

For Dominion Presbyterian.

**"For This Very Reason."**

Acts 26:16

BY REV. M. H. SCOTT, M. A., HULL.

Every Christian is the subject of Divine purpose. Paul was converted for a purpose, and that purpose was clearly apparent to himself, and is still apparent to all who read his life story. There is a purpose in each of the rivers of Canada, whether great or small, for each one drains its portion of land and so helps to make our country great. Every animal on the farm is kept by the owner for a special purpose. Every woman has a purpose for each and every article in her kitchen. Well, we are all God's husbandry, we are the vessels for his holy service, and he has a definite object in the salvation of each. Our usefulness and happiness in life depends upon our grasping and following out the purpose of God in us. How few church members there are in whose lives the other members are able to trace anything like a divine idea unfolded. Occasionally we are deceived by seeing an elder or S.S. superintendent or church manager, or other church worker who seems to have got hold of his commission and knows it, and others know it also. These are the people who build our congregations, and whose willing hands always find more work than they can do. Each one should try and undertake some special work in the congregation, and develop some spiritual gift within us; and love which is at the foundation of all will unerringly direct us.

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**Hints of Heaven.**

BY REV. JOSEPH HAMILTON.

The glory of the heavenly world is such as eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, not the heart of a man conceived. And yet, even in this lower world, all around about us here, on this dim and dingy earth, God hath strewn hints of the glory to be revealed. Here, for instance, is a drop of dew. It is suspended from a leaf. It sparkles, and glints, and gleams, in the pure morning light. In that little globe we see all the shimmering, changing, radiant colors of the rainbow. As you look steadily into that drop of dew, in your imagination it enlarges and expands into a world; and what a world of beauty! It seems a very Paradise, where the redeemed of the Lord might walk, where angels might soar and sing. Surely God has given us such hints of heaven here that amid the worries and cares of life our hearts and hopes may be lifted to the imagined glories of the better land.

I have seen a branch tied to a bleeding tree for the purpose of being grafted into its wounded body, that thus both might be one. Yet no incorporation had followed; there was no living union. Spring came singing, and with her fingers opened all the buds; and summer came with her dewy nights and sunny days, and brought out all the flowers; and brown autumn came to shake the trees and reap the fields, and with dances and mirth to hold the "harvest-home"; but that unhappy branch bore no fruit, nor flower, nor even leaf. Just held on by dead clay and rotting cords, it stuck to the living tree, a withered and unsightly thing. So also is it with many who have a "name to live and are dead."—Thomas Carlyle.

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**Religious Barrenness.**

Topic for Sunday March 3rd. Luke 13:6-9.

BY REV. W. A. STEWART, M. A.

The object of Christ is the parable of the Barren Fig tree is to bring that sense of sin and guilt, we are all so ready to refer to another, home to our own doors.

It was told Christ by certain people standing in His presence of some enormities committed by Galileans and of the summary punishment which so speedily overtook them with such a feeling of Pharisaical pride as suggested the inference that they themselves were supremely happy in their own exemplary innocence and virtue. But Christ as was His custom leads them to take their eyes off others and fix them upon themselves—saying "I tell you, nay, but except ye repent ye shall all like wise perish." When we have learned to see the exceeding hatefulness of our own sins we shall see in the chastisement which has overtaken another the image of that which might justly have overtaken ourselves. The parable of the Barren Fig Tree put the long suffering and the severity of God in their proper places.

The mere existence of the Tree warranted the expectation of fruit, "but he came and sought fruit thereon and found none." Therefore two charges were brought against the tree, it was unfruitful and it was a cumber of the ground. Cut it down. The vine dresser pleads for the tree and would fain suspend if he could not avert its doom. "Lord let it alone this year also till I dig about it and dung it; and if it bear fruit well and if not, then, after that thou shalt cut it down."

The primary reference of the parable was, of course, to the Jewish Church which not merely did not bring forth fruits of righteousness itself, but prevented the Gentiles from doing so by hindering the spread of the knowledge of God among that people. "Woe unto you scribes and pharisees, once said Christ, for ye shut up the kingdom of Heaven against men; for ye neither go in yourselves neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in." Matt 23:13.

But is the *Christian Church* guiltless? With not a few evidences of vitality and fruitfulness which we view with encouragement and gratitude how far short does it come of realising the most reasonable expectations? With a captain at the head of the host into whose hands is given "All power in Heaven and on earth," with churches here and churches there so that all over the civilized world one can hardly find a village or even a hamlet without a meeting house of some kind or another with its modest spire pointing up to the skies like a finger and reminding men of God, Heaven and Eternity; with all the professing followers of Christ associated with these churches—like soldiers standing around their fortifications—who have sworn allegiance to King Jesus and to fight bravely under His banner unto life's latest breath—should Christianity, as it is to-day, only one great religion among a score of others? Should it be a question with so many thoughtful people whether or not the world is getting any better after all? Should so large a part of this limited world be still unevangelised?

**Our Young People**

In the light of the lesson of the Barren Fig Tree is there not cause in our case also for fear and trembling? For what has been done in the past let us be thankful but at the same time confess that it is not satisfactory. The future must be better. The burning bush must no longer be our ideal. Mere indestructibility will not suffice. In spite of all the flames of opposition the bush must bourgeon.

Then what is true of a church is true also of each separate member and adherent. Is there not a warning here for all lest our own lives be open to similar charges—The fruitfulness on the one hand and on the other our affording examples that may prove stumbling blocks in the way of others—L'Amable.

**For Daily Reading.**

Mon., Feb. 25.—First wrong steps; Matt. 21:53-39.  
Tues., Feb. 26.—Forgetting the pledge; 1 Sam. 12:9-15.  
Wed., Feb. 27.—Selfishness; Rom. 12:1-5.  
Thurs., Feb. 28.—Hypocrisy vs. sincerity; Jas. 3:15-17.  
Fri., March 1.—At a distance from Christ; Luke 22:54-62.  
Sat., March 2.—Quenching the Spirit; 1 Thes. 5:15-23.  
Sun., March 3.—Topic. Religious barrenness. Luke 13:6-9.

Business men themselves being witnesses, remarks the United Presbyterian, there is nothing more essential to success in secular business than faithfulness in little things. You may regard your presence at or absence from the Wednesday evening prayer-meeting as a little thing; your faithful attendance at the meetings of the committee of which you are a member, your being present promptly at the hour for the meeting of the young people's society, your taking part in the meeting, the visit that you know you should pay the member of your class who has been absent, your speaking cordially to the stranger in the next pew, all these may seem to you to be little things; but just such little things as these are the tests of your faithfulness as a church member and servant of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Only in the sacredness of inward silence does the soul truly meet the secret-hiding God. The strength of resolve, which afterwards shapes life and mixes itself with action, is the fruit of those sacred, solitary moments when we meet God alone.—Frederick William Robertson.

It is sometimes only by the lesser that we can climb up to the greater; it is sometimes by touching only on a little human love that we can rise to the Infinite love; sometimes only by making a little earthly sacrifice that we get a glimpse of the eternal Heavenly Sacrifice.—Rev. R. F. Horton.

A sinner must not only cease to do evil, but he must learn to do good. The Gospel does not contemplate a mere life of negation, it requires the most positive and active forms of right-doing as well as right being.

It is well to be always prompt in the performance of that which is clearly our duty.

A pastor has accomplished a great deal when he has awakened a spirit of earnest inquiry among his people.