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"We have left all and followed thee; what shall we have therefore?" --
Matt. 19:27

When Peter proposed on the mount to build three tabernacles, one for Moses, one for Elias and one for Jesus, it is recorded that he knew not what he said. Our Lord made no answer. But no such charge has ever been laid against the question bearing as it does on the future of the Christian religion. The disciples were sure that they had found the Messiah, and had gladly made sacrifices in his name. They fully shared the common Jewish expectation of great material blessings for the faithful, but to the present, they had known only hardship and privation. Without any dream of it on their part, they were within two months of the crucifixion. The moral failure of the rich young ruler gives to Peter his long desired opportunity. We have left all and followed thee; what shall we have therefore? He voices the longing of the human spirit for encouragement. It is the craving of honest hearted men for the support of some vast hope. He asked that question for himself, his brethern and for us.

"Jesus honored it with an instant reply. He confessed that it was natural and just, and there committed himself to the principle that men who yield themselves loyally to his service have a right to know something of the benefits that are to follow. No one knew so well as himself, that men's powers can never disport themselves effectively in an atmosphere of gloom and despair. Was not he himself strengthened and cheered in his redeeming work by the joy that was

set before him? Right well does he know that the stability and perpetuity of his kingdom demand that he shall have power to inspire his people, and resource to give them sublime compensation. And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, that ye which have followed me in the regeneration, when the Son of Man shall sit on the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And every one that hath left houses, or brethern, or sisters, or father or mother, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundred fold, and shall inherit eternal life.

"Such is the mighty promise, with its note of certainty and its accent of authority. How gratefully it falls on our own hearts, for we, too, with these ancient brethern, have entered into the life of service and sacrifice. Many of you, like Peter, have given yourselves to the Christian ministry. Such may not have been your plan of life when first you gave your hearts to Christ. Young, ambitious, leaping like angels, impelled you otherwise. You were conscious of capacities to win the prized of the professions and the rushing business of the world. A tender hand was laid upon you, deep eyes of love looked through your soul, a secret message whispered itself in the heart, and suddenly all life's horizons were changed. Here am I, Lord, send me. What shall that man have? Rewards, ample and glorious, along with all the saints of God who fill their varied work with spiritual motive.

"But, after all, there was something in Peter's question, not entirely pleasing to the Master. It had in it a hint of calculation and a touch of the bargaining spirit. It held suggestions of compliance with the letter and not with the spirit of a divine command. The man who is good merely for the reward, is not good at all. The

compensations of our religion are not determined by the fact or the amount of sacrifice, but by the motive that prompts the sacrifice. Let the disciple beware, for he that is first in these respects may be last in the matter of merit. The exceeding great and precious promises were immediately guarded by a most solemn warning in the story of the laborers in the vineyard. Is it not a sorrowful fact that even our best fidelities in his service are ever in danger of being spoiled by the wrong dispositions which they may possibly induce?

"The theme with which we deal is: The compensation of Christian service. No man can fail to be impressed with the disproportion that holds between the promised rewards and the sacrifices that his servants make. Give us a fishing boat, a sheepfold, a farm or a store, and receive a throne. Surrender precious things and get back the same values multiplied a hundred fold. Is it not likely that such words as these will excite hopes and expectations that can never be fulfilled? There is not a doubt of it, but the danger is offset by the continuing presence of the interpreting Christ. How else, than with such sensuous images, shall he duly impress undeveloped disciples with great spiritual realities? They will not receive all blessings exactly as imagination pictured, but to their matured spiritual judgment they will realize something far better.

"It has pleased the Master to put first among his rewards distinction and honor. We were made for honors. The thirst for them is native to the soul, and it shall not go unsatisfied. But he will not give us the honors this world is familiar with, for he has reversed all the current conceptions of human greatness.

He puts us in no expectation of the homage of men. With the utmost detestation

he regards all secret scheming and posing, as the hypocrites employ, to win human applause. That vulgar temptation once assailed him with terrible force, but he grandly resolved to make himself of no reputation. He literally tore his reputation to tatters that he might stand reproachless before God.

"It is distinction enough for us, that we have a standing place in the confidence of the Son of God. He trusts us with his own honor and the interests of His kingdom. This thought put a rapture in the heart of his great servant long ago, compelling the utterance. I thank God that he counted me faithful putting me into the ministry. I blasphemed his name, and persecuted his saints; and yet he takes a poor sinner like me, and makes me a messenger to run the errands of his love. That act of confidence sprang a joy, and a sense of exaltation in his soul, that neither stripes nor prisons, nor defamation could ever abolish or destroy. With what passion he could sing that old hymn of ours:

Jesus, I my cross have taken,
All to leave and follow thee;
Naked, poor, despised, forsaken,
Thou from hence my all shall be

"The Lord increase our faith that all may really believe there is immortal honor in a call to his service. Has that honor fallen on us? Then let us bow down before the glory of God as Isaiiah did in the temple, covering our faces with our hands, and accepting our crowns with meek submission and adoring love.

"That was a proud day for a young Englishmen, when his King tapped him on the shoulder with a sword, entering him into the ranks of English Knighthood. That was an exultant moment for the French hero, when in the presence of his comrades, he received from the hands of his emperor, the cross of the Legion

of Honor. It was a far higher compliment when we, the servants of God were decorated with the confidence of his Son, and invited by him into a work of co-operation which looks to a new birth of the world.

Yes, all of us shall sit on the throne of moral and spiritual power. You shall be a heavenly salt to save this world from decay. You shall be shining lights to lead it out of its darkness. He gives us that equipment of power that shall fit us for the finest spiritual leadership the world has ever known. I am persuaded that the sway of your invisible sceptres was never more needed in human society than it is today.

"Every thoughtful man knows that we live in one of the most remarkable periods of human history. In all parts of the world, democracy is bursting the bonds of oldtime despotisms. The scientific spirit is making huge disturbances in the world's ideas, and the spirit of materialism is trying to change the very conception of God into a superstition. It is a time of wide unrest and grave moral anxiety. A confusing clamor of voices dinns in our ears, and a debilitating doubt seems to settle on every question. A black night seems to lower on the sea, and the winds and the waves are adverse. But it is no time for Christian timidity, or discouragement. There is a trumpet call to faith. Look aloft to Him that sitteth on a throne, high and lifted up, and the tumult of the waters shall become a pavement for our feet. We stand for the spirit of Christ, and that is the mightiest subduing force that plays on the hearts of men. It blends with all central human needs, and heals like a balm of Gilead, the old distempered heart of the world. We have seen the invisible, and have felt the inspiration of an endless life. It is ours to

preach, not a dogma nor a creed, but a person gloriously divine, and a life, the fairest among ten thousand and altogether lovely. It is our indefeasable right to believe in the heavenly mission of our churches, and in the adequacy of our gospel to meet the multitudinous wants of the race. I believe that the great head of the church will enable us to make our testimony with confident note, and pour along our hearts the currents of a quenchless optimism. Such is our privilege and such is our transcendent honor.

"and yet none of us can deny that here and there, in pulpit and pew, there are signs of misgiving and fear. The zest of hopeful men sometimes yields to the spirit of depression. Not long ago, twenty leading ministers were asked this question: If you were young again would you give yourself to the work of preaching the gospel? Nine of them answered emphatically, no. It was not implied that they would abandon the service of Christ, but only that form of it which they chose in their youth. The causes of that change of view, I know not. It may have arisen from alleged curtailment of the freedom of thought in theology, or it may have come from the preacher's somewhat changed relations to modern society. The observant man knows that the minister does not hold the same relative position of public influence which his brother held two generations ago. The same thing is true of the lawyer and the physician. A new social force has arisen in the person of the successful man of business and the captain of industry, and into his strong hand have passed some of the reins of power. But surely this is no occasion of discontent to any servant of God, for the fact is largely due to our civilizing and uplifting gospel. We welcome his arrival and rejoice in his industrial

triumphs. He is our brother. He has his splendid opportunities of service and his holy obligations. Let him consecrate all his powers to God, and the Lord reward him abundantly. The kingdom has sustained no loss; the cause has been advanced. No servant's prestige has really been diminished, for each one is still crowned with that honor which God bestows. His approving smile is better than all the patronage of potentates and kings. A minister once applied to President Jackson for a government appointment. The instant reply was; "Sir, I have nothing to give you equal to the office you hold." Then let all the servants of Christ be of good cheer, for we are made co-workers with God and custodians of a heavenly grace, which is enough distinction to satisfy the ambitions of an archangel.

But the rewards of Christian service do not end here. He made us for ownership. He painted within us the acquisitive faculty and the love of possession. He assures us that his servant is worthy of his hire and that he shall not run the risks of friendlessness and destitution. He shall have a regal remuneration receiving one hundred fold for every item of sacrifice. In our Lord's hands, Christianity shall become a vast system of help in the life that now is, giving to each one of us property rights in all the children of God. Buddahism and Mohamedianism have no conception of a divine fatherhood, and by consequence no conception of a hallowed human brotherhood. But it is the glory of Christianity to present both conceptions in a beautiful harmony. Jesus organized men into a spiritual society on the basis of a common devotion to himself. He multiplies, exalts, and sweetens all our human relationship on the ground of common spiritual sympathies. He has enriched us all by making us members of the nobliest brotherhood the world has ever known.

How excellent is the kinship into which we have been joined. These are our brothers and sisters, and we are more than millionaires in the uncoined affections of the redeemed human heart.

Jesus spoke to Peter as prophet and poet. He did not confine his view to individuals, but rather included all the successive generations. He did not expect these men to become large property owners, but he did forecast a time when the kingdom of God should triumph and the meek should inherit the earth; a time when his spirit should dominate men and every man should love his neighbor as himself. Have you ever looked out over a wide landscape, diversified with hills and valleys, fields and forrests, streams and flowers. That scene was made up of a million parts. The manifold forms and colors blended in harmony to make a picture of enchanting natural lovliness. Every flower and every blade of grass made its contribution to the total effect. Each belongs to all, and all belongs to each, and so every individual factor is greatened and glorified by merging with the whole. In vision, our Lord beheld the mighty human landscape unified and beautified by the spirit of God. He saw the hour when a true Christian socialism should overspread the earth, when there should be no grinding, and poverty and no human loneliness. This is the grand social achievement contemplated by our religion. Yes, the time hastens, when all men shall their mutual burdens bear, and all shall sing blest be the tie that binds our hearts in Christian love. This is, not merely the philosopher's speculation, or the poet's dream. It is Christianity's magnificent program and the Christian's confident hope.

Today our powerful gospel is slaying the jealousies and enmities of the

nations. It is declared a war of extermination on the instruments and demons of war. The sword shall be beaten into a plough-share, the spear into a pruning hook, and all this world shall delight itself in the abundance of peace. It is going to settle this racial question which has been so long the torment of our nation. No man can tell how or when this shall be, but so sure as God is in the heaven, this end must be, and shall be wrought by the Prince of Peace. He will compose into brotherhood those struggling giants, labor and capital, whose collisions shake the very foundations of society. All those forces that waste and the lives of men, shall be done away, and we shall have a new heaven and a new earth.

Our world is growing better. Evil is transient. During the past six years the charitable gifts of the American people have rounded out the sum \$500,000,000. That unprecedented fact is the work of the spirit of Christ, and it is one of the sure foretokens of the good time coming. Widespread missionary activity of our day is another one of its harbingers. We see another one still in the spirit of amelioration which expresses itself on the multiplication of 10,000 benevolent institutions round the whole earth. Two thousand years ago a great city by the Tiber was swept away in a roaring sea of flame, while a heartless emperor, sitting in his palace, fiddled his delight at the sublimity of the spectacle. A few weeks ago a noble American city was lifted up in the arms of an earthquake, shaken to pieces and consigned to desolating fire. Shocked by the news, a great President and 80,000,000 people arose by one sympathetic impulse and said, this is our sorrow, this is our burden. Times are better than they were and the world spins

down the ringing grooves of change into the younger day. What shall we have? We have right now the joy of spiritual conquest and the evident tokens of a widening, deepening human brotherhood. Ours is the honor of helping a sinning, suffering race to climb up to those shining table lands where God is moon and sun.

And now we come to consider the very top and diadem of his cheering promise. One thing there is, that hinders our conception of it, and that is, it is too great. Our comprehensive power is too dull and drowsy for due impression. It is folded up in those two words of limitless meaning, eternal life. Their import dawned on Peter's mind more and more, down to old age, when he wrote to his brethern of an inheritance incorruptable, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, preserved in heaven for you who are kept by the power of God unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time. What does that mean but perfection of character, or completion of the soul? This was the grace that Jesus meant when he said, I came that ye might have life and that ye might have it more abundantly. This is the end designed by that mystery of an indwelling and transforming God. Our crimson spots and scarlet stains shall all be washed away, and Christ shall be formed within as the hope of glory. It was for this that Paul said, I press on to the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. It means that we shall be more, enjoy more, and live more; that we shall be the great sons and daughters of God. Here is reward, profoundly inward and intensely personal. It comes not by leaps and bounds, but by slow gradations of spiritual growth. Sad indeed would be the blunder to fancy that this saving work within had already been accomplished. It was Andrew Fuller who shrewdly remarked that the people take

it for granted that the preacher is good, and the danger is, that the preacher will take it for granted himself. That peril is common to us all, and every servant of the Master needs the warning, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think. Paradoxical as it may seem, our Christian functions expose us to some of the worst perils that beset the human spirit.

"The appetites and passions of the body are dangerous, but for less so than the appetite and passions of the soul. These latter are deeper far, and may be more defiling and disastrous to character. That was a wonderful, true insight that led Dante to put into the upper rounds of the Inferno the victims of fleshly lust, while into the nethermost depths he plunged the men whose spirits were shot through with pride and selfishness.

We are told that a gas, when subjected to one degree of cold, loses one two hundred and seventy-fifth of its volume. One degree lower, and it loses another like fraction. If it could be depressed two hundred and seventy-three degrees further, the logical conclusion is that it would shrink into practical nothingness. Most certain it is that the self-centered man lives in a chilling atmosphere, and that its inevitable drift is to spiritual death. But there is a sunny clime where our souls are meant to grow. It genial warmth is like the breath of spring, compelling the burst of vegetation into luxuriant life. They tell us that far up the Fahrenheit scale, between thirty-five hundred and four thousand degrees of heat, the scientist is melting clay and turning it into aluminum. Up in that same fervent heat he is converting pencils of carbon into small sapphires, rubies, and diamonds. So up love's scale of sacrifice we are called to pass, that our dross may be consumed, and that our gold may be refined. Somewhere, far up the scale of love's white

intensity was wrought the amazing sacrifice of Jesus, and the sapphires and rubies and diamonds of his character.

"Behold what manner of love that we should be called the children of God, and beloved it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that he shall be manifested, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. When we reach that summit, the old question, what shall we have, will be lost in the blissful consciousness of what we have come to be. The full blown rose does not ask, what shall I have? for its reward is in its own fragrance, shapeliness of form and exquisite coloring. The diamond does not ask, what shall I have? for there is not splendor to be added to its crystal beauty and its flashing light. But it is written that when we have attained the sanctified life, and greet him in the height with the song of Moses and the Lamb, he will add to us one more increment of glory, and that will be a crown of still more life."