

OUR MONTHLY SERMON.

THE CHRISTIAN'S WORK AND HIS ASSOCIATES.

By Rev. C. C. Peel.

(The annual sermon before the N. C. and Va. Conference. Published by vote of that body)

Text.—St. John 5:17, My Father worketh hitherto and I work. And 1 Cor 3:9 For we are laborers together with God. We delight to think of the creation as God's best plan taking shape, and wisely arranged so that every thing created takes its proper place, prepared to serve the ends for which it has been brought into existence. If we carefully follow this arrangement as briefly detailed in Genesis, we shall see that step by step this plan rises every thing so arranged as to display the highest wisdom and the most perfect harmony. Could we but comprehend what to us is incomprehensible, and behold this divinely conceived and constructed plan in all of its details, we would behold such beauty and harmony as mortal eyes and mortal minds have not yet fasted upon.

As far as we are enabled to follow, we see that man is the crowning work of creation—created in the image and for the glory of the Creator while all beneath is created for man—for his advancement and to assist him in accomplishing his assigned duties. Then we see the world created for man, and man created for God. As we learn that God is unchangeable, we see that the purpose of man's creation must be the Creator's purpose still, what God arranged for in the creation of man, He is endeavoring to accomplish in all the plans and arrangements for man since.

Not only do we catch this glimpse of man, but we also catch a glimpse of man in his surroundings and behold them to be the very best, and the best arranged to enable him to fill the mission for which he has been brought into existence. The body given him, for he was created in the image of God, was the very best that God could give him; so we see that God made man the best man that He could make, and equipped him in the very best manner that it was possible to enable him to fill the highest of all missions, that of glorifying the Creator. And then as the world was created for man, we behold God making the best world that he could make and the best suited to man's condition; and even in assigning him a home—the garden of Eden—he selects the best place of the best world for man's abode. It is here that God meets with man, converses with him and encourages him to go forth, having dominion over the whole realm in which he moves, bearing with God's love, God's approval, God's smiles. Thus we behold the Creator and the created moving on harmoniously for awhile, but only for a while, As we behold this we are constrained to admire and wish that such a condition might continue while the ages roll by, with no estrangement to mar this divinely conceived, and this divinely arranged deal.

This condition, though arranged in heaven and by divine appointment, though working gloriously for man's hand and God's glory, does not continue. As we follow the course that events take, we find that there is an estrangement—that man is afraid of God, that God is displeased with man. How has this come about? we ask, what has taken place? The answer is "an enemy hath done this." The enemy of all that is pure, and good and noble, has entered into this sacred realm; and in an unguarded moment man, because he neither recognized his best friend, nor yet his deadliest enemy, goes beyond his appointed bounds, disobeys the divine command; and as has been the case ever since, and ever will be, brings sorrow to himself and dishonor to his mission. Now we see him charged with a mission for which he is no longer qualified.

How dreadful the spectacle!

How awful the situation!

How changed the condition!

Man, heretofore honored with a mission the grandest conceivable, is burdened with a duty for which he is now thoroughly disqualified. God behold him struggling eternally qualified, and which he can not even begin to perform. God beholds him struggling in his own shame, laboring in his own disgrace out of harmony with his own environment.

Thus God is compelled to behold the highest of His creatures disgraced—fallen from his exalted estate. No longer is man worthy of the favors bestowed upon him and though "it repented God that he made man," nevertheless, beholding him in his sin, shame and disgrace, He pities him, yea, he loves him still. The trinitarian council of heaven now decides that this priceless son, this precious jewel shall be redeemed—taken from the dust and disgrace of disobedience released from the clutches of Satan, and given an opportunity to come back into his Maker's favor, and again to start on his noble Mission. God goes to work to place man upon a plane where though he is sin-scarred and sin-cursed, he can get favor and glorify his Creator.

The situation is considered, the plan is arranged, the cost is counted. It is arranged that the Son, who has worked with the Father hitherto, shall continue to work, and shall now take the lead in this work by giving himself a sacrifice for man's ransom. Further it is arranged that even man, as he became given to man, shall be used in it. Through patriarch, priest, and prophet God works for man's uplift, He toils, struggles. Sometimes we see man showing the inclination to be, and do something; at others he turns his back upon his God, and faces toward hell, absolutely refusing to be or do any thing worthy of himself as that will honor his God, seeming rather to delight in rushing headlong to destruction. God still holds on steadfastly to His initial purpose, works on in patience, and labors on in love. As soon as the situation will permit Christ, the Son, makes His advent into the world, labors, teaches, endures, suffers, dies; thus working in harmony and union with the Father that those gone astray might be sought out, those lost be found. We are here permitted to behold the grand truth that our Heavenly Father delights to bring into service and use all that will work with Him in the accomplishment of this divinely arranged plan.

All that Christ taught, all that He did, all that He undertook, was but manifestation of the work that He and the Father had been laboring to accomplish from the fall of man on down through the ages. The sufferings which befell Christ here on earth were but indication of what had been borne in heaven whether by Father or Son, the work was one, the endurance one, the end sought one. "My Father worketh hitherto and I work."

The purpose in the creation, and Father and Son labored together then was one; in the work of redemption, and Father and Son labor together, the purpose is one, the end sought to be accomplished is one. The Father and the Son are one and inseparable in their great work and the greatest of their work is not the guiding of spheres and planets in their orbits, making the course of the comets as they sweep around the sun and dart off into space never to return in the same path again, count the sounds of the sea-shore and number the stars of the heavens, and number the stars of the heavens, reckon the atoms of the sun or calculate the effects of panics, even though these are important but to redeem man from his fallen estate and enable him to fill the place for which he has been created.

In the work of man's ransom God employs angels, because they belong to that portion of God's family that is in heaven; and angels are ever ready to fly to the remotest parts of earth at God's command in behalf of any oppressed soul striving to favor its Creator. Thus all the family in heaven with Father, Son and Holy Ghost in the lead, are working for the selfsame end. Christ has come into this world, not only to save us; but, being saved, to favor us with the high calling of laboring with him. We are laborers together with God. So that not only the family in heaven, but also in earth is favored and blessed with the exalted privilege of laboring with God, but also of being used of Him in bringing the world back to Christ.

We would get the idea then of the fact that man is saved not simply for the sake of saving him alone; but that God may then use him to help to save the world. We further more understand that in this great work of world-redemption are associated with man all the forces at God's command angels and archangels, principalities and powers, things present and things to come, things in heaven and things in earth all unite

to do His will—to carry out the divine plan of bringing man back to God and associating him in work with God. The laboring Christian then is not only associated in this work with all the pure and the good of earth, but with all the good of heaven. God leading all, and directing all. Thus man redeemed is of the family of God, and united with the whole household of faith in this work of patience and labor of love. Nor is he far separated from the world wide forces, but rather in communion and touch with them—they laboring on the other side of the sea, and he on this, but each one filling his place, being used of God as a factor in the same thing. In asking man to take part in carrying out this divinely arranged world wide program, he is only asked to join hands with God and unite forces with heaven to save himself and rescue the world from clutches of Satan, to join the ranks of the Lord, and become identified with the armies of the skies.

Before work can be completed, this world-wide program carried out, Satan must be driven from the abodes of men, and cast out of the hearts of the children of men. His empire must be overturned, and his authority banished. Evil-doers and evil doing must be found no more. The work must go forward until the sinner is saved from his sins, as classed where he belongs and is sewing with the devil and his angels. Let none deceive himself that he may wink at the sins of others, take part with them, and even plan the same, in a word serve Satan all he can propagate the interests of hell all possible, and still take work with the chosen forces of our God.

The church of the Living God is called with an high calling to purge herself of the emissaries of Satan, to arouse herself from all lethargy, and go forth engaged in the mighty conflict.

Japan became determined that Russian aggressions in the far-distant East should cease, so she aroused herself to the greatest resource of the Sun-rise Kingdom, and went possible activity—calling into play every forth in such strength as to astonish the admiring world. How well she succeeded in the task has passed into history and will be left as a heritage to other generations.

While Japan has wonderfully increased her standing among the nations of earth, she has brought to light arts that will benefit the future generations. When the church shall arouse herself to the fullest activity, and call into play her greatest strength when she shall behold the sons and daughters of earth, the fairest, the highest and loveliest, led astray—with life debauched, with character blighted and with the purpose of living prostituted and shall determine that such aggressions shall cease; and then banded together as the Lord's hosts and in cooperation with the bands of helpers of the other world, she shall receive her command from the Royal Master, and march against the enemy heaven will gladly record how complete the victory is. As every Japanese counted it the highest honor to give himself and whatsoever he possessed to the success of the cause of his country; so the church, and every member thereof should count it all honor and all joy to give self and all acquisitions to the cause of this the greatest of causes, that have ever been planned or espoused, and rejoice that the mighty God condescends to honor him with a place on the heaven arranged program, and use him as a factor in this great soul-saving work.

Every Japanese accepted the place assigned by his government, and then went forth to the discharge of duty.

Shall the members of the church ask to be excused with a smaller amount of service? From the humblest rank to the most exalted position comes the call to duty.

With the forces of the church in all of its branches marshalled together, doing service in the great army of the Lord, with angels and archangels serving in the same cause, and with King Emanuel directing the onward movement, not many more generations would pass until this old earth would echo and reecho with the praises of Him who leads the united forces to victory.

The present call is not simply to enrollment, it is to duty.

Then brethren, go forth to fill the place assigned you whether that place be humble or exalted, whether it be high or low. Go in the name of Him who calls you and has redeemed you. Go, remembering whose you

are and whom you serve. Go, remembering the joy, the light, the blessing, and the glory you shall carry. Go, beholding the souls you shall save, the misery you shall drive away, the lives you shall redeem and the good you shall do. Go, rejoicing that the Lord condescends to have you in giving you a place in His vineyard. Go, remembering who are your fellow-soldiers in this grand struggle to save every nation, kindred, tongue and people of earth, cause heaven to rejoice; and may the Lord of all peace direct our efforts, smile upon us and give us the victory in His name.

Now as God has made us the best men He could make, as He has created the best world for us that He could create; as He has bestowed upon us highest honors that He could bestow, as He has provided for us the best heaven that He could provide, and as He has given us the best Savior that He could give; let us make for Him the very best co-laborers that it is possible for us to make.

DURHAM.

Dear Brother Editor: I am now writing the letter I intended writing at the close of my very pleasant year's work with the brethren and sisters before I went to conference. But having to make a change in my location for next year have not been able to write until tonight. I have never met with a more pleasant people in my ministry than those I served last conference year during my work. Some sad experiences have come to some of the homes of the flock, to wit, at Zion Church I was called upon to bury two young men who were killed by lightning at Buck Horn Electric Plant; also Brother T.L. Wicker one of the deacons who died with typhoid fever leaving a devoted wife, three boys and two girls. Damascus has been called upon to mourn the loss of one of her most devoted brethren in the person of Brother Charlie McCauley, son of Sister Sallie McCauley. We join Sister McCauley in sorrow and grief. It was a cross to leave so pleasant a field to take up my work at Durham. But I am meeting a warm welcome in the city of Durham judging from outward expressions. Since I commenced this letter I have received an awful pounding resulting in our table being loaded with good things for the body. A company of brethren and sisters and friends rushed into our home with a great many things that are necessary for the comfort and happiness of a preacher's family. Sister Luther Jones was accused of leading the company to our house and Bros. Honeycut, Perry, Okelly, B. C. Cannada and others were the speakers of the evening. The writer tried to make a talk to those present, but could not find words to express his love for all on such occasions.

A. P. Barbee.

Durham N. C.

Grifton N. C. wiped out the dispensary and won prohibition by an unanimous vote Nov. 26. Next

Out of 23 distilleries running in Pittsylvania Co., Va., in which Danville is located 19 are under seizure by the Government accused of blockading. This is the county which some months ago wanted back saloons because under prohibition, there were so many blind tigers.

Mrs. Marshall Field, widow of the late merchant prince of Chicago, and having in her own name and right the snug sum of \$60,000, 000 has renounced "Society" and obtained appointment as head of the civic health commission of the city of Chicago with entire charge of a new bureau of milk inspection. She promises the saving of the lives of hundreds of infants who yearly die in Chicago through the use of impure and adulterated milk.

Miss Gladys Vanderbilt daughter of the late Cornelius Vanderbilt reached her majority and came into possession of her twelve millions five hundred thousand dollars last August. Just after that her marriage was announced for November. Now if she will pardon us for having given only part of the name for her foreign affianced, we will give her beloved's full name which is Count Laszio Szechenyi von Sarvarund Felso Viderk of Budapest, Hungary. Which indicates that dear Miss Gladys bought her money's worth, if name counts. May their lives be long and happy.