

Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit.

OUR MOTTO.

A Sermon

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“With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men.”—Ephesians vi. 7.

THIS sentence was expressly addressed, in the first place, to “servants,” which term includes, and first of all intends, those who unhappily were slaves. There were many slaves in the Roman Empire, and the form of bondage which then existed was of the bitterest kind. I can imagine a slave becoming a Christian and so finding peace as to his former guilt, and obtaining renewal of heart; and then, although rejoicing in the Lord, I can well conceive that he would often be downcast in view of his sad condition as a bondsman. I see him sitting down and moaning to himself, “I am a bondsman under a tyrant master. I have already endured many cruelties, and may expect many more. I would be free, but there is no hope of escape, since there is no place to which I can flee, for Cæsar’s arm is long, and would reach me at the very ends of the earth. I cannot purchase my liberty, nor earn it by long years of faithful servitude; neither can my fellow-bondsmen effect our deliverance by rebellion, for this has been tried and has ended in terrible bloodshed. I am hopelessly a slave. What shall I do? How shall I sustain my fate? My life is well-nigh intolerable: would to God it were at an end.” I can imagine the poor bondsman going to his cramped up bed under the stair—for in any hole or corner the Roman slave might find such little rest as was allowed him—and there he would almost wish to sleep himself into another world. Being a Christian, as I have supposed, he pours out his heart before God in prayer, and in answer to his cry the Lord Jesus sets before him the rich consolation which he has provided for all that mourn,—consolation strong enough to enable him to endure to the end, and glorify the name of Jesus even under such hard conditions. While yet troubled in mind this freeman of the Lord, who is yet in bonds to man, is met by the Saviour himself. He appears to him—I will not say in such form as could be perceived by the eyes, but in vision clear enough to be exceedingly influential over his spirit. Jesus stands before him. The five wounds adorning him like precious rubies are infallible tokens; the face lit up with an unearthly splendour is still marked with

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the old lines of sorrow, and the head bears the thorn-crown still about its brow. The poor slave casts himself at his Redeemer's feet with astonishment, with awe, and with intense delight; and then I think I hear those dear lips, which are as lilies dropping sweet-smelling myrrh, saying to his poor servant, "Fulfil thy service bravely. Do it unto me. Forget thy tyrant master and remember only me. Bear on, work on, suffer on, and do all as unto me, and not unto men." Then I think I see the broken-hearted captive rising up refreshed with inward strength, and I hear him say, "I will even bear the yoke until my Lord shall call me away. Unless his providence shall open for me a door of liberty I will patiently abide where I am and suffer all his will; hopefully and joyfully serving because *he* bids me do it for his sake." A vision which would so greatly comfort the poor Roman slave in his extremity may well stand before each one of us. Let us each hear our Saviour say, "Live unto me, and do all for my sake." Our service is so much more pleasant and easy than that of slaves, let us perform it "with good will doing service, as unto the Lord, and not to men." Our princely motto is "I serve:" be this sentence emblazoned on our banner, and used as the battle-cry of life's campaign.

Notice well that the Holy Spirit does not bid us leave our stations in order to serve the Lord. He does not bid us forego the domestic relations which make us husbands or wives, parents or children, masters or servants; he does not suggest to us to put on a peculiar garb, and seek the seclusion of a hermitage, or the retirement of monastic or conventual life. Nothing of the kind is hinted at, but he bids the servant continue in his or her service—"with good will doing service." Our great Captain would not have you hope to win the victory by leaving your post. He would have you abide in your trade, calling, or profession, and all the while serve the Lord in it, doing the will of God from the heart in common things. This is the practical beauty of our holy faith, that when it casts the devil out of a man it sends him home to bless his friends by telling them how great things the Lord has done for him. Grace does not transplant the tree, but bids it overshadow the old house at home as before, and bring forth good fruit where it is. Grace does not make us unearthly, though it makes us unworldly. True religion distinguishes us from others, even as our Lord Jesus was separate from sinners, but it does not shut us up or hedge us round about as if we were too good or too tender for the rough usage of everyday life. It does not put us in the salt box and shut the lid down, but it casts us in among our fellow-men for their good. Grace makes us the servants of God while still we are the servants of men: it enables us to do the business of heaven while we are attending to the business of earth: it sanctifies the common duties of life by showing us how to perform them in the light of heaven. The love of Christ makes the lowliest acts sublime. As the sunlight brightens a landscape and sheds beauty over the commonest scene, so does the presence of the Lord Jesus. The spirit of consecration renders the offices of domestic servitude as sublime as the worship which is presented upon the sea of glass before the eternal throne, by spirits to whom the courts of heaven are their familiar home.

I suggest my text to all believers as the motto of their lives.

Whether we are servants or masters, whether we are poor or rich, let us take this as our watchword, "*As to the Lord, and not to men.*" Henceforth may this be the engraving of our seal and the motto of our coat of arms; the constant rule of our life, and the sum of our motive. In advocating this gracious aim of our being, let me say that if we are enabled to adopt this motto it will, first of all, *influence our work itself*; and, secondly, it will *elevate our spirit concerning that work*. Yet let me add, thirdly, that if the Lord shall really be the all in all of our lives, *it is after all only what he has a right to expect*, and what we are under a thousand obligations to give to him.

I. Our subject opens with this reflection, that if henceforth whether we live we live unto the Lord, or whether we die we die unto the Lord, **THIS CONSECRATION WILL GREATLY INFLUENCE OUR ENTIRE WORK.** Do you say, my brother, that henceforth your whole life shall be a service of the Lord? Then it will follow, first, that you will have to live *with a single eye to his glory*. See how in verse 5 we are told, "Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ." If we do indeed live "as to the Lord," we must needs live wholly to the Lord. The Lord Jesus is a most engrossing Master. He has said, "No man can serve two masters," and we shall find it so. He will have everything or nothing. If indeed he be our Lord he must be sole sovereign, for he will not brook a rival. It comes to pass then, O Christian, that you are bound to live for Jesus and for him alone. You must have no co-ordinate or even secondary object or divided aim: if you do divide your heart your life will be a failure. As no dog can follow two hares at one time, or he will lose both, certainly no man can follow two contrary objects and hope to secure either of them. No, it behoves a servant of Christ to be a concentrated man: his affections should be bound up into one affection, and that affection should not be set on things on the earth, but on things above; his heart must not be divided, or it will be said of him as of those in Hosea, "Their heart is divided; now shall they be found wanting." The chamber of the heart is far too narrow to accommodate the King of kings and the world, or the flesh, or the devil, at the same time. We have no wish, desire, ambition, or exertion to spare for a rival lord, the service of Jesus demands and deserves all. Such is the eminence of this object, that all a man hath or can have of reason or strength must be spent this way if he is to win. Nor is this too much for our great Lord to expect from those for whom he has done so much. To whom should I give a part of myself, my Master? Thou hast redeemed me wholly, and I am altogether thine, take thou full possession of me! Who else can be worthy of my heart? Who else can have a right to set foot within the province whereof thou art the King? Nay, rule alone, thou blessed and only Potentate! As thou alone hast redeemed me, treading the winepress of wrath alone for me, so shalt thou be sole monarch of my soul! Thou art all my salvation and all my desire, and therefore thou shalt have all my homage and service. With such a Lord to be served the current of our life must run in one sole channel, that he may have it all and none may run to waste.

Next, to do service to the Lord *we must live with holy carefulness*, for what saith the context? We are to serve "with fear and trembling."

In the service of God we should use great care to accomplish our very best, and we should feel a deep anxiety to please him in all things. There is a trade called paper-staining, in which a man flings colours upon the paper to make common wall decorations, and by rapid processes acres of paper can be speedily finished. Suppose that the paper-stainer should laugh at an eminent artist because he had covered such a little space, having been stippling and shading a little tiny piece of his picture by the hour together, such ridicule would itself be ridiculous. Now the world's way of religion is the paper-stainer's way, the daubing way ; there is plenty of it, and it is quickly done ; but God's way, the narrow way, is a careful matter ; there is but little of it, and it costs thought, effort, watchfulness, and care. Yet see how precious is the work of art when it is done, and how long it lasts, and you will not wonder that a man spends his time upon it : even so true godliness is acceptable with God, and it endures for ever, and therefore it well repays the earnest effort of the man of God. The miniature painter has to be very careful of every touch and tint, for a very little may spoil his work ; let our life be miniature painting ; "with fear and trembling" let it be wrought out. We are serving the thrice Holy God, who will be had in reverence of them that come near to him, let us mind what we do. Our blessed Master never made a faulty stroke when he was serving his Father ; he never lived a careless hour, nor let drop an idle word. Oh, it was a careful life he lived : even the night watches were not without the deep anxieties which poured themselves forth in prayer unto God ; and if you and I think that the first thing which comes to hand will do to serve our God with, we make a great mistake, and grossly insult his name. We must have a very low idea of his infinite majesty if we think that we can honour him by doing his service half-heartedly, or in a slovenly style. No, if you will indeed live "as to the Lord, and not unto man," you must watch each motion of your heart and life, or you will fail in your design.

Living as to the Lord means living with a concentrated spirit, and living with earnest care that our one service may be the best of which we are capable when at our best estate. Alas, how poor is that best when we reach it ! Truly, when we have done all we are unprofitable servants, but that all is seldom reached.

Further, if henceforth our desire is to live "as to the Lord, and not unto men," then *what we do must be done with the heart*. "In singleness of your heart," says the context ; and again in the sixth verse, "As the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart." Our work for Jesus must be the outgrowth of the soil of the heart. Our service must not be performed as a matter of routine : there must be vigour, power, freshness, reality, eagerness, and warmth about it, or it will be good for nothing. No fish ever came upon God's altar because it could not come there alive ; the Lord wants none of your dead, heartless worship. You know what is meant by putting heart into all that we do ; explain it by your lives. A work which is to be accepted of the Lord must be heart-work throughout ; not a few thoughts of Christ occasionally, and a few chill words, and a few chance gifts, and a little done by way of by-play, but as the heart beats so must we serve God : it must be our very life. We are not to treat our religion as though it were a

sort of off-hand farm which we were willing to keep going but not to make much of, our chief thoughts being engrossed with the home farm of self and the world, with its gains and pleasures. Our Lord will be *aut Cæsar aut nullus*, either ruler or nothing. My Master is a jealous husband: he will not tolerate a stray thought of love elsewhere, and he thinks it scorn that they who call themselves his beloved should love others better than himself. Such unchastity of heart can never be permitted, let us not dream of it.

We may not claim to be his if we give him only lip service, and brain service, and hand service; he must have the heart. Oh, our beloved Lord, thou didst not spare thy heart from agony for us, the lance set it abroach with all its costly double flood for our unworthy sakes; therefore thou canst not be content to receive in return lifeless forms and cold pretences. Thou didst live indeed; there was no sham about thy life. In all thou didst thou wast intense. The zeal of thy Father's house had eaten thee up. Thou wast clad with zeal as with a cloak which covered thee from head to foot. Let us live somewhat after this glorious fashion, for thy servant only truly lives when he lives as his Master. "He that is perfect shall be as his Master." If we are to live to the Lord, the fountains of our soul must flow with boiling floods, and our life must be like a great Icelandic geyser casting up its columns of water, which seethe and boil as they rise. As great earthquakes shake the very centre, so must there be movements of life within us which stir our soul with vehement longings for Jesus, and with intense yearnings for his glory. All our light and life must turn to love, and that love must be all on flame for Jesus. If we truly live unto Christ it must be so.

What else saith the passage before us? If we say,—henceforth I will do the will of God as to the Lord and not unto men, then we must do it *under subjection*: for note well the words, "doing the will of God." Some people's religion is only another way of doing their own will. They pick and choose what precepts they shall keep and what they shall neglect, what doctrines they shall hold and what they shall refuse: their spirit is not bowed into sacred servitude, but takes licence to act according to its own pleasure. The freedom of a Christian lies in what I will venture to call an absolute slavery to Christ; and we never become truly free till every thought is brought into subjection to the will of the Most High. Now if henceforth I live to God, I have no longer any right to say, "I will do this or that," but I must inquire, "My Master, what wouldst thou have me to do?" As the eyes of the maidens are to their mistress, so are our eyes up to thee, O Lord. Believer, thy Master is to will for thee henceforth. It is idle to say, "I shall live as to the Lord, and not unto men," when all the while we intend to live in our own fashion. Which is to be master now, self or Christ? On every point this question must be settled: for if on any point we assume the personal mastery the rule of Jesus is wholly refused. To go or to stand still, to suffer or to be in pleasure, to be in honour or to be in disgrace, is no more to be at our option, or if we have a momentary choice it is to be cheerfully resigned before the sovereignty of him whom we have now taken to be our all in all. There is no being a Christian if Christ does not have the throne in the heart and life. It is but the mockery of

Christianity to call Jesus Master and Lord while we do not the things which he commands.

Again, *we must do all this under a sense of the Divine oversight.* Notice in verse 6 it is said of servants, "Not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers." What a mean and beggarly thing it is for a man only to do his work well when he is watched. Such oversight is for boys at school and mere hirelings. You never think of watching noble-spirited men. Here is a young apprentice set to copy a picture: his master stands over him and looks over each line, for the young scapegrace will grow careless and spoil his work, or take to his games if he be not well looked after. Did anybody thus dream of supervising Raphael and Michael Angelo to keep them to their work? No, the master artist requires no eye to urge him on. Popes and emperors came to visit the great painters in their studios, but did they paint the better because these grandees gazed upon them? Certainly not; perhaps they did all the worse in the excitement or the worry of the visit. They had regard to something better than the eye of pompous personages. So the true Christian wants no eye of man to watch him. There may be pastors and preachers who are the better for being looked after by bishops and presbyters; but fancy a bishop overseeing the work of Martin Luther, and trying to quicken his zeal; or imagine a presbyter looking after Calvin to keep him sound in the faith. Oh, no; gracious minds outgrow the governance and stimulus which comes of the oversight of mortal man. God's own Spirit dwells within us, and we serve the Lord from an inward principle, which is not fed from without. There is about a real Christian a prevailing sense that God sees him, and he does not care who else may set his eye upon him; it is enough for him that God is there. He hath small respect to the eye of man, he neither courts nor dreads it. Let the good deed remain in the dark, for God sees it there, and that is enough; or let it be blazoned in the light of day to be pecked at by the censorious, for it little matters who censures since God approves. This is to be a true servant of Christ: to escape from being an eye-servant to men by becoming in the sublimest sense an eye-servant, working ever beneath the eye of God. If we did but realize this, how well we should live! If now I recollect, as I try to do, that God hears each word I speak to you from this pulpit; that he reads my soul as I address you in his name, how ought I to preach? And if you go to your Sabbath-school class this afternoon, and picture Jesus sitting among the boys and girls, and hearing how you teach them, how earnestly you will teach. At home when you are about to scold a servant; or in the shop, when you think to do a rather sharp thing, if you think your Master stands there and sees it all, what a power it will have over you! Our lives should all be spent under the spell of "Thou God seest me," and we should each be able to declare, "I have set the Lord always before me."

One more thought, and it is this. If henceforth we are to serve the Lord, and not men, then *we must look to the Lord for our reward, and not to men.* "Knowing," saith the eighth verse, "that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free." Wage! Is that the motive of a Christian? Yes, in the highest sense, for the greatest of the saints, such as Moses, have "had respect unto the recompense of the reward," and it were like despising the

reward which God promises to his people if we had no respect whatever unto it. Respect unto the reward which cometh of God kills the selfishness which is always expecting a reward from men. We can postpone our reward, and we can be content instead of receiving present praise, to be misunderstood and misrepresented: we can postpone our reward, and we can endure instead thereof to be disappointed in our work, and to labour on without success, 'or when the reward does come how glorious it will be! An hour with Jesus will make up for a lifetime of persecution! One smile from him will repay us a thousand times over for all disappointments and discouragements.

Thus you see, brethren, that if we do in very deed make this our rule and maxim—"As to the Lord, and not to men"—our work will be shaped and fashioned most wonderfully. May God grant that the influence of this motive may manifestly sway our whole life henceforth, until we close it for this world, and commence it anew where we shall not need to shift our course, but shall continue eternally to live to the Lord alone.

II. May the Holy Spirit guide us while we reflect, secondly, that should this text become the inspiration of our life IT WOULD GREATLY ELEVATE OUR SPIRITS. What would it do for us? First, *it would lift us above all complaining* about the hardness of our lot, or the difficulty of our service. "Alas," says one, "I am worn out. I cannot keep on at this rate. My position is so terribly trying that I cannot hold on much longer: it strains not only muscle and sinew, but nerve and heart. Nobody could bear my burden long: my husband is cruel, my friend is unkind, my children are ungrateful." Ah, poor heart, there are many others who wear the weeping-willow as well as thyself. But be of good courage, and look at thy case in another light. If the burden is to be borne for Jesus' sake, who loved thee and gave himself for thee, by whose precious blood thou art redeemed from the pains of hell, canst thou not bear it? Canst thou not bear it? "That is quite another thing," say you: "I could not bear it for a sneering master: I could not bear it for a passionate, froward mistress, but I could do anything and I could bear anything for Jesus." This makes all the difference—

"For him I count as gain each loss,
Disgrace for him, renown;
Well may I glory in his cross,
While he prepares my crown!"

We are satisfied to bear any cross so long as it is *his* cross. What wonders men can do when they are influenced by enthusiastic love for a leader! Alexander's troops marched thousands of miles on foot, and they would have been utterly wearied had it not been for their zeal for Alexander. He led them forth conquering and to conquer. Alexander's presence was the life of their valour, the glory of their strength. If there was a very long day's march over burning sands, one thing they knew,—that Alexander marched with them; if they were thirsty, they knew that he thirsted too, for when one brought a cup of water to the king, he put it aside, thirsty as he was, and said, "Give it to the sick soldier." Once it so happened that they were loaded with the spoil which they had taken, and each man had become rich with goodly garments and wedges of gold; then they began to travel very

slowly with so much to carry, and the king feared that he should not overtake his foe. Having a large quantity of spoil which fell to his own share, he burned it all before the eyes of his soldiers and bade them do the like that they might pursue the enemy and win even more. "Alexander's portion lies beyond," cried he, and seeing the king's own spoils on fire his warriors were content to give up their gains also and share with their king. He did himself what he commanded others to do : in self-denial and hardship he was a full partaker with his followers. After this fashion our Lord and Master acts towards us. He says, "Renounce pleasure for the good of others. Deny yourself, and take up your cross. Suffer, though you might avoid it ; labour, though you might rest, when God's glory demands suffering or labour of you. Have not I set you an example ?" "Who, though he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor, that we through his poverty might be rich." He stripped himself of all things that he might clothe us with his glory. O, brothers and sisters, when we heartily serve such a leader as this, and are fired by his spirit, then murmuring, and complaining, and weariness, and fainting of heart are altogether fled : a divine passion carries us beyond ourselves.

"I can do all things, or can bear
All suffering if my Lord be there."

Next, *this lifts the Christian above the spirit of stinting*. I believe great numbers of working men—I am not going to judge them for it—always consider how little they can possibly do to earn their wages, and the question with them is not, "How much can we give for the wage?" that used to be ; but, "How little can we give? How little work can we do in the day, without being discharged for idleness?" Many men say, "We must not do all the work to-day, for we shall need something to do to-morrow : our masters will not give us more than they can help, and therefore we will not give them more than we are obliged to." This is the general spirit on both sides, and as a nation we are going to the dogs because that spirit is among us ; and we shall be more and more beaten by foreign competition if this spirit is cultivated. Among Christians such a notion cannot be tolerated in the service of our Lord Jesus. It never does for a minister to say, "If I preach three times a week it is quite as much as anybody will expect of me ; therefore I shall do no more." It will never be right for you to say, "I am a Sabbath-school teacher ; if I get into the class to the minute—some of you do not do that—and if I stop just as long as the class lasts, I need not look after the boys and girls through the week ; I cannot be bothered with them : I will do just as much as I am bound to do, but no more." In a certain country town it was reported that the grocer's wife cut a plum in two, for fear there should be a grain more than weight in the parcel, and the folks called her Mrs. Split-plum. Ah, there are many Split-plums in religion. They do not want to do more for Jesus than may be absolutely necessary. They would like to give good weight, but they would be sorry to be convicted of doing too much. Ah, when we get to feel we are doing service for our Lord Jesus Christ, we adopt a far more liberal scale. Then we do not calculate how much ointment will suffice for his feet, but we give him all that our box contains. Is this

your talk, "Here, bring the scales, this ointment cost a great deal of money, we must be economical. Watch every drachm, yea, every scruple and grain, for the nard is costly"? If this be your cool manner of calculation your offering is not worth a fig. Not so spake that daughter of love of whom we read in the gospels, for she brake the box and poured out all the contents upon her Lord. "To what purpose is this waste?" cried Judas. It was Judas who thus spoke, and you know therefore the worth of the observation. Christ's servants delight to give so much as to be thought wasteful, for they feel that when they have in the judgment of others done extravagantly for Christ, they have but begun to show their hearts' love for his dear name. Thus the elevating power of the spirit of consecration lifts us up above the wretched parsimony of mere formality.

Again, *this raises us up above all boasting of our work.* "Is the work good enough?" said one to his servant. The man replied, "Sir, it is good enough for the price: and it is good enough for the man who is going to have it." Just so, and when we "serve" men we may perhaps rightly judge in that fashion, but when we come to serve Christ, is anything good enough for him? Could our zeal know no respite, could our prayers know no pause, could our efforts know no relaxation, could we give all we have of time, wealth, talent, and opportunity, could we die a martyr's death a thousand times, would not he, the Best Beloved of our souls, deserve far more? Ah, that he would. Therefore is self-congratulation banished for ever. When you have done all, you will feel that it is not worthy of the matchless merit of Jesus, and you will be humbled at the thought. Thus, while doing all for Jesus stimulates zeal, it fosters humility, a happy blending of useful effects.

The resolve to do all as unto the Lord will elevate you above *that craving for recognition which is a disease with many.* It is a sad fault in many Christians that they cannot do anything unless all the world is told of it. The hen in the farm-yard has laid an egg, and feels so proud of the achievement that she must cackle about it: everybody must know of that one poor egg till all the country round resounds with the news. It is so with some professors: their work must be published, or they can do no more. "Here have I," said one, "been teaching in the school for years, and nobody ever thanked me for it; I believe that some of us who do the most are the least noticed, and what a shame it is." But if you have done your service unto the Lord you should not talk so, or we shall suspect you of having other aims. The servant of Jesus will say, "I do not want human notice. I did it for the Master; he noticed me, and I am content. I tried to please him, and I did please him, and therefore I ask no more, for I have gained my end. I seek no praise of men, for I fear lest the breath of human praise should tarnish the pure silver of my service."

This would *lift you above the discouragement which sometimes comes of human censure.* If you seek the praise of men you will in all probability fail in the present, and certainly you will lose it in the future sooner or later. Many men are more ready to censure than to commend; and to hope for their praise is to seek for sugar in a root of wormwood. Man's way of judging is unjust, and seems fashioned on purpose to blame all of us one way or another. Here is a brother who sings bass, and the critics say,

"Oh yes, a very fine bass voice, but he could not sing treble." Here is another who excels in treble, and they say, "Yes, yes, but we prefer a tenor." When they find a tenor they blame him because he cannot take the bass. No one can be candidly praised, but all must be savagely censured. What will the great Master say about it? Will he not judge thus—"I have given this man a bass voice, and he sings bass, and that is what I meant him to do: I gave that man a tenor voice, and he sings tenor, and that is what I meant him to do: I gave that man a treble voice, and he sings treble, and so takes the part I meant him to take. All the parts blended together make up sweet music for my ears"? Wisdom is justified of her children, but folly blames them all round. How little we ought to care about the opinions and criticisms of our fellow-men when we recollect that he who made us what we are, and helps us by his grace to act our part, will not judge us after the mode in which men carp or flatter, but will accept us according to the sincerity of our hearts. If we feel, "I was not working for you; I was working for God," we shall not be much wounded by our neighbours' remarks. The nightingale charms the ear of night. A fool passes by, and declares that he hates such distracting noises. The nightingale sings on, for it never entered the little minstrel's head or heart that it was singing for critics: it sings because he who created it gave it this sweet faculty. So may we reply to those who condemn us,—"*We live not unto you, O men; we live unto our Lord.*" Thus do we escape the discouragements which come of ungenerous misapprehension and jealous censure.

This, too, will elevate you above the disappointments of non-success, ay, even of the saddest kind. If those you seek to bless be not saved, yet you have not altogether failed, for you did not teach or preach having the winning of souls as the absolute ultimatum of your work, you did it with the view of pleasing Jesus, and he is pleased with faithfulness even where it is not accompanied with success. Sincere obedience is his delight even if it lead to no apparent result. If the Lord should set his servant to plough the sea or sow the sand he would accept his service. If we should have to witness for Christ's name to stocks and stones, and our hearers should be even worse than blocks of marble, and should turn again and rend us, we may still be filled with contentment, for we shall have done our Lord's will, and what more do we want? To plod on under apparent failure is one of the most acceptable of all works of faith, and he who can do it year after year is assuredly well-pleasing unto God.

This lifts us above disappointment in the prospect of death. We shall have to go away from our work soon, so men tell us, and we are apt to fret about it. The truth is we shall go on with our work for ever if our service is pleasing to the Lord. We shall please him up yonder even better than we do here. And what if our enterprise here should seem to end, as far as man is concerned, we have done it unto the Lord, and our record is on high, and therefore it is not lost. Nothing that is done for Jesus will be destroyed: the flower may fade, but its essence remains; the tree may fall, but its fruit is stored; the cluster may be crushed, but the wine is preserved; the work and its place may pass away, but the glory which it brought to Jesus shines as the stars for ever and ever.

Ay, and *this lifts us above the deadening influence of age* and the infirmities which come with multiplied years. What little we can do we do it

all the more thoroughly for Jesus as our experience ripens. If we must contract the sphere, we condense and intensify the motive. If we are living unto Christ, we love him even when our heart grows cold to other things. When the eye grows dim earthwards, it brightens towards heaven; when the ear can hardly hear the voice of singing men and singing women, it knows the music of Jesus' name; and when the hand can do little in human business, it begins feeling for the strings of its celestial harp that it may make melody for the Well-beloved. I know of nothing which can possibly elevate our spirit as workers for Christ like the sense of doing all unto the Lord and not unto men. May the Spirit of God help us to rise into this perfect consecration.

I have not time to say more than just this word. A due sense of serving the Lord would ennoble all our service beyond conception. Think of working *for him*,—for him, the best of masters, before whom angels count it glory to bow. Work done for him is in itself the best work that can be, for all that pleases him must be pure and lovely, honest and of good report. Work for the eternal Father and work for Jesus are works which are good and only good. To live for Jesus is to be swayed by the noblest of motives. To live for the incarnate God is to blend the love of God and the love of men in one passion. To live for the ever-living Christ is elevating to the soul, for its results will be most enduring. When all other work is dissolved this shall abide. Men spake of painting for eternity, but we in very deed serve for eternity.

Soon shall all worlds behold the nobility of the service of Christ, for it will bring with it the most blessed of all rewards. When men look back on what they have done for their fellows, how small is the recompense of a patriotic life! The world soon forgets its benefactors. Many and many a man has been borne aloft in youth amidst the applause of men, and then in his old age he has been left to starve into his grave. He who scattered gold at first, begs pence at last: the world called him generous while he had something to give, and when he had bestowed all it blamed his imprudence. He who lives for Jesus will never have ground of complaint concerning his Lord, for he forsaketh not his saints. Never man regretted ought he did for Jesus yet, save that he may regret that he has not done ten times more. The Lord will not leave his old servants. "O God, thou hast taught me from my youth: and hitherto have I declared thy wondrous works; now also when I am old and grey-headed, O God, forsake me not," such was the prayer of David, and he was confident of being heard. Such may be the confidence of every servant of Christ. He may go down to his grave untroubled; he may rise and enter the dread solemnities of the eternal world without a fear, for service for Christ creates heroes to whom fear is unknown.

III. I close by saying, that if we enter into the very spirit of this discourse, or even go beyond it,—if henceforth we live for Jesus only, so as never to know pleasure apart from him, nor to have treasure out of him, nor honour but in his honour, nor success save in the progress of his kingdom, **WE SHALL EVEN THEN HAVE DONE NO MORE THAN HE DESERVES AT OUR HANDS.** For, first, we are God's *creatures*. For whom should a creature live but for his Creator? Secondly, we are his *new creatures*, we are the twice-born of heaven; should we not live for him by whom we have been begotten for glory? As many as

have believed in Jesus are the produce of that divine power which raised the Son of God from the dead, shall they not live in newness of life? God has taken this pains with us, that he has made us twice over, and he has made a new heaven and a new earth for us to dwell in; whom should we serve with all our mind but him by whom we have been made anew? Then comes in *redemption*. We are not our own, for we are bought with a price. We dare not be selfish: we may not put self in opposition to God, but I must go further,—we may not allow self to be at all considered apart from God. Even when it seems that self and God might both be served at the same time, it must not be; self in any degree will spoil all. We are never to be masters, but servants always; and to serve ourselves is to make ourselves masters. Turn thine eyes, O my heart, to the cross and see *him* bleeding there whom heaven adored: he is the light of glory, the joy and bliss of perfect spirits, and yet he dieth there in pangs unutterable—dieth for me. O bleeding heart, my name was engraven upon thee! O tortured brain, thy thoughts were all of me! O Christ, thou lovedst me and lovest me still, and that I should serve thee seemeth but natural; that I should pray to serve with intense white-hot enthusiasm is an impulse of my life. Do you not confess it so, my brethren? Besides, remember you are *one with Christ*. Whom should the spouse serve but her husband? Whom should the hand serve but the head? It scarce is service. Christ is your *alter ego*, your other self—no, your very self; should you not live for him? You are bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh and therefore you must love him. Let a divine selfishness impel you to love your Lord. No hand, methinks, counts it hard to be serving his own head. Sure, it can be no hardness to do service to him with whom we are joined by bonds and bands of vital union. He is our head, and we are his body and his fulness. Let us fill up his glory; let us spread abroad the praises of his name. God help us to finish this sermon never, but to begin it now and go on preaching it in our lives world without end. For heaven shall lie in this: “Not unto us, not unto us, but to thy name be praise;” and the beginnings of heaven are with us now, the youth, the dawn of glory, in proportion while we say from our very souls, “Whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord; whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord’s.” And so shall it be henceforth and for ever.

As to those that know nothing of this, seeing they know not Christ, may the Lord bring them to believe in Jesus Christ this day, that they may through his grace become his servants. Amen and amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Luke vi.

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK.”—145, 660, 661.