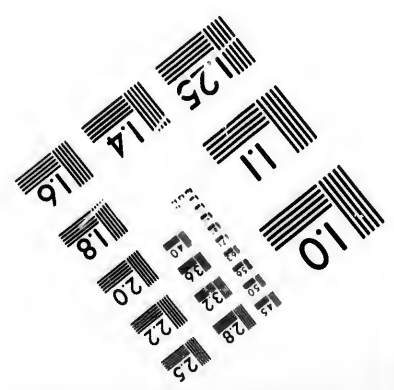
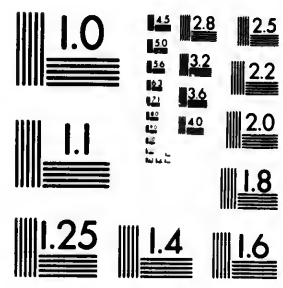


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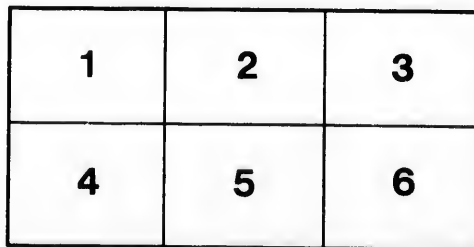
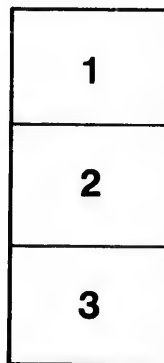
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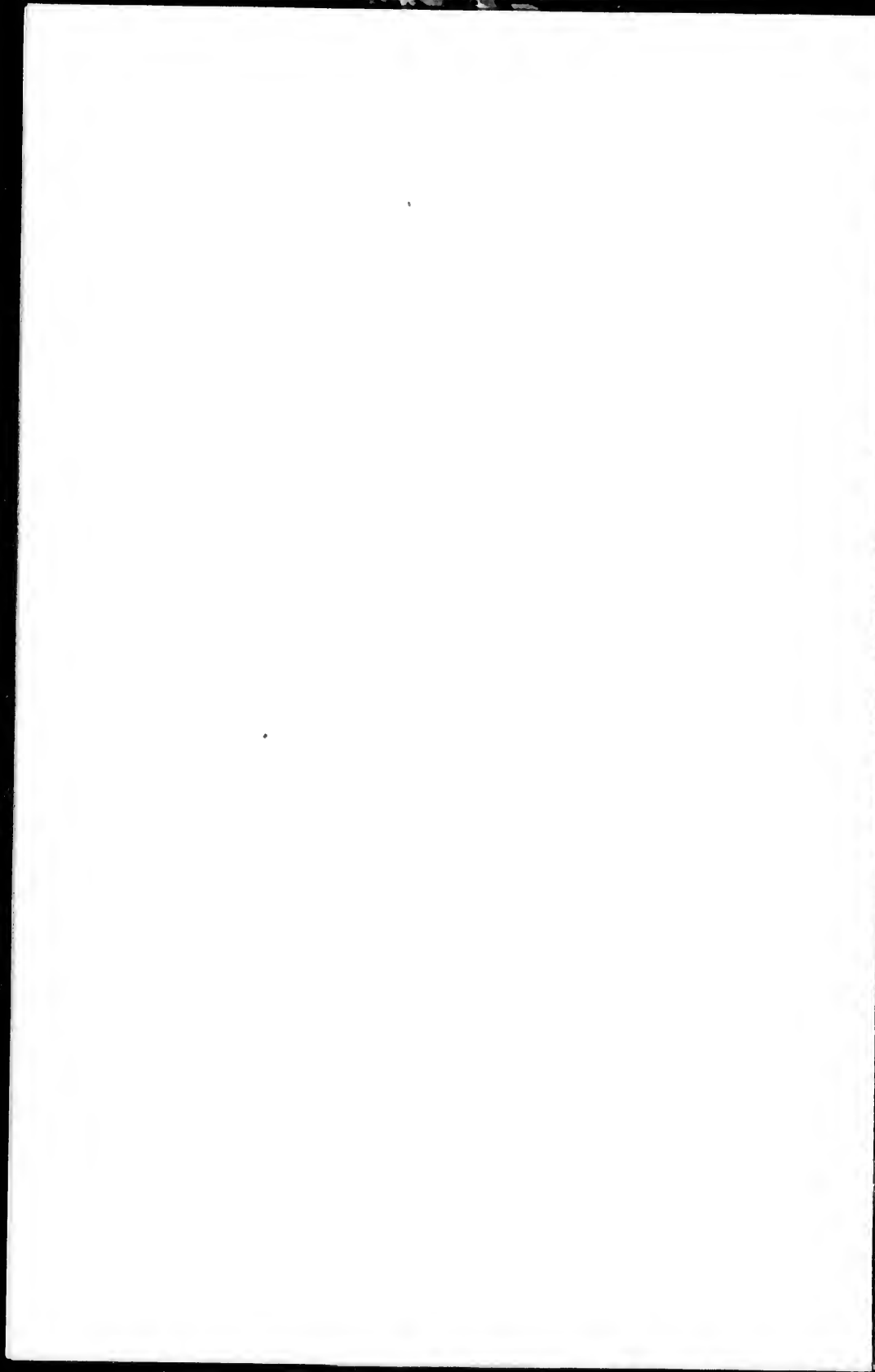
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*From the [unclear]
with [unclear]*

NEW YEAR'S SERMON.

"Lord, What wilt Thou have me to do?"

PREACHED IN THE CHURCH OF

ST. ALBAN THE MARTYR,
OTTAWA,

BY THE RECTOR,

CANON BEDFORD-JONES, LL.D.,

Sunday, January 2, 1881.

PRICE, TEN CENTS.

Ottawa, Ont.:

CITIZEN PRINTING AND PUBLISHING CO., 31 METCALFE ST.

1881.



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Ottawa, Ont.:

CITIZEN PRINTING AND PUBLISHING CO., 31 METCALFE ST.

1881.

1881
(35)

INSCRIBED

WITH ALL AFFECTIONATE RESPECT, AND EVERY GOOD

WISH FOR 1881,

TO THE RIGHT REVEREND

JOHN TRAVERS,

LORD BISHOP OF ONTARIO,

BY

HIS LORDSHIP'S FAITHFUL CHAPLAIN.

OTTAWA, JAN. 11, 1881.

NEW YEAR'S SERMON.

“LORD, WHAT WILT THOU HAVE ME TO DO?”—Acts ix, 6.

What an excellent prayer-question for Christians to keep before their minds! Would to God we all of us made it habitually a rule of life. Respectfully and lovingly I would submit it to you, my brethren, as a rule for at least one year of your life—the year 1881. At the same time let me with all sincerity pray that this may be a very happy year for you all, both in things temporal and things spiritual.

It has been usual on the first Lord's Day of each New Year, to give my congregation some brief sentiment, from God's Holy Word, to be their own religious MOTTO for the year: a kind of *Watchword* constantly in the mind, to be a weapon, or a defence, a consolation or a warning for each and every soldier of the Cross during the twelve months' battle. Sometimes it has been the one, sometimes it has been the other, of these. And I have reason to know, and I have been very thankful to know, that these annual mottoes or watchwords have often served their purpose. I have been told now and then that the few sacred words of the New Year's Text have been presented in moments of difficulty and danger with a power that proved these words, or at least the thought that the words enshrined, to be indeed from the living, all-loving, omnipresent God.

On this occasion, my dear friends, allow me to pre-

sent you with this famous prayer-question, spoken at a most solemn crisis of life, at the beginning of a new epoch in his career, by the great Apostle of the Gentiles. It does not matter much whether the sacred historian actually recorded the prayer-question in this part of his narrative, about which some doubt exists. Nor does it matter whether the words used by the Apostle were precisely those of this verse. St. Paul himself distinctly asserts that he did put some such prayer-question at the moment of his conversion, and that the Lord to whom the question was addressed, gave him a ready and gracious reply, a reply that took him at once to the ordained minister of Christ for instruction and direction. But to-day I take the words as they stand in the 9th chapter, for I conceive few words can well be more instructive or more appropriate when we ourselves have come to a new epoch of life, when we are beginning a new annual stage in the solemn journey of time, than the prayer-question : " LORD, WHAT WILT THOU HAVE ME TO DO ? "

Nor are these words out of harmony with the Collect which strikes the key-note for us all as Churchmen of the Church of England at the beginning of each and every New Year. The Collect prays that there may be a real mortification of our hearts and all our members—*i.e.*, *our souls*, our minds, our disposition, our thoughts, our tempers ; *our bodies* in all their parts, our eyes, our ears, our hands, our feet, our tongues—a real mortification of soul and body from all worldly and carnal lusts. Why ? With what object ? In order that we may *in all things obey the blessed will of God*. To obey God's

will, to submit to God's will, that our will should be only to do God's will on earth as it is done in Heaven ; this is the great end and aim of all our religion. To help us to do the Divine will, to set us an example in the doing of it, to save us from the terrible consequences of not doing it, brought down Jesus, the Son of God, to this earth. With His circumcision on the eighth day of His human life, He began to teach us the lesson of obedience, and to show the example, and to suffer pain in it all. For, brethren, we may be quite sure that in all sacrifice of our will to God's will there must be more or less of pain and suffering. So much out of harmony with God are we in our desires and aims and pleasures, that when these are checked or renounced there must be more or less of pain. Yet we know it is all for the best.

☞ To have each day the thing I wish,
 Lord, that seems best to me ;
 But not to have the thing I wish,
 Lord, that seems best to Thee.

'Tis hard to say, without a sigh,
 " Lord, let Thy will be done ;"
 'Tis hard to say—" *My will is Thine,
 And Thine is mine alone.*"

Most truly, then, Thy will be done,
 When mine, O Lord, is cross'd ;
 'Tis good to see my plans o'erthrown,
 My ways in Thine all lost. "

Therefore this prayer-question, "*Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do,*" is quite in harmony with the prayer with which the Church herself begins each New Year. It is a prayer, remember, addressed to our Divine Brother, and Head, and King, Jesus Christ, that He will graciously show to us, unfold to us, what He, Himself, wishes us to do. It implies a complete submission

of our own feelings and inclinations and desires to what the Lord Christ thinks best. Is not such a prayer, implying such submission, worth keeping before us for a year? Suppose that everyone of us, old and young, were to say this prayer honestly, earnestly, just once in each of the 365 days of the present year, and suppose that the Lord were to answer it each day (as no doubt He would)—Oh, how good, how happy should we be every day! How should we have grown in grace by the end of the year!

LORD, WHAT WILT THOU HAVE ME TO DO? To impress this motto for 1881 upon our minds I may make a brief analysis of the words. They seem plainly to enforce

THREE LESSONS.

I.—THE LORD'S WILL. "Lord, what *wilt* Thou have me to do?" It is, we know, of supreme importance that we should know what *God's will* is, because our Lord Himself tells us that not one of us shall enter Heaven at last unless we do it, and we cannot do what we know not. "*Not everyone that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter the Kingdom of Heaven, but he that doeth the will of My Father which is in Heaven.*" Therefore it is for our inestimable benefit that we should have the Lord's will revealed to us, and it is our bounden duty to ask the Lord to reveal it. St. Paul, you may remember, earnestly beseeches his Christian brethren, by the mercies of God, to present their bodies a living sacrifice to God as a rational service—a service for which there is the best reason—and he goes on to beg them not to be conformed to the world and its ungodly ways and

pleasures, but to be transformed by having their minds, their dispositions, their hearts, renewed by the grace of Christ, the sanctification of the Holy Spirit; all for what? In order that, he says, "*ye may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.*" "Good" because it prescribes only what is for our benefit, our everlasting welfare. "Acceptable," because when we follow it we shall be accepted, received into God's favor, for doing what is pleasing to Him. And "perfect," because the constant doing of God's will makes us more like God, Whose will we do, and so more perfect in our characters. This it is that helps us to understand our Lord's otherwise perplexing precept: "*Be ye perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect.*" Perfection is to be attained, if ever by men or angels, only by loving and obeying the will of God. I need not stay to show you how the Lord Himself put this precept into practice. He declared His very meat, His daily food, to be "*to do the will of Him that sent Him.*" "*I seek not,*" He said, "*mine own will.*" "*I came from Heaven not to do mine own will.*" And at the last, when the cup of supreme agony was at His very lips, and His suffering humanity would fain, if it were possible, have it taken away, He meekly, submissively, looks up and cries, "*not My will, but Thine be done!*" Brethren, if such be the precept and example of the Lord, surely the Christian ought to obey and follow it. And all through the New Testament we have frequent Apostolic exhortations to this effect: that we may "*understand what the will of the Lord is.*" (Eph v, 17). That we may "*stand complete in all the will of God,*" (Col. iv, 12) and "*do the will of*

God from the heart." (Eph. vi, 6) and be "*filled with the knowledge of His will.*" (Col. i, 9) while we are assured that "*he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.*" (1 John ii, 17). Indeed we are expressly forbidden to make any business engagements, to make any promise to go here or there, to buy or to sell, without the distinct reservation that all is to depend upon the Lord's will. "*Ye ought to say, if the Lord will, we shall live and do this or that.*" (St. James iv, 13).

All this teaches us that there is, as it were, behind us and before us, above us and beneath us, a Divine will, which, at any sacrifice, it is of the utmost consequence we should obey ; that it will be of inestimable benefit that we should thoroughly conform to it, and that we have constant need to pray that the Lord may reveal His will and help us to do it.

My God, my Father, while I stray,
Far from my home on life's rough way,
O teach me from my heart to say :

Thy will be done.

Renew my will from day to day,
Blend it with Thine, and take away
All that now makes it hard to say :

Thy will be done.

II.—This at once suggests the second lesson of our motto. Let us emphasize another word besides *wilt*. Let us say, "*Lord what wilt Thou have ME to do !*" Apply this prayer-question, my dear brother or sister, to yourself, this and every day of the year 1881. Believe me, it will suit every station in life. It will help you in the discharge of every duty. It will show you a way out of every difficulty. It will let the light of Heaven shine upon your path, however dark and gloomy be the

surroundings, and it will bring the voice of the Lord to speak to your conscience, as it did to that of Saul, and lead you on to the right and safe issue. We may, with all reverence, fancy the Lord replying to a few humble questioners. To one who is in doubt as to some course of conduct which is to be of public gain or loss,—“*Be just and fear not. Be true to principle, and seek not to please men but God. Leave results to Me.*” To another exposed to slanders and calumnies,—“*Be patient; return not evil for evil, nor railing for railing. Love your enemies. Bless, and curse not.*” To another, provoked by angry, exasperating speeches, unkind, untrue accusations,—“*A soft answer turneth away wrath. Remember, when I was reviled I reviled not again.*” To another, invited to some company or entertainment which stands directly in the way of duties to God, the sacred services of God’s Church, the true peace of one’s immortal soul,—to such a one asking—“*Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?*” The Lord says,—“*Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. The friendship of the world is enmity with God. The world passeth away and the lust thereof.*” “*Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?*” asks another, hesitating as to whether God’s will requires some personal sacrifice, an opposition to the caprice or selfishness, the indifference or unbelief of a husband or a wife, a parent or a child, or of foolish, frivolous friends. The answer comes, “*He that loveth father or mother more than Me, is not worthy of Me. He that loveth son or daughter more than Me, is not worthy of Me. And he that taketh not his cross and followeth after Me, is not worthy of Me.*” Once more. To a Christian with a darkened heart,

or in a darkened chamber, bereft of some one truly loved and truly loveable, that made earth bright and beautiful ; to any sorrow-stricken, or suffering, or despairing, or dying Christian, who, in anguish of soul, asks the question—“ Lord, what wilt Thou have *me* to do ?” comes the calm answer, “ *Cast thy burden upon Me, and I will sustain thee. Fear no evil, for I am with thee. My rod and My staff will comfort thee. None shall pluck thee out of My hand. I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. Thou art Mine.*”

And so we might go on, and find answers from the Lord, answers already written down in the Lord's Book, solving all manner of doubts and difficulties to this prayer-question, “ Lord, what wilt Thou have *me* to do ?” Aye, and answers too, to the question, “ Lord, what wilt thou have *me not* to do ?” Yes. We may, all of us, in all times of our tribulation, in all times of our health, and even in the hour of death, ask this prayer-question to our profit, and have the Lord giving us His gracious, guiding answers. Only, my brethren, bear it well in mind, that there must be a thorough honesty of heart, a sincerity of desire to obey the will of the Lord when it is revealed ; a thorough submission of one's own will to the Lord's. There must be no guile, no hypocrisy, no reserve about our readiness to do what we once know to be the will of God. Then, and only then, can we expect the Lord to hear and give an answer and the spiritual direction.

III. But now let us emphasize a different word, and learn one more lesson ; “ *Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do ?*” This is really the chief point in the Apostle's

prayer-question. This it is that makes it so practical and appropriate a motto to-day. The Lord Christ has, we cannot doubt, some special work for everyone to do for Him and His Church here and everywhere, just as He had for the convert Saul. Is there any one Christian, old or young, for whom the Lord has not appointed some work to be done? Surely not one.

Now, dear friends, remember you have been spared to see another year of time. Your day for doing the Lord's work has been graciously prolonged. You cannot but be grateful to God for having it so. He has brought you to see this new year, surrounded by many loving relatives and friends, even though He may have removed some dear ones; and He has blessed you with many sacred privileges and domestic comforts. But you very well know that the Lord expects you, in return, in gratitude for these present benefits, *to do something* for Him. You will certainly admit this. Suppose, then, the Lord to-day putting to you, my brothers, or sisters, the question, "*What art thou doing for Me?*" I have placed thee in My vineyard of the Church. I have engaged thee as My servant. As such, I have blessed thee exceedingly. I have become thine own human Brother. I feed thee bountifully with Heavenly Food. I watch over thee by day and night, never slumbering nor sleeping. I and My angels guard thee and defend thee against the assaults and temptations of the devil and his angels. I am giving thee all thou requirest for thy body and soul on earth, and I have an everlasting, ever-blessed Home prepared for thee, with Me and Mine hereafter. What, then, art thou now doing for Me? Art

thou laboring or loitering? Art thou careless and lukewarm, indifferent and indolent; or, art thou earnest and diligent, and fervent in spirit in thy Lord's service? What art thou doing? Art thou doing anything; or art thou suffering the few working days and years of thy short life to pass by, doing nothing, or doing little? And this with the night hastening on, the long, dark night fast coming in which no man can work?"

Ah, brethren, hear the Lord putting these questions on this first Lord's Day of another year. Perchance—and may the Lord grant it—the consciences of some (like that of Saul, the persecutor, but henceforth to become the devoted Apostle of Christ) are now awakening, and you, too, ask with the same faith and humility, *Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?* May not that Lord give some such answers as these: Disciple of Mine, thou hast work for Me to do both at *thy own house* and at *My House*.

1. AT THY OWN HOUSE.—There among thy own household thou hast an example to set, and thou mayest every day prove thy discipleship by thy consistency, thy control of tongue and temper, thy gentleness, thy patience, thy purity, thy faithful performance of little duties, thy self-denial, and self-restraint. And in thy secret chamber, by thy prayer and meditation, and the study of My word and will. In thy own house and household thou mayest shed around the light as of a burning and shining lamp, steadily radiating the love and the life of Christ within thee, so that all may take knowledge of thee that thou

art in close and frequent companionship with Me, thy Lord and Saviour.

2. AND ALSO AT MY HOUSE.—My sanctuary that I have chosen to place My name there—there is much work to be done. *The work is threefold.* Try and remember it. In the first place, thou mayest come every day and offer intercession with My Church throughout the world. Every day thou mayest offer with the ministers and stewards of my mysteries, the sacrifice of prayer and praise on behalf of thy Christian brethren and thyself. Every day thou mayest enjoy communion with Me, confess thy sins, and receive My pardon. Every day thou mayest learn some sacred truths which I have revealed in My written word. But the chief duty to be done and privilege to be enjoyed is, that thou mayest unite with My holy Church throughout the world—My spiritual body, of which I am Head,—*in intercession with the Father*, praying for the coming of My eternal kingdom, the speedy victory of good over evil, the spread and establishment of the Gospel of My salvation. And there, at least week by week on My own day, need I remind thee of thy duty to attend and worship Me with holy worship, and obey My dying command, “*Do this in remembrance of Me,*” offering the great Christian oblation of intercession, even as I offer it in Heaven, the same plea, all prevailing, of My body broken and My blood shed for thee and all sinners in the sacrifice of the cross? This, day by day and week by week, as an unceasing witness for Me before an ungodly and unbelieving world, I will that thou shouldst *do* at My House—My *House of Prayer*.

Secondly—Here thou mayest honor Me with thy substance and the first fruits of thine increase. I claim from thee a due proportion of what I enable thee to earn, of what I give thee to spend. All thou hast is Mine. Thou art only a steward, not a proprietor. And I ask of thee only a small portion of what I have bestowed in return. Thou must know that I could, Myself, support My Church and all the ministrations of My sanctuary, but it is *My will* this must be done *through thee*. I require it at thy hands ; and I delight in seeing it done, not grudgingly, nor of necessity, for I love a cheerful giver. This, then, thou mayest also do according to My will—*give of thy money* to provide for My ministering servants ; for the maintenance of My holy faith ; for the relief of My poor and needy disciples ; for the extension of My kingdom on earth.

And thirdly—I will have thee to do all thou canst do by this *personal work*, to assist those set over thee in the Lord. Remember that I have placed thee in a land where I trust much, if not all, to the personal love and devotion of my faithful disciples ; where there are no benefactions inherited from past ages, no great pecuniary prizes or rich emoluments to be enjoyed by the clergy. Here thou and they are laying only the foundation of the future Christian Church. You all must therefore be, and do the work of, missionaries of the Cross, and be ready to put your hand to any work claiming your co-operation. Here you can help in teaching the lambs of My flock simple Gospel truths. You may use the musical voices with which I have blessed you to unite in

the Service of praise. Ah, whose fault is it, if that service is often weak and defective? Here you may undertake the management of the secular concerns of the Church. You may look after brethren who are poor and weak, and relieve them, and lovingly keep them safe within the fold of their Church. Here there is abundant scope for the exercise of the talents which I have given to both men and women; all to promote My glory and prove your love to Me, and your value of the precious privileges with which I have blest you, and your reverence for the sanctuary where you and I meet continually, in the House of your Master and only Saviour, Jesus Christ.

My dear friends, these are some of the many ways in which the Lord wills you to *do* something for Him. There are countless others. The Lord will always show them as you always ask humbly and in faith, "*Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?*"

But now, as I conclude, pray keep in mind *two things* about it all. They are worth remembering. 1. *You and I may not have many more years for the doing of anything for the Lord.* For some of us—God alone knows how many or how few—this may be the very last year in which we shall have the opportunity and the privilege of doing anything for Him Who has done and is daily doing such great things for us. Shall we not strive, my brethren, to make the most of the short time that is left us? For, believe me, the time *is* short. 2. And finally, remember what you do must be *real doing*; not talking, or saying, but *doing*. We have an immense deal of talking and discussing, and arguing in these days. So

much time is spent in cavilling and criticising, in disputation and controversy, often about the most wretched trifle, some unessential matter of mere taste and fancy, that while this is going on the enemies of God and truth creep in and make havoc of us altogether. They take advantage of our folly, and while we are *talking* they are *doing*—doing irreparable damage to our souls.

Take, then, this motto with you, and let this year be a *year of doing* with you all. Resolve, by the grace of God, to keep these words, "*Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do—to do for Thy sake and Thy cause this year?*" ever before your minds during 1881. Busy yourselves in thinking constantly what you, each one, can do for the Lord. So will this year be an imperishable memorial before God of your Christian faith and love, and your willingness to do His will. And so, whether you live long or live short, you will, as our old forefathers used to say, *live well*. The year now begun will be, indeed, a happy new year, as well as a hopeful year, be it new or old. It will, perhaps, be a short year in passing away, but it will be a long year in its results for good, long in the blessedness that will follow every deed done for Christ and His cause. Yes. This will be to live well and live long both in time and eternity. For,

"He liveth long, who liveth well!
All other life is short and vain;
He liveth longest who can tell
Of living most for Heavenly gain.

"He liveth long, who liveth well!
All else is being flung away;
He liveth longest who can tell
Of true things truly DONE each day."

Be such a long life yours, my very dear friends, for our Lord Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

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