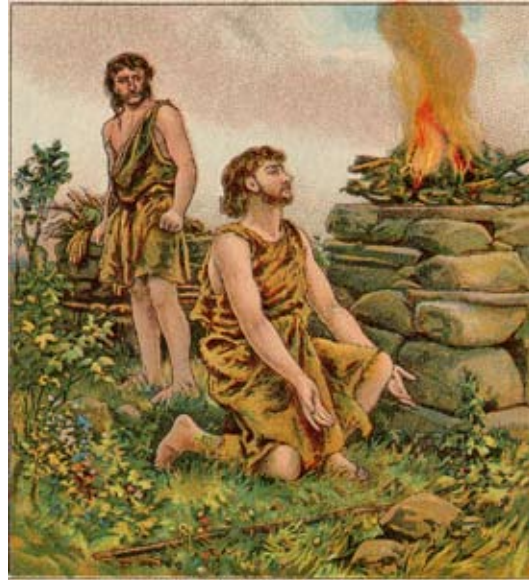


Food for the Flock

Only Two Ways

OPENING PRAYER THOUGHT

Mount of Blessing, pg. 148 -- "Jesus, while He dwelt on earth, dignified life in all its details by keeping before men the glory of God, and by subordinating everything to the will of His Father. If we follow His example, His assurance to us is that all things needful in this life 'shall be added.' Poverty or wealth, sickness or health, simplicity or wisdom, -- all are provided for in the promise of His grace.



"God's everlasting arm encircles the soul that turns to Him for aid, however feeble that soul may be. The precious things of the hills shall perish; but the soul that lives for God, shall abide with Him. 'The world passeth away, and the lust thereof; but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever.' The city of God will open its golden gates to receive him who learned while on earth to lean on God for guidance and wisdom, for comfort and hope, amid loss and affliction. The songs of the angels will welcome him there, and for him the tree of life shall yield its fruit. 'The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but My kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of My peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee.'"

And what shall our prayer be about this afternoon? -- Yes, let us pray for a realization that if we put our full dependence upon the Lord, trusting in Him for guidance and wisdom, He will not fail us; we ought to pray for a realization that His everlasting arms are ever ready to encircle the soul that turns to Him for help; and should pray for implicit faith in His promise that if we subordinate everything to the will of the Father, then all things needful in this life, "shall be added" to our eternal interests.

You often hear that there are many ways to the Kingdom of eternal peace and prosperity, that we can take any one of them and get there. I, for one, believe that there are only two ways, that the one leads to eternal life and the other to eternal death. To give you my reason for believing that there are only these two ways, I shall read from the never-erring Book:

Matt. 7:13, 14 -- "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."

How many ways? -- Just two: the right way and the wrong way. These two ways have always been with us and ever will be as long as both the natural and the spiritual man live on earth. They came into existence with the first two brothers that lived on earth -- Cain and Abel. Those that travel in the strait way are the Abelites, and those that travel in the broad way are the Cainites. There are many travelers in the latter because all that come into this world start out in it, and most of them ever stay in it.

This is so because to begin with we are born of the

flesh -- "Cainites" by nature. Consequently, before we are born again, born of the Spirit, and thus put into the strait way, we all travel in the broad way. Besides, the broad way is broad enough for one to carry all that sin offers, but the strait way is narrow enough to exclude everything but the traveler himself. Consequently, comparatively speaking, there are few who choose to deny the desires of the flesh and to forsake sin in all its forms. Naturally, then, many travel the "way which seemeth right unto a man," although "...the end thereof are the ways of death." Prov. 14:12. Now let us turn to the gospel of John, chapter 9:

John 9:39 --"And Jesus said, For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind."

Here we are told that Jesus came for judgment which will cause those that see, to become blind; and those that are blind, to see! The expression is peculiar, but the meaning is clear: He came to change every human being -- to reverse everyone's situation -- those that are blind to see, and those that do see to become blind.

Let us now judge our own case. If our vision at this moment is the same as always, then plainly enough His coming has not profited us as yet: If on His visitation we assume that we already see and know enough, have need of nothing more, and cannot be convinced otherwise, then we shall become blind forever, will never be able to see what He wishes us to see. But if we admit that we are blind to spiritual things, that our eyes need to be opened, then Christ will make us see. Such will by experience say, "Once I was blind, but now I see." The blind man's experience must be ours.

John 9:40, 41 --"And some of the Pharisees which were with Him heard these words, and said unto Him, Are we blind also? Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth."

If you say you see, and still continue sinning, then you yourself become responsible for your sin. But if you do not see, He will make you see, so that you may quit sinning.

John 10:1 --"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber."

Do you want to get into the "sheepfold"? If you do, you must get in through the "Door." If you gain entrance in some other way, eventually you will be cast out into outer darkness, there to gnash your teeth. From these alternatives we all must make our choice.

John 10:2 --"But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep."

In verse 9 Christ said, "I am the door." Connect verse 9 with verse 2, and you will see that those who enter in through the Lord's way are the only ones whom He acknowledges as shepherds of His flock. The Lord, therefore, implies that there are unauthorized shepherds herding His sheep.

John 10:3 --"To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out."

The porter, the one in charge, opens the door only to those who have complied with the requirements for admission. In other words, the Lord is plainly telling us that no one may dodge the porter's inspection and forever get by. And yet in spite of this warning, and in spite of the fact that to go through the door is even easier than to climb over the fence, some choose to take a chance stealing their way in -- pretending to be in the "faith" thus getting into the sheepfold and hoping to take over or to get a following. It is, however, not possible to induce God's true sheep to follow them for they know the true Shepherd's Voice.

Only those who gain entrance through the Door and to whom "the porter" (the one through whom the Spirit of Prophecy is manifested) opens are the authorized shepherds whose voices God's sheep hear. All such shepherds call the sheep by name: They are well acquainted with their flocks because they are intensely interested in them, and they carefully lead them in and out.

Here the student of present Truth will note that by this illustration Christ points out that the only shepherds that He recognizes as His are those to whom the "porter" opens the Door and invites them in. The student will also note that all others are branded as imposters. And the sheep that hear the false shepherd's voice, He declares, are not His sheep.

John 10:4 --"And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice."

Since His sheep know not faces, but know voices, then, those who pay attention to faces and who cannot differentiate between voice and voice are sure to be misled by self-appointed shepherds. But those who give heed only to the Voice, the Voice of Truth, are gently led in for shelter and out for green pastures. God's people are not bothered with faces, but they do give earnest heed to God-appointed voices uttering Truth.

John 10:5, 8, 10 --"And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers.... All that ever came before Me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them.... The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."

God's sheep are thus carefully led in and out, both to shelter and to "meat in due season," to present Truth. The "goats," though, those who dodge the porter while entering, must, of course, do so while coming out, too. Consequently, they cannot be led by God's appointed shepherds. Let us turn to John 14 and read but one verse.

John 14:6 --"Jesus saith unto him, I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me."

From this we see that Jesus is the only way to the Kingdom. The idea, then, that there are many ways whereas there is but one Jesus, and that they all lead to the Kingdom Eternal, is only a "hum of a humbug" that unsanctified hearts like to listen to. They are of those who are dodging the porter at the "Door," of those who know that their deeds cannot stand inspection.

If we are to have a home in the Kingdom, we must never be like them. We must know the worst of our case. We must never say that if "so and so" gets there, we will, too. It may be true that if "so and so" were to get there, we all would, too, but "so and so" is not getting there. We must not, therefore, play the fool by making "so and so" our example. We must follow the Lord through His Truth, the Truth that makes us free.

As there is but one right Way and but one Door, and as all Christians do not see alike and do not walk together, could it be that we are all wrong? all going in a wrong direction? -- No, that could never be as long as the Lord does not forsake the earth. Indeed not, for He must have a people in whom to confide His Truth and by whom to save those who choose to go His way. So, those who choose to go some other way will in the end discover that the Devil, not the Lord, is behind them, and that hell, not the Kingdom, is ahead of them.

We should do well to discuss for a few minutes the qualifications which a shepherd must have in order to pass the porter's inspection. I may use a few illustrations, perhaps only two or three.

You remember that there was a child by the name Samuel who early in life came to walk in "the Way," and therein he was trained. Now think on what happened: One night Samuel, you recall, was suddenly awakened by a Voice. Supposing it to be the voice of Eli, he quickly jumped up from bed and went to inquire of Eli. Of course Eli was surprised, but he calmly said, "I did not call you. Go back to bed." Since there was no other person but Eli around. Samuel was certain that the elderly man had called him. Nevertheless he obeyed and straightway went back to bed.

Before long, though, perhaps as soon as Samuel had fallen asleep again, the Voice called the second time. You know that Samuel could easily have then said to himself, "That old man must be dreaming. Here he is calling me again. But I won't be bothered with him any more; I'll just let him holler all he can." Samuel, nevertheless, as quickly as before hurried to his master's bed, only again to hear the words, "Go back to bed, I did not call you!" Still a third time he heard someone calling, and just as willingly and as respectfully as before, he went to his master's bedside the third time! Eli finally perceiving that the Lord must have been calling the child, therefore instructed Samuel what to do. And what did Samuel do? -- Exactly as he was told.

Had Samuel not been as willing, as respectful, and patient as he was, do you think he would ever have come to hold the highest office in the land? -- Of course not. There was nothing else but the saintly qualifications of character which Samuel demonstrated that night that promoted him to the office of prophet, priest, and judge.

Do we still wonder why Samuel was called out of bed three times in succession and why he and Eli were disturbed in the night? -- For two reasons: (1) To prove that regardless of the inconvenience, Samuel would not hesitate to arise when called, and that he would not become angry, that he would not "sass" Eli. (2) The Lord wanted to help Eli; He wanted to prevent the possibility of Eli's concluding that Samuel was getting out of place and questioning his ability to discipline his own sons. Had Eli not been given the opportunity to know for certain that the Lord talked to the child, he then could have easily concluded that Samuel was conniving against the sons of Eli. But providential circumstances being as they were, Eli certainly knew without doubt that God had a message for him. There was no room for doubt.

Boys today, as in times past, are anxious to get somewhere in life, yet millions of them fail to reach their goal and many ruin their lives. They want to become great men, but they fail to even make middle men. And the reason? -- It is simply because they overestimate their own powers, and underestimate God's power. They know not that with God there is no failure, and that with Him "they can get places."

You boys and girls lend yourselves unreservedly to God. He needs great men, and He can make you such. When you learn God's way and become a responsible boy or girl as did Samuel, God will not overlook your zeal, integrity, and sincerity. He will give you something great for your reward. Yes, you will then indeed be great.

Ancient David also was a young boy and nothing more than a common shepherd. But he was a good shepherd, the best in the land. God saw that he was mindful of and faithful to his duties, and so He determined to make the boy a king over His people. Indeed, when a person does one thing well, it is likely that he will do another thing just as well. David was as good in his duties as was Samuel in his. That is why he was lifted from the sheepfold and placed in the palace.

I am thinking of another boy, a young boy in his teens -- Joseph. The Lord saw something in him that He could not find in Joseph's brothers. Not only was he his father's favorite son, but he was God's favorite, too. God had in mind something great for Joseph -- greater than the world could ever think of. To prove himself

trust-worthy Joseph had to first become a slave. He had to be trained for the big job.

So the way Providence worked, it was that his brothers sold him to be a slave. Just then he recalled what the Lord had promised him in a dream -- that besides his brothers, even his father and mother were to bow down to him. Can you imagine what a splendid opportunity was his to curse God when he saw himself on the way to slavery? He might have said, "Why should I serve a God that promises glory but instead gives humiliation, hardship and isolation?" But Joseph did as wisely as Job: By sanctifying God in his heart, he in effect said, "Though He slay me, yet in Him will I trust."

Joseph quickly reconciled himself to his situation, confident that his father's God knew all about his troubles. Thus his slave masters, the Ishmaelites, immediately recognized that they were in possession of a fine slave, a slave that they could sell for a good piece of money. How do I know this? -- I know it because the Ishmaelites took him straightway to a man who would buy nothing but the best, to the richest man in Egypt, to one that could pay the price. Rich men, you know, do not buy cheap things, neither do salesmen take cheap things to them.

Even while in grief, Joseph must have demonstrated his ability to serve, and must have shown great respect to his slavemasters while on the way to Egypt, because then it was that the peddlers found out the worth of their captive, and then realized that they could sell him to someone who wanted something good and that could pay the price. Potiphar, too, soon found out that Joseph was in all respects trustworthy.

Thus it was that he became Potiphar's number 1 man. Even Mrs. Potiphar fell for him. It was at this juncture, you recall, that he came to the climax of his graduation test. Passing the greatest test of his life, he graduated from the house of Potiphar, then from the prison house, whereupon he was promoted to Egypt's throne, the world's greatest. In promotion or in demotion Joseph gave God the glory and did his honest best. At every thing he was put to, he was second to none, and thus he became the greatest among all earthly living.

As to the real secret of his success you will find in one simple principle -- firmness against temptation to sin, and faithfulness to duty: "Ah! I cannot do this wicked

thing. I shall sin neither against men nor against God,” was his answer to temptation.

This is why Joseph was great in his father’s house, in the hands of the Ishmaelites, in the house of Potiphar, in the prison cell, on the throne of Pharaoh, and in all the world. This is why all the ancient world bowed down to him.

From these biographical facts is seen that the simple principles which brought success to Samuel, to David and to Joseph, can doubtless bring success to all of us. And remember that success begins right wherever you happen to be, whether in the temple courts, in the sheepfold, in the yard of a slave master, in the prison house, or in the king’s palace -- makes no difference where. You need not run to catch success, but you do need to bend down and pick it up. Yes, indeed, success drops from the sky, but to pick it up you must bend down very low. This you must do if you wish to really succeed in anything.

Right now the Lord is advertising for at least 144,000 life-savers, with headquarters on famous Mt. Zion -- a greater post than was held by Joseph. Will you be one of them? There are greater opportunities today than ever before. Why not venture into something in which there is no chance-taking? Anyone can succeed if he is willing to pay the price.

In view of these never-erring alternatives why is it, pray tell me, that young people today are so careless and indifferent? Why is it? They are not bad boys and girls; they are born with the same nature as those of any other generation. In fact, those on this hill are good boys and girls, but they need to be born again, born through the Spirit -- changed, made to see.

Young people are naturally blind to spiritual things just as newborn kittens are blind to material things. The young need to be taught the spiritual way of life, they need to have the sin-craving nature pried out of them, and a sin-hating nature instilled into them.

The parents who have already been made to see, need now to awake to their duty. They need to educate their children in the way of Christ as they need to educate them in the way of society. This they can do only by precept and example.

Our greatest Exemplar came from Heaven to earth, walked and worked with men three decades, died and arose again. This He did in order to change men, to recreate the image of God in them and to give them life for evermore. If these boys and girls put forth the necessary effort to make something of themselves, then we certainly ought to happily help them reach their goal.

You, men and women, came on this hill, not because somebody brought you, but because you thought it your duty. You nevertheless, brought with you these little ones. So it is that you came through the “Door,” but the boys and girls came in your luggage, as it were. And now, if they are to become permanent members in this “sheepfold” they too, must pass examination. You see, they are going through their struggle now just as you adults went through yours before you came here. And as somebody put forth effort for you there, in like manner you now must put forth effort for the youth here.

We need young evangelists, converted boys and girls to work for the unconverted, to exert the right kind of influence over other boys and girls. This is essential because converted boys and girls do more for their own age than can the older people. Then, too, we need young men and young women to help the boys and the girls in soul-winning work -- not to preach to them, but to lead them.

You saw how the boys hung around D_____ when he was here. If D_____ had been converted, if he had made up his mind to serve the Lord as did David of old, imagine what a power for good he could have been! He could have been a marvelous influence for good among the young. He could have become a great leader. He had as great a chance as any of the great men of God in times past. But the opportunity D_____ had, every boy and girl has. One converted boy or girl can turn a bad and unprofitable conversation into a worthwhile one. One good example can do more than a sermon.

Boys and girls, there is an opportunity for you to get down to business with God, and to make up your minds what you want to be. You do not have to be a preacher to begin with, but you can right now be social evangelists. You boys and girls can turn other boys and girls away from their foolishness, from their unwise acts and evil conversations. Others will follow your example. What a great opportunity is yours if you will only avail yourselves of it!

We are longing to see you boys and girls have a good time. We are tired of imposing restrictions upon you. You just establish our confidence in you, and you will thereby free yourselves from rules and restrictions.

If you show us that you are determined to be what Samuel and Joseph were, we will not have to worry about what you do or where you go. Yes, establish our confidence in you, and you will never be troubled by us. It is only through someone's confidence in you that you can gain anything anyway.

Joseph and Samuel did the essential thing. They put their whole hearts into whatever they did. All the great men in the world do and that is why they are great. Whatever you boys and girls do, really do it. No fooling about it. In the end of each day you should be able to say, "My work was almost perfect, and my deeds unquestionable." This you can do. Go to the "Door," and tell Him your needs and your trials. Say, "Lord, my trials are Your trials. I will not let them trouble me any longer. I will put my heart and soul into Thy work."

Do this, boys and girls, and you will see things amazingly different. You will see that your ways of the past were ways of foolishness. You will say to yourself, "Was I not a great fool to do that and the other?" I know what I am talking about. I am telling you this from experience.

Why do many travel in the broad way? -- Because there you can be anything. But on the narrow way, you must be something really great.

A number of boys and girls are no longer with us because they were determined to continue in the broad way. They may get some satisfaction there, but they are headed for a great test, and for a great loss, too. Unless all who have not been "born again" come to themselves as did the prodigal, they will go all the way to the end of the road. And what then? -- The devil behind and a great precipice ahead. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Why continue in the fool's way?

Better not pass up your opportunity while it is knocking at your door. Take the "straight way" and stay in it, and you shall have prosperity and contentment all the days of your life. You shall neither want nor regret. This peace of mind you need. Why not take it?

A CHRISTIAN

Could I be called a Christian
If everybody knew
My secret thoughts and feelings
And everything I do?

Oh, could they see the likeness
Of Christ in me each day?
Oh, could they hear Him speaking
In every word I say?

Could I be called a Christian
If everybody could know
That I am found in places
Where Jesus would not go?

Oh, could they hear His echo
In every song I sing?
In eating, drinking, dressing
Could they see Christ in me?

Could I be called a Christian
If judged by what I read,
By all my recreations
And every thought and deed?

Could I be counted Christlike
As I now work and pray
Unselfish, kind, forgiving
To others every day?