

THE CALL TO DISCIPLESHIP.

A SERMON BY REV. W. C. BROWN.
Preached before the Students of Mount Allison College and Academies.

"Jesus saith unto him, 'Follow me.' Matt. 8, 22.

There are many Masters. Powerful voices are ever heard calling man to a baser or better life. Pleasure, the enchantress, wealth; with pompous, golden glories; and ambition welding a coveted sceptre, stand ever, side by side with wisdom, "in the chief place of concourse in the opening of the gates" crying unto the sons of men. Their call is not unheeded. Each has its own followers, and to each of the followers the service of his own master is most easy and the rewards most desired. There is, however another who claims our service and invites us to enter his train, one whose friendship is honorable, whose commands are not grievous, and whose rewards are large and liberal. Jesus says follow me. Jesus becomes a claimant.

Religion is a necessity to man. With it he is a brute. He needs something to worship, moral restraint and guidance, generous sentiments, hopes of an after life. So constituted is man that these things or the semblance of them will cling to him even in the most decayed state of society. There is no nation worthy of the same without a religion.

There is, however, but one religion which can bring to perfection the manhood of man; but one master who can touch every key of the human soul and bring sweet and blessed harmony from its wondrous strings; but one power which can make this earth-born instrument give forth the music of heaven. Jesus Christ is that perfect master, not a philosopher, yet treading where philosophy cannot reach, not a poet, yet sounding all the depths of human feeling; not a theologian, yet making God known to man.

He was wont while on earth to call his disciples with that majestic simplicity shown in our text. There is no elaborate ecclesiasticism, no theological minutia, no carefulness of preparation. Follow me. Come to me. Rest on and in me. Such still is his call at the outset.

There is self-assertion here, and perhaps there is nothing more wonderful than the manner in which Christ thrust himself upon the attention of the world, not indeed as a Charlatan lifting up his voice in the street and using every little miracle to make the vulgar gaze upon him in awe, and shout his praise, but the directness with which he turns upon himself the attention of every enquirer after truth. "I am the way," follow me. "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me." He admits no variation of opinion on this matter of his own supremacy. "One is your master," and he even declines to admit a second. "All ye are brethren."

There is something also in this call to wonder at. An obscure man of humble birth, without prestige, and without human sanction, calls, with authority, men to himself, and forms them with himself as the standard, the attractive centre, the supreme master, a church which expands with accelerating progress, still bearing his impress on every part and what is more remarkable bearing his impress more with the advance of age.

To me there seems no standing ground tenable between the full claims of Jesus and the extreme departure of infidelity. There is first a choice implied.

The same necessity which existed eighteen hundred years ago to choose between Christ and others exists still. His claims come now into competition with those of scientists. Then it was with Pharisees and Sadducees. It will be for you to decide who is most worthy of your confidence and homage. Not that Christ seeks to enter the domain of philosophy. He does not. But his religious teachings are often opposed by men whose scientific teachings we are disposed to accept. There are specialists in science who know nothing of revelation, as there are specialists in religion who know nothing of science. The former refuses to listen to the religion of the Bible. What wonder if the latter should refuse to listen to the religion of philosophy. Men may read rightly the facts of nature and read wrongly, or omit altogether the connection of those facts with God. Nature really comprehends the whole. It is not merely a question of atoms and molecules of attraction and growth, of development of form and development of intelligence. A man may know much about all these and yet be poorly qualified to interpret nature.

We have many would be teachers, who, in studying the book of nature are like one who, without a lexicon, is endeavouring to read a book in a foreign tongue which he but half understands. Yet these would fain interpret the world and deny the possibility of any better explanation than their own. Let one who really understands it come forward and how different the thing appears.

Brethren, Jesus Christ interprets for us much of that book which human reason vainly seeks to comprehend. He does not enter upon the path of scientific discovery. This, because it is within the reach of the human faculties, is left to them. But Jesus reveals to us God. He makes known the Father. He discloses to us the deeper mysteries of nature. He interprets all that relates to the providence of God—his grace and mercy, the soul of man, the duties of life, the destiny. It will be for you to decide whether in these things you will accept the leadership of Jesus Christ or that of some sage with Atheistic belief, Utilitarian ethics, and Sadducean hopes.

The infidelity of the present age has assumed, to the scholar, a very seductive form. Its advocates have taken infinite pains to elaborate one or two propositions which had been carefully presented and ably refuted in a past age. The observed invariability of nature's laws, has, in their hands, grown into the necessary invariability of them, and they have even set aside the "analogy" of Butler by affirming that his argument may lead either to his conclusion or to the conclusion that there is no God. To this one-sided philosophy they have brought all the resources of learning and leisure. They have with skillful hands pressed into this unhalloved service the recent discoveries of science. They have turned against Christ and Christianity the very weapons of defence which nature and history had put into our hands; making Atheism their client, they have handled their evil cause with all the dexterity and adroitness of a clever lawyer who works for victory rather than for truth. With the same carefulness and painstaking they have sought to purge away the grossness and offensive sectionalism of their unbelief and to give it the air of refinement and delicacy by introducing a temperateness of tone into their discussions, by framing an elaborate and attractive system of sociology, including morals, fitted to their philosophical views, and especially, by endeavouring to show that the aim and purpose of it all is the higher intellectual and moral development of mankind. They have endeavoured to put christianity into a repulsive form. They have charged it with delaying the advance of science; they have set down to its account the atrocities which should have been ascribed to the age or to human passion, and which the gentle spirit of christianity would have prevented had human prejudice and human ambition listened; and they have unfairly widened, with deliberate intent the breach between science and revelation.

The young and unwary may easily be drawn by all this into grave and destructive error. Influenced by the tremendous force of learning and argument which has thus with judicious painstaking been accumulated, many persons indeed come to imagine that we live in a transitional period—that the old is passing away; that thought and belief are moving into a higher flame; that the time for doing homage to the opinions of antiquity is past; and that to accept any teacher of a past age, however accredited, is to fall into the rear of the great progress which shall arise out of the change through which we are passing. There is, however, no certainty that the present age is more traditional than any period which preceded it. In every age there have been great teachers on every great question, and the world has followed sometimes one, sometimes another. The world has oscillated between the philosophy of Zeno and that of Epicurus, and at each oscillation thinking that absolute truth had, at last, been reached. Yet I think, it may be doubted if, in its grand generalizations, one age of philosophy has been much above another, least of all the present age, the tendency of whose speculations is towards absolute atheism—whose only Duties are matter and force and whose highest recognized intelligence is the human intellect—that blossom of the spinal marrow.

You will, I am sure, pardon me if I do not recognize this as true science at all, but only vain speculation; that when philosophy denies a God she steps beyond her legitimate limits as much as when she defines him; that if all which true science teaches were absolutely certain I would still feel that my faith in the Lord Jesus Christ was unshaken and my discipleship to him unhindered; I could follow him as closely and trust him as fully as I do today. I would not feel that the matter of sin and righteousness, ruin and redemption had been touched. I would still feel that Christ in his own sphere was paramount and supreme and that it was not inconsistent with modern, any more than with ancient philosophy, to believe in the immortality of the soul, the resurrection from the dead, the divinity of Christ, the redemption of man, and the fatherhood of God. No. No! A thousand times No. Christianity is not a worn out thing which the world may cast aside or a garment which the soul has outgrown. No, brethren; Jesus Christ is a matter so far in advance of his own and of every age that the more we study him the more we feel his superiority and the period will never

come when mankind can say we are beyond such leadership, or beyond the power of such an example or beyond the necessity of the vicarious death.

But whilst you may and even must choose between these things—between Christ and others, yet remember that the command of Christ is upon you. He does not only invite but commands you to follow him. He exercises an authority which he has a right to exercise. You may refuse it you may despise it, but you cannot alter his claims upon you any more than you can shake the throne of God. When Christ says "follow me" he utters a command which has as much divine sanction as the decalogue itself. You may decline to follow him, but you cannot do so and be innocent. No earthly duty however important can relieve you from the obligation. No natural infirmities or ties of friendship can be counted in the matter. The Claim of Christ is settled in heaven. Following Christ does not require the abandonment of anything truly noble or really useful to mankind.

He came not to destroy but to perfect. Christianity lifts not the finger of interdiction against learning or commerce, art or literature. Only a disordered mind will regard holiness as incompatible with business or science. Incomparables of learning flourish best under the patronage of the Church. Science makes most progress where the footsteps of Christ's religion have hallowed the ground. Commerce radiates from these lands which have felt the Saviour's sway. Art thrives under the shadow of the cross. Literature accumulates its glorious riches under the cloudless light of heaven's revelations.

Two things should be borne in mind, viz: that religion is separate from all those things, yet is to permeate them all with its spirit and to rule them by its moral power. It is like a monarch on earth, not to make the pursuits of its subjects its own pursuits, but to suppress the evil and to give legitimacy and protection to the worthy ones. The province of religion is spiritual and moral. It has to deal with the conscience. To create faith, to promote virtue, and neither faith nor virtue is bound up with the antiquity of the earth, the mode of its creation, or the slow formation of its state. Religion is separate from science and art, from literature and commerce, yet it was designed to imbue them with its spirit and cover them with its glories, so that though they "have been among the pots they may yet be as the wings of a dove covered with silver and her feathers with yellow gold." It has long been the practice to rule science by theological dogma. It has been the practice of science to throw off religious restraint and deny the supernatural. Thus the brothers, sons of the same father, instead of walking, brotherlike, arm in arm through the earth, have displayed a mutual antagonism, while the mocking world which cared for neither, went on in its heedless course of wanton riot and mad ambition. God hasten the day when in this sense Judah shall not vex Ephraim nor Ephraim envy Judah.

Nor need the following of Christ narrow your spirit or set barriers to your mental progress. Why should it? When did the command of Christ forbid inquiries into the phenomena of nature or restrain the curious spirit of research? When did Jesus call the study of nature impious, or a desire to unlock the secrets of the universe sacrilege. When did the son of God proscribe invention or lifting a barrier like that which he placed to the proud waves, say to the human mind hitherto shalt thou come but no farther? No, brethren, the highest culture, the broadest liberality of sentiment, the deepest research into nature, and the utmost progress of the human mind, are compatible with a humble acceptance of the leadership of Jesus and his perfect mastery over our hearts and lives.

Discipleship does not require seclusion from the world or renunciation of its enjoyments. "The earth hath he given to the children of men." He hath given it that they might enjoy it and be led to the higher enjoyment of its Creator. He does not design that you should retire into a cloister or that you should make a cloister of your home. Either is a perversion of nature and God is not more dishonoured by sin itself than by this travesty of religion. He does not wish you to stretch the funeral pall of a gloomy and terrified imagination between yourself and him or live under the dark shadow of a thundercloud which you fear might at any moment discharge its wrath upon you. Christ is not a thundercloud but the son of Righteousness. Bright, clear, joy-inspiring is his religion. His disciples are born of God. John 1, 12. His sons have not received the spirit of bondage to fear but the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. Romans 8, 15. Righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost, is the kingdom of God. Romans 16, 17. Christ himself set us an example of pure innocent social pleasure. Let your home life partake of this joyousness.

Nothing more powerfully argues a life beyond this than the failure of ideas here. Each gives only fragments of humanity—fragments of heart, fragments of mind, fragments of charity, love and virtue.

Confession of sin is an all-important duty, but there is no true confession of sin where there is not at the same time a turning away from it.

(To be Continued).

THE FAMILY.

OUR LITTLE MAN.

BY MRS. F. A. PERCY.

Would anybody like to know
Why it is we call him so?
Why we call him "our little man?"
Merry, jolly, seven-year old Dan?

'Tis because he's so willing to do
Everything that we ask him to;
Never pouting or making a fuss,
Always cheerfully helping us.

Ever ready to leave his play
When he's wanted in any way;
Often asking for something to do,
Saying, "Mamma, I love to help you."

Picking up things about the room,
Sweeping the steps with his little broom;
Playing with baby, shelling the peas—
How he helps mamma in things like these.

Watering the garden, pulling up weeds,
Running errands for what mamma needs,
Making the yard look tidy and neat—
Thus he spares his dear papa's feet.

Then of himself he takes so good care,
Even brushes and combs his own hair;
Keeps his hands and his face so clean,
Never a neater boy was seen.

Useful and happy through all the day,
Ready for work and ready for play;
Do you wonder that dear helpful Dan
Goes by the name of "our little man?"
—N. Y. Independent

THE PASTORAL GIMLET.

Once a city pastor was absent from home for a week. During his absence, the son of a member who lived several miles out of town died. He did not hear of the young man's death until he returned. Then he was taken sick, and it was a week or ten days before he could safely drive out and visit his afflicted parishoner. The first words that greeted his ears were, "Well, I thought you had forgotten us;" and then the good woman sat complacently down to be consoled.

That is what I mean by the pastoral gimlet, and it is astonishing how proficient certain church-members become in its use. The delicacy in insinuating, the deftness and grace in twisting, can only have been acquired by assiduous practice. They know just where it will go in most easily; just how many turns to give it before it gets down to the quick.

There are various scientific twists of the gimlet known to adepts and victims. There is the sarcastic twist. Hostess enters the parlor and greets pastor thus: "Good afternoon, Dr. A.; really the sight of you is refreshing. Have you found out at last where we live?"

There is the business twist: "Do you know that you haven't been inside our house for six months?" Parsons, as well as mathematicians, are painfully aware that figures can't lie; so that this twist is a peculiarly effective one, usually transfixing the victim and reducing him at once to a condition of silent helplessness.

Then there is the reprehensible twist, also very effective; tremendously so if the twister can manage to start a "silent tear." "Really, we began to doubt whether we had any pastor."

And once in a while we are treated to the spiteful twist, in administering which the operator, or more commonly the operator, is at no pains to conceal her fell intent, but drives the uncoiled gimlet in with a steady hand; or, in other words, gives parson a sharp "setting down" on his short-comings.

The men who wince under this instrument are the conscientious pastors, who are forever haunted by the vague sense of work in arrears, and constantly tormented with self reproach, because they do not bring it up. The gimlet is a terrible thing to such a one. He knows the gimlet houses as well as a doctor knows where small pox is. He braces himself to visit them once or twice a year. He says, jocosely, to a friend at the gate: "I know there is a rod in pickle for me here." He sits down to his work very much as if he were going to have a tooth filled, meets the twist of the gimlet without betraying his inward writhings, kneels down and prays with the gimlet-twisters, and rises from his knees to meet a parting thrust, as thus: "Now that you've found the way here, I hope we shall see you often." And, as he goes down the steps, he looks into his book, and seeing that the next place on the list is also a gimlet-house, he says to himself, "Not to-day; one day is all I can stand!"

You cheerful, sunny, sympathizing souls, God bless you, who perhaps excite the jealousy of your neighbors because the minister "drops in" at your houses so much oftener than at theirs. Does it never occur to you that he comes almost as much for his own sake as for yours, because he knows you always have oil and wine in your casks for the wounds of the gimlet?

Nothing more powerfully argues a life beyond this than the failure of ideas here. Each gives only fragments of humanity—fragments of heart, fragments of mind, fragments of charity, love and virtue.

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BEING HIS OWN PILOT.

A bright boy, who loved the sea, entered on a sailor's life when very young. He rose to quick promotion, and while quite a young man was made the master of a ship. One day a passenger spoke to him upon the voyage, and asked if he should anchor off a certain headland, supposing he would anchor there, and telegraph for a pilot to take the vessel into port. "Anchor! no, not I. I mean to be in dock with the morning tide." "I thought perhaps you would signal for a pilot." "I am my own pilot," was the curt reply. Intent upon reaching port by morning, he took a narrow channel to save distance. Old bronzed, grey-headed seamen turned their swarthy faces to the sky, which boded squally weather, and shook their heads. Cautious passengers went to the young captain, and besought him to take the wider course; but he only laughed at their fears, and repeated his promise to be in dock at daybreak. He was ashore before daybreak. We need not describe a storm at sea; the alarm of breakers shouted hoarsely through the wind, and the wild orders to get the lifeboats manned. Enough to say that the captain was ashore earlier than he promised—tossed sportively upon some weedy beach, a dead thing that the waves were weary of, and his queenly ship and costly freight were scattered over the surly acres of an angry sea. How was this? The glory of that young man was his strength; but he was his own pilot. His own pilot! There was his blunder—fatal, suicidal blunder. O young man, beware of being your own pilot! Take the true and able Pilot on board, who can stride upon those waves, who can speak, "Peace, be still!" to that rough Boreas, so that, "with Christ in the vessel, you may smile at the storm."

"PINTS."

"My trouble with him is that he don't make no pints; and when he's done, and through, and set down, I can't tell what, in particular, he's been 'a talking about; only he's kep' a good kind of a noise 'a going for about five-and-forty minutes. No longer ago 'n last Sunday night, my wife asked me when I got home from meetin'—which bein' beat out with a hard week's work she didn't go to—says she: 'John, what did the minister preach about?' and, says I, 'I don't believe I can tell ye, Jane. His text was the tail end of some verse in Leviticus, and 'twas all about being good, and sich; but I really can't say exactly what; there wan't no pint that I could bring away.'"

This was the criticism of a plain friend of ours upon a young minister who commenced preaching within the last five years; and who has an agreeable voice, and a rather graceful—if a little ostentatious—manner, and "a good port and bearing in society;" and who ought to do well as a minister—ought, it would seem, to do considerably better than he is doing.

The difficulty with him was well stated by our plain friend. His sermons lack "pints." His voice lacks "pints." His gesticulation lacks "pints." His character lacks "pints." He is altogether, and in every respect, and from every point of view, too smooth and sleek and glazed.

His texts introduced, as a general thing, a geographical, geological, archaeological, historical, ethnological essay as to matters and things possibly remotely related to the time, place and event referred to; followed by a rambling series of excellent remarks, having about as much relation to either text, or introduction, as the assorted cargo of a ship which carries pig-lead, india-rubber and bananas, together with nearly all the conceivable products of the tropics and of cooler climates, has to the iron hull which encloses, and the steam engines which propel it. He is all over the lot, yet he is nowhere in particular, while all is good and mild.

He does lack "pints." It is a grievous lack. Learning cannot supplement that. Did he call Geometry and Conic Sections all his own, and could he converse fluently in all tongues, he could not keep our plain friend awake, with that serene manner, and with no "pints."

We say could not keep him awake, not because any preaching would keep some people—more especially farmers who toil six long summer days in the open air, and then sit still in an ill-ventilated meeting-house in the hot hours of a summer Sabbath—awake. But, notwithstanding this, it is true that unless preachers can keep their hearers awake, their first duty toward them cannot be preformed. And we fancy all public speakers will agree that the simpler, the more distinct, and the more pointed, the divisions of their treatment of a subject can be made, the easier they find it to kindle the average mind with that appreciative glow which is the best antidote against sleep, and the best aid toward conviction.—Congregationalist.

Truth is the shortest and nearest way to our end, carrying us thither in a straight line.

Blessed are they who see the day of glory, but more blessed are they who contribute to its approach.

BEREAN

[Oct. 10. LESSON 11.
WASHING THE DISCIPLES' FEET.
HOME READ.
MONDAY—John 13.
TUESDAY—Luke 15.
WEDNESDAY—Romans 13.
THURSDAY—LUKE 22.
FRIDAY—MATTHEW 23.
SATURDAY—Psalm 139.
SUNDAY—Phil. 2.

TOPIC: Immanuel.
GOLDEN TEXT: Let us love one another, which was also in Christ Jesus.

GENERAL STATE

Jesus has now reached the day preceding his crucifixion, according to Dr. Strobel. Thursday evening, March 3. He has eaten the passover, the supper he proceeds to describe in the TITLE: *Disciples Feet*. This act bears what our TOPIC calls *ing*. The OUTLINE preaches HOLY CONSCIOUSNESS; 1.—THE HOLY SERVICE; 2.—THE HOLY SPIRIT. The great practice is summed up in the GOLDEN TEXT: *this mind be in you, which was in Jesus!*

[See LESSON COMMENTARY, MAN'S HAND-BOOK: (1) Passover in time of Christ's life, (showing how Jesus' disciples' feet); 712; (2) Washed feet, (2nd part); 712; (3) The outer garment; 702, 729, 730, 3353, 3359, 3360.

Where does this lesson lead to? 1. THAT SATAN WORKS IN PLACES?

2. THAT SIN BEGINS IN HEARTS?

3. THAT PIETY SHINES IN BLEST SERVICES?

OUTLINES, NOTES, AND

1. THE HOLY CONSCIOUSNESS

CONSCIOUSNESS is that knowledge which is within himself, and of person imparted to him. Jesus, according to ver. 1, hour was come; 2. That he given all things into his hands, he was come from God; 3. To God. Nothing could be done without his consent. A slightest suspicion that he honours would utterly offend him. But Jesus look his own, whom he had but "loved them unto the end."

"Often I feel my sinful heart Prone from my Jesus to depart; But though I have Him, His loving-kindness charms me."

Nay more, there was JUDAS Iscariot, who had been one of those who heard the devil had come into the world, and yet he serves Judas the others. See John 13, 2, 3.

PRACTICAL LESSONS. (See

of evil, comparing ver. 2, with Amid the holiest moments and scenes the devil is diligently at work. The highest personal conscience the heaviest personal wear, Jesus' love to waver.

2. THE HUMBLE SERVICE

LAI D ASIDE HIS GARBMENT, those outer and looser robes of ease could wear, but which could manage. Thus he illustrates the form of a servant." GRIDDING with the towel, as ver. 5, showing the double purpose of garment for wiping the feet.

WATER INTO A BASIN. One of acts, each touched with brevity and life-likeness. TO DISCIPLE'S FEET. This act of courtesy in oriental lands was worn, and where, much to on foot. It was a service, the lowest slaves to perform. The sense of a slave, for the lowest might be present. No slave upper room; he who furnishes the host of the disciples, and not see that the duty was possible considered himself to do it; hence he who had the SCIOUSNESS assumes the work.

PRACTICAL LESSONS. The teacher and the lowliest spirit together. . . . Humble service grades a great man than shining cots belittles the sun. . . . The God-man sprang to duty each disciple. . . . Jesus did this as cheerfully and well as any entire career. . . . The perfect Jesus' love is here added to faithfulness already seen. . . . served feet of men, will he not wash their sin-stained souls?

Some practice feet was religious rite. Pride may have to do with this as humility righteousness much more. serving spirit is what is sought appears in Matt. 23, 35, 36, 9, 10.

"It is a customary rite in the cathedral cities; in Vienna, for where, on Maundy-Thursdays, the pope washes the feet of the men."—Heubner.

The Pope suffers his feet to