

The Chief Incentive to Christian Missions.

A SERMON

BEFORE THE

American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions,

AT THE

SEVENTY-FIFTH ANNUAL MEETING,

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BY

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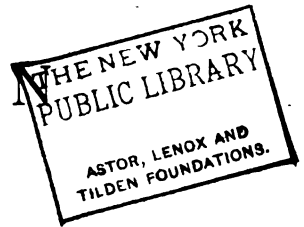
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SERMON.

BUT NONE OF THESE THINGS MOVE ME, NEITHER COUNT I MY LIFE DEAR UNTO MYSELF, SO THAT I MIGHT FINISH MY COURSE WITH JOY, AND THE MINISTRY WHICH I HAVE RECEIVED OF THE LORD JESUS, TO TESTIFY THE GOSPEL OF THE GRACE OF GOD.
Acts xx : 24.

PAUL of Tarsus has been fitly called "the Apostle of Progress." He was raised up and honored as the chief instrument for the first wide extension of the Christian faith in the world. Having once received for himself the joyful hope of salvation by Jesus of Nazareth, a fire was kindled in his soul of unquenchable zeal, to give to others the truth which he had found so precious. His contemporaries wondered when they saw the young man of high endowments and fairest prospects, by birth a Hebrew of the Hebrews, the son of Pharisees, trained in the severest school of Jewish exclusiveness, and living by choice "after the straitest sect" of the national religion, break the bands of these associations, overcome the race-prejudice born in him, fling away his pride, his aspirations and the honors of leadership among his people, just within his reach, and, from being a mad persecutor of the new sect, go forth its strongest champion, in the face of obloquy and untold perils by sea and land and the malice of men, to tell to the despised Gentiles, in their ignorance, or vain conceit of wisdom, the simple story of the crucified and risen Nazarene.

Reading the narrative of his subsequent career, *we* wonder at his ceaseless activity, at the wide range of his journeyings, at the joy and cheerfulness which characterize his spirit, and, above all, at the great success achieved, as thousands are converted, churches are organized, and the leaven of the gospel works to transform the temper and habits of men, and to change the phase of the world's civilization. Who can measure the influence of that one man, who,

through the Christ that was in him, the hope of glory, saved thousands of souls, and gave a new cast to the whole history of mankind? Who in all christendom does not feel that influence today, in the very atmosphere he breathes, in the thoughts and feelings that possess his soul, and in all the associations of his life? What meaning is there in this organization, or in its operations, what in this gathering of thousands on this occasion, except as we feel and acknowledge the spirit and aims of Paul of Tarsus, the great missionary of the gospel to the heathen world? And how can we better kindle our souls to bear on the work which he so grandly begun, than by studying the springs of his efficiency?

Let us come then into his presence, and hear him speak for himself. He has finished his great missionary tours of which we have record. Once and again has he traversed the provinces of Western Asia, and made the circuit of Macedonia and Greece even unto Illyricum, preaching Christ and him crucified, with a zeal which knew no bounds and was checked by no obstacles. Beaten, stoned, shipwrecked, wearied, in all conceivable perils, in hunger, cold, and nakedness often; through all, his spirit has not wavered, his cheerful activity has not waned, his joy and hope have been full and sustaining and his success has been wonderful. Now, on his way back to Jerusalem, stopping at Miletus, he has sent for the elders of the dear church at Ephesus, and they are around him on the seashore for a tender parting interview. He speaks of his labors among them, alludes to trials already experienced, and to the warning from the Holy Ghost that bonds and afflictions await him on the way he is going, and then from the depth of his inner soul brings to view in the words before us the hidden mainspring of his zeal and devoted service: "I hold not my life of any account as dear unto myself so that I might accomplish (or in comparison of accomplishing) my course, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God." Here, *in his consciousness of being charged with a momentous service, and in his conception of the nature of that service*, lies the secret of Paul's power and achievement.

1. Note, first, Paul went forth to his life-work, and continued it to the end, consciously *under a divine commission*. He came into the service, not for ends of his own, not impelled by personal ambition,

not asking whether its emoluments would be equal or superior to those of the career he had abandoned, but constrained by the manifested love of Christ, "to live not unto himself, but unto Him who had died for him, and rose again." When it pleased God to reveal in him his Son, it was to him a call through divine grace, that he might preach Him to the Gentiles. As soon as he apprehended the truth that was flashed in on his soul by the light from heaven which overpowered him under the walls of Damascus, he asked, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" the answer came in the charge to bear to the nations the name of Jesus, and salvation by that name. The service was not forced on him. He was indeed constrained to it, but it was the constraint of Christ's great love, and in love responsive he willingly received the ministry from the Lord Jesus. As a privilege, he rejoiced in it; as an honor, he gloried in it. "Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God," this is the title he loves best. With what a kind of exultant joy and commanding authority it rings out in the beginning of his epistles. What a glow of enthusiasm, what an inspiration of courage and patient endurance, what an assurance of hope, rising almost into a present triumph springs from the consciousness of being engaged in a ministry received from the Lord Jesus!

2. The second and main thing for us to consider is Paul's conception of the *nature* of the ministry he had received. First, as respects its *method*. It was just to testify, to bear witness, to announce everywhere certain great facts. He was not charged to set forth the secrets of nature in a system of science, nor to publish the profound principles of a speculative philosophy. The facts of his testimony are in harmony with all science and with all philosophy: indeed, in them genuine science and sound philosophy find their culmination. But his duty was simply to affirm truths which he had learned, not by his own research, nor from the testimony of fellow-men, but by revelation from God, a revelation foreshadowed in the ancient Scriptures, a revelation made directly to himself through a startling external manifestation; above all, a revelation confirmed, enlarged, intensified by an inner spiritual experience. The truths so revealed had full possession of his soul. He could no more doubt their verity than he could doubt the fact of his own

existence. Then, what he felt himself charged to do was to declare these things, not in great sermons, not in studied words of eloquence or of astute reasoning, but in all simplicity and sincerity, just as they lay in his own mind. So he writes to the Corinthians: "And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring to you the testimony of God; for I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified."

Another aspect of the nature of his service appears in Paul's conception of the *matter* of his testimony. It was a *gospel*, good news. It proclaimed not stern demands of holy law, not terrible denunciations against abounding transgressions, not dark forebodings of impending evil, but a message of blessing, of hope, of joy, rung out in a world full of wickedness, weariness, and woe. The world was waiting for such a message. Universal humanity everywhere and always needs it, longs for it. Men's tendencies are downwards, pessimistic, bearing on ever from bad to worse and worse. This message comes as a light shining in a dark place. It counteracts the downward proclivities. It kindles hope, and paints a future all bright with the better things in store for them who will receive it. So the basis is laid for an inspiring optimism, a quickening of the soul's best capacities with glowing aspirations for its highest development, its absolutely best estate.

But it is the kernel, the very substance of the message which best defines Paul's conception of the nature of his service. "The gospel of the grace of God" — the *grace of God*. We are all familiar with this phrase. Its frequent recurrence in Paul's writings has made us so. Yet very often, I apprehend, it sounds in our ears and drops from our lips with slight impression of its deep, rich meaning. To Paul's apprehension, these three words embodied all blessings — the summum bonum — the supreme good for men. He could never tire of the glad announcement. It was his life-work to ring the changes on this grandest of truths. There was no exhausting the theme. His testimony came out of the depths of his own soul. "By the grace of God I am what I am." This was the spring of all that he knew of joy or hope. It was a spring full, ever flowing — a well of water in him springing up into everlasting life.

The *grace of God* — I can attempt here no unfolding of the

precious theme ; but, for the object I have in view, I must linger on it long enough to notice distinctly a few salient points of truth which it includes. They come before my mind in successive pictures. First, there is the *occasion* for the grace of God, as it appears in the moral wreck which sin has brought upon the noblest product of God's creative power — man, formed in the image of God estranged from his Maker, dead in trespasses and sins ; and the whole creation groaning under the bondage of corruption ; the individual soul out of harmony with itself, its tastes depraved, its judgments right but its choices all wrong, therefore burdened with a sense of guilt, restless, unsatisfied, utterly helpless to restore itself ; human society like the sea under a fierce tempest, tossed unceasingly by conflicts of selfish passion, scarred all over by the violence of hatred and oppression, sights and sounds of misery everywhere. How the phases of this sad picture turn up all along in Paul's writings, as he testifies the gospel of the grace of God, how deep and strong the shading as he writes to the Romans, using the Psalmist's vivid colors. Yet our consciousness and observation attest that the case is not overdrawn. There is desperate occasion for a divine interposition, a pressing need of help for you and me and for all our fellowmen. The preaching which ignores or blinks this dread fact is not testifying the gospel of the grace of God.

Next, comes to view the *source of help*, in the heart of God — the great Father-heart, swelling with love — love the prime attribute, the very essence of deity, love full of tender compassion, pitiful towards the wretched, merciful towards the guilty, patient, long-suffering towards the willful and perverse ; love enwrapping the very throne of universal sovereignty, tinging the dazzling glory of infinite majesty with softening hues of attractive beauty, veiling without concealing the rigid pillars of eternal justice, beaming forth upon a guilty world the blended rays of severity and goodness in full power to break, and warmth to melt, and light to win sinful hearts ; love from before the foundation of the world, contemplating the ruin it could not forestall, with wisdom planning for its restoration, steadily unfolding the plan, giving it application in divers forms down through the ages ; love all-embracing, absolutely free, subjectively, in the divine thought, unlimited, restricted only by the free choice of its objects ; love particular, personal, reaching with a father's yearning after the return of individual prodigals, and joy-

fully welcoming to the home of assured blessedness each penitent child, and then enfolding him in a union forever inseparable. How cheering the counterpart to the dark picture of sin and death, which appears in the bright climax of Paul's testimony to the Romans: "I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus."

And now comes before us next, the great *exponent* which defines and measures the love of God in the dispensation of his grace — the crucified Christ — the cross which Paul so loved to contemplate, which was the burden of his testimony, in which, above all things else he gloried — the cross, emblem of divine self-sacrifice, mysterious, measureless — the cross on which is emblazoned the righteousness of God, as the ground of his mercy; the cross, sign unmistakable of hatred and malice gendered by sin in human hearts, met by God's forgiving love; the cross, turned Godward, the essential means of propitiation through the blood of Him who hangs thereon; the cross turned manward, presenting Him who knew no sin, made to be sin in our behalf, the supreme expression, the mighty power of divine love to subdue enmity and reconcile the world unto God. The figure of the Son of Man thus lifted up stands out in the words of Jesus himself, "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life." It stands in the same light as Paul testifies, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." And more distinctly does it appear as John writes, "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." This is the truth which gives significance and grandeur and saving effect to the scene on Calvary, toward which the eye of Christian faith has been turned through the centuries, never in vain. Apart from that exhibition, none of us can truly understand or feel the grace of God. We need to gaze upon this picture till we get a clear view of the glory of Christ's person as the Son of God, of the purity and beneficence of his life as the Son of Man, of his deep humiliation in the identification of his spotless innocence with sin and sinners, and of the nature and bearing, hinted at, but not fully unfolded, of the great

sacrifice of atonement made "that God might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus." Then can we understand what Paul means when he speaks of "the exceeding riches of God's grace in his kindness towards us in Christ Jesus." Surely the preaching that veils or explains away this exponent of divine love, is not testifying the gospel of the grace of God.

Another phase of the grace of God we have to notice. It cannot be pictured to the eye of sense. It is a process carried on, a result accomplished in the secret recesses of the soul. It is the grace of God in *application*, through the still agency of the Holy Spirit. The desperate wickedness of men's hearts makes this agency indispensable. The great love of God has made provision equal to the necessity. The Holy Spirit, proceeding from the Father according to the promise of the Son, is abroad in the world plying human hearts. His ways are mysterious, unseen as the viewless wind. We know this transforming power, effecting a new birth of the soul, only through our own consciousness of its inworking, or, as one and another tells his experience. The disclosure thus made accords with the promise of our Lord which sets forth a two-fold office of the Holy Spirit, viz., to convict of sin, of righteousness and of judgment to come, and to take the things of Christ and show them with vivid saving effect. This agency of divine love adapts itself to different conditions of individual souls, with their diverse temperaments, so that in no two cases is the process precisely the same. The conviction sometimes seizes the soul with a sudden shock, sometimes it is effected by strokes and stages, gradually developing a conscience sensitive and all-controlling. Sometimes the things of Christ are presented almost as a new revelation, ravishing the soul with ecstatic joy; sometimes in continued quiet contemplation they steal in more and more, till they pervade the whole being with the Light of life. However varied the steps of the process, the results produced are essentially the same. They appear in the precious fruits of the Spirit, "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, temperance," which perfect character, and adorn the life. The picture which represents this feature of the grace of God must be one showing these results. It may be the demoniac, subdued, sitting by the Saviour's side, clothed, and in his right mind, or it may be John, the son of thunder, transformed into the disciple whom Jesus loved, resting on

the bosom and breathing in, that his life may ever exhale the spirit of his Master.

The true outcome of the grace of God, applied, appears in the Christian graces which attest that "we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works which God aforetime prepared that we should walk in them." In the second chapter of his letter to the Ephesians, we have a striking example of the manner in which Paul interweaves this work of the Spirit into all his testimony, showing that to his apprehension, the gospel of the grace of God was the gospel of the Holy Spirit, no less than the gospel of Christ.

There is one more aspect of the grace of God to be noticed. It is its *universal diffusion*. As we catch the great promise and prophecy of the gospel, we have before us the bright vision, yet to be realized, of a world delivered from its bondage of corruption, full of peace and joy under the sway of love. The grace of God applied to individual souls is the mustard seed dropped into the soil of earth, the leaven hidden in human society. The seed will germinate and grow into a wide-spreading tree; the leaven will diffuse itself till the mass of mankind is pervaded and transformed. What changes have passed upon the spirit and intercourse of men since the gospel began its course! What checks have been laid upon the rule of selfishness! What softening of savage natures! What breaking of the rod of oppression! What relief to woman's degradation! What refinement of home life! What development of honesty, of good-will, of charity! Those things which are most esteemed in the mutual relations of men as true, honorable, just, pure, lovely, are manifestly the product of the gospel of the grace of God. The golden rule of Christ has not indeed yet become universal law, but it has found extended application, and all the brightest, most beautiful things we know of in human character and human associations in the world as it is, are its fruits.

What has been done is but the presage of greater things which are to be. Divine providence subserves the dispensation of grace. Scientific research and inventive genius, as they are multiplying facilities for human intercourse, are contributing, not only to the increase of material wealth, but also to the unfolding of brotherly sympathy and love. The swift current of events the world over, is breaking down barriers that have separated races and nations, and is opening channels for the grace of God to flow freely to all souls

In all lands. When we think what God has wrought during the years that measure the life-time of this Board, and that the gospel of his grace has lost none of its life-giving energy, the vision of its glorious triumph in a world redeemed, seems not far away. It is near enough to kindle in waiting Christian souls the fire of Paul's enthusiasm and self-sacrifice.

We are thus brought directly to *the practical lesson* of our subject for this hour. This American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions is simply an organized agency for sending forth, locating, and sustaining witnesses who shall testify in foreign lands the gospel of the grace of God. Its function is not to magnify itself, not to set up a great complicated beautiful machine, and to keep it running smoothly, to the admiration of all beholders — nor is it to form in those foreign lands churches and communities of a certain order, made strong by special bands of ecclesiasticism, with external signs of power and respectability. The history of Christianity shows how early a tendency in this direction was developed, and how blighting to the very essence of the gospel and to its intrinsic power were its effects, as the magnificent hierarchies of the Roman Papal Church and of the Greek Church were built up to dazzle the eyes of men, and to force upon their souls a bondage of superstition which gave scarcely any scope for the still, saving efficacy of the grace of God. Not thus, by observation, comes the kingdom of God which Jesus established upon earth. Its advancement moves on by the direct action of gospel truth on the inner life of souls, and the efficient means is always and everywhere the testimony of those who love the truth, because they have felt its power; testimony to the ear, by word of mouth; testimony to the eye, by the printed page; testimony to the intellect, through processes of education charged with Christian elements; above all, testimony to the heart and conscience by the magnetism of personal character and a pure life, in sweet Christian homes, and in all daily contact with others.

By this central thought of our subject, let the doings of this Board be estimated and directed. Let us have this in mind as we listen to the reports for the year past, and consider operations to be undertaken for the future. Let our sympathies and enthusiasms, as they may be kindled in these various exercises, be gathered to this one head, to magnify the grace of God, to enrich our own ex-

perience of that grace, here and now, and to enlarge our desires and expectations for its rapid communication and application to all peoples of all lands.

But this Board is not a power in itself. It is only a representative agent of the American Congregational churches. Its material resources are what the churches furnish. Its living witnesses are the sons and daughters of these churches. The whole efficiency of this Board depends, therefore, on the measure and tone of the missionary spirit in these churches. This determines the amount of money at its command, and the number and quality of those who offer themselves to publish the gospel, under its direction, and what kind of a gospel they will testify.

Now the whole drift of this discourse points to a *simple, positive, evangelical faith* as the spring of the missionary spirit. By these terms I mean a faith which seizes and holds as the very core of religion, the grace of God, in the five essential features which have been presented. Whatever strengthens such a faith, strengthens the missionary spirit. Whatever impairs that faith, contracts and blights the missionary spirit. The gospel of the grace of God has been systematized and embodied in creeds and theologies. Something of the kind I suppose to be necessary as a matrix and symbol of our faith; but the framing of creeds and theologies is a human work, and human error is liable to be mingled in the process. The precious gem, the grace of God which bringeth salvation, may be obscured by the framework in which it is set. No doubt the old creeds and theologies do thus, to many minds, obstruct the clear vision of the truth. Some revision is called for, and will be timely. But let it be done reverently, tenderly, carefully, for in these old forms are enclosed the richest jewels of divine wisdom, and under the reckless blows of violent assault there is danger that the jewels will be broken and destroyed. To save these sacred treasures and bring them out with polished brightness into clearer light should be the one aim of every change proposed. And when the new is presented as a substitute for the old, it is fit to ask first of all, not how rational, how logical, how symmetrical is it, but how clearly does it exhibit the gospel of the grace of God, intrinsically one and the same from the beginning.

We look, as the revered John Robinson bade us, for "more light to break forth from the Word of God." And so we bid God speed

to the "*higher criticism*" which opens the seals, and brings out the true light hidden in the sacred oracles. But we need jealously to guard our churches against that destructive criticism which would eliminate from the gospel the grace of God which is its true light and glory. All labor of this kind is properly tested by its fruit, especially in the enlarging or restricting of the missionary spirit. It was my privilege last year in Bonn, to meet Professor Christlieb, who has evinced to the world how well he understands the history and philosophy of Christian missions. Speaking on the point before us, he alluded to a plan just proposed by the rationalistic party in Germany to form a missionary society for the propagation of their peculiar views. The proposition seemed to him absurd, for such negations have nothing in them to sustain a missionary impulse. The movement, he thought, must only fail, and by its failure, illustrate the secret of power in the true gospel. Have not like experiments and like failures in our country proved the same thing? History brings to view two kinds of religious propagandism; the one goes out to fight for conquest and the setting up of a grand worldly power, like an empire of Islam, or a hierarchy of Papal despotism, and its inspiration is an enthusiasm of adventure, a zeal for self-aggrandizement, and a fanatical devotion to a splendid imposition. The other goes forth to break the spell of sin on the souls of men, and to bring them out into the liberty of children of God, loyal subjects of the kingdom of truth and righteousness under the sceptre of Immanuel, the Prince of Peace; and its inspiration is devotion to Him who redeemed us by his own precious blood, and who, by the Holy Spirit, imparts something of his own self-sacrificing love for a lost world. Our Christian work is of this latter kind. The spring of its energy is the hearty faith of our churches in redemption by the grace of God — by that alone.

We have to recognize in these days *currents of skepticism* which pervade the moral atmosphere we breathe. They come from divers sources — materialism in science, rationalism in philosophy, vague speculation in religion, all pushed to extremes, worldliness and sensuality fostered by the rapid accumulation of wealth and the greed for its possession. In its every phase, this skepticism strikes directly at the heart of our gospel. It raises doubts whether sin is such a desperate malady, whether we are shut up to the mere mercy of God for relief, whether Christ on the cross is a sacrifice of propitia-

tion, the indispensable means of our reconciliation to God, whether it is true, as the Master said, that entrance to the kingdom of Heaven is alone by the new birth from above, whether the heathen are in such danger of perishing that it is a pressing duty of Christian peoples to send them the gospel of the grace of God at any cost.

May not these influences account in part for the slow advance of our missionary work? God, in his providence, has gone before us and broken down barriers and removed obstacles, so that all parts of the world are open for the entrance of the gospel, but means and men are wanting to enable us to seize the opportunity. We boast of our national wealth as rolling up by hundreds of millions every year, and a fair proportion of this increase comes into the hands of members of our churches, and yet this Board, for almost twenty years, has been striving hard to add a pitiful one hundred thousand dollars to its reliable income, hitherto without full success. Hundreds of young men go out from our halls of learning every year, and flock into other professions till they are overstocked; but when our secretaries make their earnest appeal, how few are ready to receive from the Lord Jesus a ministry like that which Paul so joyfully accepted and fulfilled.

“When the Son of Man cometh shall he find faith on the earth?” Oh, if those who think they have tasted of the grace of God had a faith to apprehend and appreciate that grace as the great apostle did, would it be impossible or even difficult to add a million to the treasury of this Board next year, and to send out a hundred new missionaries to testify the gospel of salvation? Blessed be God this faith is not utterly wanting in our churches. There are rich brethren who, in the love of Him who died for them, give out of their abundance till they feel it, and others who willingly forego the gratification of their tastes and some of their comforts, that they may take part in this ministry, and still many a poor widow, with love and trust, brings and throws into the Lord’s treasury all her living. Now and then, too, a young disciple, holding not his life of any account as dear unto himself, responds to the call, “Here am I, send me.” These understand that self-sacrifice is a ruling principle in the redemption of this world, and having made themselves

partakers of His sufferings, they come also even now into a participation of the joy of the Lord, the joy of self-sacrifice.

Thankfully we recognize that there is among us a little of this faith. The question of the hour is *how shall it be increased?* How shall these untoward influences be counteracted? How shall the faith of the few be made general, till the souls of all are possessed by it, and the zeal and strength of our churches shall be fully drawn out.

We need, first of all, *a fresh baptism of the Holy Ghost*, a Pentecostal outpouring of the Spirit of God, to take the things of Christ, and show them unto his own people for a deeper experience of God's saving grace. This will come when hearts are set to long and pray unceasingly for it! We need next, a clearer, more pointed, and at the same time more winning presentation from our pulpits of the simple gospel of sin and grace, such as proceeds from the hearts of men who know its power and preciousness. And then, there is need that the responsibility of testifying the grace of God be distributed and accepted by all Christians. Ministers are expected, of course, to bear witness; but it is the duty and privilege of all to share in the service. The humblest believer may testify, by receiving the grace of God daily in fresh measure, by adhering to it as the spring of his inner life, by exemplifying it in an outward life adorned with its fruits, by speaking of it, in circles large or small of intimates, and by sustaining with prayer and gifts the organized methods of publishing it to the world.

Dear friends, it seems to me we have unmistakable signs that the world is approaching a great moral crisis. A battle, perhaps the last great battle, is not far away in the future. It is to be fought with spiritual, not with carnal weapons. The great adversary is already mustering his minions, and working his subtle forces. Yet the Lord's host is very much at ease in Zion. And now I seem to see our Lord, the Crucified, moving to rally his followers. He comes, not with trumpet call for a grand demonstration, for the first thing needed is not a mass movement. He draws near to each individual disciple, for the real power for victory is the grace of God hidden in each soul. He points downward to the hole of the pit whence each one saved was digged, and asks, "Is it for *thee* a great deliverance?" He points upward to the throne of God, beaming with love whose breadth and length and height and depth

pass knowledge, and asks, "Dost *thou* feel and rejoice in its blessed life-giving beams?" He points to his own five bleeding wounds, the exponent of that love, and asks, "Lovest *thou* me who bore thy sin in my body on the tree?" He looks inward, and speaking to the secret consciousness, he asks, "Hast *thou* felt the silent moving of the Spirit, quickening a new life and imparting joy and peace and the assured hope of eternal blessedness?" He points to the millions sitting still in the darkness and guilt of spiritual death, a part of the world which God so loved, and asks, "Wilt *thou*, as *thou* valuest the grace of God received, share my pity for the perishing, and go forth to testify to them the gospel of the grace of God?" Summing all up in one, to you, dear friend, and to me, he says, "I gave, I gave my life for thee, what hast *thou* given, what wilt *thou* give for me?"

Oh, Christian steward of God's silver and gold; oh, Christian parent, entrusted with children to be trained for God; oh, Christian maiden, gifted with the winning graces of woman's mind and heart; oh, Christian young man, endowed with intellectual power, and scholarly attainments, what answer give *you* to the close, tender question of your Lord? Sharing, each and all, in its unspeakably precious benefits, shall we, dare we, deny or repudiate what we owe to this gospel of the grace of God?