

THE PULPIT.

A BRILLIANT SUNDAY SERMON BY REV. W. T. BEST

Theme: Well Doing.

Text: "If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door."—Gen. 4:7.

The farmer and the shepherd both brought an offering unto the Lord. We look at Cain's offering and we say, the Lord will certainly bless Cain. What a costly offering he is presenting and how much hard work it must have taken to get it ready. Early and late he has worked through the long summer days. In the event of his face he has plowed, and harrowed, and sown, and cultivated, and now Providence has blessed him with a beautiful harvest. Look at the choice vegetables and the delicious fruits that go to make up his offering. Surely the blessing is his. Abel selected a lamb from his flock without spot or blemish; he cuts its throat; see the blood gush out! How cruel! God will certainly reject Abel. But God had respect unto Abel and his offering, but unto Cain and his offering he had not respect. Why? Had he not worked hard and faithfully? Hadn't he acknowledged divine Providence? Yes, all this is true, but his heart was not right. His offering was not conscientious and good works. Abel came in God's way, not by works, not by self-righteousness, but by the blood. "Without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin." "It is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul." God would not be satisfied with the animals to get coats of skin to clothe them. Abel had faith in God, and coming in God's way, he believed God would receive him, so God testified to his gifts that he was righteous.

When Cain saw that Abel was accepted he was wrath, and his countenance fell. "And the Lord said unto Cain, Why art thou wrath? why is thy countenance fallen? If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door." What a warning this! As if the Lord had said, "Cain I am no respecter of persons; if you do right I will bless you just as willingly as I did Abel; but if you don't do right, then you are a wild beast of prey is crouched at your heart's door, and is only waiting for a good opportunity to leap upon you." Instead of heeding God's warning, Cain watched for an opportunity and as soon as he presented himself, he rose up against his brother and slew him. "And wherefore slew he him, because his own works were evil and his brother's righteous?"

Here are two young men both engaged in good occupations and with equal privileges. One made a success of life, the other a failure. Up to the time of our text, if we look at Cain from the standpoint of this world, we would say he had done well; but it was he that did it. God's way says, by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified. "Salvation is not of works, lest any man should boast." Cain lived long enough to make a mark in the world; but instead of making a mark in the world, God had to put a mark on him lest the world should kill him. Even to this day he is despised as the first murderer. Abel's life was short compared with that of Cain, yet it was long enough to be successful; and he is honored more to-day than ever before. Jesus Christ said, "Blessed are the merciful, blessed are the pure in heart; blessed are, blessed are." Here we are distinctly told that it is not what a man has, not yet what he does, that obtains for him God's blessing; but what he is. Solomon said, "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for if it be the fountains of life." Well-doing is dependent on well-being.

I. The first step in well-doing is to give one's heart to God. If a man does not do well in this respect, what a waste of his life he has ever so good an opinion of himself, all his ways may be clean in his own eyes, he may think he is better than anybody else; but God says his heart is deceitful and desperately wicked above all things, his throat is an open sepulchre, his mouth full of cursing, his lips full of shed innocent blood, destruction and misery are in his ways, no fear of God before his eyes. How can he escape the damnation of hell? What worse error is there than to suppose a man can do well with a wrong heart? We make an awful mistake if we suppose that religion is simply for the church and Sunday school. The farmer needs it to run his farm, the merchant to run his store. It is needed by every individual that expects to make a success of life.

But remember that when a man's heart is right with God he is just in a position to do well; the doing is still before him. Salvation is in three parts, an act, a state, a man. A man repents of his sins, accepts Christ by faith and salvation is to him an act of God's free grace whereby he is saved. But how many there are that suppose that this is all there is to salvation. The fact that a man has saved five years ago is no proof that he is saved to-day, or that he will be finally saved. From the day of a man's conversion until the day of his death salvation is a work and he must "work it out" as the apostle says. After death salvation is a state.

If the second step in well-doing is to take the Bible as one's guide. It is doubtful whether there would be such a country in the world as the United States of America, were it not for the longings of Christopher Columbus to spread the knowledge of this book. To it we owe the immortalization of the Mayflower and the sublimity of Plymouth Rock. The command rolled from bow to stern on the sides of old Boston vessels. "Pull down that wall, let not an oat touch the water, this is the Sabbath Day!" When the Pilgrim Fathers landed at Newburyport, they put down the old Bible and said, "We are going to build a nation on this Book." It supported George Washington, the father of this country, and purchased for us our freedom. It made Daniel Webster the Biblical Conscience of the United States Senate and Patrick Henry and James Otis, like unto the Hebrew prophets, and now if you wish to understand one of the greatest events in our history, look at this picture. It is that of a Kentucky youth, his arms are tired after chopping all day, yet he sits up the night, and as the snow-well logs crackle on the hearth and blink up the chimney, he reads from the grand old Book, the Book that it after years made him a leader, whose administration subdued a rebellion of eight million people, and the emancipator whose pen struck the shackles from the limbs of four million slaves.

neither in this country nor elsewhere in the world shall ever die the memory of Abraham Lincoln. I heard Rev. John Mavity say one time that in his younger years he used to preach that if a man had a right heart every thing else he did would be right; but, said he, "of late years, I have concluded that a man need not only a right heart, but a right head." There is some truth in this statement. Isaiah tells us, we must "learn to do well." Paul says, "Study to show thyself approved of God."

While I would say to every young man and woman, you ought to have the very best education possible, I would also say, let the Bible be to you the Book of Books. Nearly all the great men of the past owe their greatness to this Book. It is almost impossible to name any ruler by which men have succeeded in life that has not its foundation in the Bible. The Book of Proverbs is especially full of such rules.

John Quincy Adams made the Bible his constant companion. Amos Lawrence, the philanthropic merchant of Boston, had inscribed on his pocket-book, the text, "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" No wonder he gave thousands of dollars to the cause of Christ.

But what about the men who reject the Bible? Why, sin lieth at their door. The superstitious life of Byron or the dying words of Voltaire will prove this statement.

III. The third step in well-doing is to be honest. Your Book of the Bible, says, "Thou shalt not steal," or in other words be honest. 1. Be honest with God. You have accepted Christ as your Saviour, and taken His Book as your guide; the Book tells you what is expected of each one of His followers. He tells you just the work that He wants you personally to do. Have you met both these requirements? 2. Be honest with yourself. You have a soul to save and a body to care for. You will be rewarded according to your works.

3. Be honest with your fellow-man. A man would steal a dollar on the same principle that he would steal a pin. Watch the little things; a goat choked Pope Adrian; a nail turned a ship out of its course; a fly by walking on the nose of a man, turned the onlooker that the supposed distant landscape was only a picture. Said a wholesale merchant to a customer, as he pointed to one of his clerks: "That young man, sir, is my banker; he handles every cent of money that passes through the store. He could cheat me out of thousands of dollars every year if he wanted to; but I am not afraid to trust him, he has proven himself to be strictly honest."

Said a merchant to one of his clerks: "Why, didn't you, sir, shew wanted Middlesex cloth. Why did you not shew her the next pile, and call them Middlesex?" "Because, sir, they were not Middlesex." "Well," said the merchant, "if you are as particular as all that, you will never be a young man; if I have to lie to keep my position I will lose it."

When Abraham Lincoln had charge of Orkut's country store, he walked two miles to give a lady six cents that she had overcharged her by five cents. Another time he made a mistake and sold a quarter of a pound of tea for a half pound. As soon as he discovered his error he could not rest till it was made right. After he was admitted to the bar it was said of him that he would never defend a person whom he believed to be in the wrong even if they offered him a large amount of money to do so.

He undertook the Paterson trial, believing the man accused of murder to be innocent, but when the trial was half through he changed his mind and dropped the case, refusing pay for his services. When the time came in our history as a nation that the people began to distrust the corrupt politicians who were governing in the interests of slavery, the only hope of saving the ship of state was to place an honest man in the Presidential chair. Honest Abe Lincoln was the man selected.

From a spiritual point of view we are debtors to all men, let us try and pay this debt, not only by our lives; but by giving our substance to the cause of Christ throughout the world.

IV. The next step in well-doing is to be men and women of Tact, Push and Principle. Upon these three qualities depend the success of every man or woman from a business point of view. Samuel Budgett, the great English merchant, attributed his success to them.

1. Tact.—Tact is nothing more or less than the use of common sense, and it is so common that few people possess as much of it as they ought to.

2. Push.—Many people have tact enough to succeed, if they only had push enough to go with it. They call sell a book, or a bill of goods, but it takes them so long to do so, that there is no profit in it. Many of the greatest victories in the world's history have been won by men while young in years. David, Luther, Alexander and the world's Redeemer himself are illustrations of this truth.

3. Principle.—Tact and push would be a detriment to a man if he were without principle. An employer promised a clerk higher wages if he would treat the customers now and then to a glass, in order he might sell them a bill of goods. The young man refused. "Thank God, here is a poorhouse in my native town, and I will go there and die before I shall do such dirty work." That was Principle. Nicholas Biddle, the first president of the United States Bank, requested his employees at one time work on Sunday. One young man lost his position rather than do so. That was Principle.

When President Lincoln was recommended for the Presidency it became necessary to call for 600,000 votes to re-elect him. He went to the front. His friends everywhere advised him not to issue the order. It would endanger his re-election. He went personally before the congressional military committee where a similar attempt was made. He was grand old Book, the Book that it after years made him a leader, whose administration subdued a rebellion of eight million people, and the emancipator whose pen struck the shackles from the limbs of four million slaves.

be reinforced by 600,000 men, and I shall call for them; and if I go down under the act, I will go down like the Cumberland, with my colors flying." "I can stand with you," said women of tact, push and principle.

V. The fifth step in well-doing is to be a man or woman of faith. When Thomas A. Edison first conceived the idea of the phonograph, he said, "I can stand with you." Edison was long years he never lost faith, though at times it seemed utterly impossible for him to succeed. And so it has been with nearly all of his great inventions; through faith he has exceeded our night and day, sometimes forgetting to eat or sleep, yet ever confident that he was going to succeed. The whole history of our country has been largely one of faith.

From the day that Columbus crossed the Atlantic to the present day, nearly every man and woman who has been reasonable from a worldly standpoint, but has been undertaken through faith. And what shall I now say, for the time would fail me to tell of Giddison, and of Barak, and of Jephthah, and of the wonderful things they have accomplished through faith.

The man or woman who lacks this quality of faith is of all persons most miserable, yes, sin lieth at their door and wreaks vengeance upon them. They don't enjoy their meals because they expect more to appear upon the table. The man or woman who lacks this quality of faith is of all persons most miserable, yes, sin lieth at their door and wreaks vengeance upon them. They don't enjoy their meals because they expect more to appear upon the table.

VI. Be men and women of courage. Perhaps there was never a time when we had so many examples of courage as we have to-day. When the ports of Europe closed against the sailors, Squidmen there was nothing left but to go to Manila. Many of our people feared the results. But Ensign Dewey was a man of courage. By the forts, over the mines and into the harbor he sailed. The Spaniards fled. The forts captured and Manila taken.

Hobson was no less courageous when he sunk the Merrimac in the very centre of the enemies' fire.

The Plattsburgh boys while storming the heights of Montezuma were the very hottest of the battle:

"On the star spangled banner, Oh long may it wave, Over the land of the free, And the home of the brave!"

We need more young people to-day who are not afraid of the fiery furnace, or the den of lions; young people who are not afraid to stand in the name of the God of Israel.

VII. The last quality I shall name is Perseverance. Perseverance is the "long pull, strong pull, and pull altogether" or the "grit." President Lincoln said of General Grant, "He is not easily excited, and he has the grip of a bulldog. When he once gets his teeth in, nothing can shake him off." "I will not let thee go unless thou dost bless me."

The unjust judge said, "Though I fear not God, nor regard man, yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me." The Kingdom of God suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.

Robert Bruce made several unsuccessful attempts to possess his kingdom and crown. While seeking concealment from his foes in a shattered barn:

"He dug himself down in low despair, As if he were a man could be; And after a while as he pondered there, 'I'll give it all up,' said he."

"Now just at that moment a spider dropped. With its silken cobweb dew. And the king in the midst of his thinking Stopped to see what the spider would do."

"'Twas a long way up to the ceiling dome For the spider to creep; But how it would go to its cobweb home King Bruce could not divine."

"It soon began to cling and crawl. Straight he went from the cobweb door, But down it came, with a slipping sprawl As near to the ground as ever."

Nine times the spider tried to reach its cobweb home, but every time it seemed to fall still lower.

"Sure," cried the king, "that foolish thing Will strive no more to climb, And I'll give it up; but lo! it clings, And tumbles every time."

"But up the insect went once more, And he, 'tis an anxious minute, He, 'tis a long time from the cobweb door, Oh, say, will he lose or win it?"

"Steady, steadily, inch by inch, Higher, higher, higher, higher, And a bold little run at the very last pinch, Put him into his native spot."

"Bravo, bravo! the king cried out, 'All honor to those who try; He has not lost from the cobweb door, He conquered, and why shouldn't I?'"

"And Bruce of Scotland braced his mind. And going to the window, he said, 'And that time he did not fail.'"

"Pay good heed, all you who read, And beware of saying, 'I can't.' To a cowardly word and apt to lead To idleness, folly and want."

"I do not want anyone to misunderstand. I would not have you think for a moment that I don't believe that Christ is our example in all things, but Paul said follow me even as I follow Christ. I am now going to hold up before the young people two persons who accepted Christ as their Saviour. His Word as their guide, and on the qualities named made a success of life.

Let me first speak to the young men. England has given to the world some of the greatest men in all branches of learning. To-day we place in the front ranks William Ewart Gladstone. He was born of wealthy parents and with royal blood in his veins. Instead of becoming dissipated as many a young man in such circumstances would have done, or instead of depending upon his social standing, he took the course that I have already laid out in this sermon and by so doing "he being dead yet speaketh."

Address, one of the greatest reformers that has ever blessed our country. When her funeral car drew slowly by the city of Chicago, as many as 30,000 people turned out amidst falling snow and sleet to take the last look at one of their greatest benefactors, Frances Elizabeth Willard. They came from the North, South, West and East. A wreath of flowers was sent by a young lady who had met Miss Willard but once. She was then on the correspondence staff of a city paper, and had been sent to interview Miss Willard, who was sick at the hotel and unable to fill her appointments. Miss Willard was seated in an easy chair, but when she saw the young lady's pale and emaciated face she said, "Dearie, you have this chair, you look so tired." The young lady said, "I never forgot those words. She was the only person that had spoken a kind word to me since I said farewell to mother and the dear ones at home."

Miss Willard was true to Christ. Sensing herself every pleasure or comfort that she might all the position to which He had called her.

Her influence is giving to the youth of this land a portion of knowledge that cannot fail to prove beneficial to them.

Her honesty as well as her patriotism may be seen in the fact that during her visit to England, when strained political relations existed between England and this country, she said: "I am first a Christian, then I am a Saxon, then I am an American, and lastly a woman." She expected to register from Evanston." Her tact, push, principle, faith, courage and perseverance may be seen in the great organization known to-day throughout the world as "The Woman's Christian Temperance Union."

An army of heroic women who are battling for God and home and native land. In conclusion, let me say, life is to each one of us a great battle, and we must either win or lose it. Which shall it be? Shall we take the armor of the whole armor of God, fight the good fight of faith, and endure hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ. The Captain of our salvation has never lost a battle.

"The Ideal Minister's Wife." The following description is from one of the Methodist papers of London:

The ideal minister's wife is queen in her home, ruling her affairs with discretion and looking well to the ways of her household. She has a keen interest in her husband's people and spares no pains to get to know them. Unselfish as regards her husband's company, because of the many claims made upon him, she waits what seem to be her rights and finds her joy in knowing that she is helping others. She practices the happy art of adapting herself to circumstances, and is able to converse easily with the intellectual and the unlearned.

Her manners are perfectly natural and entirely free from any tincture of patronage. Her dress is becoming, without dowdiness or loudness. She is discreet with her lips and thoroughly good in heart and loves to second her husband's efforts in all the church work. She is a helping hand, a leader of any clique, but acts in such a way that all feel they can approach her easily and confide in her perfectly. She listens to the sorrows of the people and feels with them and rejoices in their joys.

She knows how to entertain and how to be entertained. She keeps abreast of the times in reading and delights in self-culture. Knowing for what special branch of work in the church she is gifted, she devotes herself to it with all her heart, might and mind. Patient, tactful, ever striving to give human hearts with the key of love that she may lead them to the Divine Lover, she finds the minister's wife's lot though "onerous and difficult," yet delightful and blessed, and she will do her husband (and his people) all she can to do.

"Who is sufficient for these things?" and what minister is worthy of such a wife? There is nothing said about who takes care of the children, but the minister's "ideal wife" is doing all these things.—Christian Advocate.

The Uses of Trials. I always fear lest trial might leave me as the wind which passes over the rock leaves it, hard and dry as before.—H. Bonar.

An Oddly Shaped Church. And Other Freaks of the Brooklyn Approach to Manhattan Bridge.

When the work of extending Flatbush avenue to form a proper approach for the new Manhattan Bridge was well under way Brooklyn thought that the Fleet Street Methodist Episcopal Church would have to go. The first Montauk Theatre by a mighty effort was moved over the danger line and turned a new face upon the new thoroughfare, but it did look as if the church couldn't escape.

But he escaped, though not unscathed. Workmen got to work at it, but they tore down only a part. Then they built a new wall along the line of the extended avenue.

The result is somewhat curious. Imagine a rectangular building with an arched roof, and then take a generous slice off one corner. The result is a very irregular pentagon at the base and an indescribable jumble of lines and curves from the eaves up.

This church is the most striking example of buildings made into odd shapes by the Flatbush avenue extension now appear in grotesque form. Some corner buildings, once square, are now triangular and in other cases mere slices of structures have been preserved.

Buildings have been fronting this street itself is a series of hillocks and wrecks and hoardings. Brooklyn hopes it will be a real thoroughfare some day.—New York Sun.

A Dubious Tribute. The young theological student who had been supplying the Rushby pulpit for two Sundays looked wistfully at Mrs. Kingman, his hostess for the time being. "Did you like the sermon this morning, if I may ask?" he inquired.

"You done real well with the material you selected," said Mrs. Kingman, with much cordiality. "As I said to Zenos on the way home, I've heard a dozen or more sermons preached on that text, and this young man's the first one that ever made me realize how difficult 'twas to explain."—Youth's Companion.

The Sunday-School

INTERNATIONAL LESSON COMMENTS FOR APRIL 18.

Subject: The Conversion of Saul, Acts 9:1-30—Golden Text: Acts, 9:4.—Commit Verses 15, 16.—Commentary on the Lesson.

TIME.—A. D. 37 (?) PLACE.—Jerusalem, Damascus.

EXPOSITION.—I. Saul the Murderous Enemy of Jesus, 1. 2. Saul's intense anger against Jesus and His disciples was not a matter of a single hour or day. The extent to which he carried his hatred in action we see in ch. 22:18; 26:10, 11. In this Saul had persuaded himself that he was doing right (ch. 26:9). It is a striking illustration of how a man who intends to be conscientious can be thoroughly and awfully wrong.

II. Saul the Humbled Penitent, 2-9. The Lord allowed Saul to go a long way in his mad career. But at the proper moment He put forth His hand and saved the little flocks in Damascus. Probably Ananias had been praying for him, and he had believed when he heard. The Lord often acts "suddenly." The "light out of heaven" that shone around Saul was the light of Christ's resurrection glory (v. 17; 1 Cor. 15:8). It was "about noon" (ch. 22:6), and the rays of the eastern sun were exceedingly bright, but the glory of this was "above the brightness of the sun" (ch. 26:13). Our Jesus is exceedingly glorious. The stout-hearted persecutor is thoroughly humbled (v. 4).

There are many to-day who speak of swelling words against the Lord, who, if they should get one look at Him as He is, would "fall to the earth" before Him (Phil. 2:10, 11). Evidently, for all his zeal in persecuting the church, Saul had made some godly thought that he might be saved, and Jesus indeed the Lord (26:14, R. V.). A startling question (v. 4). He puts it to every one to-day who is persecuting His people. Note how tenderly Jesus identifies Himself with His disciples (v. 6; comp. Matt. 23:35-40; 43-45; Eph. 5:30). What an awful moment it must have been in Saul's life when it fully broke upon him that the glorious One who stood before him was indeed Jesus, whom he had so bitterly hated and so relentlessly persecuted. What an awful moment it will be for many now living when they see Jesus in the glory, and realize that it is He whom they have spurned and persecuted. The light Saul saw was no mere subjective vision or effect of sunstroke; the others saw it, and Jesus indeed the Lord (26:14, R. V.). A startling question (v. 4). He puts it to every one to-day who is persecuting His people. Note how tenderly Jesus identifies Himself with His disciples (v. 6; comp. Matt. 23:35-40; 43-45; Eph. 5:30). What an awful moment it must have been in Saul's life when it fully broke upon him that the glorious One who stood before him was indeed Jesus, whom he had so bitterly hated and so relentlessly persecuted. What an awful moment it will be for many now living when they see Jesus in the glory, and realize that it is He whom they have spurned and persecuted. The light Saul saw was no mere subjective vision or effect of sunstroke; the others saw it, and Jesus indeed the Lord (26:14, R. V.). A startling question (v. 4). He puts it to every one to-day who is persecuting His people. Note how tenderly Jesus identifies Himself with His disciples (v. 6; comp. 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