

The Gospel Harvest.

A Sermon

— Delivered —

Before the Presbyterian Education Society of Georgia.
At its annual meeting

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— By —

Thomas Goulding

Matthew ~~ix~~ 38th "Pray ye therefore the Lord of
the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his
harvest."

These are the words of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus
Christ. They were primarily addressed to his twelve
disciples. But the duty ~~they~~ enjoined, plainly includes
all Christians of every ^{succeeding} age. The language of the text
is figurative. "The field is the world." The harvest
is the salvation, or ingathering of souls; ^{and} the labourers
are the ministers of Christ, ^{in particular,} and, in general, all ^{the pious} who
are ^{intentional} ~~followers~~ ^{together} "working with God" in the salvation of
men. The claims of God, are, like his nature, "the
same yesterday and today and forever." The obliga-
tions of religious ^{duty} descend, with the nature of man,
from parent to child, and from generation to
generation, ^{these obligations} and remain unrepelled by the depravity
of man; ^{and} uninfluenced by the dispositions of creatures; ^{independence}

In consequence of the lamented death of the Rev.
Alexander H. Coebster, who had been appointed to preach
on this occasion; and the removal of Rev. S. S. Davis, his
alternate; the author was called upon at a late pe-
riod to prepare and preach three sermons. -

dependant of our knowledge or recollection of
them; - and unimpaired by length of time ~~or~~
distance of place. The injunction of our best
binds ^{who give} in "these ends of the Earth" ^{and} in "these last
days" ~~times~~ - with all the sacred force of an individual
address, and all the solemn weight of a first
announcement. - When our text was uttered by
the Yovious, a world was to be evangelized. Eight-
een centuries have since gone by; - bearing upon
their mighty stream thousands of millions of human
souls into the ocean of eternity. And yet, to this hour,
but one fourth part of men are nominally Christians; -
and only to one third part of our race has the name
of Christ been made known! - Even this is it, at
this very day; although every Christian throughout the
long lapse of past ages has been personally bound
by the high command of Jehovah Jesus, to ^{to cause} preach
the gospel ^{to be preached} to every creature! - When we reflect
that "there is no other name under heaven given among
men, whereby we must be saved"; - and that "whoso be-
lieveth not shall be damned"; - and when we ask
^{reason and conscience} our own hearts "how shall they believe in him
of whom they have not heard? - And how shall
they hear without a preacher?" - Is there a he-
man heard.

man heard that does not shrink ^{from} the in-
quiry, where are now these millions of souls? -

Oh! there is no other resting place for ^{the dove of} hope
than the ^{ask of the divine} sovereignty of God. "The Lord
reigneth." "The Judge of all the Earth will
do right." - But, should these souls have
fasted for that bread of life which any-
any of us have criminally withheld, the wealth
of many worlds would not countervail the
loss which such of us will suffer in eternity;
even should we be finally saved so as by fire! -

Do we not, then, desire to understand
better the nature of that important duty
enjoined upon us in the text? - Do we not
wish to know the motives which should
induce us to perform this duty? - Are
we not prepared to ask with anxious se-
riousness, what must I do? - And are we
not at this time willing and resolved to take
the first practicable step in the path of
this duty? - If so, we are prepared for the
present

present subject of discourse.

"Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest
that he will send forth laborers into his har-
vest." -

I. Let us consider the nature of the duty enjoined
in the text, - or, what important truths are
contained in these words. -

1. The interesting fact that there is a great har-
vest to be gathered in; ^{or} there are very many
millions of human souls to be saved; will
help us to understand the nature of the en-
joined duty. -

To those who conceive of this Earth as the
only world interested in the Salvation of
Christ; - and who believe, that, eventually,
few will be saved, in comparison of the
many who will be lost; - the whole econo-
my of Redemption must wear a gloomy
aspect; - and the full orb'd glories of the
Sun of righteousness must be proportion-
ably eclipsed.

And

And should such persons limit their views
of the final happiness of creatures to two
thirds of holy angels, with an inconsiderable
remnant of the human race; ~~and~~
one third part of angels and far more than
two third parts of men, will be forever
miserable; it might justly appear a mat-
ter of doubt whether creation has been a
bleeping! Such views, it is thought, are
not uncommon ^{even} among ^{but ill-instructed} pious persons; - are
still more frequent among the ungodly; and
are almost always presented ^{by unperceptive} to the world,
as the general belief of ^{all} who teach, ^{the doctrine of} eternal
retributions. But does revelation teach us
this? - Are we forbidden to believe that there
are intelligent beings inhabiting the bound-
less of millions of worlds which revolve
within sight of this earth? - Are we forbid-
den to believe that the dispensations of God
to ^{words} these worlds are known to them, ^{and exercise} ~~or exert~~
a powerful and salutary influence upon
them?

them?— What is there in revelation to forbid
the hope that the number of the saved from
among men will ~~be~~ eventually far ex-
ceed the number of lost souls?— What is
there to forbid the belief that when probas-
tion shall terminate with all worlds, and
time be swallowed up in eternity, the num-
ber of holy and happy beings will ~~be~~ incon-
ceivably exceed that of the unholy and miserable?

Why should not the prison house of Babelah
ultimately bear as small a proportion in ^{its} di-
mensions and inmates to ^{the whole number of his happy subjects, as} the prisons of the hep-
piest and most virtuous governments an-
^{do to the whole population of those nations}

Earth?— Why should not the place of dark-
ness become, in the dominions of the God of
light, like the spots upon the face of the
Sun?— Why should not the deformity of Sin,
compared with the prevalence of holiness,
be dimly drawn to a mole upon the face
of beauty:— and all that is vile and wretched
in creation diminish to a comparative speck?—
We are

We are told that Christ "shall see of the travail
of his soul, and be satisfied." - What number
of souls shall be an adequate compensation
for the suffering and humiliation of a divine
Saviour? - What number of souls will fully
satisfy the wishes of him who prayed for his
murderers, ^{on the cross, and will completely pierce} the desires of him ^{with} whose
penite benevolence? - Man may not, even in
thought, limit this number and God has not
eternally limited it then by excluding those,
and only those, who are incapable of a holy
happiness. ^{Mistake me not, brethren.} There will always be a hell.
There will always be inhabitants in hell.

But heaven too will be inhabited. And the
number of the redeemed from among men
will be "an innumerable multitude which
no man can number." - We know but lit-
tle what is meant by the Millenium. When
it will commence; - how long it will last; -
and what proportion holiness will bear to sin
among men, during its blessed continuance.
But what little we ^{do} know of this glorious
era,

era, teaches that it is possible, even in the estimation of man, for the number of the elect greatly to exceed the number of lost souls, before the judgment day shall come. - And it is the voice of truth and mercy teaching us in the text, that "the harvest is great" -

2. The nature of this duty will be further illustrated by the fact that, to gather in this harvest is a most important and desirable work. -

"He that winneth souls is wise" "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his" -

"What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul!" -

To chuse a less valuable thing in preference to a more valuable, would indicate, in worldly matters, a want of common sense. But, alas! to act thus in religious matters, only indicates the absence of holiness and the prevalence of sin. We are all unholly; - And hence need proof, that the gathering in of immortal souls is an incomparably great and good work. And what is a soul?

is a soul: - An immortal being. When millions
of millions of ages have passed away, and expired,
and been forgotten, this being will have only com-
menced to live. This Earth, and the Sun and Moon
and visible heavens, and the whole appointed
duration of time, in comparison with ^{longevity of} a soul,
is as Ephemeral as the insiel of an hour; as evanes-
cent as the morning cloud and early dew. -

And what is a soul: - A being capable of incon-
ceivable degrees of holiness and happiness - or
of sin and suffering. - There is nothing in na-
ture, in reasoning or in revelation to forbid
the thoughts, that the meekest and feeblest soul
may, in the endless gradations of Eternity, ar-
rive at a height of holiness and happiness, or
sink down to a depth of sin and misery, as
much surpassing what Gabriel in Heaven, or
Satan in Hell, now sustain, as they do now
surpass ~~us~~ ^{us} any of us ~~are~~ on Earth. -

When we measure the amazing difference
between such possible degrees of happiness and
misery, -

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Satan in Hell, now sustain, as they do now
surpass ~~what~~ any of us ~~are~~ on Earth. -
When we measure the amazing difference
between such possible degrees of happiness and
misery, -

misery, and multiply it by the endless series of eternal duration; - we shall arrive at some faint idea of the importance and desirableness of gathering in this year's harvest.

The nature of the enjoined duty will further express, by considering, that, labourers are necessary to gather in this harvest of souls.

In this position, we mean not to limit the holy one of Israel, nor to enervate omnipotence. ^{We are taught that} Almighty power only acts in conformity with infinite wisdom. And it is the obvious God our Saviour who commands in the text "pray ye therefore" &c. Why, in the councils of eternity, human or any creature instrumentality should have been ordained as necessary to effect the purposes of deity, must be resolved into the Sovereignty of God. "It is common" But there is no truth more plainly taught in Scripture than that it is the will of God for men to labour in the year's work of salvation.

salvation - the ingathering and harvest of souls.
And a heavier curse than that which fell on
Meroz may be fearfully anticipated by all
those who refuse to come up to the help of
the Lord, in this matter -

4. We learn still more of the nature of this duty
from reflecting that God only can raise
up their labouers. - "Pray ye therefore the
Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth"

When a great work is to be accomplished a work
of utmost importance - and to be accomplished
only by certain means; - how interesting to know
with whom these means reside and on whose
will depend their preparation and effectual
operation. - The existence, the mental powers,
the providential cultivation, the gracious qual-
ification, the willingness, the opportunity, the
acceptance and success, of all labouers in the
gospel harvest; depend on God. - And what
truth can be more encouraging, than this, to all
christians! He whose cause we desire to pro-
mote - whose glory we seek - whose will we
obey -

obey, - and by whose Spirit we are influenced; even he alone proposes all power to command success upon us. - How then may we insure his blessing upon our desires and efforts? -

5. This leads to mention another important truth contained in the nature of the enjoined duty; - which is, that God ordinarily waxes to be sought unto, that he may do the great and good thing for us." - "Yes, for all they will" ^{said the Lord,} "I be enquired of by the House of Israel to do it for them." - "Pray ye therefore the Lord of"

It concerns us not, now, to show how prayer prevails with God - in what sense the purposes of him who is "of one mind and who are true him"; and who is "the same yesterday, today and forever"; - or yet inseparably connected with the conduct of his creatures; - or how the sovereignty of Jehovah can consist with the promises made to pious and praying souls. -

It is enough for reason to perceive that the very attitude of supplication places the petitioner in a different relation to God. And it is enough

naught for faith to know that he whose will
is law, and whose word is power, has com-
manded us to "Pray the Lord of the harvest that
he will send forth labourers into his harvest;"
and ^{has} connected ^{with} many a precious promise ~~to~~

the right performance of this duty. -

b. And when it is considered that it is the reason-
able service, the bounden duty of all Subjects,
subjects to obey his will; - and that he who speaks
to us in the text, is, "God our all blessed" ^{more-}
the notion of the enjoined duty, will have been
exhibited according to the plan proposed. -

And what shall be said on this part of the subject?
Is there not a command given? - Does it not bind
us? - May we disobey ^{it} with impunity? -

There are not more weighty reasons, why we
should "do no murder"; - why we should "repent,"
"believe," or obey any other divine commands
than bind us and rest upon us, to obey the com-
mand in our text. - And ^{such persons as} those who fear to
commit murders only, which human as well
as divine laws forbid; - while they scruple not
to commit

to commit other sins, forbidden only by Gods -
may justly conclude their fancied virtue is
only founded in the fear of men and not ⁱⁿ the
fear of God.

III. The motives which should induce us to
perform the duty enjoined in the text, will now
be briefly considered. -

And where can we find mightier motives
than those plainly implied in the notion of the ^(duty?)
^{think of} the command of that God who can and affords
readily will eternally punish or reward, accord-
ing to the degree of our obstinacy or disobedience.
Death is approaching us with hasty strides.
He will certainly plunge his dart into our
bosoms, as we now live and breathe. The event
cannot nor be rendered more certain were our
necks, now suspended on the block of Execu-
tion, and the keen axe now descending to be-
head us. - "And after death the judgments" -
It is not more certain that there is a God, than
that we are immortal. Our immortality is
not more certain, than our eternal retributions.
And it is

And it is not more certain that there is a heaven ^{than an}
en, and eternal rewards, than that there is a hell ^{than an}
and everlasting punishments. - On whose sens-
tence will depend the endless condition of our
souls? - And on whom will the sentence be found-
ed? - He who commands us in our text will
pronounce the sentence "Com e or De profundis" -

And the sentence will be founded on the fact
of ^{our} being Obedient or Disobedient his commands. -

2. Reflect on the consequences flowing to the souls
of others, - the souls of many, - even to unborn genera-

^{ations} - from your obedience or disobedience, + to
- To know - or not to know God! - To believe, or not believe in Christ. - To
be saved. What is the character ^{and} the desert of him who
sleets, or loses forever! - ^{at midnight}

shall see a beam in flames, and feels no wick
and makes no effort to awake or alarm and
save the sleeping family? - And what is tem-
poral death, the death of the body, to the eter-
nal dying of a soul. - And what if some
great and good being should ever interpose
to save the ^{sleeping} family, devoted by the inhuman
unkindness of the supposed individuals to
destruction.

destruction! - Would this alter the nature of
the act - the criminality of the individuals
or the just desert of execution and punishment?

Brethren, souls are to be saved or lost.

Your conduct will have an important
influence upon the endless and inconceivable
degrees of happiness or misery of immor-
tal beings. To save them is your plainest
duty. To save them is most godlike. To
save them is the command of God in our text. -
And soon you and they will be either in
Heaven or in Hell! - Oh Pray - pray ye the

8. Consider the blefefulness of being instru-
mental in the salvation of a soul! -

What is it that will make you love even a bar-
ren shade tree? - Is it not that you have
planted it - you have watered it - you have
protected and cherished it; - and this makes it
dear to you, and its shade more pleasant
than other trees? - Why do parents love
certain children more than others? - It is now
because

because they have given them existence - they
watched over them, and protected and cheris-
hed them, - and taught and feared and prayed and
wept for them? - O, the very fact of seeing
the life of an individual will draw over
our sympathies and affection towards that
individual! Be it known to you, brethren
and sisters, that this is the secret chain, the myster-
ious tie, that links the affections of your
pastors to you; - so that no allurements of
honours or emoluments in another profess-
ion; no distresses of poverty or contempt
in their ministry; no, nor even your un-
faithfulness or unkindness to them, can
seduce or wrench their affections from
you. And thus will it be to all. And
most of all will it thus be in eternity.

You will intensely and eternally love those
to whom you have done the greatest possible
good. And your happiness will be in pro-
portion to your love. And they too will
love you.

love you. And what will be the nature and
degree of that holy felicity which will spring
from having their souls saved by your instaura-
mentality, while bowing around the eternal
stream. Thank God that ever you were born.
That ever his grace inclined and his providence
enabled you to do them good! - And then to
have Angels congratulate you - and the
saints embrace you - and God smile upo-
on you - And Christ say "inasmuch as ye
have done good to one of the least of these
my brethren, ye have done it unto me"! -

III. Is it the language of your hearts' desire -
tell me what is to be done! - Tell me how
this great good ^{work} may be accomplished, this
glorious felicity insured? -

1. Do you desire the salvation of souls? - Then
this is the beginning of preparation for the good
work. - Cherish these desires. Think habitus-
ally on those truths which will make Earth
insignificant - sin loathsome - Hell terrible
and heaven increasingly desirable.

2. Pray

2. Pray, pray, pray for souls! - Besiege the throne of grace in behalf of immortal beings, ruined by sin, dropping momentarily from time into eternity - and rising to heaven, or sinking to hell! - "Pray without ceasing."

3. Do not injure any of them in any way. - You can never gain by their loss. God will not suffer it. - All injuries intended to be done to others, will infallibly injure you more than you can injure others. - "John the Baptist ye offend one of these little ones."

4. "Do good unto all men as you have opportunity." - It was well said by one of old, when a day had passed without doing good to any - "I have lost a day." - It was wisely said by another when from affluence he was reduced to poverty, "I have lost all except what I have given away." - "Make to yourselves friends with the mammon of unrighteousness, that when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations." - Augustus Caesar. & Mark Antony. eternity."

atany." -

5. As first the labourers in this great harvest.
As certainly as "the poor shall be always in the land" to pray and exercise the virtue of charity; and to receive this part of tribute which is due from men to God; - so certainly will those who labour in the gospel harvest always need the help of the pious; to pray and exercise their love to souls; and to receive those loans to the Lord which are to be repaid in heaven with an exceeding and eternal weight of glory. "Nor thus we desire a gift; but we desire fruit which may abound to your account!"

6. To your sinful perishing fellow men, send those who will preach the gospel of Christ. "For after that in the wisdom of ^{God} ~~men~~, the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." A preached gospel is "the wisdom of God and the power of God to the salvation of saints" - It is the love of Christ, that, "who
so shall

"so shall call on the name of the Lord shall be
"saved. But how shall they call on him in whom
"they have not believed? And how shall they be
"lieve in him of whom they have not heard? -
"And how shall they have without a preacher? -
"And how shall they preach except they be
"sent?" -

IV. But, in the last place, will any say, these duties just mentioned, ^{though} are general in import, are general. Tell us what we may do now!

Brethren, by the mysterious providence of God, I am again, within two years, called upon to plead before you the cause of the Georgia Presbyterian Education Society. - With the object of this Society you are doubtless acquainted. With the reasons, which compelled us to confine its efforts to one branch of the Christian Church, I hope many of you are familiar. -

The beneficiaries of this Society - our dear young men - the hope of our churches - are be-
see the note in the first page. fare

face you. They are preparing to become
labourers in this great harvest. In answer,
we trust, to our many prayers, the Lord
of ^{the} harvest has sent them hither to us. -

To those of you who swear allegiance to
Christ - who acknowledge the obligations of
the duty enjoined in our test - and feel the
force of what has been, alas! but feebly said -
we now say, help us to help them! -

Are there any here who will say in their
hearts "Speakest thou this to Presbyterians
only - or even to all of us?" Is not your
Society a Presbyterian Society - a Sectarian
Society? - Shall we who do not belong to
your Society - and who belong to other so-
cieties - to rival societies - shall we help
you to increase and prosper at our expense?

If there be such individuals present, May
God pardon and enlighten them! -

Brothers, while there is but "One Lord - one faith -
one baptism -

"one baptism" - yet, great is the army of the living God. And the number of its hosts increases with each revolving year. The Captain of Salvation is pleased to divide this vast and growing army into distinct columns; and to subdivide these columns into different companies; each with its appointed officers, and appropriate banners; - but all acting under one acknowledged head, and aiming at one grand object.

When, then, some humble subaltern soldier recruits for one of these companies, he does the others no injury. He endeavours to increase the same great army of the Lord of hosts. He does only that which is his duty to do. And in his success all the officers and soldiers of the camp - every member of this sacred army ought to rejoice. - We now leave our cause with you. We commend it unto him who says in the text "Pray ye the Lord of the heavens after he will send forth labourers into his harvest."

The intention of Education is obviously to prepare the person for the duties of mature age, and active life.

For this purpose two things are indispensably necessary: viz. Knowledge, and good habits. i.e. To store the mind with such ideas, and truths, as will fit the person for the ^{is} expected station in life; and to habituate them to such a course of conduct, as will be expected of them in after life.

Under the first head, of Education, i.e. Knowledge - there are two very different kinds of Education - The Superficial, and The Solid.

1. The superficial consists in giving rather the Appearance of Knowledge, than

than knowledge itself. It is to be ef-
fected by hurrying the student rap-
idly over a number of different stu-
dies; and teaching ~~of~~ ^{only} so much of
each, as will suffice to deceive
both the pupil and the friend, in-
to a belief of proficiency.

This mode is resorted to either to please
the friends of the pupil, with the
appearance of rapid attainment;
or to promote the reputation and
emoluments of the Instructor,
~~from~~ ^{by} the appearance of unusual
fidelity, or uncommon success
in teaching. The evils of such
an Education are great and manifold.
It is a deception, or an oblique.
It induces a false belief in the pu-
pil

pit, of being Educated, when such ex-
perience will prove the fallacy. -

It is apt to puff up the individuals
with a false conceit of know-
ledge, and thus subject them to ridic-
ule, mortification, disappoint-
ment, neglect and contempt. - And
it ordinarily robs them of the Only
Season in which real Knowledge
is attainable. So that the injury
done, is too often irreparable! -

Time is the stern and certain detec-
tor of this imposture. But it is
possible for a judicious and reflect-
ing mind to decide even from an
ordinary examination of a school,
whether this system of deceit is ha-
bitually practiced. For if the pupils

peers, generally, altho' of different
ages, abilities, and many other va-
riety ^{circumstances} of circumstances, are all pursuing
the same course of Education;—
are all dipping into small parts
of the same authors, and conning
over shreds, of the same treatises;—
and above all, if a whole school
at an examination shall appear
to have made the same progress
in science—and all to the same
degree in every branch of Science;—
the suspicion is justifiable, indeed
unavoidable, that some artificial
means have been resorted to, to
hide and level ^{notive} their inequali-
ties, which every man of sense
knows must exist in such a case.

1th. That a solid education, is more
an of real knowledge. In such
an education things are necessary

1st - That the Education be suited to
the sex and anticipated circumstances
or situation of the individual.

2. That it be the best of its kind - &

3. That it be communicated in a judi-
cious and methodical manner.