

to intercede before God, to allay God's wrath that He might on the great judgment day assign them to a condition of happiness in the other world. Is it possible that a conscious soul, feeling its unworthiness, knowing that it has done nothing to merit heaven; I say, is it possible for that soul to enjoy heaven? If we receive that we do not deserve it detracts greatly from our enjoying it.

Whatever the condition of soul may be in the other life, the vital question with us should be is life here one of acceptance with God; if so, I have no anxiety for the life beyond. If we are preserved from the commission of sin day by day, it brings a happiness that is real and enduring, that supports us in sorrow, that uplifts us when we are depressed, that protects us in persecution, that brings us consolation when the heart is bruised and bleeding, and when we are done with this life wafts us into a heaven with a consciousness that we have done something to merit it.

Our work is to bring all the animal powers within us into perfect harmony with the divine. When thus controlled we are free from both the commission and consequences of sin, and will need no pardon and no absolution, in the present or in the future life. This is why the religion of Jesus is so practical. He once said, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me." It is noteworthy that Jesus nowhere called upon men to believe in this, that or the other doctrine, but always pointed to a practical life.

The first requirement in a religious life according to this utterance of Jesus is the purification of our individual soul, the denying of self.

There are certain passions and propensities with which man is endowed that are all right and proper in themselves, but must be controlled and regulated lest they gain undue supremacy and lead into error and suffering not only to the individual but also to his associates. Look around and trace the sources of all crimes, and vices and in-

congruities in a life and they will all be found to have originated in the indulgence of some of the powers intended for man's good. Nothing outside of man pollutes him. The apostle James says that, "Every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust." It is noticeable in the animal life that there is no perfectly regulating power, not even in instinct, to keep from excess. The horse, if he gets to a bin of grain, will over-eat, and death will ensue. This regulating power is the first work of the Christian, this denying of his selfish natures.

Then comes taking up the cross—daily—continually. God did not intend that our powers should be unused, or obliterated, only be kept in their proper places. There must be watchfulness unto prayer on our part, and that continually lest they get the better of us, and usurp undue authority.

I have in my mind an occurrence that transpired in the early part of my ministry. After discoursing to the people, an aged mother came to me and said, "John, remember the enemy is not dead yet." We think when we have surrendered all we have reached a condition where we will not be again so closely tried. But I found that the enemy was not dead yet, nor is he dead yet, nor will he be so long as we live in time. There will need to be a continual watchfulness to keep all our propensities within the bounds in which God intended they should be kept. This course may deprive us of some temporary pleasures to be gained from undue indulgence of some of our lusts, but it will bring a truer pleasure, a sweeter happiness, more real and more everlasting in nature and character.

I do not believe in that stern asceticism, that sanctimonious face that denies itself of the blessings that God holds out to it. God did not intend this to be a place of mere endurance; no, the highest happiness man can enjoy comes from an obedience to the laws of his being. Our God is not a God of fear, but a tender counsellor, a