



## Address on Ecclesiastes 9 v 10

*A sermon preached at Alma Road, Bristol on Sunday evening, 24<sup>th</sup> July 1887, by Mr George Müller*

All are in great danger, even the children of God, of forgetting that life is given to us as a precious talent to be used for the Lord and for blessing to ourselves. So many are going on as if dreaming as if life was not a reality. We are continually in danger of forgetting practically that we have but one life and that this one life on earth is, in comparison with eternity, very, very brief. Now, in order to counteract all this, God in His grace has given words to us in His Book like our text, whereby He, our Friend in heaven, speaks loudly to our hearts and says to us, "Now mind what you are about, your life is but brief. You have but one single life on earth: what you have to do, do with all your might, because when this life is over, you have not another life on earth." With our might we are to do what we do.

In the first place the first, great thing to do above all is to care about the salvation of our own souls. Everything else in comparison with this is of little moment. Now I affectionately ask all those present, have we attended above everything else to the salvation of our own souls? – and are we certain on Scriptural grounds that we have made no mistake about it – that all is settled regarding this matter, that we are surely not walking on the broad road leading to destruction, but are verily brought into the narrow road leading to life everlasting? Is it settled? And remember this is to be settled not by our own feelings or by what this one or the other tells us, but to be brought to God's only standard – to be settled by the Word of God. I direct the attention of any here present, who are as yet in any measure of uncertainty about this to a few passages: Romans 3 v 20-22 – a righteousness God can accept which comes from Him through the Lord Jesus Christ, a righteousness obtained by putting our trust in the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation, after we have been made to see ourselves sinners, passed sentence on ourselves and accepted what has been so mercifully provided for the greatest, vilest and most hardened sinner in the Lord Jesus Christ, for it is "unto all and upon all them that believe". None is excepted, any and every one may have it – it is not offered to this one or that one merely, but is "unto all". But it is not "upon all", therefore we read "upon all them that believe". No-one is excluded, no-one can say "I desired to have this righteousness, but could never obtain it". It is for every poor sinner if he is but willing to accept what God has provided for him. Verse 24, justified because it is a righteousness of His own, provided by giving up His Son, who at all times and under all circumstances acted according to the will of God. Then in chapter 10 we read, "being justified by faith". We have to put our trust in Christ, to depend on Christ; then we are counted as just ones, righteous ones, in the sight of God (Romans 8 v 1): the poor sinner, united to Christ, becomes a member of the body of which Christ is the Head, through faith in the Lord Jesus. One passage more, and I quote it because it is so apt for the weakest and feeblest sinner who puts his trust in the Lord Jesus Christ: Romans 10 v 9-10. Here are two points brought before us whereby we can settle whether we are saved or not. First we are to believe in our hearts that Christ is raised from the dead and secondly with the mouth to confess the Lord Jesus Christ. These two points are so united together in the same individual – not that we believe that the Lord Jesus was raised from the dead only, not that we confess the Lord Jesus only, but that these two points are found in us. Now in whatever way our faith is weak, very weak, yet in all true believers we find no doubt with regard to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. They believe He was nailed to the cross and shed His blood to save sinners – that He was taken down and put into the grave, but raised again. But this is not the only point. If we desire to be sure of the salvation of our souls we must combine with this the confession of Christ – we must let men know that we depend for salvation on the merits and sufferings of the Lord Jesus Christ. If there is this without the belief of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ it will give no comfort. If we believe and do not confess Him, we shall have no assurance in the matter of salvation. But as surely as these two points are found in one individual, God declares – not I declare it, but God declares it – that they shall be saved. Now I am a poor sinner, but wicked, guilty, hell-deserving sinner though I am, I shall be saved because I believe that Jesus was raised from the dead. I am as certain about it as if I had been one of the guard and seen Him come from the grave – nay, more certain, for I might have been mistaken or deluded by my sight but God declares it in His Word and I believe it. And I **do** confess with my mouth the Lord Jesus, though I **have** done it tens of hundreds of times – and so, though a poor, hell-deserving sinner, I shall be saved. One more passage – Acts 10 v 43. Do

you want to get rid of the burden on your conscience? – to be at peace in your soul by knowing that your sins are forgiven? Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, for whosoever does this shall receive remission of sins, obtain the forgiveness of all their numberless transgressions. This matter thus how easily settled, if we desire to settle it by Scripture alone.

Now this is being done, the question is – what next our hands find to do with our might. If the matter of our salvation is settled, the most deeply important point is to glorify God whilst life is continued to us. That is our great business whereby we shew our love and gratitude to God, for all His great love and wondrous grace in the gift of His only Son. To live for Him, to glorify Him we should make the great, sole business of our whole life, in comparison with which all other business is trifling. David says – “This one thing I have desired” Psalm 17 v 4 – not **six** things have I desired – not **five** – not **four** – “This **one** thing” One! One! And thus it should be with every child of God, with every true believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, after the matter of salvation is settled, there should be this **one** thing, to live for God, to glorify God. Now this implies a great deal and in order that the subject, to the utmost of my ability, may be of a practical character, I will hint at a few things, as illustrating how we may glorify God.

For instance, we are surrounded by poor believers – do we care for these? Do we seek to minister to them with supplies from our own means? Are we really interested in their temporal concerns? Do we realise that this is the will of God concerning us – that if there are poor believers surrounding us that it is His mind that we should care for them? There are sick ones – do we care for their comfort, aid them, minister to their necessities, provide things to ease their pain and comfort them on their bed of languishing? Do we care for them with our “might”, not in a trifling, careless way, but with our “might”, as the Lord Himself says in His own Word? Are we doing it? Then again, there are fellow-believers not merely to be cared for temporally, but spiritually. If we see one uninstructed and we have a little more knowledge, are we ready to help on and instruct him? When we see any cast down, are we ready to encourage him? When we see a brother in doubt, are we ready to do what we can to increase his faith and by communicating how the Lord has provided for us, to encourage him to trust in God? Do we, with our might, seek to help on those who are weak in the faith? When we see a brother departing from the narrow way, do we go after him and seek to restore his soul in meekness, according to the mind of Christ? With our “might” we are to do it. Ah, let us ask ourselves this – for as we are sowing, so will be the reaping hereafter. And let us never forget the words – “Do it with thy might” – not in a slovenly way, not carelessly, not in a half-hearted, trifling way, not giving away what does not cost us anything, but we are to do with our might what we do, for we have only one life to glorify God in.

Again – it can be done by taking a deep and lively interest in the work of God. What are we doing in this way? – in the work of God at home – in the first place in our families, for it would not do for us to go out and neglect them – they have the first place. But having attended to the spiritual welfare of our families and neighbours in the sphere in which God has especially put us, what are we doing for our fellow-men surrounding us? Do we care for their souls, according to our strength, time and ability, seek to pluck them as brands from the burning? Do we seek to win souls for the Lord? – for we are left here for that reason among others. How many spiritual children have we, beloved brethren and sisters? Can we point to one? If so, blessed by God, but that is very little – our life is not being redeemed as it might be – there might be five! Ten! Ah, beloved in Christ, let us see to it that at the last we shall be able to say to the praise and honour and glory of God – “Here am I and the children which God hath given me”. Let us see to it that we do not go to heaven alone. How many spiritual children have we? Ah, the more, the better. Let us not say: “It is not to be expected, because I am not a preacher that I should have any spiritual children”. The Holy Spirit is given to us for the very purpose that out of us may “flow rivers of living water” (John 7 v 38) and if we do not grieve or quench the Spirit it is impossible to say to what degree “rivers of living water” may flow from us as regards the conversion of our fellow-men, and the building up of our brethren and sisters in Christ. It is impossible to say to what degree the Holy Spirit is ready to use us, if we are desirous of being used and if we live in such a way as to be vessels “meet for the Master’s use” (1 Timothy 2 v 21).

Again, there are brethren labouring abroad – do we feel an interest in such, pray for blessing on such, seek to minister to their physical necessities, mental comfort and spiritual advancement? Do we contribute of our means in addition to giving our prayers? For if our prayers mean anything, they will be accompanied by love-tokens. What are we doing and are we doing it with our might? Ah, beloved brethren and sisters, let us arouse ourselves! If we have been drowsy and sleepy, let us get out of our sleep, and attend to the words “Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might”. Have we with our might aided the brethren labouring at home, under trying circumstances as many, and by far the great part, do? With our “might” this is to be done.

Again, the Word of God is to be spread abroad over the earth (it has been published in 250 languages) - what are we doing to spread it? What to spread tracts, now to be had in so many languages? What in regard to Sunday Schools – Ragged Schools for destitute, neglected children? – with what interest do we seek to lend a helping hand? Do we satisfy ourselves with giving the merest trifle once in the year, because we do not like to appear to do nothing? God does not look at what we give, but God looks at what is left behind. We see this in the example our adorable Lord brings before us, the widow who cast two mites into the treasury – the merest trifle, but what had she **left**? She gave her **all**! So God looks at the amount left after we have given. And if we couple our text with this – ah, beloved brethren and sisters, what an effect it will have on us and how it will stir us up and rouse us, in a way in which we have never been roused before.

Now a few words about the third part of our subject: “For there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave, whither thou goest”. This is a deeply important point to be noticed. We have only one life and that a brief one, and the end of it will be (if the coming of the Lord Jesus prevent not) that we shall enter the grave. The time will be over, the opportunities granted to us in great abundance on earth will be over; only this remains – as was the sowing, so will be the reaping. Sowing sparingly brings a very poor harvest, it brings reaping sparingly, but having sown bountifully we reap also bountifully. This has nothing to do with the matter of salvation, for all our sins are gone, but then will come the reward of grace, and as we sow, so shall we reap. Now, brethren beloved, let us with earnestness see to it that there shall be a bountiful harvest, but a bountiful harvest wil only take place if there has been bountiful sowing. This very evening, how much do we find to do? Tomorrow morning how much? Tomorrow evening how much? – and thus throughout the week, throughout next month and throughout the remainder of our earthly pilgrimage?

I affectionately beseech and entreat my beloved fellow-believers to lay these things to heart and to ask God to impress deeply on your hearts that you have but one life on earth and that that one life on earth is a brief life in comparison with eternity, and therefore beseech Him, in the riches of is grace, to help you to make the very best use of this one brief life which is as a precious talent entrusted to you. God grant it for the glory of His name, the blessing of yourselves, the good of the world “lying in the wicked one”, and the good and profit and blessing of the church at large. God grant it, for Christ’s sake! Amen.

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