

## TENTH SOUVENIR REPORT

Discourse by Pilgrim Brother B. H. Barton. Subject: "KEEPING THE HEART"

The question naturally presented itself, what our theme should be—what shall I talk about this afternoon? And I thought of the various topics we might discuss. I thought we might have talked about Moses, and might have talked about Elijah, and might have talked about the wheels within the wheels, and might have talked about a great many things, but finally decided we would spend the afternoon talking about you. I thought the best plan would be to select some passage of Scripture where the Lord had you in mind when he put it in the Bible, and to take that as the basis for our study. We want you to feel, therefore, that whatever we have to say is addressed to you. We do not want you to apply it to somebody else. I always like to impress that thought on the mind. I remember not a great while ago I was giving a discourse on the subject of pride, and a good brother, whom I believe is here this afternoon, came up to me at the close of the meeting, and said, "Well, Brother Barton, there were some helpful points in that discourse, and while you were talking I happened to think that my wife was here, and I turned around to see whether she was taking it all in, and she was sound asleep." I said, "Brother, I am almost inclined to give it over again for your benefit." I realized that while the brother said it apparently with a little humor, yet there is always a danger in that direction. We are inclined to apply these things to someone else and fail to make a personal matter of it. So we have selected a text, as we said a moment ago, that God had you in mind when he put it in the Bible—you individually, personally—and I trust this text: will mean more to you personally when we get through.

'Having decided to talk to you, the next question was, from what standpoint should we discuss you. I have wondered whether we ought to talk about your knowledge, or about your ability, or about your wishes, or about your hearing, and I decided that the best thing would be to talk about your heart. This is the most important thing you have, and the most important thing I have, in one sense. And then I wondered what we should say about the heart. I wondered whether I ought to tell you how good I thought your heart *was* a year ago, or how the influence of your heart on your life impressed me when I first met you, but I thought, no, I will make it a present day matter, and I will talk about keeping our hearts today. So we have chosen as our text the very words our good brethren here have put above our heads, :Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life.' \_

In the Word of God the heart is very often used synonymously with the affections, the intentions, the motives, the desires. Remember, for instance, how this is

illustrated in the words of the Apostle Paul in Heb. 8:10, speaking about the age to follow this more particularly; he tells of the method the Lord will use in that time, and says that God will put his laws in their minds and write them in their hearts. The thought of putting the law in the mind would imply that intellectually, mentally, we must grasp that law. God is going to give them a knowledge of the law. But he did not stop there. He is not only going to put the law in their minds, but after they have a mental knowledge of God's requirements, they will come to love him more and more, and thus God will inscribe these same laws in their hearts. The same thing is true with us today, dear friends. If we are going to properly appreciate any of the things which God has for us, it will not be merely sufficient that we have a mental knowledge, but we must also get a heart appreciation of such things.

Our text also helps us to realize what an important thing the keeping of the heart is—"Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life." These words would impress the thought upon us that it is the keeping of the heart that is going to settle the permanent destinies of our life. If the Scripture had read like this, "Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of glory," it would not have meant quite so much. It would have implied that according to the keeping of our hearts would be the measure of glory we would get; and we might think, Well, even if I fail to keep my heart, I will get some glory anyway, though I won't get the highest glory. If the Lord had said, "Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it is the position which I will occupy in the kingdom," that would indicate another thought, but it would not imply anything quite so important as the way it reads; but as it is, it gives us the thought that all our hopes for the future, our future life, depend on the keeping of the heart.

One might say, I would not have thought that all was going to depend upon our hearts, upon our intentions, upon our motives, upon our desires; it would seem to me that the Scripture ought to have said, "Keep thy knowledge with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life " or why doesn't it say, "Keep thy position in the church with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life," or why doesn't it say, "Keep thy relationship to thy brethren with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life"? But no, the prophet passes by all of these things, and says, "Keep thy *heart* with all diligence." We realize all these other things are important. The Lord forbid that we should say a thing that in any way would be detrimental to the interest you take in the proper knowledge of God's Word. We realize our position in the Body of Christ is very important. We recognize in our life a great many things are very essential. But, dear friends, in your case and in my case, the most essential thing of all is keeping our hearts with all diligence, because if we keep

our hearts with all diligence, then even if we are deficient, even if we do lack in some of those other things, it would be all right; but on the contrary, if we would strive with all the power of our being to keep the other things, and would neglect to keep our hearts, it would profit us nothing. It would be like a man who contemplated buying a house. He saw a house he thought might suit him, he went to look at that house, and found its location just right, and he found the number of rooms thoroughly satisfied him, and he found himself perfectly contented with the arrangement and size of the rooms, etc., but after having all of these other conditions just as he would like, he found the house was not for sale. What good would all the other conditions be to him, and how much benefit could he get from the proper arrangement of the rooms, how much good could he get from the location of the house, or anything else, if the house was not for sale? And yet, dear friends, if the house had been for sale, then all the other things would have contributed their share to make it the house he was seeking. And the same thing is true with us. If we have the proper knowledge of God's Word, if we properly appreciate our privilege of meeting with God's dear people, if we use to some extent the opportunities we have in the Lord's service, and then, dear friends, we are keeping our heart with all diligence, then all of these things are going to count; but if, to some measure, we are paying attention to all other things, and ignoring the thing referred to in our text, then all of these other things would be of no avail.

So many have the thought that our intentions, our motives, matter very little, just so long as we do the right thing, as they express it. But we want to say that the truth is, our intentions, our motives, our desires, occupy a more important part in the development of our Christian character, our hope for the future, than any other one thing. It is not a question so much about what you do, it is a question about what you want to do; it is not a question even so much as to what you are, but it is a question of what 'you are trying to be—what you desire to be; it is not so much a question of what you have accomplished, it is a question of what your intentions were along these lines. And if our intentions are all right, we are all right; if our intentions are all wrong, we are all wrong.

The same writer from whom we have chosen our text says, in the 43rd chapter of Proverbs, 7th verse, that as a man thinketh in his heart, so is he. The Lord is judging us, and he is not judging us by our knowledge; he is not judging us by our activities; he is not judging us by the amount of service we have been able to render; he is not judging us by our regularity of attendance on meetings; he is not judging us by the esteem in which we are held by our brethren; he is not judging us by any of these outward things at all; but he is looking down into this heart —this heart of which our text says, "Out of it are the issues of life," and he is judging

from that heart whether we are fit or unfit for a place in his kingdom—yea, whether we are fit or unfit for a place in the Universe at all.

One might say, Well, how can we tell what our intentions are, then? I want to find out whether my intentions are right, whether my desires and motives are correct. Now, how can I find out whether they are right or whether they are wrong? Well, dear friends, we must remember that in the full, accurate sense of the word, we cannot always tell positively. In other words, we find that our judgment is imperfect; we can discern whether our hearts are right, but if our hearts are wrong, these hearts can readily deceive us, us, and therefore we find today that in the world there are millions and millions who are approving their own course, and yet God has not approved their course. We remember how the Apostle Paul expressed it in his letter to the Corinthians. He tells the Corinthian brethren how it was a small matter whether he was judged according to men's judgment—"But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment: yea, I judge not mine own self. For I know nothing by myself; yet am I not hereby justified. But he that judgeth me is the Lord." In one of the translations it is rendered a little more accurately, "For though I know nothing against myself, yet am I not hereby justified: There is one that judgeth me, even God." And so, dear friends, we recognize that according to the word of the Apostle Paul, one might feel that his intentions were all right when they were really wrong. We might be deceived with respect to our intentions, and that is why we want this afternoon to try to find out something of the philosophy of this matter of keeping our hearts right, pure and good, because we recognize it is such an easy matter to be deceived and deluded and thus be led astray.

Let us remember, dear friends, that the Lord pays a very secondary attention to what we do, as we have already expressed it. The Lord is looking at our hearts, at the motive that prompts what we do. And we find a great many things that would be perfectly right of themselves will be condemned by because there was not the right motive behind them. This thought is expressed, you remember, by the Proverbs again, 21:4, where we have this statement: "An high look, and a proud heart, and the plowing of the wicked, is sin." You say, is there anything sinful about plowing? It is not the act of plowing that makes it sin; plowing is perfectly right and proper. But the man who plowed the field with a wrong spirit in his heart, the man who plowed his field with wrong intentions, the man that plowed his field thinking angry thoughts, the man who plowed his field to earn money to spend in selfish and worldly ways—that man's plowing is sin. The sin is not in the act of plowing; the fact is, the plowing, from an agricultural standpoint, might have been better plowing than this other man over here, and yet it might be this man who was

doing the best plowing was committing sin, and the man who was doing the poorest plowing was approved of God. But God was not looking at the act of plowing; God was not looking at the straightness of the furrows, but at the motive, the spirit, that was in the heart of this man, and that is why such an inoffensive act as plowing itself became sinful because of the sinful motives of the man who was doing that work.

We find that even things that are religious in themselves become sinful when the wrong motive is behind them, in accordance with the statement made in the 66th chapter of Isaiah, 3rd verse, "He that killeth an ox is as if he slew a man." Back in those days, the Jewish people were commanded to offer oxen as sacrifices; it was part of the requirement of the Jewish law, and here we are told that a man who offered such sacrifice is the same as if he had killed a man. It evidently was not because he had committed some terrible crime in the offering of the ox itself ; it was a religious duty; it was an act that ordinarily would have brought the approval of God and the Lord. But why was it that that man was classed as a murderer when he offered that ox? The people of Israel had begun to stray from God and wander away from right paths, and the result was that too frequently when a man was about to offer the ox, it was the spirit of pride, show, and vain-glory that prompted it. Therefore that man offered the ox, not because he was desirous of showing God how much he was willing to sacrifice for him, but the man offered the ox in desire to impress others with how much he was willing to do in the service of God; he wanted to make a show of his piety, and from that standpoint God condemned his course; it was sin.

You may stand up to offer a prayer, and it may be the most eloquent prayer offered at this convention, but if the intention of your heart was to impress the people here with how much more ability you had in prayer than some of the other brethren, if your idea was to attract attention to your gifts along that line, then I could tell you God never heard that prayer. That prayer was sin in his sight, the intentions were wrong. It may have been that the prayer itself was very accurately expressed; it may have been that every thought in that prayer was in thorough accordance with God's Word; it may be you really expressed the sentiments of many hearts here better than anyone else could express them, but if the motive or desire you had was to try to shine, as it were, before the congregation, then, dear friends, God never heard that prayer from you. As you offered the prayer, the other hearts that responded to it, God recognized it as their prayer; they were praying, but the one that offered the prayer was left out, and it was attributed to all the balance because their hearts were right and this one was not.

Thus, dear friends, we see the importance of having our hearts right in all these matters. Well, then, it becomes a serious thing with us if our hearts' intentions are going to be recognized by the Lord to such an extent as that. The fact is that the intentions and motives of the heart count for more than the real act itself. You may do an act that was wrong in itself, it may be very wrong, it may be so wrong that it even would shock some of the others around you, yet if in your heart there was the purest intention, if in your heart the desire was to honor and glorify God, then no matter how others condemned, God does not condemn you; you are approved of God because he saw the intention. But contrawise, if we do something that is perfectly right in itself, something that would receive the commendation and approval of all around us, and yet there was another spirit behind it, a desire for pride, a desire to make a display, then God did not approve of that; though others may have approved, God condemned.

And now with this thought before our minds, we want to continually judge ourselves, and we want to go to the Word of God, the Book which God has provided to teach us how to judge concerning our intentions. You remember it says in Heb. 4:12, "For the word of God is quick and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and a sprit and of the joints and marrow and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." We find, then it is the Word of God that will enable us to discern the intentions, the motives, the thoughts, the desires, of our hearts, and it is only in proportion as we go to God's Word that we can find out about these things.

If, on the other hand, we are going to guess at the matter and say, "Well, I believe I am as good as so and so, and I think if he is a child of God I must be too," or "I just think that," or, "I know, my heart is all right, I know my intentions are good," then, dear friends, it is probable that you are not going to the Word of God in order to judge of the intentions and motives of the heart; your judgment is not merely worthless, but very erroneous and misleading. But if on the other hand our judgment always clings to the sentiments of the Word of God, then it will not lead us very far astray. We recognize, therefore, that the Lord is really the one that is going to judge us. He is the one that can read the intentions of the heart accurately—just like the next verse expresses it, "Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and open unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do." While we recognize that God is our judge, we have some judging to do also, and we do not want to wait until our course is run, then have the Lord point out to us the many mistakes we have made. We want to know them now so we can correct our course, so we can rectify the course we have been following to any extent that may be out of harmony with the will of God.

We recognize, therefore, dear friends, that when we want to get right, the thing is not to begin with our words, and not to begin with our deeds, but with the thoughts, intentions, motives, and desires of the heart. It does not matter whether it is something that has really occurred, or whether it is something that the possibility of its occurring has come to your mind; the thing is, to see that our heart is always kept pure in connection with that. To illustrate: Suppose, the thought comes to you like this—you say to yourself, Now I know very often the Lord's people have not shown the spirit of the Lord in their dealings with their brethren; there have been many cases where brethren and sisters have acted unkindly toward some of the other brethren, toward some other sister; suppose that should happen to me some day. For instance, suppose I should be misunderstood and misrepresented, and I would be mistreated; now how will I take it if anything like that ever happens? Some of the Lord's people will say, oh well, that will never occur.

Dear friends, you don't know what may happen. Don't let us be of the class that tries to deceive ourselves and think, well, we will not have any trials. I would not want to think I was not going to have any trials; I know I need those trials; they are very essential if I am ever going to get into God's kingdom, and you need those trials, and therefore we do not want to deceive ourselves into thinking, Oh, there are no trials. There are trials, and there are going to be more trials, dear friends. In the next place, do not think that when these trials come they will always be something soft and nice, something we can easily grapple with. You may anticipate when the trials come they are going to be just as unexpected as can be; they are going to come from unexpected sources; they are going to manifest themselves in unexpected ways; and they are going to be accompanied with other unexpected incidents in your life. Now then, dear friends, we do not want to blind our minds to the fact that such trials are coming, but we want to know now, how shall I meet those trials? Here comes the thought, I want to meet these trials with a pure heart; I want to have the right intention, the right motive, the right desires in my heart when these trials do come. We cannot always say positively we will be sure to win the victory. We want to win the victory, we are going to try to win the victory; that is the highest thing we can hope for. We can try to succeed; and if we try, then we have done it in God's sight. The Lord, as we have said, does not look at the thing itself, but at the willingness; and if the willingness is there, then you are counted as having done it, even though you have not done it as an actual fact. For instance, if in your heart there is willingness, desire, to go in the colporteur work, then you are in the colporteur work. You say, No, I am not. Just wait until you get up above and look on God's colporteur list and you will see your name there. The fact is, God is looking at your willing heart, and if in your heart there is that willingness, then you are one of God's colporteurs. But you say, Wouldn't it be

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very easy for a brother or sister to deceive himself or herself in that respect; wouldn't it be easy for them to say, I am willing, when they were not willing at all, but only merely making that an excuse for not being willing? Of course, dear friends. But the Lord can see that. That shows the intentions were not pure in the heart. You may deceive yourself into thinking your intentions are all right, but it is not a question whether you deceive yourself in the matter, but whether your intentions really are all right. And the fact is this: If your desires really were to enter the colporteur work, you would have been in it if by any possible means you could have gotten in it. If you are not in it, one of two things is true: it either was utterly impossible, or else you were not really willing. There is an old saying that, where there is a will there is a way, and I do not think there is any other respect in which that is more true than with a consecrated Christian life. Dear friends, if you want to do a thing you will come pretty near doing it; if you don't do it, it will be only after you have put forth the strongest efforts to gain the victory in that matter.

We know there is a great deal of half-hearted interest in the Lord and in his work. There are a great many, I am afraid, who make believe they love the Lord, make believe they are interested in him, but the very fact they do not put forth the efforts they might is an evidence that their zeal and determination is not whole-hearted--is not prompted by the kind of a heart that our text talks about—a heart that is kept properly by the wisdom which God grants. For I know, dear friends, a great many of the Lord's people make this mistake. We will imagine for instance some brother will say, Well now, I have decided to go into the colporteur work. There are some obstacles in the way, but I have left the matter in the Lord's hand. If the Lord removes those obstacles, I will consider that that is an evidence sent to me that the Lord wants me to go into the colporteur work. Dear friends, that shows a heart with something lacking. Why? Because .if you have the proper zeal in your heart, if the desire of your heart is what it ought to be, you would not wait for the obstacles to be removed, you would try to get in the work even with the obstacles there, or try to remove them yourself. You know that is where our faithfulness to the Lord comes in. He says, "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne." That does not mean to him that has not anything to overcome because the Lord has taken all the obstacles away, but it means the one who, even though obstacles are in the way, has overcome them, and by God's grace, he has come off a conqueror in this race. And so, dear friends, don't wait for the obstacles to be removed. Let us be in deadly earnest in this matter. That is the thing that surprises me so much: I find too many of God's dear people, those who have come to a measure of appreciation of these things, not earnest enough. Why, dear friends, if some of you would put the same zeal into these matters that you put into your daily business, for instance, just think what a change it would make in your life! And

yet, in the very nature of things, these things ought to come ahead of our ordinary business affairs.

I know that in every one of our cases there are obstacles in the way. With some the obstacle is health. They say, My health is so poor I do not know how I can possibly do much in the Lord's service, because of my poor health. Well, we know that sometimes health is a barrier, an obstacle that cannot be altogether overcome, yet I am sure there are a great many cases where brothers and sisters have overcome that barrier. How many cases there are of those who have entered the colporteur work, who felt their health was an insurmountable obstacle, and, in God's providence the entering of that work has been a blessing to them in such a degree that their health is better today and they are able to stay in it permanently I think very often there is a test. The Lord may permit our health to be poor in order to try us, to show whether we are earnest enough that we are going to make the attempt anyhow, good health or poor health. If we are willing, then we will find ourselves getting over difficulties that would almost seem impossible for us to have gotten over.

I remember the case of one good brother; I think he is probably here today; but I don't suppose he will feel any offense if I mention the incident and how it impressed me very much at the time, though I did not say anything about it, but I really feared it was going to have something of the same influence over the brother I had seen in another. I remember the case of one brother several years ago who came to me and said, Brother Barton, my wife and I want to go into the colporteur work, but there is that one obstacle in the way. I think he mentioned something about health, but he did not think that need be a permanent obstacle. But, he says, there is another thing that is a real obstacle to us: I have some property and this property stands in my wife's name, and I feel I will have to dispose of the property. I feel my circumstances are such that I cannot rent it out, because no matter what tenants I would get, they would likely damage the property to some extent, so I feel I must sell the property. But, he said, I cannot get what it is worth. It is worth so much more than the best price I can get. If I could sell that property I would go into the colporteur work.

I remember the thought I expressed to the brother at the time. I said, Brother, if you want to go into the colporteur work, the thing to do is to get rid of that property for what you can get for it. We do not want to try to get into the Lord's work without it costing us anything; we want to be willing to make a sacrifice. And I remember the thought came to me at the time, that that good brother, if he does not get to the place where he is willing to lay less stress on getting the value of his property, probably the Lord will have to grant him some other experiences of a painful kind.

I am afraid that that is the way with a great many of us. I am afraid that today we are on dangerous ground, and that we are on dangerous ground because we have not had our hearts full of the zeal that ought to be there. Our hearts must be full of zeal, and earnestness and faithfulness to the Lord, and if they are not, you are going to be tripped up sooner or later.

You need not say, Oh, I don't think anything could turn me. I have heard so many brethren and sisters giving their experiences at various times —"Oh, I never could believe anything else; I never could look at things in any different light." I want to say that you never made a greater mistake in your life. You can only see things in this light as long as you are striving to live up to that light. As long as you are keeping your heart with all diligence, then you are on safe ground, but when you do not, you are on dangerous ground. Now I know that it is an easy matter for us to be deceived regarding our intentions when we are in a convention like this. Here we have probably a thousand brethren and sisters around us, and we are infused with the spirit of this gathering, as we hear the songs in which we all engage, and as we hear the discourses, and it makes one's blood tingle sometimes, and makes one feel, Oh, I know whose side I am on, I know I am on the Lord's side! I know that too, dear friends, but let me tell you that is no proof at all. It is an easy matter to think your intentions are all right in a convention, but now put it another way: Before you came to this convention, have these things had the prominent place in your life that they have had in this convention? Do you think about these matters as much, that is, as far as your time permits you from the ordinary home cares, and so on—do you give as much thought and take as lively an interest in these matters when you are in your home as you do here? Are you just as active in going around through your town, giving out pamphlets to those who have ears to hear as you are now in sharing some of the little opportunities of this convention? You see, dear friends, there is the matter: If the intention is right we will not wait for a big convention to be zealous and earnest. I know it is so in the pilgrim service; I know we get to places where we meet brethren who are overflowing with zeal; their earnestness seems to be indescribable. Probably some brother will come to you, and say, Brother Barton, I am so glad to see brother so and so take such an interest in the meeting; he has not been to a meeting for a year. And we think, Well, I know about where that brother is. I know of a case in Philadelphia, my home city, about eighteen years ago. There was a brother there who was as active a worker in connection with the conventions as any brother there, and he had been to a very few meetings before the convention, and probably a few more after the convention was over, and that was all. We do not want to be deceived in this matter. We do not want to get the thought, I know I am on the Lord's side, look at my zeal and interest; I enjoy the company of the Lord's people, and that is proof to me that I am

all right. But dear friends, it may be that you are losing an opportunity to show loyalty to the Lord in your home life, in your home town, and therefore do not be deceived into considering this proof of your devotion to the Lord, if you have not been equally devoted to him at other times when there were not a thousand other brothers and sisters around you to help you and to encourage you and to cheer you up.

So we can see that if the intentions are right, we will put forth the best efforts we are capable of to carry out those intentions; and if after we have done our best to carry those intentions out we fail, the Lord will never count that against us, because the Lord knows we want to do right, want to do his will; we wanted to glorify him in our hearts, even though the flesh has been incapable because of weaknesses, of thoroughly responding to the desires and intentions of the heart.

Now then the question next confronts us as to when it is that we are to keep our hearts with all diligence. Is it some special point of time? We say no, dear friends. We find that there are a great many people of the world who learn to some extent the secret of keeping their hearts, who never come into covenant relationship with the Lord, who never come to know the Lord and his goodness as we have come to know them. The word translated "keep" here is the word that really conveys the thought, in the original tongue, to guard, and so the idea really is, we are surrounded by enemies, and these enemies are trying to get in our heart. We want to keep them out. We want to guard our heart lest they put some of their poison into it.

You remember how our Savior expressed it in that sermon on the mount (Matt. 5:8), "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." Now we know we cannot be actually pure. It is out of the question to expect to live a perfect life today, but we can have the heart pure, we can have the intentions, the motives, the desires pure, and that is the thing that the Lord expects of us. Now we cannot be satisfied with that. We will not be satisfied until we awake in his likeness, because we want more than our hearts pure; we want to be entirely pure, we want to be perfect—absolutely. But the Lord realizes that you cannot be in this age, so he is not expecting that, but he is expecting the heart will be pure, and he tells us that the one whose heart is pure is in a blessed state — "Blessed are the pure in heart."

Now, dear friends, whether we have got to that place or not, we want to keep our heart, we want to guard our heart—even if it is not pure today, we want to guard our heart so that impurities do not get into it; and if we have gotten our hearts into the condition of purity, we want to guard them in order that, having once got them

pure, impurities may not return and our hearts may not be found in the same condition in which they were originally.

Who are those enemies that we are to guard our hearts against? They are very numerous. The first of them is, for instance, pride. I do not suppose there is any enemy more dangerous than pride, and we recognize that if pride once gets into the heart, it is such a serious matter of expelling it. When pride has been expelled from the heart, we have got to keep continuously and unwaveringly on our guard lest that pride reenter and get in its damaging work again. Remember, too, that if our intentions are right, it will manifest itself in our thorough efforts to keep our hearts pure.

I think this was so well illustrated by the Lord Jesus. You remember, for instance, how he was tempted of Satan; how Satan brought those temptations to him at the close of the forty days in the wilderness, and you remember how it was that our Savior so positively withstood Satan. The Scripture says to resist the devil and he will flee from you. Jesus did resist the devil and he fled from him, just like the Scriptures say. The Lord Jesus withstood the adversary so positively that he never came back again. We find that the adversary endeavored to attack Jesus in various ways thereafter, but he never attempted to lead him astray in those ways he tried before. Apparently Satan would say to himself, That man is so deadly in earnest, I see I will not be able to do anything with him; I see all my time is wasted; what will be the use of my trying to ensnare him? He is too determined in his zeal for his Heavenly Father. Now that ought to be our spirit. I am afraid when the adversary comes to us with some temptation, we hesitate—

Oh, well, I must gain the victory." But the adversary notices the hesitance, and thinks he will try again, and maybe he will get in next time; and in a little while he comes after us again, and we have the same temptation in probably a little different form; he realizes we are not resisting him as earnestly and positively as we did.

Now along this line of pride we know the adversary would be delighted if he could only implant in our hearts a measure of the spirit of pride. Now we must resist him, we must guard our hearts—keep them with all diligence—if we are going to keep pride out. How shall we do it? When a thought of an envious or critical character, whatever it may be, comes into our minds, as, for instance, Well, I don't think they are paying enough attention to me here; it seems to me they do not make enough fuss over me; they haven't called on me to offer a prayer yet, to such a thought you should say, "Get out of my mind, I will not have such a thought there; I am not going to think about such things at all." The thought will come back. Resist it

again, and keep on showing your determination along those lines. Suppose that thought keeps on coming back? Keep on fighting it. But suppose it keeps on still? Keep on fighting it, dear friends. The fact is that the Lord wants us to persevere. "To them who by patient continuance in well doing, seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life." We recognize that eternal vigilance will be necessary. You did not suppose that you should fight for a few years, then stop, did you? You did not suppose that by this time you would be able to give up the battle and lay your armour down? Not yet, dear friends; the Lord's work has not been accomplished in you yet, and you should be determined to fight on as long as the Lord leaves you here. If he leaves you here thirty, forty or fifty years, keep on fighting. You say, I don't think it will be that long. No, I do not think it will either, but we want to have the determination that we shall keep on fighting anyhow; we want to be of that class who are so determined to be loyal to the Lord that we could say to him, Dear Heavenly Father, I am glad the time is short, I am glad that soon this work will all be over, but, dear Heavenly Father, I am so in love with your spirit, I am so determined to have more of that same glorious character in my heart, and in my life, that if you say the only way to get it is to leave me here fifty years or longer, why I would want it even then, and I am determined to struggle to the end of fifty years in order to gain more of that Christlikeness. We want to guard our hearts against the encroachments of pride. Try to keep the pride away; discourage every thought along the line of pride. We realize that all we have to do is to encourage a little bit of pride in our hearts—we won't even have to encourage it to enter, but just be taken off our guard, as it were, for a little bit, and pride will enter and get in its deadly work, and at last we will have proved ourselves unfit for a place in the kingdom.

Then, too, let us remember that in order that we might successfully battle with this enemy it will be absolutely necessary that we be always in the attitude in which we are ready to humble ourselves. You see, we cannot keep pride out unless we let humility in, and we find that it costs something to humble ourselves. I find that there is probably nothing much more difficult for the child of God than to humble himself. We can tolerate humility when it is thrust on us. When humility is put on us we will receive it, but to humble ourselves, to really and voluntarily take some position that will put ourselves in places where we are likely to be despised, places where we are likely even to be misunderstood, places where we will be sometimes criticized, places where we will be sometimes mistreated, and so on, that, dear friends, is the thing which costs something, and yet that is the spirit the Lord wants. It seems to me that the child of God wants to learn to be small.

If you remember, the Scripture compares the Christian to the jewel—" They shall be mine, saith the Lord, in that day when I make up my jewels." You know one of the features of the jewel is its size; it is very small; and I am afraid that too many of us do not want to be small; we want to keep our size, we want to be somebody; we want to be of some importance, as it were. Friends, how we ought to rejoice that in God's providence, circumstances would combine to-put us in the most humble places imaginable; how we ought to rejoice in that humiliation, realizing that he that humbleth himself is the one that in God's due time will be exalted, if he takes that humiliation in the proper spirit.

It is not merely pride we want to keep out of our hearts. There is distrust. It seems to me that it is so hard for God's people to have the confidence, the faith, in the Lord, that they ought to have. They are continually distrusting him; we will find so many who will talk about their families in this way: they say, Now, I have some children, and if I consecrate my life to the Lord, what will that mean? What will be **my hope of dealing with them** in the future? What will be my hope of dealing with them in the age to follow this? and so on. I would be willing to consecrate if it was not for, that. Dear friends, there is distrust and lack of confidence in the Lord. Do you expect that the Lord is going to show you why he wants you to take every step before you take it? Then you are not of the faith of Abraham, if that is what you are anticipating, because that was not Abraham's way. When God told Abraham to go out in that distant place and offer up his son, his child Isaac, Abraham did not say, Well, Lord, why do you want me to do that? Why do you want me to offer Isaac? Why, Lord, don't you remember that you told me in Isaac shall my seed be called? Now if I offer up Isaac, this will really conflict with the other promise you made. Abraham did not say a thing about it; he did not question God. He must have thought to himself, If God says it is right, it is right, and I do not care much about what it means, because it will be all right in the end. I know that. I know God would not ask me to do anything unreasonable, anything that was not right, therefore I will be obedient.

Now, dear friends, is it possible that we are living in a time when we enjoy so much more light than Abraham, and yet we have not that measure of confidence where we will say, Now Lord, show me how it is to be, then I will take the step! Dear friends, let us put our hands in God's hands, and say, "I will trust it all to you; I do not know just how it will be, and, furthermore, Lord, I do not suppose if should tell me. I would **fully** understand r gaspall, but, dear Lord, however it is going to be it is a right, and I am going to show you what confidence I have in you by taking a leap in the dark." In one sense of the word, that is what it means. We do not know what consecration is going to bring to us, or how it is going to affect

us, but we know it is going to be all right anyhow, and we are willing to have it cost us something. We say, "Lord, I am willing, I am willing," and the Lord accepts that willingness.

Now, dear friends, in regard to the way your consecration will affect your relationship to your children—Do you think the Lord would want you to consecrate yourself in any way which would mar your eternity, or in any way effect injury to your relations, to your loved ones, in the life to follow this? The very fact that the Lord asked you to take that step shows it is all right; the only thing is, to be willing to take the step, and after you have taken it, remember the Lord will show you the reason for it, the philosophy of the whole matter; but the Lord is not going to explain it first so you might take the step; he wants you to take the step on faith—just like in all of these matters. You cannot appreciate the glorious reward offered to us today. If for one minute we could have a glimpse of the glory that is beyond the veil, there would not be any question about our faithfulness; all the trivial things would be laid aside, our own preferences, likes and dislikes, where we thought we were treated unjustly, whatever it might be, would be put aside, the glory would so overwhelm us. The only difference is, it is there but you have not seen it. It is there just the same as if you had seen it, but you have not seen it yet. Now cannot we take God's word and bank on it, more than if we actually saw the thing ourselves? So then, dear friends, we do not want to have that distrust.

The same thing is true on other lines. This matter of the **time** of trouble it seems to me, many of the Lord's people are thinking too much about. It is not your business or my business to worry about the time of trouble, or about our own arrangement; we can leave this matter in the Lord's hands; we need not give much thought to these things. Trust the Lord more and think less about individual arrangement on such matters. You ought to have confidence in the Lord in all of these matters. We don't know how it will be; even if things would be the very worst in the next two years it is all right; no matter how much we had to go through or how much to lose, or how much it cost us, it is worth it all; so let us exercise more confidence in the Lord, more faith in this matter. I have known so many cases of brethren in the last couple of years who have been trying to run away from the time of trouble, and I have kept a sort of count of those cases, and I do not know one single exception to the rule that where they have tried to run away from the time of trouble they have run into it ahead of time. And if any of you are thinking of that, if you are thinking of the arrangement of your business, whatever it may be, in order that you might make some better provision for the future, give up all those plans. Let us exercise

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more faith in the matter and we may be sure it will be better for us. If you manifest a lack of faith it will be to your injury and to the injury of your loved ones as well.

But not only do we want to keep this distrust out of our hearts, as well as pride, but there is another thing we want to put out of our hearts, this spirit that becomes weary in well doing. You know how the Apostle expresses it there in the 6th chapter of Galatians, 7th to 9th verses: "Be not deceived; God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap; for he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the spirit shall of the spirit reap life everlasting. And let us not be weary in well doing, for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not." We recognize, therefore, dear friends, that it is an important thing, this matter that we be careful lest we be weary in well doing, and there are a great many ways of being weary in well doing. Some of the Lord's people are weary of going forward, they want to stop right where they are; there are others weary of well doing in the sense that they are tired of being where they are. They would like to draw back a little, as it were. We do not want to have any of this weariness. I think it has been very often this weariness in well doing that has led to many of the ideas regarding the closing of the door, and the sealing of all of the elect, that are held by a great many of the brethren. We find so many brethren who are anxious to know about the closing of the door; they want to know if the door is going to close this year, or next year. Dear friends, I do not think we need worry very much about the closing of the door. The thing is to be just as zealous as if you thought the door was going to close tomorrow, or as if it were going to close the next day, and keep on that way until it is closed. Even after it is closed, I think those whose hearts are right will try not to think it is closed. I believe if the door is closed, there will be some who will become weary in well doing and who will heave a sigh of relief and say, "I will not have to do any more work." But there is another class that will feel differently about it. They will go and rattle the door, as it were, and see if they cannot get it open, and see if they cannot do something more for the Lord; and I think that is the spirit we want—the spirit that is not so anxious to have the door closed, but is anxious to do all we can for the Lord while it stands open. And we know that the adversary may deceive a great many people into thinking the door is closed when it is not. It seems strange that it is so, but there are various cases like that. I know various cases of brethren who had given up the volunteer work saying, "All the work is done here; it may be there is work other places, but there is none here, it is all done." They do not realize what they are losing. Let us keep on working as long as we can, even after the door is closed; let us keep on trying to do work after it is closed, then we will be on the safe side; we will get a blessing out of it even if it is too late for others to get a blessing.

These are some of the things that are trying to get into our hearts, and we want to keep them from entering. But you will notice, dear friends, it says, "Keep your heart with all diligence;" it does not say, "Keep your brother's heart." It seems such an easy matter for us sometimes to think, If I could just have charge of that brother's heart, I tell you I would just keep it straight; I would keep the right things in it and the wrong things out of it. But, dear friends, you cannot do that. You cannot keep my heart and I cannot keep your heart. That is our own business. Furthermore, even the Lord does not keep our hearts. It is, "Keep your heart"; the Lord has his work to do, but we have our part to do. It would be just as wrong for us to expect the Lord to do our part as it would be wrong for the Lord to expect us to do his part; we realize that it would be impossible. He will do his part faithfully; now let us do our part.

But then, dear friends, let us remember that in keeping our hearts it is a work of diligence. "Keep thy heart with all diligence." That does not mean, How did you keep your heart last year? Didn't you do pretty well then? That is not it. Diligence means keeping at it, perseveringly, patiently, determinedly. We want to be diligent in this matter today, and then we want to be diligent in the same matter tomorrow, and want to keep it up, and that is the important thing. The important thing is not to make sure we will get justice in the world. We do not expect that. The important thing is not to expect we will be appreciated in the world. We do not expect that. The important thing is not to have everything turn out just the way we would like it. The important thing is not that we should have an easy time. We do not expect that. What we do expect is that we will keep our heart with all diligence. It is not keeping our business, or our money, or our reputation, or our ability, or our time—or whatever it may be; these things we have given away. We can give them all away to the Lord and the glory of his cause, but keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life.

How can we keep our hearts? In various ways. We recognize prayer will help in keeping our hearts. Furthermore, as we recognize our brethren and take note of their loyalty and devotion to the Lord, it will help in keeping our hearts. And we recognize, furthermore, we can keep our hearts by continually endeavoring to put away all those things that would be contrary to the spirit of the Lord, not only in the heart, but in the flesh, as well; and we can keep our heart daily by feeding, encouraging, nourishing those good qualities which God has put in them and which we want to remain there. We recognize that our hope of eternal life is going to depend on this matter. The thought will be like this: every time we do anything right, it is like taking a step in this direction; and every time we do anything wrong it is a step in the other direction. We recognize that the only things that can draw

away are the intentional things. If you do something good, but it was done rather spontaneously, you did not mean to do it especially, then that is not specially commendable. If, on the other hand, you did something bad, and did not really mean to do it, it was not particularly your intention, and it is nothing against you. But, on the other hand, everything that comes from the heart, whether good or bad, counts for or against us. Therefore every time we think a good thought, every time we struggle in our minds over the spirit of pride or the promptings of selfishness, whatever it may be, we gain a victory—we take a step in the right direction. And if we keep on, by and by we will have a perfect heart. But, on the contrary, if we do something that is contrary to the Lord's spirit, we are taking a step in this direction, even if it be such a small thing as a little thought—just thinking one thought that is contrary to the will of the Lord—and encouraging it is a step in the wrong direction; it is taking us to a place where our case will be hopeless, where our character will be hopelessly bad; whereas, if we had done right, we would get to the place where our character would be hopelessly good. Do not think it does not matter if I did entertain that bad thought a while ago; it doesn't make any difference. That thought has an influence on your character; it might seem like a small amount to you, but no matter how small it is, it is that much in the direction of a bad character and might cause you to be ultimately lost. But on the other hand every time we encourage good thoughts, something ennobling, some blessed thought, that thought is helping us in the right direction, nearer that goal of a perfect character where the Lord at last may be able to say to us, "Well done, good and faithful servant, thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things."

Dear friends, I do not want to do much more than to impress on your minds the words of this text, "Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life." If the issues of life do not prove very favorable to you, it will be because you did not guard your hearts. We can all do that. You do not have to be rich to do that; you do not have to be learned; you do not have to be recognized as somebody of ability to do that; the humblest, the poorest of us can do that. I know that as we try to thus keep our hearts, the Lord will show us how to keep them and where the danger is, and at last the Lord will bring us off conquerors—yea, more than conquerors through the one who loved us and who set an example before, as well as made up for our shortcomings by the merit of his precious blood. "Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life."