REFUSALS OF THE BIBLE.

Not all, too many, but some typical examples. There are some morally indifferent refusals recorded; such refusals concern only man's physical or temporal nature. We have nothing to do with them in this study.

Our concern is with refusals which represent a moral or spiritual quality. Denials show how the wind blows in the spiritual world. We reveal ourselves by our refusals.

Refusals of common life often manifest what a man is: the meats or drinks he refuses; the fashions he declines to conform to; the books he repudiates; the amusements he rejects.

Bible tells us of most commendable refusals which men have uttered. Like them, we too give full tone "No" to what is earthly, sensual, devilish. The Bible historifies ignoble refusals--refusals that wither the refusing soul. Men have refused precious things of heaven; men have refused fragrant flowers of Paradise.

I. SELF-RESPECT THAT PROMPTED A REFUSAL.

Esther 1:12 Queen Vashti refused. King Ahasuerus in his Shushan palace presided over a feast, a disgusting revel. Heart of king became "Merry with wine." When "Wine's in, the wits out." When monarch worked himself up to point of unkingly folly, commanded his queen be brought to display her loveliness before the rioters. She refused. Queenly, womanly, it was godly. A noble refusal. Every way was it to be commended.

Self respect often entails immediate loss. She lost her "Royal Estate". Far better a character than crown. Ahasuerus may have regretted his folly & admired Vashti's self-respecting virtue. May have been sorry. Esther 2:1 He remembered Vashti. Self-respect will in long run win respect of others, even ones angered and have caused us to suffer for it. Shun all that lessens your self-respect. No one else may see but you. Encourage self-respect in others. May Vashti's tribe increase.

II. REFUSAL OF SELFISH EASE AND HONOUR. Heb 11:24

Moses refused-to be called son of Pharaoh's daughter. Not short sighted-but long sighted. What insight and foresight Moses had! He would have enjoyed "pleasures had he stayed in Egypt as son of Pharaoh's daughter. He saw they were "pleasures of sin" & only for season. He would have had riches in Egypt, but greater riches as recompense of the reward.

III. REFUSAL TO GO AGAINST A PERCEIVED PROVIDENCE.

Gen 48:19 "His father refused." Jacob lay on his dying bed, Joseph brought his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim, to receive his father's blessing. Jacob put his right hand on Ephraim's head, so giving him the chief blessings. But he was younger and Joseph wanted the older son, Manasseh, to have principal portion. "But his father refused. God was in it. Jacob saw it, though Joseph did not. It "displeased" Joseph. Choose between pleasing God and displeasing dear ones. God meant the older one to be "the greater". Though Joseph objects and begs Jacob to reverse order, "his father refused." Once you clear it is will of God, you should follow given course.

IV. REFUSAL OF TEMPTATION TO SIN: Gen 39:8

Joseph in Potiphar's house under pressure of a temptation "but he refused." His statement "How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God," a noble refusal. Dreadful temptations lie in wait at every turn today. One of heaven's most alluring features that there will be no temptation there.

DO NOT be unduly saddened by temptation. TEMPTATION & SIN ARE AS DIFFERENT AS NIGHT AND DAY. Not sinner because tempted, only when accept temptation. "My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou, not." Be sure God's grace will not fail thee in hour of temptation. As said, "God never suffers His castles to be besieged till they are provisioned."

V. REFUSAL COMES FROM PURE DEVOTION TO GOD'S SERVICE:

Elisha "But he refused" II Kings 5:16 Refused present in return for wonderful help he had rendered. Refused present of Naaman, captain of host of king. Never did refusal evince a purer devotion to God's service. A weaker man would have accepted the gift. It became too great temptation to Gehazi. In holiest service see to it that thou hast the holiest motives.

VI. REFUSAL OF UNEDIFYING TEACHING. I TIM 4:7

"Refuse profane & old wives' fables." FABLE= fictitious story designed to instruct or amuse. Can it be all fables are to be refused? Surely not, for there are fables in the Bible. Many fables are excellent. It is the unedifying fables we are cautioned against. PROFANE= tends against godliness. Not necessarily modern meaning but undivineness or secularity. "Old wives' fables= silly unbeliveable tales. Discriminate in hearing & reading. Paul speaks in Titus of "Jewish fables"--such wild stories as abound in rabhinical teaching. Trashy novel, literature, empty & unhelpful teaching refuse.

A. DESIST FROM FOOLISH COURSES:
Israel would have a king. Samuel endeavoured to reason them out of the idea; let him plead as he may "the people refused." A king they would have and a king they had. Do not persist in injurious and evil courses.

Let not repeated warnings be met by repeated refusals. Professor Drummond says, "A lion won't face a blaze, but any ignorant baby will." My often-warned friend, do not face the blaze!

B. REFUSAL OF INDOLENCE: Proverbs 21:25
Of slothful: "His hands refuse to labour." Do not blame the hands, they only instruments. The fountain of evil is in heart. If many made other things as abundantly as they make excuses for avoiding work, we should have wonderful stores of manufacture. Goes the "An idle life is an anticipated death."

C. EVANGELICAL REFUSALS. Proverbs 1:24 "I have called and ye refused." Heb 12:25 "See that ye refuse not Him that speaketh" --He who "speaketh from heaven." Very possible to refuse both God and Christ. Verily this is the great refusal. Its consequences are fearful. Mark well how alike in Proverbs and in Hebrews the unspeakable penalty of this refusal is portrayed. "Seek ye the Lord while He may be found." You have transcendent opportunity. You have immeasurable responsibility. "Call ye upon Him while He is near."