

We have hoped, my brethren, that as a result of the various Lectures and Sermons which have been given especially to yourselves, some of you have been made religiously and evangelically thoughtful, so much so as to ask, what you shall do next. You are not what you were once; but you are not what you feel that you ought to be. Desires have been induced which as yet have not been satisfied. There is a deficiency—an incongruity—a want of agreement—between your inward emotions and your outward position still to be supplied. That deficiency will be supplied by your joining yourself to a Church of Christ. And it is to the act of joining yourself to a Church of Christ that I desire to direct your attention now.

I speak, you observe, indefinitely. My reference is not to a Presbyterian Church, nor to a Baptist Church, nor to an Episcopalian Church, but to a Church of any kind which faithfully and practically holds the Head. Disliking all sectarianism from my heart, I am not going to enact the sectarian now. My allusion will be to no body of Christians in particular; but to any body with which, from educational, or ecclesiastical, or conventional predilection, you may have conscientious sympathy and regard. Assured that you will do me the justice to believe this, I do, with great earnestness, entreat your attention to the duty of joining yourselves to some Church of Christ.

You will attend as I speak, first, OF THE PRE-REQUISITES FOR THAT DUTY—WHAT DOES CONNEXION WITH A CHURCH REQUIRE?

You are to give yourselves first to the Lord. Preliminary to all other transactions, there is to be the great transaction of a surrender unto God. A surrender, observe, which must be personally made. That many of you have been commended in various ways to the Divine providence and to the Divine grace, may be presumed at once.

You have been told of what was done for you in infancy, and you have strong remembrance, some of you at least, of what was done with you in childhood and youth. The family Bible, the family psalmody, the family prayer, are in your minds now. May be, other things are in your minds too. A mother's prayer with you alone is not forgotten; nor a father's solicitude, as, with old Abraham's earnestness, he said unto God on your behalf—"O that Ishmael might live before Thee!"

Valuable, however—invaluable, indeed—as have been all such advantages, they leave the surrender of yourselves to God unperformed. You only can perform that. It must be your own act and deed. Who could repent of your own sin but your own self? Who could make your own submission to the righteousness of God for you? Who could comply with the Divine requirement in your name? Putting everybody else aside, and addressing Himself to you alone, God saith "My Son;" and when you, in your proper individuality, are hearkening to Him, He proceeds—"Give Me thine heart." No matter at all what others have done for you, you only can give Him that. And it is just that which you are to give Him. The Divine claim is addressed to your convictions, to your emotions, to your volitions, to your dispositions. You are to obey from the heart. You are to believe with the heart. You are to do the will of God from the heart.

How can that man be said to have given his own self to the Lord, who is at heart indifferent to the Lord's authority—who is at heart insensible to the Lord's love? There may be external service in profusion. There may be the observance, to the last punctilio, of outward religious duty. But it is of no avail, seeing that God seeketh such to worship Him as worship Him in spirit and in truth. Herod did many things, and heard John gladly; but Herod was an enemy of God all the