

We commit to him the wealth of our souls, which we shall only squander if we are left alone, which we shall not be able to do to guard, but that the moth and the rust will corrupt it and thieves will break through and steal. If we are wise we shall put them into his hands and say: "Take thou care! I cannot; but I can if thou wilt help me."

Thus the metaphor of our text, with all its sacred associations that bring back Calvary to our thoughts, simply means the old, old threadbare thought that we are safe when we exercise faith in God. We commit ourselves to him when we cease from the vain attempt to be the authors of our own salvation, and, recognizing the deep wounds which sin has inflicted, are content to be healed by Christ. We cannot save ourselves any more than we can lift ourselves by our own arms. To learn our helplessness is the first step toward abandoning reliance on ourselves, and when we despair of ourselves we are in a position to trust in God.

Coleridge tells somewhere of a humorist that had a sheaf of Unitarian pamphlets, bound and lettered on the back "Every Man His Own Redeemer." That is one way of salvation, which ends in destruction, and the other, the true way, is "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit."

The same self-surrender will lead to accepting God's appointments, as to outward things, or, as Peter says, committing the keeping of our souls to him in well-doing as unto a faithful Creator. It will lead to our yielding of our wills to his command. We shall roll the burden of circumstances and provision for bodily needs and protection on God. He is responsible for what is entrusted to him, as a banker is for the money deposited with him. If we are wise we shall by faith deposit our most precious possession, ourselves, in the strongly built and guarded treasure-house in heaven, as defenceless peasants flock into a fortress with their poor belongings in time of war, when the enemy is ravaging the open country. Then our treasure will be safe.

Where the treasure is, up yonder, lying enclosed in the great hands that shaped the world; where the treasure is, there will the heart be also. And lo! what blessedness, what quiet peace, what absolute repose there will be in thus denuding myself of myself that I may find myself glorified, grieved, tranquilized, defended by him!

Well, then, if I honor God by trusting my treasure to him he will honor me by trusting his treasure to me. "That good thing which was committed to thee." And what was that? I suppose the shortest way of putting it is, God's self manifested in God's Gospel. We give ourselves to him, and he will give us as much back again—he will give us himself in the revelation of his grace in Jesus Christ. Or, if you bring it down to more familiar words, the good thing committed to Timothy was the Gospel, and of the grace of God manifested in Jesus Christ.

Paul received it in stewardship, as he speaks in another place of "the Gospel of the glory of the happy God with which I was entrusted." It is a token of the divine confidence in us, of the divine fervor and love toward us, of the gladness with which he accepts the responsibility that we have thrown upon him, and that he returns a kindred responsibility which he throws upon us. "You give me yourselves to take care of," he says, "now, I give you this—take care of it for me."

We have that trust because we have cast ourselves on him, and, having it, we should cast ourselves the more upon him. The two trusts help one another, so to speak. And the more a man realizes that he has flung his whole weight upon God, the more will he feel that God had laid upon him a distinguishing and elevating stewardship; and the more he feels that he is entrusted with a portion of his Father's wealth, the more will he feel that, to keep the wealth, he needs to cast himself, with the rich dowry that has been put into his hands, on his Father's protective care.

II. Thus we come now to look at the two keeps.

The word rendered to "keep" is often used for keeping, as armed men or guards do. God mounts sentry upon what we put into his hands; and he expects us to do the same with reference to what he puts into ours. He keeps that which is committed to him.

I need not dwell upon all the manifold ways by which that delivering and protecting grace surrounds the wealth that has been laid in his hands. When we are denuded of self-will we are delivered from the strongest foe that threatens to rob us of ourselves. God comes to us in no mere metaphor, but in the deepest reality of the spiritual life, to guard us, to provide for us, to prepare ways for us, to deliver us from our own evil, and from all outward evil, to be a wall of fire round about us, and to keep us "against that day."

Paul was expecting martyrdom. He was living in the momentary anticipation that the end might come at once. And, as you remember, toward the close of this letter, he speaks about the certainty that he had finished his course; and that there was nothing left now except the reception of the crown of glory. And yet he says, in almost the same breath, that "God will save" him "into his heavenly kingdom." That triumphant hope is parallel to the saying here: "He will keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." Nero might rage; the flame of persecution might wax hot, the chain

that bound him to the legionary might chafe and rub and make a sore; the sword might be sharpened, and the block all but fixed on which his decapitation was to take place. But, he says, "He will keep that which I have committed to him against that day." Our hearts and anticipations go away out beyond the dark end of life; and we think of all the mysteries which, though they be magnificences, strike a chill of strangeness into our hearts, and we wonder what is to befall us out yonder in the darkness, where we have never been before, and about which we know nothing except that the thrones are to be set, and the books opened. Paul says to us, "He is able to keep against that day." So guarded in life, shielded from all real evil, preserved from temptation and from snares, brought unharmed through the hustling of the pitiless storm of death, and shepherd in the fold beyond the flood, the soul that is committed to him is safe. In that act of giving ourselves utterly up to God lies the secret of blessedness and the guarantee of immortality. He is not going to lose the treasures committed to his charge. He prizes them too much. And because we have said to him, "My flesh and my heart faileth, but thou art the strength of my heart, and my portion forever," therefore he will guide us by his counsel, and afterward receive us to glory. His hand will not let the treasures entrusted to him slip, and he will say at the last what Christ said in the upper room, only with a diverse application, "That what thou hast given me I have kept, and none of it is lost," and we shall find our souls in his hands.

So we come to the other keeping—"That good deposit," says Paul to the somewhat timid Timothy, "keep, by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in thee." As the two trusts are related, so are the two keepings. When we trust ourselves to God he entrusts us with himself. And when he keeps us, then, and only then, can we keep that which is put in our hands. Faith is no idle virtue. The consciousness of having denuded myself, and having laid all the responsibility on his shoulders, does not mean, of course, that we have nothing to do. The great paradox that the apostle spoke in a sentence, the two halves of which have divided Christendom, is repeated here. "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling for it is God that worketh in you." And so here he keeps me; that is the motive and the means for keeping myself, and keeping the word that he has entrusted to me.

How do I keep it? Well! there is one way of keeping it which a great many Christian people need to practice a great deal more than they do, and that is thinking about it; reading their Bibles; saturating their minds with the truths of the gospel; and carrying them about with them, as their possession, as their strength, as their peace. You do not keep that which is committed to you if, having found "salvation," as you suppose, in Jesus Christ you then live, week in and week out, practical oblivion of the great truths by which your soul is supposed to have been saved.

And there is another way of keeping them—by living according to them. And there is the other way of keeping them, which was especially in Paul's mind in the exhortation of my text, and that is by remembering that these great truths are given to us to guard, and that we are responsible for spreading them abroad upon the earth.

Unless we do these three things—occupy mind and heart with the gospel; live according to the gospel; and do our best to spread the gospel—it is vain for us to say, "I have committed myself unto him." What are you doing with what he has committed to you? That is the question. You will be kept, if you will, by the "Holy Ghost that dwelleth in you." But that good thing committed to you, you have to keep; and while it is "the Holy Ghost that dwelleth in you" who gives you power to keep it, you have to use the power. And whatsoever responsibility we have laid upon God, and removed from ourselves only brings upon us the more weightily the responsibility of keeping that good thing which was committed to us.

There is an old legend about an Egyptian monarch that had his treasure house built, as he thought, so as to be impregnable against thieves. But the architect had built a stone, in one corner of the wall, which revolved upon a pivot, and could be pushed round so as to give access; and he left the secret, when dying, to his sons. So night after night the sons crept in and brought away some of the hoarded wealth; and when the king, fancying his coffers to be still full, went in to count his treasures, he found them half gone. Ah! that is the kind of thing that happens to many Christians. They think that the deposit is safe, and unseen hands have fled it away. God keeps us, and we have to keep what he has entrusted to us; and for one man that loses it by some great crash, there are a hundred from whom it dribbles away in little unknown quantities, and who, instead of keeping that good thing which was committed to them, by some means, let it slip. "But ye, beloved, building up yourselves in your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God: looking for the mercy of the Lord Jesus unto eternal life."—The Treasury.

Tidings From Afar.

OUR NEWST RAILWAY.

Tekkali is hereafter to be frequently mentioned in connection with our work and will soon become (like Rishipattinam, Bobbili, Chicacole, Kimeri, etc.) a household

word with many dear friends of the mission at home. Let me tell you something then about this place and what we are doing here. This is an historic spot. It was here that the poor old leper Christian of fragrant memory lived and died. His history and that of the little "child-widow" that he subsequently married, is vividly told in a little booklet written by Mrs. Archibald. It is called "Gurahutti and Herriama." By all means send to Mrs. Manning and get a copy. It will be of the deepest interest now that Tekkali is coming into fuller prominence. It reads like a novel. I shall just give you enough here to whet your appetite for the wonderful story. In this town is the land upon which he used to dwell, and which the native king (Rajah) took from him forcibly when he became a Christian. Here is his well—one that he dug for the benefit of all who wished to drink, but especially for the poor outcasts who were not allowed to draw from the public wells, and often had to drink foul water from the stagnant pools that were full of filth and poison. The inscription upon a stone in the side of the well may still be seen though the figures are somewhat dim. It tells who built the well and for whom the gift was intended. Driven from his lawful property, he built a hut under a tamarind tree. That tree is still standing and the mound of earth indicates where his hut stood and the little shed adjoining, where he taught school to a few boys who came from a Savara (hill-tribe) village near the town. A piece of land half a mile from the town belonging to him, and not taken from him, was given by him at his death to the mission. On one corner of that plot his bones were laid to rest. Being dead, these many years, he yet speaketh, for the sincerity of his Christian life, amid much physical suffering and persecution, is still remembered by heathen people around here. As he was buried on that plot we have made about a quarter of the field into a cemetery, and already several have been laid at rest there. Last month we buried, near Gurahutti, the remains of one of our Bible women—Sarah—who died very suddenly. She too was a Christian in whom we could rejoice. Her memory will be blessed, and we doubt not she has gone home to her Saviour to swell the number of saved Telugus who have "washed their robes and made them white" in his blood.

OUR MISSION HOUSE.

Just outside the town the Lord has given us a lovely spot for the mission house. The compound covers two acres and lies facing the town so that people coming in from the three different directions pass in front of our premises. The attention of those passing out of the town in these three directions is at once drawn to us and our locations, so we are like a city set on a hill that cannot be hid. The road that passes by us to the right leads to the sea four miles away. But we think of it chiefly as leading to the Railway Station. It makes us laugh to talk about a Railway. This is one of the blessings that we have not had until recently. The East Coast Railway crawls along in a Northeasterly direction about two miles from the Sea and four miles from us. Our Railway station is called Nowpada. It used to take four nights (we generally travel by night in this country) to reach this town from Vizianagram; now we run down in as many hours. So much better is a railway train than an ox-cart.

OUR NEWEST RAILWAY.

You see we are having a good many new things these days that make our hearts glad and prove to us that the world "do move" even in slow old India. The native Prince at Kimeri lately decided to build a branch road from that town to this one and on to touch the East coast road. This new line is now under construction and again we laugh as we see the hundreds of coolie men and women (like so many black ants in the distance) building up the embankment for the rails. The line will pass behind our compound wall, at the back, within about 100 feet, and the Tekkali Railway Station will be just at the corner of our premises. This brings us within an hour of Kimeri instead of a whole night. It means that our missionaries hereafter will be able to see each other a little oftener than once in three or six months as formerly. As we are men of like passions with yourselves—gregarious animals—we appreciate this privilege exceedingly.

HIGHWAYS FOR OUR GOD.

These roads and railways are being built by godless men (in many cases) for purely mercenary purposes. But behind all their money-making plans, is the plan and purpose of God whom they neither know nor fear. He is really building the roads—and for his Kingdoms sure increase. I have no hesitation in claiming that these roads are being built for the use of the missionaries as messengers of the Cross of Christ. As I watch hundreds of men and women working on these roads with not a cent of expense to us or our Board, I laugh again and exclaim: "They are building that road especially for us not especially in their purposes (for what do they care about us) but in God's purpose. So the King's highways are being prepared for the coming King of Kings the Prince of Peace. May there be many swift and willing feet in the Maritime Provinces to hasten over these roads and announce to the people: The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand! Repent ye therefore and believe the Gospel."

W. V. HIGGINS.

Tekkali, April, 1898.