

overcome and have reached the Master's presence.

*Given to God.*

My text is read as indicating a principle, and I suppose I may honestly say as defending my line of action to-night, certainly as suggesting the purpose of this evening's service, that it is not given to a man that his birthday shall fall on a Sunday often, but mine falls to-day, and I want to talk to you about the thirty-seven years through which God has led me to this moment. I want to talk to you, not about myself, save as I may say to you, "My brothers, wherever you are, hear what the Lord hath done for my soul." I have preached to you the principles of the Gospel as well as I know them. I have again and again pleaded with you that you will obey the doctrine and discover the duty. Turn from the method for once and let me speak to you of what I know of God and of His dealings with me, and this in order that I may recommend my Saviour to you and speak with you persuasively out of a life's experience, that you may put the diadem of your manhood upon the brow of my Master, and that you may come to love and serve my King.

I must ask you to bear with me very patiently while I go back over these past years, so few and yet so many, and try to call up in my own mind the formative facts in my life. The first fact is one that I did not know till years afterwards, but it was one of the greatest facts in all my life. From my birth my father and my mother gave me to God for service. They did not give me to God in order that I might be saved; I pray you to draw the line of distinction. They did not take me to some dedication service and dedicate me to God in order that He might have me as His own, but very definitely and very positively from the

earliest moment of my life they gave me to Him in order that if it should be His will He would take me in the years that lay ahead and make me His servant, to preach His word, and to do His work and His will in the world, whatever it might be. I was told—it is among the things that I remember most clearly of my early life—that I belonged to God, that I had been given to God, that I must always live and walk remembering if I did wrong I belonged to Him. I am not going to discuss theology with you to-night. I thank God I was trained that way, and that I was never told once in all my life that I belonged to the devil.

*A Child's Great Sorrow.*

I cannot go back to the early days of my life without remembering Lizzie, my sister. In 1872 there came my first great sorrow—God took her away to Himself, and I was left a child without a companion, for I had never been allowed companions outside my own home up to the time of her passing away. But I go back into the days while she was still with me. I had one recreation, one form of amusement every day and always, and that was preaching. I preached to her dolls long before I preached to you. Dear, sweet soul, she was four years older than I. I think some day we will talk again about those early sermons. I want to show you that I felt that I was God's; that I had to preach; sooner or later I must talk to men and women; and I do not think I preached with greater devotion than I did before I was eight years old. You catch my thought? The influence on a young life of a great fact in the earliest years of that life. My first sorrow, my first real sorrow, the sorrow that abides with me to-night, though nine-and-twenty years have passed, was the sorrow of her