

GOOD NEWS

A Collection of Sermons

by

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SERMON ONE

JUSTICE AND HONESTY

We invite your attention to the eighth verse of the fourth and last chapter of Paul to the Philippians. And there Paul gives us a clear, philosophical, succinct idea of what the gospel is.

We have been misled, perhaps some of us, as to what Christianity is; we have heard much on the subject of the terms of discipleship; we have heard a great deal about repentance for sins committed; we have read a good deal about pardon and heard a good deal on that subject. We have heard a thousand sermons, more or less, on the subject of faith, and many on the subject of regeneration and sanctification, but here is a clear, sensible, philosophical statement as to what Christianity is. Paul begins this verse with this word **“finally;”** finally! **“finally, brethren,”** as much as to say. “I have written many things previous to this. I have said many things in your hearing, but, brethren, you may forget all I have said, and take your eye off all I have written, if you will just fix your mind and memory on what I am going to say now (for I will now give you the whole thing in a nutshell), you can get hold of this, it is brought to you clearly and plainly.

“Finally, brethren, now, whatever you may remember, whatever you may have read from me,

FORGETTING ALL

Fix your mind now on what I am going to say. Finally, brethren, I will sum it all up in a word.

“Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think — think! think! on these things.”

As a man thinks, so he is. What I think to-day will determine what I may be doing to-morrow. The actions of this day are the embodied thoughts of yesterday. As a man thinks, so he is. Let me know what you are thinking about to-day, and I will tell you what you will be doing to-morrow. A man partakes of the nature of the thing he is looking at with his mind and eye. You may bring into my presence now a coffin and in it a corpse, you may take off the lid and I put my mind and eye intently upon the picture before me, and the first thing I know I am saturated with a gloom and melancholy from head to foot; I partake of the nature of the thing I look at.

You may bring in a beautiful bouquet of flowers, and I put my mind and eye intently upon that bouquet, and the first thing I know my whole nature is saturated with the aroma and beauty of the flowers; I partake of the nature of the thing I look at, hence God tells us He will keep him in perfect peace whose mind and heart is in Him.

And, brethren, we have something to do with the creation of the world around us. And then we

PARTAKE LARGELY

Morally, I mean, of the world in which we live.

I have said before, I repeat it, we go along singing “Sweet Bye and Bye.” We are ever looking to the “Sweet Bye and Bye.” Look here, brethren, I have quit singing “Sweet Bye and Bye,” and I am singing “Sweet Now and Now.” I want it here now, you know.

I tell you here is the place for it, and now. I would rather have more heaven here now and less of it hereafter. I need it more now. I am by this, as I am by “heavenly recognition.” A great many preachers are continually preaching on heavenly recognition. Well, that don’t trouble me at all. I don’t care so much about heavenly recognition, but what I want is earthly recognition. I am a poor fellow; I fall about; I am weak and poor and helpless.

Brethren, we want earthly recognition — please recognize me. I am here, and help me all you can, but when I get to glory, and sit down under the shade of the tree of life, and take my harp and strike the chords, if you do not want to recognize me then, don’t do it — God bless you, I’m all right then, and I don’t care for your recognition. I want heaven in Illinois and in Georgia and all about me. And he who thinks and sees only goodness, mercy, glory, and blessings with his own eye, shall live and die in a perfect

ATMOSPHERE OF HEAVEN

Brethren, let’s have some more of it down here now. Let’s not talk so much about hereafter. I need it here. This old world needs heaven, Chicago needs heaven, needs it implanted right down in every street, in every home, and in every heart in the community. And I say unto you, if you will, under God, make Chicago what God intended Chicago to be, instead of being called a suburb of St. Louis, you’ll be a suburb of the city of the New Jerusalem.

Think on these things. And after all what is a thought? I am no metaphysician, and I’m no kin to one, but we’ll say, for the sake of the argument, as the lawyers say, that thought is the result of an impression upon one of the five senses. Now we won’t go into the discussion of intuitional thought, that’s a matter too deep for me, but we’ll take things as we see them. We say all thought, below the strata of the intuitional, then, is the result of an impression upon one of the five senses. I know God has come into my soul, but when I touch intuitional thought God gets in without entering through one of the five senses, for I do not hear Him come in, I do not see the door open as He comes in, nor do I see it close as He goes out, and yet I know God has been in there and talking to me.

I see something that puts me to thinking; I touch something and it brings up a thought; I taste something and it sets me to thinking, and so all the way through. The sense of perception then looks upon the scene, and the sense of conception then carries me back into my room and shows to me again, even with my eyes closed the picture I have just perceived. Then judgment will measure and weigh the picture for me, and by and by I turn it to the faculty of imagination, and I see her poise on her wings, and then go up, up, and up, until she goes above the stars and the moon, and, like Paul, I find myself over the city of God, looking down on towering spires, jasper walls, and pearly gates.

Thought! Well, if what I see opens my mind to thought, I had better be careful what I look at. If what I touch opens my mind to thought, I ought to be careful what comes in contact with my hands. If what I taste brings forth thought, then I ought to be careful what I taste. Brother, be careful of what you hear, touch, taste, feel; be careful of your five senses. I heard some men once discussing railroad conductors, and saying that railroad conductors were dishonest: and I told them the reason why the railroad conductors were dishonest generally, and they said a good many things bad on the subject. I was disgusted with the men talking.

“Well,” I said, “gentlemen, listen: I don’t say that conductors ever stole, or ever will steal; I take no part in that, but I’ll say this thing: if you ever catch a thieving conductor on this railroad here, I’ll tell you how things will look; he’ll collect \$10 or \$12 cash, and before he gets to his destination he will put \$10 in his pocket and give \$2 to the company; then he will walk through the train with his head erect, looking as innocent as an angel. Now, how can he do it? How can he hold his head up?”

Listen, he knows that four out of every five persons on that train would beat their way if they could, as he runs with that sort of a crowd. If you reform the traveling public that conductor will quit stealing or leave the road.

Think on these things. Well, we say, thought is an emotion, something we see, something we hear, we are affected by these things around us. A developed thought is ready for the hand, is ready for the tongue, is ready for the foot; that’s the idea of developed thought — thought gotten into shape for the tongue, for the hand, and for the foot.

A thought will develop into an idea, you had better look out there, there’s danger all along that line. A man can’t help evil thoughts coming in, but he can prevent them from developing into an idea.

Wesley said: “I can’t help evil thoughts from coming into my mind any more than I can help birds flying over my head; but I can help the birds from building their nests on my head and there hatching their young.”

Always keep the back door of your mind open whenever you open the front door, and make these evil thoughts pass along, and say to them: “You can’t stay until you are developed into an idea.”

I can't help a tramp knocking at my front door, but I can prevent myself from asking him into my parlor and telling him to make himself at home. Ten thousand evil thoughts may come in unawares, but I say, gentlemen, you can't stay here and make yourselves at home and develop into an idea. Bad ideas are like the devil, he tries to make your acquaintance and be with you, but he is too much of a gentleman to stay where he is not wanted. I'll tell you another thing, if the devil comes and stays with you it is because you make him at home and treat him well and are kind to him.

Thinking on these things — now, brother, Paul said if you would be what the honest aspirations of an honest soul would be, now put your mind and thought entirely upon the truth. The truth! The truth! Now, just as with the pictures of the bouquet and the corpse, I stirred my nature up, then just so, by thinking of God, I can put myself in an attitude and keep there until my whole nature is stirred with religion and truth, and when I speak I speak the truth just as naturally as I breathe.

Truth is always uppermost in the normal state of man, and no man who is a man of integrity will tell a lie until he rams back the truth first. Men tell the truth naturally, but it is unnatural to tell a lie, and now if I come up those steps and a man shakes my hand and bids me Godspeed, it is perfectly natural for me to say that he shook my hand and bade me Godspeed, but it is perfectly unnatural for me to say that the man cursed me and kicked me down the stairs. It's natural to tell the truth; it's unnatural to tell a lie. Whenever a man is a cordial liar he has perverted his nature from head to foot. A liar is a consolidated, concentrated lump of falsehood, and when he talks he tells lies just as easily as he lives in that atmosphere. I despise a liar. I have seen some men who thought on evil so much that they couldn't tell the truth at all.

The man who thinks on the truth, who reads the truth, and fills his heart with the truth will speak the truth, for out of the depth of the heart the mouth speaketh. I like a truthful man. I like a truthful child. We have left a great deal for George Washington, but George Washington was the father of his country; but some way or another he never begot one in his own likeness if he never told a lie in his life. I have made propositions like this: "Everyman in this vast audience who never told a lie in his life stand up." Every fellow began looking around, as if anybody was going to stand up, but he took care not to get up himself, and if anybody had gotten up I'd have sat down myself. A man can tell lies and never open his lips; he can tell lies with his hands, and he can tell lies

WITH HIS FEET

— With my eye I can tell a lie; with an expression of my face. Oh, brother, be so true to truth that it will be impossible for you to tell a lie or act a lie. That's it. Be loyal to truth. And, brother, you can never be right unless you are saturated with truth and on the true side of everything. Now, brother, at home with your children, as I with my children, if you have a child that has exaggerated or prevaricated — not intentionally, perhaps, but to make it appear well for them, — and when there has been a little trouble one child gives her statement, and another his, and another hers; but if you have one in your family, thank God for one like this, that you can call and say, "Come here, Bobbie," and take the little fellow in your lap and say, "Now, my son, tell me about it."

The little fellow will sit there and recount it exactly as it occurred, and will split a hair a mile long to get at the truth. And you set him down satisfied that you have got a true statement of the affair.

We have got one little fellow down in Georgia, a plain, sensible man in many respects, not noted particular for anything except the fact that when he tells you anything it's just that way, no more, no less, like that sort of a man. And I tell you, brother, if my wife ever told me one falsehood I never would

RESPECT HER AGAIN

I would lose respect for anyone who told me a falsehood. God give us truth if we have anything else or not. We need it all over this country. We want men we can bank on. If everybody in Chicago and in Illinois will not tell another lie for ten years it will starve the lawyers to death and put them to plowing; no doubt about that. Now I don't say that this profession lives upon the falsehood of the world. They may have to defend truth. It is not always a lawyer's duty in his practice to assail the opposite client, but it is the noble duty of a great lawyer to defend a good man against the onslaughts of unjust men. God give us lawyers who scorn the wicked side and stand up for justice and truth. The fee of \$5 will act as scavenger for the devil and his crowd. Do your own dirty work, and when you get to hell tell them you are there as a lawyer.

Truth — I think in truth, I saturate mind and heart with truth and speak the truth as naturally as I breathe. It ought to be the normal state of every man. **“Whatsoever things are true”** — brother, let's avoid evils of every kind; let's look out for the things that would lead a man into

TELLING A LIE

Let our utterances be truthful, and let us die before we tell a lie. Then he said, **“Brethren, whatsoever things are honest.”** Now if you'll let me define the word **“honest”** I subscribe to its truth. Now when I say **“honest”** I don't mean simply a man who pays all his just debts, as we call it. I have heard of a man walking all across the town to pay a nickel he owed, but I wouldn't trust that man in my room when I was asleep, if I had a quarter in my pocket. Bless your soul; he is often paying that nickel to get some hold for an imposition upon the community. When you let me define that word **“honesty,”** it is a man who lives up to his convictions and will die by his convictions. That's what I mean by being an honest man. Many a man who has paid every dollar he owed in this world may be put in hell at last for being a thief. You say that is mighty strong; but theft is the unlawful taking of the property of another without their knowledge and consent.

You can steal from a man when he is looking at you as well as you can when he is asleep if you just

COVER UP SOME FACT

in the trade and thereby carry your point: but maybe you would have seen the covered point if you yourself had not been working your tricks to gouge him.

Dishonesty? Down in my State I had my mind directed two or three times to a man of whom every one said: "There goes an honest man." I thought a time or two, I'd walk out and take his hand and ask him if he didn't feel lonesome in this county? He was a cotton buyer, and he would pay the most ignorant negro as much for his cotton as to the shrewdest white farmer. An honest man going around by himself in broad daylight!

Honesty! Honesty! Honesty! It is said that every honest man has a patch of hair right in the middle of his hand. I haven't got any in mine, I'm sorry to say. Oh, brother, let's deal honestly, and deal honestly toward all mankind.

I was in a store, in a circuit I was in once, when a farmer came in to get some plow points. He had just moved into the settlement, and it was the first or second time he had been to town. He came into the store and he asked the proprietor, "Are these plow points tempered hard enough?"

"No," said he, "I think not. I tried some of them, and "they are soft."

When the farmer had gone out I said to the proprietor, "Why didn't you tell that man that the plow points were well-tempered and hard, and would do the work he required of them? Why, you told him the naked truth, and missed a sale: you're a strange man."

But I tell you one thing, just as long as I stayed in that community that man had a customer who would spend his last dollar with him.

Tell the naked truth, the truth that makes a man honest.

Do you know where we get that expression, the "naked" truth? Now look out for your mock modesty along here: you may get it smashed.

The old story is that Truth and Error a long time ago went in bathing together. It isn't told what Truth was doing, but while in bathing Error ran out of the water and put on Truth's clothes and ran off with them on, and when Truth saw that Error had taken all of her clothes, she said: "I have nothing left to put on but the clothes Error has left, but before I will put those on I will go naked the balance of my life." Since that time we have had the plain naked truth, and I never want any clothes on it.

Honesty! Honesty! Honesty! — **"Whatsoever things are honest"** — Deal honestly with all men.

And then he said: **"Whatsoever things are just"** — I like a just man. Brother, you hear people say, "You had better be just

"BEFORE YOU ARE GENEROUS"

It's a great deal harder to be just than it is to be generous. I could pull out ten dollars and give it to a poor woman and I don't miss it, and it don't bother me.

But to be just to all mankind, that's another thing. I tell you what it is, it is a great deal easier to give fifty dollars to an orphan's home than it is to be just. I hurt my little boy's feelings, and take little Bobbie in my lap, precious little fellow, and say: "Son, forgive your father for hurting your feelings." It's a great deal easier to be generous than it is to beg your little boy's pardon for your harshness and meanness.

Justice! It is very easy for a man to be generous, but brother, have you the justice in you to implore the forgiveness of a wife for an unkind word uttered? If I infringe on the rights or feelings of another, then I will go to them and do right by them. That's it!

My forty minutes is about out, that I have left in this service. And, brother, let's take hold on these things. Put your mind on truth and keep it there.

"Whatsoever things are pure" — pure in word, pure in your life, pure in all manner of conversation, in everything. Observe it — Purity! Purity! Purity!

[Numerous persons in the crowded gallery at this time got up and noisily walked to the stairs].

I hope the congregation will have respect enough for itself to keep quiet until we dismiss. If you can't do any better to-morrow, don't you PUT YOUR CARCASS in this hall at all.

"Whatsoever things are pure."

We want purity! Purity! I tell you, my brother, if a man lives pure and acts pure and is pure, he is good in the best sense — in the most refined sense. Purity is like the little ermine, with its hair and skin as white as the driven snow, and when its capture is sought, its path to its home is made dirty and muddy, and when the little animal reaches the mud and dirt it lies down and subjects itself to capture and death before it will besmirch one of its beautiful white hairs. I want to say to the Christian world, rather let us lie down and subject ourselves to capture or death before we besmirch our character as Christians by any contact with the sins of the world. God make us pure on earth.

God bless you and take you under His care, and God help you to live so that if you put your head under the block and it is severed from your body that God will be there to pick it up and put a crown of everlasting life on it. God bless you all, and bring out of this service a happy sweet experience, and a blessed and saved home to every man, woman, and child in the city of Chicago.

~ end of sermon 1 ~

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