

THE VALUE OF VISION

"Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he." Proverbs 29:18.

The central word in this verse is "vision." The word means sight, and refers both to the thing seen and to the power to see it. The Hebrew word which is translated "vision" refers to the revelation of God's will which we have in the Bible, and especially to the knowledge of that will. The Hebrew word which is translated "perish" means to cast off restraint. Where there is no knowledge of what God reveals the people cast off restraint. Where there is no vision the people go to pieces. One of the symptoms of this disease is anarchy. That which causes anarchy is that the people themselves have gone to pieces. Where the people lack clear vision of God, that is, are ignorant of His revelation and unacquainted with His will as it is declared in His Word, they lack the principle of cohesion and continuity, they go to pieces. The only law they recognize is that of their own desires. They are actuated by the desire to gratify their own inclinations and ambitions, irrespective of the influence of said gratification upon others.

That people have cast off restraint is obvious to anybody today. The most abominable things are done shamelessly. The highways are not safe. Murder, adultery, robbery, inhumanity, etc., are so common today. So-called Christian people do not blush to do the things which their fathers and mothers rightly considered vile. Ignorance of what God has revealed has ever caused people to cast off restraint. It was true of the people in Israel; of the people before the Reformation; of the people in England during the eighteenth century; and of the people in our nation and various other countries today. Where there is no vital Christianity people cast off restraint. When people do away with Christianity they sound the death knell of morality. Moral dynamic is always the outcome of spiritual vision. Where there is no spiritual vision morality goes to pieces.

Due to the truth of our text, the hope of the world is to get people to see that God is good and that He is concerned for their welfare.

We have visions of the fact that we have to plow and plant in the spring, if we have anything to eat in the winter. Therefore, by working in harmony with God's law, we are kept alive, and the world is kept going. Men simply work in harmony with the fact that God Almighty appointed that we have to plow our fields and plant our crops in spring if we have anything to eat in the winter. That's vision, so we work with God.

Every great achievement of the past has resulted from a great vision.

1. Alexander the Great had a vision that he'd like to conquer the world. He won his first battle when he was eighteen. He was king of Macedonia when he was twenty. He sat upon the shores of the Aegean Sea and wept that there were not other worlds to conquer, and his sword had drunk the blood of the conquered world, and he crept into his coffin when he was only thirty-two years old. That was his vision. He bent every effort to the achieving of it.
2. Caesar had a vision. He reached the banks of the Rubicon which nobody had ever dared cross without the consent of the Roman Senate, and if they did it meant war. He stood and counted the cost and cried out, "the die is cast." He leaped in. His soldiers followed him, and that act changed the history

and the geography of the world. He had a vision, whether the vision be commendable or not, a large number of people will meet with the results of its accomplishment.

3. Columbus had a vision.

He said, "The world is round." "I can sail west and get east." They laughed him to scorn, they ridiculed him, they expelled him from their institutions of learning, and yet he sailed west and discovered this great continent. Today we count it an honor to name our streets, our institutions, or our cities after him. He had a vision.

Everything you see is the result of someone's thoughts.

1. Raphael had a vision, and he placed his immortal cartoons upon the walls of the labyrinth, and he painted the Madonna which has never been surpassed by any man who has ever mixed paints.

2. Edison had a vision that it would be better to light our homes with electricity than with a tallow dip, so we have the electric light.

3. Alexander Bell had a vision that it would be better to talk over the wire than to yell to a fellow.

4. Morse had a vision that it would be better to sit down to an instrument and make it tick, tick, tick, and every tick a human thought. So we have a telegraph.

5. Robert Fulton had a vision that it was better to sail by steam than to spread the sails and let the wind blow them. So as his boat went up the Hudson River, it revolutionized navigation.

6. Howe saw a woman threading a needle. He saw a better way than that and invented the sewing machine. All these things that we have are a benefit to humanity are because of a vision. God Almighty knew that the world would be far better off with Christianity or religion, so He entered into the covenant with Abraham. If we could have gotten along without it, He wouldn't have given it to us.

What are some of the reasons why people have no vision?

1. Because of the disrespect they show the Son of God.

Those who say that Jesus is divine but so was Buddha, Confucius, etc. Whoever holds such views shuts heaven's vision out from the people. The men that have moved the world and set her going Godward, the men of blessed memory, have been men who believed that God was God, and Jesus Christ was the Son of God, and that salvation was to be had by repentance and faith in the shed blood of Jesus Christ. They held up the bleeding form of Christ as God's ultimatum for sin and man's hope of keeping out of hell.

2. Because of the irreverent criticism that many make of the Bible.

They talk as though the Bible was the worst enemy of the human race rather than the best friend. Some critics would like to see the Bible go. It rebukes their sins. They imagine that if they shut their eyes and stop their ears, and say they do not believe it, that that makes them immune to any punishment. Please remember that a fact remains a fact whether we believe it or not, and one's unbelief does not change it one iota.

We need not worry for God's Word stands as immutable, unchangeable and irrevocable as it is possible for anything to be. Man might as well blow his breath against the vestibule of a street car and try to run it that way as to think that he can put God's Word aside. God's truth towers over all and stands as immovable as Gibraltar. It is not our business to defend or apologize for His Word but to preach and teach it and drive it home.

Some years ago, Dr. Lorenz, the great Austrian surgeon, came to this country to operate upon J. Ogden Armour's little girl in Chicago. She had congenital dislocation of both her limbs. The hip joints, that is what they call a ball and socket joint, sometimes in an accident or in birth will slip out, causing a dislocation of the hip. Dr. Lorenz came here to teach what they call bloodless surgery whereby he would slip the head of the femur back in its original place and hold it there until the muscles knit and the skin held it in place.

So he came to operate on the little girl. Armour gave him \$50,000 to make her roll a hoop like other girls. Then he took her back to Vienna with a retinue of servants to keep her under his care during the period when the muscles and ligaments were reuniting. Of course, when other mothers heard of the noted surgeon they wanted their children to walk again too, although they didn't have \$50,000 to give, and so they sent their children to Chicago to have Dr. Lorenz operate on them, and he did, and did it free. He taught other doctors in Chicago to do it, and they were constantly working to make the children walk.

Down in Missouri lived a German woman. She had a little boy who had a dislocation of one hip. She wanted him to walk, so she went around to collect money. They sent him up to Chicago, but before she had collected the money Dr. Lorenz had finished his stay and had gone back to Austria with the little Armour girl and her retinue of servants. She was so disappointed.

Dr. Cleland McAfee was in the seminary at that time. He was born in this town and knew this woman. He sent her word to send him up there to him and he took him to the hospital and Dr. Ochsner operated on the little fellow. He put his leg in a plaster cast and they kept him there. When he got able to walk Dr. McAfee was going to take him home and so he went to the hospital to get him. He told him to take a good look at his room and then say goodbye to the nurses who had been so kind to him. The boy said, "Is the doctor here that made me walk? I want to see him."

As they went down the marble stairway he said to the boy, "George this is such beautiful marble. That's one of the prettiest stained glass windows in Chicago. Look at it." He said, "Is the doctor here that made me walk?" He said it again when they got to the station. Then after they got on the train he asked the same thing again. When they got to the little Missouri town the mother of the boy was at the station to meet them. The boy got off the train and went running to meet his mother. The tears trickled down her cheeks and she said, "George, you can walk just like other boys, can't you?" He said, "Ma, I wish I could see the doctor that made me walk."

I would have you get a vision of the Jesus who has saved our souls and kept them until now. I simply want to help you see Christ.