

# The Diligent Christian

## By Paris Reidhead\*

The Diligent Christian. Hebrews, Chapter 6, verses 1 through 12. This portion of Scripture is probably one of the most controversial of all in the Word of God. As you read the Commentators that have put their thoughts on paper, you rather feel that the controversy has often been accompanied by far more heat than light. You feel as though there has been more zeal than love. And that the purpose has not been so much to prove one right as to prove others wrong. I do not believe we should approach the Word of God ever in that spirit. I certainly have no intention of doing it today. Good men, true men, men who love God and God has been pleased to honor and bless have had varied and varying opinions regarding this Scripture. I think that one of the great privileges of the Reformation is, the priesthood of the believer and the right of every Christian to understand the Scripture for himself. I do not believe that it is proper to indoctrinate a Congregation in the sense in which you are trying to get them to think what you want them to think regardless of whether or not they are in agreement. I think the Bereans set the pattern for all of us, when hearing Paul speak they went home and searched the Scriptures to see if these things be so. And it is this course that I commend to you. If I can have the effect, by the grace of God, of inciting your mind and stirring you up to read and study this portion and others related to it, then this hour will have been greatly profitable to you, and to the Church.

Let us remember, however, the general purpose of the Letter to the Hebrews. God has spoken to us by His Son. "Therefore, how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation which is now being spoken to us by His Son." (Heb. 2:3) We ought to consider Jesus lest there enter into us a heart of unbelief, and we fail to appropriate all that is ours in Christ. And writing to this people, the writer said, "I wanted to explain to you this salvation that has been spoken to us by His the Son, but I found that when I would have come to you with meat you were in need of milk; and when I would have explained to you the privileges that were yours in Christ, you were as babes." And this caused great concern, and great despair in my heart for a time, says the writer. "I was greatly troubled by it, because you ought to have been mature. You ought to have grown up. You have been long enough in the way, and there should not have been this spiritual infancy." This is what you have in the 5th Chapter that precedes the portion that we are now considering.

In order that we may have the context, I read the first three verses which give to us the goal of God's grace. "Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection;" (Heb. 6:1) This word perfection as we have said so frequently is the word maturity. In Ephesians the 4th Chapter, verses 11-13, in that which is the basic postulate of the ministry of this church, we have the words, "He gave evangelists, and Pastors, and teachers for the perfecting of the saints into the work of the ministry, unto the building up of the body of Christ: Until we all come in the unity of faith, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ: unto a perfect man." Until all of us be fully mature, grown up, the way Christ intended us to be. Let us go on to perfection, not confining ourselves to the foundation, not confining ourselves to just building the footing, and taking it out and putting it in again. Let us put the walls up, and the floor on, the roof on, and the steeple on. Let us get the edifice built. "Let us go on to perfection, go on to maturity. Not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God. Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment." (Heb. 6:1-2)

He is not intimating that these are not important truths. He is saying, however, that there is a place for these truths as the foundation to Christian character and life, but that one never will come to maturity by means of these truths. You will constantly be in that stage as children. Now it is wonderful to be a child, but it is pathetic to be a child that has not matured, and God has a contest and a controversy, because these that were His children were content to be infants. They were slothful, and sluggish, and without interest. Now He said, I would (And I read from the 11th verse of the 5th Chapter) "We have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, because ye are dull of hearing, for when ye ought to be teachers, ye are in need that someone teach you again the very first principles of the oracles of God." But, says He, You must make up your mind and set your will and fix your purpose that you are not going to let the time go on and find you in this state. Has this happened to you?

Have you made up your mind that you are going to grow up into Christ, that you are absolutely determined that you will not remain year after year in the same spiritual state.

Let us ask ourselves how much have we grown this year. How much have we matured this year? What areas of Christian truth have you appropriated during the past twelve months that you did not know previously? Are you a more useful Christian, a more fruitful Christian? Are you in a closer relationship to the Holy Ghost? Are you more completely under the control of Christ than you were a year ago? This is the pressure of what He is saying. This is the intent of it. Let us make up our minds. Let us set our will. Let us fix our purpose to grow up into Christ in all things. We will not be content to stay in the first grade year after year, or even the second, or the third, but we will go on. It is in the will. It is in the intention and purpose that this is fixed. Have you fixed it in your heart?

I wish somehow it would be possible for us to see what has happened. For four and a half years I have been with you in ministry. Sometimes a Pastor's heart becomes very burdened because the people that he loves most more than any other people anywhere hear truths that are demonstrably dynamic, in the lives of others where he may go for a day, a week, a month, or just a visit, or one night for four or five or six weeks, one night a week for that period, and see people change, completely change, their outlook change, their lives change, their ministries change. And then he comes to his own people and realizes that he has spoken to them more than to any other people, anywhere, any time. He says, Why is it? Is it that the voice becomes as the voice of one playing, as music to the ears, or discordant sounds. What have you done with the Truth? Not my truth. If it is heresy, then you have it on yourself all obligation to brand it as such and drive me from the pulpit. If it is God's truth, you have it on yourself, the obligation to walk in it, to obey it, to appropriate it, to experience it. What have we done with truth? What have we done with it? What has happened to it? This is the question that Paul is asking. This is the question that I am asking. This is the question you ought to ask your own heart.

Notice now why. Notice what Paul says in this warning against apostasy, in verses 4-6. "For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good Word of God, and the powers of the world to come, If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put Him to an open shame." And what he is saying is this, If you have done that then I have no hope for you. If this is what has happened to you, if the reason that you are sluggish, slothful, careless is because you have done as he as outlined in these verses, then I know that there will be no hope for you. But later on he goes on to say, "I am persuaded better things than these of you. I do not think this is your reason why you have not gone on in the things of the Lord."

Now this is the portion, I say, that has caused such controversy. This and then those verses of 28-31 of Chapter 10. Let me read it again. "It is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, And have tasted the good Word of God, and the powers of the world to come, If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put Him to an open shame." (Heb. 6:4-6) And notice verse 6, "to renew them to repentance." It did not say that if they repent they will not be forgiven. It did not say that if they repent they will not be pardoned. But what it does say is that when this happens, something takes place in the heart of a person that makes them unwilling to repent. There is no place found for repentance in them. It did not say that there was not a place found for forgiveness if there was repentance, but said something has happened in the human heart so that they won't repent.

Now I am going to speak to this more fully, but I have had two experiences with men that were formerly in the Alliance. One of them, a man who came into the city of New York after the death of his wife, a Pastor, left the church, and he deliberately made up his mind on the train coming in that he was going to get drunk. He went up to Jack Dempsey's Saloon, sat there, and drank himself into unconsciousness, and continued doing it till the money he had saved was gone. Then he made up his mind that was foolish, and he persisted in however revolt against the Lord, and against the church, and against the Bible. He would come to my meetings when I would be in the area where he resided. I have seen that man sit there, time after time, tears streamed down his cheeks. I would come to him afterwards, because we had gotten acquainted. What is it? Why are you weeping? And he would look at me and say, "Why am I weeping? I am weeping because everything you are saying is true, and I have

absolutely no desire to do anything about it. I have no desire to repent or change my way at all, and I am weeping simply because of self pity because I know that what you are saying is true and my heart is absolutely hard." Now this went on, not once, but I suppose I have had that same thing happen with this same man at least six times, and always the tears were, I have no desire to do differently. My heart is hard, utterly hard.

Then I had another young man who came to me in a Southern City. He came to a morning meeting several times. He was an Associate Pastor of another church in the same city. And the last day, Friday, he said, "I want you to have lunch with me. Will you?" We began to talk about his experience. How he had begun in the ministry, and how the Lord had blessed and the hunger of his heart. But he said, "You know there came a time when all my interest was in money and things. And I made up my mind I was going to get." And he said, "You know, (and tears started down his cheek)", he said, "What you are teaching is right. And what you are preaching is true. I know it is true." I said to him, "Well, why don't you come back." He said, "You see these tears?" I said, "Yes." He said, "The tears are there because I haven't any desire to come back. I have no desire. I am just feeling sorry for myself."

This is what the Scripture says, "There is no place found for repentance in them." (Heb. 12:17) It did not say that if they repented there was not forgiveness, but that something had happened to sear the human heart. Something had happened to change the attitude. Now with this in view, let us look at what Robertson says, Robertson was one of the great Greek Scholars from Southern Baptist Louisville Seminary. And this is what he says relative to it: The verb tense and I could explain it but it won't help any, the verb tense bluntly denies the possibility of renewal for apostates from Christ. It is a terrible picture, and it cannot be toned down. The one ray of light comes in verses 8 to 12. "I am persuaded of better things of you." Not here. Now the reason why such renewal is impossible is because the person crucifies Christ and puts Him to an open shame by their apostasy, saying, "Well Jesus Christ deserved to die. He was the imposter that men said He was."

There have been in the past three common attitudes toward this. Three points of view. And I give them to you with as fair as I know how an explanation. There is the one group that says that this refers to truly saved people who had fallen away, who had backslidden, been born again, and had partaken of Divine Nature, but because of their sin had fatally backslidden, or had fallen into sin. But such a group, such people who would teach backsliding out of salvation into a lost state from which they would return must also notice it is said it is impossible to renew them to repentance. And that if one were to take this attitude then it would mean that anyone found in this case would be utterly hopeless. So bear that in mind.

Now there is another group that says, This does not refer to Christians but almost but not quite saved people, that have tasted, that have looked, that have believed, that have partaken in a measure, but they have not quite been born again. They are professes, but not possessors. But there again, if this does refer to them, then it means such when they discover that they have come almost, but have not gone on, there is no hope of salvation. It is impossible to renew them to repentance. And I am sure that such that hold this would not want to say that.

Then there is another group and other individuals who hold that this does not refer to a matter (Does refer to saved people) but it does not refer to being fatally lost at all, but it refers to being put on the shelf, and taken out of service. Castaway in the sense of adokimos, laid by, and not used by God, that the person is actually saved, and that he is going to go in this state unwilling to change until he stands before the judgment seat of Christ. And then he will lose all of his reward, but will be saved yet so as by fire.

As far as I am concerned, I have no intention to say which I believe. Perhaps I would be fair to say this: Good men, and honest and true and godly have held all three positions, and have held them firmly and have advocated them strenuously. Perhaps when we get to Heaven we will discover that all three are true in some sense, and that none of them are true in quite the sense that their most avid defenders thought they were. It is not my position this morning to say to you, Take your choice. I am not even interested in that, because when you have taken a choice the other two choices still remain. All I want to say to you today is that this is God's Word, and it is true. This is God's Word, and when you have taken any explanation, or all explanations, the Word still remains. Do you see? And it is never the preacher's prerogative or privilege to take the edge off the sword of the Spirit, nor to put it into a scabbard so that it can not cut. It is not my intention to do it, nor my privilege to do

it. It is my responsibility to say, "Thus saith the Lord." And what it means, your conscious and the Holy Ghost will settle to you. You search the Scriptures. Read all that all men have said, but then remember that when everything that has been said is read and understood and comprehended by you, the Word of God remains. This is it. This is it. It is a warning. It is a warning. And it is yours to hear, and yours to heed.

I believe the Word of God teaches fear. I have said it over and over and over again. The Word of God teaches the child of God to fear. Not to fear that you shall sin, but to fear to sin. Do you see the difference? Let me explain it. I do not believe that the Bible teaches you that you should be afraid that you shall steal, because by the provisions of God's grace and the promises of His love, there is victory. But it teaches you that you should fear to steal. There is a difference. Not that you should fear that you shall lie, but fear to lie. Do you see? Not the fear that you shall apostatize, but a fear of apostasy. Fear to do it, to deny the Lord. Not be afraid of your future, but afraid of the act. Be afraid of sin. You say, Well, there is no difference. It is a haggling of words. No it is not a haggling of words. It is a basic fundamental truth of fear to sin.

Now this is God's Word. And it is to be held by you. And the moment that you allow the Sword of the Spirit to be put into a scabbard of man's working, and no longer to cut in your heart, you have been guilty of that sin of the Pharisees who, because of the traditions of the elders, made the Word of God of none effect. It is for you to accept it, and let the Spirit of God to use it, to cut any which way that He will. There it is.

For, suppose that any one of these are right, or none of them are right, or all of them are right, is it not necessary for you to say, This is God's Word. This is what God said. Notice the illustration that he gives of Divine Judgment here in Hebrews 6 verses 7 and 8: "For the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God: But that which beareth thorns and briers is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing; whose end is to be burned."

What analogy is he now using? He is using the earth, which is blessed with rain and sunshine, that produces, and he goes back to Christians that have been blessed with teachers, the Apostles themselves, teaching in the Power of the Holy Spirit, and he likens these Christians to that ground which has been nourished and tilled and dug, as you find in Isaiah the 5th Chapter, where he said, "I bought a hill and I fenced it and I dug it, and I put a well in it, and I irrigated it, and I fertilized it, and I planted the choicest vine, and looked that it should bring forth fruit, and it brought forth wild fruit. What shall I do to that vine? I'll break down the walls and let them trample it, for it is good for nothing." (Isa. 5:2-5) He did this historically. He did it to Israel, the ten northern tribes; their utter refusal to repent their idolatry was such that they were trampled and scattered, and no man can find them. And thus I submit to you that the analog is true of the Church; when the church loses its salt, what good is it? but to be cast out and trodden under foot?

I have told you so often about the Church across North Africa, all the way from Gibraltar clear over to the Red Sea, the church clear back into the hinterlands, as far as one hundred miles from Khartoum. In fact, there is a foundation of a church about 15 hundred miles south of Cairo on the Nile River. And all that country was Christian, but they became so immoral, so perverted, so ceremonial, so dead, salt without savor, that listen, and remember that the Peninsula of Arabia was also Christian, and when Mohammed sat there with his stylus and engraved and wrote that a man shall only have four wives, he was improving on the moral conditions of a country that was called Christian. And that Islam actually became a moral improvement over the ethics of that decadent powerless, meaningless type of Christianity. And Islam came as a purifying thing and swept across and the church was trodden under foot, because it had lost its savor. He had rained truth, He had rained love, He had rained power, He had rained blessing, and it brought nothing but briers and was burned with the scourge of Islam.

That is what He is saying. We have history to back it up. We have the history of nations to back it up. When Stacey Woods was with us in our Convention in October, he stood right here with a heart that is broken because he sees, as few men of our generation do. He said, "We are ripe for judgment. Ripe for judgment." I think he is absolutely right. Bankrupt evangelicalism to some degree, perhaps. Certainly Christ has not been muddied by it all. But oh I submit to you, dear heart, that this is a warning that we take personally.

How much truth is rained upon you? How much sunlight has come upon you? How much of God's blessing has come upon you? Have you prospered by it? Has it brought forth fruit? Have you grown in it, and under it, and to it, and toward it? Or, is it briars to be burned? This is the illustration of how it is dealt with. It has been dealt with by Nations, by churches, by Denominations. "Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit is taken away." (John 15:2) What do men do? They cut them. They prune them. They gather them. They burn them, said our Lord Jesus.

Now we come to the desire and the assurance of the writer toward the people to whom he wrote. Verses 9 to 12. The assurance and desire of the writer. But, beloved. But, beloved. This is the only place so far that he uses the word of tender endearment, Beloved. Does a parent indicate lack of love for the child by warning the child, saying, Dear, if you touch the stove you will be burned. Someone might say, "This is cruelty." Do not put prejudicial thoughts in the little child's mind. You are creating incipient frustrations. This child is going to go through life with a fear. Well, it is better that he be afraid than have his hand burned off to the wrist don't you think? I think so.

And here is fatherly love, tender love that has been prepared to warn about something dire, something stark, something possible. And yet he comes to them and says but Beloved, Oh God loves you. He loves you and he has put into my heart a love for you, But, beloved. We are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak. I have to speak this way, says the writer, because it is true. I have to warn you, because it is so. I want you to fear because it is a dread possibility. "But I am persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation. For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have showed toward His Name, in that ye have ministered to the Saints, and do minister." (Heb. 6:10) This is his conviction regarding his readers. You have been, and still are serving the Lord. Therefore, I have been and still am persuaded concerning you. I have watched your life. I have known you, says the writer. I have seen what you have done, and have searched out your attitude, and I am persuaded that this is not your case. This in no way weakens the force of the warning. The fact that he says, I am persuaded better things of you, does not mean that this is not true. And it might be that someone who reads this would say, "Well he means that he is persuaded better things of me, and therefore I am immune to the cutting edge of this." It would be absolutely wrong. I can imagine someone living in sheer hypocrisy as a semi-converted, as a counterfeit Christian, reading this and saying, "Well this is mine." No, Paul was - or the writer was addressing this to a people that he knew. Did he know you? You were not the one at that church at that of time. He was not sure of this of you. However, you can say this, that if these things that he found in them are true in you, then you can say, Well this includes me. But not unless. You can not just take the first part of that verse and say, Well this gives me escape from it. We are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak...Unless the things that he described are true of you.

Now let us check and see. First, he says, "God is faithful." (I Cor. 1:9) Well we know this is true today. God is still faithful. "The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are His. Let everyone that nameth the Name of Christ depart from iniquity." (II Tim. 2:19) God is faithful. And we are not going to cease to emphasize that and echo that, and proclaim that, that God is faithful. He will not fail to keep His Word, and He can not forget what has been done.

But not only was God faithful to them, but he said, "You had been faithful to God, on the level that you have known." Their faithfulness to God is demonstrated by the fact that they have labored, and still are laboring. They are working, but they are not only working, but they are laboring in love. This love is the love of the intelligence, the love of the understanding. Such love can only spring from true faith; an absolute commitment of the entire life to God is the only source from which such love can spring. And this is the love that God always looks for. You say, "Well I have labored." Ah, yes. But there is many a person that labors, not in love, but labors to be seen of his fellows, labors to satisfy his ego, labors to be approved, labors to be applauded, labors for the reward that he will get now. Ah, there are many ways for which people can work. The fact is not that they labored, but they labored in love, that they labored in agape. They labored in that love of the intelligence, of the understanding, and the commitment of the will. It was this that made them acceptable, and the work acceptable. It was this love for which God looked. This love that rises from true faith always is manifested toward God and toward His saints. Is it not strange?

It is impossible to give anything to God. Have you ever stood with a 50¢ piece in your hand and said, "Now, I would like to give this to God." How are you going to do it? You can not throw it high enough so that He will catch it. What are you going to do with the 50¢? The only possible way that you can give it to God is to invest it in something in which God is interested, in some need. And inevitably those needs are going to affect people. And thus, we find, as love always is manifested, that it true agape, is manifested toward the saints. And here was a church where they were laboring and serving in love for the saints, ministering in behalf of the children of God. It is inevitably that way. If they had been laboring for their own honor and glory, he could not have said what he said here. "God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward His Name."

You see, we labor with an eye single to His Glory, and if we labor properly. True love is going to make it that one is impelled to serve Him, not to be honored, not to be recognized, not to be applauded, not to be approved, not to be rewarded, but to do it out of love for Christ and be perfectly willing to leave it there. May I go so far as to say that everything for which we receive reward here we shan't receive reward there. And this was laboring in love for His Name. He had an eye single to His glory; the only interest that he had was that God be glorified. I am willing for the chariots of God to ride on even if they ride over me, this was the attitude that is here, a labor of love for the saints, for His Name. Because of His Name. Glorify Thou Thy Name in me and through me, this becomes the attitude. I think that every child of God that would approximate this is going to say, I want God to get, all the glory He can possible get out of my life, whether I am known or unknown, whether I succeed or fail, whether I live or die, whether I am sick or in health. There is only one thing I ask, and that is that these few brief years of time shall render to Jesus Christ the greatest possible glory. He can take me as He would a sponge, and wring from me by any means He will anything that will glorify Him. I choose not.

And then it is for His Name. Then it is a labor of love. It is His. I do not believe that surrender is complete until at least this has become the commitment of our hearts, probably not realized to the fullest degree here, but certainly the direction and the purpose of the heart, and utter abandonment to the glory of Christ. Are you laboring that way? With that love? Not counting your own time, your own strength, your own recognition, your own reward, but you are laboring only for His Name and for His Glory. Such were they. They were using everything they had, but you see there was more than they had. More than they had. And God wanted them to have it all.

And so he said in the 11th verse, And we desire: Earnestly, zealously long. Oh that is a strong word. And we desire that every one of you do show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end. How many times people think that believing on Christ is an act that they perform, and now they have believed, and they settle back in the fact, I believed six years ago. A believer is a believenger, someone who believed, continues to believe; someone who committed, walks in that commitment: Someone who trusted and continues to trust: Someone who abandoned, and walks in that abandonment.

"Ye did run well. What hath hindered you," (Gal. 5:7) he said of one. Now says the writer to these people, "And we desire that every one of you do show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end: That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises." (Heb. 6:11,12) He said, "I have something to tell you about Melchizedek. I have something to tell you about the Mediator of the New Covenant. I have something to tell you about the glorious privileges that are yours in Christ, this great salvation that has been spoken to us by Christ. Now I am persuaded that you are children of God. I am persuaded that you have not apostatized, and I am therefore entreating you and desiring greatly that you be not slothful, but diligent to appropriate and experience everything that is yours in Christ."

Now let me bring it right home to you. The evidence of the genuineness of God's work in your heart is the diligence with which you apply yourself to everything that Jesus Christ died to make yours. Let me repeat it. The evidence of the genuineness of the work of God in your heart is the diligence with which you apply yourself to everything that Jesus Christ died to make yours, and everything that He commanded you. For when you sit back, and smugly say, Thank God, I have all, and am all, and have been all, and have received all, right at that moment you contradict your profession of faith in Jesus Christ.

I remember a dear man I went to see, 83 years of age, just a few months out of his grave. He said I wish you would bring me a book. I said, "Well, if I were you studying for finals, I would be reading the Book, the Bible." "Oh," he said, "I read the Bible

once. Bring me Shakespeare; I like him.” It was terribly crass. But you know the degree of neglect that I find with Christians of the Word of God and the Truth of God, and the preoccupation with toys, and games, and all the other things that are so inconsequential in the light of eternity, convince me that there are a lot of people that have said, I read the Bible once. I would like to read something interesting now. I would like to read something interesting now “But I am persuaded better things of you,” (Heb. 6:9) said Paul. And I am of you.

And I entreat you, and exhort you, that as long as you live in the flesh, as long as you, breath the breath of life, that with all diligence you apply yourself to everything that Jesus Christ died to make yours. Do not stop with Him until He stops with you, but go on unto perfection, unto maturity.

Perhaps I am speaking to someone here today that has never been born again, and because of the Christmas Season you have come into the House. I want to say to you that this wonderful Lord Jesus died to give you full, complete, and perfect salvation; and I entreat you, and beg you, and implore you that you come to Him and abandon your life to Him, open your heart to Him, and go out even this morning, knowing that all of your sins are washed away by His precious Blood, and that you are a child of God through faith in Him. For every child of God I say this: Let us go on unto maturity. Shall we pray?

Our Heavenly Father, Thou who didst speak in times past by holy men, by Prophets, Thou hast now spoken unto us by Thy Son; and the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have beheld His glory, the glory of the only Begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. We have heard Him speak of this great salvation. Oh grant, our Father, that we shall realize that we are responsible for the rain that has come down upon us, and the sunshine that has come upon us, for all that Thou hast done to bring forth from us a harvest of glory to Thy dear Son. Thou canst only do it when we enter into the privileges that He purchased for us by His shed Blood. And so give to us, Lord, and eagerness for all that is beyond, for everything that is ours. We are grateful for the elemental principles, those first things, the foundation truths, but, Oh Father, give to us an insatiable hunger to grow up into Christ in all things. And let the warning of this Scripture be pressed deeply into every heart. Let none of us escape it. But reading it prayerfully upon our knees, let us realize that Thou hast spoken to us by the Living Word. And not to try to find explanations that sheathe it, and put it into a scabbard, but let that Word do its work deep in our hearts. And so, wilt Thou now brood over us; that one that is here unsaved, speak to him or her; and those, thy children that are here, may they have a deep insatiable desire to grow up into Christ. In His Name and for His sake we ask it. Amen.

Let us stand for the Benediction. If you would like to speak to me concerning your spiritual life, I invite you to wait behind in your seat and I will come to you or you to me, and when others have parted, we can have a time of conversation and prayer regarding these things.

Now may the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, the Communion, the Fellowship of the Holy Ghost be and abide with each of us, now and until Jesus comes again. Amen.

\* Reference such as: Delivered at The Gospel Tabernacle Church, New York City on Sunday Morning, December 18, 1960 by Paris W. Reidhead, Pastor.