

GOSPEL SERMONS

as

Sam P. Jones

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SERMON TEN

WE NEED A CONSECRATION

Second Corinthians, seventh chapter, second verse.

“Receive us: we have wronged no man; we have corrupted no man; we have defrauded no man.”

“We have wronged no man with our tongue; we have corrupted no man by our example; we have defrauded no man in our business transactions.”

The cry of the ungodly world, when you preach the pure truth, is, “Puritanism, transcendentalism,” etc. There is nothing more dangerous to Christianity than to hear that cry. My idea of Christ and Christianity determines what my life is as a Christian. Someone has said that we should so live that every word of our mouth and every act of our life would become a maxim for universal rule; that is, we ought never to do anything which the world by adopting would not be made better and happier and purer. Christ Jesus is our pre-eminent exemplar, one which, if followed, will make us enjoy a heaven on earth. That is, we would make a new earth which would be:

A NEW HEAVEN

This morning's lesson helps us out of a great many of our difficulties and problems. In the text Paul was asking admission into the kingdom and communion of saints. “On what grounds,” they said, do you demand so great a privilege?” Then came the answer: **“Because we have wronged no man; we have corrupted no man; we have defrauded no man.”**

If I were asked what is the great trouble in Christendom to-day, I would say, America has too many churches — not too many buildings, understand you, or too many organizations. But I will illustrate:

Bro. Tudor, here, as pastor of Centenary Church, is pastor, not of one church but of two. It is hard enough to be pastor of one church, but when it comes to fulfilling that relation to two churches the labor becomes onerous. What I mean is, that while on the church roll there are the names of all, there is another and inner church where are to be found only those who are true spiritual Christians and in alliance with the kingdom of Jesus Christ.

No man is safe until he is within the walls of that inside church. There are members here in Bro. Tudor's church who, while they have made the same vows, are as different as night and day. While some are spiritually minded, there are others who, while nice, genteel and pleasant people, never thought of longing for a better life. They are satisfied as they are. Oh, let all in your church be of one mind, one heart, of one accord. They will all talk alike, think alike, do alike, and pray alike.

But the question now is not how we have lived heretofore, but how we may enter the inner circle. Can you answer, as did Paul, "**I have wronged no man with my tongue?**" What a great thing it is to be able to say that. The hardest thing to obtain is:

A CONSECRATED TONGUE

But a perfect Christian man bridleth his tongue. There is not a wild beast that we cannot tame. We can tame the lion, although we see the venom of death in his eye; or the serpent, with the poison of death blowing from his mouth; but there is a little member in our mouth that we cannot tame. "**Let the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be acceptable unto Thee.**"

A wicked, uncontrollable, godless tongue can never get in the inner circle of Jesus Christ. I have gone into a community and looked on that pale face and could hear the blood drip, drip in the heart, and I asked her what was the cause of this? Who did it? And the answer was an inhuman, cruel tongue.

In one short breath you can speak a word that will stab a character forever. Husband, how often have you wronged your wife with your tongue? Wife, how often have you stabbed your husband by a hasty word? Mother, how often has your child winced and shrunk away from you under the merciless power of your tongue? The prettiest, whitest tombstone I ever saw, and the prettiest epitaph I ever read was when I visited an old friend in Georgia. He said he had lost the best wife a man ever had, and he led me out to the little white tombstone. There were only a few words on it — the date of her birth and her death — and then, underneath, this one line, "She made home pleasant."

Of all the places in the world, home should be the most pleasant; but this can never be without bridled tongues. The wife, as she bends over that pale, waxen face, cries out in the agony of her heart, "Husband, precious, forgive those unkind words." The husband, as he stands by the coffin and looks upon the last remains of his wife, cries out, "Good Father, forgive every unkind word I uttered." My innocent little child runs into my study, where I sit:

WORRIED AND WORN

with writing. It is little five-year-old Bob, or perhaps four-year-old Laura, and he gathers my arm and scatters the ink. Then I turn around and say, "Oh, you little brat!" or "You mischievous little wretch, get out of here!" He straightens up with a look of surprise, turns around and walks out of the room. I try to go ahead with my work, but I don't write five lines.

I say, "He didn't think I will hunt him up and beg his pardon."

I go out on the back porch and there I find little Bob crying as if his heart would break. I take him up in my arms and say, "Forgive me, my little pet; I didn't think."

And the little one sobs out, "Mamma told me not to bother you, but I forgot. I ask you to forgive me."

Oh! If you want to be received into the inner kingdom you must have a converted tongue.

The second condition is that you have corrupted no man; corrupted him by example. Every man is an example for every other man; every woman is a pattern for every other woman. This question of example is a momentous one. I have frequently heard people say a child has crossed the line of accountability. There is no line of accountability.

There are lines of accountability, but not one line. A child of ten years knows that it is wrong to lie, but not that it is wrong to covet. You and I are crossing these lines year by year. There were many things that I would not have been held accountable for doing when I was converted, but that I would be accountable for now. Year after year, and day after day, I expect to improve. A man who never crosses these lines is well satisfied with his life. The man who improves day by day says, "God forgive my ignorance."

There are thousands of people in this city who never cross these lines and go rushing down to destruction. But the trouble is the dams are all washed out. Oh, let every man that loves Jesus Christ pile one on top of another until we can resist the powers of evil that are sweeping over the land. Some of us would be honey-combed, may be, so that the water would go through. But what God likes is:

A SOLID, CONCRETE CHRISTIAN

that will break water wherever you throw him up. Here in this city Christian people ride about in the parks on Sunday afternoon, thus encouraging the beer garden. I know of a minister in a great city below here, and on the same river, who got up in the pulpit one day and took the position that "**Sabbath was for man, and not man for the Sabbath.**" He countenanced baseball, theaters and park riding on Sunday, and the saloon-keepers of the city procured his sermon, published it and spread it broadcast over the land.

Josh Billings said we had "precepts enough to run four inch worlds as this; what we need is some good examples."

Never allow your neighbor to do a thing that is radically wrong because he has seen you do a something that is sorter wrong.

Oh, I hope that Centenary Church will set such an example to the other congregations in St. Louis as will put to blush every church in the city.

The last condition is: Have you defrauded any man in business transactions? Your tongue may be harmonious, your example correct, but to both you must add honest dealing. Can you say, "I have never pocketed a dollar or invested a cent that would not be approved by God! I have not defrauded God, nor my church, nor man!" If so, when you go up and knock at the inner door you will get in. Oh God, baptize us in the works of Thy salvation. Give us a blood-washed throng that will take this city for Christ.

~ end of chapter 10 ~

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