gone to his children, they had all laughed at him. In all those years of Christian profession, there had been nothing in his life to show that he believed the tremendous facts of religion. As Lot fled from Sodom, with hell treading on his heels and angels dragging him along, he beheld the little city of Zoar and asked the privilege of taking refuge in it. Even in that awful moment, clinging to the city infatuation! We next find him in a cave in the mountains. The last we see of him he is in a drunken debauch, a part of an indescribable scene. O the fathers and mothers that have tossed and groaned and prayed at night, but have said nothing and have done nothing but vex themselves! O the Christians that have suffered because of the things they see and have kept silent!

4. What would Moses have done had he lived in Sodom? What would Elijah have done? When Elijah met Ahab, who had all possible earthly power to crush him, he cried in his face, "Thou art he that troubleth Israel." What would Jeremiah have done if he had been in Sodom? What would John the Baptist have done? When Herod with his infamous companion came up in condescension and out of curiosity to hear the preaching of John, John looked at him above the heads of his audience

and cried his warning to him, "And you too Herod, sitting there with your vile associate, in your costly chariot and robes of state, I mean you too, Herod, it is not lawful for you to have that woman, repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." What would Jonah have done if he had been in Sodom? In Ninevah Jonah cried, "Yet forty days and Ninevah shall be destroyed." He thundered it until the throne trembled and the king cried out in terror and all Ninevah wailed and groaned, man and beast, in a three days fast and sackcloth, and turned to God. One man against a mighty city! What would Paul have done in Sodom? Paul stood before Felix and his infamous companion and "reasoned of righteousness, temperance and judgment to come" till Felix was startled from the stupor of sensuality and trembled, though the Roman Empire was at his back and Paul was at his mercy.

5. If Lot could not or would not do as these other heroes of faith and grace did, then there was one other course still open to him. He might have withdrawn from the city. If we cannot testify we can at least separate ourselves from vile companionships. "Come ye out from among them and be ye separate saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing." "Same yourselves from this untoward generation!"



## V

## RESTORING THE BACKSLIDER

Galatians VI:1.

**T**HE word of God from which I wish to preach to you, and to myself, this morning is the first verse of the 6th chapter of the Epistle to the Galatians. Instead of reading the whole text at once I suggest that we go into it gradually, clause by clause, just as it came from the mind and heart and dripped from the pen of the inspired Apostle. When the night blooming cereus is about to open its wondrous blossom, the whole family with possibly some of the neighbors are gathered around to witness the strange phenomenon. The unclasping of the casket, the unfolding and artistic arrangement of each exquisite petal, its breathing out of its perfume upon the night air, the hushing of every voice in silent admiration of the beauty, the magnificence and the mystery, make it almost a dramatic moment. So, let us stand by with reverent curiosity, and let this text unfold itself to us.

I. The first word of the text is the word "Brethren," one of the sacred words of all human

speech. The apostle did not say "fellow citizens," or "sirs," or "men," or "neighbors," or "comrades," or even "friends," but "Brethren". This at once sounds a key note, it creates an atmosphere, it establishes an understanding, it invokes a spirit, it makes an appeal, it excites an expectation. "Brethren," "Brethren"!

In a family I once knew, the mother, a venerable woman, died. Her children, sturdy men and women, gathered from their several homes for the funeral. There was not one of them who was not in a misunderstanding with some other one, with whom he refused to speak. When the pastor, a warm hearted Irishman, reached the home, he asked them all to go with him into the room where the mother's body lay, and requested everybody else to leave the room. He shut the door and told them it was a shame for them to keep up their animosities in the presence of the dead body of the mother whom they all loved, and every one of whom she loved. Then and there, without apologies, or explanations, or making amends, they shook hands and made friends, on the single ground of a common love for the same mother. Everything else was forgotten for the time.

It is an appeal somewhat like this that Paul makes when he uses the word "Brethren". They have not only a common Saviour, and a Saviour who had died, but one whose death was caused by His love for them. He loved them, each of them,



the others as well as themselves. For them Christ had left His throne in glory, had humbled Himself, had suffered hunger, thirst, cold, vigils, weariness, bodily pain, suspense, hatred, the horrors of the wilderness temptation, the sweat, as it were, great drops of blood in Gethsemane, the anguish, writhing, groaning, physical torture of Calvary and the abandonment by His Father. All of this is the rich suggestion of the word "Brethren". Brethren they were to one another, brethren of Jesus Christ. Hear what John says, "Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another." The word challenges all that is richest and most powerful and most active in the soul that is born of God. If there be any of the spirit of Christ in us, it must respond to this word "brethren" when it is sincerely used. It arouses and moves what is latent and torpid in Christian character. It is like the prelude to a splendid oratorio. It leads us to anticipate that the apostle is either going to announce some joyful tidings or summon to some noble achievement or appeal for some self-surrender. Which will it be?

2. "Brethren," said he, "If a man be overtaken in a fault." "If a man be overtaken in a fault!" He does not say, if you discover a man in fault, as if he were a hypocrite, conscious of being false and trying to conceal it. The thought is that the temptation has overtaken a man and has proved too great for him, and he has yielded.

"If a man be overtaken in a fault," if a fellow Christian has done wrong! Is that a rare occurrence? Is it an unusual situation to find a fellow Christian doing what you think is wrong? Did you ever know a Christian to take an unfair advantage of anybody in a trade or evade a contract in any sort of business transaction? Did you ever know one to prevaricate, to misstate facts in order to make his side appear better? Did you ever know one to be double-tongued or two-faced, saying one thing in a man's presence, and another behind his back? Did you ever know one who was a flatterer or a slanderer or a gossip or a tale-bearer or a back-biter? Did you ever know one to swear, to gamble, to be drunken, to be unreasonable or unkind or cruel, or anything else that you regard as wrong? Has any man been overtaken in a fault? Suppose you take your church roll, or the roll of any other church with which you are well acquainted, and select all the people on the roll whom you have had an opportunity to observe, and whom you have never known to be guilty of any wrong-doing, how many names would there be on that list of faultless people? When Paul wrote these words, "If a man be overtaken in a fault," did he write it for Galatians only? Or did he write it for Christians in Rome as well, and for those also in Athens and Egypt and Paris and London and New York and Staunton? Was it for first century Christians only, or those of the second



century too, and the 20th century? Was he not speaking to a universal and abiding condition? May I not truly quote my text this morning as taken from the first verse of the sixth chapter of Paul's Epistle to the First Presbyterian Church of Staunton? "If a man be overtaken in a fault!"

3. Now what is the right thing for a Christian to do, if a man be overtaken in a fault?

Let me first ask, how we are to decide such a question. How are we to find out what a man ought to do when another is overtaken in a fault? Shall we attempt to work out the answer for ourselves, or have we some recognized authority to consult, in which we will find an answer? If you consult a lawyer upon a question of law, he does not tell you what he thinks will please you the most. He does not work out in his mind what he thinks the law ought to be. It is a question of fact, of authority, and so he goes to his book-case, selects the book that has the information and reads the law to you from that book. Even if he has in his mind an exact mental picture of the language in the book, and its place on the page, for fear of a mistake in so grave a matter, he will get the book and verify every word and expression. If you consult the ticket agent at the station as to schedules and connections for any travel you may be anticipating, he does not tell you what he thinks you would like the facts to be, nor what he thinks they ought to be, nor what he guesses that they are.

He does not calculate in his mind or on paper what the probabilities are. It is a question of fact. He has a Railroad Guide that contains the facts. He carefully examines the tables in the Railroad Guide, and deliberately reads the figures from the book in a way that you can copy down and take away with you.

Now, the question of how to deal with a fellow Christian overtaken in a fault is far more important than any question of human law or railroad time tables. When a man is overtaken in a fault how may we learn how to treat him? Shall we try to reason it out for ourselves, and do what our judgment approves? Shall we be guided by our general knowledge of right and wrong, and by what we instinctively feel to be right under the circumstances? We do not pursue that course with reference to any other affairs of life, and yet the matter we are dealing with concerns one of the most sacred and responsible duties of life. Why should we depend on our own judgment in this, when we do not in other cases involving questions of fact? God has faithfully warned us that our judgment in moral questions is peculiarly untrustworthy. "It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." How shall we solve then the problem of what to do with the back-slider? God said, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him." "The meek



will He guide in judgment, and the meek will He show His way." "Ask and it shall be given you, seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you."

How then shall we find out what to do when a man is overtaken in a fault? We should get our instruction from God, and God speaks in the Bible. What then does the Bible say we ought to do with our brother who has fallen? First of all, it tells us that we ought to be very sure the man has really done wrong. We may be in the wrong ourselves in thinking evil of him. "Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? To his own master he standeth or falleth." That, however, is not the case before us here. This is not a doubtful case. The man is really overtaken in a fault. What shall we do about it? Shall we strike him? Shall we get angry with him? Shall we shake our finger or our fists in his face and give him a piece of our mind? Shall we cut his acquaintance? Shall we go and publish it abroad that he has done wrong, and that he is a bad, unreliable man, and abuse him?

In a certain church there were two leading women who had a falling out. The breach widened, the other members took sides, and the church was divided into warring factions. The pastor prayed over it, and finally worked out a plan that looked full of promise. He would propose to the two women that they meet together and talk over

their differences, face to face, and heart to heart, without any one else present to hear except the Invisible and the All Hearing. He went to one of the women, whom we will call Mrs. Blank, and made his proposition, and she readily assented to it in a most earnest and beautiful spirit. Having received Mrs. Blank's consent, he next went to Mrs. Pointblank and submitted the same plan to her. She replied at once, "Certainly, I will meet her at any time and place. I have already told her what I think of her, and if she gives me a chance I will do it again." That of course put an end to all peace conferences in that congregation. Did the second woman do right? Is that the instruction the Holy Ghost is here about to give us through Paul? Let us see.

4. "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, *restore* such an one." The thing to do is not to get angry or contemptuous or severe, nor is it to abuse or scorn, but "*Restore.*" Ah, but, suppose the thing the man has done can never be undone? Suppose he has done an irreparable injury and no power can ever recall the harm that has gone forth. Suppose that by the man's evil deed his neighbor's property is destroyed or forever lost, suppose the neighbor's virtue or reputation, be he man or woman, has been wrecked. Shall we restore that man while his victim continues to suffer on and on? I do not see that the Bible limits or qualifies the case at all. It mentions no



exceptions. "Restore" him, that is all. Whatever he has done, if he is susceptible of restoration, restore him. The apostle tells us to restore the offender and not to make reparation for the offense. He does not say undo the evil and restore things to the same condition they were in at the beginning, but restore the fallen brother. It may be that the offender should make restitution as one of the conditions of his being restored. It may be your duty to suggest this to him, and insist upon it, but so far as the offender himself is concerned, your object is to reclaim him, whatever his offence may have been. This view is made absolutely conclusive when we read the passage that leads up to our text. Let us begin back in chapter five and disregard the chapter divisions. There we have "The works of the flesh" and "The fruit of the spirit," placed side by side in sharp contrast. "The works of the flesh \* \* \* are these: Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envying, murders, drunkenness, revelling and such like; \* \* \* they which do such things shall not inherit the Kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." And then, lest some heedless Christian might get across the dividing line and do some of those horrible works of the flesh and become discouraged or outlawed by his brethren,

ren, the apostle goes on to give our text. "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault,"—if a man who has known love, joy, peace, etc., should get over into the territory of evil and be guilty of idolatry, hatred, murder, drunkenness and such like—"Ye which are spiritual restore such an one." He does not put any man beyond the reach of that restoration: "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."

Henry Ward Beecher told this story of General Grant. When his friend Senator Conkling withdrew from the United States Senate, Grant very strongly disapproved his course, but he sought Conkling's company more than ever. His friends wondered at it, and felt aggrieved. They went to him and asked him if he had changed his views of Mr. Conkling's course. He said he had not; then they inquired why he was so very friendly with him. This was Grant's answer: "When is the time to show a man's self friendly except when his friend has made a mistake? That is not the time to leave a man, when he has made a blunder or mistake." That was a noble sentiment, and while General Grant did not, at the time at least, claim to be a Christian, the sentiment challenges the best and finest that is in a Christian. Some one has said that Paul's conception of a perfect society is one in which the righting of wrong comes not so much from the outcry of the wrongdoer, as from the



sympathy of the whole for the diseased part. In a healthy body when any part is bruised or diseased, the health and vitality of the whole body rally to the affected part to overcome the poison. Listen to James, "Brethren"—you see he too begins with "brethren,"—"Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth and one convert him; let him know that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins." So James too believed in restoring the offender. Restore him to his true self, to his regenerated and sanctifying self, to his brethren, to his church and to God.

5. But who is to restore the fallen brother? May just any one do it? Does it require no special adaptation? Are there no specified qualifications required for the work of restoration? Is the recovery of an erring brother so simple and easy and commonplace that it requires no spiritual training? Christ said, "Why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye?" Shall I quote the rest of the Saviour's language? Are we afraid of the very words of Jesus? Are they not always acceptable to his people, even though they may sting? He proceeds to say, "*Thou hypocrite*, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to

cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye." How we do have to guard against self-righteousness in our work of reclaiming an erring fellow Christian! Paul elsewhere wrote in the same vein "Thou, therefore, that teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? Thou that preachest a man shall not steal, dost thou steal? Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? Thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege? Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonorest thou God?" Sometimes men will rush in where angels fear to tread. When the high priest entered the holy of holies he bathed his body in pure water and clothed himself in spotless white linen garments. Isaiah said, "Be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord." Christ said, "If thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift." What does our text say? "Ye that are *spiritual* restore such an one." Let the spiritual restore the wrongdoer. The winning back of an erring brother to heavenly ways is a more than angelic ministry. It must not be attempted by profane hands. And yet the apostle does not say "ye who are perfect," but only "ye who are spiritual." If it required a perfect soul to reclaim the backslider, none might aspire to it. But if a man is



sincerely, earnestly and prayerfully fighting the good fight, notwithstanding all his faults and past failures, let him undertake in the strength of God to lead his sinning brother back.

But what about the inconsistent Christian? Has he no responsibility to the erring brother, is there no way by which he can help? Let me make this suggestion. Suppose you are a Christian, but not a very spiritual one and you are eager to help the erring brother. How would it do for you to go to him and say, "you have done wrong and so have I. I propose that we kneel down together and pray over this and then shake hands in an agreement that we will both start over afresh," how would that do? Or, if you cannot do anything else, you can at least pray while some one else does the actual work of restoration. But if you cannot do any of these things, I submit that your part is to hold your peace, to keep absolutely silent and inactive. If you will not help, do not hinder. Your choice is between restoration and keeping silence.

6. In what spirit shall the spiritual approach the work of restoration? Must it be in anger or severity or censure or reproach or self-righteousness or condescension or patronizing? Shall he gather his robes tightly about him and shrink away as one who would say, "I am willing to help you, but I am holier than thou, and I must not allow my spotless garments to be soiled by contact with such

an evil doer"? The apostle said it must be done in the spirit of "meekness"—not kindness merely and lovingness, but humility—"meekness". The "Biblical Illustrator" quotes a story which former Governor Banks of Massachusetts is said to have told of the days of his apprenticeship. One cold day when he was with a group of laborers on the bank of a river, some one discovered that a man was in the river a quarter of a mile below, fighting for his life with immense blocks of ice coming down the stream. They hurried to his assistance and reached out a plank to him. Twice he seized the plank, but his hands slipped off of it. As they extended it to him once more they realized that it was probably his last chance, and he realized it too. He cried out in terror to them, (He was a negro) "gimme the wood end". Then they noticed for the first time that the end of the plank they had given him was so encased in ice that he could not hold on to it, whereas the end which they held had no ice on it. In saving our brother, let us give him the human end.

7. Then comes at the last the powerful incentive to the recovery of others and to meekness of spirit—"Considering thyself lest thou also be tempted." And who is it that must consider himself lest he also be tempted? Is it the inconsistent Christian, or the weak-kneed, or the vacillating, or those who are trying to serve both God and mammon, or those who are hoping to get to heaven at



the least cost of service and self-sacrifice? No, it is the "*spiritual*". It is the very man that is qualified to restore his brother who is cautioned to do it in meekness, considering himself, lest he also be tempted. "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." One of the most humiliating things in the world is for a man to condemn his fellowman for an act and then afterwards meet the same temptation and fall before it just as the other man had done, upon whom he had been so hard. What would become of any of us if the grace of God did not keep us? All the preëminent Bible saints were disfigured by some glaring act of sin, Abraham, Noah, David, Peter, all of them. Can I then be so deluded, so blinded by conceit as to think I am proof against all temptations when such men as those were overtaken and were overcome?

Let us, by God's help, try to catch the spirit of this text and live that kind of life and render that kind of service that would be sweetest and most beautiful to look back upon, when all the mists have cleared away and we see our present life from heaven's point of view. It is Christ-like to save the fallen, even though it costs a life.

## VI

## THE SECURITY OF THE BELIEVER

*"What shall we then say to these things?"* Rom. VIII:31.

THIS is only a fragment of the passage, but it is a connecting link between that which precedes and that which follows, and it is suggestive of the whole. What are "these things" to which the Apostle refers? Evidently they are all those things which he has discussed in that part of the epistle that precedes the text. They are the several facts, which taken together constitute an outline of the plan of salvation. Let us refresh our minds as to the contents of that part of the epistle.

It first makes us to realize that man, in a state of nature, is a sinner, guilty, miserable, defiled, helpless, hopeless, doomed and desperate. It tells us how God loved the sinner with a perfectly gratuitous love, notwithstanding the fact that he was so repulsive a sinner, and that He loved him so much as to give His only begotten Son to die that he might be saved. It tells how, on the ground of this atonement, He offers to the lost sinner forgiveness of sin, peace of conscience, holiness of life, com-



fort, help and guidance, throughout this life, and all the glories of Heaven in the life to come. It tells how He offers to do this for man upon the simple condition that he will so trust God as to accept this salvation in its entirety, without money and without price. It shows us how, notwithstanding the graciousness and the freedom of this offer, man in a state of nature is unable to accept it, unable to make choice of the holy life it offers and unable to trust God. It tells us how, under these circumstances, God has provided an "effectual call," by which the sinner is not only invited to accept salvation, but he is empowered to do so. The sinner is persuaded and enabled to embrace Jesus Christ as he is freely offered in the Gospel. It tells us how the Spirit of God takes up His abode in the saved sinner, causing him to cry Abba Father, thus not only restoring him to God's favor and restoring him to the image of God's Holy nature, but adopting him as His son and giving him all privileges of the children of God. He tells us how the same Spirit excites holy desires in the heart, imparts faith in God's promises to answer prayer, gives utterance in prayer and thus becomes within the believer a living and inextinguishable fountain of prayer. He tells how God controls all the events of providence and makes all things work together for good to them that love God, to them that are the called according to His purpose. Finally, it tells how the believer is predestinated

to be conformed to the image of God's Son, sharing His exalted character, sharing His ineffable glory and even sharing His kingdom. It is after such an outline of what God has done for the believer and what He engages still further to do, that the Apostle utters the daring things he does concerning the security of every poor sinner who has taken shelter in Jesus Christ. It is a provision that covers all the interests of man for time and for eternity. These are the things that give the apostle such assurance, and cause him such transports of delight and make him cry, "What shall we then say to these things?"

And now what shall we say to these things? What does the apostle himself say to them? He pronounces five distinct challenges to show wherein that salvation is deficient which God offers to the sinner, challenges addressed to the fearful believer, to the skeptic, to the enemies of religion. Each of these five challenges he supports with a proposition which cannot be disputed. Who dares assail the child of God from this direction? Who dares assail him from that direction? Who dares assail him from the other direction? As the mediaeval knight threw down his gauntlet in the tournament as a pledge that he was ready to enter the lists with any one who would dare to lift it, and as the disputant of the schools posted in a public place the propositions he was ready to defend and to debate with any contestant, so the apostle here



proclaims before the assembled world five challenges supported by a number of propositions concerning the faithfulness of God and the security of the believer. He defies all the human learning of all the ages to dispute his theses. He defies all devils, with all their knowledge and their subtlety. He challenges the angels about the throne of God. Yea, inasmuch as he has planted himself on the very word of God and he knows that God cannot lie and cannot deny himself, he is confident that there is nothing in all the reaches of the divine nature that can overthrow the citadel in which God's love has placed the Christians. Let us examine these challenges.

1. "Who can be against us?" "If God be for us who can be against us?" Shall we not rather ask, what really is against us?

(a) This vast grinding system of matter, in the midst of which we live, is against us. God cursed the ground for the sake of sinful man, and caused it to bring forth thorns and thistles and doomed man to eat bread in the sweat of his face. The earth opens its millions of graves to receive the corrupted and dishonored bodies of men. It quakes with fearful convulsions and opens wide its mouth to engulf its multitudes. The sea yawns and swallows its thousands. The winds rage at man with a deafening roar, the clouds discharge their thunderbolts at him, and the stars in their courses fight against him.

(b) Man's own nature is against him. His lustful passions are against him. His very finiteness, his infirmities of the flesh and spirit, his ignorance, his indiscretions, his incapacity, his poverty, his diseases.

(c) Man's fellowmen are against him. Human life, in one aspect of it, may be regarded as a mad fight of selfishness and greed and lust and ambition. Sometimes a man's worst foes are they of his own household.

(d) Satan and his hosts are against him, principalities and powers, the rulers of the darkness of this world and spiritual wickedness in high places. Our "adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour."

(e) Some of the attributes of God are against him, and at times it seems as if God's providence is also against him. Jacob cried, "All these things are against me." A sentient, never-dying atom is man, at the heart of a hostile universe!

With what facts then does the apostle offset all this array of hostile forces? With what proposition does he support the challenge, "Who can be against us?" His proposition is in these four simple words making a most powerful sentence, "God is for us". "If God be for us, who can be against us". This might be more satisfactorily read, "Since God is for us, who can be against us?" The angel said to Gideon, "The Lord is with thee



thou mighty man of valor." Gideon alone, defeated, despairing, cowed, but "a mighty man of valor" because the Lord was with him. David cried, "The Lord of hosts is with us." Jesus Christ said to his followers, "Lo, I am with you alway." The alliance with God makes one man stronger than all his enemies combined. Elisha said to his servant, frightened by the hosts of the Syrians, "They that be with us, are more than they that be with them". Hezekiah said to his panic stricken people when threatened by the Assyrians, "With us is the Lord our God, to help us, and to fight our battles." Said the prophet to Jehoshaphat, "The battle is not yours, but God's." No object, no person, no event, no law, no force, no influence can break through the defenses of the Christian, or effect an entrance into his life, except by the command or the permission of God. Nothing ever gets beyond the absolute control of the Most High. He makes all things work together for the good of His people, and no weapon that is forged against them can prosper.

2. His next challenge is, How can God fail to give us all things? "He that spared not His own son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" What then would you have God give you? What do you wish? Rather let us ask, what do you need? Our desires are not always a safe guide for us. When our health is impaired, we crave things

to eat that are injurious to us. We wish sweets or acids or rich food, while these things may be injurious, and even fatal. We cannot, at a time like that, allow the appetite to control us. We need advice. We need to have the physician, who has expert knowledge of the chemistry of food and of digestion, who knows all that the experience of his profession teaches him upon the subject, to advise us what are safe and nourishing things to eat. So, with spirit, mind and body, all disordered by sin, the judgment weakened, the heart astray from what is good, the will enfeebled, the conscience stupefied, we need to have some one choose for us who is better informed than we are. And who knows so well what is good for us, as God Himself? Then what do you need? Is it wealth, you may have it, in lavish abundance. All the gold and the silver are God's. He knows where it is and the way by which it may be acquired. He can direct it to one person or to another with much more ease than he created it. Do you need health? It will be yours, with all of its fullness and joyousness. Is it friends you need? Is it freedom from anxiety? Is it a field of service and the capacity to fill it? Is it suffering you need and disappointment and discipline and conflict? God is too faithful to withhold anything that you need. He gives us what we need, "freely". That may mean copiously, as the waters flow freely from a spring, or it may mean without expense. As a mat-



ter of fact, God gives in both ways. What we need He gives richly and abundantly, and He gives without money and without price.

Now when the apostle makes this remarkable challenge, with what proposition does he support it? How does he prove that God must give all things freely and cannot deny us? He declares that God has already refused to spare His own Son when man's necessities demanded that He should be sacrificed. "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" with Him also freely give us all things?" He has already done for us the only thing that was hard for him to do. It was not hard to create a world. It was hard to give His only Son to die for men. He has already made the only possible sacrifice. Just how God could sacrifice or suffer, we are utterly unable to say. That He did sacrifice, the Scriptures very clearly teach. But if the Infinite could sacrifice at all, it was an infinite sacrifice, far beyond our power to conceive. Since then God's love was so great that it overrode such obstructions and expressed itself under such difficulties, how is it possible for that love to be restrained, when there are no obstacles in its path?

3. The third challenge is, "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?" O, there are enough to accuse God's people. Their own consciences accuse them. "Their thoughts the mean

while accusing or else excusing one another." The accusations of conscience are so fierce that they often hinder our peace by apprehensions of divine wrath. We speak of "horrors of conscience". The language is not too strong for the facts. Our fellowmen accuse us. They declare that we are inconsistent and that we are hypocrites. We admit and lament the inconsistency, but we protest against the charge of hypocrisy. Satan accuses us. He is called in the Scriptures the "accuser of the brethren." He accuses us at the bar of conscience and at the bar of God. The word of God accuses the people of God. Abraham lost faith and courage on one occasion and told a falsehood. Noah imbibed to excess and was drunken. David was guilty of adultery, treachery, falsehood and murder. Peter cursed and swore when he denied his Master in the hour of that Master's supreme need of the loyalty and sympathy of His friends. The Bible declares, "There is none that doeth good, no not one." "There is not a just man upon the earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not." With what sort of proposition then can the apostle maintain a challenge like this? It is the simple unanswerable statement that it is God himself who has justified the believer, "It is God that justifieth." God is the supreme court of appeals. He is the court of last resort, His decree is final, it ends the case against the believer. Right or wrong, just or unjust, if the supreme court declares the accused



innocent, there is no way by which we may go back of the verdict, except by revolution and the overthrow of the government. As none can overthrow the throne of God, His verdict of acquittal of the believer stands. I am not now discussing the ground upon which He pronounces the believer innocent, I state the fact, "It is God that justifieth."

But Paul has still another reason for maintaining that believers are immune to adverse charges. It is that they are "God's elect". All of their religion originated with God. A sinner in a state of nature can neither trust God nor choose a holy life. He dreads the misery of sin, but he nevertheless sins from choice. He prefers sin to holiness and does not wish to do otherwise than to choose sin. The fallen angels who kept not their first estate are devils. They neither repent and turn to God nor choose a holy life and pursue it. There is no reason why fallen men should repent and believe and persevere in grace, except that God chooses to give them His grace to change their hearts. So all the believer's religion originated in an act of God's grace. If, therefore, God began the work, He will certainly complete it. "He which hath begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." For these two reasons, then, that God himself has justified the believer, and that He has from the first purposed to do so, none can defeat His sovereign and judicial action.

Thus every accusation against the believer in Christ falls short of its mark.

4. The fourth challenge is, "Who is he that condemneth?" It is the prerogative of God to pass a sentence of condemnation. Paul here seems to imply that the Christian is protected even against the condemnation of God, as if God had placed Himself in a position in which He has now no right to condemn. This challenge is supported by four propositions. (a) "It is Christ that died." If Christ died for sin, then the sin has been expiated. Two persons cannot be punished for the same offense. If you pay my debt, the creditor cannot recover the amount a second time from me. If you render my service it cannot be required of me again. Now Christ was made sin for us. He bore our sins in his own body on the tree. If he did so, then by all the principles of justice, I am free.

"My sin, oh, the bliss of that glorious thought;  
My sin, not in part, but the whole,  
Is nailed to his cross and I bear it no more,  
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, Oh, my soul!"

(b) But not only did Christ die, He rose again. The apostle exclaims, "It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again". The resurrection of Christ completed the victory over death as the wages of sin. It also completes the proof in the believer's mind that his own deliverance is assured.



(c) But he further adds the cumulative security that Christ is "even at the right hand of God". That strengthens the argument in behalf of the Christian's complete redemption. Moreover by the enthronement of Christ at the right hand of God and His possessing all authority in heaven and in earth, He is in a position to apply all the resources of the world to the protection and deliverance of those He loves and died for.

(d) And then he adds the crowning demonstration, namely, that Christ makes intercession for us.

5. The fifth and last challenge is, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" That does not mean our love for Christ, but Christ's love for us, as the remainder of the passage plainly shows. We know very well it is easy enough to separate us from our love for Christ. Sometimes when our love for him seems most trustworthy, we are put to the test and quickly learn that we are wanting. Sometimes when our meditation upon Christ has been the most delightful and our communion with him the sweetest, those times of which the poet writes:

"There, there on eagle's wings we soar,  
And sense and sin seem all no more;  
And heaven comes down our souls to greet,  
And glory crowns the mercy seat,"

Of which another has written—

"My willing soul would stay  
In such a frame as this, and  
Sit and sing herself away,  
To everlasting bliss,"

times when we seem to be lingering in the very portals of heaven and feel as if nothing can ever again seduce us from the love of Christ and the close following of Him, even then the evil spirit is there. He catches us off our guard, betrays us into sin and overwhelms us with mortification and discouragement. No, we cannot boast of our love for Christ. But who can separate us from Christ's love for us? All the enemies of religion both visible and invisible have done their utmost to tear us from the grasp of Christ's love. Read once more the story of the persecutions. Go to the museums where they collect the instruments of torture with which men have tried to separate the people of Christ from their master's love. What can separate us, "Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or nakedness, or famine, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For Thy sake we are killed all the day long. We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter." With what proposition does Paul support this challenge? "Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us." "*In* all these things," not in spite of all these things, but *in* them, by means of them. They are aids rather than restraints. They were intended to destroy our religion, but by the over-



ruling grace of God they promote it, and only serve to tighten the grasp of Christ upon us and make it more certain that none can ever pluck us out of His hands.

In view of all these facts, Paul said, "I am persuaded"—not merely I am convinced, or I have reached a conclusion of the intellect, but "I am persuaded," I have reached a soul satisfying knowledge that goes to the depth of my soul, that tingles in all my veins and arteries, and thrills in every fiber of my being. "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."

Solomon said, "The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous runneth into it, and is safe." How aptly that describes the revelation God has here made of his unconquerable love for his redeemed. Here is a strong tower. The righteous take refuge here and they are safe. The Psalmist says, "As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about his people from henceforth even forever." The situation of Jerusalem is peculiarly strong. It is built upon a high elevation surrounded by strong walls, from which the land descends rapidly to ravines below. Beyond the ravines, the mountains so surround it as to make the defense of its approaches easy. So

God has fortified his people in an impregnable fortress, and then, as if that were not enough, He encircles the whole with his own protecting presence.

"How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord,  
Is laid for your faith in his excellent word!  
What more can He say than to you He hath said,  
You who unto Jesus for refuge have fled?"

"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof. Selah." —"The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah."



## VII

## THE TITHE

*"The tenth shall be holy unto the Lord."* Leviticus  
XXVII:32.

**T**ITHING may be defined as "Paying to the Lord one-tenth of one's annual income, as a minimum, to be used for exclusively religious purposes." Observe that it is "paying" and not "giving". It is paying a tenth of one's "income" and not of one's "surplus". It does not mean that we may spend all the money we wish upon the support of our families, the improvement of our property, the gratification of our tastes, paying of taxes, the taking of trips, the making of presents, etc., and pay a tenth of the remainder to the Lord and call it "tithing." Tithing is paying a tenth of the "increase," as the Bible expresses it, income without any deductions except for the expense incurred in the making of the income. A man tithes when he pays one-tenth of this income; if he makes fifty dollars this week and pays five, one hundred dollars next week and pays ten, five hundred the next and pays fifty, he is tithing.

Observe that the tenth is regarded as the mini-

imum offered for religious uses. It never was intended to be anything else than a minimum even under the Mosaic Dispensation. A man could offer as much more as he chose. Observe also that the tithe is devoted to exclusively religious uses—not to charity, not to taxes, but to strictly religious purposes. The tithe under the Mosaic Dispensation was given to the Levites, whose duties were exclusively religious. They were not subject to draft for military purposes; they had no inheritance in the land; they were not called upon to discharge any function of civil government: they were officers of the religious establishment and the whole tithe was devoted to the Levites and, therefore, to religious purposes.

Is it our Christian duty to tithe in this sense? How are we to answer this question? Are we to attempt to work out for ourselves a plan of church support that seems to us to be reasonable? Are we to "give" the amount that gives us the most pleasure? Are we to consider what is for our best interests? Are we to ask what will make us popular? Are we to follow public opinion and do as others do? What method shall we employ for answering this question: Whether or not it is our duty to pay a tithe to the Lord?

The Christian man will ask what is God's will and, in order to find out what God's will is, he will repair to the Word of God, which reveals God's will and which is the only infallible rule of



faith and practice. What say the Scriptures?

Beyond all question, God did at one time express His mind as to what is a proper proportion of a man's income to be devoted to religious uses. Concerning this, there is no possibility of doubt:

"And all the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land, or of the fruit of the tree, is the Lord's: it is holy unto the Lord.

"And if a man will at all redeem ought of his tithes, he shall add thereto the fifth part thereof.

"And concerning the tithe of the herd, or of the flock, even of whatsoever passeth under the rod, the tenth shall be holy unto the Lord.

"He shall not search whether it be good or bad, neither shall he change it; and if he change it at all, then both it and the change thereof shall be holy; it shall not be redeemed.—Lev. XXVII, 30-33.

Here is one clear, unequivocal expression of God's mind as to what is proper for a child of God to contribute for divine worship.

The next point I will make is that this law, given to Israel by Moses, has never been repealed in express terms. If it has been repealed at all, we are left to find out the fact by inference. There is no positive statement that the law has been repealed. If you know of a passage which affirms that this law has been abolished, I would be glad to have you call my attention to it. There is one text in the New Testament Scriptures which some have claimed supersedes the tithe law by a new Christian law of church support. It is the second

verse of the sixteenth chapter of First Corinthians: "Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come." This has been emphasized and advertised as a new gospel law for the maintenance of religion and as a substitute for the Mosaic Law of the Tithe. Much has been preached and written upon this text based on this interpretation of it. Many newspaper articles have taken the same view. Leaflets by the thousand have been distributed over the church displaying this text as the Christian method of maintaining the worship of God as distinguished from the Mosaic method. But upon closer study, it is found that this language very accurately describes the tithe. If we grant that the reference in this verse is to the worship of God (which I grant only for the argument's sake), no language could have been chosen that would more perfectly fit the tithe than this. For example, If I make fifty dollars this week and give five, five hundred dollars next week and give fifty, a thousand dollars the following week and give a hundred, I am giving "as the Lord has prospered" me, and at the same time I am giving one-tenth. So that there is no contradiction between this language and the tithe,—on the contrary, a perfect harmony. But as a matter of fact, this verse does not have any reference to the maintenance of religion at all. It refers manifestly to



collections for charitable purposes. The Jews made a distinction between money that was offered for worship and money that was given for charitable uses. The tithe was compulsory and it was used for exclusively religious purposes. There were also freewill offerings, not compulsory, that were devoted to religious uses. Besides these, there were alms for the poor, which were voluntary and were devoted to the relief of the needy. The Jews did not confuse the two kinds of offerings—the one for the maintenance of the religious establishment and the other for the relief of suffering humanity. Now the reference in I. Corinthians, 16:2 was to charity and not to the maintenance of religion. The first verse of the chapter makes this clear beyond any question: "Now concerning the collection for the saints . . ." is the expression used; that is, for the believers in Jerusalem. The Christians in Jerusalem had been persecuted and robbed and were in distress and want, just as the Christians in the same region in these days have been persecuted and robbed and are now appealing to Christendom for relief. The second verse, therefore, which enjoins the laying by in store weekly as the Lord had prospered them was intended to meet the situation of the sufferers. It was not for the maintenance or spread of the Gospel, except possibly in an indirect and very remote sense. So that this very completely disposes of that quotation as any sufficient proof that the

New Testament has inaugurated a new plan for the support of religion.

We have so far established two points: That God did once express His mind as to the proper proportion of our income to pay for the support of religion, that proportion being one-tenth. That the law has never been repealed in express terms.

Another point I will now add to these two is that in no place throughout the Bible has God ever expressed His approval of an offering for religious uses that amounted to less than a tenth of one's income. I confidently challenge the citation of a single instance in which God has ever expressed approval of less than one-tenth for the support of religion. Some one has replied to this statement that Christ approved the widow's mite and that that was an exception to the rule. But was the widow's mite less than one-tenth of her income? Was it not more? Was it not ten-tenths? "She of her penury hath cast in all her living that she had." So the challenge remains unanswered.

Let us then note clearly the data so far derived from the Scriptures for a satisfactory answer to our question, Should Christians pay tithes?

1. God certainly once expressed His approval of the tithe in the Mosaic law.
2. God has never expressly repealed that law.
3. God has never expressed approval of an offering for religious uses that amounted to less than a tenth.



If time permitted, I would be glad to take up the question of the positive evidences of the survival of the tithe law in the New Testament. Suffice it to say I am quite confident that the argument for the continuance of the tithe under the New Testament dispensation is so strong as to raise, at least, a doubt in the mind of any fair-minded man. And if one is in doubt as to whether God requires the tenth or not,—as to whether the tenth belongs to God or to himself—he would take the benefit of the doubt and yield the tenth to God, lest he might be found robbing God.

I would also like to raise another question, if time permitted; that is, the question as to the reason for repealing the tithe law, if indeed, it was repealed. Why was any Mosaic Law repealed? It was because God would make way for something larger and not smaller than the old law. The Passover was abolished to give place to the larger sacrament of the Lord's Supper; circumcision yielded its place to Baptism; animal sacrifices were abolished because the infinite sacrifice of the Son of God had been made; the splendid worship of the Temple was dispensed with that God might fill the world with the revelation of His presence and His grace. So if the tithe law has been abolished, it was, doubtless, abolished that men might do better and not worse than they had done under the old dispensation.

It is not to the credit of Christians to have it

said of them that, when they believed the tithe law was abolished and they were left free to give voluntarily an amount that would express their gratitude and worship, they gave less than the Jews gave under the old dispensation. If it was worth one-tenth to the Jews to worship God amidst all the obscurity of types, and shadows, and prophecies, how much more should it be worth to Christians who know the regenerating and sanctifying love of Jesus Christ, the comforting influences of the Holy Spirit, and rejoice in the life and immortality brought to light in the Gospel? It is not to the credit of Christians that Mormons should pay tithes for the maintenance of their foul religion, and adherents of other religions pay tithes to support their degraded worship, and that Christians, when permitted to give a voluntary expression of their appreciation of the glorious gospel of the blessed God, should do less.

But I wish to lay emphasis upon some objections that have been brought against the practice of tithing. In advance, however, I would make two statements concerning these objections: The first is that every objection brought against tithing in this day is an objection that would bear with equal force against tithing in any day. If it is a valid objection to-day, it would have been an equally valid objection for the same reason under the old dispensation. If these objections prove that it is wrong to require tithes now, they prove that God



ought never to have ordained such a law. The second remark is that nearly all the objections to tithing (though not all) would be objections of equal force against the law of the Sabbath.

1. The first objection to tithing is that it is so difficult to find out with accuracy what one's income is. I reply that, if there were no other advantage in the practice of tithing than the fact that it compels a man to find out what his income is, that of itself would commend it as a good practice. As stewards of God, have we a right not to know what our income is? We are beginning to recognize very generally that we are stewards of God in all that we possess. We own nothing in our own right as toward God. As toward our fellowmen, we have our property rights, but not toward God. The Bible tells us that "It is required in stewards that a man be found faithful." Have we any right as stewards of God to pass on from year to year without knowing how much of God's substance has been committed to our trust? What would you think, if you had a business and had employed a man to conduct the business for you and, on the day of settlement, he had said, "I have no idea how much this business has made this year"? It is our duty to keep accounts, not only because we are stewards but also for many other reasons, and if there were no other advantage in tithing, it would have the advantage of compelling us to keep accounts.

But is it impossible to ascertain what our income is? I have known people of a great variety of occupations to practise tithing: lawyers, physicians, ministers, public officials, merchants, bankers, farmers, teachers, clerks in stores, seamstresses, almost every sort of calling in life. The occupation of farming presents the greatest difficulties in reckoning one's income with accuracy. But successful farmers have told me that the questionnaires sent out by the Government for reckoning the income tax will enable even the farmer to arrive at a correct estimate of his income. It is, at least, sufficiently accurate to satisfy an exacting Government and, no doubt, sufficiently accurate for tithing for religious uses.

But the unanswerable argument to the objection now under consideration (that it is impossible to estimate the tithe accurately) has been given somewhat humorously in this way: If the case were reversed and God were to tell you that, if you would give a reasonably accurate statement of your income, He would add one-tenth to it, instead of taking one-tenth from it, you would have little difficulty in forming a satisfactory estimate of your income.

2. Another objection urged against the tithe is that it is unjust to the poor, because it requires the poor man to give the same proportion of his income that the rich man is required to give. In reply, I submit that it is no more unjust to-day



than it was under the Old Testament Dispensation. There were poor people before the coming of Christ. The laws of Moses provided for them and they are mentioned in the Psalms and the prophets. Our Saviour spoke of the widow whose whole living was two mites. We are told of one whose only treasure was an alabaster box of ointment. Christ spoke of men whose earnings were only a penny a day, and He said, "The poor ye have always with you". So that there were poor people under the Mosaic Dispensation, and yet they were required to give one-tenth. So if the tithe is unjust now, it was unjust at any time and, if this objection proves anything, it proves that God ought never to have instituted a tithe law.

Again if the tithe law is unjust because it requires the same percentage of income from rich and poor alike, the same argument would prove that the Sabbath law is unjust, because it requires the rich and poor alike to give the same proportion of their time, one seventh.

But the suspicion of injustice is removed when we reflect that the tithe is only the minimum and that the equity might be maintained by unlimited freewill offerings by the rich.

But you need not be uneasy about the poor nor so solicitous to protect them. They are not complaining of the tithe. I have known many a poor person to pay tithes and I have never known one of them to complain of hardness or injustice in it.

For a number of years after I began preaching on the tithe, I received hardly any responses except from the poor. Later on in my ministry, wealthy people began to adopt the practice, but even then probably the majority of the tithers were amongst poor people or people of moderate incomes. There are at least a hundred and fifty tithers in my church now, and not a fourth of them are men. Let me give you an illustration: There was a venerable woman in my church about eighty years of age, quite deaf, almost blind, and confined to a rolling chair on account of a broken limb. She was a very deep Christian but very reserved. On one occasion when I was sitting by the side of her chair, talking to her, she asked me with a smile if I would excuse her for a moment; she wheeled herself to a corner of the room where she fumbled a while amongst books and papers and came back presently with a beaming face and held out some money in her hand toward me. She said, "I do not have much money, but I want to give a tenth to the Lord. Will you please take this and use it for the Lord's work in the way you think best?" It was a dollar bill she handed me. I knew little of her financial circumstances, though I knew that she could not command much money. Some months afterwards, it became necessary for her to be removed from the home in which she lived with relatives, because the home had to be broken up. I was consulted as to what arrangement should be



made for this venerable friend. When I asked the question, What her income was, the answer came in surprise, that she had no income whatever, that a friend had been giving her ten dollars every year for a number of years. This she imagined had come from property which she had once owned. The ten dollars a year was the whole amount of money she possessed. It is true that she did not need very much money, for she had a shelter and food and fuel and needed but little clothing. But ten dollars a year is a very small amount for any respectable person in this country to have. If I had known the circumstances, possibly I might have declined to take the dollar from her and yet I know full well it would almost have broken her heart, if I had done so. No, they are not the poor who complain of tithing.

3. Another objection urged against tithing is that it inculcates a wrong principle, that if you tell a man that one-tenth of his income is God's and nine-tenths belong to him, he will not feel under any obligation to use all of his property for God. I submit again that if this is a valid objection to the tithe today, it was an equally valid objection when Moses promulgated the law. It would prove that the tithe was not suitable in any age. Again, if this is a valid objection against tithing, it is an equally valid objection against the Sabbath day, because it would teach a man that, if he gave one day in seven to the Lord, there would be no re-

striction at all upon the way in which he would spend the other six days of the week. This reminds one of a conversation between a minister and a member of his church. The minister had preached upon the perseverance of the saints, and one of his members, approaching him at the close of the service, remarked, "If I believed what you preached and felt sure that I could never fall from a state of grace, I would sin all I chose to." The minister replied, "How much would a Christian choose to sin?" I may ask in a similar way, "If a man gives one-tenth of his income to the Lord and one-seventh of his time to the Lord, in what way would he probably wish to spend the nine-tenths of his income and the six-sevenths of his time?" As a matter of fact, the one-tenth and one-seventh are given as a token of God's ownership of it all, and the man who in this way recognizes God's ownership will spend all his time and all his money with a sense of obligation to use both for the glory of God.

4. Another objection urged against tithing is that the advocates of the tithe appeal to mercenary motives by representing that if we give the tithe, we will receive material blessings as a reward. We should be very careful not to set standards for ourselves higher than those set in the Word of God, and not to assume to be more righteous than the Scriptures. Beyond all question, the Bible appeals to this very motive; for instance, this text:



“There is that scattereth and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty”; or this: “Honor the Lord with thy substance and with the first fruits of all thine increase: so shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine.” Or take that classic quotation from the third chapter of Malachi. The Jews had been greatly afflicted by drought and pestilence, by the locust and the caterpillar. They cried out in their distress and sought to know the reason of their affliction. God’s answer to them through Malachi was, “Ye have robbed me,” but they said, “Wherein have we robbed Thee?” He replied, “In tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse; for ye have robbed Me, even this whole nation.” Then he gives them this challenge: “Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in Mine house, and prove Me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.” God here challenges his people, He dares them. He says to them, “Prove me, put Me to the test. Come back to your duty in paying tithes and see if I will not drive war and pestilence, the locust and the caterpillar from all your coasts, see if I will not ‘open the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.’” Once more, our Saviour said, “Give,

and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom”. In this passage, there is the unmistakable promise of material blessing to those who honor the Lord with their substance. The truth is, however, that the material and spiritual blessings are so interwoven with each other that it is difficult to separate them and unnecessary to do so.

Now let me give you a few illustrations of the material and spiritual blessings that I have known to follow the practice of tithing.

I have in my church a tithe league. We have more than one hundred and fifty members in that league. One day after church, a gentleman called me aside and said, “I wish you would put my wife’s name and mine on your tithe roll.” When I thanked him for it, he said with some hesitation, “We don’t see how we are going to be able to give one-tenth, but we have come to the conclusion it is our duty to do so, and we are going to try it.” He did not wear a very happy expression of countenance, for evidently he was uncertain as to what the result would be. A few months afterwards, I saw him approaching me on the street and, at a distance of more than 100 yards, I could see his face was wreathed with smiles. As he drew nearer, he began to laugh aloud and was almost in convulsions of merriment. He said, “It is perfectly ridiculous, the way that money has been coming



in to me since I began tithing." "God loveth a hilarious giver," so some translate it. This gentleman was a "hilarious giver". His face became more serious then and he said with deep earnestness, "My wife and I believe that God is rebuking us in this way for our distrust."

On another day, I met a professional gentleman, who crossed the street from his home to tell me his experience with the tithe. I had not known before that he was a tither. He made this statement to me: "I began to tithe several months ago. I did not see at the time how it was possible with my income and with all the financial obligations that rested upon me, to give any more to the church than I was giving, but I saw that it was my duty and determined to try it. The result is that, while my income is the same and my obligations are the same, I meet those obligations just as easily as I did before and now I am giving to the church *thirty times as much as I gave before.*"

I will give one more illustration: A young lady came in to see me, who was not a member of my church. Her Christian life had recently been greatly revived. She was very happy after her new experience and came to consult me about tithing. She said that she had resolved to pay one-tenth of her income to the Lord, that her mother was old and unable to support herself, being entirely dependent for her support upon what her children could give her from their earnings. The question

that troubled her was whether she could take out of her tithe what she gave for her mother's support. I told her that I was unable to settle that question for her, that it would have to be settled between her and God, but that I could give her some facts upon both sides of her question and leave it for her to decide. On the one hand, the Israelites gave their tithe exclusively for religious uses; on the other hand, when Christ was upon earth, he told the Pharisees that Moses had commanded them to honor their father and their mother, but that they claimed that, if a man's father or mother asked him for anything that they needed and he did not wish to give it, he might say, "The thing you ask me for is devoted to God: it is Corban and, therefore, I cannot give it to you." In that case, they held that the man was released from his obligations to his parents and so they made void the Fifth Commandment. I said to my young friend, "You take this question to God in prayer and ask Him whether you may give to your mother out of your tithe. He will not leave you without His guidance and, if He shows you that it is your duty to give the whole tithe to religion and to contribute to your mother out of your nine-tenths, *He will make it possible in some way* for you to do it." She sat in silence for a few moments, absorbed in thought, then her face lighted up with a bright expression and she said, "I am going to try it; I will give the whole tenth to God. That is what I



want to do. I want to trust Him in that way." I was out of town for several weeks after that visit. On my return, I learned she had had a substantial increase in her salary. Was there any connection between these two things? When God tells us, "If you do thus and so, then I will do thus and so," and we do as he commands and then the thing happens which He promised, have we any right to say that God did not do it in fulfilment of His promise, that the coincidence was accidental? God had promised to bless those who honor Him with their substance. She had honored Him and the blessing had followed. Was it a mere coincidence or was it an unmistakable expression of God's approval? But that which most deeply impressed me was the expression of spiritual exaltation in that young lady's face when she said, "I want to trust God that way". Again we see here the mingling of the material and the spiritual reward for tithing.

5. There is one more objection, that I must confess I cannot answer. It is the position of the man who has heard all these facts, and the scriptures and the arguments, and meets all by saying, "But I don't look at it in that way," without giving a fact, a scripture or an argument in support of his position. I cannot answer that argument.

## VIII

## THE HEAVENLY HOME

NOTE:—This sermon was preached at the funeral of the Rev. Rutherford Douglas, D.D., in April, 1890.

*"In My Father's house are many mansions."*—John XIV :2.

ONE of the most potent words in human speech is the word "home". If one is capable of any unselfish feelings at all, he is apt to have a strong affection for his home. If he can be overcome by powerful emotion it is apt to be when the tender sentiment in which he has invested his home is freshly stirred. One of the essential elements of the home idea, one of the reasons for its endearment, is the association with the idea of parentage. It is the Father's house. It is not simply that we regard it as the locality where our parents lived, but the feeling rather is, that all the objects about home, the people who occupy it, and the ideas which govern there, have lent each some quota to our being, and we are the product of this happy combination. It is as though we had been born, not so much of our parents, as of the whole environment, albeit our parents are



the largest and most precious portion of that environment. It is doubtless due to these facts that that little song "Home, Sweet Home" has won for itself such a tender and lasting place in the estimation of men. It is regarded as almost an inspiration, in its sweetness and power. Few songs have so much power to grasp, hold and move the affections of men as this simple little melody. And it only enhances our estimate of the song when we are told that its author never had a home. So near does the home idea lie to the human heart, so deep do its sentiments penetrate into the sources of human feeling, that one who has never actually known the charms of a home, out of the very necessities of human nature can conceive them. It is this home idea which our Saviour uses to soothe the tumultuous sorrow of his disciples on the eve of His separation from them. With it He would console them in the hour of their supreme bereavement. When He would be taken away and leave them sitting amidst the wreck and desolation of all their ideals and hopes, He bids them lift their eyes above and beyond all the pains and distractions of earth to a heavenly home. "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions." He thus takes two of the three words that have been pronounced the sweetest of all human speech, "Mother, Home and Heaven," he takes the two "Home" and "Heaven", and shows how, to the

Christian, they may become merged into one—home attaining its perfect and happiest form in Heaven. And even then, the two are not divorced from the third, because He calls it His Father's house and assures us that He, Himself has fitted it as our dwelling place and that the Holy Spirit is fitting us for it, and They have sworn that They love us with a love surpassing that of a mother.

The Bible tells us that it doth not yet appear what we shall be in that home. It gives us no revelation that enables us to conceive a definite picture of its appearance, its occupations, or its inhabitants, but nevertheless certain general facts about it are revealed which, when we embrace them, are a source of comfort and inspiration. Some of these are suggested here in the expression "many mansions". First, it suggests *plenty*—an abundant provision. The redemption purchased by Christ is a "plenteous redemption". It is "a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory". All men know what pleasure is, and what desire and aspiration are. They have had experience of the material pleasures of sense, of the pleasures of the heart and intellect and taste. Some men have also known spiritual pleasures in Christ. But all men know too what is meant by restriction, the limitations of pleasures, the bridle of desires, the clouding of anticipation. The poor man knows, because he has not the means to buy pleasure and gratify desire. The rich man knows, because he



has the means to get all that money can buy, and he has learned that if passion is not restrained, it defeats itself in satiety and drowns itself in debauch. But since the curse of sin passed upon the human race, no man ever yet knew what it was to have indefinite increase of both appetite and satisfaction, or pleasure which could be abundant and never pall. But it is just this blessedness to which the Saviour lifts the faith of his followers. It is boundless enlargement of capacity with boundless enlargement of supply.

Second, it suggests a varied provision to meet the wants of diverse characters. He does not say *one* mansion, however large, but *many*. In Heaven, it seems, there is to be a place provided for every character, as there will have been a character fitted for every place. The Saviour would assure us, that Heaven has not only its large assembly room in which there may be promiscuous gatherings of all, but, so to speak, as many apartments as there are different characters to occupy them, labors infinitely divided, pleasures endlessly varied. So that each one on entering finds a congenial occupation and those pleasures awaiting him which will be most delightful to him. Else why the differences that are permitted here? If it be otherwise, why does not the education of grace tend to destroy these differences rather than to confirm them. Why that strong individuality, those decided traits, those special tastes for particular enjoyments and yet

clear as the sun the grace of God shining through and illuminating the whole? Why this different discipline of individuals, so different that none can completely share his own burden with another, or if he would, admit him to a perfect sympathy with himself in his trials, if these differences do not point to a specific allotment of labors and joys in Heaven? Is all the schooling of earth to be lost? Are all its records to be destroyed? When we break out of this chrysalis condition and become bright winged angels before the throne of God, shall there not be beneath the covering any lines or marks which are the record of an earthly conflict? Is there, as the heathen conceived, a river of forgetfulness whose water shall be drunk on the borderland of glory to cause oblivion of earth? Shall the inverted stylus of divine omnipotence efface the inscriptions of this life? Shall we all begin anew there as little babes in glory? Or is it not rather true that Providence is here giving a direction to our development that will be maintained forever, putting character into molds that will never be broken? When David prayed for the life of his infant, and his prayer did not seem to be answered, he comforted himself with the thought, "I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me," there was a sweet thought of Heaven with which he comforted himself, that could not be a comfort to more than two people in the world, David and Bathsheba. So there are persons you



expect to meet again in Heaven, there are trials which you will leave behind and victories you will celebrate. I, on the other hand, shall meet my friends, leave my trials, celebrate my victories. The fruition of each is different from that of all others, does not impair the completeness of any other, and yet itself is perfect. "I go to prepare a place for you."

Third, it suggests *durability*. The word "mansions" has that idea in it. It is derived from the Greek word which means "to remain" and embodies in itself the idea of permanency. And this is one thing that makes Heaven such a perfect complement of the unsatisfactoriness of earth. Change is stamped upon everything we see here, distressing, painful, change. If the word "home" is one of the sweetest we know, one of the bitterest of feelings is caused by the breaking up of home. One by one the members of the family leave it. Some are taken away by death and withdrawn from our company forever, some move away to new homes and form other ties. We drift apart, and the whole tendency is to isolation. The home itself passes into the hands of strangers. The stones have begun to drop from the little wall that encloses our burying ground, there is no one to replace them, and weeds are springing up all over it. We know that in a few years the ruthless and unsympathetic stranger will be plowing over the ashes of our dead, and there will be nothing left

to mark the place where we laid them to rest.

The hearthstone which is sacred to the loves and graces of home, that has resounded with the laughter of childhood, and has been consecrated with the tears of family grief, hears new sounds and sees strange faces grouped about it. This is but a part of the evanescence of all earthly things. "We have here no continuing city." No man can establish himself and surround himself with his own chosen comforts and associates and say to himself "here is my resting place, this is my home, and this peace shall never be disturbed." How gracious then the cheer which comes from Christ when he tells us of a home in Heaven from which we "shall no more go out". How beautifully do the Scriptures draw this contrast in the case of Abraham. "He sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; for he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God". If ever a man had reason to feel that he had a permanent home on earth it was Abraham when he reached Canaan. This was the place for which he had been called to leave Ur of the Chaldees and Haran where his father died. The land had been given him as far as he could see in every direction. It was foretold that generations of his seed should live there, and yet he only "sojourned" in the land of promise as in a strange country. When a very



old man and Isaac had become a man, and the little Jacob was growing up between his knees, he was still living in tabernacles, the most temporary of human dwellings, because he "looked for a city that hath foundations whose builder and maker is God". Man cannot build such a home, then how glorious to have "a house not made with hands eternal in the heavens"!

Fourth, it suggests *certainty*. Jesus said, "Ye believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions." And then as if to support the assertion on both sides he adds, "If it were not so I would have told you." Divine revelation was never more accurately fitted to human want than here. It is one of the eminent weaknesses of human faith to be unable to grasp the reality of the future glory. This world is so tangible and substantial, and we are acquainted with it. It may have its trials and disappointments, but unbelief says "better bear the ills we have than fly to those we know not of". Death is a blank wall and all is uncertain beyond. How timely then the assurance of Christ that He would have told us if there had been any mistake about it. He appeals to His own honor. He is too honest and sincere to deceive. Ah! the whole world will grant us the premise of His argument, "If it were not so, I would have told you." Not a finger can be lifted against His integrity. He was truthful and honorable, but grant His premise and His conclusion

follows. If He be true and faithful, then everything He has asserted of the Christian religion and hope is true. He appeals to His kindness. Surely that cannot be doubted in the face of the proofs. "Footsore I have trod the length and breadth of the land, hunting for suffering, to relieve it. Cold mountains and the midnight air have witnessed My exposure. In a few days I will give you the last crowning proof of My love and compassion on Calvary. And now knowing Me to be so unselfishly benevolent, do you suppose, I would stand off and see you forsaking and losing all things for the hope of a future compensation, and not tell you if there were any mistake or uncertainty? Am I the heartless being to do so cruel an act?" It is therefore as the last resort of God to bolster the failing faith of the disciples. It is as if Christ had taken these attributes as jewels from the diadem of His character, His honor and His kindness, and cast them into the scales against unbelief. "Here, take these and keep them, the tokens of My promises, the pledges of My fidelity, the hostages for My good faith, keep them till the time of fulfillment comes and if every word I have spoken be not established and proven yea and amen in Me, then before the assembled universe declare that Jesus is dishonored and unkind." "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you.



And now shall we return to the beggardly elements of the world? Shall we sacrifice such a birthright for a mess of pottage? Or shall we not rather resolve so to imitate the Master and live in such communion with Him that when the transition comes it will be so easy as scarcely to be perceptible, and the records of our lives will be told in the words, "He walked with God and he was not, for God took him"? "Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness; looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens, being on fire, shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless, we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness."

"Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of Him in peace, without spot, and blameless."

There may be some present, who have no part nor lot in these hopes. They are far from the Father's house and companionship. Will you not resolve "I will arise and go to my Father"? "We are journeying unto the place of which the Lord said, I will give it you. Come thou with us, and we will do thee good: for the Lord hath spoken good concerning Israel."

## IX

## HYMN

*"We have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin."—I. John 1:7.*

I praise Thee for Thy people Lord,  
Bought with Thy precious blood,  
Born of Thy Holy Spirit's grace,  
And fashioned by Thy Word.

While they behold Thy glory bright,  
They of Thy form partake,  
And as I love Thee for Thyself,  
I love them for Thy sake.

They charm me by their loveliness,  
Their Christ-like charity,  
The fragrance of a holy life,  
Their tranquil rest in Thee.

They teach me how to bear the cross,  
To fight the fight of faith,  
To reverence God, to love mankind,  
To triumph over death.

Communion sweet we here enjoy  
In places heavenly,  
But when we in Thy presence meet,  
Joy will be ecstasy.



