

WILL YOURSELF A BETTER TOMORROW

"Commit thy works unto the Lord, and thy thoughts shall be established." Proverbs 16:3.

A survey was taken in the United States that involved putting a number of questions to thousands of people. One question was: In which are you most interested, your present or your future? It was reported that ninety-four per cent answered that they were merely enduring the present in order that they might finally reach the future. Would you have thought that so many people were in such a miserable state of mind? Anyway, in the human mind the future is out there full of hope.

The past is often discolored with unhappy memories and we are glad to get away from it. The present is full of responsibility, difficulty, struggle, and sometimes pain, so we have trouble living with it. But the Lord has provided a future where the past may be forgotten and where the present may be assuaged, where our highest hopes and dreams and anticipations may come to realization. It is a great land to which we travel -- the bright and glorious land of the future. This future is ever impinging upon us; we are just one step from it. Your future is extraordinarily important, for that is where you are going to spend the rest of your life -- in the future.

Would you like to have a better tomorrow? Of course you would. All of us have the desire for better tomorrows, yea, wonderful tomorrows. A better tomorrow is possible for every one of us. The greatness and the power of God are within the reach of every one of His children.

Why do some people live day after day, and year after year, without any of these glorious tomorrows ever really eventuating for them? Why are better tomorrows elusive for some people, like some will-o'-the-wisp on which they cannot lay hold? Gilbert K. Chesterton said that some men live and die with all their sweetness still within them. Some people live all of their lives without ever releasing the tremendous capacity which God built into them. This is a pity; this is a sin against oneself; this is a tragedy, for locked within each of us is a far greater person than has ever appeared on the surface.

How then can your better tomorrow be brought to pass? Well, of course, the real wisdom which answers this question is to be found in the greatest Book of Wisdom ever written. It is found in an especially wise part of that Book -- in the Book of Proverbs. Solomon, the writer thereof, was led to see, believe and acknowledge the existence of God. He was led to believe in the absolute dependence of man upon God. He knew that man was under obligation to revere, love and adore God, and to seek His guidance and direction in the path of duty. He came to the conviction that man ought to acknowledge God in everything he does. With this strong conviction and under the inspiration of God's Spirit, he wrote: "Commit thy works unto the Lord, and thy thoughts shall be established" (Proverbs 16:3).

I. The Precept.

"Commit thy works unto the Lord." It is well to begin with the realization that there is no intrinsic value in things. They only possess a relative value. All things depend upon their seasonableness. The Bible speaks of a "word in season." If there can be words in season, there can be words out of season also. A word which is not in season is merely a right thing in the wrong time and place.

This word "commit" literally means "roll." So, the injunction means, "Transfer thy burden to the Lord, cast upon Him all that thou hast to do; do all as in His sight, and as an act of duty to Him." He who rolls all of his affairs over upon the Lord will find Him ready to take charge of them, and to carry them on to a proper completion. But it must be remembered that if one thus commits all to Him, he no longer chooses for himself as to what the outcome should be, but he says with confidence and delight, "Thy will be done."

Our text teaches that we should ask God to direct us what to do. Frequently we are at a loss to know what we should do. Although there are some plain cases of duty, which cannot admit of a doubt as to what ought to be done, yet there are many difficult cases, in which we are uncertain whether we ought to act or not to act thusly. In such cases we need to be directed, and ought to acknowledge our dependence on God for direction and determination. Our wishes may not be in conformity to His will. David first determined to destroy Nabal, but God altered his determination and had him to spare his life. Joseph's brethren first determined to slay him, but God changed their plan. They then resolved to leave him in the pit to perish, but God altered their determination. Finally, God made them decide to sell Joseph into Egypt. Man may decide to do this, or to do that, but God may deem it best for him to do something else. Because of this constant influence which God exercises over the minds and hearts of men, it is proper that men should ask Him for His direction in all matters and cases. Men should ask God what they should do both in general and in particular.

Committing our works to the Lord implies our asking His assistance, as well as direction, in all we do. After we have obtained His direction, we still need His constant assistance in the doing of our duties. Our sufficiency is in Him. Without Him we cannot do what and as we should. He is the One Who gives us the right thoughts and attitudes. We are under obligation to do what He has commanded in an acceptable manner. Let us commit our works to the Lord, and rely on Him for strength to do what He has commanded. If we attempt anything in our own strength, we need not be disappointed if we fail, but we can perform every duty through the divinely-given strength. As Paul said, "I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me" (Philippians 4:13).

Committing our works unto the Lord implies our leaving the consequences of what we do to His disposal. God does not require us to succeed in our works, but He does require us to do our duties, and then leave the results with Him. After we have received directions from the Lord as to what we should do, and after we have done our very best to follow them, we still must wait upon Him to determine what shall be the fruits of our desires and labors. This waiting implies submission to His willingness for us to succeed or for our hopes to be disappointed, depending on which will bring Him the most glory. Our duty, as children of God, is quite clear: "Commit thy works unto the Lord." Dedicate to the Lord everything we are doing. None of our works, which would be acceptable to the Lord, can prosper without His strength and blessing. Let us place all of our works in His hands.

II. The Promise.

After we have done our duty in committing our works unto the Lord, the promise is, "And thy thoughts shall be established." What does that promise mean? It means that our plans will work out; our hopes, our dreams, our ideals, our objectives, and our goals will be realized; our thoughts will be translated into actualities. The true Christian, who commits his works unto the Lord, always has a desire to obtain the particular object for which he labors, but, at the same time, he has a supreme desire that God will overrule his desires and efforts for His own glory. The promise which God makes in the text is that He will grant the supreme desire. Whatever God's children do with a sincere and supreme desire to glorify the Lord will result in their efforts for Him being approved and in their desires being gratified.

Those who commit their works unto the Lord may rest assured that He will establish their thoughts according to His promise, because He wants their thoughts, desires, designs and actions to promote His glory. They want Him to direct them in what they do, and He does direct them. They want Him to assist them in what they do, and He does assist them. They want Him to supervise what they do for His glory, and He does in order that this end may be achieved.

Repeatedly God has fulfilled this promise by establishing the thoughts of those who committed their works unto Him. From time to time, God directed Abraham where to go, and what to do. Abraham obeyed, and his thoughts and works were established. God directed and assisted Moses, in a great and arduous undertaking for which he did not think he was qualified, and his labors were abundantly successful. God directed Jacob where to go and what to do, and he received the divine blessing. When Solomon came to his father's throne, he acknowledged his personal ignorance, weakness and insufficiency to handle the reins of government and manage the great interests of so many people, and asked for His direction and strength.

This is an astonishing promise. It is worth its weight in gold. Commit yourself and what you are doing every day into the hands of God. As you begin to put this idea into practice, you will visualize a better tomorrow. This is very important. In psychology we learn that there is a very strong tendency for the long-held mental picture to come to pass. One of the great laws of psychology is the power of the realizable desire or wish. If you develop and hold in your conscious mind a picture of yourself as a weak, ineffective person, then after a while the unconscious will take over this image and produce weakness. If, on the contrary, you print on your mind, and hold there until it sinks into the unconscious, a picture of yourself as a child of God, who is achieving, creating, acting and living constructively, you will become precisely that kind of person. Such is the immense power of visualization. It is for this reason that the intended impact of God's Word is to cause you to see yourself not as just weak and sinful, but as a child of God into whom He keeps on pouring His power. God built capacity into you. When you see or realize that, you must then dedicate it, or give into God's hands everything you do.

What would you like to have in the future? Do you know? If you don't know, you will never get it. In order to attain anything you have to know what you want to attain. You have to have a mental picture of it; you have to pinpoint it; you have to objectify it. Then your whole nature will work toward it. The trouble with so many people is that they have only an obscure or fuzzy notion of what they want their future to be. They want to go somewhere, but they don't know where they want to go. Well, you will never get anywhere if you don't know where you want to go. Imagine yourself walking up to a desk or window and saying to a ticket agent, "I want to go some place." He asks, "Where do you want to go?" You say, "I don't know, but I want to go. I want to go somewhere." That may sound silly to you, but I have heard people complain about never getting anywhere. I ask, "Where do you want to get?" Frequently the answer is, "I just don't know." Well, how can you get where you want to go when you do not know where you want to go?

You are potentially greater than you think. So you do not have to go through life being negative, defeated, inferior or inadequate. "Commit thy works unto the Lord, and thy thoughts shall be established." Will yourself a better tomorrow. Of course, if you are to have a better tomorrow, you must separate yourself from those attitudes and behaviors which prevent better tomorrows, such as self-centeredness, prejudice and sinfulness. These unhealthy conditions in the heart and life cast shadows over the tomorrows, so that the sunlight of a glorious future never comes. You must love God supremely in order to commit your works to Him. None except those who have the love of God in them want Him to direct them what to do, assist them in what they do, or overrule whatever they do which would prevent the doing of His will and the accomplishment of His purposes.

Christian friend, what are your dreams? What are your hopes? What are your objectives? What are your goals? What are your ideals? Do you truly want to realize them, or do you just say that you do? To accomplish great things you have to go all out for God. Commit your works to Him, and commit your thoughts to Him, and your dreams for tomorrow will be realized, for you will be in His blessed will. Nothing gets so much in the way of better tomorrows as wrong thinking and wrong doing. There is One Who can lift you out of both. There is One Who is really an expert in tomorrows, and that is Jesus Christ

our Saviour and Lord. He is the greatest bringer of better tomorrows. Better tomorrows are His specialty. He is the One Who turns our sunsets into sunrises. If you will go along the way with Him, there will never be a day, no matter how hard or how tear-filled it may be, that does not lead to a better tomorrow. Will yourself a better tomorrow.