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## PAUL'S INQUIRY—"WHAT WILT THOU HAVE ME TO DO?"

A Sermon, by REV. WM. HOOPER D. D., of North Carolina, preached in the Baptist church in Columbia, South Carolina, October 27, 1844.

*"And he trembling and astonished, said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?"—Acts ix: 6.*

These were the words of the amazed and terrified Saul of Tarsus, when the Lord Jesus appeared to him in that glorious and miraculous manner on his way to Damascus. His proud spirit was at once brought low—his fierce enmity at once cloven down—and he fell as a trembling suppliant at the feet of that once crucified Jesus, whom he just now hated and despised, and whose people he was making havoc of as a blood-thirsty wolf makes havoc among a flock of helpless sheep. He saw that that same Jesus was the Lord of glory; and hence, as soon as he recovers sufficiently from his amazement, produced by that overpowering vision, to express the feelings of his heart, he breaks out in the language of our text, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" He acknowledges Jesus to be his Lord, and therefore entitled to command and to dictate to him his sovereign pleasure. What a change was this for the furious persecutor! A moment before, he would have lost his right hand, or perhaps his head, rather than have accosted Jesus with this title of respect. Nay, he had no other thoughts of Christ but as of an executed malefactor, who had deservedly expiated on the cross his crimes as an impostor and impious blasphemer. How changed in a few moments! Such is the mighty and victorious grace of God, when it comes with its full and sudden energy upon a sinner's heart! It so

totally transforms his views and his tempers, that now he takes for his Lord and his God whom just before he neither feared, nor loved, nor believed in. Having acknowledged Christ as his Lord, we need not be surprised at what follows: "What wilt thou have me to do?" His own will he surrenders; he considers Christ's will as his law; and therefore his question to his new Master is of much the same import as was the address of Jesus to his Father: "Not my will, but thine be done." "What wilt thou have me to do?" As if he would say, "Thou art, I perceive, my Lord and my God, and as such, hast an indisputable right to rule me and to command my services. The settled purpose of my soul, when I set out on this journey, was to exterminate the hated sect of thy followers, and to root out thy name from the earth. But now, be it my business and my choice, as I perceive it is my duty, to enquire thy will and await thy commands. Nor do I make any reserves, any conditions with thee. It is not my part to say, I am willing to undertake such and such services; but I beg to be excused from such and such others which are too laborious, or too dangerous, or too humiliating." No: his question implied unlimited submission—a willingness to undertake any thing which Jesus would direct. He had no will of his own about the matter; or rather, so completely was his own will absorbed and merged in the will of his divine Master, that his highest gratification would be to set about doing that will, as soon as it was revealed to him. He therefore wants to know Christ's will respecting him, as soon as he was converted. "Lord," he asks, "what wilt thou have me to do?" He takes for granted that he wants him to *do* something. He did not suppose that he had been favored with this astonishing manifestation of Christ's compassion and love to him for nothing. He supposed, of course, that he was to *do* something for his new Master. He found he had a heart to serve Christ, and hence he very naturally inferred that he who had given him such a heart, *had work to do*—had appropriate services on which the new affections of his heart might find exercise and employment. He also would conclude that Christ wanted him to do something, because there was need of so much work. He saw that a world lying in wickedness was to be converted to the knowledge of the gospel. He saw that the harvest was immense and the la-

borers few. He saw that no individual's labors could be spared; that every one now a disciple was wanted, and then there would not be enough. He saw, too, that there was not only some employment for all Christ's disciples, but so much employment as to task and put to the stretch the utmost powers of every individual disciple whom Christ had called into the field. How, then, could he help supposing that there was much for him to do; and how natural was the first question of his new-born soul: Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? He is then informed what Christ would have him to do; and immediately when thus instructed, he sets about executing the charge which he had received.

Let us pause upon this most interesting portion of sacred history, and apply to ourselves the lessons which it is calculated to afford.

1. We may remark the change which conversion makes upon the will. Every unconverted man has a will of his own, contrary to the will of Christ. It is his will to gratify his lusts, or to make gain, or to raise himself or his family in the world. It is his will to have nothing to do with religion—to neglect God. It is his will that God would only let him alone to take his pleasure, and allow him to live and prosper long on the earth. If God would do this, he would be willing there should be no intercourse whatever between him and his Maker. He never thinks of asking that question, "What wilt thou have me to do?" If God has business to be done, he wishes him to assign it to others, not to him. He has no relish for it. His heart can take no interest in carrying on God's operations in the world. Nay, it has a positive distaste for them. But conversion produces a revolution in his will. He finds a correspondence between his own will and God's. He has obtained such exalted views of God's wisdom and holiness, that he feels it to be infinitely the best that God's will should prevail, and *his* will should yield whenever there is any difference. Like Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane, the christian, if he ventures to express his own will about any matter, always subjoins that condition, "nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done."

2. We remark the converted sinner's acknowledgment of Christ's sovereignty over him. Christ is the rightful Lord and Master, and he is the rightful servant and vassal,

owned by this Master, bought by him, redeemed by him with a most precious ransom, even his own blood. It is therefore perfectly natural in him to ask that question, "What wilt thou have me to do?" Not so the unconverted man. He claims to be his own master. He acknowledges no allegiance to any other. His conduct speaks this sentiment, "Who is the Lord that I should obey him?" He glories in his uncontrolled freedom—in doing just what he pleases. I am my own master, he says; I have a right to do with myself, with my time, with my talents, my money, my influence, my power, whatever I choose. "God is not in all his thoughts."

3. We remark the redeemed sinner's willingness to act for his new Master. He has no idea that his religion is to be an idle, inactive principle, locked up in his heart. He feels the strivings of benevolence moving within him, and prompting him to action. He has no such thought as that a christian may be an idler—that religion is only a title to certain privileges and comforts—that he has only to sit down and feast on the luxuries of divine love, while the Lord smiles upon him, or to mourn after that smile when it is withdrawn. Paul wanted to be employed. Hence he asks the Lord whether he had nothing for him to do? He would have felt disappointed and grieved, if he had received for an answer, I have nothing for thee to do. I can carry on my plans and operations without the need of such a man as thou art. Thou hast only to rejoice in thy happiness in being called out of darkness into light, and in having a title to the kingdom of heaven. O! how, must we suppose, such an answer as this would have chilled and damped the ardent zeal and restless benevolence of the new-born apostle! We may suppose that he would have begged for some labor of love—that he might have thus humbly expostulated with his Saviour: "True, my divine Lord, I am but a man—a vile, unworthy man, totally unworthy of the honor that thou shouldest make use of me to carry on thy glorious purposes in the world. But the feebleness, the unworthiness of the instrument, the more unquestionably, the more undividedly, the more exclusively will the praise be thine of whatever good may be done. Thou dost not scorn to employ even worms to achieve thy works either of beneficence or of wrath. By means of these insignificant insects didst thou punish the

vain-glorious tyrant, Herod, and bring him down from that brilliant throne to lay his head in the dust. By means of the most contemptible reptiles and swarms didst thou terrify and abase the haughty monarch of Egypt. By a worm dost thou build up the coral islands and continents in the ocean for a habitation for man, where thousands of thy people may find a tranquil home. Oh, then, disdain not to employ me in pulling down the strong holds of Satan—a tyrant more than Herod or Pharaoh—and in carrying to the ears of my unhappy fellow-men the story of thy matchless love—in telling them the glad news that thou hast saved them from eternal ruin and purchased for them a kingdom of endless felicity in the heavens! Oh, grant me the happiness of executing for thee this blessed errand. I want not to be excused from duty. I covet, I crave some work to do for thee—yes, for thee; that will sweeten every toil, nay, it will make even suffering and danger welcome, because it is endured for thee. But if I am to do nothing, if thou assignest me no toils to undertake, no dangers to encounter, no hardships to sustain, no self-denial to exercise, how shall I ever be able to testify the sincerity of my gratitude? How shall I ever have an opportunity of evincing the inflexible strength of my attachment to thee—an attachment which will remain faithful amidst all the opposition and murderous violence of Jew and Gentile? How shall I ever be able to give conclusive and ocular demonstration that neither death, nor life, nor famine, nakedness, sword, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate me from the love of Christ?—Besides, if I am to do nothing, why, Lord, hast thou implanted these new affections in my breast? What means this tumult in my veins? Why do I find my heart burning to go forth in thy service? Dost thou impart zeal for thy service when there is no service to be performed? Why do I find my heart expanded with benevolence towards my fellow-creatures, if there is no field wherein that benevolence can find place for action? Why hast thou lighted up such a flame in my soul, if no body is to be illuminated or warmed by it? Why hast thou opened to my vision the glories and the terrors of the world to come, and fired my heart with unquenchable desires to snatch my fellow-men from those terrors and raise them to those glories; why hast thou done this, if thou hast no work for me to do? Why

do I feel my soul nerved with a courage which the combined powers of earth and hell cannot overcome, to carry this gospel to the utmost boundaries of the earth? Is it possible that thou hast touched my hitherto torpid breast with all these new, and sweet, and powerful emotions, that they may merely blaze there unseen—agitate and corrode me with useless struggles, and die there as they were born, without having done the world any good, or having produced any other result towards me than the consciousness of holding pent up and imprisoned in my own breast, holy, and active, and strenuous, and unconquerable principles of benevolence, without any field for their exercise, any call for their exertion? No, my Lord; I know thou dost nothing in vain: and I would as soon believe that thou hast created the sun without any worlds for it to warm and enlighten, as believe that thou hast begotten these energies in my soul to burn, and waste themselves, and expire in vain, and not provided an appropriate theatre where they may expend themselves in deeds, bringing glory to God and diffusing blessings among men. Yes, I know that thou hast much for me to do, because I see that much is to be done. I see a world lying in wickedness, which must be won from the dominion of Satan and brought to the obedience of Christ. The field is spacious, the harvest plenteous and the laborers few, hence I am certain that thou intendest no one to be idle—every energy of mind, every moment of time, has a demand upon it. The enemy is active, ardent, not intermitting for an instant his malignant operations, spreading the havoc of eternal death among the thousands of mankind. How, then, Lord, can thy people be still? Surely they must be using every means to defeat what Satan and his active adherents are so industriously contriving and executing. I want to have a share in this righteous battle against the powers of darkness. I therefore humbly ask again: Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?"

Such may we suppose were the feelings of the apostle's heart when he put this question to his Master, and in some such manner may we suppose the holy desires of his soul would have found vent if he had been told that the Lord had nothing for him to do. He wanted to be a *doing* christian. He did not esteem it to be a privilege to be exempted from *doing* something. He would have accounted it the

hardest lot his Master could have assigned him to command him to sit still and do nothing, while the labor and heat of the day was assigned to others. Now are all christians like Paul in this? Do all love to go about doing good? Are all zealous in doing good works? Is there not, now-a-days, a sect of *non-doers*? Are there not professed christians who resemble Paul in nothing but in having like him been buried in baptism—buried in water, but not buried to sin and risen again to righteousness? They do not ask, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" but "Lord, what wilt thou have me to enjoy? I want to taste thy love. I want to enjoy the assurance of pardon. I want to read my title clear to mansions in the skies, but I can't do any thing for thee. I am too weak. I would rather be excused from any active service. Indeed, I believe that thou hast purchased for thy people a discharge from labor. They are not under law, but under grace. It is their privilege to feast on the fatness of thy house, and not to toil as if they were bondmen under the covenant of works." Such are the sentiments of some professed christians. So deplorably do they pervert the doctrine of free salvation. Because they are not to be saved *by* or *for* their works, therefore they think themselves not bound to do good works. What would you think of the son of a kind and indulgent father, who should say thus within himself: "I know that my father will give me a portion of his estate, no matter how I behave myself. I will, therefore, take no pains to please him. I will not trouble myself to perform his business, or forward his designs, for I am sure of the inheritance without this?" Would you think this youth had the spirit of a son? Would you not rather think that he was a base, unnatural being, who deserved not a particle of his abused father's bounty? So is the professed christian, who would plead the freeness of salvation as a reason for his doing nothing. Such a professor does not want to hear of *duties* at all. He wants to hear only of privileges and comforts. Preach to him the duty of christians laboring for their Master, spending their time and their money in promoting his cause, going about like their Master doing good, he straitway takes offence, loathes such preaching, calls it legality, brands you as one that holds forth that men are to be saved by their works. Such was not Paul. He inculcated good works most strenuously. He occupies a

large part of his letters to the churches in detailing christian duties—in telling men how they ought to act in all the relations of life—how husbands ought to treat their wives, and how wives ought to conduct themselves towards their husbands—how parents ought to behave to their children, and children to their parents. He taught masters to be kind to their servants, and servants to be honest and faithful to their masters—how magistrates ought to rule, and people submit quietly to be ruled. Paul was a zealous preacher of good works. No man insisted more strongly on the doctrines of grace, and taught more clearly and forcibly than he, that we are justified *freely* by the *merits of Christ, without our own deservings*—yet this same man saw no inconsistency in urging all the professed disciples of Christ to adorn the doctrine of God their Father, by bringing forth abundantly the fruits of righteousness—nay, he tells them expressly that “Christ died to purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.” Hence, we have a right to conclude that where Christ’s people are, they will be zealous of good works, and on the contrary, where men are not zealous of good works, it authorizes us to doubt whether they are the people of Christ.

Paul tells us he was willing to spend and be spent for the cause of Christ. Oh! how unlike Paul are many of those who profess to receive his writings as the inspired word of God! Are they willing to *spend* for him? What do they spend for him in the course of the year? Five dollars? or one dollar? or half a dollar? Do they give with a liberality according as God has blest them? Do not many reap plentiful harvests, a bounteous providence causing their fields to bring forth by handfuls, and yet they grudge a small pittance of this plenty to the Divine Giver? How apt are they to receive an application for money with a resentful spirit, or give some little with a cold, reluctant heart! God loves a cheerful giver, but these are not cheerful givers. They give with a sad, *unwilling* heart, and feel a bitterness against the man that asks it of them. Are they like Paul, who even wrought with his own hands that he might minister to the necessities of those that were with him? Oh! if there were more christians like Paul, you would not find so many ministers of the gospel going out of our State, because the people wont support them. You

would not find so many neighborhoods without meeting-houses or pastors, because the people are too parsimonious to be at the expense of having them. You would not find so many uncomfortable meeting-houses, with broken windows and open logs for the blasts of heaven to whistle through, if the professed followers of the self-denying Jesus were any thing like as willing to give to the cause of God as they are to buy good lands and horses, and to deck themselves with fine apparel. If people were as concerned for their souls as for their bodies, then might every neighborhood have a comfortable meeting-house and a well provided pastor, who might devote his whole time “to prayer and the ministry of the word,” and not be condemned, as he now is, “to serve tables,” to spend a great part of life in providing for his family, by teaching school, or ploughing the earth, or working at a trade, while the people are perishing for want of his oversight and pastoral care.

4. We remark, the redeemed sinner’s dedication of himself without reserves or limitations, to the will of his heavenly Master. “Lord, what *will* thou have me to do?” As much as to say, I am willing to do any thing, provided I know it is thy will. I do not ask thee to assign me this or that particular work—such as will be easiest—such as will be least trying to flesh and blood. No; it is sufficient that thou wilt me to do it. For I know that what thou wilt is wisest and best. Now, this ought to be the disposition of every servant of Christ. If he is sincere, he will want to know the whole of the Lord’s will respecting him. He will not, like Naaman, the Syrian, make an exception in favor of some favorite sin, or beg a dispensation from some hard duty. Any yoke or burden imposed upon him by Christ, he finds easy and light, because it is his Saviour’s yoke. That thought nerves his nature to endure every thing cheerfully and bravely. But I fear there are many of us, now-a-days, who never make this unlimited surrender of themselves to Christ. They are willing to profess themselves christians so far as regards a certain round of duties; they are willing to be baptized, to go to meeting, to attend on preaching and the administration of the Lord’s supper; but they are not willing to crucify their fleshly lusts; to curb their evil tempers; to restrain their tongues from evil and idle speaking; to be perfectly fair and honest in all their

dealings with their neighbors; to make restitution if they have formerly done any man injustice; to give up every kind of gain that is manifestly unlawful, or at least doubtful; to sacrifice some portion of their time, of their labor, or of their money, to the cause of Christ. Let us suppose, now, a man brought to this point, sincerely to inquire of the Lord, "What wilt thou have me to do?" How is he to get the Lord's answer? Is he to get it as Paul did, by a voice from heaven? No; the Lord, since the days of miracles, no more gives directions in that way. He has had his word written down. He no longer speaks to us in thunder from the skies, but he speaks to us in the still small voice of scripture. He tells us that the holy scriptures are "able to make us wise unto salvation;" that "all scripture is given by inspiration, and is profitable for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be thoroughly furnished unto all good works." Here, then, is our guide—if we want to know what our Lord would have us to do, we must read his written commands. This will furnish us unto all good works. He that sincerely wishes to do God's will, will be much in the study of the Bible, that he may know more and more of that will.

But we must take notice that the Bible instructs us by *general rules and principles*. It cannot enter into all the minutiae of human transactions, and tell us what we must do in every particular case occurring. If the Bible did this—if the Bible were to specify all the various, possible cases in which men have to act, and in which they may need direction, "the world itself would not contain the books that should be written," or, at least, the scriptures would be swelled to such dimensions, that we could never read the hundredth part of them, and should need a set of men, like the lawyers and judges, to search out and expound to us the divine law, before we could proceed a step, as we now have to expound to us the numerous volumes of *human laws*. But, blessed be God, he has assigned to us a much easier task. He has comprehended all things necessary for our direction in one volume—and that a small one—so that every one that can read at all, can find time to read the inspired volume *through*. Indeed, that part of it which contains all that is essential to salvation, to wit: the New Testament, is a very small book. But how has God managed to

compress all necessary directions for human conduct in the compass of so small a volume? It is in this way: He has laid down broad and comprehensible principles of action, which include in them all supposable cases of particular actions. For instance, in instructing me as to my conduct towards my neighbor, he has not specified all the particular ways in which I must do my neighbor good, nor all the particular ways in which I must avoid doing my neighbor wrong. He does not tell me I must not burn my neighbor's house; I must not turn my hogs or cattle into his field; I must not sell him an unsound horse; I must not sell him a piece of goods for more than its value; but it provides for all these cases, and ten thousand such, by these few universal rules: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." "Love worketh no ill to his neighbor." "Do unto all men as you would have all men do unto you." "Defraud not." "Thou shalt not covet any thing that is thy neighbor's." With these few directions, a man can be at no loss about his duty to his neighbor. He has only to ask himself in any case that may occur, "Am I doing to my neighbor as I would he should do unto me in like case? Am I in this thing loving him as myself?" If man will faithfully consult these rules and be guided by these principles, he will never do harm to any fellow-creature living.

It is evident, therefore, that the Bible never was intended to give us *specific* directions for the determination of each particular case of conduct, but has left us to solve that case by a reference to general rules. Of course the Bible cannot contain directions about societies and institutions that have grown up since the Bible was written. When the Bible was written, there was not an hospital or poor-house in the world. Now suppose one of these men who says he must have scripture for every thing, is asked to contribute something towards the building of an hospital, where the sick are cured, or an alms-house, where widows, and orphans, and helpless people are taken care of. He replies, I can't give any thing; there is no scripture for it. I don't find any such house spoken of in the Bible. His neighbors join to put up a school-house, or clear out a road, or build a bridge. He is asked to help. I can't, he exclaims; scripture don't tell me that I ought to build school-houses, or bridges, or clear out roads.

Let us suppose now, an honest, sincere christian to be anxious to know what the Lord would have him to do respecting the benevolent and religious institutions of the day. He asks, first, Lord wouldst thou have me to be a member of the Bible Society? The Lord tells him that the scriptures are able to make men wise unto salvation; that faith comes by hearing; that the Eunuch was prepared for embracing Christ by reading the scriptures; that every man must try to save as many souls as he can. He then looks at the Bible Society. He sees that by it the word of God is circulated over the world; that by its means 100 Bibles are put in circulation now for one before; that Bibles are rendered five times cheaper than they were formerly; that the Bible in the course of few years has been translated into two hundred different languages of the earth, and ship loads of the life-giving volume sent all around the world to the perishing Gentiles; that in fine, more has been done since the establishment of the British and Foreign Bible Society, in 1801, to supply the lost race of man with the word of eternal life, than was done in the 1800 years before that time. How, then, can such an inquirer hesitate? He must say, If I believe the Bible to be the word of God and able to make men wise unto salvation; if I love it and have tasted its preciousness in my own soul; if I love my fellow-creatures and want them to be holy and happy; if I think it better that 100 Bibles should be in circulation than one; that a poor man should be able to buy a Bible for half a dollar than for \$2, or a Testament for 25 cents than for \$1; if I think it better that the one hundred millions of Hindoos, the twelve millions of Burmans, the three hundred millions of Chinese, the fourteen millions of Japan, the fifty millions of Africa, the people of the Sandwich Islands, of Otaheite, of New Zealand, and innumerable other pagan nations, should have the Bible in their several languages, and each man a copy in his own house, in the course of a few years, than wait for this blessing, till half a century or a whole century has elapsed, then I must be friendly to the Bible Society. I must bid it God's speed. I must encourage it and contribute towards it. I must bless God that he has put it into the hearts of his servants to embody themselves for this purpose, to combine their united strength and zeal to diffuse the rays of the Sun of Righteousness over a dark-

ened world. Can I oppose such a Society as this? Can I speak evil of its contributors and of its managers? No; God forbid—I should be afraid of slandering God's dearest children and most active servants. I will rather remember Gamaliel's advice: "Refrain from these men and let them alone, lest haply ye be found even to fight against God."

Suppose our inquirer next to wish to know of the Lord what he would have him to do with respect to Missionary Societies. He finds no mention of them in scripture; but he finds Christ's disciples commanded to go into all the world and to preach the gospel to every creature. He finds them commanded to pray the Lord of the harvest that he would send forth laborers into his harvest; he finds that God has ordained that they who preach the gospel should live of the gospel; he finds Christ saying the laborer is worthy of his meat; he finds Paul praising the Philippians for bearing his expenses while he was preaching at Rome, and telling the Corinthians that he might justly have claimed support of them while preaching the gospel at Corinth. Can a christian when he considers these things, doubt that he ought to promote missions; that it is the Lord's will he should join in this thing? If it is our duty to pray for any thing, it is our duty also to use all other proper means to bring it about. For example, it is right we should pray that our heavenly Father would provide food and raiment for all our needy and suffering fellow-creatures. But are we to stop here? Are we to satisfy ourselves with mere prayer—not relieve, as far as lies in our power, those poor and needy persons who are within our reach? What would you think of a man who, on a cold winter night, when the snow was driving in sheets from the heavens, and the freezing wind was piercing even to the bones, should, at his family devotions, pray to God to have mercy on all who were exposed to the inclement season, and yet he knew at the same time that there was a family lying out not far from his door, without shelter and without fire, and would not give them either? Would you not think him a hypocrite, his pretended concern for his fellow-creatures mere sham, and would not God consider his prayer as a mere mockery? Yes, we are told to let our love be without dissimulation, and the apostle James says, "if a brother or sister be naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them, Depart in peace,

cieties, shall they be lords over my conscience and say I shall think so, too? No; I would allow no man, or set of men, to exercise this despotism over my conscience. I would no more allow twelve, or twenty, or thirty men to dictate to me and say I shall not do what I believe will promote the glory of God and the good of man, than I will bow to the Pope of Rome and let him tell me what I shall believe, and what I shall not believe. It is rank tyranny to attempt it. If any church on earth were to excommunicate me for holding such sentiments as these, I would only pity their blindness and prejudice, and consider myself as suffering in the cause of righteousness. I am ashamed that any church bearing the name of Baptist, advocate such sentiments. I blush and hang down my head when I am among other christians, to hear an article read from a newspaper that such and such an Association condemn all the benevolent institutions of the age, and forbid their members to have any thing to do with them. But I will tell such men one thing. These institutions will go on—God will succeed and prosper them. They will gloriously triumph over all opposition, and leave nothing but shame and confusion of face to those who attempt to stand in their way. It is the honor and glory of the Baptist church, that it has such men as Fuller, and Pearce, and Carey, and Judson, and Boardman, and Wade, who have either toiled at home to support missions, or have carried the gospel to the uttermost parts of the earth, crossing the raging ocean, venturing among cruel barbarians, and pining away life in a parching sun and sickly climate all for love to the dying souls of the poor heathen, while some men sit at home in slothful ease, and revile them. But their "praise will be in all the churches," and their renown will be sounded on the tongues of grateful millions for ages to come, when the names and the calumnies of their opponents will be buried in oblivion, or remembered only to be wondered at for their prejudice and illiberality. Yes, I trust that in less than fifty years from now, it will hardly be believed that any set of men could have been found to oppose all these good and glorious deeds of christian benevolence. If some enemy of the Baptist church shall then start up and say, Ah! some years ago your people were violent opposers of these things, your children will deny the charge as a slander, and say, "Well,

if such opposition ever was made, it never could have been in the civilized portions of our land. It must have been in some remote, out of the way distance, in the hollows of the mountains, where the people could not read, and where the sun did not shine upon them more than half of the time he was above the horizon. May God bless what has been said, incline us all to inquire "what he would have us to do," and give us a heart to obey his will when we know it, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

#### RECIPROCAL INFLUENCE OF FAITH AND WORKS.

The faith of the new-born soul, not followed by good works, if we can suppose such faith to be real, must of necessity affect the growth or health of the spiritual man. Either he must remain a mere dwarf in stature, or, if forced to expand by the application of stimuli, he must suffer all the effeminacy of the hot-bed or green-house plant. Whereas, on the other hand, the spiritual man, brought into constant exercise and appropriate labor, is invigorated, and attains his full dimensions, proportions, energies, beauty, usefulness and enjoyment. Nor is this all. The natural tendency of faith is to produce works which re-acted on itself secures its own increase: and the natural tendency of works is to increase faith, which re-acted on themselves, magnify and multiply themselves. Take for illustration the following examples:—

Faith loves to hear and peruse the word of God; and the word heard and perused, increases faith. Faith inspires prayer, and prayer invigorates faith. And thus it is with all the graces in all their application. Faith works, hope endures, and love labors; and then each is in its turn, reciprocally promoted by work, endurance and labor. One of the most impulsive influences to charitable deeds, is the performance itself of charitable deeds. If you wish a single act of kindness done, in the least thing, go to him who does the greatest acts of this class, and the most of them. The soul by the contraction of itself into itself, reduces itself to an infinitesimal; or by the expansion of itself beyond itself, comprehends infinity.

The inferences from these premises are important as they are numerous. We hence learn the folly of neglecting a



duty because we are disinclined to it. The neglect increases the disinclination, which would be counteracted by the performance. You stay away from the communion table, because you do not enjoy the presence of your Redeemer, as if you expected to find him by avoiding the place of his abode. You shun the society of the faithful, because your heart is cold and desponding: whereas that society is among the very means which God has ordained for your warmth and cheerfulness. Let principle act itself out, by the use of the appropriate scriptural means of its own development, and it will be itself perfected by the re-action of those very instrumentalities which it has itself employed.

"Seest thou," says the Apostle James, speaking of Abraham, the father of the faithful, "how faith wrought *with* his works, and by works was faith made perfect?"

ED.

#### THE THOUGHTS AND DICTION OF THE BIBLE.

To say of this or that portion of sacred scripture, that it is remarkable—that it is interesting—that it is extraordinary—is to fall infinitely below the subject. The Bible is full of facts, truths and expressions, all of which are of inconceivable beauty, force and grandeur. It is a collection of mines of diamonds—it is alps upon alps of gold, not the gold of Ophir, but, as the Apostle Peter expresses it, "of gold more precious than of gold that perisheth."

"O may these sacred pages be,  
My ever dear delight,  
And still new beauties may I see,  
And still increasing light."

Few books, if any, have been so mangled, by the commentaries of ignoramuses and dolts; but it stands a colossus, a pyramid, inviting the gaze of every beholder.

ED.