

Sermon Outlines

Change

“Gray hairs are here and there upon him, yet he knoweth it not.”
Hosea 7:9

A frequent order before battle is to “fire low,” for it is a mistake to fire too high. Just as directness is needed in shooting, so the pulpit needs to use directness and plainness of speech, or its message will miss those for whom it is intended and fail to accomplish its purpose. Thus God’s messengers in Bible times were direct in their speech — Nathan, the Prophets, John the Baptist, Paul — while in many ways Christ Himself was the greatest exponent of this principal in the entire Scriptures.

Our text exemplifies the tendency of man to be indefinite about his own deterioration and blind to change in himself.

I. Change — “gray hairs”

1. A fact

- a. Life has different characteristics at each stage: infancy, youth, manhood, age.
- b. Gray hairs ordinarily sign of advancing years, of change, of incipient decay. “Change and decay in all around I see.”

2. A Reminder

- a. Changes in life noticeable not only in appearance, but in temperament, feelings, circumstances.
- b. “This is not your rest” (Mic. 2:10). Earthly life not all.

II. Gradual Change — “here and there”

1. The Truth

- a. Ordinarily not hurried, but gradual — so with other marks of age. Cf. eyesight — print often has to increase in size until the aged person returns to primer size he used in childhood.
- b. So with disease — often creeps up unnoticed.

2. The Teaching

Soul change may parallel body change.

a. The Sinner

- (1) Dullness — hearing and seeing but not heeding.
- (2) Deafness to voice of God.
- (3) Dimness in seeing truth.
- (4) Deadness of life.

b. The Saint

- (1) Less joy.
- (2) Less elasticity.
- (3) Less hopefulness.
- (4) Less taste for Bible-reading and prayer.
- (5) Less vitality in service.

III. Unconscious Change — “yet knoweth it not”

1. The Experience

- a. Cf. literal knowledge, also symbolical.

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- b. Workers past work and not know it.
- c. Incapacity to adapt to changing circumstances.

2. *The Truth*

- a. The sinner — ignorance of condition (Rev. 3:17); ignorance of opportunity (Lk. 19:44).
- b. The saint — ignorance of opposite spiritual conditions. Cf. Moses (Ex. 34:29) and Samson (Judg. 16:20).

Conclusion

Physical change necessary — but spiritual change not.

Change for the worse may only be resisted by change for the better — spiritual renewal — either in salvation or in sanctification.

First unused and then unable. “How shall we escape if we neglect . . .?” (Heb. 2:3)

Time must be “taken by the forelock” or it will “bear all its sons away.” “Behold NOW!”

. . . . *W.H. Griffith Thomas, D.D.*