

Let Us Go On Unto Perfection

By Paris Reidhead*

Will you turn, please, to Hebrews. The portion we will read is from Chapter 5 and 6. Our Theme this morning, words taken from the 1st verse of the sixth Chapter: Let us go unto perfection.

Now I would like to give you a brief resume of what we have seen, simply by quoting several verses, (beginning with Hebrews Chapter 1 and verse 2) "God hath spoken unto us by His Son" (Hebrews Chapter 2 and verse 1) "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard." "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation" (Heb. 2:3). "Wherefore, holy brethren, consider Christ Jesus" (Heb. 3:1). "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God" (Heb. 3:12). "Let us therefore fear lest a promise being left us of entering into His rest any of you should seem to come short of it" (Heb. 4:1). "There remaineth, therefore, a rest to the people of God. For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from His. Let us labor therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief" (Heb. 4:9-11). "Though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered; And being made perfect, He became the Author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him; Called of God an high priest after the order of Melchizedek. Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing" (Heb. 5:8-11).

This gives to us the testimony of Hebrews thus far. Since God has spoken by His Son concerning this great salvation, that includes the ceasing from our own labors and the entering into rest, we are entreated, we, are commanded that we should not come short of it through unbelief or indolence. But now we find that Paul has dealt to this people to whom he writes.

I should not say Paul. I continually think of him that way. But the issue is not settled. When I get to Heaven I am going to take 10 thousand years off before lunch and let him explain to me whether or not he did, and who did, and why. But until that time, I guess we will just have to suggest that perhaps he did.

But the writer of the Book of Hebrews is giving here a humiliating rebuke to the people by telling them that they are dull of hearing and hard to teach. People were sluggish, indolent, and apathetic. This is the thing that he found with the people to whom he writes, and he is concerned about them. He has warned them several times about neglecting the salvation, failing to enter in, and now he says the problem lies in the fact that you are unable to grasp those things which pertain to the relationship that Jesus Christ has for you in this great salvation.

How many there are that are content with forgiveness and pardon, and justification from past sins, but seemingly do not want to go on beyond that. And apparently there was something of that in this people. They were dull of hearing. They ought to have been teachers. They had had enough instruction. They had had Apostles for their teachers. He said, however, "You need to have one teach you again the very first principles of the oracles of God. And you have become much as have need of milk and not of strong meat" (Heb. 5:12).

He is touching a very important principle here. There is no such thing as standing still in the Christian life. You are either going to go ahead or go back. One or the other. You just cannot stand still. And he is apparently saying to the people, "You have failed to go on." Therefore, you have gone back and the principles which were clear to you in times past now have become obscure, foggy, uncertain, indistinct, and you need to have someone teach you again that justification is not an end in itself, repentance is not to stop there, but preparation for that which is to go on. And, therefore, because they had failed to go on, they had started to go back. That is, they had become dull, insensitive.

You see, only when you clearly understand the first principles can you adequately understand the fuller aspects of the Christian life, and truth, and revelation. I remember the first year when I was with you. It hardly seems possible that it is now in the 5th year. Yesterday, not yesterday but Friday, I was looking at a list of the messages that have been preached in these four years. It is astounding. Sometime you might appreciate having it published so that you could see just the ground we have covered, and how far we have gone, how many things have been dealt with, how many areas of the Scripture have been touched upon. But,

the first year or two years, I was deeply concerned (And still am incidentally) about the basic principles of repentance, and the nature of justification, and regeneration. Well why? Only a people who are fixed solidly and soundly on the basic truths have under them the foundation to go on into those other aspects of the Christian life.

Whoever heard of putting a tower on a building before they had the footing poured? Or building a church, for instance, and propping the tower up on bamboo poles and then trying to put the footing in, the foundation in, the walls in. This is not the way you do it. You first clear the ground, and then lay your footing, and build the walls, and it has to go up brick upon brick, line upon line, precept upon precept, and truth upon truth. But there is something a little disconsolate about seeing a Church in a basement. Have you ever felt that way? Now I know many groups have to do that. And I am not averse to it. But have you ever really had an emotional reaction to a church in a basement? Year, after year, after year, and they are there and have tar paper over the top because they did not want to put anything better than that on you know. And the basement is fine. Then all of a sudden it just comes to an abrupt, low, sloped roof.

I went to church for about the first eight years of my life in a basement church. And we had happy times there, and I am not criticizing it. I am simply saying that I am afraid that it represented our Christian experience. I rather think that in those eight years I never heard anything that got me much out of the basement. We just about hit that tar paper ceiling and stopped. That was about as far as we went. We never went on beyond it. And I wonder today, how many basement church Christians there would be here, that all the years of your experience you have just gotten up about six feet above the floor and there you have stopped, and you haven't gone on. You have not put the walls, and the roof, and entered on. That is what Hebrews is trying to do. The writer is speaking to a people now about Christ as Melchizedek. Well? Because, in Revelation the Lord Jesus...John is going to say of the Lord Jesus, Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins: There is the basement. And hath made us to be kings and priest unto God. There is the super-structure.

Well, Aaron was a priest after the order of Levi. And in Israel under the Aaronic priesthood Judah was the ruling land. Out of Judah did the kings come. So here Christ is after the order not of Levi, but of Melchizedek, who was a king and a priest. He was the Priest of the Most High God, and the King of Salem or the King of peace. And Christ is after the order of Melchizedek. Therefore, the priesthood of the believer is after the order of Melchizedek, not after the order of Levi. Though we learn from Levi concerning some aspects of our priesthood ministry. The writer wants to explain to them...what their privilege, their high holy privilege in Christ is, and the writer says, "You are dull of hearing." You need to have someone teach you. Put the foundation in again. It has sort of disintegrated a little. Well it is pathetic, and he tells them that everyone that uses milk is unskillful in the Word of Righteousness. He is a babe. "But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil" (Heb. 5:14). Yes, you are babes. You are hard of hearing. You are dull of hearing, and you need to be taught again the first principles. I say this is a humiliating rebuke.

But are you prepared to accept it today? Are you? I am. I am prepared to say that I am not nearly as far in Christ as I wish I were and ought to be. Are you? I hope you are. Why should we not be perfectly honest and transparent with ourselves? I believe that Jesus Christ would have us recognize that there is so much more in Him than any of us have ever seen. Every once in a while you begin to say, "Isn't it wonderful how much the Lord has taught me." You know what happens when you are saying that. You are looking down. That is the only way. Here is a ladder. When you came into Christ, you got on the first rung of forgiveness. Then you started up the ladder. And you eagerly go up the ladder, and you look around. There are not many people on the level you are. Then you look down. All the people are down there on the 5th rung, 6th rung, the 10th rung, the 11th rung, and you say, "My look how I have outdistanced the rest of the Flock. Say I really am something. Here I have come faster than all those around me." And you feel pretty good as long as you are looking down. But the moment you look up, and you see how far the ladder extends, you say, "I have hardly started. I have barely begun to get started." And I think this is where spiritual smugness comes in because we are comparing ourselves among ourselves, and judging ourselves by ourselves, instead of seeing what we are going to be. Do you realize that this salvation is so immense and wonderful, and God is so gracious and marvelous, and His Character and Person, that it is going to take an eternity in a perfect environment, unhindered by sin and all the restrictions that it imposes upon us to comprehend what is ours in Christ. And I think we ought to look up and see how far there is for us to go. Instead of saying, "Well thank God I am not like other people are. We know so much more than these do." Smugness can only come ... Spiritual complacency can only come when we compare ourselves by ourselves.

The moment that we see Him and what He has for us, and deep humility settles upon our heart, and we say, “Lord I am but a babe when ought to be a man.” I think all of us, without exception, can take this to ourselves and can say, “Yes, Lord. There are certain truths I see.” Oh I think that one who said when he finished his life (wasn’t it Bacon?) who said, I have been as a child picking up stones on the seashore, and I have filled my little pail. And what he meant was, that he had learned and acquired a certain amount of information, but in comparison to what there was to know he was just a child with his little tin pail.

This is the trouble about specialty in secular education. I will never get over my dear friend, Dr. Boles, who had his PhD. (now listen) in Warts on Apple Trees. But it was just one kind of warts, on one kind of apple tree. And this is where he had obtained his Doctor of Philosophy. Now I am grateful that he did, and I am sure that his diligence in earning his degree there prepared him to be equally diligent in other areas of thought and study, but you know being an expert on the warts on apple trees really would not make one much of an authority on other things. Would it? And so, whatever you and I have learned has been, perhaps, in some such degree. We have learned a lot about a little. Oh that God could give to us today a deep sense of humility, and a deep willingness to accept this to ourselves and say, “Lord, in the light of all that You have provided, and all that Your Word offers, I am but a babe. I want to do that. And I want you to join me in it.” If I am five rungs above some of you, and ten rungs below others of you, then it is just that we are in relationship to each other. Oh, that we might see that whatever ground we have covered, or distance we have come is as nothing in comparison to the treasures of wisdom and knowledge that are hid in Jesus Christ, that He wants to open to us. Will you do that? Will you put yourself in that place where you are willing to say: This does apply to me? Surely I am not the mature Christian I ought to be, and equipped as I ought to be equipped, and ministering as I ought to minister. Grateful for every blessing of this past. We will minimize nothing. But humble, and earnest, and simple, and sincere in seeking to go on into that full preparation that He said is the result of all Scripture. There are some Scriptures that some may know, and others do not. “But all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto every good work” (II Tim. 3:16-17). Let us take this rebuke as to ourselves.

But notice now the hopeful request that Paul makes. He expects his rebuke to take proper effect. He gave it in love. He expects it to be received in love. He reminds them that they do not know the basic truths. They have forgotten the significance of repentance from dead works. They have lost the fact that faith toward God that began was to continue. They have failed to realize the place and significance of baptisms and the laying on of hands. Oh yes, they are sure about the resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment, but they have made it a ceiling instead of a footing. And so Paul reminds them that the right understanding of these basic truths furnishes that foundation of which we have spoken.

His rebuke to them is to drive them from their sluggishness, to open their ears and their minds, to make them recover something of what they have had in the past in preparation for what they are to receive now and in the future. And so the writer focuses his concern on the teaching that he is going to give to these that will lead them on to maturity. He wants them to go on to maturity, but he indicates that it is through teaching. He is about to speak in the 10th verse and the 11th concerning Melchizedek, and Christ a priest after the order of Melchizedek. And he is saying, “Let us go on unto maturity, unto perfection.

I like Lenski’s translation of this. “Therefore, leaving the discussion of what constitutes the beginning of our connection with Christ, let us bring ourselves in our discussion to what constitutes the proper maturity” (Heb. 6:1). He wants them to take themselves to the maturity of understanding, and judgment that is needed. He wants to lead them into a discussion and consideration of what lies beyond the A B C’s, and what is built upon the foundation.

Now the implication of this to you is that if the A B C’s and the foundation are not clear in your mind, you are not going to go on to maturity. But you are not going to ever mature if you are just content with the foundation. You have got to understand that each truth that you learn is to build and prepare the way for something that is to follow. And you must have that inquisitiveness of mind and heart that is satisfied with nothing less than everything Jesus died to make yours. How much does it take to satisfy us? Have you ever been thinking or writing, or studying, (and this happens to me very frequently) and something will come that seems quite clear, and quite significant, and meaningful, and I will get up and leave the table where I have been writing. Because, what I have received seemed so precious, so tremendous, I do not want anything to minimize it.

And if I learn anything else after that, for a moment at least or a time, it is going to take away something of the significance of this that has just come clear. And so many times when I am studying, and the Lord seems to illuminate some truth to my heart, I will stop writing, stop studying, get up and go for a walk or do something else, because I want this thing to be seen without anything over it. It is like a great masterpiece, and then somebody comes and puts another picture in front of it, and still another, and still yet another, and quite soon you are overwhelmed. You do not know which one it was. If they, had just left you alone with the first one, your heart would have been fed and refreshed. But too many have dulled your ability to absorb.

Well now, there is a sense, therefore, that you're going on to maturity is not going to be in terms of a preaching schedule that I give you. I wish it were. I once... I think I thought it would be, that if I just patiently enough taught the truth, you would be able to move on with me. I really think that deep down in my heart there was some little idea that if you listened carefully and thought clearly that when I finished talking about it you would have experienced it. But I have gotten over it now. I do not think that of you, or of me either. We have to distinguish between what our intellect perceives, and what our heart has received, what our minds comprehend, and our hearts have embraced, and experienced. Therefore, you're going on to maturity, (going on in the Word means maturity. That is all. Perfection means fully developed in terms of the prospects for whatever it is.) A mature, a perfect apple is one that is ripe. And a perfect ear of corn is one that is fully developed. Mature. And a person is one that has grown up into Christ in all things. This is the meaning of perfection. Don't be afraid of it. People say, "Oh I am afraid of perfectionism." Oh forget about the Anglo Saxon word that has such a connotation. Take the Greek idea, which means maturity. You are not afraid of growing up in your family, your education, your home. Why should you be afraid of growing up in Christ? You do not need to be afraid of perfection. We are not talking about something ... I never heard anybody that believed it. But I am sure there must be. Because there are so many people that repeat it... Talk about sinless perfection. We are not talking about that. We are talking about your growing up into Christ, and becoming an adult, fully mature, fully developed. Everything that Jesus Christ intended you to be.

Now this is what he is trying to get us to see in this Text. And that is, that the degree to which you grow will depend upon two or three things. First, it will depend upon the degree to which you understand the foundational truths. Can you... I have used it before. I use it again. A building being built and the contractor runs out of steel, and so instead of putting steel in at a particular place, he has large photographs made and he pastes the photographs on the plywood and he tapes them in with scotch tapes and wire, and it looks all right from the ground, and so then he says, "Go ahead." And when steel comes, he builds right over the plywood. Well, this is the danger in the Christian life. I have explained to you how in 1949, coming back from Africa, such a miserable failure in my own personal apprehension of spiritual truth, I had took spiritual inventory. And it took me about six weeks. I had the time, was free. And day after day, I went back studying the Word and my own heart, and trying to find what was real plowing through. And you know what I discovered? Saved in 1932. In 1949, having returned as a missionary, I went down through these past years, and you know the last real thing that ever happened to me in Christ had happened the night I had been born again, because the very next day a teacher started talking to me and getting me to claim something I had not experienced, and profess something that was not real, and began from that time on taking the truths and the doctrines, and the outlines, and the explanations from books and preachers, and teachers, and piling them in my memory until I had, as I have said, a great theological compost pit. I had just taken all of this that was green when I took it, and it had just been there and become a heavy pall of death in my heart. And I ploughed it and pushed it and got away, and get back to the place that I was born again. And I knew it. And I sorted out this, and put some away, and threw the rest away, and I said, "From now on what comes into this heart has got to be real, got to be real."

First, we have got to intellectually comprehend it. And then we must personally experientially have it. Now this is what we mean when we say, "Go on to maturity." You have got to have the foundation clear. You must know where you are. It may be necessary for some of you to take spiritual inventory. Some of you have lived in a full Gospel environment all your lives. Maybe twenty years ago you made a profession at an Altar. For a week, you thought something happened. And then two weeks later, you knew nothing had happened. But all your years, you have lived in the light of an empty profession. And I assure you that the moment that you put something superficial over that which was real, there is no possibility of anything real growing. Your spiritual growth stopped back there the day that you made an empty profession. And you have got to go back there, and sort it out, and begin right there. You cannot build over it. You cannot build over that which your imagination saw, and your heart had

not experienced. It has got to be real. And, therefore, I exhort you and entreat you to go back through your life and find where reality stops. Maybe some of you have not been born again, professing to be Christians for years. You have never been born again. All right. Do not be troubled about it. We know what Jesus Christ died to do for sinners. You find out that you have had a name to live, and are dead. Do not let it worry you. Meet Him. He will give life. You say, "Well I made profession of the deeper life, and this and that, and I have not experienced it." Be honest with yourself, transparently honest. This is the only way you will ever go on to maturity. And if you find that what you have professed you have not experienced, admit it to yourself, and to others. You say, "Well I will lose face." You do not have anyway. You are not going to lose anything. Be honest. Be honest with yourself. Be honest with God, and let God meet you, and let God bless you. And if you say, "Well the profession I made was not real. Well this testimony I gave was not genuine, face it today." Find out reality began, and then begin to move. This is the first principle - is to have the foundations cleared.

The second principle is to have the truth clear. You must understand where you are to go. And then, of course, the third principle is, you must give thought and attention to the truth. And this is the thing that Paul is saying here. Now I want to read this translation that we have from Lenski, because it brings this into focus. I think that there is nothing quite as clear as this. I have read many translations, but I think they all leave something to be desired. But this one: "Therefore, leaving the discussion" (Heb. 6:1a) Can you see that Church? They had been talking about repentance, about forgiveness about baptisms, laying on of hands, these basic... "Leaving the discussions of what constitutes the beginning of connection with Christ, let us bring ourselves in our discussion to what constitutes the proper maturity for the child of God" (Heb. 6:1).

Now in this he does not explain what that maturity is. He tells us how it is achieved. Robertson throws some light on it, the great Greek Grammarian: Wherefore let us cease to speak of the first principles. Let us cease to speak. What has happened has been the Church has been confining its discussions to the milk level, and in doing that they have even lost the significance of the first principles. Let us cease to speak of the first principles indicates that their immaturity has resulted from their thought and preoccupation, and their conversation with the first or the beginning principles to the exclusion of those other areas of truth.

Then Robertson goes on: (Heb. 6:1-3) Let us bring ourselves in our discussion to what constitutes proper maturity. This is now bringing into focus the means by which you are going to grow in the grace and knowledge of Christ. What you think about is what you talk about, and what you talk about is what you think about. And what you think and talk about is what you want, and what you want is what you are willing to pay the price to receive. Now you tell me what you have been thinking about the last week, and I will tell you what you have been talking about. You tell me what you have been talking about, and I will tell you what you have been thinking about. And I will tell you what you want. And I will tell you what you are going to get. They spoke oft one to another of the Lord. You go back to Acts, the 2nd Chapter, and the 42 verse, and you read that wonderful testimony of 3 thousand people that were baptized on the Day of Pentecost, and it says, "And they continued steadfastly in the Apostles' Doctrine, in fellowship, in breaking of Bread, and of prayers. And they grew, and strengthened and became a force that God could use."

Do you think for a moment that if those 3 thousand people, after they had heard the message by Peter and had been baptized, had gone back to their home and only met for one hour a week in a formal Service that they would have grown? I do not believe it. I do not believe their growth would be any more than the growth that we see about us, or our own growth. They continued in the Apostles' doctrine. They continued listening and talking about what they had heard. They continued in fellowship. They continued in prayer. They continued in worship, and in breaking of Bread, and because of this they grew in the Grace and knowledge of Christ, and went on to maturity and became a force that God could use to change the world.

As much as I believe in what we are doing this morning, and as committed as I am to this ministry of standing before you, and opening as I best am able by His Grace the Word, I know with all my heart that it will never meet the need of a world that is on fire. If we confine our ministries to what we are doing here, we will never be what God wants us to be. It takes more time. We sing. Take time to be Holy. It takes time to be holy. If you want to grow in the Grace and Knowledge of Christ, and want to go on to perfection, then it is going to require time. I am convinced that God has far more for us than we have begun to see. I am sure of this that if you have life, spiritual life, if you have been born of God, there is a hunger in your heart for God, and even

though you may be the babe of which we have read, and frankly and honestly admit it, if you are prepared to admit it, and prepared to do something about it, the life that is in you from Christ is going to stir your heart and will be the flame upon which the fuel of your thought and your love will begin to burn. And I entreat you, therefore, this morning, to ask yourself, "How concerned am I about being spiritually immature. How concerned are you? Are you concerned enough about it to do what it is going to require to grow up into Christ? To go on to maturity? He says, "I am going to help you. I am going to discuss with you the truths that have the effect of producing maturity, and I am expecting you to give your attention to these truths, to discuss them, to talk about them, to pray about them, to apply them to your own heart and extend them into your own life. I am going to be faithful in teaching. Now I am trusting that you are going to be faithful in giving your consideration and your conversation to the truths that I am presenting. This is what the writer is saying.

In Acts, I told you, they continued in the Apostles' doctrine in fellowship, in breaking of Bread, in prayers. The next time that we see something as significant-as significantly happening in this realm is in the time of Wesley. I read with the Deacons and Elders at our last meeting something of this, and I am going to publish it for them, and have it available for others. John Wesley's plain account of the people called Methodist. It began when they had a debt at Bristol in a little church there, a little Society, meeting hall. And so one of the brethren said, "Well, I'll tell you what. You give me eleven names, and once a week I will go around and collect a penny a piece from them, and if they cannot pay it I will make it up." And so, they had several of the leading brethren, several of the Elders that did this. And they began to report back: Now look this brother over here is walking disorderly. This one is livening in drunkenness. This one should not be part of the Society. Finally they said, "Well, we would like to have Mr. Wesley come and instruct us. But He found he could not, and it ultimately was decided that the class leader would meet once a week, one night a week. Eleven men and a leader. Eleven women and a leader. And they would spend time each week in talking about their own experience, where they were, what the truth meant to them, and to lead them on. (The result of this was that for twenty years, while George Whitfield was having great meetings all over England, and getting a great many professions of faith, all he was getting was a response, and people were making a profession, and disappearing back.) And Wesley took these little groups of eleven and a leader, and they would get together for a night of discussion and conversation, talking, and praying, ministering the Word, and they went on. Macaulay in his history of England says, "There is only one real explanation why England, that was just as immoral and wicked, did not go down into the abyss into which France fell, and that was because God raised up John Wesley."

And I firmly believe with all my heart that the day in which we are living is a day that has with it far greater foreboding and threat than the day of Wesley. And Christianity has to be something more than words, and something more than doctrines. It has to become a vital, experiential reality in the lives of the people. Now I would like to think that your meeting with me for thirty minutes or thirty five on Sunday morning is going to produce that. I do not believe it will. I have not seen it happen. (And I do not believe it will.) You say, "Well, give us an Altar (call). Let us come. That will do it." But I have men and brethren that are equally adequate in preaching the Word as am I, that are having Altar (call) s, and they are not having any greater evidence of maturity than I am with you. Brethren, Sisters, dear children of God, if you want to go on to perfection, go on to maturity, you must be prepared to give time to do it. You must alter your schedules, alter the life, and make room to give consideration to the things of God long enough and in an environment conducive to the appropriating experience. I have nothing further for you today in terms of an outline or a program. But I am assuring you that the Elders and the Deacons of this Church are hearing from me continually such as I am giving to you this morning. I do not know how it will be worked out, but I am convinced of this, that if we are to see vital Christianity return again we must create a climate in which people can become effectually, vitally mature Christians. I believe in this.

In conversation with Dr. Tozer this week, I told him of my burden. And we discussed the possibility of writing two articles for the Alliance Witness regarding it. I do not know when and if those articles will come, but I do know this, that wise men everywhere are vitally concerned about the fact that people can have had truth given to them for years and not have moved into the vital appropriation and experience and outworking of that truth. "Let us go on unto perfection," giving consideration to those truths that lead to proper maturity. I believe it is going to have to be in the smaller group, with proper leadership, with warm environment. I hope that the Spirit of God quickens your heart with such insatiable longing that when we can say something to this effect, you are going to say, "Include me. I am desperately desirous to grow up into Christ, and to become all

that God wants me to be. I do not know what the practical out workings will be, but I know He says, "Go on unto perfection. Go on unto maturity" And to disobey that is to disobey a sovereign Lord who speaks through His servants. I am not the servant. I am but the echo. But the one who wrote the Epistle said, "Go on unto perfection, maturity. I am sure that if you are born of God, this strikes a chord in heart and you say, "I want to go on. I want to grow up into Christ. I want the kind of help that will enable me to be what Jesus Christ died so that I could be." Take heart. Take heart. Pray. Ask God to guide and direct, and bring a climate again where truth will be something more than pleasant words like music, but will be that which becomes our bread and our meat day and night, and we grow up into Christ by appropriating His Truth, and giving consideration to those Truths that lead us to maturity. Let us pray.

We thank and praise Thee, our Heavenly Father, that we are becoming aware of the desperate plight of our generation. We cannot, like ostriches, close our eyes and bury our heads in the sand at our feet, and go on as though all things have continued as they were from the time of the fathers. We are living in dire days. We are living in days, our Father, when criminal conspiracy has set itself against Thee and Thy Word and Thy Church and Thy people, and against us. And our Father, our hearts cry out to Thee. We cannot go through the motions of playing church, and have Thy Power. We must commit ourselves wholly to Thee if Thou art going to commit Thyself to us in Power. And we must have the Power of the resurrected Christ both in our lives and in our ministry and testimony. Therefore, we believe that Thou art giving to us this morning an exhortation, yea an entreaty, a commandment, and a promise, that if we will go on to maturity, Thou wilt come upon us with all that Thou art in Thy resurrection Power and Life. We have before us the Word, "the Lord thy God in the midst of thee is Mighty" (Zep. 3:17). We believe that Thou in Thy great Heart, Thou art yearning to be mighty again in the midst of Thy people. We know that to be blessed we must be bless-able. And so, Father, we ask Thee that somehow the Word that we have read today shall light fire within our spirits, and there shall be that preparation given by the Holy Ghost that when Thou hast made clear to us the course we should take, there will be from this company a person who loves Thee, a desire, to spend that time necessary in consideration and conversation and prayer and discipline of life in order to grow up into Christ in all things, that we should go to maturity. And to that end now wilt Thou bless and seal the Word today, and may there be conversation and thought and prayer about it, and out of all of it lead us in the plain path that we should take because of our enemies. In the Name and for the Sake of Jesus Christ. Amen.

Let us stand. "Now may the God of Peace that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the Sheep, through the Blood of the everlasting Covenant make us perfect in every good work to do His will, working in us that which is well pleasing in His sight. Through Jesus Christ our Lord, to Whom be the Glory now and forever. Amen" (Heb. 13:20-21).

* Reference such as: Delivered at The Gospel Tabernacle Church, New York City on Sunday Morning, December 11, 1960 by Paris W. Reidhead, Pastor.