

However, they are men of flesh like myself. Ten years later I inquire where they have gone. Here is one who is doing a fine piece of work for God. Here is one who is serving the Lord in a quiet way, but effectively. Here is one who we thought would accomplish much, but who has let the things of the world pull him away from serving Christ with his whole heart, so that his impact is never what it ought to be. We must never forget that our lives are a vapor.

Whether you live or die is in the Lord's hands. What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? You are here because God wants you here. You are here to preach "as dying men to dying men." You are here to take the Word and present it in an age when it is needed as never before. Was there ever a day when temptation seemed more widespread, when it was easier to be led astray by the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life? Back in the days of the Reformation, it was in some ways easier to follow Christ. If one were called upon to give up the comparatively few comforts that people had then, there was comparatively little to give up. Today everyone thinks he must have the latest washing machine, and one of the latest cars. It is fine to have these things if the Lord chooses to give them to you, but can you be happy without them if the Lord does not choose to give them to you? Are you ready to put Him first in everything? Are you ready to recognize that your life is a vapor?

Far more men fail to serve God as they should, because of little temptations and minor allurements, than because of great difficulties or powerful opposition. Yet powerful opposition is also found on every hand today.

These are days when the world is full of propaganda denying the Word of God. Today some scientists are teaching what they call "the steady state theory." According to this view there never was an original creation. It holds that the universe has always been in the process of being created, as parts of it wear out and new parts come into existence. Thus some of its supporters think that they have reached the point where there is no longer any need to believe in God. But "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh." Their life, like ours, is only a vapor.

This is only one of the many theories that are being disseminated around this world to lead people away from belief in the Lord Jesus Christ. Each of you will face theories, objections, obstacles, temptations to compromise, that will hamper your work and your accomplishment for God. Remember that your life is a vapor. It will only last as long as God chooses that it shall. God holds it in the hollow of His hand. He alone can decide when your life will continue and when it will stop. At every step, try to remember that He controls everything. Look to Him to use you as He chooses.

Oh, may we be able, at the Alumni Banquet ten years from now, to have most of this class back. May we have the joy of seeing them rise up one after the other to tell us how the Lord is using them. May the Lord have used each one of you in a mighty way. You have the abilities to do it. You have the knowledge. You have the training. If you fail, it will be because you put your own desires ahead of those of God. May you be able to say to us, "I have put God first, and followed Him. I have not gone to the Word with my own ideas to look for proof to support them. I have gone to God's Word humbly to find out what is there. I have found it, I have accepted it, and I have followed as the Lord has led."

Our life is a vapor. The Lord made that clearer to me this week than ever before. May the Lord enable each one of us to live in the light of the sovereignty of God, and of the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Let us pray.

Oh God, our Father, we thank you for Jesus Christ. We thank you that He Who knew no sin became sin for us. We thank you, our Father, that each of us, though deserving nothing good at your hand, has had the opportunity of looking to Jesus Christ for salvation, and of being born again through His precious blood. Oh, our God, fix our eyes upon Him. Help us to follow Him and to be His forever. Oh God, as this class goes out, be with them and lead them and use them. Make their lives to accomplish much for the Lord Jesus Christ. We ask in our Savior's name. Amen.