

Pastor and People.

SERMON AT OPENING OF SYNOD OF TORONTO AND KINGSTON.

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1 Corinthians ix. 16. "For though I preach the Gospel I have nothing to glory of; for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the Gospel."

For nervous and telling eloquence I know no passage in sacred or profane literature to surpass this chapter. One who pursues the even tenor of the argument in the eighth chapter and pauses to admire the noble sentiment couched in its last verse is absolutely startled by the abruptness with which the writer, as he enters on the ninth, breaks off into a long series of impassioned interrogatories. It is as the transition from the calm flow of the majestic river to the rush and roar of the cataract—from the stately tread of the mettle charger to his impetuous dash, when struck by the spur. The sensitive and high-spirited Apostle has evidently been stung to the quick. His title to the Apostleship has been called in question, and that too by those who should have been the last to do so—some of his own spiritual children acting under evil advisers. Yea, the very circumstances on which he (humanly speaking) prided himself—the self-denial which constrained him to sacrifice his own tastes and comforts for the better advancement of the Gospel—were made the grounds on which they assailed his authority. What wonder then that his whole soul should be stirred with indignation! Drawing himself up to the full height of his intellectual and spiritual stature, he arraigns his challengers. With lightning in his eye and thunder on his lips he quells them into silence—abashes them into shame, as he hurls at them question upon question, each marked by rare incisive logic and clear-cut terseness of expression. The whole man seems to quiver with emotion. These interrogatories burst upon the ear with the quick, sharp crack of artillery, driving the enemy from the field. Each, whether introducing an analogy from nature or enforcing an illustration from Scripture, carries forward his apology with cumulative force to a commanding climax. In every sentence as he advances he forges a link in the chain of argument with which he leads captive their judgment. He pauses not until he has vindicated his Apostleship, and established on a basis which the ages cannot shake, the right of those who preach the Gospel to live by the Gospel.

Having conclusively settled this point, he proceeds to state that he had not availed himself nor did he desire to avail himself of this right. Why? That no one might make void a pardonable boast in which he took great comfort. What was the ground of this boast? Was it because in season and out of season he preached the Gospel of Christ? Ah! no. Herein he had no choice. Preach that Gospel he must. Necessity to do so was laid on him. A dread woe impended o'er him, if he sped not from city to city, proclaiming the offers of Christ's saving love. A delightful constraint, overmastering his will—controlling his whole man, impelled him to devote his life to the noble task of bringing back men to God. In this he was practically an involuntary agent. Wherein then lay his boasted liberty? In what sphere of duty was he a voluntary agent? It was optional to him to demand his unquestionable right—to claim maintenance from those to whom he ministered, or absolutely to forego this right and support himself by the labour of his hands. This latter course he deliberately adopted and consistently pursued. Wherefore? To satisfy his conscience and convince all gainsayers that his heart was in the work—that he could be happy in no other occupation—that he spoke because he believed—that he worked because he loved. He would not risk the suspicion of being regarded as one who had unwillingly been entrusted with a stewardship and who performed the duties of his office as a matter of routine—gaining his livelihood by dispensing to others the portions assigned them by the master. The decision of this question of temporal support lay within his own power. In this province of action he was his own master. But to decide whether or not he should preach the Gospel—whether he should glorify God in this or some other walk of life, did not lie within his own power. He was shut up to this pursuit. He could not turn aside either to the right or the left. Forward he must go, a divine power impelling him—a dire woe threatening him if he shrunk back from fulfilling his course!

What was this overmastering necessity? When first introduced to us, Paul was in full career as a persecutor of all who avowed the crucified Jesus as the Jewish Messiah—as the world's Redeemer. By nature he was one who loved—one who worked in any mission which enlisted his energies with all his heart and soul, and strength and mind. He did not espouse a cause by halves. While thus mad against the followers of the Nazarene, he is arrested at the gate of Damascus and wheeled

right round in his course. His mind is flooded with heavenly light in regard to Jesus and his claims. Bitterly opposed to Christ, he becomes zealous for Him. The persecutor becomes the preacher. Some six years later he is transported to the third heaven and beholds scenes that far eclipse the transfiguration glories vouchsafed to Peter, James and John. But over and above these extraordinary revelations, peculiar to Paul, given as a support to that marvellous faith required to bear him through the tremendous work appointed him, there was that mighty influence, common to every Christian, which took possession of his whole being with its springs of action and motives to work. He himself discloses it in these words: "For the love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge that, if one died for all, then were all dead, and that He died for all, that they who live should henceforth live not unto themselves but unto Him, who died for them and rose again." The necessity which impelled him on was thus no tyrant's will holding the lash o'er the reluctant worker—no dread fatalism driving onward its infatuated devotee, but an intensely vivid realization of that divine love consummated on Calvary. Alike on the work bench and in the solitary cell—on the street or the vessel's deck, he was intent on pondering that love. It was his study in the day—his meditation in the night. He tried to plummet its depths and scale its heights and compass its breadth. A vain task for any mind short of the Infinite! He, however, found it to be deep enough to bury out of sight the sins of Paul the blasphemer—vast enough to embrace every sinner willing to accept its offers—high enough to lift those who trusted to it to the image and presence of God. With the message of this love to perishing men High Heaven had charged him. "Go, tell it to Israel; preach it to the Gentiles; sound it before kings; proclaim it at the tribunal of Cæsar." This was his mission; and oh! how straitened he was until it should be accomplished!

This furnishes us with a key to interpret his marvellous career. Without it his life would be an inexplicable mystery. To those who know not the secret, his whole course was an enigma. They saw that he was possessed by a power that was master of every mental fibre, every spiritual impulse. Festus accounted for it by saying that much learning had made him mad—the Corinthians by asserting that he was beside himself. He evidently was a man lifted out of himself and above himself—a man terribly in earnest—a man imbued with the conviction that he was entrusted with a mission of tremendous import which he must bear wherever there were ears to hear and souls to be saved. Follow him through his Christian course of thirty years! With breathless haste he sped from land to land, like a messenger bearing a pardon, who fears that the law may have executed punishment on the criminal ere he arrive with the glad news. During these eventful years he encountered hardships and endured privations and suffered cruelties, the very recital of which stings amazement in the reader. Listen to the following statement written ten years before he closed his adventurous career! "Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one; thrice was I beaten with rods; thrice I suffered shipwreck; a night and a day I have been in the deep." And this was only a part. Rest he would not take—he got only in the enforced seclusion of the prison. In the synagogue and agora—wherever men do congregate—he expounded and entreated. And, while others slept, he was weaving tents so as to earn a competence. He toiled with his hands—how he toiled with his brain! But the most trying ordeal to a sensitive and cultured mind, to a weak and delicate frame such as he possessed, was the mob-violence which he had everywhere to face. Well might he testify to the Ephesians: "The Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me." He had experience of mobs of every kind—a Jerusalem mob, zealous for the law; an Ephesian mob, jealous of the honour of Diana, apprehensive for their own gains; a Philippian mob, infuriated that an end had been put to their unholy traffic; a Thessalonian mob, made up of low fellows of the baser sort, hived ruffians goaded on by Jewish fanatics. Oh! what wonder that his friends—that his flesh, utterly weary of this constant exposure to brutal treatment, should urge the Apostle thus: "Have done with this work; you have had more than your share; wash your hands of these men's blood; retire into repose or employ your talents in some other useful calling!" But what says the Apostle to this remonstrance? "Nay—necessity lies on me; woe is unto me if I preach not the Gospel." "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." And he emerges from the briny sea, from the dank prison—he drags himself from under the stone-heap, with a hotter zeal fanning his enthusiasm—a more fervid fire consuming his bones. Neither Roman scourge nor Jewish lash deterred him. The angry floods of the Egean could not quench his determination to carry the fiery cross. Expulsion from one place he deemed a call to the next; and from point to point he hastened in that circuit, which extended not from Dan to Beersheba but from Jerusalem even round unto Illyricum. Is it then matter for wonderment that Paul and men who caught his mantle revolutionized the world! Need we be surprised that the decaying bulwarks of Paganism—the effete superstitions of Greece and Rome should have gone down below such assailing engines? Zeal so burning, earnestness so consuming, endurance so unflinching engaged in any cause, would have overborne a formidable array of opposing forces; but enlisted in the right cause, they were absolutely irresistible and bore onward the standard of the Gospel to conquest and triumph!

Paul was by gifts, training and accomplishments peculiarly fitted for the mission to which he was called. A special work had to be done. For this the eleven were quite unqualified. They were admirably adapted to be Gospel-writers—to record the

various incidents in their Lord's public life, of which they had been eye-witnesses—to declare the Gospel to their own countrymen. But they were not fitted for the post which Paul was called to fill. Long years after his conversion even Peter shrank by his conduct at Antioch that he had not outgrown the prejudices of early education. A man was needed to carry the Gospel to Gentile lands. Such an one must be a person of rare culture and refined bearing—of logical acumen and subtle penetration—of scholarly attainments and versatile intellect—mighty in the Scriptures, versed not only in Rabbinical but classic lore. The agent requisite for this weighty enterprise must be capable not only of confuting Jewish Rabbis out of Mosal record and prophetic writings, but of encountering heathen philosophers on ground of their own selection—able to address himself with the resources of a profound scholar and practised thinker to an audience of Athenian literati—able to bear himself royally before kings and emperors. Such an agent Providence had been silently forming in the schools of Tarsus, and at Gamaliel's feet; and in the fulness of time, the fire of the Holy Ghost descends—quicks him into life—and the Apostle to the Gentiles opens his lips in the oldest city of the world. Hence we learn that the great Head of the Church desires to draw preachers of the Gospel from the severer classes of society—to have in the ranks of the ministry men of varied gifts and diverse qualifications. The offers of salvation must be borne to prince and peasant, to statesman and savant, and simple folk. Hence a great variety of agents is required to approach these so as to present the truth in such a light as to press home its claims. It behoves us to be crafty and catch them by guile. We must become all things to all men that we may win souls.

Brethren in the ministry! our text holds up a standard by which to test ourselves. Paul's ground of boasting may not be ours—need not be ours, as circumstances have changed since his time. And yet, I am thankful to say, there are in the ministerial ranks, many, who, though not absolutely, yet relatively, do make the Gospel of Christ free of charge to those to whom it is delivered. I ask it, fearless of contradiction, have we not among the ministers of the Presbyterian Church in Canada those, who, were they to take their talents to other markets—were they to enter the law or engage in commerce, or pursue some other lucrative vocation, would rapidly accumulate wealth. And yet these are content with a scanty competence—have of a struggle to keep the wolf from the door. All honour to such! Well may they claim a share in Paul's noble boast!

Brethren! we repeat that we have here a touchstone by which to try our proficiency in this sacred calling! Here is a mirror in which we may examine ourselves and see what manner of preachers we are! We cannot claim a supernatural call as did Saul of Tarsus. We cannot feel the urgency of the stimulus arising from sight of the unutterable glories of the third heavens. Still, may we not assure ourselves of a call from the Holy Ghost audible within the recesses of our own spirit? May we not by faith vividly conceive the brightness of the upper world? Yea, may we not realize, in degree equal to that impelling the Apostle, the constraining influence of the love of Christ? There is no insuperable barrier to our attaining the full force of Paul's master motive. Does, then, our whole bearing indicate that we are borne onward by an overmastering necessity? Do we speed with the glad news under the shadow of a woe impending if we flag and preach not the Gospel? Are we on fire? Are we rapt in an enthusiasm of earnestness? Does something in our demeanor compel men's attention and extort the remark: "Look at that man! he evidently believes he has a mission." By day—by night do we weigh the tremendous issues of that message to our perishing neighbors with which we are charged? "Oh! who is sufficient for these things?"—Who of us but must cry: "Oh! I am a cold, leaden-footed messenger; but, Lord! enlarge my heart and I will run in the way of Thy commands; baptize Thou me with Pentecostal fire and the zeal of Thine house shall consume me."

Here also is a standard by which to test the Christianity of our age and country! We sadly need a revival of the old days. We want Pauls as well as Peters. We specially need men of Pauline training, Pauline culture, Pauline fire. We require men charged with his living earnestness—men—restrained by that heaven-wrought energy which made him a Mercury not merely as to eloquent speech, but also winged activity. And we are not getting them in anything like adequate number. Christianity is making conquests in heathen lands, but relatively is not gaining at home. A gulf yawns and widens between the expounders of God in nature and the expounders of God in Revelation. All ranks do not furnish their due quota of recruits to the Ministry. How alarmingly few do we now obtain from what are called the upper classes of society! How appallingly few are furnished by our large and wealthy city congregations! Almost all come from the country—belong to the middle classes. And noble specimens we do oft obtain from these sources—men, who are nature's princes, who by gifts and graces prove Christian gentlemen of royal bearing. Not fewer of these than we now have do we desire; but far more of the others than we now receive do we crave. We abhor class distinctions, which engender class prejudices. And we now raise our voice, because we have observed with pain that among our opulent families there is a growing disinclination to devote their sons to the preaching of the Gospel of Christ. Not merely pet misses and flippant lads, but grave fathers in the eldership and mothers who talk sentimentally upon religion, have an idea that the ministry is not respectable enough for a scion of their house. Speak to the wealthy members of our communion about the duty of giving back to the Lord one of those whom He has given them in trust, say the brightest and best; and they will demur the subject with scant courtesy as they tell you: "It is a poor business." And this objection will come from men ready to give their

sons thousands of dollars as a capital for trading, hundreds of pounds wherewith to purchase a well-stocked farm—from ruin prepared to bequeath to these ample pecuniary means wherewith to live in comparative opulence; but who will not incline them to the pulpit, although they could supplement their stipends so as to place them beyond anxious care. Is it not a sad spectacle to look over a large city or crowded country congregation—to note in pew after pew youths of intellectual look, with energy displayed in every line of their countenance, and then to reflect that these shall soon be absorbed in the several occupations of a busy life; but probably not two—possibly not one will respond to the call for Gospel-messengers. "Lord! here am I; send me!" It is a dark blot upon our Christian discipleship that so few of our brilliant youth offer first their hearts and then their lives to the active service of Him who showed Himself glorious in creating it. Matchless universe—still more glorious in yielding His life to further the welfare of our race. Once it was not so. Time was in the country whence we have sprung that the pulpit could command the finest talent in the land. We have not to go back to the days of Knox or Melville to find a condition of society where the most cultured gentry esteemed it a privilege to dedicate to temple work the noblest son in the family—the lad of much promise and many prayers. That the Church does still in that land secure a considerable share of the intellectual capital, the working power, the enthusiastic fire of the nation we admit, but nothing like her due share. But this is a money-worshipping continent. This is not the golden but the gold age of its history. The evil we deplore arises mainly from the exaggerated estimate placed on earthly riches—the low esteem in which people hold everything not measurable by a money standard; as if coining money were the chief end of man made in the image of God, as if not the mind but the purse were the measure of a man. Oh! I fear that we are losing sight of the sharp line that divides the Church from the world. I fear that the god of this world is blinding us as to the mission of the former. The Church fulfils her end, only when maintaining a constant protest against the vanity of this-world-ness—when causing men vividly to realize the grandeur and importance of things spiritual and unseen. We are not sufficiently faithful to our wealthy members, who are really to be pitied as standing on slippery places, especially in this matter of the Ministry. As in our pews and graves, so also in our pulpits the rich and poor should meet together. We long to see flocking into our ranks men capable of this hour of sitting down beside the peasant widow in her humble cot and making her in her loneliness feel that she has a brother—the next hour of stepping into the drawing-room of the most polished circle and making the inmates realize by his bearing and accomplishments that they have their social peer and that on an equal footing he can denounce their fashionable follies and sins.

How may this desirable end be accomplished? In two ways:— First, by giving ourselves to prayer on the subject. One mode in which prayer accomplishes itself is this: In supplication we set up before our minds a vivid image of the importance of the object we desire, and this constrains us to use adequate means to secure the end. Hence prayer accomplishes itself by its reflex influence on ourselves as much as by any other mode. If my petition: "Thy kingdom come," is heartfelt—if it is a wrestling with God; there will be a corresponding wrestling with myself, so that I shall exert and deny myself to effect this glorious consummation. Christian professors go through the form of entreating the Lord of the harvest to send forth laborers to reap His fields. If this prayer were earnest, would they incline their sons in every direction rather than to these fields? Let our prayers, then, be something more than a form. Let the pulsations of spiritual life throb through them and new light shall be thrown on the proper aims of life; every energy will be put forth—yes, sacrifices will be made to bring to pass that which we desire. Some parents may with the humility of Abaz say that they have no children good enough for the Ministry and that, however willing themselves, they cannot force these into the work. We don't want them to do so. God requires willing service. But what we have a right to ask those parents to do is to use their parental influence with a view to this end—to impress on their families that there is something more valuable than riches, more enduring than fame—to besiege a throne of grace year in and year out, imploring God to turn the hearts of their children into consonance with their wishes. Let Christian parents do what they can and they may safely leave the consequences to God. And think you that they who thus sow in tears shall not some day bring home their sheaves rejoicing? Have we lost faith in the efficacy of earnest prayer? Do you imagine that, if supplicants worthy of the name, went up daily from the closets and family altars of the thousands of households within our communion, we would have to count over candidates for the Ministry by tens? Cannot we now have Hannahs, prepared to consecrate their Samuels even from the cradle, and then to surround their early years with religious influences and hallowed associations, while they give themselves to prayer for the accomplishment of their heart's desire? Can we no longer have Eunices, moulding by line on line the plastic minds of their youthful Timothy to the service of the sanctuary? Oh! let us pray Him who holds men's hearts in His hands to crown all such efforts with a blessing; and soon we shall rejoice in the crowd of talented and pious youth who offer themselves for the Ministry—soon shall we count among the prophets Sauls who tower intellectually head and shoulders above the mass of their fellow-men.

Induced by the feeling that they have stretched out their hands all their lives to a niggardly and unappreciative people. I admit that the ministry is not respected— is not supported as it ought to be. But how is this to be remedied, if they who are examples to the people speak in the manner to which we have referred? If the love of Christ burns within our souls, then necessity is laid on us, as on Paul, to go forth and preach the Gospel. We cannot resist the overpowering impulse, even though it lead us into hardships and privations. The old story must ever repeat itself. "He, that shall save his life, must lose it." The discipline cannot expect to fare better than his master, nor the ambassador than his lord. Brethren! let us magnify our office not by pompous bearing, not by claiming priestly functions, not by lordling it over God's heritage, but let us show by our untiring energy, our rapt enthusiasm, our unnumbering self-denial, how grand and noble we deem it! When we are pressing this life work on young men, let us speak of it as little as possible as a profession, for with this world incessantly comes in the idea of money-making, comfort-securing. Rather, let us candidly refer to it as a service; but a service, gracious in its supports—glorious in its rewards. So poisoned has the domestic atmosphere in many families of our communion become that I have been told by lads in their early teens, when speaking to them of the ministry, "There is nothing in it." Nothing in it! Is there not? There may not be in it palatial mansions, Tyrian furniture, dashing equipages; but is there not something more satisfactory—more enduring—more worthy of true manhood? What of the crown of righteousness! What of the robe of light! What of the inner row of peers in the presence-chamber of the King of kings! Even in this world, is there nothing in the approval of conscience? Think of the self-respect, which supports a man, who lives not for himself but others! Is it not more noble to play on this life's stage the role of a Paul, who spent and was spent in his unceasing efforts to proclaim the love of Jesus, than to exhaust our few years in a circle of objects, whose centre is self and whose circumference is earth? Such a life cannot but command inward homage—must extort outward appreciation. True, we may sometimes meet with Corinthians, who would wish us to sow for them spiritual things without allowing us to reap their fleshy things. Yet we shall oft be cheered by the grateful recognition of Macedonians, who to their power and beyond their power will send gifts and minister to our necessities. While a minister must look to the future state for his full reward, yet even here he has many things which give dignity and zest to life. What a poem could be written on the Mause! Keen privations are borne by the patriarch of the family, especially in the matter of food for a cultured literary taste. Marvels of economy are accomplished by the matron of the household. Stinted is the income of a large majority of our ministers. And yet I maintain that a higher peace reigns—a deeper contentment prevails—more real comfort is enjoyed—more genuine service rendered in a national point of view by the class of young men they send forth to the various occupations of life, in those humble homes than in those of any other portion of the community.

Brethren! follow Paul even as he followed Christ. Please not yourselves even as the Master pleased not Himself. Be baptized into the spirit of the Apostle. By the grace of God be what you can be and ought to be. Up—haste ye—work while it is called to-day. Have fire in your hearts—the eloquence of earnestness on your tongues—wings to your feet. The night shall soon be here. Be animated by fervor so intense—be borne along in such an ecstasy of work as to show that your whole being is permeated with the conviction that necessity lies on you—that woe is unto you if you preach not the Gospel. Then shall we compel the tribute: "These are the men who turn the world upside down—these are transforming the kingdoms of this world into the kingdom of our Lord and his Christ."

WHAT a holy sensibility ought to mark the child of God! "Not once named among you."

WEEP not for death!  
'Tis but a fever still'd,  
A pain suppress'd, a fear at rest,  
A solemn hope fulfill'd.  
The moonshine on the slumbering deep  
Is scarcely calmer—wherefore weep?

Weep not for death!  
The fount of tears is sealed;  
Who knows how bright the inward light  
To those shut eyes revealed?  
Who knows what peerless love may fill  
The heart that seems so cold and still?

MUCH as the starry heaven with its innumerable worlds fills man's soul with wonder and awe, making him feel his own littleness, yet there is something within him which elevates him above suns and stars, above angels and seraphs, and that is his moral nature.—Köhler.

CHRISTIANITY is the true citizenship of the world; and universal peace, and the free exchange by all lands and tribes of their several peculiar goods and gifts, are possible only as all are grouped around, and united by the cross of a common Redeemer, and the hope of a common heaven.—Wm. B. Williams.

Be patient. This cloud of cares which darkens your pathway is not lasting; but like a cloud will soon pass away and leave not a trace behind. The cares of last year are well nigh forgotten, or if you recall them, you wonder they ever had power to annoy and depress you. So with those of the present hour. You will yet smile at some of those annoyances which now darken your sunshine.

WHEN a man joins a particular church he is bound to identify himself with it, and to strive to sustain and promote its church-life. He must attend its services, and cooperate in its measures. He must not go first to one church and then to another, he gratifies his curiosity or his taste. He must be governed by a sense of duty, and not by inclination; thus only can he promote his own edification and the welfare of the Church.—Dr. Charles Hodge.