

the owner of it, and to adorn it, and build upon it the finest mansion in all the borough, and name it in honor of the maiden to whom he was espoused. Last summer, I had the pleasure of dining in that princely mansion, and to receive this fact from the lips of the great shipbuilder of the Clyde. That *one* purpose was made the ruling ambition of his life, and all the energies of his being were put in requisition for its accomplishment.

So with Paul. From the moment of his conversion to the day of his martyrdom he had one supreme purpose, which took full possession of him, mastered his whole mind and soul, and laid under contribution all his mental gifts and spiritual attainments, and power of achievement and suffering, even unto death.

"*This one thing I do.*" That single high aim filled his whole field of vision, and possessed him day and night, in city and country, in journeyings and in prison, and excluded all other ambitions and made all other possible attainments of no worth in his view, even as "dung, that he might win Christ." His past record, brilliant though it was; his high, exalted position and wonderful career as "the great apostle to the Gentiles"; the world and all its glittering prizes, which most men so covet—all these things were nothing to him. They had ceased to have any charms for him since he had seen "the Lord of glory"; since the love of Christ had come into his soul like a river in its fullness and sweetness. "The prize," for which he so nobly ran in the spiritual race, and gave up all things else and counted all things but loss that he might win it, was "the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

This is the spirit and purpose of the Christian religion when it dominates in the soul of man. Enoch, Noah, Moses, Abraham, furnish illustrations of it. The failures so common in Christian life are caused, to a great extent, by a *divided* purpose. The world comes in to share the kingdom of the heart; self divides the supremacy of

the affections with Christ; the prize is not so coveted and kept in near and constant view as to set the soul on fire with holy ambition, and to consume, by the intensity of its flame, all selfish ends and earthly passions.

I. The purpose of Paul: WHAT IS INVOLVED IN IT? "This one thing I do."

1. Supreme love to Christ, and consecration to His service.

2. Deadness to all human ambitions and to merely earthly and sensual good. So absorbed is the soul in this one idea that it becomes the masterful passion of life; and the world, the flesh, all things else, cease to have any real attraction.

3. Not satisfied with any measure of past attainment, or service, or consecration, but continually "reaching forth" to something higher and better, and "pressing toward the mark of the high calling," with quenchless and ever-growing ardor. There, in full view, is the "goal," and the racer's eye is fixed on it; he flings aside every weight, and quickens his step continually, until he crosses the line and receives the immortal prize from the hands of the ascended Savior.

II. What was the meaning in Paul's mind as to the prize on which his heart was thus set? I think it was this: A PERSONAL RESEMBLANCE TO CHRIST, AND A DESIRE TO BE NEAR HIM. His vision of Christ in the infinite attractiveness of His character, and in the glory and blessedness of His presence and reign in heaven, made him long, with unutterable yearnings, to be like Him, and to have, not only a place in His kingdom, but a place hard by the throne of the Lamb. Multitudes of Christians are content just to be saved—to get inside the heavenly gate. But Paul rebukes this spirit. He had a higher and truer ambition. He coveted the place of honor in the final kingdom; a crown studded with numberless stars, the plaudit of the Master, a final character and attainments in harmony with the heavenly world and with the exalted and glorious purpose of Christ in his redemption.

III. HOW THE GREAT PRIZE IS TO BE WON.