

come difficulties and to accomplish great results, there must be a firm resolve and an unwavering purpose. Men have been just on the point of victory and given up their work as impossible, because resolution failed them. But it will not be so with the subject of this prophecy. He will never be discouraged, his resolution will never fail. With men composure of mind seems necessary to success. For "the spirit of man sustaineth his infirmities, but a wounded spirit who can bear?" The Redeemer of men was "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief," but he was not discouraged. For the joy that was set before him he endured the cross and despised the shame. And amid all the discouragements of the present and the future we are assured that he will never fail.

In examining the words of the text we notice two leading thoughts:

First.—The great work Christ is to do. Second.—The certainty of his success.

I. The great work Christ is to do—to "set judgment in the earth." Many men commissioned by superior authority or by self-appointment have undertaken to do great things in the earth, but success did not crown their efforts. Adam was constituted the federal head of his posterity, but he failed in the undertaking and the race was ruined. Moses was commissioned to deliver Israel, but he failed to bring the people to the promised land. Some have thought of universal empire. That is a great idea, to have all civilized nations under one ruler. Alexander and Caesar undertook to carry it out, and it may be that it entered the day-dreams of the first Napoleon. The idea of having universal peace is still grander, and to establish it in the earth would be a yet greater work, for men might be subject to the same ruler and not be friendly towards each other. To secure universal prosperity would be a work still more grand and difficult, for there might be peace with only a limited amount of prosperity. The work that our Redeemer has undertaken to do is the greatest and sublimest that ever occupied the mind of man. It is not to secure universal empire, or universal peace, or universal prosperity; but greater still,—it is to establish judgment or righteousness in the earth. We do not say that every man will be righteous, but we do affirm that the power of Christ will be universally acknowledged, and his influence will be universally felt. "Men shall be blessed in him; all nations shall call him blessed." Kingdom after kingdom shall be wrested from the power of Satan and given to Christ. The stone cut out of the mountain without hands will fill the earth. The heathen will be given to Christ for his inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession. His name shall be great in all the earth, for at his name every knee shall bow and every tongue confess. In the far north, the regions of eternal ice and eternal snow, where winter's sway is ceaseless, where every wave that shivers along the coasts tells of the winter of human hearts, Christ is to have monuments of his grace. "The north" is to "give up." Hearts that beat in the greasy bosoms of the Esquimaux and Greenlanders in their huts of snow are to throb with love to earth's Redeemer and Lord. In the torrid South, where summer is eternal, and in the islands of the ocean, where the waves make music along the shore, the name of Jesus will be the sweetest name under heaven. "The South" shall not "keep back," and the "isles shall wait for his law." In Africa, where an ardent sun sheds light and heat everywhere, except into the hearts of her dark-browed children, Jesus will be known and loved as the Sun of Righteousness. For Ethiopia shall stretch out her hands unto God. And from the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same His name is to be honored and adored. More than ten centuries before the Messiah was a pilgrim on earth's highway, the Father promised that "his hand" should be "set also in the sea, and his right hand in the rivers." What meaneth this promise? Is it not that commerce, which makes the ocean its highway and the rivers its by-paths, shall yield tribute not only to Caesar, but to God? Like the ark of bulrushes which bore the infant Moses, commerce will yet bear the Gospel of Christ. And among the inhabitants of lands through which the Indus, the Irrawaddy and the

Euphrates run, as well as among dwellers in Christian lands, according to this prophecy, will Jesus raise the standard of righteousness and peace. But how is it to be done? The Holy Spirit is the grand agent for accomplishing a work so desirable and glorious. And blessed be the name of Christ, he is shedding forth upon the world, even at this moment, the Spirit that he promised when he was about to return to his Father. This Spirit, the author of Scripture and the enlightener and Comforter of those that duly seek him, is irresistible in his energy and mighty in his working. Earth's most potent resistance is utter feebleness, and the most cunning machinations of hell are the sheerest and most transparent folly in comparison with his might and his wisdom. But he waits to be enquired of by his people, for he is pleased to use human instrumentality in accomplishing the purpose of the Messiah. The pleadings of childhood in its first lisping of devotion and the prayers of the aged saint as he is about to enter heaven. He weaves into the chain of Providence to help forward the cause of righteousness and truth. Sceptics may sneer at the worth and deny the relevancy of prayer, yet in answer to the supplications of his church in Britain and in America, wonders have been wrought on the Foreign Mission field, conquests have been won on the high places of danger and trial, scores and hundreds that dwell in "a land of graven images and who were mad upon their idols" have been attracted to the Saviour and are worshipping the living God. Pagodas have given place to Christian temples. False systems, hoary with age, are shewing signs of feebleness and decay. New doors are open everywhere. China and Japan are throwing wide their gates and bidding Christianity welcome. And what meaneth all this? Is it but a gentle intimation to the churches that if the Spirit is duly invoked and honored, he will meet the largest requests that their faith in spires. It is a pledge that Jesus is true to his promise and sufficient for the work of setting "judgment in the earth." And no changes earth can bring will ever upheave his covenant or shiver the sceptre of his unchanging and eternal purpose. It seems that as the Spirit is pleased to honor every draft of his people upon him, and to send down upon a gainsaying world untold blessings in answer to their pleadings, prayer must avail much towards the success of missions. It is necessary, too, for the preservation of piety in the individual heart and life. A lighted taper in foul air will soon be extinguished. Thrown into a jar of oxygen gas, it will burn with a beautiful and vivid flame. The lamp of piety will burn brightly only in the atmosphere of prayer. Piety and prayer react upon each other. Prayer is necessary to piety, and piety is necessary to successful prayer. "If I regard iniquity in my heart," says the Psalmist, "the Lord will not hear me." Leaping out from the soul of a poor but pious widow in some lonely garret, or from the bosom of some patient and faithful sufferer, prayer ascends with more rapid speed than lightning's flash or angel's wing, and a blessing descends. But the sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord. Purity of character in the followers of Jesus has therefore an important bearing on the success of his cause. Our holiness of life may hurry on the chariot of his salvation. Our decrepit piety may clog its wheels and retard its progress. It is a solemn thing then to live in this bustling and headlong age. Our piety is so rapied by the selfishness and forwardness of human nature that we should look upon it as in danger of being worn quite away. Where is the safeguard? In watchfulness and prayer. Like Perseus, who cut off his golden locks before he entered into battle lest he should be entangled thereby, we should "lay aside every weight and the sin that doth so easily beset us." As the Rechabites, who would not drink wine but refused also to eat grapes, we should "abstain from all appearance of evil." The ermine, it is said, will expose itself to death rather than soil its snow-white fur by crossing the muddy mound which the cunning hunter throws in its way. Let us follow its example, and court death rather than drag in the mire of iniquity our Christian profession, and thus disgrace the cause that we have espoused. And as personal holiness springs from trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, does not our faith need renovation, and increase? In writing to the Corinthian Christians, Paul uses this memorable language: "Having hope, when your faith is increased, that we shall be enlarged by you according to our rule abundantly, to preach the Gospel in the regions beyond you." As the richness and strength of faith will be seen in communion with God and conformity to his image, in labors and sacrifices for his cause, the great Apostle expected with an enlargement of their faith that he would be aided with their wealth and liberality and mercantile influence to preach the Gospel to the neighboring heathen. It is manifest at least that he was embarrassed by their lack of faith. It may be, my brethren, that the missionaries in the foreign field to-day have their arms palsied and their hearts made faint by the weakness of our confidence in the Almighty. The poverty and imbecility of faith in the Christian Church

seem, from the teaching of the Apostle, to be a mighty hindrance to the work of evangelizing the heathen. The converse of this must be true. A revival of primitive and child-like trust in the world's one Redeemer would so draw upon the resources of the Christian Church as to supply the wants of the perishing. Then she would soon see the reddening of the millennial dawn. The enlargement of the Church's faith in God must come before that better and happier era. And this increased confidence in Divine power and faithfulness and love, the Spirit will use for the advancement of the Messiah's Kingdom. But, as we before suggested, a simple-hearted faith would lead to the consecration to God of the Church's wealth. Jesus Christ is the proprietor of the universe. He made all things and by him all things consist. We are not our own. And what have we, but our sins, that we have not received? We are only the servants and stewards of Christ, sent out by an indulgent Master to collect his revenues and report to him. What will be our terror and punishment if we waste well nigh all upon ourselves and thus defraud the proprietor of his rightful due? As covetousness is idolatry,—a crime which excludes the soul from heaven—it is well to commence a most searching and jealous examination of our hearts. The time is coming, and in prophecy it is foretold, when it will not be necessary to ask every man, "How much owest thou the Master?" But "Holiness to the Lord" shall be written upon all the Christian's possessions. In the interval between the present and that happier time, Jesus will need the consecration of his people's substance to his service. The products of the mine, the farm, the forge, and the loom; the fulness of the earth and the abundance of the sea, must be converted unto him. It would thus appear that the great work of setting judgment or righteousness in the earth, which the Messiah has undertaken to perform, is to be accomplished through the agency of the Holy Spirit aiding and making effectual as instrumentalities his people's prayers and purity of life; their faith in God and their sanctified benevolence.

II. The certainty of his success. "He shall not fail nor be discouraged." He shall not be broken in spirit or in purpose. Do you not think he would be discouraged? Think of his rejection by the wealthy and the influential. During the years of his sojourn among men, it was tauntingly asked, "Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on him?" With the exception of Nicodemus, Joseph of Arimathea, and Zachaeus, who of the honorable or the wealthy could have been counted among his followers? The rulers, the leaders of opinion, the wise men, these are against him. Is not this discouraging? If men are to establish a new cause they seek the patronage of the rich and the noble. Eloquence and poetry and philosophy must all be laid under contribution to give success to the enterprise. It was not so with the cause of Christ. Met by priestly hate and kingly power, by the coldness of the Pharisees and the opposition of the Scribes, Christianity was not the foster-child of authority, of fashion, or wealth. The leaders of the people did not accept it as heaven-born and God-given. Its early adherents were fishermen and tax-gatherers, uncouth and uneducated Galileans. Manasseh, men of blood, and Magdalen, cast-off creatures, are among the number. Is the plain Nazarene, the reputed son of a carpenter, to revolutionize the world and "set judgment in the earth" with such a rabble at his heels? Does he call men from the publicans' seats and tax-gatherers' tables and commission them to preach the Gospel of the Kingdom? Does he select those whose hands are wet with nets and fishing tackle to handle the Word of Life? Even so. And is the world in the Augustan age of its glory to be converted to the faith of this man of Nazareth, by the labors of a dozen poor, illiterate and unpolished Galileans? Is not the outlook discouraging? Will not the attempt be a failure? Did not Zeno and the Stoics; Socrates, Plato, and the Academics; Aristotle and the school of Peripatetics, try to reform the world and fail? Is it reasonable to suppose that any better success will crown this new effort.

The early death of Christ would seem to bring ruin to his cause. The founder of a new religion requires many years of patient toil to meet the prejudices of men and inspire them with confidence in him and his undertaking. Jesus Christ wandered up and down throughout the cities of Palestine, as a public teacher, three years only. He was then arrested and condemned as a malefactor, and crucified as a slave. In the midst of his years "he was cut off out of the land of the living." Can his doctrines survive and his work go on after a life so brief and a death so ignominious?

The brief life of his followers and their limited influence would seem to be another cause of discouragement. Jesus commenced his work many centuries ago, but it is not yet completed. As the river Nile, stealing its mysterious way through African sands to the ocean, carries fertility to but a limited extent on either side, so the river of Salvation seems to have enriched but a small portion of the world. Vast areas are yet arid and sterile. Many labourers are needed. And if human wisdom

were consulted she would say that they should be kept here toiling on until old age whitened their locks and exhausted their strength. But Christ deals not thus with his followers. Prophets have gone; Apostles have gone; worthies that we knew and with whom perchance we toiled, sleep in the quiet sepulchre. The most godly are often early removed. Pearce and Spenser and Summerfield and Nott, and many others whose names are precious, were taken in the full flush of their manhood and while the sweat of labor was still upon their brow. And the majority of Christ's disciples have been of limited influence according to the world's reckoning. They were unnoticed, or noticed only to be despised. For "not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called."

Vigorous and persistent opposition to the cause of Christ would appear, to our imperfect knowledge and fallible judgment, a source of discouragement. Such opposition has been offered to Christ in countless ways. Satan, the arch-enemy of God and man, gathered all his energies into one desperate effort to overthrow Jesus and the kingdom he came to establish. That was the hour and power of darkness. Messiah went down under the engulfing flood of the enemy, but he rose again. He was not discouraged. From that hour to the present the same old foe in Protean shapes, has been waging a relentless conflict with the Head of the Church. Judaism has opposed the Gospel. Heathenism, with its midnight orgies, its bloody rites and infernal mysteries, has been no mean enemy. Mohammedanism, which spread its principles by the sword, has been a bitter foe. Vulgar Infidelity planted its batteries against the walls of Christ's Kingdom. Refined Scepticism sent out its sharpshooters to destroy. The "harp, sackbut and psaltery" have been used to beguile the unwary, to throw down the bar of separation between the church and the world. The hand of persecution, armed with fire and sword, has been raised against the followers of Jesus. Millions, of whom the world was not worthy, were either drowned, burned, flayed or buried alive. The thumbscrew, the rack, the dungeon and the faggot have all been used to crush out the cause of the world's Redeemer. And yet he is not discouraged. That ancient prophecy concerning him has not yet spent its force, "He shall not fail." The imperfections and inconsistencies of his own friends hinder the work of Christ. That was the "unkindest cut of all" when the ungrateful Brutus thrust the dagger into the bosom of Caesar, his former friend. The failings of his people, the poverty of their faith and their conformity to the world, would seem to be more discouraging to Jesus than the opposition of his foes. The weakness of faith in his disciples is a grief to the Master. The only occasion on which he addressed his followers with anything that appeared to savor of impatience and indignation, but which was really an expression of grief, was when their lack of trust in him failed to heal the lunatic boy. He discovered in the weakness of their confidence a want of sympathy with him. His love was disappointed. His heart was grieved. And who can say with certainty that a pang of pain is not sent into his tender and sensitive heart now when we are guilty of unbelief? It may be so. Perhaps our failures and our sins grieved him too. His people are vessels to hold the manna of the Gospel. If the vessels are unclean, is not the manna injured? They are the lights of the world. If the light is obscured where is hope for the home, the community, the nation, and the race? They are the salt of the earth. If the salt should lose its savor where is its worth as a preserving power? They are Epistles to be known and read by all men; but if the Epistles are blotted and blurred so that the writing is well-nigh illegible, how are men to know the meaning of the letter and be benefited by its teaching? It would seem, then, my brethren, that the rejection of Christ by the titled, the wealthy and the influential—the fact that his followers are mostly the obscure whose range of influence is limited—that his death was early, and the life of his people brief—that there has been persistent opposition to him on the part of his foes, and but feeble support given him by his friends, are indeed causes of discouragement. But Jesus is not broken in spirit. He is not to fail till he have set judgment in the earth. And wherefore? What are the guarantees of his success?

His own death pledges the triumphs of his cross. False religions must fall: Idols must totter and tumble to the ground. All opposing influences must give way. While upon the cross Jesus shot an arrow of defiance at the hosts of darkness. He triumphed then, although he fell in the conflict. He rose like a giant refreshed with sleep, wrenched from Satan's grasp the keys of death and of the unseen world, flung them upon his shoulder and ascended on high. Henceforth he has been expecting until his enemies shall become his foot-stool. Caesar's ghost is reported to have said to Brutus, "We shall meet again at Philippi." Jesus is again to meet the ghosts of evil, and then victory will be his. In the days of his flesh he intimated to his disciples that his death would guarantee the success of his cause. "The hour is come that the Son of Man shall be glorified."

Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die it bringeth forth much fruit." The enemies of Christ thought his death would be destruction to his purposes and plans. They erred, not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God. By crucifying the Redeemer they helped forward the cause they intended to destroy. The early achievements of the cross inspire the belief that Christ cannot fail. The humble Nazarene was cast out of Jewish synagogues by his own people, and put to death as a malefactor by Roman power. What followed? Defeat? Nay, in ten days from the time his wondering disciples stood on Olivet's brow watching the rapidly diminishing form of their ascending Lord, three thousand souls in one day were added to their number. Scarcely three years have passed before churches are planted "throughout Judea, Galilee, and Samaria." In seven years the Gospel is carried to the Gentiles. In thirty years the religion of Jesus was a power in Asia Minor and Egypt, in Greece and Rome. In about a century from the time of the Ascension Justin Martyr uses this remarkable language: "There is not a nation, either Greek or Barbarian, or of any other name, even of those who wander in tribes and live in tents, among whom prayers are not offered to God the Father in the name of the Crucified Jesus." In the fourth century, a little more than two hundred years later, Chrysostom writes that "the Apostles of Christ were twelve, and they gained the whole earth. If you go to India, to Scythia, to the uttermost parts of the world, you will everywhere find the doctrine of Christ enlightening the souls of men." It is by no means a difficult task to refer to the triumphs of the cross in later times. We might speak of thousands and tens of thousands in Asia and Africa and the islands of the ocean, who have been uplifted from heathenish darkness and degradation into the light and liberty of the children of God. We could tell of lands where man's rights are guarded and social blessings are enjoyed, and trace all to the religion of Jesus. But the early achievements of the cross are a certain and sufficient pledge, and a glorious earnest of its ultimate and universal success. They guarantee the fulfilment of the promise that "the Gentiles shall come to his light, and kings to the brightness of his rising," and that "the whole earth shall be filled with his glory."

There is another reason why Christ shall not fail nor be discouraged till his purpose is accomplished. It lies in the fact that he possesses the necessary qualifications for the work he has undertaken. He is Divine. If he were only man his wisdom would be too limited and his strength too feeble, to carry his cause to a successful issue. His zeal, his motives and his faithfulness, if he were a creature merely, would be inadequate to his great undertaking. Napoleon with all his skill as a warrior and a statesman goes down. The rod of power is splintered in his grasp, and as the caged eagle flutters against the bars of his prison, so he strives and fails. But Jesus sits on the circle of the earth and calmly sees his work go on. He is a God of patience. One day is with him as a thousand years and a thousand years as one day. He is eternal and can afford to wait. He is a God of patience because he is a God of knowledge. He is the wisdom of God. By virtue of his omniscience all things, past, present, and to come, are known to him. From all eternity he knew the circumstances that would be connected with his work and the glorious results that would follow. This knowledge must have sustained him in the garden and on the cross. He knew that there was joy before him, and he despised the shame that lay between him and the prize. He knows all about the future. Prophecy declares that he shall "justify many." This is the purpose for which he agonized and died. Prophecy also says that "he shall see of the travail of his soul and shall be satisfied." When we remember that his spirit inspired these prophecies, we are persuaded that before his eye continually floats the vision of myriads saved by his grace. And while he contemplates that "multitude which no man can number," who with voices "louder than the sound of many waters" give him the glory, how can he be discouraged—how can he fail? He is a God of power. He himself says, after his resurrection from the dead, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." This power is delegated to him, but it rests on no precarious foundation. Jesus holds it by no uncertain tenure. "The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand." He holds his authority by his eternal, unchanging, infinite love of his Father and ours. He has power over nature, for he is the Creator. Nature obeyed him in the days of his flesh.

Ulysses, after a twenty years absence from his home in Ithaca, proved himself the genuine husband and father of wife and children who had forgotten him, by drawing with ease a bow that no one else could bend. Despised and rejected Jesus stood among his own people. His power over the laws of nature proved that he was the Creator. Nature bent at his will. And from that hour Jesus has been using the elements and pro-