

go home to ponder the honest confession and the fate of one who was "past feeling" anything but his own indifference. Yet I cannot dismiss you without a few words of affectionate counsel to those who are not "past feeling"—who feel now—who cannot but feel under the touch of God's Spirit. Yonder anxious faces are the dial-plates of anxious hearts. In this silent, hushed assembly, we seem to overhear the very throb of those hearts, palpitating with the great question—"what shall I do to be saved?"

My friends! hear away with you from this house four solemn practical suggestions drawn from the text before us.

I. You feel now; but *do not be contented with mere feeling*. 'Tears never save a sinner; hell is vocal with the wails of weepers. *Faith is better than feeling*. Your Bible does not say—feel and be saved. It says, "Believe and be saved." And faith is not enough without action. "The devils believe." There are no atheists in the dungeons of the damned. But lost spirits do not love God, do not obey Him. You must obey as well as believe. Act out your feelings. Obey God in self-denying duty. Crystallize your feeling into faith, and prove your faith by your works. "Faith without works is dead." Faith in Jesus is the invisible root of religion concealed within the soul; but deeds of holy duty are the glorious outgrowth with stalwart trunk, and branches broad, and luxuriant masses of foliage lifted into the air of heaven. And amid these goodly boughs are found the *fruits* of godliness shining—as quaint Andrew Marvell said of the Bermuda oranges—

"Like golden lamps in a deep green night."

Aim immediately at fruits. Begin to-night to serve God from principle. Go home and set up your altar. Lay hold of work; the harder it is the better. Paul struck the key note of his whole religious life when in the gush of his first feeling he cried out, "Lord what will Thou have me to do?"

II. My second suggestion is, that what you do, you must *do quickly*, for you cannot long remain as you are. For a few brief days in May, the orchards are white with blossoms. They soon turn to fruit, or else they float away useless and wasted upon the idle breeze. It will be so with your present feelings. They must be deepened into decision, or be entirely dissipated by delay. You must advance, or be lost. As the result of your present seriousness, you will either become a true child of God, or else a more hardened and unfeeling child of wrath. Dread (as you would death itself) the very idea of relapsing into indifference. Cherish conviction. Take your fears to the mercy seat, and beseech your compassionate Saviour not to permit your awakened soul ever to become "past feeling."

III. My third suggestion is a brief caution. Do not compare your feelings with those of other people, or allow yourself to be discouraged because you have not the intense griefs or the lively joys of which they speak. God does not command you to feel like this one or like that. He bids you *repent and believe*; you are to conform to His words and not to your neighbours' varying frames and feeling.

The Holy Spirit deals with no two hearts precisely alike. He opens some hearts by the gentlest touch of love; others He seems to wrench open as with the iron-bar of alarming judgments. As one happily remarks: "When the lofty palm-tree of Zeilan puts forth its flower, the sheath bursts with a report that shakes the forest; but thousands of other flowers of equal value open in the morning, and the very dew-drops bear no sound; even so many souls do blossom in mercy, and the world hears neither whirlwind nor tempest." Do not question the rightfulness of your own heart-exercises because no one else has had any precisely similar. God will not bear dictation. He is a Sovereign. He will save you just as He chooses. Be thankful that you can be saved at all. See to it that you do not cavil, and question, and tamper, until the Holy Spirit abandon you to become "past feeling."

IV. Finally, let me remind you, that in the eternal world no one can be indifferent, no one shall be insensible. Neither in heaven nor in hell can you ever become "past feeling."