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WHOLE No. 142

## SERMON.

Preached at the funeral services of the late Rev. S. D. Irvine, Sunday, May 29, 1904, By his friend and admirer, M. B. Shaw.

"Having faithfully served, he fell on sleep."  
Acts 13:36:

All the sights and sounds of this occasion remind us of the uncertainty of life, and of the sad, and inscrutable dispensations of Providence. It will be my task to attempt what Paul attempted when he was preaching the words of my text to an interested audience. He was emphasizing the triumphant element of our glorious religion. The resurrection was his constant theme. He admits that David fell on sleep, and that his body saw corruption, but David's greater Son the Savior of the world never saw corruption, though his body, lifeless, was laid in the tomb. The same power that hindered that corruption, and raised again that precious body, will be exercised some day to bring up David's body, and this precious body we are about to lay away today.

Thank God for such a religion as this for such a time as this!

David, having served his generation, by the will of God fell on sleep, his spirit to be with his God, and in a gloriously triumphant day, to have a new and incorruptible body among the Saints forever.

In a peculiar sense I feel that this text is very appropriate to the life story of our departed friend.

I. What is it to serve one's generation? (a) We are to serve it, not cringe to it as a slave.

The mother in all the fondness of a mother's love may make her child her tyrant. She must serve it during all its helplessness, but there is a way of service that is not servility.

The politician who is continually seeking some new nostrum for the nation, finds himself at the mercy of every fad and freak of the age, whereas the man who always stands for pure ideals, for civic righteousness, needs not ever to shift his ground. The thinker, or preacher who is always at the beck and call of every new apostle of every new thought and scheme in the religious life, cannot but become the slave in a sphere where God has called him to be master. Such a man as this is always at sea. He never knows what next will be handed out to him as an article of belief by his master, the Spirit of the Age. The man, who like our beloved dead, grew up in the BIBLE, had a real experience of saving Grace, and had mighty convictions of TRUTH, could always occupy the commanding position. He believed something. He preached it with all his God given powers.

(b) We serve our generation by keeping in constant touch with it. There are those who, appalled at the awful corruption in the world, hide away from it. Our brother was not one of these. Where there was sin there he was ambitious to present the dying love of his Savior; no field was too hard, no task too great for him to attempt. While in his vigor of manhood his ambition, the fervor of his spirit, pushed him on continually, to labors almost superhuman.

(c) We are to serve in all the common duties. David was a sheep-herder, a carrier of lances to men on the battle field. He was a trapper of bears and lions, a musician. He did police duty on Mt. Carmel. We have the privilege of serving our generation, chopping wood, drawing water, keeping the house, and always doing our work with a cheerful smile.

(d) We serve our generation by maintaining high religious ideals; high ideals of the home life, high ideals of the church life, and high ideals of our personal relation to God. It is a joy to me today to be able to say that in all these things our brother was pre-eminent.

2. Who of our generation are we to serve?

(a) The old and feeble.

(b) The men and women who hold any official position, our devoted school teachers, our toiling wives and mothers, everyone who can be helped by a kindly word, and a friendly smile.

(c) Serve the children. The most impressionable of all God's children, who hold unlimited possibilities, who are the special prey of all theimps of Satan.

3. What of us when we have faithfully served our generation?

The story of David gives a realistic answer. His kingdom was magnificently prosperous. There was not an enemy to lift his hand against the throne. The succession was provided for, all needed preparation for the erection of that great Temple for the LORD had been made. His work was done. The kindly old King gathered up his feet into his bed and like a tired child, quietly "fell on sleep" and was buried with his fathers.

(a) He did not go to sleep till his work was done

(b) When his work was done he, his body, went to sleep and his SPIRIT returned to God who gave it.

My beloved brother was allowed to do a splendid work among the people." though he was a most acceptable preacher any where, he is now asleep. The tired body is at rest, and his spirit is with his Savior. We will not say "Good bye," we will say "Good-night."

"Sleep on, beloved, sleep, and take thy rest;  
Lay down thy head upon thy Savior's breast;  
We love thee well; but Jesus loves thee best—  
Good-night! Good-night! Good-night!

Only 'good-night,' beloved—not 'farewell!'  
A little while, and all his saints shall dwell  
In hallowed union, indivisible—  
Good night!

Until we meet again before his throne,  
Clothed in the spotless robe he gives his own,  
Until we know even as we are known—  
Good-night!"

## Reliance on God.

This narration contains an account of King Asa's appeal to God in a time of great peril from the invasion of the land of Judah by Zerah, the Ethiopian, with an immense host of warriors. In his appeal, as translated in the revised version, Asa expressed his trust in God in the words, "We rely on Thee."

Asa's reliance at this time was entire and was not marred by wavering or resort to questionable means of success. The victory that he gained is ascribed wholly to the power of God. On a later occasion of peril from Baasha, King of Israel, he secured the co-operation of the King of Syria and this is marked by the chronicler as a step aside from trust in Jehovah. It is also recorded that at the last of his life he resorted to the "physicians" and not to his God for the healing of his disease. His reliance on God was not perfect on all occasions, but in the events of our lesson it reached the high level which was pleasing to God and secured a notable manifestation of divine power.

The general Scriptural law as to human reliance on God is that blessing and power will be "according to your faith." If faith is capable of full reliance on God and the occasion demands it, the Divine power is given accordingly and is more evident. Reliance on God draws out more of His special grace to those who possess and express it.

Asa's reliance on God did not exclude his employment of proper means and measures. God smote the Ethiopians "before Asa," showing that the Divine working was through Asa's army and equipment. If Asa erred in resorting to "phy-

sicians" it was because the medical art was then a system of heathenish charms and rites which were not consistent with the pure worship of Jehovah. But the employment of orderly and proper agencies is recognized in all the Scriptures as in harmony with reliance on Divine power. God is just as truly in the ordinary things of life as in the extraordinary. There are times when His power cannot be traced by man and works in seeming miracle, but the common operation of Divine power is along the line of what He has Himself created and blessed. God expects men to use their own created powers and all the natural agencies He has placed in their hands.

There is a disposition in the human view of reliance on God to discard ordinary means in order that there may be a demonstration of God that is beyond all doubt as being His alone, so that men must say, "This is the finger of God."

It is narrated that in the last days of a very successful and beloved Christian minister he yielded to the persuasions of friends to call in medical skill, contrary to his habit, but afterwards he was overcome with the fear that he had been unfaithful to his Lord. It is a practical and important question whether reliance on God necessarily excludes all personal effort and any use of ordinary means. The Scripture is our guide in answering this question and our conclusion is that God always expects man to cooperate just as far as he can with his own effort and means, but at crises and on occasions where man is perfectly at loss and helpless, or is tempted to resort to unblest means, he may expect the divine help in a way that is extraordinary.

Just when and where one can expect God alone to act is a question which must be determined through the enlightening influence of the Holy Spirit. There are those who deceive themselves and expect of God what He requires of them to do with the power He has already bestowed. They seek to strain themselves up to a point that cannot be maintained constantly and permanently, and tends to result in a collapse of faith and a reaction from all reliance on God.

Normal reliance on Him looks for His presence in every event and His blessing on personal effort along ordained lines.

A danger, however, of those who rely on God in this way is that they tend to place their confidence in the old and honored agencies and not on Him who is behind all things. They do not rely on Him, but on something else. Faith needs restoration to its proper object. The conclusion of the matter is, Reliance on God Himself on all occasions and in all things.

## Ministerial Record.

Rev. Seldon W. Cummings has accepted a call to the pastorate of the First Baptist church in Amherst, N. S. The church that he has been serving successfully in Chester, Pennsylvania, for some time past are very reluctant to have him leave them.

Rev. Francis Wayland Pattison, son of the lamented Prof. Pattison of Rochester, a graduate of Acadia has become assistant pastor at Springhill, N. S., for the summer.

Rev. Zenas L. Fash of Woodstock, has been called to the pastorate of the first church in Hillsboro, N. B.