

“THAT WHICH IS COMMITTED TO THY TRUST.”

(I TIM. VI. 20 ; MARK XIII. 33 TO END ; LEV. VIII. 33
TO END.)

THE desire is, by the Lord's grace, to consider that which is committed to our trust.

We are left here as trustees to take care of, and to be concerned for, that which God has entrusted to us. I suppose every one of us has been entrusted with some charge from God. There may, however, be those present who have no living link with Christ, no knowledge of God or concern about their souls, but I would suggest that each one of us has a sacred trust put into his charge by God Himself. It should be a matter of deep and personal interest with every one as to how he is

2 *“That which is committed to thy trust.”*

answering to it. The first great consideration is that

OUR NATURAL LIFE

is a trust from God. God has given to each one of us a life to live. He has given us health, ability to think, the possibility of influencing others and of using our life, our time, and all we possess, for His glory. Every one is either true to that trust or unfaithful as to it.

It is no mere accident that we are here in this world; we are spending our days by the mercy of God. Each day comes and passes, carrying with it a definite and specific responsibility, and we should be awake to the solemnity and reality of life. It is a sad thing to go through life and awake at the end to realise that it has been misspent, and then to say, “How I wish I had spent my life differently.” It is sad indeed to wait until there are only vain regrets and remorse left for us. Let us seek that we may be awakened to

the value of life, to come under the hand of Christ and have that life saved for God, devoted to Christ, and used as realising the value of it, so that, instead of a mis-spent life, it may have been well spent.

We realise what a triumph of mercy it is when God comes in and saves an old person just as he is slipping into eternity. One rejoices in the triumph of God in extending mercy to a man who has lived a lifetime in self-will, that He should then receive him and give him a welcome as a repentant sinner; but it is a greater triumph of our God to secure a young life that the soul may be saved for eternity, and, in addition, that the life may be spent under the hand of God for His glory, for the testimony of Christ, for the furtherance of the interests of the house of God here on earth, and for the encouragement of His beloved people.

It is a joy to look into the faces of the young and think what possibilities are open to them, until the Lord comes, to

spend that life which God has given for His glory. Hence we turned to the Epistle to Timothy and read those words: “O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust.”

Timothy was a young man with his face turned Godward, with his soul saved and his life devoted to Christ. The apostle knew him and loved him, and had a deep concern for his welfare. He therefore wrote him this letter, and in true affection said, “O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust.” You know what a man means when he puts his hand on your shoulder, and, as he looks into your face, gives you an earnest exhortation. You feel the affection that is behind it; you know the faithfulness which moved his heart to address you thus. So that beloved servant was moved by the love of Christ when he wrote to Timothy thus.

It is sad indeed to see so many really fine young men and women throwing their lives away. Many able and promising

young men are devoting the whole of their lives and energies to the pursuit of the pleasures of sin, consumed by their love of honour and fame, or wasting their lives in folly and vanity. There are many young women capable of being used greatly in God's service, yet spending their lives like butterflies, with no objective but self-love and self-gratification. But you look round with joy upon the beloved young men and women who have come under the influence of Christ and would say, “Keep that which is committed to thy trust.” Do not consider it lightly that the Lord has put His hand upon you and touched your affections by the power of His love. There is a wonderful life to live, a marvellous sphere to live it in, a remarkable company to walk with, a great incentive to use your energies, and then, the most profound of all, there will be eternity to spend with the Lord you love.

Now the thought of faithfulness arises. Oh, that we might be prepared to face it!

6 *“That which is committed to thy trust.”*

We are called upon to keep that which is entrusted to us. What sort of custodians are we going to be? If I were appointed to be a trustee of an estate, how concerned I should be to be governed by the principles that should control one with a trust. As there may be some here who do not quite understand that position, I will endeavour to explain it a little. There are three distinct points about a trustee. The first is that he is dealing with property which is not his own. The second is that he is bound by law to invest trust money suitably in the very best investments that are open for trustees to invest in; it must not be invested frivolously. It is not his own, and therefore it should be put out to the best advantage. Thirdly, he has to give an account of all he receives and of all he pays. That makes it a very practical matter.

God has put us, as those that love the Lord Jesus, in possession of a trust, and we do well to realise our helplessness and

to say, “Lord, help me, for what I have is not my own, it is Thine.” My health, my body is the Lord’s; all I possess is His; I am only a trustee. My energy is not given me to spend in the interests of this present evil world. I cannot claim my possessions, but only say, “It is all Thine, it is not mine: I am only a steward.”

Then I would turn to the Lord and say, “Lord, give me wisdom. I would like to invest what Thou hast entrusted to me in the very best investment I can find.” I wonder whether the young men have ever weighed over the suggestion that the Lord made to His disciples, that all they invested in the interests of God down here brought forth a hundred-fold. If you calculate it, a hundred-fold means that if you invest one hundred pounds you get ten thousand pounds in return—*ten thousand per cent.* A man of the world would say, “That is good interest; I would like to invest in a concern that entitled me to ten thousand per cent. interest.”

If you put your life, out of true affection for Christ, at the disposal of the Lord, it will yield ten thousand per cent. interest. You will never calculate the joy, the blessing and the privilege that the Lord gives to those who surrender their lives for His pleasure and for His glory. A life spent for God is the finest investment you can find on earth; there is nothing to be compared with it. Just trust, and you may go forward with all confidence, for the Lord will give you understanding in all things, and you will find how to invest your time, your energies, your mental powers, your interests, your affections in that which shall yield you a hundred-fold in this life, “manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting.”

As a trustee I am bound to have regard to the fact that I must render an account, and would pray, “So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.” Every day has its record.

If we move in the light of the judgment-seat of Christ, we shall have regard to the fact that the Lord will shortly review the pathway of His people, but not with the idea of pouring judgment upon them. No, it is a great review day, when the Lord will delight to surround Himself with the objects of His love and have in review their pathway in order that He may publicly appreciate that which has met with His approval in their lives down here. He would have us live in the light of the judgment-seat of Christ, when every one shall give an account. There is an account day. There is a day when trusts will cease, when our trusts shall be "wound up," as men say; when the last day of responsibility will have been reached, and we shall go to be with the Lord. We shall no longer tread the earth in testimony, in witness, and in responsibility to Him, but enter, in all the fulness of divine grace, into the joy of the Lord where there are no responsibilities, no cares, but all is joy

10 "*That which is committed to thy trust.*"

and divine love. Let us remember this important question of giving account.

In view of this we should cultivate the habit of rendering an account to the Lord *daily*. It is well worth while. It is difficult to keep accounts if they are not kept daily. We do not find long accounts in business are profitable, and we may apply that principle to our daily life. Young believers who have never tried it, begin now! Get into the presence of the Lord and give an account of how the day has been spent; to find how much or how little has been spent for Him and to have a deep concern about that which has been spent in vain. Remember a day spent in vain can never be recalled. There are many days we would all gladly recall; we should have spent them otherwise. The Lord would encourage us in rendering an account to Him. It shews a recognition of His rights over us, and He would greatly bless us in doing it.

We should be more true to our trust

“That which is committed to thy trust.” 11

if we went continually to Him to get a sense of His approval. We should have an assurance of what was pleasing or displeasing to Him, and be encouraged to pursue a path for His pleasure and delight. We should get alone with the Lord and we should have this matter out with Him, and we should recognise that our lives—the few days that are left to us—are His sacred trust, put into our hands by the Lord Himself. It would be so much more easy then to pursue a path which would be pleasing to the Lord. Many are living for themselves, many who should be yielding a hundred-fold are living lives which will only yield sorrow. The Lord would have us true to our trust. “O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust.”

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Now we pass to the second thought,
that of

OUR SERVICE.

12 *"That which is committed to thy trust."*

"To every man his work." In the first instance the Lord would have us hold Him in our affections as the object of our hearts. Is Christ your object? You say, "I am a believer in Jesus." Thank God! "I know He is coming for me one day." Thank God again! It is a wonderful thing to look forward to, but

IS CHRIST YOUR OBJECT?

When we get up in the morning, what is the great objective before us? What engrosses us and commands our lives? When we have leisure, how do we use it? what are we spending our energies upon? what is really commanding us? The Lord knows! Possibly no one else knows, for our most secret movements are known only to the Lord Himself. He sees whether He Himself is the object of that life. We may well pray "that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by

life, or by death.” The apostle felt that, and that was the secret that lay behind his exhortation, “O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust.”

It is well to value the sacred trust of service. The Lord says that the householder taking a far journey “left his house and gave authority to his servants, and to *every man his work.*” That is in the great “service” gospel—the Gospel according to Mark. Have you been just going quietly on and saying, “It is very nice for those who are gifted to serve the Lord, but I suppose there is nothing I can do for Him?” The Master Himself says that He went away and gave to *every man his work*—to every one who belongs to that household where the Lord is recognised—to every one that has come under the Lordship of Christ. Have you sought the Lord and asked Him what particular work He has entrusted to you? Have you ever inquired of the Lord what He would have you to do? These are matters to

be weighed over in the presence of the Lord. We have but a short time to spend here, and the Lord has directly linked us with His service.

There is the great question of the gospel, How do men hear the glad tidings? "Oh," you say, "preachers preach the glad tidings." Yes, but how do they become preachers? Having heard the glad tidings themselves, their hearts have been touched by the love of God, and they are bubbling over to tell others of the God they have found, and of His wonderful grace. It is not merely because they can speak publicly but because they are the subjects of divine mercy; their hearts are on fire to tell others of the wonderful story of the Saviour-God whom they once feared and doubted. He redeemed them and they now know Him as Father, so that they long for others to know Him also. It is not necessary to stand on a public platform to be a preacher.

Moreover, there are different kinds of

"That which is committed to thy trust." 15

preachers. Some say by their lives, "It is not enough to have Christ," for when believers go to the world for pleasure they are telling others that Christ is not enough for their hearts. Many are thus preaching against Christ. Every wrong step we take, every false impression of God we give is preaching against Christ.

But there are many who are preaching that His love *is* enough to fill the heart, that the company of the people of God is well worth having, and that the saints of God are the "excellent of the earth." Do you know what it is to let the influence of your love tell on those around you, so that those who know you say, "There must be something in it or he would not be so happy"! A happy life before the eyes of men, when one has not to resort to the pleasures of this world, is a preaching for Christ—a living witness to what Christ can do.

Service is open to the youngest and feeblest believer. It is committed to our

trust by the blessed Lord Himself. Are we going to be faithful or unprofitable servants? That day will declare how true we have been to our trust in the recognition of the greatness of the privilege that it is to serve the Lord. We recognise that only by His grace, His support and His power can we be true to our trust. “To every man his work.” We would encourage the youngest, for the Lord’s service is a wonderful interest; there is exceeding joy in it. He puts the desire there; He grants you all the power and the grace to carry that desire out, and then He is gracious enough to reward you for all that you have done.

A short time ago, I was standing by the bedside of a brother who had been bed-ridden for several years. He was exceedingly bright. I went there to cheer him and I came away cheered myself. Just as I was leaving he said to me, “I wonder whether you realise that at the judgment-seat of Christ this little interview is coming up and that there will be three hearts

delighted through it.” I said, “No, I have never thought of it; it was a joy to come, I did not attach any thought of reward to it.” “That may be,” he said, “but it will be exceeding joy to the Lord’s heart to say, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant.’ The Lord has approved of the fact that you have been to see me. It will be a joy to *His heart*, and I am sure it will be a joy to *your heart* to hear Him say it, and I know it will be a joy to *my heart*.” He had a sense of how pleasing it is to the Lord that one of His brethren should be visited. “Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.”

Let us encourage the young believer to wait upon the Lord as to visiting the sick. There are many people within our reach who would love to be visited. If you had seen the look there was in the eyes of a poor old dying woman whom I saw, you would believe it. She looked up into my face and she said, “You *will* speak and

pray with me, won't you ?” Her heart was longing for a word about the Lord. There are many thus waiting for you to speak to them. You do not have to be a preacher to do this. You must have your heart full of the love of Christ to do it, and you will be able to tell them something to fill their hearts. You do not need to be an *experienced* visitor. If you think that, you may wait until your opportunities are over for ever. May the Lord set our hearts on fire to be available to Him for His service. Remember that “He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much.” Many a young man may be waiting until he is able to speak to a large number of people. The Lord is waiting for him to have the heart to speak to one individual. It is possible to have right desires, but to fail to carry out that which is entrusted to us.

It was put thus in that well-known Old Testament story: “A man turned aside, and brought a man unto me, and said,

“That which is committed to thy trust.” 19

Keep this man: if by any means he be missing, then shall thy life be for his life, or else thou shalt pay a talent of silver. *And as thy servant was busy here and there, he was gone.* And the king of Israel said unto him, So shall thy judgment be; thyself hast decided it.” He failed to keep his one trust, and lost his life through his failure.

That was in the day when judgment was ordered, this is a day when grace reigns, and it may be the Lord has entrusted to you one precious soul, to tell them the wonderful story, and testify to them of your precious Saviour. Are you too busy here and there to keep the one trust the Lord has entrusted to you? It may be only one little service in this day of rush and bustle. The Lord give us grace to be true to the trust that He has committed to us, that we may carry it out simply and faithfully, that He may be glorified.

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Now I would suggest to our hearts that there is an aspect of our trust even more precious than those of which we have spoken. We have in Leviticus viii. that most sacred trust which was entrusted to the priests. It is a large subject, but I would like to put it briefly for the prayerful consideration of our hearts. The greatest privilege and the greatest trust that our God has put before us and committed to us is that of

THE INTERESTS OF THE HOUSE OF GOD.

The truth of the house of God has been greatly developed in living spiritual ministry during these last few years. The privilege that belongs to God's assembly, its love and joys, its liberty, its links, have been opened up in great spiritual power and ministered to us in a wonderful way. The sacred trust has been committed to us as having the light of this great truth, and our God would have us consecrated that we might take up “the charge of the

Lord," and that we might be true to our holy trust.

Do we think of it when we are inclined to pursue our own way, to choose our own path, or to decide for ourselves where we shall live, what occupation we shall take up and what we shall do? Are we having regard to this trust—the love and joy of the house of God, and its holy service which has been entrusted to us, and which it is our privilege to carry as the charge of the Lord? We do well to remember the exhortation of the prophet when he said, "Be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord," that we may "come out from among them and be separate, and touch not the unclean thing." There is committed to us a holy trust and only clean hands may touch the holy vessels; only the consecrated priests may carry the ark. Only those devoted to God and to His pleasure and His glory can carry out the service of the house of God, for all these are holy things. This holy trust

carries with it wondrous spiritual blessing, but also a call for consecration, holiness and separation, as becomes those bearing the holy vessels of the Lord.

The charge of the Lord is connected with the seven days of consecration which cover the whole of our lives. Our lives are made up of weeks of seven days. We are privileged to start with the Lord's supper, when we may touch assembly privileges and joys together as sitting before the Lord engaged in the holy service of God. From this we may take up, in His fear, and with holy hands, our business life, and our home life. Even the boys and girls in their school life may come under the impress of the Lord's own hand. Seven days our consecration has to be maintained, and when that week is completed we begin another with praise and worship. So our whole life is made up of seven days of consecration to the Lord. Is it not a wonderful trust? It is well worth while to consider it in all its seriousness.

Then as we see THE CHILDREN growing up among us, one after another coming to the age of intelligence, we may regard them as those whom the Lord has put into our midst to take care of for Him. They are part of the holy trust He has committed to us. Are we concerned that they should get help and encouragement through His people? They are connected with His interests, for He would have them enjoy the privileges of the house of God. Are we concerned, too, that there should be a living testimony in THE GOSPEL in power and blessing? Are we all taking up our privileges from the assembly that there may be praise Godward and blessing manward? All these things are within our reach.

There are many things which we cannot *explain* but which we can *enjoy*. I once went to the bedside of a dear old blind saint, and I asked her, “Do you know the Lord?” She said, “Sir, I have been talking to Him all the morning.” She was in touch with the house of the Lord. She

could not have explained the doctrine of it, but she could give the impression of its liberties. It was a heart free to be in communion with the Lord. The simplest can enjoy the liberty and fatness of the house of God though not be able to express much. Joy does not lie in our ability to explain these things, but in the power of the Spirit of God, though doubtless if we enjoyed them more we should find we could express more.

May we be more true to the charge which God has entrusted to us! The trust will soon be over. A few short days and the special opportunities we now have will be past for ever. May we realise the greatness, the sweetness and the preciousness of the privileges God has committed to us as a sacred trust—the joys of His own house and all that belongs to it!

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