

The Old and the New

TWO SERMONS
Preached in St. Paul's Church
Philadelphia
THE LAST SUNDAY OF 1902
and
THE FIRST SUNDAY OF 1903

By J. R. MILLER, D. D.

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Breaking Away from Our Past

Forgetting those things which are behind.—Phil. 3:13

WE have here St. Paul's plan of life—progress by forgetting, by letting go, the things that are past. "Forgetting the things which are behind, and stretching forward to the things which are before, I press on toward the goal." This is such a wise theory of life that we may profitably study it a few minutes this morning.

"Forgetting the things which are behind." There are some things we would like to forget. Probably most of us have done things this year we would give much to leave behind, to blot out from memory, to cut altogether loose from, to bury in oblivion. We may have spoken words which we would eagerly recall—words which hurt tender hearts, or which left a stain where they fell, or which misdirected a trusting life. Or it may have been a silence over which we grieve—the word that was not spoken.

“Lost for want of a word—
A word that you might have spoken;
Who knows what eyes may be dim,
Or what hearts may be aching and broken?
So, scatter beside all waters,
Nor sicken at hope deferred;
Let never a soul by thy dumbness
Be lost for want of a word.”

We may have done things we would gladly forget. Even when sins are forgiven they leave their marks. They stay in the memory. Looking back on the year, we must know of things in our lives we wish we might forget, but cannot. Some one tells of a picture of a man in agony, on his knees, praying that God would turn back the hands on the dial of time, and give him again hours that were past. “O God!” he cried, “turn back thy universe and give me yesterday.” But the prayer could not be granted. Even God cannot turn back the hands of the clock, that we may have any day over again. But one thing God will do—we may bring to him all the mistakes, the follies, the sins, and he will forgive us, and then use even these poor broken things for good. Some traveler tells of finding somewhere beside the sea, at a place where many ships were dashed upon the rocks, a beautiful house built altogether of pieces of wreckage

gathered from the shore. That is about the best many of us can do. We have little else to bring to God but wreckage—disobediences, broken commandments, mistakes, sins. Yet it is a wonderful thought that even with such materials, if we are truly penitent and repentant, our Master will work, helping us to build beauty in our lives. Sins forgiven become lessons for us. Out of a past full of failures we may make a future full of strength and beauty—through the grace of Christ. We cannot forget our sins, but we may be wiser and better for them.

Then there are things in our lives which we would not want to forget. George Eliot wrote, "I desire no future that will break the ties of the past." Memory is a wonderful treasure house. It keeps for us in store the sweet things, the joys, the happy experiences, of all our days, so that when we will we may live them over again. There are sacred hours and holy days in every good life, the remembrance of which it would be sacrilege to have blotted out. We would not forget the sweet friendships which have woven their threads of gold and silver into this year's web. We would not forget the lessons we have learned, the beautiful things we have seen, the blessings that have come into our lives. Every-

one has red-letter days that stand out in the calendar as days never to be forgotten.

Paul does not mean that he absolutely forgot everything in the past. He never forgot the days when he was a persecutor—the memory of his violent opposition to Christ in years past stirred him to the last to more earnest and hearty devotion to his Redeemer, to burn out the old shame in flames of love and service. He never forgot his friends. His epistles are full of grateful mentions of those who in days gone had shown him kindness. He never forgot the goodness of God. His life was one long anthem of joy. Paul does not mean any such forgetting as this.

Yet there is a forgetting which is part of every one's duty. "Forgetting the things which are behind." We are about at the ending of the year. There are many things that we should not carry out of this old year into a new. When a family is removing from one house to another, especially if they have been quite a while in the old house, there are likely to be many things that they would better leave behind, either having an auction or a bonfire. There is rubbish in most of our lives that we should get rid of before we enter the New Year's paths.

A friend of mine has written a little book which she calls "The Evolution of a Girl's Ideal." The text of the book is a sentence which the author says she found somewhere a good while ago—"The way of life is wonderful; it is by abandonment." Most people believe that the way of life is by acquisition, by getting things, by adding to their possessions. The way to grow rich is to keep all you have and continue to add to your wealth—saving and accumulating. By and by, if we are wise, we learn that it is by abandonment, by giving up things, by leaving things behind, by growing away from things and ideals, that we really grow.

So Miss Laughlin tells us the story of the girl's life in illustration of her text: "The way of life is wonderful; it is by abandonment." The little girl lives in her dolls for a while. Then she gives up her dolls for her school-girl friendships. For a time these fill her life. If she could not see these friends daily, two or three times a day, life was blank, empty, intolerable. Then "affairs of the heart come in"—before the girl is ten. In two or three years the boys are supplanted by clothes—these again by a more serious love affair, with its dreams, which, too, collapse and fall to nothing, by and by. So the story goes on

to the end—one hope after another cherished, then given up and left behind, always for something better and more substantial. Thus was the truth of the writer's text illustrated and proved—"The way of life is wonderful; it is by abandonment."

St. Paul states the same truth when he says, "When that which is perfect is come, that which is in part shall be done away. When I was a child, I spake as a child, I felt as a child, I thought as a child; now that I am become a man, I have put away childish things." Childhood is very sweet and beautiful, but who would want to stay a child always?

Thus we begin to catch hints of the meaning of the apostle when he says he forgets things behind and presses on to things before. It is the law of life. The blossom is not lost when it is left behind by the coming of the fruit. The boy is not sorry when he feels himself growing into manhood. He seems to be leaving much behind, much that is winning and attractive. Perhaps his mother grieves as she sees him lose one by one the things she has always liked—his curls, his boyish ways, his delicate features—the qualities that kept him a child, and taking on elements of strength, the marks of manhood.

But if he remained always a boy, a child with curls and dainty tastes, what a pitiful failure his life would be! He can press to the goal of perfection only by putting away, leaving behind, passing by, the sweetness, the simplicity, the innocence of boyhood.

The same principle runs all through life. Manhood is stern, strong, and heroic. It would seem that childhood is more beautiful. But who regrets passing to man's ruggedness and man's hard tasks? Nazareth was easier for Jesus than what came after; but when he left the carpenter shop and went to the Jordan to be baptized, thence to the wilderness to be tried, and thence started on the way to his cross—do you think he was sorry?

“That evening, when the Carpenter swept out
The fragrant shavings from the workshop floor,
And placed the tools in order, and shut to,
And barred, for the last time, the humble door,
And going on his way to save the world,
Turned from the lab'rer's lot for evermore,
I wonder—was he glad?

“That morning when the Carpenter walked forth
From Joseph's doorway in the glimmering light,
And bade his holy mother long farewell,
And, through the rose-shot skies with dawning
bright,

Saw glooming the dark shadows of the Cross,
Yet, seeing, set his feet toward Calvary's height,
I wonder—was he sad?

“Ah! when the Carpenter went on his way,
He thought not for himself of good or ill;
One was his path, through shop or thronging men
Craving his help, e'en to the cross-crowned hill,
In toiling, healing, teaching, suffering, all
His joy, his life, to do his Father's will,
And earth and heaven are glad.”

He forgot the easy, pleasant things which were behind, and with joy entered upon the harder way before him, as he pressed toward the goal. A word in the Hebrews tells us that for the joy set before him Jesus endured the cross, despising the shame. So every true and worthy life rejoices to go on to where the burdens are heavier, the path steeper and rougher, the thorns sharper, if thus fuller, larger manhood is reached.

Look at the lesson in another light. We should not permit ourselves to remain entangled in the experiences that are past. Some people do. They never get entirely out of the meshes of the sins into which they have fallen. They never come up out of their sorrows. They never rise altogether from the dust of their defeats. I believe one reason God gives us time in little sec-

tions—in little short days—is that we may finish up each day's duties and tasks, its struggles and sorrows, and then leave all behind forever. Night is meant to cut off completely yesterday's life. Suppose you did fail yesterday,—that has nothing to do with to-day, except to make you all the braver and stronger. Suppose you had a sorrow yesterday, one very dear, on whom you leaned your whole weight, being taken from your side; do not let the sorrow quench the light of your path to-day. We are to forget the things that are behind. We cannot forget love. We cannot but miss the companionship. But our own life need not be hurt by the grief, for our journey is not yet finished. Besides, God is a Comforter; he is able to make the love all the sweeter, and to send light into our darkness.

“Old sorrows that sat at the heart's sealed gate
Like sentinels grim and sad,
While out in the night damp, weary and late,
The King, with a gift divinely great,
Waited to make me glad:

“Old fears that hung like a changing cloud
Over a sunless day:
Old burdens that kept the spirit bowed,
Old wrongs that rankled and clamored loud—
They have passed like a dream away.

“In the world without and the world within,
He maketh all things new;
The touch of sorrow, the stain of sin,
Have fled from the gate where the King came in
From the chill night’s damp and dew.

“Anew in the heavens the sweet stars shine;
On earth new blossoms spring;
The old life lost in the life divine;
‘Thy will be mine, my will is thine,’
To the new song our hearts now sing.”

The old year will soon be done. Let us break ourselves away from all its entanglements. Let us carry none of its burdens through the gate of the new year. “If you are feeling the sting of past defeat, let it quicken your steps, and let every failure and disappointment of the old year stimulate you to greater effort in the future.” If you have failed and stumbled this year, making a sad story of your living, well, confess it all with penitence. You cannot change it now. Though you should weep for years, you cannot make one of this year’s crooked lines straight. Why then waste a moment in unavailing tears? The penitence that avails is that which puts its sorrow into holy living for the future. The only true way to repent for yesterday’s evil ways is to make to-day a white, clean day.

Perhaps some of us are grieving over a year of idleness, of indolence. At least we have not lived up to our privileges. We have not done our best work in school. We have dawdled over our lessons. We could have done far better. Of course, we cannot change anything now. But we can learn a lesson from our trifling—we can save ourselves from such shame and humiliation another year as we feel to-day. Or we have fallen below our possibilities in other ways—in business, in home life, in friendship, in our self-improvement. We have wasted time—minutes, hours, days. We have been content with a low standard of excellence. We have left undone the things we ought to have done. We see many blanks in the story of the year—duties not attempted, ministries of love not performed. Oh, if we could only go back to the beginning of this year of our Lord and live it over again, how much more beautiful year we would make it than the year whose volume will be closed up in three days more! If we could only go back with the wisdom we now have, how well we would live the year! This we cannot do, but we can make our new year better if we will. But will we? That is the question. Will we use our new wisdom in the only way we can use it?

But not only past follies and mistakes and failures and sins must we leave behind, but past successes as well. St Paul is not speaking of sins when he uses the words of my text, but of attainments. He is pressing toward a goal—perfection. He says he has not yet attained, is not yet perfect, but he is pressing on that he may at length reach the goal.

Think a moment of Paul's splendid career. How far above ordinary Christians he had climbed! What consecration was his! What self forgetfulness! How he trod the world under his feet! How he rose above all jealousy, envy, love of ease, desire for honor, longing for applause! How such a life as Paul's shames our poor Christian living! Yet notice, he says he has not yet attained the mark, is not yet perfect. He saw measureless heights above those to which he had climbed. How far, then, have you and I still to go? Yet some of us seem almost content with our attainments. We think we have done quite well this year. We think we have given a good deal of money—how much have we given? We think we have been rather respectable Christians—have we been? How does our record appear to the eye of Christ? What sacrifices have we made? What lives have we

led to Christ? Satisfaction with our attainments as Christians is a mark of death. "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled."

Suppose you have done well this year, following Christ closely, doing worthy service in his church, fulfilling the law of love—you are to leave all that behind, forget it all. It is not to be your standard for the new year. No matter how good yesterday was, to-day must be better. See this old apostle far up the mountain yonder, yet crying back to us, "I have not yet attained, I am not yet perfect: but this one thing I do: Forgetting the things which are behind, I press on toward the goal." That must always be the attitude of living faith. Only dead men are satisfied: living men are always climbing higher. We used to sing an old song:

"If at first you don't succeed,
Try, try, try again."

A better way to sing the song, however is this:

"If at first you do succeed,
Try, try, try again."

The men and women who are nearest to Christ to-day are those who are pressing the most earnestly after him, singing from their hearts most yearningly:—

“Nearer, my God, to thee,
Nearer to thee.”

Shall we not all strive to attain better things?
Let us leave the record of this year far behind
us as we enter the new year.

“Let me but live my life from year to year,
With forward face and unreluctant soul,
Not hastening to nor turning from the goal;
Nor mourning things that disappear
In the dim past, nor holding back in fear
From what the future veils; but with a whole
And happy heart that pays its toll
To youth and age, and travels on with cheer:

“So let the way wind up the hill or down,
Through rough or smooth; the journey will be joy.
Still seeking what I sought when but a boy,—
New friendship, high adventure, and a crown,
I shall grow old, but never lose life’s zest,
Because the road’s last turn will be the best.”

“Forgetting the things which are behind.”
Let us keep our eyes forward. When we leave
this old year let us not look back upon it with
regret. Whatever its story, it has led us another
year nearer home. If it has been wasted, not
lived well, if we are ashamed to have the volume
go to God as it is, let us take the wisdom into
our life and apply it to the year we soon shall
enter.^a If we have lived it obediently, earnestly,

faithfully, then let us make the new year better still, more worthy yet.

Let me speak another word of comfort, before we go away, to those whose hearts are sad to-day with memories of loss. Are you looking backward to see your loved ones, as if they were lingering in the shadows? They are not behind you. Do not think that in leaving this old year you are going farther away from your sainted ones. This is the year they left you—it is sacred, therefore, and will ever be remembered as the year they vanished from your sight. But they, the beloved ones, are not behind; they are on before. If you would get to where they are, to see them again, you must forget the things which are behind and press on toward the goal. They have reached the goal, and are waiting there for you.

“Forgetting the things which are behind.” Need I remind you that only those who are in Christ can forget the past and look forward with confidence and hope? “I press on toward the goal.” Are you moving at all toward the goal? Are you in Christ? If not, where will you come at last, if you press on? On this last Sunday of the year should not everyone of us make sure that we are believing in Christ?

9—The Old and The New.

The Religion for the New Year

Whosoever shall compel thee to go one mile, go with him two.—Matt. 5: 41.

THIS may seem a rather unusual New Year's text, but I have a purpose in choosing it. New Year is a time for a new start. Let the curtain drop on the old year. Forget the things that are behind. Some things were not satisfactory—let them go. Some things vexed and annoyed you—forget them. Some people wronged you and hurt your feelings—never mind it. Forget all personal hurts, as the water forgets the cleaving of the keel that plows through it and becomes smooth again. The problem of living is not to have everything just our way, pleasant, agreeable, easy—which is not possible—but not to be hurt, not to have our lives harmed in any way by the rude, hard and trying experiences of life. Let the curtain drop on the old year and begin anew with all things new in the new year.

“Let the old life be covered by the new,
The old, old past, so full of sad mistakes;
Let it be wholly hidden from our view
By deeds as white and silent as snowflakes.”

The new should be better than the old. No year is good enough to be a standard for the next. However well you lived last year, you must live better this year. The voice of God calls everyone of us to make 1903 the best year we have ever lived.

There is something else in my heart for you, and that is why I have chosen this text. “Who-soever shall compel thee to go one mile, go with him two.” That is, do more than you are expected to do, be better than you are expected to be, go further in love and service and self-denial than you are expected to go. The immediate reference is to the old, hard days when most men had to serve despotic masters and often do compulsory service. Able-bodied men, for example, would be required to go with soldiers to guide them through the country and carry their burdens. “If such forced service is demanded of you,” said Jesus, “do not resist; go cheerfully; go even further than you are compelled to go.”

Of course, this was only an illustration of a

principle. The Christian is to accept hardness patiently. He is not to watch the clock lest he may work a few minutes too long. He is not to keep account of all the things he does for others, lest he may do more than he is required to do. Rather when he is serving he is to do more than strict duty demands. He is to go two miles instead of one.

You remember how Jesus disliked the religion of the scribes and Pharisees. They were very strict, but they carefully measured all their devotion and duty. Jesus said to his disciples, "Except your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven." He made this more plain by illustration. For example, "Ye have heard that it was said to them of old time, Thou shalt not kill, . . . but I say unto you, that every one who is angry with his brother shall be in danger of the judgment." We are Christ's followers, not only when we do no murder—that is going one mile—but when we keep our hearts free from all bitterness, all unkind feelings, all desire for revenge—that is going the second mile. We please Christ, not merely when we do no impure and immoral acts, but when no unholy thoughts and no unclean desires

are allowed to build their nests in our bosoms. The religion of the Pharisees said they must love their friends but hate their enemies, giving as they had received; but the friends of Jesus must go the second mile, and love their enemies and pray for those who persecute them. "What do ye more than others?" is the question which tests Christian life. Anybody can love those that love him. Anybody can be kind to those who are kind to him. You must do more—you must go two miles.

We are too apt to make our religion a matter of rules, and to be careful never to go farther than the rule requires. If it is a mile that is required we go the mile, but not a step beyond. The religion of Christ is second-mile religion—it is what we do over and above what we are expected to do, what might be demanded of us. That is what we want to take as our New Year's plan of living and serving.

You know I never complain. I would never be a discourager of the humblest or feeblest of God's children. I know life is hard for many people, very hard for some. I would always be an encourager, an inspirer. But a wise man has said that our best friend is he who makes us do our best. I am one of your best friends, there-

fore, when I come to you calling for your best—your best life, your best work, your largest usefulness, your most Christlike loving.

For one thing, I call for your best work in the church. How many of us did our best last year? Who of us cannot be more earnest, more intense, more diligent? Jesus lived so that his disciples remembered it was written of him, "The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up." Are our lives a commentary on such Scriptures? Do we live and work so devotedly, so self-denyingly, with such consuming ardor that people apply such texts to us, saying that our zeal for God eats us up? St. Paul has many words calling believers to be always abounding in the work of the Lord. Sometimes we hear it said of a man that he overworks. Does anybody say of you that you overwork as a Christian, that you are wearing yourself out in Christ's service?

There is a very suggestive story told of Elisha when he lay on his death-bed. Joash the king came to see the old minister, and wept that he was to lose his good friend's guidance and help. Elisha told the king to take his bow and arrows. Then he put his hands on the king's hands and bade the king open the window and shoot. "The arrow of the Lord's deliverance, the arrow of

victory over Syria," said the prophet. He then further bade the king take his arrows and smite on the ground. The king smote three times and then stopped. Then Elisha was wroth. "Thou shouldest have smitten five or six times: then hadst thou smitten Syria till thou hadst consumed it, whereas now thou shalt smite Syria but thrice." The king's lack of energy and persistence in smiting revealed the character of the man—he lacked energy. He did his work languidly. There is too much of the same lack in Christian workers. They tire too easily. They desist too soon. They smite but three times. "Thou shouldest have smitten five or six times." That is the word for us as we enter upon another year's conquest for our Master, another year of soul-gathering.

"The time is short,
If thou wouldst work for God, it must be now;
If thou wouldst win the garland for thy brow,
Redeem the time.

"Shake off earth's sloth!
Go forth with staff in hand while yet 'tis day;
Set out with girded loins upon thy way;
Up, linger not.

"Fold not thy hands!
What has the pilgrim of the cross and crown
To do with luxury or couch of down?
On, pilgrim, on."

But what is Christian work? What is the work of the Lord to which we are so earnestly called? Preaching? Yes, but not all can be preachers. Teaching in the Sunday schools? Yes, but only a limited number can find a place in the ranks of teachers. Missionaries? Yes, but only a few Christians can go to heathen lands to carry Christ, or to the mission fields at home. What can the great company, the countless hosts, of the Master's disciples do?

First of all, they can preach in holy lives. This is always the first essential in preaching, in winning souls. If you are not good, if your life is not beautiful, what you say will have little effect. Naomi never would have won Ruth for her God if her own life had not been rich in its loveliness. We must hold forth Jesus Christ in our own disposition, conduct, and character before we can work for him in any other way.

But that is not all. Being good is not enough. There is work to do. The precious seed must be sown. The Master's errands must be done. Evermore God is calling, "Whom shall I send here and there? Who will go for me? St. Paul's church is not a happy Christian family, merely, living here for the comfort and pleasure and good of its own members. It is a happy family, and it is good for us to dwell together in

unity. It is our church home, which we love and in which we find rich blessing. But we dare not stop with this. If we do, our sweetness will soon become sourness. If we live only for ourselves we will die. We have a mission to the world close about us and the world farther out from us. We must take up the Master's work. What is it? It is the same kind of work Jesus himself did—a ministry of kindness, a witness for God. We must tell others of God's love. We must get people to fall in love with Jesus Christ.

“To every one his work.” It may not be easy. It was not easy for Christ to come to this world and do the work he did for men. It was not easy for Paul to be a great missionary. Do you suppose it is easy for anyone to do work worth while in blessing others? It is because we want something easy that we are of so little use to God. We are willing to go only one mile. To-day our Master is calling us to take the second mile.

Some of us will not find it easy to stand at the judgment-seat of Christ and give account of our work. Easy work here will make it hard there. Are you not ready, friends of the Master, for harder work this year than you ever have done before? Are you not ready for a year of second-

mile journeys to do God's errands, to carry blessings to others? Instead of putting on your slippers and dressing gowns for snug evenings at home, or your evening dress for brilliant functions in amusements, will you not give Christ at least some of your evenings for the service to which he calls you? It will not injure your health—never fear that. I will pay the doctor's bills if it does. It will not unfit you for business next day—no danger of that. Try it. Instead of your poor little measured mile for Christ, go two miles.

Let us apply the same principle to our personal religious life. A good many people want to go only one mile in consecration, in praying, in church attendance, in loving others, in doing God's will. But I say to you that one-mile following of Christ is pitifully, shamefully inadequate.

What kind of a friend do you like—one who will go just the easy one mile with you, while the path is flowery, and the air full of sweet odors, and then drop off when the road gets rough and steep, and winter winds begin to blow? Or, do you like the friend who stays by you when it costs to be your friend, when he has to carry burdens for you—has almost to carry you, sometimes?

Do you like best the friend who goes only one short, easy mile with you and then drops off, or the friend who goes the second mile with you? Was Orpah or Ruth the better friend to Naomi?

Now what kind of friends do you suppose Jesus Christ prefers to have—those who go with him a little way, while it is easy, and then drop out when the pinch comes, or those who go with him through pain and tears and cost? those who go one mile, or those who go two? Some Christian people have never learned the deep joy of the Christian life because they have never gone beneath the surface in loving Christ, and in consecration to him. Our religion is easy-going. We think we are fulfilling our duty if we come to church once a Sunday, when the weather is clear and beautiful, if we give a few cents a week to church support, if we kneel morning and evening and say our prayers. Yet these are only one-mile excursions in religion, and the blessing does not lie at the end of the little conventional mile—it lies on further, at the end of the second mile. Those who think not of their own ease, but devote the whole day to God's worship, are the ones who enter into the secret place of the Most High, and get the true blessing of the Sabbath.

The goodness Christ calls for is not merely the

goodness which passes for respectability. It is said of a certain royal personage who always attended church, that when the commandments were read—"Thou shalt not kill"; "Thou shalt not commit adultery"; "Thou shalt not steal"; he would respond audibly after each, "I never did that," and go away thinking himself a very good man. Yet if you read the Sermon on the Mount you will find that such pharisaism came in for our Lord's most scathing condemnation. It is only going one mile—common decency requires as much of us as that. We begin to enter into the kind of goodness Jesus requires—only when we obey the commandments in our hearts.

Only the second mile in loving others counts. On this first Sunday of the New Year we should look well to that quality of Christian life which Jesus himself said is the unfailing hallmark of discipleship. "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." The measure of this love is given in the same paragraph—"even as I have loved you, that ye also love one another." "As I have loved you"—that is the second mile in loving each other. The first mile is loving nice, agreeable, congenial people, in a conventional sort of way, so long as they love you, and flatter you, and pamper your

vanity. One-mile loving asks, "How often must I forgive my fellow-Christian, when he has been unkind to me? How often must I forgive? Three times? Seven times?" But second-mile loving never asks any such questions. It is patient, forbearing, forgiving seventy-times seven, unto the uttermost. "As I have loved you" means nothing less than that. It keeps no account of how much and how often.

Let us not forget that where there is no second-mile loving there really is no growing Christian life. I know we must begin at the a, b, c—this loving is a new commandment. Christian love is, indeed, a new life—it is the heavenly life brought down to earth. We get it into our hearts only when we accept Christ and let him into our lives. We must begin as a little child. We cannot learn the whole lesson in a day. We cannot fulfill the meaning of the words, "As I have loved you," until we have gone over the lesson many times. But that is the lesson we are to learn. Think what patience Jesus had with his disciples—"As I have loved you." Think how he bore with their faults and failings, with their dullness and slowness, with their unbelief and unfaithfulness, with their denials and betrayals. "As I have loved you, that ye also love

one another." How it shames our touchiness, our quick firing up when a brother seems to fail a little in courtesy, or speaks a little bitterly to us! Was that the way Jesus loved his disciples? Is that the way he loves us now? Ah, if it were, we never could be saved, we never could learn the lesson of loving, and if we never learn to love as Jesus loves we cannot enter heaven, for heaven is only for those who have learned to love. Shall we not set as our standard for this new year this love that goes the second mile?

I shall name only one other point of application—the submitting of our lives to the will and the Spirit of God. We say we take Jesus Christ as our Lord and Master. We do not begin to be Christians until we do. He is, first, our Saviour—"If I wash thee not thou hast no part with me." Then comes surrender to him. "Follow me." Martin Luther's seal was a rose; in the rose a heart; in the heart a cross. The rose suggested fragrance and beauty—a Christian life should be beautiful, winning, attractive. It should be sweet, pouring forth the fragrance of love wherever it goes. The heart in the rose told that all life is from the heart. But at the center of all was the cross. Until we have Christ we can have neither fragrance nor beauty. We must

never forget that nothing but the self-sacrificing love of Christ in our hearts can transform our lives. But we can have Christ only by yielding to him. To resist the Spirit of Christ is to cut ourselves off from blessing.

“Though Christ a thousand times in Bethlehem be
born,
If he’s not born in thee, thy soul is all forlorn,
God’s spirit falls on me as dewdrops on a rose,
If I but, like a rose, my heart to him disclose,
In all eternity no tone can be so sweet
As when man’s heart with God’s in unison doth beat.
Whate’er thou lovest, man, that too become thou
must—
God, if thou lovest God; dust, if thou lovest dust.”

Immeasurable indeed are the possibilities of Christian life—to be dwelt in by God himself, the Holy Spirit; to be transformed into the very beauty of God; to have the power of God; the love of God in us. “Know ye not that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, which is in you?”

But how many of us are conscious of these wonderful possibilities? How many of us are striving to attain them? We expect to be like Christ in heaven, but do we think earnestly about being like him now and here? Indeed, how many of us would like to become filled with the Spirit

to-day and to keep that fullness all the year? If we could, would we exchange our poor, meager measure of Christlikeness to-day for the complete filling of our hearts with Christ? It would make a tremendous change in our lives, at least, in some of our lives. We sometimes sing, "Take the world, but give me Jesus"—do we mean it? We sing often, "Nearer, my God, to thee; even though it be a cross that raiseth me, still all my song shall be, Nearer, my God, to thee." It is a very sweet hymn, but do we mean it? Are we ready to have the prayer answered, fully, wholly, whatever it may cost? We go the first mile in following Christ, in yielding to the Spirit, in letting God into our hearts—yes, but are we not ready, this New Year's Sabbath, to go the second mile?

"Spirit of God, descend upon my heart;
Wean it from earth; through all its pulses move;
Stoop to my weakness, mighty as thou art,
And make me love thee as I ought to love.

"Teach me to love thee as thine angels love,
One holy passion filling all my frame;
The baptism of the heaven-descended Dove,
My heart an altar, and thy love the flame."