

the true north sermon series

July 2003



**The Life, Experience, and Gospel Labours  
of the Rt. Rev. Richard Allen**

by

Richard Allen

a resource of the Compass ministry of Camelback Bible Church

## True North Sermon #7

Dear Camelback Family,

Richard Allen (1760-1831) was born into slavery in Philadelphia. He and his family were then sold to Stockley Sturgis, a Delaware plantation owner. Sturgis allowed Allen to attend meetings at the Methodist Society, where Allen came to trust in Christ as his Savior. A year later Allen's master also converted and joined the Methodist Church. Sturgis' involvement in the church led him to the realization that slavery was wrong. He decided to allow Allen to work towards purchasing his freedom, which Allen accomplished five years later, in 1786.

Upon becoming a free man Allen dedicated his life to full-time gospel ministry. He moved back to Philadelphia and became a minister in the Methodist Church. For the next six years Allen traveled and preached to both blacks and whites in Pennsylvania, South Carolina, New York, Maryland, and Delaware. In 1799, he was ordained as the first black deacon of the Methodist Church.

Over the years, however, Allen became frustrated with the Methodists, largely due to the discrimination and prejudice he experienced from many of the denomination's white ministers. Finally, in 1816, he and several other black leaders left the Methodist Church and formed America's first African-American denomination, the African Methodist Episcopal Church (commonly known today as the A.M.E.). Allen himself served as the first bishop of the new denomination.

Allen was an active evangelist and minister of the gospel who was especially known for his preaching. For this month's True North selection I've chosen an excerpt from *The Life, Experience, and Gospel Labours of the Rt. Rev. Richard Allen*, an autobiography that contains Allen's memoirs, as well as some significant writings, historical documents, and addresses from his life.

The first section of this excerpt contains three addresses by Allen to slaveholders and slavery supporters, slaves and former slaves, and anti-slavery advocates. I have personally found myself challenged by how in this section Allen urges people towards love and forgiveness. Whenever I read about slavery or see depictions of slavery (I recently saw one particularly chilling, yet realistic, depiction in the movie, *Amistad*), I must admit to feeling a great deal of anger and bitterness. Allen, however, refused to wallow in anger and bitterness. Instead, he told slaves to trust in God and to show the love of God to their masters, even those who treated them badly. He taught former slaves not to harbor any hostility or resentment towards their former masters. Perhaps Allen's words to those who dealt with slavery and its effects every day of their lives might be instructive for many of us today who are facing difficult situations or who regularly interact with difficult people.

The second section of the excerpt is either a sermon or a short paper by Allen (I haven't been able to discover which) on "the nature, extent, and necessity of Christian charity." His words on this topic are especially compelling and convicting. For Allen, the very heart of being Christian is to be abundantly loving and charitable to others, especially to the poor and less fortunate.

I hope and pray that this month's selection will bear the fruit of righteousness, faith, love and peace in your life. May God grow us all closer to him, and may we all live in readiness and eager expectation for the final consummation of his divine plan.

In Christ,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Vernon Pierre". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the text "In Christ,".

Pastoral Intern Vernon Pierre

# The Life, Experience, and Gospel Labours of the Rt. Rev. Richard Allen\*

by

Richard Allen

---

\*used with permission, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Source Description: The Life, Experience, and Gospel Labours of the Rt. Rev. Richard Allen. To Which is Annexed the Rise and Progress of the African Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America. Containing a Narrative of the Yellow Fever in the Year of Our Lord 1793: With an Address to the People of Colour in the United States Written by Himself, 60 p., Philadelphia, Martin & Boden, Printers 1833. Electronic edition transcribed from a photocopy supplied by the Library Company of Philadelphia.

## AN ADDRESS

*To those who keep slaves, and approve the practice.*

The judicious part of mankind, will think it unreasonable, that a superior good conduct is looked for from our race, by those who stigmatize us as men, whose baseness is incurable, and may therefore be held in a state of servitude, that a merciful man would not doom a beast to; yet you try what you can, to prevent our rising from a state of barbarism you represent us to be in, but we can tell you from a degree of experience, that a black man, although reduced to the most abject state human nature is capable of, short of real madness, can think, reflect, and feel injuries, although it may not be with the same degree of keen resentment and revenge, that you who have been, and are our great oppressors would manifest, if reduced to the pitiable condition of a slave. We believe if you would try the experiment of taking a few black children, and cultivate their minds with the same care, and let them have the same prospect in view as to living in the world, as you would wish for your own children, you would find upon the trial, they were not inferior in mental endowments. I do not wish to make you angry, but excite attention to consider how hateful slavery is, in the sight of that God who hath destroyed kings and princes, for their oppression of the poor slaves. Pharaoh and his princes with the posterity of King Saul, were destroyed by the protector and avenger of slaves. Would you not suppose the Israelites to be utterly unfit for freedom, and that it was impossible for them, to obtain to any degree of excellence? Their history shews how slavery had debased their spirits. Men must be willfully blind, and extremely partial, that cannot see the contrary effects of liberty and slavery upon the mind of man; I truly confess the vile habits often acquired in a state of servitude, are not easily thrown off; the example of the Israelites shews,

who with all that Moses could do to reclaim them from it, still continued in their habits more or less; and why will you look for better from us, why will you look for grapes from thorns, or figs from thistles? It is in our posterity enjoying the same privileges with your own, that you ought to look for better things.

When you are pleaded with, do not you reply as Pharaoh did, "Wherefore do ye Moses and Aaron let the people from their work, behold the people of the land now are many, and you make them rest from their burdens." We wish you to consider, that God himself was the first pleader of the cause of slaves.

That God who knows the hearts of all men, and the propensity of a slave to hate his oppressor, hath strictly forbidden it to his chosen people, "Thou shalt not abhor an Egyptian, because thou wast a stranger in his land." Deut. 23. 7. The meek and humble Jesus, the great pattern of humanity, and every other virtue that can adorn and dignify men, hath commanded to love our enemies, to do good to them that hate and despitefully use us. I feel the obligations, I wish to impress them on the minds of our colored brethren, and that we may all forgive you, as we wish to be forgiven, we think it a great mercy to have all anger and bitterness removed from our minds; I appeal to your own feelings, if it is not very disquieting to feel yourselves under dominion of wrathful disposition.

If you love your children, if you love your country, if you love the God of love, clear your hands from slaves, burden not your children or your country with them, my heart has been sorry for the blood shed of the oppressors, as well as the oppressed, both appear guilty of each others blood, in the sight of him who hath said, he that sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed.

Will you, because you have reduced us to the unhappy condition our color is in, plead our incapacity for freedom, and our contented condition under oppression, as a sufficient cause for keeping us under the grievous yoke. I have shown the cause,-- I will also shew why they appear contented as they can in your sight, but the dreadful insurrections they have made when opportunity has offered, is enough to convince a reasonable man, that great uneasiness and not contentment, is the inhabitant of their hearts. God himself hath pleaded their cause, he hath from time to time raised up instruments for that purpose, sometimes mean and contemptible in your sight, at other times he hath used such as it hath pleased him, with whom you

have not thought it beneath your dignity to contend. Many have been convinced of their error, condemned their former conduct, and become zealous advocates for the cause of those, whom you will not suffer to plead for themselves.

*To The People of Colour.*

Feeling an engagement of mind for your welfare, I address you with an affectionate sympathy, having been a slave, and as desirous of freedom as any of you; yet the bands of bondage were so strong that no way appeared for my release; yet at times a hope arose in my heart that a way would open for it; and when my mind was mercifully visited with the feeling of the love of God, then these hopes increased, and a confidence arose that he would make way for my enlargement; and as a patient waiting was necessary, I was sometimes favoured with it; at other times I was very impatient. Then the prospect of liberty almost vanished away, and I was in darkness and perplexity.

I mention experience to you, that your hearts may not sink at the discouraging prospects you may have, and that you may put your trust in God, who sees your condition; and as a merciful father pitieth his children, so doth God pity them that love him; and as your hearts are inclined to serve God, you will feel an affectionate regard towards your masters and mistresses, so called, and the whole family in which you live. This will be seen by them, and tend to promote your liberty, especially with such as have feeling masters; and if they are otherwise, you will have the favour and love of God dwelling in your hearts, which you will value more than any thing else, which will be a consolation in the worst condition you can be in, and no master can deprive you of it, and as life is short and uncertain, and the chief end of our having a being in this world is to be prepared for a better, I wish you to think of this more than any thing else; then you will have a view of that freedom which the sons of God enjoy; and if the troubles of your condition end with your lives, you will be admitted to the freedom which God hath prepared for those of all colours that love him. Here the power of the most cruel master ends, and all sorrow and fears are wiped away.

To you who are favoured with freedom--let your conduct manifest your gratitude toward the compassionate masters who have set you free; and let no rancour or ill-will lodge in your breast for any bad treatment you may have received from any. If you do, you transgress against God, who will not hold you guiltless. He would not

suffer it even in his beloved people Israel; and you think he will allow it unto us? Many of the white people have been instruments in the hands of God for our good; even such as have held us in captivity, are now pleading our cause with earnestness and zeal; and I am sorry to say, that too many think more of the evil than of the good they have received, and instead of taking the advice of their friends, turn from it with indifference. Much depends upon us for the help of our colour--more than many are aware. If we are lazy and idle, the enemies of freedom plead it as a cause why we ought not to be free, and say we are better in a state of servitude, and that giving us our liberty would be an injury to us, and by such conduct we strengthen the bands of oppression, and keep many in bondage who are more worthy than ourselves. I entreat you to consider the obligations we lie under to help forward the cause of freedom. We who know how bitter the cup is of which the slave hath to drink, O how ought we to feel for those who yet remain in bondage! Will even our friends excuse--will God pardon us--for the part we act in making strong the hands of the enemies of our colour?

*A short Address to the friends of him who hath no helper.*

I feel an inexpressible gratitude towards you who have engaged in the cause of the African race; you have wrought a deliverance for many from more than Egyptian bondage; your labours are unremitting for their complete redemption from the cruel subjection they are in. You feel our afflictions--you sympathize with us in the heart-rending distress, when the husband is separated from the wife, and the parents from the children, who are never more to meet in this world. The tear of sensibility trickles from your eye to see the sufferings that keep us from increasing. Your righteous indignation is roused at the means taken to supply the place of the murdered babe; you see our race more effectually destroyed than was in Pharaoh's power to effect upon Israel's sons; you blow the trumpet against the mighty evil; you make the tyrants tremble; you strive to raise the slave to the dignity of a man; you take our children by the hand to lead them in the path of virtue, by your care of our education; you are not ashamed to call the most abject of our race brethren, children of one Father, who hath made of one blood all the nations of the earth. You ask for this, nothing for yourselves, nothing but what is worthy the cause you are engaged in; nothing but that we would be friends to ourselves, and not strengthen the bands of oppression by an evil conduct, when led out of the house of bondage. May He who hath arisen to plead our cause, and engaged you as volunteers in the service, add to your numbers, until the princes shall come forth

from Egypt, and Ethiopia stretch out her hands unto God.

Ye ministers that are called to preaching,  
Teachers and exhorters too,  
Awake! behold your harvest wasting;  
Arise! there is no rest for you.

To think upon that strict commandment  
That God has on his teachers laid:  
The sinners' blood, who die unwarned,  
Shall fall upon their shepherd's head.

But, O dear brethren, let's be doing--  
Behold the nations in distress;  
The Lord of hosts forbid their ruin,  
Before the day of grace is past.

We read of wars and great commotions,  
Before the great and dreadful day:  
Oh! sinners, turn your sinful courses,  
And trifle not your time away.

But oh! dear sinners, that's not all that's dreadful;  
You must before your God appear,  
To give an account of your transactions,  
And how you spent your time when here.

Our Saviour's first and great work was that of the salvation of men's souls; yet we find that of the multitudes who came or were brought to him labouring under sickness and disorders, he never omitted one opportunity of doing good to their bodies, or sent away one that applied to him without a perfect cure; though sometimes, for the trial of their faith, he suffered himself to be importuned. And that he also often administered to the necessities of the poor in money, is plain from several passages of his life, one of which may suffice for the present, viz. When

Satan had entered into Judas, and our blessed Saviour had said, "That thou doest do quickly;" none of the other disciples knew for what intent he had so spoken; for some of them thought, because Judas had the bag or common purse, that either he had ordered him to buy what was necessary against the feast, or (as was usual, no doubt, otherwise they could not have supposed it) that he should give something to the poor.

To this unanswerable proof from our Saviour's practice maybe added his repeated precepts and exhortations; for his examples and doctrines were always of a piece. A new commandment, says he, I give unto you, that ye love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another. This is my commandment, that ye love one another as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. I say unto you which hear, love your enemies, and do good to them which hate you; bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you. Love your enemies, and do good and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest; for he is kind to the unthankful and to the evil. Be ye therefore merciful as your father also is merciful. From these few passages may be collected the nature, extent, and necessity of Christian charity. In its nature it is pure and disinterested, remote from all hopes or views of worldly return or recompense from the persons we relieve. We are to do good and lend, hoping for nothing again. In its extent it is unlimited and universal; and though it requires that an especial regard be had to our fellow Christians, is confined to no persons, countries, or places, but takes in all mankind, strangers as well as relations or acquaintances, enemies as well as friends, the evil and unthankful, as well as the good and grateful. It has no other measure than the love of God to us, who gave his only begotten Son, and the love of our Saviour, who laid down his life for us, even whilst we were his enemies. It reaches not only to the good of the soul, but also to such assistance as may be necessary for the supply of the bodily wants of our fellow creatures.

And the absolute necessity of practising this duty is the very same with that of being Christians; this being the only sure mark by which we may be known and distinguished from such as are not Christians or disciples of Christ. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.

Hearken to St. Paul, speaking of this most excellent way or duty, and then judge ye, my brethren, of the necessity of putting it in practice. Though I speak with the tongue of men and angels, and have not charity, I am become as a sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth nothing.

But these articles will receive a considerable light from the consideration of the second point, viz. the benefits and advantages arising from the practice of Christian charity.

In which, as the present occasion more especially points out to us, we may take a short general view of the advantages and benefits attending the exercise of that particular branch of Christian charity, which consists in the applying and bestowing some part of our substance, or the produce of our labours, towards the relief and support of the poor and needy; or in contributing towards such works of piety and mercy as are intended and contrived for the real good and bettering the condition of our indigent brethren, either by public or private ways of charity. And by this we improve our talents to the glory of God and the welfare of our own immortal souls.

Consider, my brethren, that all we have and are is entrusted to us by Almighty God. In him we live, move, and have our being. The earth is the Lord's, and the fullness (or plenty) thereof. We are consequently no more than his servants or stewards; the talents are all his; it is his substance that is distributed by him among us, to some more, to some less, as it has pleased him to entrust us with our own several portions or dividends; and to him we must give an account at the great day of reckoning, for every penny--for the improvement as well as for the principal.

Our blessed Lord has not committed his goods to us as a dead stock, to be boarded up, or to lie unprofitably in our own hands. He expects that we shall put them out to proper and beneficial uses, and raise them to an advanced value by doing good with them, as often as we have opportunity of laying them out upon the real interest and welfare of his poor children and subjects. By doing acts of mercy and charity we acknowledge our dependence upon God and his absolute right to whatever we

possess through his bounty and goodness; we glorify him in his creatures, and reverence him by a due and cheerful obedience to his commands. By applying our substance to the pomps and vanities of this wicked world or the gratification of the sinful lusts of the flesh, we deny God's right to what he hath thought fit to place in our hands; and disown him as our master by laying out his substance in ways expressly contrary to his orders; we thereby glorify Satan, whom we renounced at our baptism, and most shamefully dishonour our Maker by the abuse of his talents. When, therefore, we are called to a reckoning at that awful tribunal before which the most wealthy and powerful upon earth shall appear as naked and friendless as the poorest beggar, and when nothing but the goodness of our cause, and the mercy of our judge, can afford us the least support, if in that strict and solemn examination we have no better accounts to give in, than--so much laid out in luxury and extravagance, rapine and oppression; so much in a vexatious, litigious law-suit, or other idle, useless diversions, but little or nothing in charity. Shillings and pounds upon our vanity and folly, but scarce a few pence upon doing good! With what shame and confusion shall we hang down our heads, and wish for rocks and mountains to cover us, not only from the view of our justly offended master, but from the eyes of angels and men, all witnesses of our disgrace!

Some may perhaps say, "Well, I have refrained from debauchery, folly, and idleness; I have earned my honest penny, and kept it, and laid up a comfortable provision for my family." Be it so--this is laudable and praiseworthy, and it were to be wished that many more in this country would do so much. But may not such a one be asked, have you been charitable withal? Have you been as industrious in laying up treasures in heaven, as you have been in hoarding up the perishable riches of this world? Have you stretched out your hand, as you had opportunity, beyond the circle of your own house and family? Have your poorer neighbours cause to bless you for your kind and charitable assistance? Have you dedicated any portion of your labours to God who blessed them, by doing good to any besides your own? Has the stranger, the widow, or the fatherless ever tasted of your bounty? If you have never done things of this kind, but have hitherto slighted, overlooked, or put off occasions of this sort, your talent is as yet hid in a napkin, it lies yet buried in the ground, huddled up within yourself. And consider farther, that the real poor and needy are Christ's representatives. We cannot, surely, doubt of this, if we look into our Saviour's own account of the last judgment, 25th chap. of St. Matthew's Gospel, which plainly shows us that the inquiry at that great and solemn day will be very

particular about our works of mercy and charity: "Inasmuch as ye have done, or inasmuch as ye have not done it to the least of these my brethren, ye have done, or ye have not done it to me." When, therefore, an object of charity, or an opportunity of doing good, presents itself, the prudent Christian will not once deliberate, shall I relieve this man or this woman? Shall I assist this widow, this orphan, or this poor child? No. He rather considers it as a demand made upon him by Christ himself, and would be as much afraid to delay or refuse payment in such case, as if he saw his Lord and Saviour to ask it of him in person. The question, therefore, with him is this: Do not the holy Scriptures expressly teach me that whatsoever I do to my brethren who stand in need, will be reckoned to me as if I had done it to Christ himself? Can I relieve them without relieving him, or can I neglect them without slighting him? What hope could I have of being received and accepted of him at the last day, or that he will then hearken to my cries for mercy and forgiveness, should I be regardless of the requests he now makes to me by his members and representatives? I earnestly desire my Lord may have mercy upon me; therefore will I cheerfully show mercy to this his brother, however little or contemptible he may appear. I ardently wish my Lord may show goodness to me at the great day of reckoning; therefore will I seize the present opportunity of doing good, which he, in his good will towards me, now offers to my acceptance.

The accustoming ourselves to those acts, separates our affections from earthly things, learns us to sit loose to the world, and secures us treasures in heaven.

To people who are heartily in love with this world, who can see no greater happiness than wealth or power upon earth can afford them, such advantages, I own, are in no sort alluring. To talk of placing their affections upon possessions beyond the grave, or of lessening their present gains, in hopes of future benefits, is much to the same purpose as setting a most beautiful prospect before a blind man, or the most delicate meats before one who has lost his palate.

The person who has a due regard to his eternal salvation; who knows by experience how apt the love of earthly things is to draw off his affections from those of a heavenly nature; who remembers that he ought not to love the world, nor the things that are in the world, because the friendship of this world is enmity with God, and that whosoever will be a friend (or lover) of the world is the enemy of God; who reflects that a time will come when he must part with all that is dear to him here: how necessary it is, therefore, to wean his mind from these perishable things, that

they may give him no pain or uneasiness in quitting them, and is convinced that the whole world is of infinitely less value than the least inheritance in the kingdom of heaven. Such a one is always prepared to exercise himself in acts of mercy and charity; giving up a part, whenever opportunity offers of doing good, in token of his readiness to give up the whole whensoever God shall please to call upon him for it; and rejoices in the means afforded him of laying up treasures subject to no waste, rapine, or corruption, at the small expense of a trifling sum here; nay, is ready, should it appear necessary, to follow the advice of our Saviour to his little flock, "Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens which faileth not."

In short, the love of this world is a heavy weight upon the soul, which chains her down, and prevents her flight towards heaven. Habitual acts of charity loosen her from it by degrees, and help her in her struggle to disengage herself and mount upwards.

A dying person would give the whole world, were it in his possession, for any rational assurance of acceptance with God, and an inheritance in the kingdom of heaven; why then will any man, who knows he must one day die, neglect the insuring it to himself by such works of mercy in his health and strength, as he may be assured will help him to mercy in a dying hour? Blessed are the merciful, saith our dear Redeemer, for they shall obtain mercy.

Another advantage arising from acts of mercy and charity is, that they secure us the blessing and protection of heaven.

Blessed is he, saith King David, who considereth the poor and the needy; the Lord will deliver him in the time of trouble. The Lord will reserve him and keep him alive, and he shall be blessed upon the earth, and thou wilt not deliver him into the will of his enemies. The Lord will strengthen him upon the bed of languishing: thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness. To be slow and uneasy at almsgiving, argues a strong distrust in providence, either that God cannot or will not make up to us what we thus bestow. To suppose he cannot, is to deny his Almighty power, and consequently that he is God. To imagine he will not, is to suspect his truth, who has not only promised eternal treasures in heaven, but has also engaged his sure word that he will repay it, even upon earth, as if it were lent to himself. He that hath pity

upon the poor lendeth to the Lord; and that which he hath borrowed, he will repay him again.

With how great reason did our Saviour so solemnly charge his disciples to beware of covetousness, since we see it borders so nearly upon infidelity? How strangely inconsistent is the narrow-hearted man with himself, with his own settled principles! He desires a blessing upon all that he has; he earnestly wishes for wealth and prosperity, yet cannot find in his heart to lay out a little of what he has to secure that blessing, that prosperity he aims at for himself and family, in doing these good and charitable actions which Providence throws in his way, and which God has assured him will purchase it! How much more rationally does the open-hearted benevolent Christian act, and upon what sure and steady principles does he proceed! This trifle, says he to himself, which I now bestow, may possibly be of some small present inconvenience to me; but it is given to God, and he will never suffer me to feel the want of it. My Saviour has kindly insured to me whatever is necessary in this world, by promising, that if I first seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and these things, which others are toiling and sweating after, often to no purpose but vexation and disappointment, shall be added unto me. Here are both earthly and heavenly blessings laid before me, so that I cannot fail of a return from God, though he hath expressly ordered me to hope for nothing again from those I give to. I shall therefore assuredly reap according to my sowing--in this world, if God sees it good for me, but most certainly in the blessings of the next, if I grow not faint or impatient. My alms will ascend up before God for a memorial; and as he has taken the payment upon himself, I am convinced that even a cup of cold water thus bestowed, by those who have no more to give, will not lose its reward; for Jesus has promised, and in him all the promises of God are yea and amen.

Having thus gone through the proposed heads, and shewn the nature, the extent, and necessity of Christian charity; having pointed out the benefits and advantages arising from the practice of it, and how it secures to us the blessings both of this world and the world to come, it now remains that some common objections be considered, with a short application to the present design. Objections, I know, are many; and each person unwilling to contribute towards a charitable proposal will find out one of some kind or other, to ward off the blow that seems to aim at his very heart. Numerous, however, as they are, they appear so trifling, as to deserve

little particular consideration, and might well enough be examined in bulk.

All objections to charitable contributions may well be supposed to arise from covetousness, or an unwillingness to part with the present penny. Covetousness is indeed a Goliath, a giant of the first magnitude, which is always ready to defy and set at naught the best formed arguments and motives drawn from reason and Scripture, all the armies of the living God. All the common pretences to prudence in the manner or time of giving charity, all hints of reserving it for better purposes, generally centre in covetousness, in the love of money: and how wretched a fruit is to be expected from the root of all evil, as St. Paul expressly calls it, let every one judge for himself.

But the answer to all such pretences of prudence in bestowing, in short, is this: you may be deceived in the object, but you never can be deceived in your intention of charity, be the object ever so undeserving; nay, should I bestow money upon one in apparent necessity, who might abuse it to ill purposes, yet the good intention sanctifies my gift, consecrates it to God, and insures me a blessing, because it was done in his name and for his sake; while the whole abuse of it rests upon the guilty head of the vile person who thus basely misapplies my good deed. It may indeed be a reasonable objection against my giving a second time to that same person, but can be no excuse to me for withholding my hand from the relief of any other object which may appear another time to be in real want of charity.

And O! consider what a joyful thing it must be for a person in a dying hour to have a conscience free from offence, and to see their blessed Saviour, with his arms stretched out, ready to receive them when their breath leaves the body, and saying, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." Are not these, my brethren and sisters, pleasures worth seeking after? are not these privileges, this freedom, and these possessions of far more value than thousands of worlds like this we live in, which we must all leave in a short time, and cannot carry with us into another life? And can you ever sufficiently admire the goodness of God, or ever be thankful enough to him for his loving kindness, who hath set these glories and these enjoyments as much within the reach of the poorest slave as of the greatest prince alive? For it is not power and high station that can purchase these heavenly possessions: they are only to be gained by goodness and serving of

God; and the lowest of us can serve God as well as the richest person here below, and, by that means may adorn the doctrine of the Lord your God in all things, and bring more honour to Christ than many of higher rank and condition, who are not so careful of their souls as you may be.

When, therefore, we shall leave this impertinent and unsociable world, and all our good old friends that are gone to heaven before us, shall meet us as soon as we are landed upon the shore of eternity, and with infinite congratulations for our safe arrival, shall conduct us into the company of patriarchs, prophets, apostles and martyrs, and introduce us into an intimate acquaintance with them, and with all those brave and generous souls, who, by their glorious examples, have recommended themselves to the world; when we shall be familiar friends with angels and archangels; and all the courtiers of heaven shall call us brethren, and bid us welcome to their master's joy, and we shall be received into their glorious society with all the tender endearments and caresses of those heavenly lovers. What a mighty addition to our happiness will this be! There are indeed some other additions to the happiness of heaven, such as the glory and magnificence of the place, which is the highest heaven, or the upper and purer tracts of the æther, which our Saviour calls Paradise.

In the temper of every wicked mind there is a strong antipathy to the pleasures of Heaven, which being all chaste, pure and spiritual, can never agree with the vitiated palate of a base and degenerate soul. For what concord can there be between a spiteful and devilish spirit, and the fountain of all love and goodness? between a sensual and carnalized one, that understands no other pleasures but only those of the flesh, and those pure and virgin spirits that neither eat nor drink but live forever upon wisdom, holiness, love and contemplation? Certainly till our mind is contempered to the Heavenly state, and we are of the same disposition with God and angels and saints, there is no pleasure in Heaven that can be agreeable to us. For as in the main we shall be of the same temper and disposition when we come into the other life as we are when we leave this, it being unimaginable how a total change should be wrought in us merely by passing out of one world into another, and therefore as in this world it is likeness that does congregate and associate beings together, so doubtless it is in the other world too, so that if we carry with us thither our wicked and devilish dispositions, (as we shall certainly do, unless we subdue and mortify them here) there will be no company fit for us to associate with,

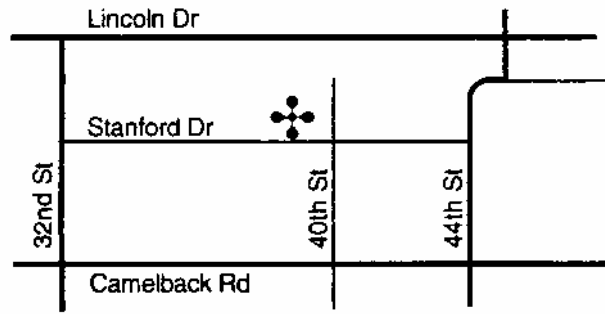
but only the devilish and damned ghost of wicked men, with whom our wretched spirits being already joined by a likeness of nature, will mingle themselves as soon as ever they are excommunicated from the society of mortals.

For whither should they flock but to the birds of their own feather, with whom should they associate but with those malignant spirits, to whom they are already joined by a community of nature? So that supposing that when they land in eternity? it were left to their own choice to go to Heaven or hell, into the society of the blessed or the damned, it is plain that Heaven would be no place for them; that the air of that bright region of eternal day, would never agree with their black and hellish natures, for alas! what should they do among those blessed beings that inhabit it? To whose godlike natures divine contemplation and Heavenly employments, they have so great a repugnancy and aversion? So that, besides the having a right to Heaven, it is necessary to our enjoying it, that we should be antecedently disposed and qualified for it. And it being thus, God hath been graciously pleased to make those very virtues, the condition of our right to Heaven, which are the proper dispositions and qualifications of our spirits for it, that so, with one and the same labour, we might entitle ourselves, and qualify ourselves to enjoy it.

Date I Finished Reading This Sermon: \_\_\_\_\_

# *PERSONAL NOTES & APPLICATION*

# *PERSONAL NOTES & APPLICATION*



# Camelback Bible Church

3900 East Stanford Drive  
Paradise Valley, Arizona 85253  
Telephone (602) 955-6370

Sunday School Classes for all ages – 9:00 a.m.  
Sunday Morning Worship – 10:40 a.m.  
Sunday Evening Worship – 6:00 p.m.

God-glorifying ...  
Cross-centered ...  
Life-transforming ...  
... serving in our world  
as Christ served in His.

In navigation, discovering 'true north' is about orienting one's self towards what is certain. In the journey of life, human beings find themselves doing this very thing: searching for a fixed point of reference that will guide them through the 'uncharted waters' of their existence. The Scriptures have revealed that God himself is our only certainty in an uncertain world. In all things, He desires that we look to Him, to Jesus Christ, in order to 'get our bearings'. The *True North Sermon Series* is intended to be a resource in pointing men and women towards the unchanging truths of God's word. May the message you hold in your hands, whether it comes from ten years ago or a thousand years ago, be used by God's Spirit to lead you towards life's only True North.

