THE END OF THE COMMANDMENT.

BY REV. ALEXANDER MACLAREN, D. D.

"Now the end of the commandment is love, out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned."—1 Tim. 1: 5.

The apostle has just said that he left Timothy in Ephesus, in order to check some tendencies there which were giving anxiety. Certain teachers had appeared, the effect of whose activity was to create parties, to foster useless speculations, and to turn the minds of the Ephesian Christians away from the practical and moral side of Christianity. In opposition to these, the apostle here lays down the broad principle that God has spoken, not in order to make acute theologians, or to provide materials for controversy, but in order to help us to love. The whole of these latest letters of the apostle breathe the mellow wisdom of old age, which has learned to rate brilliant intellectualism, agility, upon controversial fence and the like, far lower than homely goodness. And so, says Paul, "the end of the commandment is love."

Now he here states, not only the purpose of the Divine Revelation, but gives us a summary, but yet sufficient, outline of the method by which God works towards that purpose. The commandment is the beginning, love is the end or aim. And between these two there are inserted three things, a "pure heart," a "good conscience," "faith unfeigned." Now of these three the two former are closely connected, and the third is the cause, or condition, of both of them. It is, therefore, properly named last as being first in order, and therefore last reached in analysis. When you track a stream from its mouth to its source, the fountain head is the last thing that you come to. And here we have, as in those great lakes in Central Africa—out of which finally the Nile issues—the stages of the flow. There are the twin lakes, a "good conscience" and a "pure heart." These come from "unfeigned faith," which lies higher up, in the hills of God; and they run down into the love which is the "end of the commandment." The faith lays hold on the commandment, and so the process is complete. Or, if you begin at the top, instead of at the bottom, God gives the word; faith grasps the word, and thereby nourishes a "pure heart" and a "good conscience," and thereby produces a universal love. So, then, we have three steps to look at here.

I. First of all, What God speaks to us for.

"The end of the commandment is love." Now I take it that the word "commandment" here means, not this or that specific precept, but the whole body of Christian revelation, considered as containing laws for life. And to begin with, and only to mention, it is something to get that point of view, that all which God says, be it promise, be it self-manifestation, be it threatening, or be it anything else, has a preceptive bearing, and is meant to influence life and conduct. I shall have a word or two more to say about that presently, but note, just as we go on, how remarkable it is, and how full of lessons, if we will ponder it, that one name for the gospel on the lips of the man who had most to say about the contrast between gospel and law is "commandment." Try to feel the stringency of that aspect of evangelical truth and of Christian revelation.

Then I need not remind you how here the indefinite expression "love" must be taken, as I think is generally the case in the New Testament, when the object on which the love rests is not defined, as including both the twin commandments, of which the second, our Master says, is like unto the first, love to God and love to man. In the Christian idea these two are one. They are shoots from the one root. The only difference is that the one climbs and the other grows along the levels of earth. There is no gulf set in the New Testament teaching, and there ought to be none in the practice and life of a Christian man, between the love of God and the love of man. They are two aspects of one thing.

Then, if so, mark how, according to the apostle's teaching here, in this one thought of a dual-sided love, one turned upwards, one turned earthwards, there lies the whole perfection of a human soul. You want nothing more if you are "rooted and grounded in love." That will secure all goodness, all morality, all religion, everything that is beautiful, and everything that is noble. And all this is meant to be the result of God's speech to us.

So, then, two very plain practical principles may be deduced and enforced from this first thought. First, the purpose of all revelation and the test of all religion is—character and conduct.

It is all very well to know about God, to have our minds filled with true thoughts about Him, His nature and dealings with us. Orthodoxy is good, but orthodoxy is a means to an end. There should be nothing in a man's creed which does not act upon his life. Or, if I may put it into technical words, all a man's *credenda* should be his *agenda*; and whatsoever he believes should come straight into his life to influence it, and to shape character. Here, then, is the warning against a mere notional orthodoxy, and against regarding Christian truth as being intended mainly to illuminate the understanding, or to be a subject of speculation and discussion. There are people in all generations, and there are plenty of them to-day, who seem to think that the great verities of the gospel are mainly meant to provide material for controversy—

As if religion were intended
For nothing else but to be mended—

and that they have done all that can be expected when they have tried to apprehend the true bearing of this revelation, and to contend against misinterpretations. This is the curse of religious controversy, that it blinds men to the practical importance of the truths for which they are fighting. It is as if one were to take some fertile wheatland, and sand it all over, and roll it down, and make it smooth for a gymnasium, where nothing would grow. So the temper which finds in Christian truth simply a "ministration of questions," as my text says, mars its purpose, and robs itself of all the power and nourishment that it might find there.

No less to be guarded against is the other misconception which the clear grasp of our text would dismiss at once, that the great purpose for which God speaks to us men, in the revelation of Jesus Christ, is that we may, as we say, be "forgiven," and escape any of the temporal or eternal consequences of our wrongdoing. That *is* a purpose, no doubt, and men will never rise to the apprehension of the loftiest purposes, nor penetrate to a sympathetic perception of the inmost sweetness of the gospel, unless they begin with its redemptive aspect, even in the narrowest sense of that word. But there are a miserable number of so-called and of real Christians in this world, and in our churches to-day, who have little conception that God has spoken to them for anything else than to deliver them from the fear of death, and from the incidence on them of future condemnation. He *has* spoken for this purpose, but the ultimate end of all is that we may be helped to love Him, and so to be like Him. The aim of the commandment is love, and if ever you are tempted to rest in intellectual apprehensions, or to pervert the truth of God into a mere arena on which you can display your skill of fence and your intellectual agility, or if ever you are tempted to think that all is done when the sweet message of forgiveness is sealed upon a man's heart, remember the solemn and plain words of my text—the final purpose of all is that we may love God and man.

But then, on the other side, note that no less distinctly is the sole foundation of this love laid in God's speech. My text, in its elevation of sentiment and character and conduct above doctrine, falls in with the prevailing tendencies of this day; but it provides the safeguards which these tendencies neglect. Notice that this favorite saying of the most advanced school of broad thinkers, who are always talking about the decay of dogma, and the unimportance of doctrine as compared with love, is here uttered by a man who was no sentimentalist, but to whom the Christian system was a most distinct and definite thing, bristling all over with the obnoxious doctrines which are by some of us so summarily dismissed as of no importance. My very text protests against the modern attempt to wrench away the sentiments and emotions produced in men, by the reception of Christian truth, from the truth which it recognizes as the only basis on which they can be produced. It declares that the "commandment" must come first, before love can follow; and the rest of the letter, although, as I say, it decisively places the end of revelation as being the moral and religious perfecting of men into assimilation with the Divine love, no less decisively demands that for such a perfecting there shall be laid the foundation of the truth as it is revealed in Jesus Christ.

And that is what we want to-day in order to make breadth wholesome, and if only we will carry with us the two thoughts, the commandment and love, we shall not go far wrong. But what would you think of a man that said, "I do not want any foundations. I want a house to live in"? And pray how are you going to get your house without the foundations? Or would he be a wise man who said, "Oh, never mind about putting grapes into the vine vat, and producing fermentation; give me the wine!" Yes! But you must have the fermentation first. The process is not the result of course, but there is no result without the process. And according to New Testament teaching, which I am bold to say is verified by experience, there is no deep, all-swaying, sovereign, heart-uniting love to God which is not drawn from the acceptance of the truth as it is in Jesus Christ.

II. And so I come, secondly, to note the purifying which is needed prior to such love.

Our text, as I said, divides the process into stages; or, if I may go back to a former illustration, into levels. And on the level immediately above the love, down into which the waters of the twin lakes glide, are a pure heart and a good conscience. These are the requisites for all real and operative love. Now they are closely connected, as it seems to me, more closely so than with either the stage which precedes or that which follows. They are, in fact, two twin thoughts, very closely identified, though not quite identical.

A pure heart is one that has been defecated and cleansed from the impurities which naturally attach to human affections. A "good conscience" is one which is void of offence towards God and man, and registers the emotions of a pure heart. It is like a sheet of sensitive paper that, with a broken line, indicates how many hours of sunshine in the day there have been. We need not discuss the question as to which of these two great gifts and blessings which sweeten a whole life come first. In the initial stages of the Christian life I suppose the good conscience precedes the pure heart. For forgiveness which calms the conscience and purges it of the perilous stuff which has been injected into it by our corruptions—forgiveness comes before cleansing, and the conscience is calm before the heart is purified. But in the later stages of the Christian life the order seems to be reversed, and there cannot be in a man a conscience that is good unless there is a heart that is pure.

But however that may be—and it does not affect the general question before us—mark how distinctly Paul lays down here, the principle that you will get no real love of God or man out of men whose hearts are foul, and whose consciences are either torpid or stinging them. I need not dwell upon that, for it is plain to anybody that will think for a moment that all sin separates between a man and God; and that from a heart all seething and bubbling, like the crater of a volcano, with foul liquids, and giving forth foul odors, there can come no love worth calling so to God, nor any benevolence worth calling so to man. Wherever there is sin, unrecognized, unconfessed, unpardoned, there there is a black barrier built up between a man's heart and the yearning heart of God on the other side. And until that barrier is swept away, until the whole nature receives a new set, until it is delivered from the love of evil, and from its self-centred absorption, and until conscience has taken into grateful hands, if I might say, the greatest of all gifts, the assurance of the Divine forgiveness, I, for one, do not believe that deep, vital, and life-transforming love to God is possible. I know that is very unfashionable; I know it is exceedingly narrow teaching, but it seems to me that it is Scriptural teaching; and it seems to me that if we will strip it of the exaggerations with which it has often been surrounded, and recognise that there may be a kind of instructive and occasional recognition of a Divine love, there may be a yearning after a clear light, and fuller knowledge of it, and yet all the while no real love to God, rooted in and lording over and moulding the life; we shall not find much in the history of the world, or in the experience of ourselves or of others, to contradict the doctrine that you need the cleansing of forgiveness, and the recognition of God's love in Jesus Christ, before you can get love worth calling so in return to Him in men's hearts.

Brethren, there is much to-day to shame Christian men in the singular fact which is becoming more obvious daily, of a divorce between human benevolence and godliness. It is a scandal that there should be so many men in the world who make no pretensions to any sympathy with your Christianity, and who set you an example of benevolence, self-sacrifice, enthusiasm for humanity as it is called. I believe that the one basis upon which there can be solidly built benevolence to men is devotion to God, because of God's great love to us in Jesus Christ. But I want to stir, if I might not say sting, you and myself into a recognition of our obligations to mankind, more stringent and compelling than we have ever felt it, by this phenomenon of modern life, that a divorce has been proclaimed between philanthropy and religion. The end of the commandment is love, out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience.

III. Lastly, notice the condition of such purifying.

To recur to my former illustration, we have to go up country to a still higher level. What feeds the two reservoirs that feed the love? What makes the heart pure and the conscience good? Paul answers, "faith unfeigned"; not mere intellectual apprehension, not mere superficial or professed, but deep, genuine, and complete faith which has in it the element of reliance as well as the element of credence. Belief is not all that goes to make faith. Trust is not all that goes to make faith. Belief and trust are indissolubly wedded in the conception of it. Such a faith, which knows what it lays hold of—for it lays hold upon definite truth, and lays hold on what it knows, for it trusts in Him whom the truth reveals—such a faith makes the heart pure and the conscience good.

And how does it do so? By nothing in itself. There is no power in my faith to make me one bit better than I am. There is no power in it to still one accusation of conscience. It is only the condition on which the one power that purges and that calms enters into my heart and works there. The power of faith is the power of that which faith admits to operate in my life. If we open our hearts the fire will come in, and it will thaw the ice, and melt out the foulness from my heart. It is important for practice that we should clearly understand that the great things which the Bible says of faith it says of it only because it is the channel, the medium, the condition by and on which the real power, which is Jesus Christ Himself, acts upon us. It is not the window but the sunshine that floods this building with light. It is not the opened hand, but the gift laid in it, that enriches the pauper. It is not the poor leaden pipe, but the water that flows through it, that fills the cistern, and cleanses it whilst it fills. It is not your faith, but the Christ whom your faith brings into your heart and conscience, that purges the one, and makes the other void of offence towards God and man.

So, brethren, let us learn the secret of all nobility, of all power, of all righteousness of character and conduct. Put your foot on the lowest round of the ladder, and then aspire and climb, and you will reach the summit. Take the first step, and be true to it after you have taken it, and the last will surely come. He that can say, "We have known and believed the love that God hath to us," will also be able to say, "We love Him because He first loved us." "And this commandment have we of God, that he who loves God love his brother also."

— Here are two women going down to work among the sick and the poor. One goes because there is a fashion of it, because she would fain have the credit which belongs to the lady bountiful. She moves among them like an iceberg, and they hate her. She brings a chill with her which all her coals and blankets can never warm away. The other goes because she believes in it, believes that God wants her to do it, believes that the sorrowful and the distressed are Christ's brethren, and that she is bound to them, and that they have immortal souls which she may win for Him. She moves among them like a sister of Jesus and a friend of God; and of her the Master says, "Inasmuch as she hath done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, she hath done it unto Me." Here are two men praying. One stands upon the corner of the street, correct, punctilious; at the appointed time he lifts his hands, he raises his voice that he may be heard of men. The other kneels in the dust, ignorant, stammering, feeble; he lifts his face to Christ and says, "Lord, I believe, help Thou mine unbelief." And that broken, stammering cry of honest faith pleases God, and brings the blessing which would never come to the Pharisee though he stood on the street corner till the crack of doom. Let us never be so foolish as to think that it makes no difference whether we believe or not. Faith is the soul of conduct; faith is the bloom, the breath, the vital power of religion; without it, virtue is the alabaster box, empty; faith is the precious ointment whose fragrance fills the house. Therefore without faith it is impossible to please God.—*Henry Van Dyke, D. D., in Straight Sermons.*

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The Use of the Bible.

Before we can use the Bible we must know what it is, how it came to be, and what it teaches. At this stage of study the "Inductive Method" is of supreme value. For this is the method which in the physical and social science has proved so fruitful. It aims to gather all the facts of the Scriptures, to arrange them according to the principles of coexistence in space, succession in time, antecedent and consequent, cause and effect, germ and matured form. Sacred geography, chronology and philosophy work together to one end. First the blade, then the ear, and then the full corn in the ear; such is the order of creative action and of our own discoveries of truth. A right method follows the expanding revelation of redemptive purpose from the first evangel to the crowning of Christ after His resurrection as King of the spiritual realm. The confusion into which these writings have been thrown by the carelessness and ignorance of man is compelled to yield to the order introduced by scientific method.

But the Bible is not an end in itself; it is one of the chief means of accomplishing the loving purposes of God for man. Jesus sets forth the moral rank of hearing and doing in Matt. 7: 15–27. Intellectual processes are instrumental, while moral uses are ultimate. The teaching of Jesus is adapted, in form and contents, to doing the will of the Father. "Both head and heart make human life. Work for ends, I mean for uses ¹/₂; said Mrs. Browning. The study of the Bible with solemn purpose of obedience, is lighted up with the radiance of love and hope, and stirred by the energy of a consecrated purpose. Schopenhaur insisted that men learn rapidly and correctly only that in which they are, for some reason, interested. There must be some hunger and thirst for knowledge and for righteousness if we understand the great Book.

The intelligent study of the Bible is aided by taking the point of view of the authors of the sublime pages. They were "men of God," and they saw all events in the light of the Sun of righteousness shining over the kingdom of the Eternal. They desired the triumph of that kingdom more than all else. They spoke and wrote with most urgent desire to promote that kingdom whose sphere and ideals they comprehended but slowly as they spoke "in divers portions and in divers manners." Each new experience, each century of trial, each heavenward prayer brought forth some larger and juster conception. As sailors discover new constellations by journeying southward, so the writers of the Bible, as they urged present reforms, discovered new doctrines in their heavens.

There is a vital and rational connection between the humane spirit of our age and the larger comprehension of revelation. The "Inductive Method" itself is more than an intellectual scheme: it is born of a solemn determination to go to the roots of all facts, to face all truth, and never to offer to God the sacrifice of a lie. It is of honest origin; it believes truth is from the Good One, and is meant for the good of man.

Therefore the interpreter of the Bible should live the best life of its authors if he would understand them. He must at times go forth from his library and critical apparatus into the real world of joy and suffering and sinning, where these books first sprang into being. He must not regard this experience as a waste of hours, lost to scholarship. Once he has felt the power of modern words he enters into the meaning of the ancient words, contemporary of all ages, and returns invigorated from the fresh air, as from gymnasium and bath, to the somewhat musty atmosphere of grammars and lexicons. This point of contact with human life may be anywhere. Jesus was laborer, physician, preacher, friend, teacher, and His living relations to nature and society flooded the Old Testament with meridian light. In the real world of action the acute sophistries of scribes and Pharisees were swept away like cobwebs. It is true that a too public life kills or at least maims scholarship. Jesus Himself filled the lamp of His spirit with the oil of prayer and meditation on the silent mountain. He reflected and He saturated His memory with the knowledge of the sacred writings of His ancestors. In rhythmic alternations between thinking and acting, paying and doing, receiving from God's fulness and pouring into man's emptiness, He passed His days. A river is kept pure by accepting the constant tribute of springs and rills, and by pouring its opulent flood into the sea, or quenching the thirst of forests and cities on its banks. For the superficial child of these "merchantable days" we advise retreat and contemplation; for the student who apart from social life handles words that have spilled their contents, we urge Christlike service at regular times and in suitable degrees.

"By deed and word and pen
Thou hast served thy fellow men,
Therefore art thou exalted."

—*Prof. C. R. Henderson, in Standard.*

— O Lord, who art our Guide even unto death, grant us, I pray Thee, grace to follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest! In little daily duties to which Thou callest us, bow down our wills to simple obedience, patience under pain or provocation, strict truthfulness of word and manner, humility, kindness; in great acts of duty or perfection, if Thou shouldest call us to them, uplift us to self-sacrifice, heroic courage, laying down of life for Thy truth's sake, or for a brother. Amen!—*C. G. Rossetti.*

— There is but one way in which man can ever help God—that is, by letting God help him; and there is no way in which His name is more guiltily taken in vain, than by calling the abandonment of our own work the performance of His.—*John Ruskin.*

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The Destiny of the Jews.

Three ways, each traversing a period of more than eighteen hundred years, lead down from the dead old world into our modern time—the Roman Empire, the Christian church, and the Nation of Israel. But the empire which was in succession Italian, Byzantine, Frankish, and German, has vanished like a ghost at the cock-crowing of the French revolution. Its place knows it no more, and the dwellers in the Judengasse at Frankfort-on-Main would have had a cheap bargain in the worn-out robes and gilded sceptres of Kaiser Redbeard, who sleeps in Kyffhauser beyond all chance of waking. Not such has been the fortune of Christendom or Israel. These two, the New Testament and the Old, seem to be moving forward in battle array toward the future—their hosts divided by ravines which they do not attempt to cross. With their faces set toward the rising sun, Jew and Christian maintain that it is their mission to conquer the world. Yet they are always antagonists in spirit, and not seldom open enemies. Israel has been charged with lying in wait for the heel of the Christians; nor does the Christian feel any scruple, for the most part, in crushing Israel's head. Their feud is intensified by the appeal which they make to the same inspired pages, and the one Lord who has called them both His people. From the prophets who wrote six-and-twenty centuries ago, they derive their witness,—Israel that he is the covenanted nation, and the Christian that to him has been given the inheritance of Jacob, and neither modern science nor the outbursts of revolutionary change have made a durable impression upon these high preternatural institutions, which have stood above Europe from of old, portentous, and unlike all others, in their weakness as in the grandeur of their achievements.

But one thing, at least, is certain. Those who imagine, as perhaps George Eliot did, that Israel is to be absorbed in a new cosmopolitan race, neither Asiatic, European, nor American, but distilled from all three, are preparing themselves no small disappointment. Israel is the prophet among the nations, and its day is not yet over. The history that no theories can explain away, which binds us with the past, and looks on to the future, will not end less miraculously than it began. As Heine says with entire truth, the Jews who decline to practice any form of idolatry, and have followed after a law during more than three thousand years, are "the people of the Spirit," and even their worship of wealth, for which not they but their Christian persecutors must answer, cannot destroy the passion of the hope with which their teachers are still inspired. Yet again they may be spoiled and scattered; but enlightenment, civilization, and the growth of democratic equality have in them no elements, so far as we can discern, which will absorb Israel. He remains, as in harder times than our own, "the everlasting Jew."

What we could desire for him is that he should fling aside his delusive Kabbala and his armor of the Talmud, and recognize in the New Testament such a law, embodied in a perfect and Divine life, as will set him free from casuistry, and reconcile obedience with the inward light of love and reason. It is strange, indeed, that he should hesitate to claim as his greatest inheritance the Christ who has established above Greek wisdom and Roman law an order of things which the prophets beheld in vision, but which only a Divine strength could have made victorious and a present reality. Nor need the Jew renounce, in acknowledging his true Master, anything which the noblest of his race would, at all events in these days, insist upon preserving. To "modern thought," as it is called, his other sacred books, Talmud, Yetsira, Zohar, and the rest, will doubtless yield; but not the Bible. He has learnt so much from Mendelssohn. Let him learn from "Chozari," that the olive and the wild olive, when Providence grafts them into one stem, will flourish together; and that the two covenants, which have a common past, were intended to work out between them, in friendship and not by antagonism—in love and not in hate—the future of mankind. — *London Quarterly Review.*

— We are not apt enough to think of our daily work as the Good Shepherd's pasture-field. We are too apt to give heed to a miserable distinction between the sacred and secular, and to seek to get out of what we call the secular into what we call the sacred, that we may find spiritual pasture fields. . . . You and I know that the grand Martin who dared to cease to be a monk and give himself to daily toil that had real meaning in it, was right. The most sacred service may sometimes consist as much in Paul's tent making as in Paul's preaching. This is sacred service, this is God's work; praying, communing, preaching, buying, selling, bricklaying, *doing* whatsoever things are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, of good report, which God's providence has thrust into your hand to do—doing them for God's sake and in His name; the shining motive for them, God's glory. "Why, my voice was from God, and I sang as unto God," said Jenny Lind. And her songful duty was sacred duty, because she put God in it. The daily toil is a real spiritual pasture-field; and the best of herbage we shall find in it, if we will have it so. If we will take into it the motive of pleasing God, and so of doing in it our very best. How the spiritual life may nobly grow in this pasture-field of daily duty done from a Divine impulse.—*Wayland Hoyt, D. D., in At His Feet.*

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THIRD QUARTER.

Lesson VI. Aug. 6. Acts 2

PAUL AT MILETU

GOLDEN TEXT.

"Remember them which rule over you, who have spo you the Word of God."—Heb.

EXPLANATORY.

Paul, driven away from E the mob in May, 57, went to Je and, from April to Novemb the churches he had founded or six years before. After th at Corinth, Paul started on hi to Jerusalem, hoping to reach Pentecost. There was a brie the ship at Miletus, so that able to have a much-desired with the Ephesian church. of the sailing of the ship was so that Paul, instead of going himself, sent for the leader church to meet him at Milet

22. *I go bound in the spir* mental constraint from an ove sense of duty, which rendere different to dangers and ins remonstrances. *Not knowing that shall befall.* The definit lar events.

23. *Save that the Holy Gho eth in every city.* By prophets examples given at Tyre an (21: 4, 11). *Saying that bonds* imprisonment, as at Cæsarea *Afflictions.* Most of the lesso ing in Acts are an account afflictions. *Abide me.* Wait was some dark unknown calam ing up in the future, strange, i but terrible.

24. *But none of these things* From my course of duty, o me to give up preaching t *Neither count I my life dear* He is ready to die for Christ, for Him in trials, and dan pains, which is harder than Him. *So that I might finish* He speaks of his life under th a race-course, in which as an is pressing toward the goal a ward. *With joy.* Of an acc work, of successful service; gaining the victory and wi crown. "With joy" is wanti eral MSS. The passage is gra out them. *And the ministry* vice of God in redeeming shows that he was not seeki selfish reward, but desired to will and proclaim the glorio *Which I have received of the L* Jesus chose him as His apos repeatedly asserts. Indeed, life work we ever receive f *To testify.* Paul did not orig gospel, He did not make his trines; he only bore witness God had taught him. *The go grace of God.* The good new favor and forgiving love to God is our Father, that He de His whole nature our salvatio has sent His Son to make for us, and to bring to us the of life and love from God.

25. *And now . . . I know.* vinced, I feel sure. Not an knowledge. *Shall see my face no* was going on toward prison a

26. *Wherefore I take you* Not merely "Testify to yo call you to witness." *This* last day I ever expect to see *pure from the blood of all men.* of expression is striking and m It is borrowed from the murder, and the method by w is ordinarily brought hom criminal. In many cases con pends on blood being foun clothes of the murderer. Thu he invites the elders to loo hands and garments to make there is no blood on them.

27. *For I have not shunned.* "for I shrunk not back." No popularity, no anxiety to smooth and pleasant things, him from declaring all God's only the pleasant and hopef terrible; not only the promis but His threatenings; not pleasure in virtue, but the and ugliness of their sins in

28. *Take heed therefore.* B done. The responsibility now you. (1) *Unto yourselves.* ourselves first be cleansed, cleanse others; be instructed, instruct others; be enlightene enlighten others; be conducte and then conduct others to *and all the flock.* The church flocks who are like a flock of guarded from danger, folde guided into green pastures waters. *Over the which.* "In which," since the bishops mak the flock while they had the di it. *The Holy Ghost hath made* fer (1) to their having been cho the direction of the Spirit, or (having been qualified for thei the Spirit by the bestowal of gifts, or (3) to the inward co Holy Spirit, which drew the self-denying work, and made "woe is me if I preach not th *Hath made you overseers.* T word rendered here "overseers" ly rendered "bishops," as fo the same word in the singular 2: 25, "Shepherd and Bishop souls." *To feed the church* shepherds of. It applies to shepherd care of the flock, tending, feeding, as illustrated and John 10: 1–18. *Which purchased.* Acquired, made B great cost to Himself. *Wit blood.* Nothing can so show the of God's love for His people as fact of the infinite cost to Him redemption.

29. *For I know this.* Both fr vation and experience. He those grievous wolves growing his long ministry at Ephes *grievous wolves enter in am* They were those who tau doctrine, evil principles, morals, and brought worldlin tions. *Not sparing the flock.* ther own selfish interests, no m many were lost or injured by

30. *Also of your own selves.* from their own community; n sarily from the number of tho *Shall men arise, speaking perve*