

**THE**  
**A M E R I C A N**  
**NATIONAL PREACHER.**

**A**  
**REPOSITORY OF ORIGINAL SERMONS,**

**FROM**  
**LIVING MINISTERS OF THE UNITED STATES.**

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**EDITED BY REV. F. C. WOODWORTH.**

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• Corresponding with previous volumes.

THE  
NATIONAL PREACHER.

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I.

GOD'S MORAL SYSTEM, SUPERIOR TO THE MATERIAL.

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"And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fall."—LUKE xvi. 17.

THE conception of the Material System is naturally accompanied in the mind by the impression of its permanence. Even the child perceives the solidity and hardness of the objects that surround him; and their power at once so absolutely to uphold and to restrict him, may well seem the evidence of their necessary duration. And as he comes to understand more fully the extent, and structure, and the history of the system, this first impression is naturally confirmed. As he learns how vast the Earth is,—not bounded by the horizon as he supposed, but bearing upon its mighty bosom islands, and realms, and empires, and continents even, with fathomless oceans poured round them as their drapery; as he examines the physical structure of the earth, and drives his drill into the granite bars that lock and interlock beneath its surface, or traces the ridges of rock and iron that stretch across it as its ribs of strength; as he follows backward the many generations that in succession have lived and labored upon its globe, and feels how changeless it has been through all their changes,—how absolutely it is now the same as when the Roman eagles traversed its surface, as when the temple of the Sun was standing in Palmyra, as when the hundred-gated Thebes stretched its stupendous front along the Nile; nay, as passing backward from even this computation he learns through what vast cycles and periods, and into what remote, impenetrable abysses, the researches of the naturalist seem to carry its duration:—and most of all, as rising from this view of the Earth, he learns to comprehend in some degree the magnitude of the System in which it is but part,

## III.

## BECOMING ALL THINGS TO ALL MEN.

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..... "I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some."—I Cor. ix. 22.

If there be a passage in any language worthy to be compared, for the nobleness and sublimity of its sentiments, with the vindication which Paul has made of himself in this ninth chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians, we have not yet been fortunate enough to discover it.

We cannot be insensible to the magnanimous bearing of Aristides "the Just," when defending his pure fame against the jealousy of his great rival Themistocles; deeply are our sympathies moved when we read of men like Galileo and Columbus, wronged and defrauded by those whom they had benefited, standing forth to repel aspersion, and vindicate their own names and achievements; infected with his own deep pathos are we all, when we read the words with which the Earl of Chatham stirred the British senate in defence of his life, spent in public service, against the attacks of men who could not, or would not, appreciate his motives; but not one of these signal passages in the history of forensic eloquence is equal to the chapter now before us, in which, under the necessity of self-defence, the Apostle to the Gentiles appeals to the principles and conduct of his disinterested and noble life.

He had been falsely accused by false men; who, by misjudging his motives and degrading his official character, sought to impugn and degrade Christianity itself; and the occasion demanded that he should step forth from the modest retirement, in which the conscious uprightness of his motives was left with God, and, by an explanation of his own principles, vindicate the spirit of Christianity as attacked in his person. Nor is that man to be envied, who can read this record of self-sacrificing benevolence, this devotion of oneself to hardship, and solitude, and toil, for the good of others, without the generous glow of enthusiastic admiration.

In the one verse which I have selected for my text, we have,

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condensed into a few words, the *object* of his life, and the *means* by which he sought its attainment; which form of expression may serve to furnish the method to be pursued in the following discourse:—

I. THE OBJECT AND END OF HIS LIFE: "*That I might by all means save some.*"

II. THE MEANS BY WHICH HE SOUGHT TO ACCOMPLISH HIS OBJECT: "*I am made all things to all men.*"

The object of the Apostle's life was the salvation of his fellow-men. It is plain that he looked at the human race from a particular point of view. He was convinced that they were in danger; and his desire was to rescue them.

There have been a great many ingenious representations of human life. The world has been described under a very great variety of images. Old Pythagoras, when he was asked what he thought of human life, compared it to the Olympic games, where some came to try their fortune for the prizes; some as merchants to exchange their commodities; some to make good cheer and meet their friends; and others, like himself, were simply lookers-on. Epictetus, another of the old philosophers, in a very striking paragraph, which has been confessedly employed by Mrs. Barbauld as the foundation of a very ingenious essay, compared the world to a great mart of commerce, where fortune exposes to our view many and various commodities, which we may procure by purchase or barter. Others have painted life as a voyage—the revolution of the seasons—a war—a race—a school—and so on, through the whole range of metaphorical illustration. Far different was the view taken by the great Apostle. To his eye the world was a vast wreck, in danger of being broken up by the waters of a destroying deluge. Mankind were in imminent peril of being drowned in perdition; and he was running from point to point, making incredible exertions, *if by all means he might save some*. In the language employed by him at other times, the image, but not the idea, is somewhat varied. Instead of a drifting wreck, the world was as a house on fire, and its inmates in danger of being consumed in everlasting burnings. He shouts to the sleepers; he wakes them out of their slumbers; he rushes to the rescue, "pulling them out of the fire," that *by all means he might save some*. It is evident that he was thoroughly convinced of the fact that all mankind are in danger of eternal ruin. He cherishes no notion akin to the universal salvation of all his race. To him they do not appear to be floating quietly and securely towards a state of indiscriminate happiness. The sharp cry from his lips—*If by all means I might save some*—implies what he felt as to the exposure of all. He was like the wrecker pacing the shore, devising now this means, and

now that, if by all he might save a few out of the ship just ready to founder.

Was this a just and correct view of the world? Was it the fancy of a maddened brain, or the vivid conception of truth and soberness? Whence did the Apostle acquire these peculiar sentiments? Was he a misanthrope, soured and moping? Was he a disappointed man, taking revenge upon the world, by maledictions, for his losses? When he first comes to our notice, a young man in high favor and popularity, a scholar trained in legal tactics, in repute with the priesthood and the people, he has none of those views of life which he subsequently possessed. He is first introduced in history as a persecutor, more intent on cruel slaughter than the salvation of his fellow-men. But a change passes over the whole spirit and tenor of his life. Scales fall from his eyes, and he is enlightened by the Spirit of God to discern new things concerning himself and the world. He feels that he is rescued from the bonds of iniquity and from the jaws of hell. Is he right in the judgment he now passes, that the world lieth in wickedness? Has he grown suddenly less pitiful, and more morose, than when he was hauling men and women to prison, compelling them to blaspheme the name of Jesus Christ? Has his theology just emerged from the cave, or descended in light from the skies? Here we are not left in doubt. The knowledge he had concerning God and his Christ came down from heaven; and the commission given to him at his conversion was to "go among the nations, to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them who are sanctified by faith that is in Christ." Here was his theology. The race in their sins, and for sin forgiveness through faith in Christ, the Saviour. This is Christian theology. This is its characteristic in distinction from all speculations of philosophy, ancient or modern. It furnishes relief from an universal calamity. Whenever we use the familiar words, *Saviour* or *salvation*, we do, in fact, admit all that is declared concerning the lost condition of the human race. Jesus Christ came to seek and to save that which was *lost*. Paul learned to view the world as it was contemplated by his Lord and Master. Nor did he view it as a Fatalist or as a Stoic. He was touched by a more than mortal tenderness towards his fellow-men. His heart's desire and prayer to God in their behalf was, that they might be saved. He who was once ready to persecute unto blood, was filled with the compassion of his Lord, and animated with the hope of saving, at least, some. This now becomes the motive of his life. To behold men ready to perish, without relief, would have tortured him to despair; but there was a way of affording relief, and by the hope of success was he impelled to great exertions. No matter in whose presence he stood, whether the keeper of a jail, a soldier on guard, or a governor, king or emperor, his uppermost desire was to save that

man's soul. Of himself he was forgetful, as men always forget themselves in the excitement of great endeavors for others. "I seek not yours, but you," was the explanation of all his peculiar intercourse with men. To publish the Gospel was a necessity laid upon him. "Woe is me if I preach not the Gospel." To preach the Gospel was his choice. He was impelled to it by the irresistible fervor of Christian love. Others might prefer other pursuits; one thing only remained for him. Preferment in church or state, wealth, learning; all which he himself, in common with others, had once counted as an excellency, seemed unto him now as the very filth of the earth; and were to be counted as loss, save as they bore upon the accomplishment of his grand purpose—the salvation of men. This is the key which explains the whole of his speeches, his travels, his self-denials, his remarkable life. He was an insane man, and nothing short of it, if there was not a reality and a reasonableness in the motive which governed him. It was not at Jerusalem only that men were exposed to the wrath of God; so he fled, as on angels' wings, to Arabia, to Ephesus, to Athens, to Rome, to Spain, to announce the news of a Saviour's mercy. The barbarians of Malta heard him; the Areopagites listened to him with solemn awe; the mariners of the stormy Adriatic were his auditors; those of Cæsar's household were told the tidings from his lips; well nigh every land and every city, from Spain to Arabia, had seen and heard this extraordinary man, who *by all means hoped to save some*. A hero he was, a hero he meant to be, but not as the world counts heroism. Might he not, says he, in this chapter, have taken a wife, if he had chosen? Might he not have received support from those to whom he preached? Was not this the law of God? But if he chose to forego domestic ease, and the support to which he was entitled, that he might the better perform his heart's desire, in saving lost men, were his motives for this to be misunderstood and impugned?

Do not suppose, dear brethren, that my purpose in this is to pronounce a panegyric upon the Apostle. I propose something far more practical than an encomium upon his noble conduct.

He has himself announced, in our text, what was the one end and motive of his life:—To save the souls of men. His whole life, as we have seen, subsequent to his conversion, was coincident with this motive. If he was sane and sober in this view of the world, and in this course of conduct, there is every reason why we should adopt and practise the same. No great change has passed of a sudden, upon the nature of man, to render obsolete and inappropriate the words of Jesus Christ: "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." And if the words of the Apostle, inspired by the Spirit of God, are to be received as a correct exponent of Christianity, then we too should look upon our fellow-men, as he did, in danger of being lost; and we too should be touched by the tender compassions of Christ, and animated by



apostolical fervor, *if by all means we may save some*. All other pursuits are to be held subordinate to this. Not that they are to be abandoned for the one employment of preaching the Gospel; but that they are to be prosecuted in reference to the same end and object which filled the eye of the Apostle. There is a value in those very objects which many pursue for selfish ends, beyond all which concupiscence and ambition ever dreamed. There is a value in gold and silver, beyond all that the most sordid miser ever imagined, as he drops the shining ore into his bags and boxes. There is a value in learning and knowledge above all that was ever imagined by any one who, stimulated by the mere ambition of excelling, has grown gray in midnight study. So of station, power, or influence of any kind; seeing that they may, and ought to be applied to the grand purpose of saving a lost world.

II. But it is time that we pass to the next division of our subject, and consider the means by which the Apostle sought to accomplish the object which was his motive in life. He *became all things to all men*.

And here it will be necessary to make careful discrimination; seeing that what Paul here intended was instrumental in doing so great a service; while the words chosen to convey his meaning may be easily perverted, as indeed they have been by many, who wrest them to their own and others' destruction. Happily the discrimination is very easily made. What the Apostle actually intended is best understood from his own words. "For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more. And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; to them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God but under the law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law. To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak. I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some. And this I do for the Gospel's sake, that I might be partaker thereof with you."—(Ver. 19-23.)

If there be a character in all the world which merits our unmitigated scorn and detestation, it is that of a man who, on important subjects, will trim and truckle in conformity with the company into which he happens to be thrown; who, in one position will give up his opinions, if he has any, to suit one class of people, and in another circle will maintain the very same, and that most strenuously, to suit others. Now, it is almost derogatory to the character of the noble-hearted Apostle to the Gentiles even to say, that his spirit and conduct bore no resemblance to such a mean and fawning sycophancy. Nor is there anything here in conformity with the doctrine of modern Jesuitism, that "the end justifies the means;" that because the object to be attained, to

wit, the salvation of men, was benevolent and of all things important, therefore it was lawful and proper to use all kinds of means to bring it about, even duplicity, fraud, and dishonesty. How strange the solecism! Nor do we mean that the Apostle had no opinions, no principles of his own, to which he attached importance, and which he felt himself bound to defend. All such associations with the conduct of this sincere, upright, and earnest man, do injustice to his language, his life, and his sacred fame.

Opinions he had; preferences he had; a definite creed and theology he had; opinions and faith, than which he would rather have surrendered his life. While this was so in reference to *vital* truths, other matters there were which were perfectly indifferent—indifferent to him, though not to others. The Jew held to opinions and practices to which he attached great importance, but which Paul had learned to regard as altogether trivial and unimportant. He, Paul, was not under the law of ritual observances; he had experienced a better thing than that, even Christianity. Christ had liberated him from that punctilious adherence to rites and letters, which was no better than servile. But freeman though he was, if he might the better secure the confidence and affection of the Jew, so as to save his soul, he would conform to Jewish customs and preferences, so far as he might without the compromise of principle. He was willing to make himself a servant to all, that he might gain the more. Just as a slave submits to all the whims and caprices of his master, unwarrantable though they be, so Paul, with Christian magnanimity, says that he was accustomed to forego his own opinions and preferences, and accommodate himself to the preference and prejudice of others, so far as could be done with a good conscience, that he might gain them to Christ. So again, when laboring among the Gentiles—described by him as those who were “without law,” that is, being uninformed concerning the rites and ceremonies enjoined in the law of Moses—he tells them that they were perfectly right in omitting many things which were practised by the Jew. He does not insist upon circumcision; indeed he absolves them from it, declaring that the *obligations* to observe that, and other kindred rites, have been done away in Christ; they were no more binding as matters of authority or necessity at all, even though he himself, when among the Jews, had conciliated them by practising what was their preference, but to him a matter of indifference. Thus his consistency is made out—and more than consistency—a noble magnanimity; a superiority above all personal preferences and prejudices, and that for others’ good. When he was at Lystra, he took Timotheus and circumcised him. He was among the Jews who regarded the rite as essential. He had been taught to believe that now it was nothing. Circumcision or uncircumcision, it was nothing, if we were in Christ. Howbeit, if the Jews could be conciliated and

won to Christ, by what was "no-thing" to him, happy was he to meet their wishes; telling them at the same time, that he did not attach the same importance to the rite with themselves. He gives up himself to be a servant to Jewish whims, caprices, and prejudices; but, observe, it is upon points which he pronounces to be indifferent. He would prefer that they should see things as he did; and should do as he did; but as they could not see with his eyes, and adopt all his sentiments, he will cheerfully relinquish his own preferences to their advantage. In this, how careful was he to violate no obligation, bend no principle, break no law, offend no truth. He himself has interpreted in this parenthesis the declaration that all this pliant conformity was not as though he was without law to God; for "under law to Christ" he was; so that though he was flexible as a willow wand in his elastic and cheerful conformity to all the preferences and prejudices of Jew or Gentile, in things indifferent, he was ready to go to the cross in defence and testimony of those vital truths by which God was to be honored, and the world could alone be saved.

Understood in this sense, the conduct of the Apostle presents a rule of conduct of incalculable service to all who would seek to gain their fellow-men to Christ. If this motive *to save men*, be first in the mind; if it be distinct, intense, and earnest, it will vindicate the conduct from all those inconsistencies and meannesses which make up a selfish sycophancy. Christian pliancy, and unchristian conformity, are distinguished in two respects; as *to what* is surrendered, and *the motive* by which anything is surrendered. The selfish parasite flatters and yields, cringes and surrenders, that he may ingratiate himself, and obtain his own purposes. The Christian yields and conforms when he can, that he may save others. The one hopes to exalt himself, secure his own ends, and rise in favor with all. The other, forgetful of himself, gives up all he can, that he may win souls to Christ. The one surrenders everything, trifles with matters the most sacred, counting no price too great to be paid for his ambitious ends; willing to sell his soul and his Saviour. The other, steadfast and unshaken in vital truth, displays a magnanimous indifference in all things immaterial and unimportant.

Bunyan has sketched the portrait of the one in Mr. By-Ends, in lines so bold and strong, that no one who has ever seen the face will ever forget it. He came from the town of Fair-Speech, and pretended to be on the way to the Celestial City. For kindred he had my Lord Turnabout, and Mr. Smoothman, Mr. Facing-both-ways, Mr. Anything; and the parson of the town was Mr. Two-tongues, and his great-grandfather was a waterman, looking one way and rowing another; and his wife was my lord Feigning's daughter, so remarkably well-bred that she knew how to carry it to all, even to prince and peasant. Here was a man who, in his own words, "jumped in his judgment with the present way of the times;" whose rule of

life was "never to strive against wind and tide; but seek to please everybody, for his own advantage." The portrait, we fear, does not belong to an old gallery. It is a lifelike representation of that worldly conformity which is practised in all times and places for one's private ends. Here it is, and thus it is, that many pervert this rule of apostolical conduct, this becoming all things to all men. They learn to do as others and be as others; but alas! it is not for others' good. Conform when you can consistently, innocently, if your motive be, as with the Apostle, to save the soul. But beware that you do not take fire into your bosom to be burned, rather than hold out a lamp to enlighten others in the way of life. If your motive be not like the Apostle's, your conduct will not be as his. If you become all things to all men, that they may be pleased with you by seeing what a high-minded, accommodating, easy, worldly Christian you are, the whole process is vitiated by a bad motive, which leads you to dishonor religion, deny Christ, and instead of saving, delude and mislead, by your inconsistency, many to destruction. There is a vast difference between the Apostle Paul and Cardinal Wolsey.

Another thing is implied in this rule of conduct we are now considering. There is a *great variety of means* to be employed for the salvation of different men. I do not mean that there is more than one Gospel, or any second way of entering the kingdom of God. But the aspects of truth are indefinitely varied; the one great truth by which we are saved is not to be confined to one fixed and changeless form of expression; and it spreads itself out in conformity to the capacity and accomplishment of the mind into which it enters. If it were not so, we might as well have automata moved by clock-work to parrot off a set form of words, muezzin-like, from the top of our churches. What an infinite variety in men themselves, their talents, their dispositions, their education, their habits, their prejudices, their modes of acquiring and retaining opinions. These are circumstances which are not to be overlooked by any wise man, in the pulpit or out of it, who would be successful in saving souls. What is an excellent rule in all forms of convincing and persuasive speech, at the bar, before a jury, in a schoolroom, in a political meeting, should never be disregarded by any man who would inform, persuade, and guide others on religious subjects; viz.: Place yourself, as much as possible, in the circumstances of those whom you address. Take into account how they have been educated; make allowance for their prejudices; enter into all the feelings peculiar to their age, their station in society, and adapt your mode of approach, as far as possible, to them. Here the example of the Apostle again instructs us. With no chameleon-like propensity to change his opinions with his company; with no inconsistency whereby to condemn and degrade himself, he possessed the power, in the intense desire to do good, to place himself in the very position of any and every man whom he

would win to Christ. He did not go through the world like Sir Artegale's iron man Talus, with a flail, crushing and trampling down all opposition, provoking wrath, and stirring up to the utmost every malignant passion, rasping and lacerating feeling, having no part or lot in human infirmity. He knew how the Jew felt; and throwing himself into a Christian sympathy with the Jew, sought to save the Jew. He turned again to the Gentile, educated under different customs, familiar with a different philosophy, and forthwith he who determined to know nothing but Christ and Him crucified, adroitly conforms his style of address, his mode of approach, to his new auditors. He would have been insane had he done otherwise. He would have frustrated his own object by a different procedure.

It would be a pleasant rhetorical exercise, suited better to another place, to analyze the several discourses of Paul, as recorded in the book of the Acts, and show how skillfully he varies himself so as to conform to his several auditors. Contrast his speech or sermon in Pisidia, in the synagogue of Antioch, with his address before the Areopagites, the highest court at Athens. In the one he becomes a Jew, thinks like a Jew, speaks like a Jew; he descants on Jewish history, out of which history he brings forth the Saviour. At Athens he encounters the Epicureans and the Stoics. No stranger is he to their prejudices and their philosophies. With what inimitable grace and self-possession, a master of himself and his subject, does he set off in his address. The very style of his Greek is classical. He quotes their own Greek pagan poets. Verily the Christian Jew is transformed into a polished Grecian debater; and why should he not be, seeing that he would save some at Athens too?

Listen to him again, when, standing on the stairs of the temple, he speaks in the Hebrew tongue to the Jews; relating his conversion, and subsequently repeating the same narration in a very different form and style before Agrippa, the Roman governor. With the weak he became weak; forcing his large mind down into sympathy with all their weak and narrow prejudices, for the weak he would save. With the mighty and the noble, the wise and the great, though he had a theme which he knew would be unwelcome to their hearts, the more did he raise himself up to their level, that he might command a hearing and a respect. Among the tent-makers of Corinth, he became a tent-maker; talked in their language, sympathized in their pursuits, that they might be saved. Because the Gospel detects prejudice, it is a sad mistake to infer that it was designed to excite and provoke prejudice. When our Lord told his disciples that the effect of his gospel would be to send swords rather than peace among the relationships of life, he spoke of an effect incidental and not designed. He also instructed his disciples to be wise as serpents, and harmless as doves; and that man has not yet learned the first lesson of nature or

grace who hopes to save the souls of any in his family, neighborhood, or walks of usefulness, without considering the age, circumstances, education, and characters of those whom he seeks to approach and address.

A young minister just entering upon his profession in a rural district, was informed that a certain farmer in his parish was violently prejudiced against him as a "proud and college-bred" man. He resolved to pay him an early visit. The man was in the fields mowing the clover, in the midst of his men. The minister, wisely avoiding untimely interruption, resorted to the meadow, while the dew was yet sparkling on the grass, and requesting the loan of a scythe, led on the work, as if it had been the pleasant pastime of his youth. Prejudice was disarmed, and melted into partiality and confidence, and, subsequently, Christian conversion. To the farmer he had become a farmer, that he might save the farmer. Precisely what Paul did on Mars Hill, when he quoted to his classic audience from Cleanthus' Ode to Jupiter, and "Dionysius the Areopagite clave unto him and believed." If you would save a child, you must become a child. How absurd to give a babe strong meat; or feed Christ's little lambs in racks so high that nothing but a giraffe can reach them.

A man who has an object to accomplish, devises all expedients, invents and tries now this, now that. What is most admirably adapted to one, may be repulsion and effervescence to another. Of the art of doing good we should be studious; and means are many. We could not, in conscience, eulogize the poetry of John Bunyan as the best versification in our language. It is not quite so smooth and polished as that of Pope; nor does its measure equal the glorious majesty of Milton. Yet we might search far and long before we found better sense, or sager advice, than the following lines in his rhyming apology for the Pilgrim's Progress:—

"You see the way the fisherman doth take  
To catch the fish; what engines doth he make!  
Behold how he engageth all his wits;  
Also his snares, lines, angles, hooks, and nets.  
Yet fish there be that neither hook, nor line,  
Nor snare, nor net, nor engine can make thine—  
They must be groped for, and be tickled too,  
Or they will not be catch'd whate'er you do."

God be thanked that we have the Dreamer's Allegory, as well as Butler's Analogy. Give children their medicine, if you must, in their milk. Many a man has found Jesus Christ in the Tinker's Dream—the second uninspired book in our language for genius, wit, and wonder—who would have found nothing but verjuice, spleen, and prejudice, as Bolingbroke did in the forced reading of Dr. Manton's one hundred and nineteen sermons on the one hundred and nineteenth Psalm.

While it is true that an incidental activity of opposition is a more hopeful sign in the recovery of the soul, than downright insensibility, just as spasms and acute pain are better than paralysis and coma, yet no man has a right to provoke hostility, and excite prejudice of settled purpose and plan. We have no right to heap up stumbling-blocks; rather should we remove them, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way. It is an ingenious art of the devil to push a man on in an opinionated, self-willed, cast-iron, imprudent, and headstrong way, and then misname this Christian fidelity. Better is it to be studious of occasions. Speak a word in season. Be fruitful in expedients. Be expert in means, that by all you may save some. If the desire and motive at the heart be right, the means will not be wanting. Now it will be an interview on purpose; now an incidental word; now a visit of consolation in an hour of affliction; and now the loan of a book, or the mission of a letter. *Watch* for souls; so fowlers seek their prey, and good agencies must counteract the bad.

In short, an active desire to save men makes us catholic and prudent. And by being *catholic*, in this connection, is not meant a blind, unthinking charity, which dissolves away into vapory nothingness; and by *prudence* we intend something very different from that which the world designates by the word, in whose nomenclature it passes for an adroit avoidance of all offence to our own injury. When we say that the desire and endeavor to save lost men makes us catholic and prudent, we mean just what is implied in the conduct of the Apostle as here exhibited; a carelessness about all unimportant differences, provided that the main thing may be gained; and the seeking of the best ends by the best means.

We must now add, and that emphatically, that there is little hope of hitting this line of discrimination, unless the heart is first possessed of the right view of man's lost condition, and prompted by the irrepressible desire to secure his salvation. If this be wanting, one is as sure to fall into worldly conformity as waters to flow downward.

If you would learn to please,  
Do what others do with ease,

is the compendious direction of worldly and fashionable life: and this *that the world may be pleased* with you. Jesus Christ has said to all His disciples, Be not conformed to this world—in the sense of being converted over to the world—but seek, by all means, to convert the world over to Christ. Be consistent. Be manly. Be earnest. Yield what you may, when yielding will save. Be firm as a rock where you must, that thereby you may gain the more.

If our hearts were only burning with love for Christ, and the souls He has died to save, we should not need so many discrimina-

tions; nor should we be left to wander and sink in the bogs and swamps of doubtful and debatable questions, which make up so much of the supposed neutral space between Christian consistency and worldly conformity.

May the Spirit of all grace and life enlighten our eyes, and move our hearts to a just apprehension of human guilt and peril, and to all forms and expressions of fidelity, that by all means we may save some!