

"Seek Those Things Which are Above."

"If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory."

These words are simple and plain, but do we understand them? Do we have a practical knowledge of what they mean? If we do not, as professed followers of Christ, we are to understand that we need to make haste, and place our affections on those things that are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Why are we commanded to do this? -Because if we place our affections on the things of earth, we shall become earthly, common, and evil. Our minds take the level of the things on which our thoughts dwell, and if we think upon earthly things, we shall fail to take the impress of that which is heavenly. We would be greatly benefited by contemplating the mercy, goodness, and love of God; but we sustain great loss by dwelling upon those things which are earthly and temporal. We allow sorrow and care and perplexity to attract our minds to earth, and we magnify a molehill into a mountain. In speaking of that which we are called upon to endure, Paul says: "Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look"--at our difficulties, while we magnify our trials, and think only of our hardships? No, but "while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal."

Temporal things are not to engage our whole attention, or engross our minds until our thoughts are entirely of the earth and the earthly. We are to train, discipline, and educate the mind so that we may think in a heavenly channel, that we may dwell on things unseen and eternal, which will be discerned by spiritual vision. It is by seeing Him who is invisible that we may obtain strength of mind and vigor of spirit. This is the way in which Daniel received strength. He was called to act a part in the first place in the kingdom of Babylon, and proved himself a noble statesman in all his connection with the court. He lived a noble life, and presented a worthy example. His eye was fastened on things unseen and eternal. He realized that he was fighting in the sight of the heavenly intelligences, and his dependence was in God.

We may not be called upon to act a part in public affairs, but in whatever place we are called by the providence of God, we may confidently expect that God will be our helper. We are not to be a toy to circumstances, but to be above circumstances. We are not to be controlled by circumstances. When we are placed in trying positions, and find things about us that we do not like, that try our patience, and test our faith, we are not to sink down in despondency, but to take a firmer hold upon God, and prove that we are not setting our affection on things on the earth, but on things above; that we are looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith. Jesus is to be the beginning and the end, the first and the last. He is to be our strength in every time of trial. God must be our sole dependence. When we drop God out of our reckoning, and cease to place our affections

upon him, we deprive ourselves of great benefit. We cannot afford to do this, and God cannot afford to have us do it! Why?--Because we have been bought with an infinite price, even with the precious blood of his only-begotten Son. God cannot afford to have us glorify the powers of darkness by turning our eyes upon things seen and temporal; for instead of being workers together with him, we cast our influence on the side of the enemy.

You are to work out your or.'rn salvation with fear and trembling, at the same time realizing that it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure. When we are laborers together with God, we cannot set our affections upon things below; for where our affections are, our thoughts will be; and where our thoughts are, there will be our treasure. When we dwell upon things seen and temporal, we fail to obtain divine knowledge, as did Daniel. What is our position today? Are we learners in the school of Christ, earnestly seeking to know what is the will of God concerning us? How many in this congregation believe that Christ is their personal Saviour? How many can say, "He saves me"? I know that he wants that I should be saved. He looks upon me as of value in his sight, and therefore I know that my thoughts, my words, and my works, all pass in review before him. Every,'thing that is connected with the purchase of the blood of Christ is of value in the sight of God. By the price paid for our redemption we are under obligation to devote our entire affections to Christ. We are to give God all there is of us; and in giving to God our all, are we to consider that we sustain a great loss?--No, for in giving to him our talents, we are doubling them. Every gift he has given to us, when returned to him, receives his blessing, that it may have increased influence in the work of God. Wherever you may be, you are to realize that you belong to Christ, and that your influence is to be as far-reaching as eternity.

At one time a lawyer came to Jesus, and said, "Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" Is there anyone here that wants that question answered? Jesus turned the question back upon the questioner, and said unto him, "What is written in the law? How readest thou?" The lawyer answered him in a way that made manifest that he understood what the law comprehended. He quoted the words found in Deuteronomy and Leviticus, and said, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart [not giving half to the world and a third to self, but all to God. Will there be anything left for the world?I and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself. And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right; this do, and thou shalt live." Our whole being is required in the service of God. No reservation is to be made. But someone says, "Well, I do not know how I would succeed in the things of this world were I to carry out this instruction." You would succeed much better; for you would find that godliness is profitable unto all things, providing that which is essential for your welfare in this world and your happiness in the next. You would succeed much better; for you would have God to work with you. You would live as seeing him who is invisible, realizing that you were working in the sight of the unseen world.

This is the way in which Moses succeeded. He lived as seeing Him who is invisible, and was therefore able to count the reproaches of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt. If men would live in this way, we should see their faces aglow with the glory of

God; for they would be viewing the glory of the eternal, and by beholding, would be transformed into the image of Christ. But instead of this, how general is forgetfulness of God! How few are constantly beholding the unseen Guest, realizing that he is at their right hand! How many ignore his presence! Did we treat others as we treat Jesus, what discourtesy it would be thought!

Suppose a friend were with us, and we should meet an acquaintance on the way and direct our whole attention to our new-found acquaintance, ignoring the presence of our friend, what opinion would men have of our loyalty to our friend, of our degree of respect to him? And yet this is the way we treat Jesus. We forget that he is our companion. We engage in conversation, and never mention his name or include his instruction in our words. We talk of worldly business matters, and where it does not bruise the soul, where it is essential, we do not dishonor Jesus, but we do dishonor him when we fail to mention him in our intercourse with our friends and associates. He is our best friend, and we should seek for opportunities to speak of him. We should ever remember that he is at our right hand, that we should not be moved, and we should ever keep him in view. Our conversation should be of a character that would be of no offense to God. We are to be overcomers, copartners with Jesus, not lending our influence to the work of the enemy. Although "God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life," yet not a soul of us will be saved who fails to cooperate with God. Although our salvation is dependent upon our cooperation with God, yet we can take no glory to ourselves; for Jesus is the author and finisher of our faith; all the glory is to rebound to God. Christ is the beginning and the end, and we are utterly dependent upon him.

Jesus says, "Without me ye can do nothing." Since this is our position, shall we permit our minds to wander to the ends of the earth? Shall we spend our probationary time in jesting and joking? Shall we fail to realize that it is a solemn thing to live? Men generally agree that it is a solemn thing to die; but it is a far more solemn thing to live. Why?-- Because every soul surrounds itself with an atmosphere that has a telling influence upon those with whom we are brought in contact. Many gather to themselves the atmosphere that breathes from the powers of darkness. Even professed followers of Christ often permit the hellish shadow of Satan to interpose between the soul and God. Their thoughts, their words are of a cheap, common order, and they give others the impression that religion is a cheap thing. Oh, we cannot afford to give any such instruction! We who may be imbued with the Spirit of Christ, who may have his love in our hearts, his vivifying influence in our souls, should shed upon men a beneficial influence. We should be copartners with Jesus. He says:--

"As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctifi' myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth. Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that

thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me." "I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil."

These are the truths upon which we should dwell. Our bodies are built up from what we feed upon, and our minds, our experiences, will be after the order of that which composes our spiritual food. Jesus says: "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day." "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life."

We are looking forward to the change from mortality to immortality; but what more can we have than it is now our privilege to have? We may have Jesus abiding in our hearts by faith. He died on Calvary's cross, that he might abide in you, and you in him. We may have the presence of Christ with us, as had Daniel in Babylon. God gave him wisdom in all knowledge, and he had understanding in all mysteries. But we may be as was Daniel. The Source of Wisdom is open to us. We may come to God, we may grow in wisdom.

There is no need of our being ignorant. James says, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not." The exhortation is given, "Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." How is it possible that we may grow in grace? It is possible to us only as we empty our hearts of self, and present them to heaven, to be moulded after the divine Pattern. We may have a connection with the living Channel of Light; we may be refreshed with the heavenly dew, and have the showers of heaven descend upon us. AS we appropriate the blessing of God, we shall be able to receive greater measures of his grace. As we learn to endure as seeing him who is invisible, we shall become changed into the image of Christ. The grace of Christ will not make us proud, cause us to be lifted up in self, but we shall become meek and lowly in heart. It was the grace of Christ that made Moses the meekest man on earth. As we learn of the divine Master, we shall manifest this precious attribute. How long did it take Moses to learn the lesson of meekness, and become fitted to be a general to lead the armies of Israel out of Egypt? He went through a long discipline. For forty years he tended sheep in the land of Midian, learning how to be a good shepherd to the flock. In his position of shepherd he was called upon to care for the weak, to guide the wayward, to seek for the wandering. This was an essential training for him who was to be the leader of Israel; for in the care of the flock of God he would be called upon to nourish the weak, to instruct the wayward, and to bring the lost one back to the fold. This is the work of the follower of Christ. We are to watch for souls as they that must give an account, to do all in our power that those with whom we associate may grow to the full stature of men and women in Christ Jesus.

We are to realize to what we are called in Christ; for by faith we are to attain unto his righteousness. Since this is the standard for our attainment, how can any of us be satisfied with our present attainments? If we have been dwelling upon things seen and temporal, let us turn our attention to the things unseen and eternal. Let us not wait for a revival in the church, or for special conviction; but, realizing our need, and knowing that all heaven is at our command, let us now yield our hearts to God. Let us not think that we may wait

until some Conference meeting, until a large company is called forward, to seek God's blessing. It is best for us to be awake individually, today yielding our hearts to God. Decide now to dedicate yourself to him, not only as a congregation, but as individuals; decide to seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Do not wait one for another. Do not look about you to see if your neighbor is going to make the surrender, but, realizing that each one of us must give an account of himself to God, that we have a living Saviour, who is our substitute and surety, draw nigh to God.

The word of the Lord says, "Draw nigh to God, and" perhaps he will draw nigh to you? No, the promise is, "He will draw nigh to you." God does not do anything for man without his cooperation. He draws you by the tender cords of his love, and as you respond to this drawing, you draw nigh to him. As you are seeking his face, the angels minister unto you. He has at his command ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of angels. They are constantly ascending and descending; for are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who shall be heirs of salvation? They are ministering in the cities, towns, and villages. They receive their commission from God, whose eye beholds all things; and when a soul is in discouragement, he sends help from heaven, even before the prayer for help is uttered. Before we ask, he commissions his ministers to go forth with divine aid. During the sleepless nights I have passed through the months of my illness, I have taken indescribable comfort in these thoughts. As soon as my mind was fixed on Jesus, the clouds of darkness were transformed, and all was light in the Lord. My soul was melted with his love. Fix the eyes upon Jesus, and say, "Lead me, guide me." Your prayer will ascend before the Father as fragrant incense; for the merit of Christ will make it of value before God.

When Christ's righteousness is your plea, you will be accepted in the Beloved. Jesus encourages us to present his merit at the throne. He says, "If ye ask anything in my name, I will do it, that the Father may be glorified in the Son." Oh, educate the soul to believe the promises of God. Would he make such promises if he did not love us? We are his purchased property; bought at an infinite price. Would you know the manner of love that has been bestowed upon you? I point you to the cross of Calvary. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Christ died in behalf of the world. Our Heavenly Father has valued us at the price of Jesus, and, having been bought at such a cost, what right have we to spend our God-given capabilities in the service of the world and sin? What right have we to fritter away our time, to use our talents in aiding the work of the powers of darkness? "Set your affections on things above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God."

It means something to be a Christian, a joint heir with Jesus Christ. To what?--To an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away. But are we preparing for such an inheritance when the mind is all full of lightness and trifling and folly, when we devote our God-given time to that which has no substantial value? We need the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Jesus said to his disciples, "It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. . . . When he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth; for he shall

not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak; and he will show you things to come. He shall glorify me; for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you."

We are to commune with God through the agency of the Holy Spirit; and when we pray, the Spirit helpeth our infirmities. The plow-share of truth must go deep. We are full of self, satisfied with our condition. Jesus says, "Thou sayest I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked; I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eye salve, that thou mayest see." We must fall on the Rock and be broken, and then the Spirit of God will take possession of us, and mold us after the divine Pattern.

Then make the surrender at once. Don't wait till you get home, but make it manifest that you realize what is required of you. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart." You are to set your affections upon God. In order to do this it is not necessary to sound a trumpet before you, to make a proclamation to the world that you have turned from darkness to light, and that you do not wish anyone to come near you to cast a cloud of darkness over you. Religion means the making of a daily consecration of yourself to God; it means meekness and lowliness of heart; it means to take everything that comes to you as a blessing, to let praise flow back to God. The Lord says, "Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me." As we praise God, the soul becomes strong in spiritual power.

At morning, noon, and night we should meditate upon the goodness and love of God, that we may know God; for this is life eternal. The Father has given the best gift, the greatest treasure of heaven, to us, and we are of value to God, and should render praise to him. But when we surround ourselves with a dark atmosphere, we forget that the Father knows our trials, and has sent them to us in love. The praise that should reach him never comes to his throne; for our affections are not centered upon him.

We should lay hold upon God with all our strength, and love him with undivided heart. Do not look to see what others are doing, but be yourself a copartner with him, a laborer together with God, a partaker of the divine nature. We are to consecrate ourselves to God, to help others, to surround ourselves with a fragrant atmosphere. Our words are to be cheerful and kind; we are to come heart to heart as members of the family of Christ. We are to be one, as Christ is one with the Father. Let us seek for this oneness, and by and by we shall see him as he is, and enjoy his presence through the ceaseless ages of eternity. We shall have the life that measures with the life of God. It will take all eternity to comprehend the science of redemption, to understand something of what it means that the Son of the infinite God gave his life for the life of the world. Then shall we not seek for glory, honor and eternal life? Shall we not make it our first business? We can have but a short lifetime here, but the life to come is eternal. We may attain unto this through daily consecration of ourselves to God, through the aid of the Holy Spirit, through following the example of Christ, who was tempted in all points like as we are, yet who sinned not, that he might be able to succor those who are tempted. Let us come to the throne of infinite

love, and there wait and watch to see the fulfillment of the promises of God. Make your appeal to heaven, knowing that what God hath said he will do, and will make his light shine through you to others. You may not know that you are giving light to others, but God will know it. To those on the right hand the Lord will say: "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or, naked, and clothed thee? or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto thee, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." They did not know that they were doing good to others; for it was the Spirit of Christ that wrought with them, and others took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus, and learned of him. Let us have personal religion, and become rooted and grounded in love.

While the Conference was assembled at South Lancaster, Mass., a faithful old sister was dying, and she sent in this message to those assembled, "The anchor holds." This is what we want, a hope that we can cast like an anchor, entering into that which is within the veil. We want to be able to bear testimony that the anchor holds in the time of sickness, trial, or bereavement. In our darkest hours we want to be able to see matchless charms in Jesus, to set our affections on things above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God, that our life may be hid with Christ in God, that when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, we also may appear with him in glory.