

SAYING AND DOING

A SERMON

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“And do as you have said.” 2 Samuel 7:25

WE bless the Lord that there is an order of things with him in which saying and doing do not always go together for he has in his holy word made many righteous threatening, and those threatening's belong to us all, and we cannot therefore say, in the relation which those threatening's bear to us, “Do as you have said.” He has, in the infinity of his mercy contrived a way in which we may pray against what he has said. Hence when the Lord by his prophet declared to Hezekiah that he was to set his house in order, for that he should die, the Lord spoke then according to the disease that Hezekiah was under, therefore that which is implied is, if that disease took its natural course Hezekiah would die. But he knew that the Lord had another rule, he knew that he might pray with propriety against that, and he did pray against it, and the Lord heard and answered, and sent his prophet, and said, “You shall not die.” But then we could not pray against these threatening's were there not away in which we may do so acceptably to the Lord. But in the gospel, there the sayings and doings of the Lord go together. The heavens and the earth may pass away, but not one jot or tittle of his truth shall fail. Now it does appear, at first sight, that the promises the Lord made to David and to his house failed; and even to this day divines labor hard to build up the literal, or to insist upon it that the literal tabernacle, the literal posterity of David are again to be built up; for, say they, what will become of the promises if the Jews do not return to their land, and if they be not restored? But I myself in the Bible find no such promises. If we go on in David's line until we find a sinless man, when we get thus far, and find out the character of that man, then we shall see, in relation to these promises, referring; to the mere typical priesthood, land, and royalty, that as the kings were sinners and failed, so all that failed. But we go on till we come to David's greater Son; one that did no sin, one who came into the world to establish the promises' spiritually, and to bring in, not a reformation of an old kingdom, but to bring in a new kingdom, and to declare that his kingdom is not of this world. Jesus Christ, then, was that sinless Son, and he has taken away all the “ifs;” “If your children shall keep my covenant, and observe my statute, then your children shall sit on the throne forever; but none of them did it. But Jesus Christ did all this. And faith in him enthrones us with the Savior, for Jesus has said, “He that overcomes shall sit in my Father's throne.” Now, it is not a self-evident truth, beyond all dispute, that Jesus Christ did overcome by the perfection of his life, and by the atoning power of his death? Just so with you; you must overcome by his sinless life, by faith in his righteousness, by his perfect atonement. Ever remember, his righteousness was not for himself, his atonement was not for himself, his victory

was not a victory over something that he had entailed, but it was over that enemy that we had brought in; his victory was a victory over that sin that we had committed, over that curse that we had entailed, over that wrath to which we were heirs. Therefore, the victory that he wrought was not over something that he had entailed him, but over something that we entailed. And therefore, for us to set up a religion apart from him, as a kind of imitation of him, that he has wrought the victory, and we must try and work another victory; that he has wrought out righteousness, and we must try and work out another righteousness; and that he has succeeded by his own worth in going, to heaven and we in our own persons must do the same, why, what is this but blasphemy? And yet this is the religion of thousands. Oh, my hearer it is a mercy to be brought to feel and to know that you have no sinless life to plead, and that so far from your death being an atoning death, your death will be an unclean death; your death will be the death of the sinner, the death of the unjust, that is, as a sinner considered; and even the Christian's death is, as to the flesh, an uncles death. What is it that dies? An unclean thing, an unrighteous thing, a body filled with sin; that which is under the sentence of God's law. Something in your death atoning! Why, your life is loathsome, your death is loathsome, you are loathsome, and you are all infinitely loathsome together, apart from Jesus Christ. But precious faith brings him in; there you have a sinless life, an atoning death, there you have the victory, and there you are in body and in soul made virtually as pleasing as he is pleasing to God; for "if the Spirit of him that raised up Christ from the dead dwells in your mortal bodies, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwells in you, and shall fashion it like unto his glorious body, according to the working of his mighty power, whereby he is able to subdue all things unto himself."

I think, out of the very many things which our very concise text implies, I may choose four. First, *understanding*. You would not say to a person, "Do as you have said," you could not say it with propriety, if you did not understand what he said. Second, *approbation*. You would not seriously and properly, much less earnestly, say to a man, "Do as you have said," if you did not approve of what he said. Third, *supplication*. You would not pray for a person to do as he said unless you were favored with understanding and approbation. Fourthly, and lastly, *confidence*.

First, then, *understanding*. "Do as you have said." I will take, for conciseness' sake, the 10th and the 16th verses of this chapter, to give you a sample, and it will be but a sample, of what the Lord has said. You will perceive that my text is one of that kind that really embodies the whole of the gospel. There is not a scripture promise all through the Bible that is not embodied in the text. You may look upon every promise of the Bible, and our text will fit the whole of it, and the whole will fit our text, "Do as you have said." Therefore, you see at once how utterly useless it would be to attempt to range over the ten thousand things embodied by implication in these few words. Now the Lord in the 10th verse of this chapter assures us that he would appoint a place for his people, and that he would plant them, "that they may dwell in a place of their own and move no more neither shall the children of wickedness afflict them anymore, as in the past."

Now just condense this part into three. First, that he will appoint a place for his people. The letter of that refers of course to the city of Jerusalem, and embodying the temple; and this place we must understand when we Christianize it, we must take the word literally to be a figure of spirituality; to be a figure, in a word, a type of Jesus Christ. In order to illustrate this part of what the Lord has said, I will take two circumstances of the Old Testament. It is a remarkable thing that when the Lord commanded Abraham to offer up Isaac, he directed him to do it upon the very spot, for so

you learn, Mount Moriah, where the temple afterward's stood. So that here you see, in a very beautiful and clear way, that the Christian is never weary of, eternity will not wear it out; you need not be afraid to go to heaven upon that one truth, for eternity will not wear it out. And what is the delightful truth, you for say then, in this typical place, pointing us to Christ as the place which the Lord will appoint for his people? Here is Isaac, bound hand and foot; here is the wood laid in order, here is the fire about to be put to it; here is the knife raised to slay him. But the Lord watched narrowly over his own. "Touch not the lad, neither do *anything* unto him." Do not exact a hard day's work from him, nor half an hour's work from him; do not exact any penance from him; do not anything unto him, except let him go entirely free. And Abraham looked round, and there was the ram in the thicket, and that ram was the substitute. Why, we need no explanation here. You know, some of you, what it is to be bound and foot; that is to say, to be brought into self-despair, and to see the wood which you have grown. And what is that wood that you have grown, planted, and watered, and grown? Why, your sin; and the more wood you have grown, the more fuel there is to burn the soul to eternity in hell. And so, I take the wood to be a figure of that sin that we have grown. You see your sin, and you see that it is to be the fuel by which the wrath of God shall burn against you. There is the deadly knife, or sword, as it is sometimes called, and you seem as though you must be lost. By-and-bye, in comes a revelation of the blest Redeemer; he bears the wood, he bears the burden, he bears the fire, he endures the sword, he bears the sin, he dies, he is the Substitute, and you are set free. We then, brethren, as Isaac was, are not the children of the bondwoman, but of the free. Jesus Christ is the place, then; I mention him first. It may mean the city of God, which indeed will all amount in substance to the same thing. He is the place to which we are brought.

That is the place where we have entire freedom; that is the place where we are loose; that is the place where the love, and mercy, and goodness of God appear. "I will appoint a place for my people, and plant them." Jesus Christ is the place to which we are appointed, and through mercy to which some of us are come; we can truly say so. Now come, let us look at it. If you cannot say he is yours, if the Spirit has not yet so sealed home the word with power, yet you can say you see the beauty and suitability of this Substitute. But I notice the next circumstance, which you get at the end of the Second Book of Samuel. There is a plague in the land, and that plague swept away many of the people. David built an altar in the threshing-floor of Araunah; that very threshing-floor on the same site, the same spot, whereon afterwards the temple was built, on Mount Moriah. There was an altar, and he offered burnt offerings and peace offerings, and the plague was stayed. Let this plague symbolize death; let it symbolize, shall I say, for we might as well go so far, let it symbolize a twofold death; death literal, and the second death. Jesus Christ, as our good brother told you last Sunday so nicely, has swallowed up death in victory; the death is gone, the plague is stayed. Where is there a Christian that has not read with some degree of wonder, when he can get a little quietude of mind so to do, the 15th chapter of 1st Corinthians? What divine revelations were made to the apostle there! He seemed carried forward in spirit to the last great rising day; he saw immortality rise into the place of mortality, incorruption into the place of corruption, strength into the place of weakness, beauty into the place of deformity. and infallibility into the place of frailty. He saw in the light of divine revelation what a glorious resurrection that would be. He saw the plague was stayed. And then the apostle looked a little further, and he could not see anything beyond that for the saints to fear; for it was revealed to him that Jesus Christ had also swallowed up the second death. Hell may swallow up fallen angels, and has done so; hell swallows up, it makes one shudder to say it, millions of our own poor fellow-creatures; but when hell made its

attempt upon Jesus, when the second death made its attempt against him, he swallowed it up. Oh, what an exercise of omnipotence, what an exercise of love and mercy to us! what a wondrous exercise of power was this, for Jesus in his deity to go on to eternal ages, grasp the second death in its eternity, swallow it up, leave no vestige or possibility of it! “I am he that was dead, and am alive,” and “I have the keys of hell,” denoting his entire dominion “and I am alive for evermore.” May we not, then, well say, “Do as you have said”? I feel now, what I often feel, utterly, inadequately to treat of such a subject. Why, believer, the place that God has appointed for you he has thought to be great enough and good enough for himself; for there he is, the Scriptures are full of this, that he dwells in Zion, where you are to dwell, and he will dwell with you. It is good enough for him, great enough for him, glorious enough for him.

Is it any wonder that John gets out of his difficulty so nicely as he does? John is writing, and getting a little, as it were, into a difficulty apparently, and the Holy Spirit shows him the way out of it very quietly. John contemplates this wondrous subject of the Substitute, the swallowing up of the first and second death, and what the people of God shall be; and he says, “Behold what manner” cannot describe to you what it is, “what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God;” why, it is Christ’s own name; he is the Son of God, “therefore the world knows us not,” in this order of things, “because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God; and it does not yet appear what we shall be;” as though John should say, I was just going to try to describe it, but fell back all at once; the greatness and the glory of it so overwhelmed me, and therefore I must get out of the difficulty in the best way I can; “but we know that when he shall appear we shall be like him.” And then, as though John should say, Some of you will say, Well, what is Jesus Christ in his glory? No prophet, no apostle, could ever undertake to describe what he is; that is, to give such a description as to say, “There, that is all he is.” No, I like those words of the poet, and it is a good poetic license,

“Secure, when mortal comforts flee,
To find ten thousand worlds in you.”

And yet, poor earthy creatures as we are, fond of this miserable clay, fond of our prison and our clay, attached to the world, ready to break our hearts if anything hinder the fulfilment of our fond desire to be better off: we wish to be better off after the flesh, but can hardly endure the thought of being better off after the spirit. It shows what silly things we are. And indeed, I have never felt offended with the Savior for calling me a fool. Why, say you, he has not called you a fool, has he? Yes, he has, and I hope you, too: “O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken.” So we are, Lord; Lord, increase our faith, and quicken our souls, and bring us more and more to appreciate, that is what we want, the power of appreciation, to appreciate the glories of the place you have appointed for your people. Christ then, is the place, the holy place, the righteous place, the living place, the heavenly place, the stable rock, the garden of Eden, the Paradise, the place where God supplies all our needs. Let us, after these remarks look at the second part. “And I will plant them, that they may dwell in a place of their own.” “Plant them.” There are several characters Christ bears that one feels a strong sympathy with, and among the rest is that of a tree. Now some of us that are very peaceable, never like to be in a storm, never like to scold, never like to hear scolding, do not like unkindness, we do not like to be unkind, and do not like other people to be unkind to us. A tree conveys the idea of perfect tranquility. Trees are gentle, but not dull, no their foliage is eternally green, their fruit always ripe and sweet; so that there is no war; no, there

are, the vine and the fig-tree, as quiet as possible. No winter in Christ, no storm in Christ, no coldness in Christ, no clouds in Christ; in him is no darkness at all. So that the people are planted in sweet peace with God. Some of us know a little of this now, so far as the Lord is concerned. In the world we are tried and blown about; but bless the Lord, we cannot be torn up by the roots, rooted and grounded in him. "That they may dwell in a place of their own." Now the people of God, then, as trees, must be looked upon as dwelling in sweet peace with God; and that is a beautiful position to dwell in. "As a tree planted by the rivers of water." A false prophet, who did not understand spiritually what he said, has given one of the most pleasing representations of Divine plantation. It is given under four degrees. "How goodly are your tents, O Jacob, and your tabernacles, O Israel! As the valleys are they spread forth." That is just the Christian; he is a little piece of grass first; "Hurt not the grass of the earth;" there he is in the valley, just beginning to peep up out of the earth, just high enough to be seen, that is all, like a little piece of grass, quite a little one. Then, next, when the Lord comes into that man's soul, it becomes as a garden. "As gardens by the river's side, first the valley, then the garden by the river's side. And then, after they have grown up, and come into this Paradisiacal experience, then comes the fragrance. "As the trees of lign aloes, a tree noted very much for its fragrance. And so, the Christian, by the experience he has is made to savor of the grace of God, the truth of God, the Christ of God, the counsels of God, and the presence of God. "As cedar trees beside the waters." First the valley, then the garden, then the lign aloe, then the cedar. So, the Christian is not to be ultimately a little bit of a stunted thing, but he is to be as the cedar tree, taking deep root, expanding in all the majesty of his eternal oneness with the Lord Jesus Christ. "I will plant them there;" we shall grow up into all the perfection that shall make us happy. And the Lord says, "That they may dwell in a place of their own." That is one reason why I like the New Surrey Tabernacle, it will be a place of your own. The people of God are to dwell in God; and it reads in this way, "God, even our own God, shall bless us." When I hear a God, the Father preached after a free-will or duty-faith strain, Ah, I say, that is not my Father; I do not live there, no. When I hear a Jesus Christ preached after the same strain, Not mine; nothing to do with it. Will you come and hear it? Nothing to do with it, sir; done with it, years and years ago; I was driven out. When I hear a Holy Spirit preached as though he could not take up the isles as a very little thing, as though he did not, in the exercise with infinite ease of his omnipotence, give to every man severally as he will; that is not my Holy Spirit. When I hear the gospel spoken of as though it was blind, and sick, and lame, and I have got myself into such a state that the gospel cannot see the way out for me; and I am got into such circumstances the gospel is not strong enough to get to me; and I have raised such mountains between myself and the Lord that the gospel is so lame it cannot step over them, the Lord in olden times spurned the sick, the blind, the lame, for sacrifice; and so will the real Christian spurn such a gospel, and say, "That is not my place." What is the Christians place? Here it is; "My people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation;" every gospel truth is peaceable, proclaims peace; "and sure dwelling;" no danger of being turned out, or going out, or being driven out; no thief can break in, no moth to corrupt the riches there; it is their own home. They shall look upon Zion, the city of their solemnities, and they shall say, "We have a quite habitation; not one of the cords thereof shall ever be broken; not one of the stakes thereof shall ever be removed." If you are a real Christian you are not a stranger to doubts upon this matter. Is that my home? That kingdom, the kingdom of God, may I call it mine? May I call the Christ of God mine? May the Lord lead us to search ourselves upon this matter, and that you may live full of doubts, and fears, and trembling all your days upon that question, rather than falsely conclude that it yours, when you have no proof from the power of the Holy Spirit that it is yours. I know many ministers that are afraid of those words of Mr. Hart,

“May we never, never dare,
What were not to say we are.”

I value a Christian more by his faith of adherence than I do by his faith of assurance. I bless God for assurance; but if I can see the faith of adherence, that the man feels that it is by the gospel of God that God is his happy home, and anticipates Jerusalem as his happy home while he cannot, perhaps, yet call it his, yet if that be revealed to him there stands the promise, “That he might deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.” “Do as you have said.” “And they shall move no more;” no. It is a mercy to be delivered from that which is injurious and ruinous, a great mercy; but to be moved from the love of God, never; to be moved from the Christ of God, “Lord, to whom shall we go? you have the words of eternal life;” to be moved from the gospel, never. “Be you steadfast, immoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.” “Neither shall the children of wickedness afflict them anymore, as before.” The Israelites were held in Egyptian bondage, could not get to the promised land; now, the people of God cannot be held back by the enemy, not vitally. We may be held back from preaching, and from hearing, and from reading; but we cannot be deprived of praying, we cannot be deprived of access to God. Oh, I don’t know that, say some: men may kill you. Would that stop my thoughts? I should have better thoughts than ever. Would that sever me from God? “Absent from the body, present with the Lord.” The apostle saw no purgatory, no; he saw no evil awaiting the saints after the last enemy which is within reach. Therefore, the son of wickedness, as we stand in Christ Jesus, cannot afflict us. “This is the will of him that sent me, that of all he has given me I should lose nothing.” The promises are safe there, the people are safe, everything is safe. Though the son of wickedness may afflict us in our circumstances, in our families, in our reputation, in our life, and the devil be as hard as he can upon us when we come to die; yet, as we stand in Christ, there no plague shall come near our dwelling, there the enemy is defeated, there it is you shall tread upon the lion; the dragon, the adder, and the young lion you shall trample under foot, and rejoice that there you are safe, and safe for ever. “Do as you have said.” These are things the Lord has said.

Two more things I must notice: 16th verse of this chapter, “And your house and your kingdom shall be established forever before you.” So, it is with Jesus Christ; his church is established forever. “Upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” “And your kingdom shall be established for ever before you;” so the kingdom of Jesus Christ is an everlasting kingdom. “Your throne shall be established forever.” His house, that is his church; his kingdom, that order of things in which he reigns; and his throne, his government; his government never was, and never will be, overturned. Never forget that the royalty of Christ arises from his priesthood. Never view his kingship apart from his priesthood. Christ reigns by having put sin away by his blood; Christ reigns by virtue of his priesthood. It is his priesthood that has made a king of him forever; he reigns infallibly. But take away his priesthood, then there is no ground of mediatorial reign, because the enemy is not cast out; the promises not firmed, the people not redeemed. But his royalty arises from his blood; and therefore, to separate the two is to put that asunder that God has joined together. There is no Christian under heaven that does not dearly love the royalty of Christ. What is his kingship? Nothing else but carrying out the claims of his eternal atonement; that is what his royalty consists in; redeemed by his priesthood, returned to Zion by his royalty; the two go together. Make every one of his characters savor of his priesthood. “Do as you have said.”

Now a word, in hastening to the conclusion, upon *the approbation*; “Do as you have said.” Only this approbation must be of the highest kind. Can I tell you? No, no; I can only hint, and only suggest the intensity contained in these words, namely, “approved in Christ.” What is it? It is the approbation of burning, eternal love; it is the approbation of eternal choice; it is the approbation of eternal decree to eternal glory. I am speaking now of the Lord's approbation of us, in order to get a clearer view of our approbation of him. It is the approbation of all the perfections of his nature; because, whatever God is, Christ is: he is the image of God, the brightness of his glory, the express image of his person. So, you, if your approbation be of the right kind, you will approve him most lovingly; you will approve him as the object of your choice, having chosen that good part that shall not be taken from you. You will approve him in all the dear characters he bears, together with the ultimate ends to be brought about by those characters. Well, can you say you do so approve him? Where there is only a spark of grace, I would wish to be the means of encouraging it. Some of you can say you do so approve him; then here is this scripture, though I know the Lord only can help you to take it, that “Blessed is he, whosoever,” so you may find a thousand faults in yourself if you like, the more the better, for the more faults you have in yourself the less time you will have to find fault with other people; yet, if you are not offended in him, then “Blessed is he, whosoever,” even such a crooked thing as you are, if you have but that one good quality among the many bad ones you see in yourself if you are acquainted with yourself, “Blessed is he, whosoever is not offended in me.” So, then, “Do as you have said.”

Third, *supplication*. In the gospel the Lord's sayings and doings go absolutely, with unerring and with infallible certainty, together. Does the Savior say, “Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world.”? Did not circumstances prove the truth of his words? If I go back to the Old Testament, did the Lord swear to Abraham that in blessing he would bless him? Did not his sayings and doings go together? The same with Isaac, with Jacob, with Joseph. Between the time the apostle Paul left Jerusalem and arrived at Rome, there were no less than six times when it seemed as though his life must be destroyed, but what had the Lord said? “As you have borne testimony of me here in Jerusalem, you must, also bear testimony of me in Rome,”

“If Paid in Caerus's court must stand,
He need not fear the sea,
Secured from harm on every hand
By the divine decree.”

Forty bound themselves by a great curse to kill him, and they were forty fools for doing it; they could not touch him. Did Paul arrive at Rome? Perfectly safe; perfectly safe. “Do as you have said.” Bless the Lord, his sayings and his doings go together. That does not shut prayer out, but furnishes material for prayer. The Lord says, “Take with you words,” and he actually gives the words that we are to take in that 14th of Hosea.

But, lastly, “Do as you have said.” also means *confidence*. What is the effect of confidence? Work; that is the effect. Let us see how David showed his confidence in the Lord. Here was a house to be built, and David said, “This is the place, the house of God; I have confidence, and that confidence will set me to work. And this is the altar of burnt offering and I have prepared, he says, “brass and iron in abundance and cedar trees.” Confidence set him to work. What set you to work at the new

chapel? I am about the worst, among you; I have trembled several times; I begin to see the end now. I looked, I thought, Ah, the last point we shall never get over; we shall have to stop at the last. But now that cloud seems passing off as quietly as you please. And people wonder how it is, those that have been squeaking with guinea-pig voices, "Where is the money to come from?" I would tell such, for their comfort, the greater part of it is come, and the rest is on the way. Yes, confidence in the Lord. And David said, "The house is to be built for the Lord to show that this confidence makes me work, it must be, not a humble, poor sort of place, but exceeding magnified. A man said to me one day, "That word magnificent is obsolete." Said I, "Not while I live. Obsolete means unfashionable; and it will not be unfashionable while I live." "The house must be," said David, "exceeding magnificent, of fame and glory throughout all countries." Has it not been so? Has not the antitypical house, Christ Jesus, acquired a fame universal? and shall not the fame of this greater temple still go forth, exceeding magnificent, of fame and of glory throughout all countries? It must be so; Christ must suffer; Christ must rise; Christ must be preached; Christ must reign; people must believe in his name; and that name shall be exceeding magnified for fame and glory throughout all countries. "Therefore," in this confidence, said David, "I will therefore now make preparation for it." Ah, says one, "I dare say David had nothing else to do, and so he amused himself with making a little preparation." Nothing else to do! Poor David! He comes forth, and slays Goliath, scene the first; hunted about like a partridge upon the mountains, second; comes to the throne, Philistines, Amalekites, and Moabites on all hands, never at peace, but always at war, third; steeped at the last to his very lips in domestic trouble: and if any minister now had such things in his family he would not dare show his face out of doors; he would be scouted by the present hypocritical, self-gratulatory, self-justifying generation: they would damn such a man to the lowest hell. Yet they can read the psalms of David, and say, "What a beautiful Psalm!" A great many of which psalms you never would have had if he had not been steeped in such troubles that so agonized his soul as to enable him to bring out things that he could not have done had he not been into those low dungeons by the mysterious workings of God's sovereignty. Now take notice; "In my trouble", in all my troubles I have kept close to the Lord; let me not fall into the hands of man, Lord; do not let me fly three months before the enemy; let me fall into the hands of the Lord, not the hands of men: In my trouble I have prepared for the house of the Lord an hundred thousand talents of gold, and a thousand, thousand talents of silver: and of brass and iron without weight, for it is in abundance: timber also and stone have I prepared; and you may add more to," left plenty of room for you. So the people have given a great deal of money towards the New Surrey Tabernacle, and you strangers may add thereto; we have left room for you; we would not exclude you from helping us for all the world; it will be the greatest honor you ever had in your life to do so. "You may add thereto," said David to Solomon. Ah, say some. I dare say poor David died very miserable at last, giving himself up to the house of God like this. How do you think David died? "He died in a good old age full of days." "Ah," says hypocritical piety, "I should have thought that such an un-pious man would have died full of nights!" No, they were all gone, and only days left. "Full of days, riches, and honor," and no wonder for with all his faults he loved his covenant God, scrupulously abode by the truth, died in the firm belief of an inimitable covenant, and is now before the throne of God in all the blessedness that he shall possess and enjoy forever.