

“REVERENCE”

(Discourse by Isaac Hoskins, Sioux City, Iowa, Convention. 1916 Convention Report starting on page 46.)

Text: “What man is he that feareth the Lord? Him shall he teach in the way that he shall choose.” Psalm 25:12.

I assure you, dear friends, it gives me very deep pleasure to come before you. I will say that I have been looking forward with fond expectations for some time to this convention. Although our convention is small, as to the number of people, we will have a great blessing nevertheless. These conventions give us opportunity to renew our acquaintance with those we have met before and more or less recently, and our hearts are drawn closer and closer together.

I am given the Manna text for this morning as the theme for our discourse: “What man is he that feareth the Lord [reverences the Lord]? Him shall be teach in the way which he shall go.”

Our text first of all declares the value and importance of reverence. Reverence is made up of esteem and admiration. Reverence means adoration, worship, and is always exercised toward that which is superior. It is eminently proper that God should be revered, that he should be recognized as the great Master, as one to whom we owe all that we are and have. God should be adored and revered because it is the proper things to do. This leads to obedience. The man or woman who properly reverences Jehovah will be led to obedience, to do his will. Obedience is necessary throughout all the Universe in order to preserve peace. The Bible teaches that all will reverence God and recognize him as the great Master of all. If God did not require his creatures to reverence and obey him and did not cause them to recognize in him their headship and the one that has the right to give rules and regulations we would have anarchy.

Suppose he had told the angels, I have given you your life, you can do as you please and have your own way, and suppose he had said the same to mankind and to all creation, what may we suppose the result or condition have been? They would very likely have become inclined to do something else than what God intended. There are about as many ways of doing things in the world as there are creatures and heads and we would have a reign of anarchy instead of love. God’s will should be the seat of the government.

“What man is he that feareth the Lord, him shall he guide and teach.” There are not very many people on the earth who reverence Jehovah because the race has strayed from him. God has practically said, you have turned from me you can have your way, and so man today has very little reverence for God.

While this admonition comes to us today, yet we find very few of mankind reverencing Jehovah. It is not the proper time for them to be enlightened, so that they could reverence him. Our text does not apply to the human family at large at this time. The reverence of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and none can begin to get wise until they recognize God, because God does not now propose to give wisdom to any, until they come into harmony with him. More and more we find that the Lord is not now pleading with the world to come to Christ. If he is we must all recognize that is far from satisfactory, because the great portion have not heard of God and do not know that we have such a thing as this book we call the Bible. They do not know anything about Jesus Christ. The more we come into contact with the world, the more we see how blind they are, how set they are in their prejudices and ignorance, and seem determined not to know God in the present time. Paul said that, "The God of this world hath blinded their hearts and minds lest the glorious light of the gospel of Christ should shine into their hearts and they should be converted." That is why.

Only last Monday night I attended a little service and gave a discourse along the general plan, and I saw some people who wanted to ask a question. I said if anyone present would like to ask a question they will be given an opportunity. Immediately an old gentleman said, I would like to ask a question. He asked and I answered four or five and I replied as best I could. I thought he was getting along all right, but he said, I don't believe one word you say. It was because he was so prejudiced and set in his own ways that he was determined not to see anything. I thank God that the time is drawing near when the vail over all nations is to be lifted and all flesh shall see the glory of the Lord.

This morning we are to see how our text applies to the Lord's people at the present time. As such they are being taught of God, they are being guided by him in the way which he shall choose. We find that those who are susceptible to the influence of the truth, who hear the heavenly voice, that these are disposed to be taught of God and the Bible teaches that all these shall be instructed out of his word. All called to be saints and follower of Christ are called to participation with him as kings and priests, and these are taught in the way that they shall go.

Well you know, friends, as well as I do, that the narrow way is the way of the present time. This matter cannot be emphasized too much. "Narrow is the way and straight is the gate that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." The more we look at this way, and the human family, and those who are striving to walk in the narrow way, the more we are convinced that those who are trying to walk in that way are very few. But this narrow way is a way that has certain limitations. Narrow because it is limited—there are certain confinements—and those who will walk in it have certain limitations placed upon them during this life. All this is in what we call a consecration to God. Those who come to God give themselves to him with a complete resignation of their wills to his will,

and agree to a certain proposition. They sign their death warrant, so to speak, to put down their own wills, humbling themselves under the mighty hand of God, and instead of giving loose rein to their human sentiments, they control all those. Now the individual who undertakes to do that will find himself in the narrow way.

What is the way? It is that direction in which the Lord is teaching those who reverence him, because he wishes to make of this class glorious beings, who will shine as the sun in the kingdom of their father. One cannot read the New Testament without being impressed with the thought of how he instructs his saints. They were the Lord's mouthpieces, the apostles. Jesus said, I pray not for the world, but for those whom thou hast given me out of the world. He said you are not of the world because I have chosen you out of the world. We see how finely drawn is the line of demarcation between the world and the saints. He speaks to the *you* class and the world as *they* and *them*. The church belongs to this dispensation, and the Master indicates that his interests were to be more with his people, that he would be with them always, even unto the end of the age.

Note the first chapter in the book of Revelations: he said he saw Christ standing in the midst of the seven candle sticks, the seven churches. We believe those seven churches do not belong to seven different institutions, but that seven relates to the one record of the entire gospel church, divided into seven different epochs or dispensations, and Jesus' dealings with the church during the seven stages. St. John said he saw Christ dressed with a crown of gold, purple, etc.; implying that Jesus had received his commission from God, a divine commission, to sustain, guide, and perfect his people even unto the end of the age. We find that the apostles were faithful as God's mouthpieces in communicating to the Lord's people the instructions and teachings in the way that he would have them go.

Paul's entire soul was devoted to this one important theme for getting ready of the kingdom of God and making preparations for the Master's return and union with him in that kingdom. Paul said, "Forgetting those things that are behind, I press forward toward the prize. I cannot know anything else or proclaim anything else except Jesus Christ and him crucified." It is a very remarkable thing that St. Paul would make such a statement, one who was qualified to make for himself a very illustrious career; he might have had a great station in the world, but he said, I will not, because I see something else. Therefore I have decided to forget the things that are past, and look forward to the heavenly prize. He virtually said to the Lord's people, the only proclamation that I am going to make is the Savior and His work, the prize of our high calling. Thus Paul gave evidence that he was of the Savior's class. He forgot the things of the past in the sense that he ceased to hold or to live for those things, or to feast upon the earthly life or to live for those things, or feast upon the earthly life or ambitions. We know that he did because of his faithful devotion, conscientious, untiring zeal. We know that St. Paul had that living faith that enabled him to do and live according to his own preaching. As we look at the example of

St. Paul, and all through the New Testament, we find that all who were walking in the foot steps of Christ recognize that they are undertaking a gigantic proposition. As how much we see in the world of that which is mere form and outward profession.

A great many people seem to have the idea that religion is like a coat that you can take off or put on when you please and, that you will be just as well with it off as with it on, and that it does not have much to do with their religion. Many evidently think that way because that is the way that they conduct themselves. Now, as we look back to the early church, we find that it meant something to them. Don't we find that to be the spirit and import of all the sayings of the New Testament?

The position of most Christian people is illustrated by the colored man in a testimony meeting who said, I have plenty of ups and downs especially down, since I joined the Church. I get strong on chicken and watermelon, etc., but I thank the Lord that I never lost my religion. The difficulty with the gentleman was that he did not have any to loose.

So many people today think they can do almost anything because they go through a form of prayer, read a chapter in the Bible, etc., or some might think it is because they have read the Scripture Studies, attended Church, etc. That is all right and well enough and necessary, but they are not the all important things. We should read our Bibles, and the Scripture Studies, not for form or ceremony, but in order to reach a certain end, and that is to get nearer to the Lord. The question with us should be, not how much time I go to Church or read the Scripture Studies, but how much of the Bible do I digest, how much of the communion with saints do I manifest in my walk of life. We cannot read the Scripture Studies or go to Church too often, but all these things should be to the end of our spiritual development as New Creatures for the Kingdom of Heaven.

Jesus said, "not all who say Lord, Lord shall enter the Kingdom of Heaven." It should take more than form. He said that those who attain to the Kingdom are those who would do the will of his father. Now then, if you and I today have learned sufficiently that we are to reverence the Lord, and if we have rendered full consecration to him, it would mean that we were being taught in the way the Lord would teach us, because we all must learn a very important lesson before we reach the goal of immortality. I remind you that St. Paul admonished the saints to lay up a good foundation against the time to come. The foundation is the character that God will recognize as qualifying that person for their inheritance. I know some think they have a good foundation because they have a good pocket book; they say, Yes, I have a good bank account, a good farm and enough to keep my family. Another, will say, I have a good education or a good profession. Another, will say, I am popular in society, I am happy and do what I please. Yes I know, but I do not think St. Paul had any of those things in mind when he admonished the saints to lay up a good foundation for the time to come. He was speaking from the standpoint of eternity. A man might have plenty of money, education, a good profession, popularity,

and plenty of friends, but those things do not constitute any foundation at all when we come to eternity. They are all right here, and yet our friends, money, popularity, etc., can be swept away and then such a man has no foundation. So that in order to attain eternal life we must have a foundation of a good character.

The more we view the matter the more we will be inclined to marvel at the thought. We are to enjoy a great reward and it is no wonder that God requires us to lay up a good foundation against the time to come. You do not know how long eternity is, we cannot comprehend it. Neither can we comprehend the great reward that we are to enjoy in the Kingdom of God. What is this foundation? It is a character like his Christ likeness. Now then, all those who are going to enjoy the Kingdom of Heaven must have their lives, words and doings here in line with the divine character represented in Jesus. We sometimes use the thought of a Pyramid to represent perfection and our Saviour is represented in the Pyramid as the top corner stone. Well now, the Bible tells us that we are built up into him. That means that your life and my life must be squared with the angles and lines of the top corner stone which is the chief corner stone. In the Bible we have the example of Christ-likeness in Christ as he lived, thought and acted, and the example he demonstrated while he was here on the earth. And the Bible declares that we are to take him as our pattern. We read that he was heard in that he feared. He revered Jehovah. He did not question Jehovah's method of dealing with him. Our Lord's devotion cannot be questioned. I do not think the Saviour ever stopped to question why the Lord asked him to do what he did. When God made that proposition to him to come here to redeem mankind, Jesus might have said, I do not know whether I will go or not; just tell me what it is going to cost me, what will I have to do, what will I have to suffer, where would I go? Tell me about it and I will think about it. No, Jesus said, Yes, my father, I will be glad to cooperate with you, only too happy. Then when he came to earth and found himself against this great proposition, I do not think Jesus ever said, Well father I did not think you would have me undergo such a great work. No, he did not talk that way, but he always said, I delight to do thy will O my God. I do not think Jesus ever stumbled or faltered in his course because he had implicit faith in God, that Jehovah would work out that which was for the best for him and God would not let him lose out in the end. Therefore anything our Father wishes he can do to me. It is as though God had come to us and said, would you like to have a share with my son in his kingdom? And we would say, yes. Are you sure about that, you have earthly prospects, you have homes, earthly ambitions, etc.? Are you willing to sacrifice these in order to be joint heirs? Those who have come to know God have said, Yes, Lord, I have given myself away, this is all that I can do. We said that because we have come to have the same faith in Jehovah that Jesus had, and we would say, We want you to teach us the way you choose because you are the best chooser; you understand your business and you will not make any mistakes in choosing for us.

As we realize our own lack of wisdom, how much we feel the need of greater counsel to guide us day by day into the way that we ought to go. Now we see friends that gives us power to walk the narrow way is faith in God's. Because we believe in him we have decided to do what he asks us to do. It is the same that gave to our Lord the impetus to follow him. Our Lord was then able to hold fast and be faithful. Our faith is what is enabling us to follow his teachings. The man who has faith can be said to be in a very happy condition because he has the Lord on his side in fighting the good fight of faith. Any not having faith is not a good Christian.

Now friends, you and I are in the way trying to lay the good foundation for the time to come. It is a good character. How far along are we in the school of Christ? God is now teaching us the way that he chooses. It means that we are in the great school, and he is the great school master. There are some great teachers on earth, and you know some of them. they think they are teaching all there is to be known in the universe, but they do not know what there is in the school of Christ. Many may know something about the intricate things of science, etc., but they cannot see anything about the coming kingdom. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God, because they are spiritually discerned." You will find very little of that quality in the schools of earth which man has organized. We are learning the lesson here that men cannot teach us about the Kingdom, so we are sitting at the feet of Jesus and we are progressing in the school of Christ. Now friends, I think that it will be well for us to ask ourselves, What grade are we in, how far along are we? Some may say, well are not all the Lord's people alike? No the Bible does not say that we are all in the same grade, but that it is a progression or that it is a process of developing the new nature. We have a common standard, but they are not all in the same class. Some are higher up than we are. What grade are we in this morning? We cannot grade the Lord's people. Some try it and make a great mistake. If we are doing the judging we may put some too high or too low. Jesus said, "Judge nothing before the time." When the time comes and God gives us the power to judge we will know all about it. Every person should attend to his own business—such a person will have all that he can do. How shall we judge ourselves? By exercising mind and heart in a careful discrimination of ourselves. If we judge ourselves we will not be judged of the Lord.

Now then, the Lord is teaching us in his leadings day by day. We must walk in his leadings and ask ourselves why we have certain experiences, and draw the lessons there from. He does not tell us just why because we are walking by faith and not by sight. Sometimes you are going through a way that you cannot possibly fathom and cannot understand. It is because the Lord wants us to do God's will without asking questions. So God wishes us to develop that faith which will not require us to ask, why. I remind you that St. Paul had an experience along this line. He had a thorn in the flesh and he made up his mind that he would ask the Lord to remove it. He wanted to have the thorn removed, he thought he could serve the Lord better, or make a better apostle, etc. So Paul said, I am going to ask the Lord to remove it, and he did ask but it was not removed. So

Paul said, I will pray again. And still the Lord did not remove it, and he prayed the third time and it was not removed. The Lord did make one answer, and that was, "My grace is sufficient for you." What did St Paul do about it? Well, St. Paul might have become sour and bitter; he might have said, Well, I will give up the whole race. He did not, however, and I am glad, but he said, I will endure this affliction that the power of God might be manifested in me. His conclusion was that the Lord was giving him an experience that was keeping him humble. Had the thorn been removed there would have been a tendency toward self-esteem and he might have gotten to think too much of himself, and if the Lord had not given him that affliction he might have said, Well, I tell you, I am the greatest of all the apostles.

I tell you friends, that that example of St. Paul is a most noble and marvelous one. I believe that others have thorns in the flesh in other ways. We can pray for them to be removed but with all our praying we ought not to be too certain that the Lord is going to deliver us. The Lord may never make any change, nevertheless if we find that the Lord is going to make any change at all we can say, All right, Lord, most gladly I will endure. My friends, let us take ourselves to the Lord in prayer and leave ourselves there. I thank God he has been showing me more and more how to do that. We should go to him and pray, Lord, you know all about me and my affairs and you have told me to cast all my cares upon you, and I come here for the purpose of doing it, and I want you to overrule everything in my life so that I can be fit for the Kingdom.

Now friends, we are coming to see more and more the meaning of our experiences and that we are now on the way which he chooses for us. He is leading us forth to glory, honor and immortality. Jesus said, I am going away prepare a place for you and if I go away I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am there you may be also. He was virtually telling us that he expected us to be ready for that place and the place is the divine plane of the New Creation. We are being led day by day, being disciplined and instructed that we might make our calling and election sure. In following God's teachings we are laying up for ourselves treasures in heaven and in doing this we are developing character. If a man does not have character it would not make any difference how much money, fame, etc., he might have, it would not amount to anything. Our lives here are having a bearing upon the glorious future we will have, and as star differs from star in glory, so shall be also the resurrection of the dead. There will be different degrees in the Kingdom of God.

How long must we develop this character? Even unto death. "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life." My friends, we have this afternoon this thought before our minds, because we have come to reverence Jehovah, we find ourselves in the school of Christ and he will teach us in the way he chooses, and that way is the narrow way which leads to glory, honor and immortality, and the one about which the apostle said, "He that hath this hope purifieth himself."

DAY BY DAY—HOUR BY HOUR

God broke our years to hours and days
That, hour by hour and day by day,
Just going on a little way,
We might be able all along
To keep quite strong.

Should all the weight of life
Be laid across our shoulders, and the future rife
With woe and struggle, meet us face to face
At just one place,
We could not go.
Our feet would stop;
and so God lays a little on us every day.
And never, we believe, on all the way
Will burdens bear so deep,
or pathway lie so threatening and so steep,
But we can go, if by God's power
We only bear the burden of the hour.
—Author Unknown.

It is folly to seek the approbation of any being besides the Supreme. —Addison.

God should be the object of all our desires, the end of all our actions, the principle of all our affections, and the governing power of our whole souls. —Massillon.