

# A SERMON FOR SUNDAY

## AN INTERESTING DISCOURSE BY DR. HOWARD DUFFIELD.

Subject: Heart Failure—The Autobiography of Our Souls is Often Stained with the Very Faithlessness Which Blots the Memoirs of the Apostles.

New York City—Dr. Howard Duffield, pastor of the Old First Presbyterian Church, 51st Avenue and Twelfth Street, preached Sunday morning on "Heart Failure." He took his text from Mark xiv: 50: "And they all forsook Him and fled."

What covarits friendship with the Master to come to such an end? Shall the intimacies of man months go swirling like leaves in the wind before a puff of panic fear? Apostles of Jesus, why will ye be pilloried for poltroonery? When ye defied the world, the powers, the devil and the remnants of the armies of Israel, ye strewed through the Judean valleys, Saul and Jonathan died together. When ye were cast into a prison of meanness but faintly typified by the degradation of those gloomy mines that burrow into the Asiatic mountains. The opinion of the world exiles finest feeling. It dungeons the truest patriot. It rivets chains and halts our loftiest aspirations. It vetoes independence. We dare not be free and manly and genuine. It makes our feet fast in the stocks of its whims. We are all the while asking which way the weather-cock points and how the current sets, and we veer, instead of asking whether the needle points and setting our prow to the pole star; instead of reading the chart and laughing to scorn the fret and roar of the billows. We serve Christ, by the world's permission. Why begin the chronic of our faithfulness with the world's opinion? If you slip, will the world help you up? If you are sick, will the world play physician? If you are struggling with all the energy that your soul can muster, will the world lend you a hand? When your path enters the valley of the shadow will the world walk beside you on that lonely and mysterious way? When your stay here is ended will the world spend one thought upon you, keep flowers growing on your grave or tear the lichens from your tombstone? There is one who loves you, one who, whenever you slip, has an arm of love ready to catch you, when you fall has messages of hope ready to whisper in your ear. He will lighten your soul. He will gird your weakness. He will school your ignorance. He will share your sorrow. He will companion you as you cross the frontiers of time. He will introduce you to an eternity beyond. Why care very much for the opinion of the world in which we are but a fraction now, and in which to-morrow we will be a cipher? Why not very keenly care for one whose love envelops our being as with an atmosphere?

Turn the page and read the later story of apostolic loyalty. The apostles are introduced from the preface. Call the roll of that glorious company of the apostles and hear every compass point ring with fidelity to Jesus. Read how they sowed the earth with martyr blood from Abyssinia to India. Begin the chronic of our faithfulness with the name of Simon Peter, who was led out to death in the Roman amphitheatre while his wife was crowned with martyrdom before his eyes, to shake if possible the staunch rock of his bedded faith. And with the name of Paul, who was crucified and addressed her in terms of educating affection and exhorted her to remember the love of the blessed Lord and to be firm until the very end. His turn came next. He had but a single favor to ask from God as he stood there in the old Roman arena to face with a death, and that was that he might remain firm for one more hour. He had but a single favor to ask from man, and that was that he might be crucified head downward, as it might be crucified head upward, as it might be crucified head forward, as it might be crucified head backward, as it might be crucified head to the left, as it might be crucified head to the right, as it might be crucified head to the sky, as it might be crucified head to the earth, as it might be crucified head to the sun, as it might be crucified head to the moon, as it might be crucified head to the stars, as it might be crucified head to the angels, as it might be crucified head to the devils, as it might be crucified head to the elements, as it might be crucified head to the powers, as it might be crucified head to the principalities, as it might be crucified head to the thrones, and scepters. When with a lightning stroke all these fond dreams went whirling down the wind, and their cloud palaces vanished like mist at sunrise, disappointment thrust its iron into the eyes of the apostles, and spurred by an impulse which for the moment was irresistible. Their thought had been centered on the good they were to get, not upon the good they were to do.

It is not impossible that you and I should just as soon interpret the purpose of Christ's mission. In some pivotal moment the consciousness of sin unexpectedly leaps up and chills us with its shadow. We are lashed by the scorpion whip of conscience. We shudder at the thought of death. The way of certainty overshadows us. With timid fingers we open the Book of God. With eager eye we scan the page of Scripture. A wondrous gospel salutes us. Glad tidings ring like music through our hearts concerning one who has a name above every name, who can lighten the most soiled soul, who will uplift the fallen and recall the wandering, and who has promised His mighty heel upon the head of death. We kneel rejoicing at the foot of the cross. We surrender our life into the keeping of Jesus. We yield Him the ready homage of our hearts. Then comes the danger hour. Then we are in peril of thinking how much Christ has to give, and how little of what He is training us to give. Then we are vain of our own imagination with the spirits of just men made perfect, and the companies of the shining ones who walk with Christ in glory, until we lose touch with the men and women who through the sin and sorrow of the world. We forget that forgiveness is not the last word but the first word of the Gospel. We forget that pardon is not the last utterance but the first utterance of the Father. We overlook the fact that there is a culture of character which demands the energy of a hero and the patience of a devotee, that there is a service of others that calls for the crucifixion of self.

Another element of heart failure is doubt. How was it possible for the apostles to recognize a Messiah under arrest? Was this the upshot of centuries of prophecy? Was this the story that the messengers of God had been telling of majesty and glory and of victory? Was the Prince of the house of David to be dragged away in chains and the Lion of Judah to be thrust into a cage? Clouded in their perceptions, confused in their thought, confounded by the insinuations of doubt, the disciples hurried away beneath the shadow of a night that but faintly suggest the dark questionings that must have shadowed the devoted hearts.

This is a narrow way, trusting aspirants are upon every breeze. Siren songs are at every turn. Faiths are under the scalpel. Creeds are in the crucible. Bewildered criticism is passing under its lens the minutiae of our lives. We are counted holy and in the days gone by. For one, I do not regret it. Flame will never harm gold. A life's truth cannot bite a diamond. But an age of doubt brings many a doubting disciple. The champions of the faith had their doubting days, the record of which is written in the Scripture with a pen dipped in tears. There came a day when David loaves, trusting aspirant spirit that he was, was bestowed the name when God's face was hidden. There came a day when Elijah, that man with nerve of steel and heart of iron, lay spent and worn by the stress of mental conflict under the juniper tree in the desert. There came a day when John the Baptist, that mounted like an eagle to greet the dawn of truth, felt his heart weaken and his eye dim. There comes a Gethsemane to every one that is following Jesus closely, a time of darkness, of loneliness, of a wrestling in the night, when those that love us most

# THE SUNDAY SCHOOL

## INTERNATIONAL LESSON COMMENTS FOR JUNE 14.

Subject: Paul at Rome, Acts xxviii., 16-23, 30, 31—Golden Text, Rom. i., 16—Memory Verses, 23, 24—Study Verses, 16-31—Commentary on the Day's Lesson.

Paul enters Rome (v. 16). "Came to Rome." Rome is reached at last and the long journey is at an end. At this time the city of Rome was at the height of its glory. It held sway over nearly the entire known world. Within a circuit of little more than twelve miles more than 2,000,000 of inhabitants were crowded of whom about 1,000,000 were slaves. "But Paul," Nero, the emperor to whom Paul had appealed, was too much engaged in his debaucheries and pleasures to care much for such a man as Paul or such accusations as were made against him by the Jews. "By himself," this penalty was probably due to the commendation of the centurion Julius. "With a soldier." The custom was to chain the prisoner by one hand to the guard. To this chain the apostle frequently alludes in his epistles. In his friendly note to Philemon, all of which were written during this imprisonment. See Eph. 3: 1; 1 Phil. 1: 13, 16; Col. 4: 18; Philem. 1: 9, 10.

The first interview with the Jews (vs. 17-22). "After three days." Three days after Paul's arrival at Rome he invited those who presided over the Jewish community to visit him. His first steps on passing beyond the narrow circle of those already converted were directed, in accordance with his established principle, toward Israel. And as his circumstances did not allow him to seek the Jews, as he had done in other places, he requested the representatives of the Jewish congregation to come to his lodgings with all the energy that your soul can muster, will the world lend you a hand? When your path enters the valley of the shadow will the world walk beside you on that lonely and mysterious way? When your stay here is ended will the world spend one thought upon you, keep flowers growing on your grave or tear the lichens from your tombstone? There is one who loves you, one who, whenever you slip, has an arm of love ready to catch you, when you fall has messages of hope ready to whisper in your ear. He will lighten your soul. He will gird your weakness. He will school your ignorance. He will share your sorrow. He will companion you as you cross the frontiers of time. He will introduce you to an eternity beyond. Why care very much for the opinion of the world in which we are but a fraction now, and in which to-morrow we will be a cipher? Why not very keenly care for one whose love envelops our being as with an atmosphere?

18, 19. "Let me go." He narrates briefly the events given in chapters 21 to 26. The Roman officials repeatedly failed to find fault with his conduct. He had been in Rome, that they might continue the prosecution before the emperor, is not known. It is probable that they regarded their cause as hopeless, and chose to abandon the prosecution. Paul had been acquitted successfully by Lystra, Felix, Festus and Agrippa.

22. "Desire to hear of thee." They implied that they had heard of him by their request to know what he thought of this new teaching. That they spoke so cautiously, and subsequently to face with a death, and that was that he might remain firm for one more hour. He had but a single favor to ask from man, and that was that he might be crucified head downward, as it might be crucified head upward, as it might be crucified head forward, as it might be crucified head backward, as it might be crucified head to the left, as it might be crucified head to the right, as it might be crucified head to the sky, as it might be crucified head to the earth, as it might be crucified head to the sun, as it might be crucified head to the moon, as it might be crucified head to the stars, as it might be crucified head to the angels, as it might be crucified head to the devils, as it might be crucified head to the elements, as it might be crucified head to the powers, as it might be crucified head to the principalities, as it might be crucified head to the thrones, and scepters. When with a lightning stroke all these fond dreams went whirling down the wind, and their cloud palaces vanished like mist at sunrise, disappointment thrust its iron into the eyes of the apostles, and spurred by an impulse which for the moment was irresistible. Their thought had been centered on the good they were to get, not upon the good they were to do.

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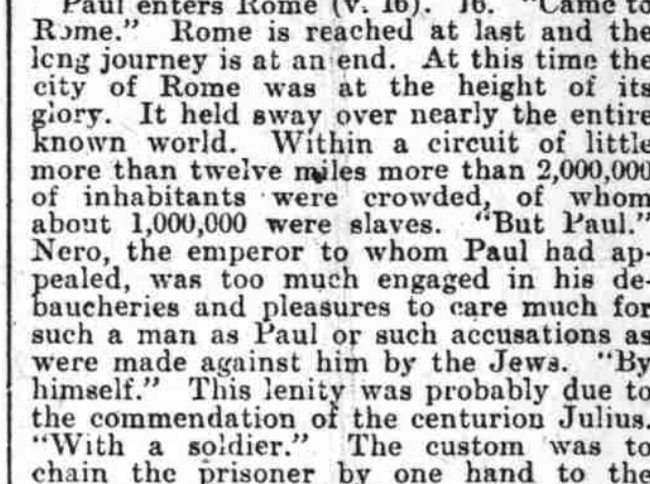
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THE greatest things in life are the things that all can do.

The only way to arbitrate with the devil is with a shot-gun.

When David takes Goliath's weapon he loses his heavenly ally.

Prosperity is liable to turn the Christian race into a dull trot.

It is better to give evidence of salvation than to be able to understand it.

If there was salvation in legislation Moses would have rendered Christ unnecessary.

It is hard for churches to grasp the law that when they are dead they have to be buried.

It is hardly fair to expect God to provide us a home there if we shirk the responsibilities of a home here.

God's justice cannot be weighed in the scales of our scruples.

A good deal of laziness of mind is called liberality of opinion.

Greatness of soul is not synonymous with littleness of sense.

The modern pharisee knows enough to adopt the publican's prayer.

The sign of the dollar is the one most sought by this sinful generation.

The flight of time ought to remind us of the coming of the time of our flight.

It is of little use making earth like heaven until we make men's hearts like God's.

To be called God's child is not so much an expression of your doctrine as of your destiny.

The indifference of the masses is to be accounted for partly by the differences of the churches.

There are churches where Christ instead of driving out the traders would have to cast out the devils.

The survival of the fittest may be the way of law, but the salvation of the failures is the way of love.

A virtue is not a deceased vice.

Sorrow is a stronger link than joy.

Fine harness does not make the fast horse.

# LABOR WORLD.

Calgary, Can., carpenters have struck for higher wages.

Spain has a legal eight-hour day that the courts have no power to interfere with.

An unusual amount of unemployed labor is an existing condition in Sheffield, England.

It is stated that more than 15,000 women are employed on the six principal French railways.

Machinists on strike at Quincy, Ill. have agreed to a settlement of their strike by arbitration.

The Miners' Union, of Lanarkshire, Scotland, has added \$30,000 to its credit in the past six months.

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