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THE PERSEVERANCE OF THE SAINTS  
NO. 872

**DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, MAY 23, 1869, *BY C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“Being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you  
will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.”***Php 1:6***.***

THE dangers which attend the spiritual life are of the most appalling character. The life of a Christian is a series of miracles. See a spark living in mid ocean, see a stone hanging in the air, see health blooming in a leper colony, and the snow-white swan among rivers of filth and you behold an image of the Christian life. The new nature is kept alive between the jaws of death, preserved by the power of God from instant destruction—by no power less than Divine could its existence be continued. When the instructed Christian sees his surroundings, he finds himself to be like a defenseless dove flying to her nest, while against her, tens of thousands of arrows are leveled. The Christian life is like that dove’s anxious flight as it threads its way between the death-bearing shafts of the enemy and by constant miracle escapes unhurt.

The enlightened Christian sees himself to be like a traveler standing on the narrow summit of a lofty ridge—on the right hand and on the left are gulfs unfathomable, yawning for his destruction. If it were not that by Divine Grace his feet are made like hinds’ feet, so that he is able to stand upon his high places, he would long before this have fallen to his eternal destruction.

Alas, my Brothers and Sisters, we have seen too many professors of religion thus fall. It is the great and standing grief of the Christian Church, that so many in her midst become apostates. It is true they are not truly of her, but beforehand it is not possible for her to know this. Not a few of her brightest stars have been swallowed up by night. Those who seemed the most likely to be fruitful trees in Christ’s vineyard have turned out to be cumberers of the ground, or very upas trees, dripping poison on all around.

The young Christian, therefore, if he is observant, fears lest after putting on his burnished harness amid the congratulations of friends, he may return from the battle ingloriously defeated. He does not pride himself because, like some gallant knight, he puts on his glittering harness— but as he buckles on his helmet and grasps his sword, he fears lest he should be brought back into the camp with his escutcheon marred and his crest trailed in the dust. To such a one, conscious of spiritual perils and fearful lest he should be overcome by them, the doctrine of the text will afford richest encouragement.

If we are helped to set forth the doctrine of the Final Perseverance of the Saints, so as to commend this Truth of God to your understandings and confirm it upon your souls, we shall be glad at heart, because the Truth will make you glad and strong and thankful. Without further preface, we shall *expound the Apostle’s words,* in order to show in detail the

matter of his confidence. We shall then, in the second place, *support that confidence by further arguments*. And then, thirdly, we shall seek to *drawout certain excellent uses from the doctrine*which the text undoubtedly teaches.

**I.**First, let us EXPOUND THE APOSTLE’S OWN WORDS. He speaks of a *good work* commenced in “all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi.” By this he intended the work of Divine Grace in the soul which is of the operation of the Holy Spirit. This is eminently a *good* work, since it works nothing but good in the heart that is the subject of it. To bring a man from darkness into light is *good*. To deliver him from the bondage of his natural corruption and make him the Lord’s free man, must be good. It is good for himself. It is good for society. It is good for the Church of God. It is good for the Glory of God Himself.

It is so good a thing, that he who receives it becomes the heir of all good and moreover, the advocate and author of further good! This good is the best that a man can receive. To make a man healthy in body and wealthy in estate, to educate his mind and train his faculties—all these are good, but in comparison with the *salvation of the soul*, they sink into insignificance! The work of sanctification is a good work in the highest possible sense, since it influences a man by good motives. It sets him on good works, introduces him among good men, gives him fellowship with good angels and in the end makes him like unto the good God Himself.

Moreover, the inner life is a good work because it springs and originates from the pure goodness of God. As it is always good to show mercy, so it is pre-eminently good on God’s part to work upon sinful and fallen men so as to renew them again after the image of Him that created them. The work of Grace has its root in the Divine goodness of the Father. It is planted by the self-denying goodness of the Son and it is daily watered by the goodness of the Holy Sprit. It springs from good and leads to good and so is altogether good.

The Apostle calls it a “work,” and, in the deepest sense, it is indeed a work to convert a soul. If Niagara could suddenly be made to leap upward instead of forever dashing downward from its rocky height, it were not such a miracle as to change the perverse will and the raging passions of men! To wash the Ethiopian white, or remove the leopard’s spots, is proverbially a difficulty—yet these are but surface works! To renew the very *core* of manhood and tear sin from its hold upon man’s heart—this is not only the finger of God, but the baring of His arm.

Conversion is a work comparable to the making of a world. He, only, who fashioned the heavens and the earth could create a new nature. It is a work that is not to be paralleled. It is unique and unrivalled, seeing that Father, Son and Spirit, must all cooperate in it—for to implant the new nature in the Christian, there must be the decree of the Eternal Father, the death of the ever-blessed Son and the fullness of the operation of the adorable Spirit. It is a work indeed! The labors of Hercules were but trifles compared with this! To slay lions and Hydras and cleanse Augean stables—all this is child’s play compared with renewing a right spirit in the fallen nature of man!

Observe that the Apostle affirms that this good work was *begun by God.*He was evidently no believer in those remarkable powers which some theologians ascribe to “free will”! He was no worshipper of that modern Diana of the Ephesians. He declares that the good work was begun by *God*, from which I gather that the faintest gracious desire which ultimately blossoms into the fragrant flower of earnest prayer and humble faith is the work of God. No, Sinner, you shall never be before God! The first step towards ending the separation between the prodigal son and his father is taken by the Father, not by the son!

Midnight never seeks the sun—long would it be before darkness found within itself the germs of light. Long ages might revolve before Hades should develop the seeds of Heaven, or Gehenna discover in its fires the elements of everlasting glow. But till then it shall never happen that corrupt nature shall educe from itself the germs of the new and spiritual life, or sigh after holiness and God! I have heard lately, to my deep sorrow, certain preachers speaking of conversions as being *developments*. Is it so, then, that conversion is but the development of hidden graces within the human soul? It is not so! The theory is a lie from top to bottom!

There lies within the heart of man no grain or vestige of spiritual good. He is to all good, alien, insensible, dead and he cannot be restored to God except by an agency which is altogether from without himself and from above! If you could develop what is in the heart of man, you would produce a *devil*—for that is the spirit which works in the children of disobedience! Develop that carnal mind which is enmity against God and you cannot by any possibility be reconciled to Him and the result is Hell. The fact is that the Divine life has departed from the natural man—man is dead in sin and life must come to him from the Giver of life, or he must remain dead forevermore.

The work that is in the soul of a true Christian is not of his own beginning, but is commenced by the Lord! It is implied in the text further, that *He who began the work must carry it on.*“He who has begun a good work in you will perform it,” will complete it, will finish it, as the margin puts it. The Apostle does not say as much, but still it is in the run of the sense, if not of the words, that God must perform it or else it never will be performed. Along the road from sin to Heaven, from the first leaving of the swine trough right up to the joyful entrance into the banquet and the music and dancing of glorified spirits—every step we take must be enabled by Divine Grace.

Every good thing that is in a Christian, not merely begins, but progresses and is consummated by the fostering Grace of God through Jesus Christ. If my finger were on the golden latch of Paradise and my foot were on its jasper threshold, I should not take the last step so as to enter Heaven unless the Divine Grace which brought me so far should enable me fully and fairly to complete my pilgrimage. Salvation is God’s work, not man’s! This is the theology which Jonah learned in the great fish college, in the university of the great deep—to which college it would be a good thing if many of our divines in *these* days could be sent!

Human learning often puffs up with the idea of human sufficiency—but he that is schooled and disciplined in the college of a deep experience and made to know the vileness of his own heart, as he peers into its chambers of imagery—will confess that from first to last salvation is not of him that wills, nor of him that runs, but of God that shows mercy! But the Apostle’s main drift in the verse is that this good work which is begun in Believers by God, which can only be further performed by God, *most certainly will be so carried on.*

You observe he declares himself to be confident of this Truth of God. Why did Paul need to write so positively, “being confident of this very thing”? Surely, as an inspired man, he might simply have written, “He who has begun a good work in you”! But he gives us over and above the inspiration of the Holy Spirit—the confidence which had been worked in him as the result of his own personal faith. He had been, himself, very graciously sustained and he had been favored personally with such clear views of the Character of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ that he felt quite confident that God would not leave His work unfinished.

He felt in his own mind that whatever anybody else might affirm, he was fully assured and would stand to the Truth and defend it with all his might, that He who has begun a good work in His people will surely finish it in due season. Indeed, dear Friends, in the Apostle’s words there is good argument. If the Lord began the good work, why should He *not* carry it on and finish it? If He stays His hand, what can be the motive? When a man commences a work and leaves it half complete, it is often from lack of power—men say of the unfinished tower, “This man began to build and was not able to finish.”

Lack of forethought, or of ability, must have stopped the work. But can you suppose Jehovah, the Omnipotent, ceasing from a work because of unforeseen difficulty which He is not able to overcome? He sees the end from the beginning! He is almighty! His arm is not shortened! Nothing is too hard for Him! It were a base reflection upon the wisdom and power of God to believe that He has entered upon a work which He will not, in due time, conduct to a happy conclusion! God did not begin the work in any man’s soul without due deliberation and counsel. From all eternity He knew the circumstances in which that man would be placed, and He foresaw the hardness of the human heart and the fickleness of human love.

If, then, He deemed it wise to begin, how can it be supposed that He shall change and amend His resolve? There can be no conceivable reason with God for leaving off such a work—the same motive which dictated the commencement must be still in operation and He is the same God— therefore, there must be the same result, namely, His continuing to do what He has done. Where is there an instance of God’s beginning any work and leaving it incomplete? Show me for once a world abandoned and thrown aside half-formed! Show me a universe cast off from the Great Potter’s wheel, with the design in outline, the clay half-hardened and the form unshapely from incompleteness!

Direct me, I pray you, to a star, a sun, a satellite—no, I will challenge you on lower ground—point me out a *plant*, an*ant*, a grain of*dust* that has about it any semblance of incompleteness! All that man completes, let him polish as he may—when it is put under the microscope it is but roughly finished, because man has only reached a certain stage and cannot get beyond it. It is perfection to his feeble optics, but it is not *absolute* perfection. But all God’s works are finished with wondrous care! He as accurately fashions the dust of a butterfly’s wing, as those mighty orbs that gladden the silent night.

Yet, my Brethren, some would persuade us that this great work of the salvation of souls is begun by God and then deserted and left incomplete! And that there will be spirits lost forever upon whom the Holy Spirit once exerted His sanctifying power—for whom the Redeemer shed His precious blood, and whom the eternal Father once looked upon with eyes of complacent love! I believe no such thing! The repetition of such beliefs curdles my blood with horror! They sound like blasphemy!

No, where the Lord begins He will complete. And if He puts His right hand to any work, He will not stop until the work is done, whether it is to strike Pharaoh with plagues and at last to drown his chivalry in the Red Sea, or to lead His people through the wilderness like sheep and bring them in the end into the land that flows with milk and honey. In nothing does Jehovah turn from His intent. “Has He said and shall He not do it? Has He purposed it, and shall it not come to pass?” “He is God and changes not and therefore the sons of Jacob are not consumed.”

There is a world of argument in the quiet words which the Apostle uses. He is confident, knowing what he does of the Character of God, that He who has begun a good work in His saints will perform it until the day of Christ. Notice the *time* mentioned in the text—the good work is to be perfected in the *day of Christ,* by which we suppose is intended the Second Coming of our Lord. The Christian will not be perfected until the Lord Christ shall descend from Heaven with a shout, with the trumpet of the archangel and the voice of God.

But what about those, you say, who have died before His coming? How is it with them? I answer, their souls are doubtless perfect and made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light. But Holy Scripture does not regard a man as perfect when the *soul* is perfected—it regards his body as being a part of himself—and as the *body* will not rise again from the grave till the coming of the Lord Jesus, then we shall be revealed in the perfection of our manhood, even as He will be revealed.

That day of the Second Coming is set as the day of the finished work which God has begun, when, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, body, soul, and spirit, shall see the face of God with acceptance and forever and ever rejoice in the pleasures which are at God’s right hand. This is what we are looking forward to—that God who taught us to repent—will sanctify us wholly! That He who made the briny tear to flow, will wipe every tear from that same eye! That He who made us gird ourselves with the sackcloth and the ashes of penitence, will yet gird us with the fair white linen which is the righteousness of the saints!

He who brought us to the Cross will bring us to the crown! He who made us look upon Him whom we pierced and mourn because of Him, will cause us to see the King in His beauty and the land that is very far off. The same dear hand that struck and afterwards healed, will, in the latter days, caress us! He who looked upon us when we were dead in sin and called us into spiritual life, will continue to regard us with favor till our life shall be consummated in the land where there is no more death, sorrow nor sighing! Such is the Truth of God which the text evidently teaches us.

One remark I here feel bound to make, though it is running somewhat from the theme. It is this—I marvel beyond measure at those of our Christian Brethren who hold the doctrine of the Final Perseverance and yet remain in the Anglican Church, because their so remaining is utterly inconsistent with such a belief. You will say, “How? Is not the doctrine of Final Perseverance taught in the Articles?” Undoubtedly it is! But it is a flat contradiction to what is taught in the Catechism. In the Catechism and

in parts of the liturgy we are distinctly taught that children are born again and made members of Christ in Baptism.

Now, to be regenerated, or born again, is surely the beginning of a good and Divine work in the soul. And then, according to this text and according to the doctrine of Final Perseverance, such a Divine work being begun, will most certainly be performed until the day of Christ. Now, no one will be so foolhardy as to assert that the good work which, according to the Prayer-Book, is begun in an infant at its so-called “baptism,” is beyond all question perfected in the day of Christ—for, alas, we see these regenerated people drunk, lying, swearing! We have them in prison, convicted of all kinds of crimes! We have even known them to be hanged!

If I were an evangelical clergyman and believed in the doctrine of Final Perseverance, I must at once renounce a Church which teaches a lie so intolerable as that—that there is a work of Grace begun on an unconscious infant in every case when water is sprinkled from priestly hands! No such work is begun and consequently no such work is carried on! The whole business of infant baptism, as practiced in the Anglican Episcopal Church, is a perversion of Scripture, an insult to God, a mockery of Truth and a deceiving of the souls of men! Let all who love the Lord, and hate evil, come out of this more and more apostatizing Church, lest they be partakers of the plague which will come upon her in the day of her visitation!

**II.**Secondly, WE SHALL SHOW FURTHER GROUND FOR OUR BELIEF IN THE DOCTRINE OF THE FINAL PERSEVERANCE OF THE SAINTS. Our first ground shall be *the express teaching of Holy Scripture.*But, my dear Friends, to quote all the Scriptural passages which teach that the saints shall hold on their way would be to quote a large proportion of the Bible, for, to my mind, Scripture is saturated through and through with this Truth of God.

And I have often said that if any man could convince me that Scripture did not teach the perseverance of Believers, I would at once reject Scripture altogether as teaching nothing at all—as being an incomprehensible book of which a plain man could make neither heads nor tails, for this seems to be of all doctrines the one that lies most evidently upon the surface. Take the ninth verse of the 17th chapter of the book of Job and hear the testimony of the Patriarch: “The righteous also shall hold on his way and he that has clean hands shall be stronger and stronger.”

Not, “the righteous shall be saved, let him do what he will”—that we never believed and never shall—but “the righteous shall hold on his way”—his way of*holiness*, his way of *devotion*, his way of *faith*—he shall hold to that and he shall make a growth in it, for he that has clean hands shall add “strength to strength,” as the Hebrew has it, or, as we put it, “shall be stronger and stronger.”

In the 125th Psalm, read the first and second verses, “They that trust in the Lord,” that is the special description of a Believer, “shall be as mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abides forever. As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about His people from henceforth even forever.” Here are two specimen ears pulled out of those rich sheaves which are to be found in the Old Testament. As for the New Testament, how peremptory are the words of Christ in the 10th of John, 28th verse, “I give unto them eternal life”—not life *temporal* which may die— “and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hands. My Father, which gave them to Me, is greater than all, and no man is able to pluck them out of My Father’s hands.”

The Apostle tells us, 11th Romans, 29th verse, that, “the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.” That is, whatever gifts the Lord gives, He never changes his mind of having given them so as to take them back again. And whatever calling He makes of any man, He never retracts it, but he stands to it still. There is no playing fast and loose in Divine mercy! His gifts and calling are without repentance. Following that terrible passage in the sixth of Hebrews, which has raised so many questions, you find the Apostle, who seems at first sight to have taught that Believers might turn away—you find him in the ninth and 10th verses disclaiming any such idea! “Beloved,” he says, “we are persuaded better things of you and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak. For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labor of love which you have showed toward His name, in that you have ministered to the saints, and do minister.”

The Apostle Peter, who is in no way given to administer too much comfort to the saints, but deals very sternly with hypocrisy, has put it very strongly in the first chapter of his first Epistle, at the fifth verse, where he says of all the elect according to the foreknowledge of God—they are “kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.” Brothers and Sisters, the 54th of Isaiah, which I read in your hearing this morning, with many more to the same effect, are scarcely to be understood if it is true that God’s children may be cast away and that God may forsake those whom He did foreknow!

Yonder Bible seems to be disemboweled and stripped of its life, if the unchanging love of God is denied! The Word of God is laid on the threshing floor and the chaff, alone, is gathered and the *wheat* is cast away, if you take out of it its constant and incessant teaching that the “path of the just is as the shining light, that shines more and more unto the perfect day.” But further, in addition to the express testimonies of Scripture, we have to support this doctrine all the attributes of God, for if those who have believed in Christ are not saved, then surely*all the attributes of God* are in peril!

If He begins and does not finish His work, all the parts of His Character are dishonored. Where is His wisdom? Why did He begin that which He did not intend to finish? Where is His power? Will not evil spirits always say “that He *could not* do what He did not do”? Will it not be a standing jeer throughout the halls of Hell that God commenced the work and then stayed from it? Will they not say that the obstinacy of man’s sin was greater than the Grace of God, that the hardness of the human heart was too hard for God to dissolve?

Would there not be a slur at once cast upon the Omnipotence of Divine Grace? And what shall we say of the Immutability of God, if He casts away those whom He loves—how shall we think that He does not change? How will the human heart ever be able to look upon Him, again, as Immutable if after loving He hates? And, my Brothers and Sisters, where will be the *faithfulness* of God to the promises which He has made over and over again and signed and sealed with oaths by two immutable things, wherein it was impossible for God to lie? Where will be His Grace if he casts away

those that trust in Him, if after having tantalized us with sips of love He shall not bring us to drink from the fountainhead?

It is all in vain for us, therefore, to trust if His promise can be forgotten and His mind can be turned. Therefore we need not talk of Ebenezers in the past as though they comforted us for the future, if the Lord does cast away His children, for the past is no guarantee whatever as to what He may do in days to come. But the veracity of God to His promise, the faithfulness of God to His purpose, the Immutability of God in His Character and the love of God in His Essence—all these go to prove that He cannot and will not leave the soul that He has looked upon in mercy until the great work is done.

Further, how can it be that the righteous should, after all, fall from Grace and perish, if you recollect *the doctrine of the Atonement?* The doctrine of Atonement, as we hold it and believe it to be in Scripture, is this— that Jesus Christ rendered to Divine justice a satisfaction for the sins of His people—that He was punished in their place. Now if He were so, and I do not believe any other atonements worth the turning of a finger, if He were really our satisfactory vicarious Sacrifice, then how could the child of God be cast into Hell? *Why* should he be cast there? His sins were laid on Christ—what is to condemn him? Christ has been condemned in his place! In the name of everlasting justice, which must stand, though Heaven and earth should rock and reel, how can a man for whom Christ shed His blood be held as guilty before God, when Christ took his guilt and was punished in his place?

He who believes must surely be ultimately brought to Glory—the Atonement requires it—and since he cannot come to Glory without persevering in holiness, he must so persevere, or else the Atonement is a thing that has no efficacy and force. The doctrine of *justification,* in the next place, proves this. Every man that believes in Jesus is justified from all things from which he could not be justified by the Law of Moses. The Apostle Paul regards a man who is justified as being completely set free from the possibility of accusation. Have you not the rolling thunder of the Apostle’s holy boasting still in your ears: “Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect?” If nothing can be laid to their charge—if there is no accuser—who is he that condemns? If *God* considers Believers just and righteous through the righteousness of His dear Son. If they put on His wondrous mantle—the fair white linen of a Savior’s righteousness—where is there room for anything to be brought against them by which they can be condemned? And if not accused, nor condemned, they must hold on their way and be saved!

Further still, my Brethren, *the intercession of Christ in Heaven* is a guarantee for the salvation of all who trust Him. Remember Peter’s case— “Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has desired to have you that he may sift you as wheat, but I have prayed for you, that your faith fail not.” And the prayer of Christ preserved Peter and made him weep bitterly after he had fallen into sin. The like prayer of our ever-watchful Shepherd is put up for all His chosen—day and night he pleads, wearing the breastplate as our great High Priest before the Throne of God—and if He pleads for His people, how shall they perish unless, indeed, His intercession has lost its authority?

Moreover, do you not remember that every Believer is said to be “one with Christ”? “For you are members of His body,” says the Apostle, “of His flesh, and of His bones.” And is your imagination so depraved that you can picture Christ, the Head, united to a body in which the members frequently *decay*—hand and foot and eyes, perhaps, rotting off so as to need fresh members to be created in their place? The metaphor is too atrocious for me to venture to enlarge upon it! “Because I live you shall live also,” is the immortality that covers every member of the body of Christ! There is no fear that the righteous will turn back to sin and give themselves up to their old corruptions, for the holiness that is in Christ by the vital energy of the Holy Spirit penetrates the entire system of the spiritual body and the least member is preserved by the life of Christ!

Once more— *The inner life of the Christian* is a guarantee that he shall not go back into sin. Take such passages as these, “Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which lives and abides forever” (1Pe 1:23). Now, if this seed is incorruptible and lives and abides forever, how say some among you that the righteous become corrupt and fall from Grace? Hear the Master—“The water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.” How say you, then, that this water which Jesus gives dries up and ceases to flow? Hear Him yet again—“As the living Father has sent Me and I live by the Father, so He who feeds on Me, even he shall live by Me... He that eats of this bread shall live forever” (Joh 6:57-58).

The life which Jesus implants in the heart of His people is allied to His own life—“For you are dead and your life is hid with Christ in God.” “When He who is your life shall appear, then shall you also appear with Him in Glory.” The Holy Spirit dwells in us. “Know you not that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit?” O Beloved, God Himself shall as soon die as the Christian, since the life of God is but eternal and that is the life which Christ has given to us! “I give unto My sheep *eternal* life and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of My hand.”

I leave the doctrine with your understandings, the Word of God being in your hands, and may the Spirit of God put it beyond a doubt in your souls that it is even so. Remember, it is *not* the doctrine that every man that believes in Christ shall be saved, *let him do as he wishes*—but it is this doctrine—that each man believing in Jesus shall receive the spirit of *holiness* and shall be led on in the way of*holiness* from strength to strength until he comes unto the perfection which God will work in us at the coming of His own dear Son.

**III.**Lastly, we have to DRAW CERTAIN USEFUL INFERENCES from this doctrine. One of the first is this—there is much in this Truth of God *by way of comfort* to a child of God who today walks in darkness and sees no light. You know that sometime ago the Lord revealed Himself to you. You remember times when the promises were peculiarly sweet, when the Person of Christ was revealed to your spiritual vision in all its Glory. Then, Beloved, if some temporary depression of spirit should just now overwhelm you. If some heavy personal trial should pass over you, hear the words, “I am the Lord, I change not.”

Believe that if He hides His face, He still loves you. Do not judge Him by outward Providences—judge Him by the teaching of His Word. Do as the bargemen on the canals do when they push backwards to drive their boat forwards. Take comfort from the *past—*snatch firebrands of comfort from

the altars of yesterday to enkindle the sacrifices of today—

***“Determined to save, He watched over your path, When Satan’s blind slave, you sported with death. And can He have taught you to trust in His name, And thus far have brought you to put you to shame?”***

This doctrine should suggest to every Christian *the need of constant diligence,*that he may persevere to the end. “What?” says one, “Is that an inference from the doctrine? I should have thought the very reverse, for if the Believer is to hold on his way, what need of diligence?” I reply that the misunderstanding lies with the *objector*. If the man is to be kept in *holiness* till life’s end, surely there is need that he should be *kept* in holiness—and the doctrine that he shall be so kept is one of his best means of producing the desired result. If any of you should be well assured that, in a certain line of business, you would make a vast sum of money, would that confidence lead you to refuse that business? Would it lead you to lie in bed all day, or to desert your post altogether?

No, the assurance that you would be diligent and would prosper would *make* you diligent! I will borrow a metaphor from the revelries of the season, such as Paul borrowed from the games of Greece—if any rider at the races should be confident that he was destined to win, would that make him slacken speed? Napoleon believed himself to be the child of destiny, did that freeze his energies? To show you that the certainty of a thing does not hinder a man from striving after it, but rather quickens him, I will give you an anecdote of myself.

It happened to me when I was but a child of some 10 years of age, or less. Mr. Richard Knill, of happy and glorious memory—an earnest worker for Christ, felt moved, I know not why, to take me on his knee, at my grandfather’s house and to utter words like these, which were treasured up by the family and by myself especially—“This child,” said he, “will preach the Gospel and he will preach it to the largest congregations of our times.” I believed his prophecy and my standing here today is partly occasioned by such belief. It did not hinder me in my diligence in seeking to educate myself because I believed I was destined to preach the Gospel to large congregations—not at all—the prophecy helped forward its own fulfillment

I prayed and sought and strove, always having this Star of Bethlehem before me, that the day should come when I should preach the Gospel. Even so, the belief that we shall one day be perfect never hinders any true Believer from diligence, but is the highest possible incentive to make a man struggle with the corruptions of the flesh and seek to persevere according to God’s promise. “Well, but,” says one, “if God guarantees final perseverance to a man, why need he pray for it?” Sir, dare he pray for it if God had *not* guaranteed it? I dare not pray for what is *not* promised, but as soon as ever it is promised, I pray for it! And when I see it in God’s Word I labor for it. “Say what you will,” says one, “you are inconsistent.” Ah, well, my dear Friend, we are bound to explain as best we can, but we are not bound to give understanding to those who have none!

It is hard trying to make things appear aright to eyes that squint. It will sometimes happen that people cannot see Truths of God which they do not particularly want to see. But the practical is the main thing, and I hope it shall be ours, by practical argument, to prove that while those who think that they *can* fall from Grace run awful risks and *do* fall. But those who know they *cannot*, if they have truly believed, yet seek to walk with all carefulness and circumspection! I would seek to live as if my salvation depended on myself and then go back to my Lord, knowing that it does not depend on me in any sense at all. We would live as the opposite doctrine is *supposed*to make men live, which is exactly as the Calvinistic doctrine actually *does* make men live—namely, with earnestness of purpose and with gracious gratitude to God, which is, after all, the mightiest influence—gratitude to God for having secured our salvation through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Another matter drawn from the text is this—let us *learn from the text how to persevere.*Brothers and Sisters, you will observe that the Apostle’s reason for believing that the Philippians would persevere was not because they were such good and earnest people, but because God had begun the work! So our ground for holding on must be our resting in God. There is a dear Brother sitting here this morning, a member of this Church, who was once a member of another denomination of Christians. One night, when he was quite young and lately converted, he knelt down to pray and he felt himself cold and dead and did not pray many minutes, but went to bed.

No sooner had he laid down than a horror of darkness came over him and he said to himself, “I have fallen from Grace.” Dear good soul as he was and is, he rose from his bed, began to pray, but got no better, and at five o’clock in the morning, away he went to his class leader! He began knocking at the door and shouting to awaken him. “What do you want?” said the class leader, as he opened the window. The reply was, “Oh, I have fallen from Grace!” “Well,” said the class leader, “if you have fallen from Grace, go home and trust in the Lord.” “And,” said my Friend, “I have done so ever since.”

Yes, and if he had known the great Truth before, he would not have been taken up with such nonsense as that of having fallen from Grace. “Fallen from Grace? Then go and simply trust in the Lord.” Yes and this is what we must *all* do, fallen or not! We must not trust within, but *always* rely on that dear Christ who died on the Cross. Lord, if I am not a saint, and I often fear I have nothing to do with saintship, yet, Lord, I *am* a sinner and You have *died* to save sinners and I will cling to that! O precious Blood, if I never did experience Your cleansing power! If, up till now, I have been in the gall of bitterness and the bonds of iniquity, yet there stands the grand old Gospel of the Cross—“He that believes and is baptized shall be saved.” Lord, I believe today if I never did before! Help my unbelief! This is the true theory of perseverance—it is to persevere in being *nothing* and letting Christ be *everything*! It is to persevere in resting wholly and simply in the power of the Grace which is in Christ Jesus.

Lastly, *this doctrine has a voice to the unconverted*. I know it had to me. If anything in this world first led me to desire to be a Christian, it was the doctrine of the Final Perseverance of the Saints. I had seen companions of my boyhood, somewhat more advanced than myself, who were held up to me as patterns of all that was excellent. I had seen them apprenticed in large towns, or launching out in business for themselves and soon their moral excellences were swept away. Instead of being patterns, they came to be persons against whom the young were warned for their supremacy in vice. This thought occurred to me—“That may also be my character in

years to come! Is there any way by which a holy character can be ensured for the future? Is there any way by which a young man, by taking heed, may be kept from uncleanness and iniquity?”

And I found that if I put my trust in Christ, I had the promise that I should hold on my way and grow stronger and stronger! And though I feared I might never be a true Believer and so get the promise fulfilled to myself, for I was so unworthy, yet the music of it always charmed me. “Oh, if I could but come to Christ and hide myself like a dove in His wounds, then I should be safe! If I could but have Him to wash me from my past sins, then His Spirit would keep me from future sin, and I should be preserved to the end.” Does not this attract you? Oh, I hope there may be some who will be allured by such a salvation as this!

We preach no rickety Gospel which will not bear your weight! It is no chariot whose axles will snap, or whose wheels will be taken off. This is no foundation of sand that may sink in the day of the flood. Here is the everlasting God pledging Himself by Covenant and oath that He will write His Law in your heart—that you shall not depart from Him—He will keep you! That you shall not wander into sin but if for awhile you stray, He will restore you again to the paths of righteousness!

O young men and maidens, turn in here! Cast in your lot with Christ and His people. Trust Him! Trust Him! Trust Him and then shall this precious Truth be yours and the experience of it be illustrated in your life—

***“My name from the palms of His hands  
Eternity will not erase!  
Impressed on His heart it remains  
In marks of indelible Grace.  
Yes, I to the end shall endure,  
As sure as the earnest is given;  
More happy, but not more secure,  
Are the glorified spirits in Heaven.”***

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Isaiah 54.  
Adapted from***The C.H. Spurgeon Collection***, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307.  
PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #370 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1**

**÷Php 1.18**

EVANGELICAL CONGRATULATIONS  
NO. 370

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON MONDAY EVENING, MARCH 25, 1861, *BY THE REV. W. BROCK,*  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“Christ is preached and I therein do rejoice.  
Yes and I will rejoice.”***Php 1:18***.***

HOW Paul would have rejoiced had he been living now! Judging from the effect that was produced upon his mind by the evangelical labors at Rome, what do you think, Brethren, would have been the effect produced upon his mind by the evangelical labors in London? Because the Brethren there were waxing bold in the name of Christ, he was glad. The fact that in the metropolis of the empire the glad tidings were proclaimed filled him with the most profound satisfaction. His heart was and his heart still would be joyful in the Lord!

And yet I take it that the ministry of the Gospel in Rome must have been comparatively on a small and insignificant scale. I suppose that in proportion to the population and in proportion to the size of that city, the preaching must have been very circumscribed and all things considered, considerably obscure. No preacher had lifted his voice from the terrace of the Capitol, no congregation had been gathered into the great area of the Coliseum, no public announcement had been made over all Rome that if the people would flock to the Pantheon they might hear about the incarnation of the Son of God.

Anything like that would have kindled Paul’s gladness into rapture! Christ preached out on the Campus Martius, or in the hall of Minerva, or on the platform of the Athenaeum at Rome would have left him nothing this side of Paradise to desire. As it was, his cup was running over. Men were told in honest speech about the One who had come down from Heaven. The One who had come at the Father’s bidding to proclaim His will and to accomplish His purposes. They had been told of a Friend that “sticks closer than a brother,” of the Advocate and the Mediator between God and man. And, the Spirit of all grace concurring with that which had been preached, the Apostle was fully persuaded in his own mind that they had heard words whereby they would be saved and that the promise of the life that now is and the promise of the life that is to come would by them be personally enjoyed. Hence he said, “I do rejoice,” and then emphatically again, “Yes, and I will rejoice.”

But how he would have rejoiced, or how he would rejoice if he were living now! Why, for every one man who preached the Gospel in his time there are thousands who are preaching it now. For every hundred hearers of that day, there are thousands upon thousands now. And for every one place into which the citizens of Rome might go to hear about Christ and

Him crucified, I need not say that there are many and ever multiplying places now. And you, my Brethren—the pastor of this church and those connected with him—you have added to the number, thank God, of those places and we are tonight to celebrate the completion of one, I suppose, of the best places that has ever been raised for the honor and for the glory of Christ.

From the first day until now, from its foundation to its top-stone, you have begun and continued and ended—your desire, your prayer, your purpose, your ambition having been just simply this—that here the Redeemer’s name may be magnified, that here His great salvation in all simplicity may be proclaimed. And we have come here tonight to assure you of our sympathy, to give to you the pledges of our brotherly affection and in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, to bid you heartily God speed—

***“Peace be within this sacred place,  
And joy a constant guest;  
With holy gifts and heavenly grace,  
Be our attendance blessed.”***

Well, the Apostle rejoiced and would have rejoiced a great deal more had he occupied the place which I am occupying now. My purpose is to show to you tonight why there should be such rejoicing in connection with the preaching of Christ crucified.

Various reasons, of course, could be assigned—at least several reasons could be thrown into various forms. I throw my idea of the matter into this form—by the preaching of Christ the renovation of mankind is *intelligently proposed* and not only so, but it is*graciously guaranteed*.

Given—a ministry that shall speak out openly what Christ is, what Christ has done, what Christ is doing, what Christ requires, what Christ administers and the renovation of our fellow man is not only intelligently proposed but is thereby on God’s part graciously guaranteed. I rejoice that the very first text from which my Brother has preached in this noble edifice was, though unfeignedly, so singularly coincident with my own— “They ceased not to teach and to preach Jesus Christ.” The preaching and the teaching of Christ was the very first message with which he opened his service here and I take that among other things to be a token for good.

**I.**In the first place, we rejoice in the preaching of Christ because thereby THE RENOVATION OF FALLEN MAN is intelligently proposed.  
High time, by common consent, that something was done in that direction. Everybody admits the foundations are out of course. And while many persons admit it, they also go about to suggest improvement, amendment and cure. You will give me your attention while I recapitulate some of the projects which they suggest in order to the attainment of an end which is desired by us all.  
This is one suggestion—Give the people, they say, a good, sound, secular education. Impart to them the elements of knowledge and when they are apprehended and understood, then educe and cultivate the corresponding results. Let them know about their own bodies and their own minds. Let them know something about the chemistry of common life. Let them know something about their relations to one another and to society at large and then when you have done that, there is some hope that their renovation may be obtained.  
This is another suggestion—Give to the people sound remunerative employment. Recognize the right of every honest and industrious man to live and then act upon your recognition by not preventing or interfering so that he cannot live. A fair day’s wages, they say, for a fair day’s work. The ample recompense for the unbegrudging toil. Save your countrymen from the dread of pauperism and never insult them any more by the sanctimonious condescension of some of your so-called Christian charities. Let every man be enabled to earn his bread in the sweat of his brow and thus you may hope that their renovation will be obtained.  
This is another suggestion—Confer upon them honorable enfranchisement. Barring the criminal and the imbecile, esteem every man throughout the country to be a free man. If you expect him to pay the tribute, give him a voice in the imposition of that tribute. Let him be regarded by yourselves and equally with yourselves and in all practical respects touching the commonwealth let him be regarded as a free man and then you may hope that the renovation so desirable will be obtained.  
This is another suggestion—Take care to raise them into better and more civilized habits. See where they live. See how they eat and drink— mark their demeanor one towards another, and towards the community at large. Change all that, or get them to change it so that they shall prefer cleanliness to filth, frugality to wastefulness, the seemly garment to the rotten rags and the well-ventilated and the well-lighted apartment to the moldy attic in the roof, or to the dark pestiferous, rotten cellar underground. And when you have done *that*, you may hope that so far their renovation will be obtained.  
And this is another suggestion—Let the people have their tastes cultivated. Introduce them to the great works of ancient and modern art. Throw open your museums. Take them into your art galleries, admit them into your artistic and your antique salons. Fire their love for the beautiful, kindle it yet more brightly and more brightly still. Insure their rejection of the base through their predilection for the refined and accomplish their abhorrence of the groveling through their rapture with the sublime and when you have done that, you have done much to obtain the renovation that we all desire.  
I believe these are the great suggestions of the men who designate themselves and I respectfully regard their designation as the philosophical philanthropists. These are the suggestions which those men make. They say get all such things done and then you will have society just what society ought to be both in regard to God and in regard to man. But now, can you look at these suggestions for a single moment without marking a most fatal defect throughout them all? They tell you about dealing with a man *externally*, but not a word about dealing with him *internally*. He is to be better cultured, better dressed, better housed.  
But for all that—the subject of all that we are talking about—as for the man essentially and inherently considered, there is nothing whatever done. After all that philosophy and philanthropy together have accomplished, the man’s heart is just what it was before. Well, I say in any company, in any place, what I say here—that if you leave the man’s natural heart untouched, you may culture and cultivate him as you may, there is that which will laugh all your culture and all your cultivation to scorn. If a man’s *heart* is right, his life will be right. If a man’s *heart* is right in its relations towards God and towards man his life will be right, but not else.  
And no man’s heart on earth is right. No! There is an universal, an absolute and unvarying necessity, as our Lord brought it out so distinctly with Nicodemus, “You must be born again.” “You must be born again.” And choosing as we do to sit at His feet, we accept the great oracular deliverance from Heaven and authorized by that we pronounce that all the suggestions which I have referred to are worth nothing.  
No, my Brethren. To educate the people is expedient, to remunerate them incumbent, to enfranchise them desirable, to civilize them important and to cultivate their tastes, if you will, laudable in all respects—but if you were to do all that tomorrow with every man and women and child in England, you have not put them into their right position. You have not inspired them with the right dispositions. You have not set them on the prosecution of the right career. A man may be educated and yet licentious—he may be well-paid and yet vindictive. He may be enfranchised and yet covetous. He may be civilized in all his habits and yet intemperate. He may be a man of cultivated taste and yet he may have no love for his neighbor and no love for his God.  
Why, what dishonesties, what startling dishonesties have been perpetrated by men who have had all the benefits of our foremost colleges and of our first-rate schools! What debaucheries, what fearful debaucheries have been perpetrated by men whose barns have been filled with plenty and whose presses have burst out with new wine! What inhumanities, what cruel inhumanities have been perpetrated by men who have boasted and who have blustered and who have brawled that they were free! What falsehoods, what shameful, incredible falsehoods, have been perpetrated by men who have been clothed in purple and fine linen and have fared sumptuously every day!  
And what profanities, cross and blasphemous have been perpetrated by men who have been the warmest admirers of Michelangelo and Rubens and who have been among the choicest of your connoisseurs, the very choicest of them in art! I need not adduce the evidence. It would insult and grieve the congregation if I did. Everybody here knows how that evidence accumulates. No, no, education and morality are not coincident— competence and morality are not coincident—civilization and morality are not coincident—liberty and morality are not coincident—and refined and cultivated tastes are not coincident with morality so that if you have the one you are sure to have the other.  
Brethren, you may deal with man’s external condition as scientifically as you can and with his character—so far as the outward character goes— as philosophically as you can—but as I said before, there is an underlying aboriginal peculiarity of his nature that laughs all your science and your philosophy to scorn. You cannot turn his condition into a paradise, you cannot convert him into a king and a priest unto God. Everywhere, without the exception of a land under Heaven and without the exception of an individual under Heaven, men need the clean heart and the right spirit— the new creation in Christ Jesus.  
They are dead in trespasses and sins. And they must be made alive unto God before you will get for them the renovation or the improvement which is so much desired. Hence my rejoicing and hence, as I believe, Paul’s rejoicing, were he here, because of the preaching in a commodious place like this—because of the *preaching of Christ*.  
Brethren, it will be preaching that goes down to the bottom of things. It will be preaching that deals not with the symptoms but with the sources of human guilt. It will be preaching that takes all profanity and debauchery and dishonesty and inhumanity and falsehood and deals with them. Mark—not in their overt acts so much as in their rudimental germs. My Brother’s preaching here will declare that if you could do all which our philosophic philanthropy desires, man would go wrong and be wrong and presently would actually go on to justify and to glory in the wrong. It will be the preaching, in one word, that declares the absolute necessity of a new creation, of a new creation in Christ Jesus.  
It will deal not with conjecture but with certainty, not with theories but with facts, not with experiments but with realities, not with the words which man’s wisdom teaches but with the words which the Holy Spirit teaches. It will deal not with the superficial, temporary, partial amendment, but intentionally at least with a profound, a radical, a fundamental, an everlasting cure. The preaching will never ignore one peculiarity of our nature because it is embarrassing, nor overlook another because it is inconvenient, nor tremble at another because it happens to be possessed of some authority and power. I anticipate and rejoice that here will stand the preacher to declare in the good mother tongue of us all that the tree is bad, but that by God’s grace it can be made good. That men are living unto themselves, but that by God’s grace they can be brought to live unto Him. That the Divine image is defaced, but that that Divine image can be restored. That where sin is reigning even unto death, there grace may reign instead through righteousness even unto everlasting life.  
And therein we do rejoice and if you are of my mind therein tonight we will *all* rejoice. Think of this place, look around it. Conceive of it devoted to a purpose like this and with tendencies and probabilities—for I am speaking only of these now—with tendencies and probabilities like these before our minds—is there a man or a woman listening to me who does not lift up his heart and rejoice and thank God now? Oh, I see the banner floating here that will be displayed because of the Truth. I hear the trumpet blowing here that will proclaim the message of God’s own mercies to man. I see the embassy going on here touching reconciliation between God and man and I see the confederacies of Christian brotherhood here provoking one another to love and to good works.  
Our country will be the better for this place. We shall be relieved of our pauperism after all and saved from our licentiousness and rescued from our immorality. Yes, and we shall be rescued, too, from the superstition that would endanger our immortality by its sacerdotal and wicked and mischief-making tendencies—from the superstition that would put our immortality in jeopardy. And from the atheism that would laugh that immortality to scorn. It will be that our own land, so happy amid the nations of the earth already, shall be the royal habitation of righteousness and joy and peace in the Holy Spirit. Christ is preached. He has been preached here today already and “therein I do rejoice, yes, and I will rejoice.”  
**II.**Secondly, we rejoice in the preaching of Christ because thereby the renovation in question is GRACIOUSLY GUARANTEED.  
There can be conceived of by us a wise and sound plan that may, nevertheless, be frustrated when all comes to all by unknown and unperceived opposition. There are men all round about us who say, “Yes, and you ought to remember that and hold your peace, for just as beyond any question civilization will fail, so Christianity will fail likewise.” And they have apparently a case. Let us look at it. They say, “What can you do *there*?” And then they point us to the masses rising up early, sitting up late, eating the bread of carefulness, if in hundreds of cases they can get the bread to eat. “What can you do *there*?” And they point us to our merchants, our physicians, our statesmen, our artisans, our bankers who are all with one accord apparently looking for what they preposterously call the main chance.  
“What can you do *there*?” And then they point us to religious assemblies where superstition and formalism have everything their own way and where because of sacramental rites performed upon unconscious infants, people are told that they are members of Christ, children of God and inheritors of the kingdom of Heaven. “What can you do *there*?” And then they point us—alas, how they can point us—to multitudes whose licentiousness and profligacy are gradationally cross and perhaps to quite as many multitudes whose licentiousness is gradationally refined and then they say, “Now look at them, look round and tell us whether such ones will ever be prevailed upon to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts and to live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world?”  
And they take our own utterance, our own Scripture and they say, “You may well enough call them ‘dead in trespasses and sins.’ ” Brethren, we looked at the other case—let us look at this. I own that there are about it indications that ought to make every thoughtful Christian man a great deal more thoughtful and a great deal more Christian, too. Oh, the domination of ungodliness is desperate and its tyranny is terrific and its sagacity is superhuman and its mastery of man is malignant in the last degree. How one stands sometimes and looks at it dismayed! If it would be content to take what is in itself inherently abominable, it would not be so bad.  
But it comes and takes what is in itself inherently *amiable and moral* and with that it tries to do the work of death. It takes our legitimate occupations and makes them a decoy to irreligiousness. It takes the amenities of our social life and perverts them to ungodliness. It takes the great charities of our homes and makes them antagonistic to devotion. Yes, and it goes to the very altar of God and it makes the sacred and solemn ordinances of the Church an opiate—pleasant enough—but dreadfully and fatally poisonous to the soul.  
So I look as they bid me look and then think of all the particulars and resources of my case again. And as I do so I say, “Your premises apparently are sound, but your conclusion is altogether unsound. The Church is not always to be second to the world—Christ is not always to be resisted by the devil.” No, no, my Brethren, the Church is to take precedence of the world—Christ is to be triumphant obviously and before the world. Psalms and hymns and songs of praise are to come up into the ascendant and knees are to bow and tongues are to confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father. And for believing like that, in the face of such a case, I offer these as my reasons.  
**1.**With the preaching of Christ, God has formally connected the exertion of His power. “With God all things are possible.” I sometimes apprehend that good men are forgetful of this and they are for lying down and dying as though God had somehow or other ceased to be able to do everything. “With God all things are possible.” And should He gird His sword upon His thigh, should He go about to show Himself strong, I ask what are the world, the flesh and the devil in their worst combinations, then? What adversary would not succumb then—what adversary would not become a friend? “Yes,” you say, “almightiness in action would do all that we require.”  
Brethren, I speak of almightiness in action *now*. It is not simply that in this place there will be the message of God. Along with that message there will be God Himself. It

s not that the Word will be preached merely, but of His own will God will beget men by the Word. It is not simply that the Gospel will be proclaimed, but that that Gospel is the power of God unto salvation. My Brother will not stand here as the statesman stands in the senate house or the advocate at the bar, or the lecturer on the platform of an Athenaeum. He will stand here, I doubt not, as well-accoutered and well-furnished as they are mentally, intellectually and so on.  
But eloquent and mighty in the Scriptures as he or any other man may be, it is neither that eloquence, nor that might which will effect the end. These things and the things like unto them, are the vehicles through which God sends down His blessing, the instrumentalities by which God accomplishes His work, the means and medium by which it pleases God to work. He will stand here a fellow-worker with God, so that the Word will be in demonstration of the Spirit and in power. Mark—the human will be confirmed by the superhuman, the natural will be accompanied by the preternatural, the earthly will be helped and succored and blessed by the Divine.  
With all that may be persuasive or argumentative or pathetic, with all that may be properly and intentionally adapted to commend the Truth to every man’s conscience in the sight of God, there will be the energy whereby God is able to subdue all things unto Himself. “Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, says the Lord of Hosts.” And so in the face of all that seems to be opposed to us we do rejoice and we will rejoice because God’s own channel for the communication of His power is the preaching of Christ.  
**2.**Secondly, with the preaching of Christ God has been pleased formally to associate the accomplishment of His purposes. He has His purposes. “God so loved the world, that He sent His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes on Him should not perish but have everlasting life.” The Lord told Paul at Corinth when Paul was all but giving way to our common unbelief—He told him to stay there and not to hold his peace. Why? “Because I have much people in this city.” And emboldened and encouraged by that, he stayed there a year and six months.  
Well, those purposes which thus come out in the Scriptures of Truth which are possessed by us—those purposes are to be accomplished. “By two immutable things in which it is impossible that God should lie, His Son is to see of the travail of His soul until He is satisfied. God is in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself.”  
But now how are those purposes accomplished? Mark! “Go into all the world and *preach* the Gospel to every creature. He that believes and is baptized shall be saved, he that believes not shall be damned.” Mark again—“It has pleased God by the foolishness of *preaching* to save them that believe.” Mark again—“Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved. How shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed, how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard and how shall they hear without a *preacher*?” Mark again—“There is one mediator between God and man—the Man, Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be *testified* in due time. Whereof I am ordained a *preacher*.”  
Do you see my drift? The preaching obviously, demonstratively, stands connected with the purpose, which cannot fail—bound up with the Everlasting Covenant which is ordered in all things and sure. “The Word of the Lord endures forever and this is the Word which by the Gospel is preached unto you.” I think therefore of our friend occupying this place and of other men occupying similar places and I take up with Paul’s jubilate again. He will stand here and this will be the plea, “As though God did beseech you by me.” That will be the plea, “As though God did beseech you by me.” And speak I to men tonight who do not understand as soon as they reflect how such a plea must chasten the preacher—how it must humble and yet dignify him—how, if he has a soul, it must bring out his soul and all that is within?  
“God by me beseeching you.” What man so affected and impressed can be careless, heedless, prayerless, selfish? Oh, the plea does wonderful work for the minister. And what does it do for a people who will listen? Why, it arrests them, takes hold upon them, keeps hold of them and God being present with His blessing never lets them go. And what does it do in regard to the Spirit of all grace, the Author and Giver of all the gifts you want? That plea adopted, earnestly and devoutly used will bring the preacher into the fullest sympathy with the Holy Spirit of promise, as he stands here pleading, expostulating, comforting, encouraging, warning. With the plea moving everything within him and everything around him, the Divine purposes are recollected and they are accomplished—until he and the brotherhood will have to say, “Who has begotten us these? the young men and maidens, the old men and children and the strangers that are within your gates.”  
Yes, and let us hope that some of you who have heard all the sermons up to now and have never surrendered yourselves to Christ—hat you will be given to them in answer to their prayer. Not the units but the groups, not the individuals but the many, born “not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” Oh, what will this place be then? Brethren, the angels will have large employment in this Tabernacle. Heaven will have much to do in what is passing here. “For God is not a man that He should lie nor the son of man that He should repent. Has He said it and shall He not do it, has He spoken and shall He not make it good?” Of Him and through Him and to Him are all things. And He will come and stand by our Brother here, proving Himself to be “God over all, blessed for evermore.”  
**3.**Then, lastly—God has been pressed formally to identify the preaching of Christ with the manifestation of His sympathies.  
Why, we could tell of much already—we could tell of much which has been done in our own time and not upon a small scale either. But let us rather remember what God did in the earlier times of our evangelical history. What happened at Jerusalem? Believers were the more added unto the Lord, multitudes both of men and women and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith. What happened at Ephesus? The name of the Lord Jesus Christ was glorified and the men who had used curious arts brought their books together and burned them before all men and they counted the price of them and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver.  
What happened all through Macedonia? “God makes us,” said the Apostle, “to triumph everywhere in Christ.” And what happened upon the larger scale through proud and philosophic Greece and through lordly and domineering Rome? Why, we have it on the testimony of our enemies that the preaching turned the world upside down. The preaching did, mind you! Before the preacher came, everything was earthly and sensual and Devilish—after the preacher came, there was the alteration, the improvement, the renovation of which we speak. Not by the preacher’s unassisted, original, independent effort—the excellency of the power was of God and not of man.  
Mighty through God were the preachers throughout Greece and Rome and Asia Minor and mighty, too, through God will be the preacher here. Say that London is as corrupt as Corinth was, that it is as worldly as Rome was, that it is as rationalistic as Athens was, that it is as dead set against Christ and His Gospel as Jerusalem was and you cannot very well say more than that. Yet He that stood by the preacher in those places and in those times will stand by the preacher here. “Go, go, stand and speak in the temple all the words of this life.” On Sabbath mornings he will hear that and at other times besides and when his courage and his heart may fail, he will hear besides “Go,”—“for I have much people in this city.”  
And so sent he goes and so going, what ensues? Participation of the Divine nature is vouchsafed unto the people. Sympathy with the Divine purposes is induced within the people. Communications of Divine grace are given to the people. Life everlasting becomes possessed by the people. “Heirs of God” are they and “joint-heirs in Jesus Christ.” Brethren, I speak boldly as I ought to speak. It is a vile and wicked calumny that our doctrines of grace lead to licentiousness. Never was there anything more palpably contrary to the Truth. And all the history of the Church being my proof tonight—where Christ is preached as He ought to be preached, after the apostolic manner—neither licentiousness nor wickedness of any kind, will abound there. No, there will be honest dealing, kindly neighborhood, patriotic loyalty, world-wide philanthropy, truth-telling speech. There will be a race of men loving God with all their hearts and *therefore*their neighbor as themselves.  
You cannot alter that order. You will never get a man to love his neighbor as himself till he has loved God first of all. And what we are looking for and hoping and praying for being done that order will supervene here. Loving the Lord their God with all their hearts, therefore the people will love their neighbors as themselves. And not being the amended ones but the regenerated ones, not being the improved ones but the twice-born ones, not being the corrected ones but the newly-created ones—the Law will have no need to arm itself for them, justice will never need to be on the alert for them, humanity will never need to tremble for them. No, and the purest chastity will never need to blush for them.  
Their bodies will be the temples of the Holy Spirit and their members will be the members of Christ, sacred to His service in every way in which they can be employed. The tree having been made good, there will be fruit unto holiness and the end of that shall be everlasting life.  
Well then, who does *not* rejoice? Everybody responds, “I rejoice.” We all rejoice because of what will be done by the preaching of Christ here. We know that this place will be the birthplace of precious souls through successive generations. We know that this place will be like a great big human heart, throbbing, pulsating with beneficence and benevolence obtained directly from the Cross of Christ. And this great big human heart will be propelling far and near a thousand influences which shall be for “glory to God in the highest, for peace on earth and good will towards men.” It will be none other than the house of God and the very gate of Heaven.  
If indeed the preaching were of another kind from what we know it will be, it would be a very different thing. If I thought the preaching here was to be the preaching of Christ robbed of His divinity—the pure and perfect man to admiration, but not the co-equal and the co-eternal Son of God—I should not rejoice. But I know that it will be preaching in which Christ’s proper deity will be spoken out unambiguously and unequivocally and systematically. I know that He will be declared here to be the friend that “sticks closer than a brother” and at the same time our Lord and our God. If I thought that the preaching here was to be the preaching of Christ as an example merely and not as a sacrifice, or as a sacrifice in some vague, indeterminate, rationalistic, deceitful, false sense of submitting His own will to His Father’s, I should not rejoice. But I believe that it will be the preaching of Christ’s propitiatory sacrifice, as a proper sin-offering and that these words will bring out the aspect of the case as presented here— ***“He bore that we might never bear  
His Father’s righteous ire.”***  
If I thought that the preaching here was to be the preaching of Christ with any hesitancy as to His power, or His readiness to save the transgressor I should not rejoice. But I believe that there will be no approach to such hesitancy, that it will be Christ with His precious blood cleansing from all sin, Christ able to save even to the uttermost all that come unto God by Him. If I believed that it would be the preaching of Christ independently or apart from His jurisdiction. If I thought it would be represented here that Christ had nothing to do with the lives and the conduct of His people—I should not rejoice. But I believe on the contrary that His royal and kingly Character will be insisted upon and that every believer will be told, “At your peril do you make Christ the minister of sin.”  
If I believed that the preaching here was about to be at variance with the scholarship, the thoughtfulness, the uprightness, the spiritualmindedness, of the past ages of the Church I should not rejoice. I believe, on the contrary, that it will be preaching in strictest harmony with the sound evangelical scholarship and with the lofty evangelical integrity and with the concordant evangelical orthodoxy of all the ages that are past. I stand here as I would stand in some other places that I know to resent the imputation and to show cause, if need be, for the resentment that in preaching Christ as we do we have no scholarship, no talent, no honesty, no spiritual-mindedness on our part. Brethren, it is not so. I speak unto wise men and ask you to judge what I say.  
If I believed that the preaching here would regard all godly mystery as a scandal and all godly boldness as a calamity and all godly aggressiveness as a nuisance and all godly joyfulness as an offense, I certainly could not rejoice. But I believe that the preaching here will hold all godly mystery in veneration, will strengthen and enforce all godly boldness, will honorably vindicate all godly aggressiveness and will give, on behalf of godly joyfulness, the conclusive argumentation and the kindly and the pathetic appeal. And so believing, I ask again whether we shall not close our gathering, our service tonight, with one great song and Psalm of thanksgiving to the Lord our God.  
The maxim, the watchword, the war cry here will be Revelation, not Intuition. Faith, not imagination. The Scriptures, not tradition. The Gospel, not philosophy. The Person, not the proxy. Grace, not merit. The Cross, not the crucifix. The Savior, not the Church. I, believing that and knowing that—hearing indeed from all the brotherhood constituting the Church here, a great, unanimous, hearty, irrepressible AMEN, as I am thus speaking on their behalf—let us, I say, take the cup of salvation and let us call upon the name of the Lord. There may be others, I dare say there are, who have to sing the melancholy dirge—we have to sing the exultant Psalm. They may, if they will, chant the lamentable elegy—we mean to chant the triumphant canticle.  
They may go and perform, if they must, the service for the dead—we come here to celebrate the great festival of a living Gospel, a living Church and a living Savior—  
***“Let the vain world pronounce its shame,  
And fling their scandals on Your cause;  
We come to boast our Savior’s name  
And make our triumphs in His Cross.  
“With joy we tell a scoffing age,  
He that was dead has left the tomb;  
He lives above their utmost rage,  
And we are waiting till He come.”***  
Christ is preached! Therein do I rejoice and therein I will rejoice! And now, Brethren, let us have the rejoicing in a joyous collection. I catch that response of yours and I catch it as an honest man with his eye upon honest men. And if you go—in the main, at all events—with what I have been saying now, I ask you that you will give the evidence of your sympathy with me. And then and thereby the evidence of your sympathy with our Brethren, in making your collection tonight the outward and the visible sign of a gladness of your inmost soul, which amounts, approximately at least, to the joy that is unspeakable and full of glory.

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OPENING SERVICES  
NO. 371

Tuesday Evening, March 26, 1861  
MEETING OF THE CONTRIBUTORS.

On Tuesday evening, March 26th, the first of the Public Meetings in connection with the opening of the Tabernacle took place. It was limited exclusively to the Contributors to the Building Fund, of whom more than three thousand were present. Up to the moment Sir HENRY HAVELOCK took the Chair the platform below the pulpit presented a busy scene, as it was here the collecting cards had to be turned in. Some half-dozen gentlemen officiating as clerks were for about an hour unceasingly engaged in receiving and recording the contributions handed in by some hundreds of volunteer collectors, the respective amounts varying from a few pence up to many pounds. Rich and poor vied with each other and it would be hard to say which excelled. The whole matter seemed to awaken a personal interest in each individual.

When the period arrived for commencing the business of the meeting Mr. SPURGEON gave out the third hymn, which had been composed expressly for the occasion —

***“Sing to the Lord with heart and voice,  
You children of His sovereign voice;  
The work achieved, the temple raised,  
Now be our God devoutly praised.  
For all the treasure freely brought—  
For all the toil in gladness worked —  
For warmth of zeal and purpose strong—  
Wake we today the thankful song.  
Lord of the temple! Once disowned,  
But now in worlds of light enthroned—  
Your glory let Your servants see  
Who dedicate this house to You.  
What if the world still disallows —  
Our corner and our top-stone You!  
Your shame and death and risen joy,  
Shall here our ceaseless thought employ.  
Be Your dear name like ointment shed  
O’er every soul, on every head.  
Make glorious, oh our Savior King,  
The place where thus Your chosen sing.  
More grand the temple and the strain  
More sweet, when we Your Heaven shall gain And bid, for realms where angels dwell,  
Our Tabernacles here, farewell!***

After offering up a few words of prayer and reading portions of the 35th and 36th of Exodus, descriptive of the offerings brought to the Tabernacle by the Jews in the wilderness, he briefly introduced Sir Henry Havelock, the Chairman for the evening.

The CHAIRMAN said he hoped he should be excused if he were at a loss how to address such a meeting as this, because he supposed that a similar assembly in a building like this had never been addressed before in England. The kind way in which they had greeted him gave him encouragement and was sufficient to enable him to give utterance to thoughts, which, but for their hearty welcome he would hardly have power to express. He had been expressing a doubt to a friend near him that he should not be able to get through the duties which devolved upon him satisfactorily, but his friend remarked to him that this was not an occasion when speaking was required, for the occasion spoke for itself. He thought it did speak for itself. They could not look around that magnificent building without feeling that it was entirely of God’s doing. The progress which had been made in that work of God was the most extraordinary thing in modern Church history.

It began two and a half years ago with fear and trembling. But from the first they had been triumphantly advancing and they had seen the work grow larger and larger, until now they saw it completed. It was impossible to come to any other conclusion but that God had worked mightily with His people. Then let them look at their pastor and at the different phases through which he had passed and they would agree with him that God had been with him in each of them. At one time it was said the work would break down in a month but it did not come to pass. It was also said that it was a passing *excitement* and would soon come to an end, but he thought their appearance there did not look like passing excitement.

What excitement there might be before the end of the meeting, he could not foretell. But if they were really mad, as some people said, there was certainly a great deal of “method in their madness.” He was no orator and they should not expect a long address from him but he thought they ought to thank God for the blessings which He had showered upon that building at each stage of its erection. There had been nothing like it accomplished before. Let them hope it was but the beginning of many such undertakings destined to be carried to a similarly successful end.

Their pastor, in speaking to him of the building, pointed out some deficiencies in the inner room. He said that everything was not as yet quite comfortable and remarked that it was like a newly married couple coming to a new house. Now, he (the Chairman) hoped the simile would be carried a little further and that the church would not only be like the newly married couple in a new house, but like the noble matron who had become the mother of many children. They had heard that the small sum of £3,000 was required for the complete payment of every liability connected with past expenditure and from what he saw there that night he felt convinced that all would be speedily given.

And when no more should be needed, that need not prevent them from displaying their liberality in the cause which they had at heart. They had just had a precedent in Scripture brought before them where the people of old were told they need not bring any more to the tabernacle. But they had not been told so there. He therefore hoped they would still contribute to the work until they had accomplished everything which they desired. It was intended that after the building itself had been paid for, the remainder of the money which might be raised should be devoted to the education of young men intended for the ministry.

In addition to that there was accommodation beneath the church for about two thousand scholars. And he was sure that was a purpose for which their contributions would still be given, even though the money might not be wanted for the mere bricks and mortar of the structure. He trusted they would excuse him saying more. But he could not conclude without thanking them kindly for so patiently listening to the remarks he had made.

The REV. C. H. SPURGEON said they were all aware that there was a happy contest between himself and his congregation. It was a very bad thing certainly for a newly married couple to fall out, especially in the scarcely furnished home but it so happened that the contest in their case was as to which should bring the better dowry to stock the house with. The minister should in every case do his share of the work, or how could he with any conscience appeal to his flock?

Now, he had undertaken that he would bring in £1,000 between the month of January and the opening of the building. He had fulfilled his pledge. In fact, he had gone somewhat beyond it. They might remember that on the last occasion they left off with a drawn battle. Having two or three bankers behind him who generously came to his aid, he had outstripped the congregation by some thirty shillings. However he considered it an undecided battle and if they could beat him tonight he should be very glad.

He then read over a list of the various contributions he had received, amounting to £1,170 14s. There was still, he said, a shot or two in the locker to win the victory with even should their industry and zeal excel in their results what he had accomplished. They might say the amount was £1,200 and it was matter of wonder and thankfulness that the bazaar had realized a clear £1,200. He ought to state and he should not be saying more than should be said, that there were many ladies in the congregation who had been working very, very hard and had always been at the side of his beloved wife whenever there had been a meeting for work. Still the main anxiety and arrangement had rested upon her and had it not been for those ladies, who, like the women of Israel, brought the labor of their hands the work could never have been so singular a success.

Of old it was written (Exo 35:25-26)—“And all the women that were wise-hearted did spin with their hands and brought that which they had spun, both of blue and of purple and of scarlet and of fine linen. And all the women whose heart stirred them up in wisdom spun goats’ hair.” So now they did the same. Thus had the willing-hearted people of God, each in their own way, brought an offering unto the Lord of gold and silver and copper and blue and purple and scarlet so that the house of the Lord might be completed. So large a sum as had been realized spoke well, both

with respect to individual co-operation and to the sympathy of the Christian public.

The result which they had attained was exceedingly satisfactory because almost every farthing which they required had been raised. He would not say the whole of it. But they would, no doubt, have the amount in a few minutes. The top-stone would soon be brought forth with shouts of praise. How had such a result been attained? The reply was, that there had been three main elements in it. The first was *faith in God*. At the beginning of the year, they wanted £4,000 and an entry to this effect would be found in the Church book, signed by himself and the deacons—“This Church needs rather more than £4,000 to enable it to open the New Tabernacle, free of all debt. It humbly asks this temporal mercy of God and believes that for Jesus’ sake the prayer will be heard and the gift bestowed, as witness our hands.”

As for himself he never had a doubt about the opening of that place free from debt since he attached his name to that entry. The work in which they had been engaged had been a work of faith from the beginning to the end. The Lord has fulfilled His promise to the letter—for according to our faith has it been done to us. Why not have faith in God for temporals? Will He ever allow His own cause to lag for lack of means? In this case, as the need grew, the supply increased. As the proportions of the project were enlarged, the liberality of the Christian public increased. And even during the last three or four weeks he had been amazed at the contributions which he had received. Contributions had come by post varying in amount from pounds to a few shillings. They had come from America, from Australia and from almost every country in the world, from men of all ranks and persons of every denomination.

Universal sympathy had been strewn and most of the donations from readers of the weekly sermons were accompanied by letters so affectionate and encouraging that it was a happy thing that such an opportunity had been given for the utterance of up to now unknown Christian love. Faith in God had done much of that which had been accomplished and unto a faithful God be glory. But “faith without works is dead”—very dead indeed in chapel building! One must *work* there and he could say he had toiled as hard as any man could to accomplish his purpose.

The house had been built for God and his sole object with regard to its future income was that it might be applied to the tuition and training of young men as ministers—that thus the Church in the Tabernacle might be a helper to many of the Churches of Christ. But besides individual energy there had been a third thing, *combination of numbers*laboring with one aim. Many poor persons had brought offerings which they could ill afford to spare and no one should ever know how many of them had received back, indirectly from himself, the amount they had given, but which they would have been grieved if he had refused. He publicly thanked all his generous friends throughout the world for their cooperation and he would thank them all, individually if it were possible to do so.

Before the Chairman sat down Mr. Spurgeon paid a warm tribute to the memory of General Havelock, the Chairman’s father. They might not, he said, be aware that there were only two dissenting lords and those two were Baptists. There were only two dissenting baronets and those two were Baptists also. Both of them had earned their titles fairly—those were Sir Samuel Morton Peto and Sir Henry Havelock. The one the king of spades and the other the savior of our empire in India. He was sure the country would for many years remember the name of Havelock.

As a Christian minister, he was no apologist for war, but it was a righteous cause in which Havelock was engaged. It was rather to save than to subdue—to rescue women and children than to slaughter men. But he was sure that when his fame as a warrior should cease to be heard, his name as a Christian would live. He was glad to see Sir Henry Havelock with his father’s people in a Baptist Tabernacle. He hoped they would see him for years to come and that the blessing of the God of his father might richly rest upon him.

Mr. MUIR said there was no one who attended the last meeting held two months ago but must have felt a desire to do all they could to show their zeal in raising that building and he was very glad the wish had now been accomplished. At the time to which he referred it was his intention to take a journey to the north and he thought he would do what he could to further the work. He accordingly took a number of cards with him in order to collect contributions. Some of his friends gave very liberally, although he must confess that he had more difficulty in obtaining contributions from others. He then read his list of contributions, which amounted to £123 14s. The REV. F. TUCKER of Camden Road Chapel, said he could echo every word that had fallen from Mr. Spurgeon with regard to the gentleman who occupied the chair that evening.

Long, long indeed would it be before to any Baptist, or to any Christian, or to any Englishman, the name of Havelock would be a common or indifferent word. He had himself come there that evening partly from sympathy for he knew what it was to have to do with a chapel debt. And although the debt upon his chapel was only about one-tenth part of that which rested upon theirs, he only hoped it would cost him one-tenth part of the trouble. One of the most difficult things in the world to deal with was the tail of a debt. They might bury the body of the animal, but if the tail still was above ground—it was like the tail of the rattlesnake—it made a great and formidable and alarming noise although the body had been safely interred.

Now, that night, he understood they intended to bury the rattlesnake, tail and all and over that grave no one might write “*Resurgam*.” He had come, however, personally to congratulate them. It was not the first time that he had stood within these walls. He was at the first public meeting held in that place some few months ago. It was then in its *deshabill*e and yet he looked around the place with admiration and he felt, as he told his

Brother Spurgeon, as he supposed the captain of some ordinary seafaring steamer must have felt when he first stood in the hold of the Great Eastern.

The Great Eastern was now on the Gridiron in Milford harbor. They intended tonight to float their magnificent vessel off the Gridiron and might God grant her a long and prosperous voyage. He congratulated them not merely on the size of the great building, but also on its beauty. He did not think it was anything too large. His own chapel would seat about eleven hundred persons and it was large enough for him. But if John Bunyan were on the earth, should they like to confine him to a little company of eleven hundred persons?

If George Whitfield were on the earth, should they like to limit him to a little company of eleven hundred? Now they had got Charles Spurgeon on earth, should they shut him up in a little company of eleven hundred? As to the beauty of the building, no words he could use could adequately describe it. He did, from his heart, congratulate them on the size and beauty of the edifice. But he had also to congratulate them upon another matter—upon the doctrines that would be preached in that grand building. He was not there to give account of every word that his Brother Spurgeon had ever uttered, nor of every aspect of every doctrine which he had presented. But as an older man than his Brother, he was sure he would not be thought impertinent if he said that he, with many of his Brethren throughout the country, had watched Mr. Spurgeon’s course with intense and prayerful interest.

They could see his growth and development towards a liberality and a symmetry of creed which had filled all their hearts with gratitude and joy. Just as dear Jonathan George—dear sainted Brother—just as he had at the meeting to which he (the speaker) had referred, there were some people who wanted to keep the eagle in a very small cage. But he said it was no use doing that—the eagle would either break his wings or break the cage. Well, they rejoiced that night that it was not the wings of the eagle which had been broken, but the cage. And they now saw the noble bird careening through the firmament in the shining light of the Sun of Righteousness.

He looked upon his Brother Spurgeon as one who upheld the sovereignty of God and who, on the other hand, declared the responsibility of man. He preached that never could the sinner repent without the aid of the Holy Spirit and yet he called upon every sinner to repent and believe the Gospel. Especially did his Brother make prominent the grand doctrine of the atoning sacrifice of Christ and the kindred doctrine of justification by faith in the righteousness of the Lord and Savior. He took it that the central object which would be exhibited by his Brother in that place would be the Cross and nothing but the Cross. The central object would not be the roll of the eternal decrees, not the tables of the moral Law, not the laver of baptism, not the throne of judgment—the central object would be the Cross of the Redeemer.

Right and left they would find the roll of the eternal decrees, the tables of the law, the laver of baptism and the judgment throne, but the CROSS of Jesus would stand in the midst, shedding its pure and harmonizing light over all besides. There was many a building in the Established Church of this land where they might enter and they would hear as clear an exposition of Gospel Truth as they would from Mr. Spurgeon, but in many another building of the Established Church, all was priestly power and sacramental efficacy. In many another all that was preached was reason, intuition, the wisdom of man and not of God. And yet all those men had subscribed to the same articles, all those men belonged to the same Church.

Come within this building, whenever they might, he believed they would hear nothing of sacramental efficacy on the one side, or of man’s reason or intuition on the other. But their dear Brother would say that he had determined not to know anything among them but Christ and Him crucified. One word more and he had done. They were living in the days of “Essays and Reviews”—living in the days of a Nationalism, which, for his own part, he considered far more unscriptural than any Romanism. He wished to explain himself. He meant to say for himself that he would rather be a poor humble-minded member of the Church of Rome, believing too much, than he would be one of those modern philosophers, too wise to believe anything at all. With this modern philosophy he had no patience!

The Bible, according to those men, was an old-fashioned book which had its value two thousand years ago, but now its value was diminished by all the length of those two thousand years. They had now out shot the Bible, said these men—they had got ahead of the Bible. They were now more intelligent and more wise than the Bible. Well let them take it as those men said and then he (the speaker) would add, let the venerable Book have fair play after all. If by it those men were so much wiser than they would have been, then, he said, it was only fair that they should strip themselves of all they had learned from the Bible—with regard to the attributes of God, the origin of the universe, the standard of morals, the destiny of spirits beyond the grave—and if they did that he could fancy he saw them peeling off coat after coat, like an onion and getting “small by degrees” but not “beautifully less,” and he did not know what would remain of them.

Why, in ancient Greece there were intellects as subtle and spirits as profound as any in modern times. He believed that on some lines of philosophical inquiry none had been able to surpass them. But when those men entered on the doctrines of theology, how far did they get? Why, just as far as this, “the world by wisdom knew not God.” That was as far as they got. The youngest Sunday-School child, he was going to say, knew more about God than Socrates and Plato. And if these men knew more about God than Socrates and Plato, where did they get their knowledge, except where the little Sunday-scholar got his, from the Scriptures. It was easy to stand on the Mount of Revelation and then to spurn the ground upon which they stood. But let them cut that ground from under them

and down they would go into the pit.

There was, he continued in ancient Athens an old cynic who went into the marketplace with his lantern kindled in the full blaze of day and said, in the Market of Athens, “I am come to look for an honest man.” And all Athens smiled at the satire. But suppose he had said, “I have come here at noon-day with my lantern to light up the scenery, to bring to view those grand hills and this glorious city and that blue sky?” Would not the cry have rung through Athens, “Diogenes is mad”? What then is the insanity of the men who, in the full noon-day of the Gospel illumination, bring forward the little lamp of their own intuition and say, while turning their back upon the Sun of Righteousness shining in His strength, “See what our little lantern can show? See what a vast circumference it illuminates?”

But oh, let that sun but withdraw his shining and the pall of night come down upon the scenery and what a very twinkle would their lantern be in that abyss of darkness!

The REV. J. BIGWOOD said he could not fail to express his deep gratitude to God that He had permitted such a building as the present to be erected in which the glorious Gospel in all its purity and simplicity would be preached. He had been wondering why it should be called a tabernacle—a tent—a place that was to pass away. Surely if there was a *mansion* in London, this was the one which would remain when all others had passed away. Was it not rather a temple than a tabernacle? Regarded in an ecclesiastical point of view, it was a marvel that such a building should be built and opened *free from debt*. What was the secret? If was the faith which the pastor and Church had exhibited in the mighty power and goodness of God. The minister was not alone. God was with him and he with God. He walked with God and relied upon His power and God had granted him the desire of his heart. He congratulated them with his whole heart upon what they had accomplished and he hoped that God’s blessing would rest upon them and that thousands might there be born again to God.

The REV. J. RUSSELL congratulated Mr. Spurgeon and his friends on the completion of the Metropolitan Tabernacle at Newington. Its being erected so near the Borough made him feel a deep interest in it, for he was born in the Borough and knew the whole neighborhood well. Close by, in former days, there stood the Fishmongers’ Alms-houses with their pretty gardens and there his beloved fisher used to go and speak to some of the aged inmates of the love of Christ. And he hoped the members of this church would visit the poor all round and make known to them the glad tidings of mercy through Christ. It was called a Tabernacle, which curiously enough in its derivation meant a little wooden house—*taberna*, a wooden house, *tabernaculum*, its diminutive—but the general sense is an habitation and its sense in Scripture, the habitation of God.

They had erected a large and magnificent house, but its size, its splendor, its elegance, its beautiful columns would avail nothing if it were not the habitation of God. But he believed it would be and that would be its glory. He rejoiced that a place of that size had been erected. There were large theatres, large Roman Catholic chapels, why should there not be large chapels where great numbers of people might be brought together to hear the Gospel? He hoped there would be others like this. They had showed great zeal and liberality. It was a coincidence rather singular that it was computed the poll-tax on the children of Israel, for the erection of the tabernacle in the wilderness, amounted to about £35,000 and the cost of their tabernacle was not much less.

It was entitled to the name of Metropolitan, for it drew its hearers from all quarters and the results of this great effort will affect not only the metropolis, but the world. The numerous Sunday-School children there instructed would grow up and carry with them to many distant parts the good Seed of the kingdom. He thanked God for what Mr. Spurgeon and his friends had been enabled to accomplish and he trusted they would have the continual and abundant outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

Mr. SPURGEON said they might get their hymn books ready. But he would first give them a statement of the liabilities that had been sent up to him. They wanted for the builder, £3,000. For the architect, £200. For gas, £160, for the gates and boundaries, £300. For the treasurer, £100, matting, carpets, etc., £350, for fittings, furniture, etc., about £100— which made £4,200, or thereabouts. These calculations were made so that they would meet all demands. But the pledge he made to the public was that they should enter that place free of debt and that would be accomplished when rather more than £3,000 had been paid in, for the other matters could wait awhile and would not be undertaken until the funds were in hand to warrant their being done.

He read additional lists of contributions received from various sources and gave the following abstract of the whole—he had brought in over £1,500, his wife and her lady friends, £1,200 the people that night, about £771. Clear proceeds of the lecture by Mr. Layard £100. The collection on the previous day amounted to rather more than £120, making a total of £3,700. Mr. Spurgeon then called upon the whole assembly to sing the Doxology, the congregation immediately rose and sang with great fervor those words of praise to the God of Heaven and repeated them with enthusiasm at the request of the rejoicing pastor.

The REV. C. STOVEL was then called upon. They had maintained, he said their operations with a constant living zeal and he wished them to receive the affectionate assurance of his joy in their success. Yet he could not join in any flattery that should lead them from the point where zeal, care and discretion would be required. Not a little would it require of personal effort and of wisdom to maintain the institutions in this place in due order and in effective operation. Not a little would be required of patient reliance upon God before the agencies committed to their trust should have been brought out for use. They must become learners at the feet of Jesus and while they kept the Cross in the center, as Mr. Tucker had reminded them and promised in their behalf, they were to remember that above that Cross—the Cross never to be forgotten—there would be a living Savior before whom they must all bow.

Reference had been made to some of the features of there own time. He wished not himself to enter the Establishment and define its various features. He had read the book, or nearly the whole of it, to which reference had been made. He besought them not to turn to that book to awaken a theological odium about it, but to study practically in the testing house of daily life the points which it threw out into public light. His impression was that there was more to be dealt with than at first sight might be suspected and they might be assured, that in the present time they stood in a position where the docility of a learner was much required to bring the Truth of Heaven home to the direction of our present affairs.

If they would take his advice—he presented it only for what it was worth—it was that they should entangle themselves as little as possible with the theories of the past, or with the speculations of the present—but to keep themselves in thought, in heart and in action free to follow the commandments of Him who lived and ruled forever. For his part he could not help thinking that the personality of our Christianity was precisely the point on which their thoughts should ever rest. The reverend gentleman enlarged upon this topic and concluded by assuring the meeting that they had the most tender and sincerest desires of his heart for their spiritual welfare.

Mr. SPURGEON then stated that while the last speaker had been addressing them Sir Henry Havelock had been compelled by his camp duties to retire and Mr. Moore of the eminent firm of Copestake and Moore had occupied the chair at his request. He should by the chairman’s leave, depart from the ordinary rules of public meetings by putting two or three motions to them. The first was that their hearty and sincere thanks should be tendered to Sir Henry Havelock for presiding over them, coupled with their kindest wishes and earnest prayers for his esteemed mother, Lady Havelock and the whole family. The motion was carried by acclamation.

Mr. SPURGEON then proposed a vote of thanks to the architect and the builder for their joint skill and liberality. The builder, he was happy to tell them, had become a deacon of the church. And in referring to the architect he remarked that the chapel would be a model for others, whether large or small. The motion was carried in the midst of loud applause.

Mr. POCOCK, the architect and Mr. HIGGS, the builder, both returned thanks and were warmly applauded.  
Mr. SPURGEON said he wished them to signify their hearty recognition of the splendid Christian liberality of which they had been partakers by proposing a vote of thanks to the contributors to that magnificent building. The motion was carried by acclamation.  
Mr. Spurgeon: Now, my Friends, I would ask you tonight to offer one more prayer for me than you have offered before. What am I to do with such a work as this upon me? It is not the getting up of this building, it is not the launching of the vessel—it is keeping her afloat. Who is sufficient for these things? How shall I, a young man, a feeble child, go in and out before this people? Blessed be God, there is a glorious answer to this question. “My strength is sufficient for you, My strength shall be made perfect in your weakness.” That arm which has upheld us up to now shows no sign of palsy. That eye which has smiled upon us until now has not grown dim. The promise has not failed.  
We have had this day another pledge of His faithfulness and another foretaste of His future goodness. In the name of the Lord would I set up my banner tonight. He has been Jehovah-Jireh here, now, tonight we would call this place Jehovah-Nissi—for here has the Lord’s banner been displayed. But, Brethren, as to the future we must ask for the blessing or we shall not have it. If you ever prayed for me before, pray for me tonight. Oh, my dear Brothers and Sisters, upon whose hearts I have been borne so long—you who have listened to me so patiently and have sometimes had your souls comforted, do not forget me.  
Of all men the most *pitiable* if you take away your prayers and if, in consequences, God take away His Spirit—of all men the most *happy* if you will bear me in your arms, if the Lord shall still be my Strength and my Shield. More than I have done to advance His Gospel I cannot promise to do, for God knows I have preached beyond my strength and worked and toiled as much as one frame could do. But I hope that in answer to your prayers I may become more prayerful, more faithful and have more power to wrestle with God for man and more energy to wrestle with man for God. I pray you, as though I asked it of you for my very life, do this night commend me to God.  
If you have ever been edified, encouraged, or comforted through me I beseech you carry me before God. And especially you that are my spiritual sons and daughters, begotten of me by the power of the Holy Spirit—you who have been reclaimed from sin, you who were wanderers in the wild waste until Jesus met with you in the Music Hall, in Exeter Hall, or in Park Street—you, above all—you *must* pray for me.  
Oh, God, we pray You, let multitudes of the vilest of the vile here be saved. I had rather die this night, on this spot and end my career than lose your prayers—y aged members, deacons and elders, will you not be more earnest than ever? My younger Brothers and Sisters, my co-equals in age, comrades in battle, you, young men and women, who are strong to overcome the Wicked One, stand up with me, shoulder to shoulder and give me your help. Let no strife and no division creep in among us. Let no vain glory mar our deeds. Let nothing be done which could drive away the sacred dove and rob us of the presence of the Holy Spirit.  
Brethren, pray for us, in the name of all the ministry, I say, pray Brethren, pray for us. But I think the ministers here would rise as one man and say with me, standing as I do in the most perilous of positions “Brethren pray for me.” For oh, if I fall, what dishonor to the Holy Church at large? If your pastor sins what shame! If this Church become a failure, what dishonor! Great God, we lay hold upon Your promise tonight. We did pray last Sabbath evening, “If Your spirit go not with us carry us not up hence.” And now we grasp the promise and by faith would we believe in its fulfillment—“My presence shall go with you and I will give you rest.”  
Mr. SPURGEON concluded by proposing a vote of thanks to Mr. Moore, who occupied the chair and it was also carried by acclamation.  
Mr. MOORE, in returning thanks, said, he had never seen a sight so thoroughly charming as the one before him. Speaking in sober earnest and as a Churchman he must say that this was a magnificent sight. Mr. Spurgeon had done the Church of England more good than any clergyman in it, in his opinion. He had watched his career ever since he came to London, when he was supposed to be not quite so sane as he was now. He had listened to his sermons and he had considered his success a miracle.  
He believed that Mr. Spurgeon was a miracle raised up by Almighty God to advance His kingdom. He had had something to do with selling that plot of land, as he was one of the Fishmongers’ Company and he must say that he had been astonished how they had raised the money. It would have taken churchmen ten years. It was a thing almost unexampled in the Christian church. There was no one who sympathized with them more than he did and he believed that that Church would be instrumental in bringing many to Christ.  
He would just say one thing further in reference to the miraculous influence which the preaching of Mr. Spurgeon had had on the Christian world. He had said a hundred times that they should never have had St. Paul’s nor Westminster Abbey, nor the Theatres opened for Sunday preaching if it had not been for such influence. He hoped Mr. Spurgeon’s appeal for their prayers would be listened to and he prayed God himself that their minister might never be left to disgrace the position in which he was placed.  
Mr. SPURGEON then pronounced the benediction and the proceeding closed with the Doxology.

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MEETING OF THE NEIGHBORING CHURCHES  
NO. 372

AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE NEWINGTON, WEDNESDAY, MARCH 27, 1861.

THE invitation to the ministers and members of neighboring churches, to show their support in the opening of the new Tabernacle, by attending especially at a meeting held this evening was most cordially accepted and the number present proved the heartiness of the response. An audience approaching four thousand in number assembled on the occasion, while on the platform and pulpit were a goodly array of ministerial Brothers.

The CHAIR was occupied by the Rev. Dr. Steane.

The fourth hymn, given out by Mr. SPURGEON and described as a hymn of welcome and fellowship, was first sung.  
The Rev. WILLIAM ROBINSON, of York Road Chapel, offered prayer.  
The CHAIRMAN, in opening the proceedings, said two days ago that magnificent edifice for the first time resounded with the proclamation of the Gospel and its lofty dome thrilled with the notes of prayer and praise. Then, with an appropriate and becoming solemnity it was consecrated and set apart to the worship of Jehovah, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, the God of our salvation. He had not the privilege of being present on that occasion, but then, as now, he most affectionately and cordially sympathized with his Christian Brother who was henceforth to minister there in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. He said that by Rev. Spurgeon’s godly zeal and untiring diligence, sustained by the whole Christian public, the magnificent structure had been reared.  
And now, the pastors, the deacons and the members of the neighboring churches, without regard to denomination, without distinction of name, without reference to varieties of judgment and opinion, had been by him and his friends invited to gather together in that great concourse. That invitation had been accepted with the deep affectionate Christian sincerity with which they believed it to have been given. And they were there to offer to Mr. Spurgeon and to the Church over which he presided their affectionate congratulations. As they surveyed that splendid structure—the largest sanctuary which had ever been reared by such churches as theirs to the service and glory of God—they were filled with adoring reverence and gratitude and exclaimed, “What has God worked!”  
He wished on that occasion to be commissioned by the meeting to assure Mr. Spurgeon and the church itself of the entire cordiality, of the affectionate respect, of the brotherly love with which the sister churches in the neighborhood regarded them all. He did not want that expression to be the individual expression of his own heart, but of the hearts of the pastors and members of the churches present. Perhaps he should proceed in a novel and unexpected way, but he should ask if his Brethren, the pastors of the churches, would entrust him with the commission to communicate their congratulations and affectionate love, to signify it by rising. (*Here the ministers rose at once*). If the meeting would commission him to tell Mr. Spurgeon how much they loved him and how devoutly and unanimously they wished him “God speed,” they would signify that by rising. (*Everyone in the building at once rose*).  
Nothing could have been more prompt, more unanimous and more delightful and he now begged to offer to Mr. Spurgeon the right hand of brotherly fellowship. (*This was done in the most hearty manner*). He had no intention when he entered the building of proceeding in the manner that he had done. But was it not a good, a wise and happy suggestion? He trusted that his dear Brother would live to be the pastor of that church for a far longer period than any of the Brethren present had ministered in their respective churches. Long might he live with God’s blessing to labor there. He desired devoutly to thank the Providence of God which had brought Mr. Spurgeon among them.  
That Providence might have brought a Brother who would have been an element of strife and discord—but God’s grace had brought a*Brother* among them, with whom they were one in feeling, one in doctrine, one in heart, one in sympathy and one in Christ. There were present the representatives of many Churches, yet they were one Church—a part of the general assembly and church of the First-born. They were not two churches, if they spoke of the church of the redeemed in Heaven and the church of the blood-bought on earth. They were not two churches but one body of which Christ was the ever-living and glorified Head.  
He trusted, through the grace of the Lord Jesus pervading all members of that one body, they should henceforth be still more united than in past time they had been and exhibit that unity in the face of a scoffing, infidel and ungodly world. He trusted they would spend a happy evening, the recollection of which would never be erased from their memories and when, in that upper and better sanctuary, the true Tabernacle, not made with hands like this, through the infinite riches of Divine mercy, they should be worshippers together, it might be among the sweetest and hallowed reminiscences of their life on earth, that on the present occasion they were gathered together a united assembly of Brothers and Sisters in the Lord.  
Mr. SPURGEON did not know what he could say in answer to the affectionate expressions of his Brethren. They would excuse him if he did not attempt to express his gratitude on his own account, for his heart was too full. It had been singularly his lot to be placed in a position where he had the kindest Brethren for neighbors that ever gathered round any man. It was not easy for people to love *him*, for he sometimes said very strong things. When he meant to say a thing that should take effect, he felt that he ought to say it in a strong manner in an age like this so shallow and so careless. Yet he had the love and esteem of his Brethren far more than if he had attempted to speak smoothly.  
He believed he was everybody’s debtor. He did not know that anybody owed him anything, but he owed something to everybody. For all his friends had kindly helped in the present effort. While his own Church had to do the most, yet there had hardly been a place from which they had not received some aid. He could scarcely look round London upon any Church of Christ where he could not find some dear Brother who had taken as large an interest in the work as themselves. He could only say on behalf of his own Church that they were heartily at one with all Churches of our Lord Jesus Christ who held their common faith in that neighborhood and he hoped in the future they would have better opportunities of testing their willingness to assist all efforts carried on by their Brethren.  
Next week there was to be a meeting, called a meeting of denominations which would be addressed by members of all denominations upon the Scriptural Unity of the Church. They, as a Church, had ever been distinctly Baptists, but he hoped it would be their pleasure yet more and more in the future to bear upon their banner the motto of “Union in Christ,” which was the true light in which to see the union of all the saints. He hoped they should have meetings for fellowship and mutual encouragement at least every quarter and thus the pastors of the district would become more intimate and more cordial, by joining their prayers and by mingling their efforts.  
The Rev. WM. HOWIESON, of Walworth said he had come there that evening to bid his Brother Spurgeon, “God speed,” in his new and enlarged sphere of labor. He believed he was his nearest ministerial neighbor and if his coming to Newington should affect the attendance at other places of worship in the neighborhood, he (Mr. Howieson) would be very likely to suffer himself. Still whatever might be the consequences to him in that respect, he did most heartily welcome Mr. Spurgeon to Newington and he prayed that his most sanguine expectations as to the success of his ministry might be more than realized.  
A short time after the site for the building had been secured he had some conversation with a Baptist minister, from the West of England, respecting it. He was asked, “What do you and the other ministers in the neighborhood of the Elephant and Castle mean to do now that Mr. Spurgeon’s tabernacle is to be built there?” He did not understand the question. “Well,” said the gentleman, “you will find Brother Spurgeon a very potent neighbor and if you do not do something, you will find you will not hold your own.” He wanted to know what they were to do and asked his friend what he had to suggest.  
The reply was—“You must do as they were accustomed to do in the old coaching days. When a new opposition coach had been put upon the road, the people connected with the old Evangelist said one to another, ‘If we mean to stand our ground, we must horse the old coach better.’ So, said he, you and your Brethren must preach better—horse the coach better.” He trusted that this would be one of the effects of Mr. Spurgeon’s coming there—that they should all preach better. There was no doubt much room for improvement. And perhaps that improvement was needed more in the spiritual than in the intellectual qualifications for their work.  
The Chairman had been nearly forty years a pastor of the same church and he was sure he could not have been so long a pastor, “without having become acquainted with the peculiar temptations to which they as ministers were exposed.” He knew they were in danger of neglecting their own hearts, while they were professedly taking care of the souls of others. He knew that they were tempted to substitute a critical study of the Scriptures as ministers for a devout and daily perusal of them as Christians. That they were apt to perform or discharge the duties of their office in a professional sort of way, instead of feeling themselves the power of those Truths which they declare to others. That they were in danger of resting satisfied with a fervor and elevation of soul in public, instead of a calm and holy communion with God in private.  
He said if they gave way to those things, then as the result of diminished spirituality there would be a barren ministry. For it was only as they were living near to God themselves that they could be the means of blessing to others—it was only by feeding on His Truth themselves that it became spirit and life to those that heard it. It was only as they were living and preaching in the spirit of prayer that the weapons of their warfare were mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds. Happy then would it be for them as ministers and happy for their respective churches if the coming of Mr. Spurgeon to Newington should drive them all to their knees in prayer and should lead them to cry mightily to God for the help of His Spirit and should impress upon their minds more than it had ever been—that a minister’s life was the life of his ministry.  
But he demurred to one representation of his West of England friend, for this was not an *opposition* coach. It was doubtless opposed to something, for it was opposed to Satan and all his works, but it was not opposed to him nor to his Church nor to any minister in that neighborhood who preached Christ and Him crucified. What was his Brother Spurgeon’s object in the building of that large place of worship? Was it merely to gather round him a large and influential congregation? Was it merely that he might be admired and applauded? Was it that he might commend the Gospel to the tastes rather than the consciences of his hearers? Oh, no! It was that he might not cease to teach and preach in that place Jesus Christ and that a great number might believe and turn unto the Lord!  
Then their hearts, their Master and their success were one. There were “diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit.” There were “differences of administration, but the same Lord.” There were “diversities of operations, but it was the same God which worked in all.” When, therefore, he looked round upon that beautiful structure and tried to imagine its future history, he could not but rejoice to think of what would take place within its walls. *There*, hearts would be broken by the power of God’s Spirit and then healed again by the restoring power of Christ’s precious blood. *There*, multitudes of conversions would be worked by regenerating grace and then these multitudes trained up for glory. *There*backsliders would be reclaimed, mourners comforted, believers established. *There*, there would be many triumphs of faith over temptation, of love over selfishness and of hope over the fear of death.  
*There*, there would be workings of devout emotion—now sinking down in the dust of penitence, now soaring to Heaven in praise—sometimes earnestly wrestling in supplication and sometimes pouring forth the strains of adoring gratitude. One hour weeping before the Savior’s Cross, another exulting before the Savior’s Throne. Oh, when he thought of the probable history of that magnificent place of worship, he was compelled as a Christian man to pray, “The Lord God of your fathers make you a thousand times so many more as you are and bless you as He has promised.”  
The Rev. PAUL TURQUAND said he was the nearest independent minister to Mr. Spurgeon and perhaps the first of that denomination who had spoken in that place of worship. He did not wish to bring them before him as a Christian Church and utter the language of flattery, nor did he wish to stand before the minister of that noble place of worship and swing the censer of adulation and cover him with that perfume. But he should like to utter the language of heartfelt praise. The minister and the congregation had done well, nobly, magnificently, triumphantly and he did not think he was praising them unduly when he gave expression to those words. They had taught others by the success which had crowned their efforts that they ought to hope for nobler things and dare greater things than they had up to now done.  
They had proved there was a latent power in the Christian Church which only needed circumstances fully to evoke it. Their friends had shown them when the Christian Church had a good purpose before it, resolution to accomplish it and faith in God to accomplish it, that their work would be sure to be crowned with success. He was exceedingly glad that this admirable edifice had received the name of “Tabernacle.” It was a word which carried them back to the structure erected in the wilderness. It told them of the brazen altar on which the substitutionary victim was laid. It brought before them the brazen laver in which the water typifying the influence of the Holy Spirit was held and as his Brother, Mr. Howieson, had said, just as it was *there* so should it be *here—*that God’s work and power should be greatly manifested.  
His prayer for them and their minister was, “Clothe Your ministers with the garments of salvation, abundantly bless the provision of Your house, satisfy Your poor with bread, so we, Your people will give You thanks and show forth Your praise from day to day.” He was very glad the Tabernacle had been placed in the midst of *London*. Some country Brother told him that it would be a good thing if it had been placed in Pekin or St. Petersburgh. He himself should not have been sorry if it had been built in Paris, or better still, in Rome. What would the Pope have thought of it? If he had been consulted, he should perhaps have recommended that it should be erected on the other side of the water.  
As, however, it was in Newington, he would say it was in a very good place indeed. He was glad that it was placed in the middle of *London*, for there was no city in the wide world that had so much influence as London and if they acted upon London they acted upon the whole world. He was pleased to think that the Tabernacle was in his own neighborhood, but still some prophets of evil put the question, how would it act upon their churches? It might perhaps cause some vacant seats—perhaps some members of their churches might leave. Well, there was no garden but what wanted occasionally to be weeded. And they might depend upon it— the garden of the Lord occasionally wanted weeding.  
“What is a weed?” was asked of a celebrated botanist. And he said, “a weed is a flower out of its right place,” and Mr. Spurgeon very likely would take some of those weeds and by planting them in their right places, cause them to become flowers in the garden of the Lord. He had a powerful and eloquent voice and was well able to arouse the indifferent and to make those who were careless and unconcerned thoughtful with regard to their souls. If there had been one burden upon his (Mr. Turquand’s) spirit, it was this—that in that neighborhood indifference seemed to have gathered like a cloud on the people.  
He did not think they were more immoral than in other parts of London, but he did think they were more indifferent. If, however, they would come to hear Mr. Spurgeon they might be led to go and hear others and he hoped a spirit of hearing would be diffused among them. Why, in such a case, when the congregations grew larger, the preacher would grow more eloquent and possibly the Paul of York Street might become an Apollos. At any rate, when a noble boat was stranded and men were perishing, it was a high crime to quarrel about the manning of the life boat! Let us hasten to the rescue and be as willing to take the oar as to stand at the helm.  
As the representative of his congregation, he could say they had always had a friendly spirit towards Mr. Spurgeon and had done something to help him. They had but one object in view—the conversion of souls and the glory of their Master. When an army stood in phalanx before the foe, they did not regret that some general great in battle was coming to their help and should they not rejoice that another had come to assist them in the tremendous struggle, whose watchword was—“to the help of the Lord against the mighty”?  
A hymn was here sung, after which the CHAIRMAN introduced the Rev. George Rogers as the gentleman who had the educational superintendence of the young men who were in training for the ministry, under Mr. Spurgeon.  
The Rev. GEORGE ROGERS, after speaking in terms of congratulation, said he had been told the building was an extravagant affair—a nine-days’ wonder—and that before many months had passed it would be converted into a penny theater. A man’s prophecy was often the intimation of his desire. The wish was father to the thought. Such a remark might apply, if it had been a simple speculation, erected for an untried object. But he believed it to be the result of a gradual and solid growth. A giant infancy and a giant youth required a habitation of its own when it came to manhood. He felt and all must feel, that that magnificent structure had been raised as a public homage to the doctrines which Mr. Spurgeon preached and to the earnest manner in which he had proclaimed them.  
This house was built, not for him, but for the God whom he serves. Not for him, but for the Savior whom he loves. Not for him, but for the Spirit on which he relies. Not for him, but for the Church over which he presides. Not for him, but for the souls by which he is encompassed. It was a noble memorial of the unseen realities of the faith of the Gospel. To every passer-by it would be a witness that the tabernacle of God was with man and that He would dwell among them. To every eye it would tell of the liberty

nd the independence which Protestant dissenters could claim in this land and of the readiness of the Christian public to support doctrines of such a nature, when earnestly preached.  
Some ascribed it to the infatuation of the people. Why, Englishmen were not such fools as to give their money away without consideration and without an approval of the object. Some time ago, in a continental city, the priest of a certain cathedral got up a subscription for a golden crown to be put on the head of the Virgin. A solemn festival was held on the occasion of the coronation, at which the king and his courtiers were present. But one man retired from the scene to weep and when asked why he wept, said, “They put a golden crown upon the Virgin, but there is no crown for the infant Jesus.”  
But here, what they had done had been to put a crown upon the head of Christ and as they would often sing in that place, to “Crown Him Lord of All.” The building gave the lie to those who said the doctrines of grace were inimical to good works. Their friend Mr. Spurgeon preached all the doctrines of grace. Election, Particular Redemption, came from his lips in trumpet tones. He saw the love of Christ to His Church and of the Church to Christ overflowing in sweet nectar in the song of Solomon. Some said those doctrines were destructive of all good works—that people who listened to such doctrines did nothing. His answer to these objectors was, let them look at this building.  
Election would never have built it, except by seeking to make their calling and election sure. Particular Redemption would never have built it without the particular love which it was calculated to inspire. The doctrine of Perseverance would never have built it without the act of perseverance. Faith would never have built it without works. One of his students, who came late one morning, said his clock did not go right. He replied to him it was an antinomian clock—it was without good works. The creed of Mr. Spurgeon was not antinomian and that building was a witness to it. Nor would works without faith have built it. No tree could grow without being well watered at the roots. And if they wished this tree of theirs to grow and bear much fruit, they must bring down the rains and dew of Heaven by their prayers.  
Why were they, the neighboring ministers and Churches there, but to show that the object was not to set up altar against altar, It was to publish the same doctrine. The God whom we all honor is to be honored in this place. The Savior whom we love is to be exalted in this place. The Gospel which we love is to be preached here. The atonement on which we rest our hope is to be the open fountain here for sin and for uncleanness. He, therefore, felt an interest in the building and all his Brethren in the ministry must have a common interest in it. Although one star might differ from another star in glory, it was their combined rays that guided the pilgrim on the desert and the mariner upon the wave. They had done a good work and had worked long and hard and unitedly.  
What was next to be done? They had now no more to do with begging, with bricks and mortar and with bazaars. Let them turn all their energies into spiritual channels. Let the hands that had been stretched out to labor be lifted up in prayer. Let the feet that had borne them to the houses of the rich to collect gold now carry them to the habitations of the poor to give them that consolation whose price was far above rubies. Having such a start, great things were expected from them. The eyes of the Church and of the world were upon them. There was much grace needed and it was to be had with faith and prayer. He came to that meeting from the bed of an aged lady and when he told her he was coming to Mr. Spurgeon’s tabernacle she said, “May it be a house in which thousands shall be turned to God.” That was his wish and he was sure it was the wish of them all.  
The CHAIRMAN called upon the Rev. Mr. BETTS, of Peckham, whom he introduced as the successor of the well-known Dr. Collier.  
The Rev. R. W. BETTS said, like William Jay of Bath, he was not born under the platform dispensation, but, when he received the hearty letter from his Brother, Mr. Spurgeon, asking him as a neighboring minister to come and give them a few words of greeting upon taking possession of that magnificent edifice, he felt it altogether impossible for him to refrain and therefore he had come as a neighboring minister to bid them welcome and God speed. He was perfectly astonished at that beautiful and that magnificent structure. After some remarks upon the name of the building, he proceeded.  
As he was coming from Westminster the other evening on an omnibus, there were two large buildings which he passed and he could not help remarking the contrast presented by the outward aspects of those buildings. The one was St. George’s Cathedral, the other was the “Metropolitan Tabernacle.” The one was dimly lighted, with a group of some dozen miserable people standing outside the gate and the whole thing seemed enshrined in gloom. But in the Tabernacle, the light was brilliantly streaming from the windows and the whole place seemed full of life and vigor. If he had been a stranger in London, he should not have needed anyone to tell him the difference of those buildings—the one all darkness, the other all light.  
The one full of the light of Christianity, the other a hollow empty sepulcher of rites and ceremonies. In the one the living personal Christ, preached as the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believes, in the other His glory eclipsed by rites and ceremonies and all taken away that is vital and essential in the Gospel of our Lord and Savior. There was another thing that struck him about those two buildings—the incompleteness of the one and the beautiful perfection of the other. The spire of the one structure—where was it? It was nowhere. Although so many years had elapsed since that structure was commenced, yet the faithful did not seem to be ready with their offerings. The needful was not exactly forthcoming.  
What was the case with the Tabernacle? Within a year or two the magnificent sum of £30,000 had been subscribed for its erection. He looked upon that as a token of the earnest Protestantism of our Savior—of the love of the people of England for the simple Gospel of our Lord and Savior. He supposed that the spire of St. George’s Cathedral would one day be completed, but whether completed or not, Roman Catholicism as a system must fall. It was founded in the sands of human tradition and priestly ordinances. And when the waves of our Gospel salvation and the winds of Divine Truth shall have beaten upon it a little more, it will fall and great will be the fall of it—and God speed that day!  
But he did not come to tell them that. He came there simply as a neighboring minister to bid Mr. Spurgeon and his friends a hearty welcome and God speed to that locality. He did so because they came in his Master’s name. In conclusion, he urged them, as there only remained £500 to completely finish the edifice, to see if they could subscribe it that night and then in future the meetings would be free.  
“All hail the power of Jesus’ name,” was then sung.  
The Rev. NEWMAN HALL congratulated the congregation and the pastor upon the successful termination of their arduous labors and upon their being able to meet in a building free from debt—a building not raised by taxes wrung from the community at large, willing or unwilling, but a structure raised by the free-will offerings of God’s people—of those who, recognizing the spiritual gifts with which God had endowed their friend and were desirous that a building should be retired capable of holding as many thousands as could be conveniently reached by his rich voice.  
He need not say to them, what, no doubt, they were saying to themselves, “Be not high-minded on account of what you see.” He knew they felt it to be a matter not of pride, but of deep humble gratitude to God, who condescended to permit unworthy sinners in any way to be engaged in advancing the interests of His kingdom. He knew their earnest prayer was that the old words might be continually verified—“What house will you build for Me? I dwell in the high and holy place, but with this man will I dwell, who is of an humble and contrite spirit and who trembles at My word.”  
For some time, Surrey Chapel had been the largest Christian sanctuary south of the Thames. He hoped there was not a worthy member of Surrey Chapel who did not rejoice that there was a sanctuary raised more than twice as large. And even should it lead to a decrease of the number of worshippers at Surrey Chapel, yet, if on the whole the cause of God were more advanced, it would be their duty and their pleasure to say—“Herein do I rejoice, yes and will rejoice.” Envy, jealousy, pitiful everywhere, were monstrous in connection with the work of God. What? Regret if others are doing more than we? Regret that others are more useful than we? Is it not all one business—one interest? Are not all things ours? Whether Paul or Apollos, or Cephas—all are ours. We are rowing the same boat against the strong tide—each of us doing our best. Shall I regret if others in the crew with stronger arms and more vigorous strokes are helping to send the boat more strongly against the tide and bringing it more quickly into port?  
Our house is on fire, we are bringing water to extinguish the flames— shall I be sorry if my brother can handle a larger bucket and throw a greater volume of water upon them? We are engaged in one grand warfare and if we are each of us standing in the place our Captain has bid us occupy and fighting bravely for Him, shall we regret it if others are more advanced in the fight and with heavier blows and surer aim are making greater havoc among the enemy? It might sound anomalous, but it was most true, in great enterprises every man must do his best to excel his Brethren and when he had done his best he must rejoice that many of his Brethren excelled himself.  
They might excel Surrey Chapel in the size of the building and in the number of the congregation, but they did not and could not be expected to excel it in the machinery they employed for evangelization. This was the work of his revered predecessors, Rowland Hill and James Sherman and therefore he could refer to it without any supposition of arrogance or boasting. In connection with Surrey Chapel, they had eighteen Sunday evening services conducted by members of the congregation in various courts and lanes in the district—five Evangelists were maintained to go about and instruct the poor and comfort the sorrowful.  
They had twelve Sunday-Schools with four thousand five hundred children and four hundred teachers—four week-day schools, three sets of secular lectures going on week by week, in different parts, for the benefit of the working classes. They had benevolent societies distributing about £400 a year in addition to the money collected at the Sacrament for poor members and they had the Temperance Society helping all. He sincerely hoped the time was not far distant when they would exceed Surrey Chapel in all these instrumentalities and labors, when they would have thirty-six Sunday evening services, ten Evangelists, twenty-four schools with their nine thousand children and eight hundred teachers, eight week-day schools and half a dozen sets of lectures.  
And he trusted that this sanctuary would soon be opened for the advocacy, if the glorious temperance principle which had rescued so many from vice and ruin, let them ever bear in mind what a Church was. It was not an institution the members of which had nothing to do but to come on Sunday and hear comfortable sermons and go home and discuss it, weigh the doctrines in it and criticize the preacher. He knew their minister would be the last to encourage them in a namby-pamby sort of religion of that kind. No, the churches were to be arsenals where the weapons of love were stored with which they were to attack the enemy round about— grand depositories of Christian enterprise. A glorious propaganda, every member a member of the society of Jesus—not leaving it to the pastor to be the only Evangelist, but every man saying to his neighbor, “Know you the Lord God.”  
What an interesting sight was the opening of a new sanctuary! How one’s thoughts looked forward! What important events would take place in this sanctuary in the course of years!—events that might not be chronicled in the history of this world, but in which angels would take the very deepest interest. Here the people of God, worn and jaded by the toils and cares of life, will come to be refreshed with the heavenly manna and the invigorating streams of the River of Life. Here the sorrowful and downcast will feel their burdens lightened and be able to say to an old Yorkshire working man, a friend of mine, “Ah, it is blessed work, Cross-bearing, when its tied on with love.”  
Here those who come tormented with doubts and fears will see the clouds dispersed and feel their anxieties removed. Here the tempted, carried down headlong by the tide of peril, will see the hand of love stretched out and grasping it by the hand of faith will be drawn up unto the firm land of salvation. Here souls dead in trespasses and sins will hear the voice of Jesus, Come forth! There will be many a cry, “What must I do to be saved?” There will be many a prayer heard, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy upon me!” Here the saints of God will be trained for a better sanctuary. Angels will often hover over this spot and carry up the glad tidings, “Behold, he prays.”  
I seem to see the ladder that Jacob beheld let down from Heaven— angels are coming up and down, blessings are descending and prayers and praise are ascending. And Jesus the Redeemer is above, seated at the right hand of Power, making all-prevalent intercession for His people. Oh, may this be the consecration that shall hallow this Tabernacle! Never may *Ichabod* be written on these walls. Never may there cease to be preached here and loved here, the pure, the simple, the all-glorious Gospel of the grace of God—the grace of God revealed to all transgressors.  
The size of the building seems to me in glorious harmony with the glorious character of the redemption that we preach. It seems impossible to speak of a straitened and limited theology in a spacious building so vast as this. No, as Dr. Chalmers says, “In the commission we have received to preach the Gospel to every creature there is no frozen limitation, but a munificence of mercy boundless as space, free and open as the expanse of the firmament.” I am persuaded that never will there be so great a multitude gathered together here that your minister will hesitate to proclaim a Christ for every man, declaring that all who believe shall be saved and that none shall be lost except those to whom it is said, “You will not come unto Me that you might have life!”  
Christ—Christ crucified, the only foundation of the sinner’s hope, the only secret of the believers’ life and joy. This, my Friends, is the true palladium of the Church. “Here,” as old Oliver Cromwell says in one of his letters, “here rest I would and here only.’” It is not our sect, however we may prefer it—Episcopacy, or Independency, or Presbyterianism, or Methodism. It is not the having a Liturgy, or the having free prayer. It is not a gorgeous ceremony and it is not a Scriptural simplicity. It is not much water or little water—it is not the adult immersion or the infant sprinkling. No, it is Jesus exhibited in the pulpit, honored in the worship, manifested in the lives of all the people that is the glory of the Church. And without that there is no glory.  
It is not the splendor of architecture, nor your glorious portico and majestic columns—not this graceful roof and these airy galleries and these commodious seats so admirably arranged for worship and for hearing. It is not the towering dome, or the tapering spire emulating the skies. It is not clustering columns and intersecting arches through which a dim religious light may wander—it is not all these—though I do not despise the beauties of architecture—which is the glory of the Church. Nor is it the splendor of the pew, though wealth and fashion and learning may be there and overflowing numbers crowd the sanctuary.  
It is not the splendor of the pulpit—the eloquence that can wave its magic wand over a delighted audience till every eye glistens and every heart beats with emotion—the erudition that from varied stores of learning can cull its illustrations to adorn the theme—the novelty of thought and sentence and argument that can captivate the intellect and satisfy the reason—the fancy that can interweave with the discourse the fascinations of poetry and the beauties of style. No, it is not any one of these, nor all of these together. But it is Christ in His real and glorious divinity. Christ in His true and proper humanity. Christ in the all and sole sufficiency of His atonement. Christ in His in-dwelling Spirit and all-prevailing intercession.  
This is the glory. And without this, though we had all other things, *Ichabod* must be written on the walls of any church. This is the true ark before which alone Dagon falls prostrate. This it is that gives us a glory greater than that which the temple of Solomon ever possessed. For here we have the living manna upon which we may feed. Here we have the true mercy seat. Here we have the real sacrifices—He that takes away the sins of the world. Here we have constant miracles. What? will they tell us there are no such things as miracles possible? There are miracles—actual, glorious miracles taking place continually, verifying the Truth of our Christian system.  
The eyes of the blind are still being opened. The ears of the deaf are still being unstopped. And the lame man still leaps as a hart and the dead man sepulchered in his sin comes forth to live a life of holy obedience and grateful love. Because I know this Gospel of Christ crucified is preached and will be preached and manifested here, therefore I say there is no enchantment against Israel, there is no divination against Jacob. “How goodly are your tents, O Israel and your tabernacles, O Jacob.”  
Peace be within these walls and prosperity within these palaces. For my Brethren and companion’s sake, we all of us now say, “Peace be with you.”  
Mr. SPURGEON proposed a vote of thanks to the chairman and to the various ministers, observing that large as the place was and preaching as he did a great redemption, yet every pillar was made of iron, firmly fixed and immovable and he hoped to preach a sure, settled covenant Gospel and not a frail and failing one. The thanks were carried by acclamation. The Doxology was sung and the meeting separated.

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**÷Php 1.19**

THE MINISTER’S PLEA  
NO. 1139

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, NOVEMBER 2, 1873, *BY C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“Through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ.”*** Php 1:19***.***

THE Apostle was in prison, in great jeopardy of his life. He was much troubled by many who had begun to preach Jesus Christ but did not preach Him in a proper spirit. He was often depressed by that which came daily upon him, the care of all the Churches. Yet, while he looked in the face the evils which surrounded him, he was able to see beyond them and to believe that the consequences of all his trials would be a real and lasting good. He felt sure that it was a good thing for him to be in prison, that it would be a good thing even if he had to die there. He felt that it was well that many were preaching Christ—even though some did it for the wrong reasons—for Christ was still being preached and the result could not be evil. And he felt that the troubles and trials of the Churches were good, for somehow or other they would be overruled for God’s Glory.

Let us learn from him to look at the end as well as at the beginning of things. The bud of our present trouble may have no beauty in it, but fair will be the flower which will ultimately develop from it. The clouds hang heavily above our heads, but let us not, like little children, be alarmed at their blackness, but remember that they are—

***“Big with mercy and will break***

***With blessings on our head.”***  
Whatever happens to the true servant of the Lord will turn out for the furtherance of the Gospel. Therefore will we rejoice in tribulations and accept God’s will, whatever it may be. But observe that the Apostle did not expect that good would arise out of everything, apart from *prayer*. He believed that it would be through the prayer of his beloved friends at Philippi, and the supply of the Spirit, that everything which happened to him would work to promote his salvation, his spiritual advantage and his success as a minister of Christ.

He looked for the transformation of the evil into good by that sacred alchemy of Heaven which can transmute the basest metal into purest gold. But he did not expect this to happen apart from the ordained methods and ordinary institutions of Grace. He counted upon the result because he saw two great agents at work, namely, prayer and the supply of the Spirit. Whoever else may be foolish enough to look for effects apart from causes, the Apostle was not of their mind. This morning my sermon will be mainly upon my own behalf and on the behalf of my Brothers in the ministry. We ought, sometimes, to have a sermon for ourselves, for we

preach a great many for others. And we may the more boldly become pleaders on our own account, inasmuch as what we ask for is really intended for the profit of our people and for the good of Christ’s cause.

My real subject will be, “Brethren, pray for us.” The end to which I shall drive at will be to excite you to be much in prayer, both for myself and all ministers of Christ Jesus, so that everything that is occurring abroad and happening personally to any one of us may be turned to the best account, “Through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit.” Let us speak, first of all, upon the prayer of the Church. And then concerning the supply of the Spirit. The two matters are closely connected and cannot be separated.

**I.** THE PRAYER OF THE CHURCH. The Apostle evidently expected to be prayed for. He had the fullest confidence that his Brothers and Sisters at Philippi were praying for him. He does not ask for their prayers so much as *assumes* that he is already receiving them. And truly I wish that all pastors could always, without doubt, assume that they enjoyed the perpetual prayers of those under their charge. Some of us are very rich in this respect and this is our joy and comfort, the reward of our labor and the strength of our hands. We have abundant evidence that we live in the hearts of our people.

But I am afraid that there are many of my brother ministers who are sad because they hear not their people’s loving intercessions. They are weak because they are not prayed for and unsuccessful because they have not so gained their people’s affections that they are borne upon their hearts at the Mercy Seat. Unhappy is that minister who dares not take it for granted that his people are praying for him! Paul exceedingly valued the prayers of the saints. He was an Apostle, but he felt he could not do without the intercessions of the poor converts at Philippi. He valued Lydia’s prayers and the prayers of her household. He valued the jailer’s prayers and the prayers of his family. He desired the prayers of Euodias and Syntyche, and Clement and the rest—the most of them, probably, persons of no great social standing as the world has it—yet he valued their supplications beyond all price—and he was as grateful for their prayers as for those temporal gifts whereby the Philippians had again and again ministered to his necessities.

If the Apostle thus felt indebted to the pleadings of the brethren, how much more may we, who are so far inferior to him! He expected great results from the prayers of the Church. That is certain from the text. He expected evil to be turned to good and himself to be helped onward in the Divine life. Beloved, my heart has no deeper conviction than this, that prayer is the most efficient spiritual agency in the universe next to the Holy Spirit. He is Omnipotent and does as He wills. But next to the Omnipotence of the in-dwelling Spirit is the power of prayer. “Ask, and you shall receive; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you.”  
This great charter of the Church of Jesus Christ confers upon her powers which are almost, if not quite, Omnipotent. And if a Church will but pray, it shall set in motion the second most potent agent under Heaven. The Apostle knew the power of prayer and we know it, too, and hope to prove it more and more. Paul expected the people at Philippi to be praying for him all the more because his troubles were, just then, more heavy than usual. He was sure that this would excite their sympathy and so make them plead more eagerly. Truly, if ever there were times when the people of God should pray for their ministers, these are the times, for the minister of Christ is beset by legions of evils of all kinds and has to cut his way through perpetual opposition. The Church is sailing, now, like a vessel in the Arctic Sea when the frost is setting in and is turning the sea into plates of iron—and each wave into an iceberg to block up the vessel’s path. These are evil days, almost beyond any age that has gone before, and therefore we may exhort the Church to pray more importunately, because her prayers are more than ever needed.

Plunging into the middle of my subject, I would say, first, that ministers may justly claim the prayers of their Brethren. Every Christian should be prayed for. We have each a claim upon the other for loving intercession. The members of the body of Christ should have a care for one another, but especially should the*minister* receive the prayers of his flock. I have, sometimes, heard his duties called arduous, but that word is not expressive enough. The works in which he is occupied lie quite out of the region of human power. The minister is sent to be God’s messenger for the quickening of the dead. What can he do in it? He can do *nothing* whatever unless the Spirit of God is with him through the prayers of his Brothers and Sisters.

He is sent to bring spiritual food to the multitude, that is to say, he is to take the loaves and fishes and with them, few as they are, he is to feed the thousands! An impossible commission! He cannot perform it. Apart from Divine help, the enterprise of a Christian minister is only worthy of ridicule. Apart from the power of the Eternal Spirit, the things which the preacher has to do are as much beyond him as though he had to weld the sun and moon into one, light up new stars, or turn the Sahara into a garden of flowers. We have a work to do concerning which we often cry, “Who is sufficient for these things?” and if we are put to this work but have not your prayers, and in consequence have not the supply of the Spirit, we are, of all men, the most miserable.

Remember, also, that in addition to extraordinary duties, the minister is burdened by remarkable responsibilities. All Christians are responsible for their gifts and opportunities, but peculiar responsibilities cluster around the preacher of the Word. “If the watchman warns them not, they shall perish; but their blood will I require at the watchman’s hands.” When I look at Paul laboring night and day, weeping, praying, pleading, pouring out his soul in his ministry, I feel his example to be such that I cannot attain to it, and yet I shall never feel satisfied with anything below

that standard. The responsibilities resting upon one minister are the same as those which press upon another, in proportion to his sphere and capacity of service. Oh, unhappy men, if we are found unfaithful!—of criminals, the chief—murderers of immortal souls! If we have not preached the pure Gospel, we shall be wholesale poisoners of the bread of men, the bread which their souls require! We, if we are not true to God, are the choice servants of Satan. Judas, himself, was not more the Son of Perdition than the man who calls himself an ambassador for Christ and yet dares to be unfaithful to the souls of men! Brothers and Sisters, we claim your prayers by the solemnity of the responsibility which rests upon us!

Remember, too—what I think is not often noticed—that every true minister of Christ who is sent to men’s souls, has an experience singular and by itself. A physician who has to treat the diseases incident to our flesh need not have personally suffered from the sicknesses with which he deals. But a physician of souls never handles a wound well unless he has felt a like wound himself. The true shepherds who really feed the sheep, must, themselves, have gone through the experiences of the flock. Did you ever read the life of Martin Luther? Then you must have observed the mental storms and spiritual convulsions which shook the man. He could not have been so influential with his fellow men if he had not felt within himself a sort of aggregation of all their sorrows and their struggles.

You can not bring forth God’s living Word to others till first you have eaten the roll and it has been in your own stomach like gall for bitterness, and yet at times like honey for sweetness. Every successful farmer in the Lord’s vineyard must, first, have been a partaker of the fruit. Yes, and of each kind of fruit, too. Therefore it often happens, that to comfort yonder desponding heart, we must have been, ourselves, despondent. To console yonder downcast, despairing spirit, we must have been despairing, too. To direct the perplexed we must, ourselves, have been in dilemma. To ride the whirlwind and come as God’s messenger to the help of those who are in the storm, we must have, ourselves, been tossed with tempest and not comforted.

David could not have written his Psalms, which, as in a mirror, reflect all changes of the human mind, if he had not, himself, been the epitome of the lives of all men. And in proportion as God qualifies His minister, really and effectually, to feed the souls of His people, that minister must go through the whole of their experience. And I ask you, whether in such a case, he does not have a claim, and should not have, the prayers of the Church of God? Remember, too, that the temptations of those who serve God in the public ministry are subtle, numerous and peculiar. Do you suppose that when a man attracts thousands to listen to him. That when he conducts large agencies successfully. That when he wins souls to Christ and edifies the household of faith, that the temptation to *pride* never crosses his soul? Have you not seen men who have been set upon a pinnacle of eminence, and their heads have been turned, fall, to their own disgrace and to the Church’s sorrow?

Do you wonder at it? If you do, you know not what is in men. And do you wonder that ministers are often tempted to grow formal in service? Here, so many times in the year, must I come and speak to you, whether I am fit to do so or not. How can I always be zealous when even the weather has an effect upon nerves and brain? Are you always earnest in your hearing? Do you wonder, therefore, that sometimes the preacher does not find it easy to be earnest in his speaking? And yet he would loathe himself if he dared speak to you what he did not feel and would think himself accursed if he dared to preach with cold and chilly lips those matchless Truths of God which have been bedewed by the bleeding heart of Jesus! We, who would instruct others, must keep up our spiritual life to a high point! And yet the temptation is, from our familiarity with holy things, to become mechanical in our service and to lose the freshness and ardor of our first love.

I might give many instances of temptations which are peculiar to us, but the recital might be of no benefit to you. Suffice it to say that there are such. And if by your choice, you place any man, in the name of God, in a place where he is so peculiarly assailed by the enemy, surely you will not be so ungenerous as to leave him without the perpetual support of your extraordinary prayers! Fail not your standard-bearer, but form around him a bodyguard of valiant intercessors!

And then, mark you, if any man shall lead the way in the Church of God, he will be the main object of the assaults of the enemy. The private Christian will have some persecution, but the minister must expect far more. His words will be misrepresented and tortured into I know not what of evil. And his actions will be the theme of slander and falsehood. If he shall speak straight out and boldly, fearless of man, and only fearful lest he should grieve his God, he will stir the kennels of Hell and make all the hounds of Satan howl at his heels! And he may count himself *happy* if he shall do so, for who is he that wants to be on good terms with this evil generation which cares nothing whatever for God’s Truth, but sets up, for its own church, a church which has made a league with Antichrist and a compromise between the Gospel and idolatry, so that it may drag down this nation into the deeps of Romanism?

I say, who cares to have honor from this adulterous generation? And yet, if a man once dares to provoke its wrath by his faithfulness, he needs the prayers of those who believe with him, that he may be sustained. Many are the archers who sorely shoot at us and grieve us. Pray, therefore, that our bow may abide in strength and that the arms of our hands may be made strong by the Mighty God of Jacob! One plea more and I will not further add to the points of my argument. Among the worst trials of the ministry are the discouragements of it. I do not, just now, refer to discouragements from the outside world. We expect opposition from that quarter and are not discouraged by it. If the world hates us, we remember

that it hated the Lord before it hated us.

But our saddest discouragements arise from within the Church and congregation. There are those whom we hoped to see converted who go back to their old sins and disappoint us. And others who are a little impressed, relapse into their natural indifference. There are those who are, we hope, right at heart, who nevertheless live inconsistently—for many walk so far from Jesus that they pierce us with sorrow. And then there are others who were great things and united themselves with the Church of God, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the Cross of Christ! They shame us! They make the world ask, “Is this your religion?” They open the mouths of atheists and infidels and ungodly men of all sorts against the precious Christ, Himself, so that He is wounded in the house of His friends and put to an open shame by those who ought rather to have laid down their lives to promote His cause and Kingdom.

Oh, if you are called of the Lord to shepherd His flock. And if you bear in your bosom the Church of God and the cause of Christ, and live for it with all your heart and soul, you shall not live many days without many heartbreaking trials! And you will greatly need the supply of the Spirit in answer to the prayers of the people of God! Now, having stated the case and pleaded not for myself, only, but for all my Brothers, let me say, next, that the prayers which are needed are the prayers of the *entire* Church. From some other labor some of you might be exempted, but from this service not a single one can be excused. “Your prayer,” says the Apostle, and he means the prayer of *all* the faithful. My Brothers and Sisters, my fellow worker, you of the Sunday school, you of the Evangelistic Society, you who visit from house to house—I need your prayers, my Brethren!

You can sympathize with us. You know something of this way. You can, therefore, bear us up with hands that have been exercised in the same warfare. We need your prayers, also, who are not workers in any public capacity—you who feel you have not the ability or the opportunity. If there are such among us, you ought to pray doubly for those who are working, and so, in some measure, make amends for your own lack of energy. If you feel laid aside from actual service yourselves, so that you have to abide by the staff, let your prayers go up doubly for those who go down to the battle. Hold up their hands, I pray you, if you can do nothing else! We ask the prayers of all who profit by our ministry. If you feed upon the Word, pray to God that we may feed others, also. If your hearts are ever made glad within you by the Word of God we speak, do plead for us that we may have the power of God resting upon us yet further.

If you do not profit we have an equal claim upon you. We beseech you pray that you *may* profit. If we are not suited to teach you, pray the Lord to *make us* suitable. If you discover some lack or deficiency which mars our ministry, do not unkindly go and speak of it everywhere, but tell the *Lord* about it. You will be doing more good and acting more after the mind of Christ. And—who knows?—the very ministry which is flat and unprofitable to you, now, may yet become a great blessing to you when you have prayed concerning it.

Some of you are our spiritual children, begotten unto God by us. Surely we don’t need to take *you* by the hand and say, “Brothers and Sisters, children, pray for us”? There is between us and you a tie which neither life nor death can break. We shall recognize it in eternity. When fathers, mothers, husbands and wives will find all human relationship forgotten, the relationship which exists between the spiritual father and his children shall last on! Therefore, as you feel the tie, yield to its gentle persuasions and let your pastor have a very warm place in your prayers. You aged men and matronly women, you of experience, you of power with God, you who are mighty in your private wrestling—we need your prayers! And you young Christians with your new-born zeal—in the freshness and vigor of your spiritual life—we need your entreaties, too.

My little children, you who have been added to the Church while yet you are boys and girls, there are no intercessions more precious than yours! Do not forget your minister when you say, “Our Father which are in Heaven.” God will hear the petitions of little children who love Him. As for those who are not, and could not be here this morning, my voice will reach them through the press, and therefore let me say to them—You cannot come up to the House of God, but are appointed to lie tossing upon the bed of pain. And yet, from you, also, we ask intercessory prayer. You are, especially, set to do this service for the Church. If you cannot appear in the public assembly, you may in secret wrestling bring down power upon that assembly. You keep the watches of the weary night when pain forbids your eyelids to find rest—let each weary hour be cheered for yourselves and enriched for us—by prayers for the Church of God and prayers for us.

Perhaps to this end some among the Saints are always sick, that pleaders for the hours of night may not be lacking. The sleepless sufferers change guard before the Mercy Seat, lest, perhaps, there should be an hour in the night unhallowed by a prayer in which the world should pass away beneath the unrestrained wrath of God. Prayer must be kept up like the quenchless fire on Israel’s altar. We must belt and girdle the world with prayer—and the sick ones are they to whom much of the sacred work is allotted. I believe in the efficacy of united prayer, but each one must pray.

There would be no clouds unless the drop of dew from each blade of grass were exhaled by the sun. Each drop ascending in vapor falls, again, in the blessed shower which removes the drought. So the Grace that trembles upon each one of you, my Brothers and Sisters, must exhale in prayer, and a blessing will come down upon the Church of God. Let me suggest for a moment, in passing on, that the prayers of God’s people ought to go up for the minister in many forms. I think it should be *daily*

work. I was pleased to hear one of our Brethren say, the other day, what I am sure was true, and true of a great many beside himself, that he never did pray for himself without praying for me. That he never bowed his knee, morning or night, without remembering the work carried on in this place. It ought to be so with us all.

Besides that, if we expect a blessing on our families through the ministry, we should, as a family, ask God to bless that ministry. When we come around the family altar, among the petitions never to be forgotten should be this—that he who is set to feed our souls may, himself, receive the bread of Heaven. Then there are our Prayer Meetings, our public gatherings for intercession. Ah, Beloved! I may well glory in our Prayer Meetings, for I know not where the like have been found continuously, year after year!

Still, though I may glory, I am not sure that all of you could. For as I look around upon you today I cannot help remarking that I see some faces on the Sunday which I have never had the pleasure of seeing on the Monday evening. Or, if ever I did, I remember it very well, because it has not been so common an occurrence that it is likely to slip out of my mind. I know there are some who could not come and would be neglecting family duties if they did. Their duty and their calling keep them from it. At the same time, there are others to whom a gentle hint may be serviceable. Forsake not the assembling of yourselves together for earnest prayer, as the manner of some is. Beside the Prayer Meetings, there ought to be meetings very frequently of Christian friends who gather by appointment for this very purpose.

When they come together, professors often waste time in idle talk which would be used to great profit if they spent it in prayer. When two Christians meet together for united prayer, among their other supplications should be one that the Lord would bless throughout all England the preaching of the Gospel of Jesus. Oh, dear Friends, we need, more than anything else, to have the Gospel preached with power! God forbid we should criticize severely those who may be doing their best, but how much preaching is utterly powerless? We need a telling ministry. We need a ministry which cuts like a two-edged sword and goes through into the very heart! O God, send us thousands of men armed with Your Spirit’s own sword, endowed with the muscle of Divine Grace and gifted with manliness to use the celestial weapon! Pray for such, often, not at set times only, but at all convenient seasons.

And here, let me remark, should there not be special prayer by each Christian for his own minister before every service, before going up to the House of the Lord, and when he arrives there? Many people have a habit of looking into their hats to see the name of the maker whenever they get inside a place of worship. They are, themselves, the best judges whether it is not a piece of Pharisaic formalism or fashionable hypocrisy. There is a formalism about it and we are the very last to care about outward forms. Still, what can be a better beginning for a service than secret prayer? Then, during the service, how much of prayer there should be for the preacher—“Lord, help him to speak Your Truth outright. Put Your power into it to send it home to the hearts and consciences of the hearers.” It is well to pick out someone in the congregation, and pray, “Lord, bless the Word to him.”

You would often find God hearing you in that respect. Then, after the whole service is done, what can be better than to rake in with earnest prayer the good seed which has already been sown? I must not keep you longer on this point. Suffice it to add that the prayers of the Church of God must always be true prayers to be good for anything, and if they are true prayers they will be attended with consistent lives. The man who says, “I pray for the Church and pray for the minister,” and then is a thief in his business, or is guilty of some secret vice—why, he is pulling down, not building up! Can unclean hands ever be acceptable in prayer? Consistent living there must be, or prayer will be a vanity of vanities!

And there must be consistent effort, too. If I want God to bless the Church, I must try to bless it myself, by the gift of my substance, by the consecration of my talents, by the laying out of my time for the glory of God. To pray one way and to act another is to be a hypocrite! When the wheel sticks in the mire—to pray to God to help the cart out of it—and never to put my shoulder to the wheel is to mock the Most High. We must *act* as well as pray. And we must *believe* as well as act. We must have faith in the Gospel and faith in prayer! And if, beloved Friends, such prayer as this shall go up from this Church, we shall continue to enjoy the prosperity we have had for many years! And we may hopefully look for an increase of it, though sometimes, I must confess, I can hardly look for an increase, for God has blessed us so much that we have rejoiced and wondered as we have seen that His hand is still stretched out!

**II.** The Apostle has put in connection with your prayer THE SUPPLY OF THE SPIRIT. “The Spirit of Jesus Christ,” does he not say? Yes, because the Spirit we need is the Spirit that rested upon Jesus Christ, the Spirit which gave power to *His* ministry, for He said, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me.” That same Spirit we need, even the Spirit who represents Christ on earth, for Jesus is gone, but the Comforter abides with us as His vicegerent. He moves at Jesus Christ’s will and operates upon human thought and heart and will, subduing all to God.

Now the Holy Spirit is essential to every true minister. We must have Him. A preacher may save souls without being learned—it is a pity but what he should possess a good education—but he can be useful without it. The preacher can save souls without eloquence—it is well if he is fluent—but even stammering lips may convey the message of life from God. But the man of God is nothing without the Spirit of God. It is the *sine qua non* of a ministry from God that it should be in the power of the Spirit.

The preacher must be, himself, first taught of the Spirit, else how shall he speak? And being taught, he must be led as to which shall be the proper theme for each occasion, for much of the power of true ministry lies in the fitness of the Word to the case of the hearer, so that the hearer perceives that his experience is known and is met at the time by the ministry.

The Spirit of God must teach us the Truth and then guide us as to which Truth of God is to be spoken. Then the Holy Spirit must inflame the minister. The man who never takes fire—how is he sent of God? He who never glows and burns—what knows he of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, which is also the Baptism of fire? Pray, therefore, for the supply of the Spirit! Without the Spirit every ministry lacks that subtle—I was about to say indescribable—something which is known by the name of *unction*. Nobody here can tell what unction is. He knows that the Spirit of God gives it and he knows when it is in a discourse and when it is absent. Unction is, in fact, the power of God.

There is an old Romish story, that a certain famous preacher was to preach on a certain occasion, but he missed his way and was too late. And the devil, knowing of it, put on the appearance of the minister, took his place and preached a sermon to the people, who supposed they were listening to the famous Divine whom they had expected. The devil preached upon Hell and was very much at home, so that he delivered a marvelous sermon in which he exhorted persons to escape from the wrath to come. As he was finishing his sermon, in came the preacher, himself, and the devil was obliged to resume his own form. The holy man then questioned him, “How dare you preach as you have done, learning to escape from Hell.” “Oh,” said the Devil, “it will do no hurt to *my* kingdom, for I have no unction.”

The story is grotesque, but the truth is in it. The same sermon may be preached and the same words uttered, but without unction there is nothing in it. The unction of the Holy One is true pourer. Therefore, Brothers and Sisters, we need your prayers that we may obtain the supply of the Spirit upon our ministry—otherwise it will lack unction—which will amount to lacking heart and soul! It will be a dead ministry and how can a dead ministry be of any service to the people of God? The supply of the Spirit is essential to the edification of the Church of God!

What if the ministry should be the best that ever was produced, its outward form and fashion orthodox and ardent? What if it should be continued with persevering consistency? Yet the Church will never be built up without the Holy Spirit. To build up a Church, *life* is needed—we are living stones of a living temple. Where is the life to come from but from the Breath of God? To build up a Church, there is needed light, but where is the light to come from but from Him who said, “Let there be light”? To build up a Church, there is needed love, for this is the cement which binds the living stones together. But from where comes true genuine love, but from the Spirit who sheds abroad in the heart the love of Jesus?

To build up a Church, we must have holiness, for an unholy Church would be a den for the devil, and not a temple for God! But from where comes holiness but from the Holy Spirit? There must be zeal, too, for God will not dwell in a cold house. The Church of God must be warm with love, but from where comes the fire except it is the fire from Heaven? We must have the Holy Spirit, for to build up a Church there must be joy—a joyous temple God’s temple must always be! But only the Spirit of God produces the fruit of heavenly joy. There must be spirituality in the members, but we cannot have a spiritual people if the Spirit of God, Himself, is not there. For the edification of the saints, then, we must have, beyond everything else, the supply of the Spirit.

And, O Brothers and Sisters, we must have it for the salvation of sinners! Here comes the tug of war, indeed! Who can enlighten the blind eye? Who can bring spiritual hearing into the deaf ear? Yes, who can quicken the dead soul but the eternal, enlightening, quickening Spirit? There it lies before us, a vast valley full of bones. Our mission is to raise them from the dead. Can we do it? No, by no means, of ourselves. Yet we are to say to those dry bones, “Live.” Brothers and Sisters, our mission is absurd—it is worthy of laughter unless we have your prayers and the supply of the Spirit with us—and if we have those, the bones shall come to their bones, the skeleton shall be fashioned, the flesh shall clothe the bony fabric, the Holy Spirit shall blow upon the inanimate body and life shall be there and an army shall throng the charnel house!

Let us but invoke the Spirit and go forth to minister in His might and we shall do marvels! And the nation and the world, itself, shall feel the power of the Gospel of Jesus! But we must have the Spirit. And, oh, we must have the Spirit of God just now, I am sure! It is essential to the progress of the Gospel and to the victory of the Truth of God. At this moment the Gospel is on trial. It has had its trials before and has come out of them like gold from the furnace, purified by the heat. But just now they are telling us on all hands that the old-fashioned Gospel is effete. I have found myself dubbed in the public prints by the honorable title of Ultimus Puritanorum—“the Last of the Puritans”—the last preacher of a race that is nearly extinct, the mere echo of a departed creed, the last survivor of a race of antiquated preachers!

Ah, my Brothers and Sisters, it is not so! They come, they come, a mighty band, to bear on the Truth of God to future ages and even yet there are among us men who hold the Truth of God and preach it! Yet everywhere we encounter the sneer of the servants of error. They dress themselves out in many colors—in blue and scarlet, and fine linen, and I know not what—and they tell us that the day of our stern, gaunt religion has passed. Then your wise men, the philosophers, the men of thought, the men of culture—they sneer at us. Such preaching of the Gospel as ours might have been fine 200 years ago—might even, perhaps, have

sufficed for Whitefield and Wesley and the Methodists who followed at their heels. But*now*? In this enlightened 19th century? We do not need any more of it!

From this insult we make our appeal to the God of Heaven. O God, the God of Israel, avenge Your own Truth! O You whose mighty hammer can yet break rocks in pieces, You have not changed your hammer. Strike and make the mountains fall before You. O You whose sacred fire burns in Your Word, forever the same flame, You have forbidden us to offer strange fire upon Your altar. And we have not done so, but kept, by Your Grace, the faith and held to Your Truth. Acknowledge it, we beseech You, and prove that it is the Gospel of the blessed God! Let the sacrifice that is now before You in the midst of this great nation be consumed with the flame from Heaven and let the God that answers by fire be God!

The fact is, the Church only lives in the esteem of men by what she does. If she does not convert sinners she has not a reason for existing. The proof of the Gospel is not to be found in theories and problems, or propositions in catechisms or creeds, or even in Scriptural texts alone! The proof of the Gospel lies in what it *does*—and if it does not raise the depressed, if it does not save the sinful, if it does not send light into the dark places of the earth—in fact, if it does not make sinners into saints and transform the nature of men—then let it be thrown on a dunghill, or cast away, for if the salt has lost its savor it is therefore good for nothing! But we cry to God that the savor of our salt may continue in all its pungency, penetrating and preserving power. I ask you to pray that it may be so—that God will bring to the front the old Gospel, the doctrines of Whitefield and Calvin and Paul, the old Gospel of Christ, and once and for all by a supernatural working of the Holy Spirit give an answer to those who, in this age of blasphemy and of rebuke, are reviling the Gospel of the living God, and would have us cast it behind our backs!

By the name of Him who never changes, our Gospel shall never change! By the name of Christ who is gone to Heaven we have nothing to preach but Christ and Him Crucified! By the name of the Eternal Spirit who dwells in us, we know nothing but what the Holy Spirit has revealed. To your knees, my Brothers and Sisters! To your knees and win for us the victory! Feeble as we are and unable as we are to cope with our antagonists in any other field but this, we will vanquish them by the power of prayer through the supply of the Spirit of God! With you I leave it, my own beloved Friends. Through your prayers and the supply of the Spirit all will be well. Amen.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Philippians 2.**Adapted from*The C.H. Spurgeon Collection*, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307.  
Sermon #146 The New Park Street Pulpit 1

**÷Php 1.21**

THE GOOD MAN’S LIFE AND DEATH  
NO. 146

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, AUGUST 16, 1857, *BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT THE MUSIC HALL, ROYAL SURREY GARDENS.**

***“For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.”***Php 1:21***.***

How ominously these words follow each other in the text—“live,” “die.” There is but a comma between them and surely as it is in the words so is it in reality. How brief the distance between life and death! In fact there is none. Life is but death’s vestibule and our pilgrimage on earth is but a journey to the grave. The pulse that preserves our being beats our death march and the blood which circulates our life is floating it onward to the deeps of death.

Today we see our friends in health, tomorrow we hear of their decease. We clasped the hand of the strong man but yesterday and today we close his eyes. We rode in the chariot of comfort but an hour ago and in a few more hours the last black chariot must convey us to the home of all living. Oh, how closely allied is death to life! The lamb that sports in the field must soon feel the knife. The ox that lows in the pasture is fattening for the slaughter. Trees do but grow that they may be felled.

Yes and greater things than these feel death. Empires rise and flourish—they flourish but to decay—they rise to fall. How often do we take up the volume of history and read of the rise and fall of empires. We hear of the coronation and the death of kings. Death is the black servant who rides behind the chariot of life. See life and death is close behind it. Death reaches far throughout this world and has stamped all terrestrial things with the broad arrow of the grave. Stars may even die. It is said that conflagrations have been seen far off in the distant ether and astronomers have marked the funerals of worlds, the decay of those mighty orbs that we had imagined set forever in sockets of silver to glisten as the lamps of eternity.

But blessed be God, there is one place where death is not life’s Brother, where life reigns alone. “To live,” is not the first syllable which is to be followed by the next, “to die.” There is a land where death knells are never tolled, where winding-sheets are never woven, where graves are never dug. Blessed land beyond the skies! To reach it we must die. But if after death we obtain a glorious immortality, our text is indeed true—“To die is gain.”

If you would get a fair estimate of the happiness of any man you must judge him in these two closely connected things, his life and his death. The heathen Solon said, “Call no man happy until he is dead. For you know not what changes may pass upon him in life.” We add to that—Call no man happy until he is dead. Because the life that is to come, if that is miserable, shall far outweigh the highest life of happiness that has been enjoyed on earth. To estimate a man’s condition we must take it in all its length. We must not measure that one thread which reaches from the cradle to the coffin.

We must go further. We must go from the coffin to the resurrection and from the resurrection on throughout eternity. To know whether acts are profitable, I must not estimate their effects on me for the hour in which I live but for the eternity in which I am to exist. I must not weigh matters in the scales of time. I must not calculate by the hours, minutes and seconds of the clock but I must count and value things by the ages of eternity.

Come, then, Beloved. We have before us the picture of a man—the two sides of whose existence will both of them bear inspection. We have his life, we have his death—we have it said of his life, “*to live is Christ.*” Of his death, “*to die is gain*.” And if the same shall be said of any of you, oh, you may rejoice! You are among that thrice happy number whom the Lord has loved and whom He delights to honor.

We shall now divide our text very simply into these two points, *the good man’s life and the good man’s death*.  
**I.**As to HIS LIFE, we have that briefly described thus—“For me to live is Christ.” The Believer did not always live to Christ. When he was first born into this world he was a slave of sin and an heir of wrath, even as others. Though he may have afterwards become the greatest of saints, yet until Divine Grace has entered his heart he is “in the gall of bitterness and in the bonds of iniquity.” He only begins to live to Christ when God the Holy Spirit convicts him of his sin and of his desperate evil nature—when by grace he is brought to see the dying Savior making a propitiation for his guilt.  
From that moment when, by faith, he sees the slaughtered victim of Calvary and casts his whole life on Him, to be saved, to be redeemed, to be preserved and to be blessed by the virtue of His atonement and the greatness of His grace—from that moment the man begins to live to Christ.  
And now shall we tell you as briefly as we can what living to Christ means. It means, first, that *the life of a Christian derives its parentage from Christ*. “For me to live is Christ.” The righteous man has two lives. He has one which he inherited from his parents. He looks back to an ancestral race of which he is the branch and he traces his life to the parent stock. But he has a second life, a life *spiritual*, a life which is as much above mere mental life as mental life is above the life of the animal or the plant. And for the source of this spiritual life he looks not to father or mother, nor to priest nor man, nor to himself but he looks to Christ.  
He says, “O Lord Jesus, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace, You are my spiritual parent. Unless Your Spirit had breathed into my nostrils the breath of a new, holy and spiritual life, I had been to this day ‘dead in trespasses and sins.’ I owe my third principle, my spirit, to the implantation of Your grace. I had a body and a soul by my parents. I have received the third principle, the spirit from You and in You I live and move and have my being. My new, my best, my highest my most heavenly life, is wholly derived from You. To You I ascribe it. My life is hid with Christ in God. It is no longer I that lives but Christ that lives in me.”  
And so the Christian says, “For me to live is Christ,” because for me to live is to live a life whose parentage is not of human origin but of Divine, even of Christ Himself. Again he intended to say that *Christ was the sustenance of his life*, the food his newborn spirit is fed upon. The Believer has three parts to be sustained. The body, which must have its proper nutriment. The soul, which must have knowledge and thought to supply it. And the spirit which must feed on Christ. Without bread I become attenuated to a skeleton and at last I die. Without thought my mind becomes dwarfed and dwindles itself until I become the idiot, with a soul that has just life but little more.  
And without Christ my newborn spirit must become a vague shadowy emptiness. It cannot live unless it feeds on that heavenly manna which came down from Heaven. Now the Christian can say, “The life that I live is Christ,” because Christ is the food on which he feeds and the sustenance of his newborn spirit. The Apostle also meant, that *the fashion of his life was Christ*. I suppose that every man living has a model by which he endeavors to shape his life. When we start in life, we generally select some person, or persons, whose combined virtues shall be to us the mirror of perfection.  
“Now,” says Paul, “if you ask me after what fashion I mold my life and what is the model by which I would sculpture my being, I tell you it is Christ. I have no fashion, no form, no model by which to shape my being except the Lord Jesus Christ. Now, the true Christian, if he is an upright man, can say the same. Understand, however what I mean by the word “*upright*.” An upright man means a straight-up man—a man that does not cringe and bow and fawn to other men’s feet. A man that does not lean for help on other men but just stands with his head Heavenward, in all the dignity of his independence, leaning nowhere except on the arm of the Omnipotent.  
Such a man will take Christ alone to be his model and pattern. This is the very age of conventionalities. People dare not now do a thing unless everybody else does the same. You do not often say, “Is a thing right?” The most you say is, “Does So-and-So do it?” You have some great personage or other in your family connection who is looked upon as being the very standard of all propriety. And if he does it, then you think you may safely do it. And oh, what an outcry there is against a man who dares to be singular, who just believes that some of your conventionalities are trammels and chains and kicks them all to pieces and says, “I am free!”  
The world is at him in a minute. All the bad dogs of malice and slander are at him because he says, “I will not follow your model! I will vindicate the honor of my Master and not take your great masters to be forever my pattern.” Oh, I would to God that every statesman, that every minister, that every Christian were free to hold that his only form and his only fashion for imitation must be the Character of Christ. I would that we could scorn all superstitious attachments to the ancient errors of our ancestors. And while some would be forever looking upon age and upon hoary antiquity with veneration, I would we had the courage to look upon a thing, not according to its age, but according to its rightness. And so weigh everything, not by its novelty, or by its antiquity, but by its conformity to Christ Jesus and His holy Gospel.  
Then we would reject that which does not conform to Jesus, though it be hoary with years. Then we would believe only that which is—even though it be but the creature of the day and saying with earnestness, “For me to live is not to imitate this man or the other but ‘for me to live is Christ.’ ”  
I think, however, that the very center of Paul’s idea would be this—*The end of his life is Christ*. You think you see Paul land upon the shores of Philippi. There, by the riverside were ships gathered and many merchant men. There you would see the merchant busy with his ledger and overlooking his cargo as he paused and put his hand upon his brow and said as he griped his moneybag, “For me to live is gold.” And there you see his humbler clerk, employed in some plainer work, toiling for his master and he, perspiring with work mutters between his teeth, “For me to live is to gain a bare subsistence.”  
And there stands for a moment to listen to him, one with a studious face and a sallow countenance and with a roll full of the mysterious characters of wisdom. “Young man,” he says, “for me to live is learning.” “Aha, aha,” says another, who stands by, clothed in mail, with a helmet on his head, “I scorn your modes of life—for me to live is glory.” But there walks one, a humble tent maker, called Paul. You see the lineaments of the Jew upon his face and he steps into the middle of them all and says, “For me to live is Christ.”  
Oh, how they smile with contempt upon him and how they scoff at him for having chosen such an object! “For me to live is Christ.” And what did he mean? The learned man stopped and said, “Christ? Who is He? Is He that foolish, mad Fellow, of whom I have heard, who was executed upon Calvary for sedition?” The meek reply is, “It is He who died, Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews.” “What?” says the Roman soldier, “And do you live for a man who died a slave’s death? What glory will you get by fighting His battles?” “What profit is there in your preaching?” chimes in the trader. Ah and even the merchant’s clerk thought Paul mad! For he said, “How can he feed his family? How will he supply his wants if all he lives for is to honor Christ?”  
Yes, but Paul knew what he meant. He was the wisest man of them all. He knew which way was right for Heaven and which would end the best. But, right or wrong, his soul was wholly possessed with the idea—“For me to live is Christ.”  
Brothers and Sisters, can you say, as professing Christians, that you live up to the idea of the Apostle Paul? Can you honestly say that for you to live is Christ? I will tell you my opinion of many of you. You join our Churches. You are highly respectable men. You are accepted among us as true and real Christians. But in all honesty and truth I do not believe that for you to live is Christ. I see many of you whose whole thoughts are engrossed with the things of earth. The mere getting of money. The amassing of wealth seems to be your only object. I do not deny that you are liberal, I will not dare to say that you are not generous and that your checkbook does not often bear the mark of some subscription for holy purposes.  
But I dare to say, after all, that you cannot in honesty say that you live wholly for Christ. You know that when you go to your shop or your warehouse you do not think, in doing business, that you are doing it for Christ. You dare not be such a hypocrite as to say so. You must say that you do it for self-aggrandizement and for family advantage. “Well!” says one, “and is that a wicked reason?” By no means. Not for you, if you are wicked enough to ask that question—but for the Christian it is. He professes to live for Christ.  
Then how IS it that anyone dares to profess to live for his Master and yet does not do so but lives for mere worldly gain? Let me speak to many a lady here. You would be shocked if I should deny your Christianity. You move in the highest circles of life and you would be astonished if I should presume to touch your piety after your many generous donations to religious societies. But I dare to do so. You—what do you do? You rise late enough in the day—you have your carriage out and call to see your friends, or leave your card by way of proxy. You go to a party in the evening. You talk nonsense and come home and go to bed.  
And that is your life from the beginning of the year to the end. It is just one regular round. There comes the dinner or the ball and the conclusion of the day. And then, Amen, so be it, forever. Now you don’t live for Christ. I know you go to Church regularly, or attend at some Dissenting Church. All well and good. I shall not deny your piety, according to the common usage of the term. But I deny that you have got to anything like the place where Paul stood when he said, “For me to live is Christ.” I, too, my Brethren, know that with much earnest seeking I have failed to realize the fullness of entire devotion to the Lord Jesus.  
Every minister must sometimes chasten himself and say, “Am I not sometimes a little warped in my utterances? Did I not in some sermon aim to bring out a grand thought instead of stating a home truth? Have I not kept back some warning that I ought to have uttered because I feared the face of man?” Have we not all good need to chasten ourselves because we must say that we have not lived for Christ as we should have done? And yet there are, I trust, a noble few, the elite of God’s elect—a few chosen men and women on whose heads there is the crown and diadem of dedication.  
They can truly say, “I have nothing in this world I cannot give to Christ—I have said it and mean what I have said—  
***‘Take my soul and body’s powers,  
All my goods and all my hours,  
All I have and all I am.’***  
Take me, Lord and take me forever.” These are the men who make our missionaries. These are the women to make our nurses for the sick. These are they that would dare death for Christ. These are they who would give of their substance to His cause. These are they who would spend and be spent, who would bear ignominy and scorn and shame if they could but advance their Master’s interest.  
How many of this sort have I here this morning? Might I not count many of these benches before I could find a score? Many there are who do in a measure carry out this principle. But who among us is there (I am sure he stands not here in this pulpit) that can dare to say he has lived wholly for Christ, as the Apostle did? And yet, till there are more Pauls and more men dedicated to Christ, we shall never see God’s kingdom come, nor shall we hope to see His will done on earth, even as it is in Heaven.  
Now, this is the true life of a Christian, its source, its sustenance, its fashion and its end all gathered up in two words—Christ Jesus. And I must add, its happiness and its glory is all in Christ. But I must detain you no longer.  
**II.**I must go to the second point, THE DEATH OF THE CHRISTIAN. Alas, alas, that the good should die! Alas, that the righteous should fall! Death, why do you not hew the deadly upas tree? Why do you not mow the hemlock? Why do you touch the tree beneath whose spreading branches weariness has rest? Why do you touch the flower whose perfume has made glad the earth? Death, why do you snatch away the excellent of the earth, in whom is all our delight? If you would use your axe, use it upon the cumber grounds, the trees that draw nourishment but afford no fruit. You might be thanked then. But why will you cut down the cedars, why will you fell the goodly trees of Lebanon?  
O Death, why do you not spare the Church? Why must the pulpit be hung in black. Why must the missionary station be filled with weeping? Why must the pious family lose its priest and the house its head? O Death, what are you doing? Touch not earth’s holy things! Your hands are not fit to pollute the Israel of God. Why do you put your hand upon the hearts of the elect? Oh stop! Stop! Spare the righteous, Death, and take the evil! But no, it must not be. Death comes and smites the best of us all. The most generous, the most prayerful, the most holy, the most devoted must die. Weep, weep, weep, O Church, for you have lost your martyrs. Weep, O Church, for you have lost your confessors. Your holy men are fallen. Howl, fir tree, for the cedar has fallen! The godly fail and the righteous are cut off.  
But stay awhile. I hear another voice. Say you unto the daughter of Judah, spare your weeping. Tell the Lord’s flock, cease, cease your sorrow. Your martyrs are dead but they are

glorified. Your ministers are gone but they have ascended up to your Father and to their Father. Your Brethren are buried in the grave but the archangel’s trumpet shall awake them and their spirits are ever now with God. Hear the words of the text, by way of consolation, “To die is gain.” Not such gain as you wish for, you son of the miser. Not such gain as you are hunting for, you man of covetousness and self-love. A higher and a better gain is that which death brings to a Christian.  
My dear Friends, when I discoursed upon the former part of the verse, it was all plain. No proof was needed. You believed it, for you saw it clearly. “To live is Christ,” has no paradox in it. But “To die is gain,” is one of the Gospel riddles which only the Christian can truly understand. To die is not gain if I look upon the merely visible. To die is loss, it is not gain. Has not the dead man lost his wealth? Though he had piles of riches, can he take anything with him? Has it not been said, “Naked came I out of my mother’s womb and naked shall I return there”? “Dust you are and unto dust shall you return.”  
And which of all your goods can you take with you? The man had a fair estate and a goodly mansion. He has lost that. He can no more tread those painted halls, nor walk those verdant lawns. He had abundance of fame and honor. He has lost that, so far as his own sense of it is concerned, though still the harp string trembles at his name. He has lost his wealth and though he may be buried in a costly tomb, yet is he as poor as the beggar who looked upon him in the street in envy. That is not gain, it is loss!  
And he has lost his friends—he has left behind him a sorrowing wife and children, fatherless, without his guardian care. He has lost the friend of his bosom, the companion of his youth. Friends are there to weep over him but they cannot cross the river with him. They drop a few tears into his tomb but with him they must not and cannot go. And has he not lost all his learning, though he has toiled ever so much to fill his brain with knowledge? What is he now above the servile slave, though he has acquired all knowledge of earthly things? Is it not said—  
***“Their memory and their love are lost  
Alike unknowing and unknown”*?**  
Surely death is loss. Has he not lost the songs of the sanctuary and the prayers of the righteous? Has he not lost the solemn assembly and the great gathering of the people? No more shall the promise enchant his ear, no more shall the glad tidings of the Gospel wake his soul to melody. He sleeps in the dust, the Sabbath-bell tolls not for him. The sacramental emblems are spread upon the table, but not for him. He has gone to his grave. He knows not that which shall be after him. There is neither work nor device in the grave, where we all are hastening. Surely death is loss.  
When I look upon you, you clay-cold corpse and see you just preparing to be the palace of corruption and the carnival for worms, I cannot think that you have gained! When I see that your eye has lost light and your lip has lost its speech and your ears have lost hearing and your feet have lost motion and your heart has lost its joy. When I see they that look out of the windows dressed in black and no sounds of the harp wake up your joys, O clay-cold corpse, than have you lost, lost immeasurably. And yet my text tells me it is not so. It says, “To die is gain.”  
It looks as if it could not be thus and certainly it is not, so far as I can see. But put to your eye the telescope of *faith—*take that magic glass which pierces through the veil that parts us from the unseen. Anoint your eyes with eye salve and make them so bright that they can pierce the ether and see the unknown worlds. Come, bathe yourself in this sea of light and live in holy Revelation and belief. Then look and oh, how changed the scene! Here is the corpse but there the spirit. Here is the clay but there the soul, here is the carcass but there the seraph. He is supremely blessed—his death IS gain!  
Come now, what did he lose? I will show that in everything he lost, he gained far more. He lost his friends, did he? His wife and his children, his Brethren in Church fellowship are all left to weep his loss. Yes, he lost them but, my Brethren what did he gain? He gained more friends than ever he lost. He had lost many in his lifetime but he meets them all again. Parents, brothers and sisters who had died in youth or age and passed the stream before him—all salute him on the further brink. There the mother meets her infant. There the father meets his children. There the venerable Patriarch greets his family to the third and fourth generation!  
There brother clasps brother to his arms and husband meets with wife, no more to be married or given in marriage but to live together like the angels of God. Some of us have more friends in Heaven than in earth. We have more dear relations in Glory than we have here. It is not so with all of us but with some it is so—more have crossed the stream than are left behind. But if it is not so, yet what friends we have to meet us there! Oh, I reckon on the day of death it were much gain if it were for the mere hope of seeing the bright spirits that are now before the Throne. To clasp the hand of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob. To look into the face of Paul the Apostle and grasp the hand of Peter.  
To sit in flowery fields with Moses and David. To bask in the sunlight of bliss with John and Magdalene. Oh how blessed! The company of poor imperfect saints on earth is good. But how much better the society of the redeemed! Death is no loss to us by way of friends. We leave a few, a little band below and say to them, “Fear not little flock,” and we ascend and meet the armies of the living God, the hosts of His redeemed. “To die is gain.” Poor corpse! You have lost your friends on earth—but no, bright spirit—you have received a hundred-fold in Heaven.  
What else did we say he lost? We said he lost all his estate, all his substance and his wealth. Yes but he has gained infinitely more. Though he were rich as Crisus, yet he might well give up his wealth for that which he has attained. Were his fingers bright with pearls and have they lost their brilliance? The pearly gates of Heaven glisten brighter by far. Had he gold in his storehouse? Mark you, the streets of Heaven are paved with gold and he is richer by far. The mansions of the redeemed are far brighter dwelling places than the mansions of the richest here below.  
But it is not so with many of you. You are not rich, you are poor. What can you lose by death? You are poor here, you shall be rich there. Here you suffer toil, there you shall rest forever! Here you earn your bread by the sweat of your brow but there, no toil. Here wearily you cast yourself upon your bed at the week’s end and sigh for the Sabbath—but there Sabbaths have no end. Here you go to the house of God but you are distracted with worldly cares and thoughts of suffering. But there, there are no groans to mingle with the songs that warble from immortal tongues. Death will be gain to you in point of riches and substance.  
And as for the *means of grace* which we leave behind—what are they when compared with what we shall have hereafter? Oh, might I die at this hour, I think I would say something like this, “Farewell Sabbaths—I am going to the eternal Sabbath of the redeemed. Farewell minister. I shall need no candle, neither light of the sun, when the Lord God shall give me light and be my life forever and ever. Farewell you songs and sonnets of the blessed. Farewell, I shall not need your melodious burst. I shall hear the eternal and unceasing hallelujahs of the beatified.  
“Farewell prayers of God’s people. My spirit shall hear forever the intercessions of my Lord and join with the noble army of martyrs in crying, ‘O Lord, how long?’ Farewell O Zion! Farewell house of my love, home of my life! Farewell temples where God’s people sing and pray! Farewell tents of Jacob, where they daily burn their offering—I am going to a better Zion than you, to a brighter Jerusalem, to a temple that has foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God!”  
O my dear Friends, in the thought of these things, do we not, some of us, wish we could die!—  
***“Even now by faith we join our hands  
With those that went before,  
And greet the blood-besprinkled bands  
Upon the eternal shore.  
One army of the living God,  
At His command we bow,  
Part of the host have crossed the flood,  
And part are crossing now.”***  
We have not come to the margin yet but we shall be there soon—we soon expect to die.  
And again, one more thought. We said that when men died they lost their knowledge. We correct ourselves. Oh, no, when the righteous die they know infinitely more than they could have known on earth— ***“There shall I see and hear and know  
All I desired or wished below.  
And every power find sweet employ,  
In that eternal world of joy.”***  
“Here we see through a glass darkly but there face to face.” There, what “eye has not seen nor ear heard” shall be fully manifest to us. There, riddles shall be unraveled, mysteries made plain, dark texts enlightened, hard providences made to appear wise.  
The least soul in Heaven knows more of God than the greatest saint on earth. The greatest saint on earth may have it said of him, “Nevertheless he that is least in the kingdom of Heaven is greater than he.” Not our mightiest Divines understand so much of theology as the lambs of the flock of Glory. Not the greatest masterminds of earth understand the millionth part of the mighty meanings which have been discovered by souls emancipated from clay. Yes, Brethren, “To die is gain.”  
Take away, take away that hearse! Remove that shroud! Come, put white plumes upon the horse’s heads and let gilded trappings hang around them! There, take away that fife, that shrill sounding music of the death march. Lend me the trumpet and the drum. O hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah! Why weep we, the saints to Heaven? Why do we need to lament? They are not dead, they are gone ahead. Stop, stop that mourning, refrain your tears, clap your hands, clap your hands!—  
***“They are supremely blessed,  
Have done with care and sin and woe;  
And with their Savior rest.”***  
What? Weep? Weep for heads that are crowned with garlands of Heaven? Weep? Weep for hands that grasp the harps of gold? What? Weep for eyes that see the Redeemer? What? Weep for hearts that are washed from sin and are throbbing with eternal bliss! What? Weep for men that are in the Savior’s bosom? No! Weep for yourselves, that you are *here*. Weep that the mandate has not come which bids *you*to die. Weep that you must tarry. But weep not for them. I see them turning back on you with loving wonder and they exclaim, “Why do you weep?” What? Weep for poverty that it is clothed in riches? Weep for sickness, that it has inherited eternal health? What? Weep for shame, that it is glorified? And weep for sinful mortality, that it has become immaculate?  
Oh, weep not but rejoice! “If you knew what it was that I have said unto you and where I have gone, you would rejoice with a joy that no man should take from you.” “To die is gain.” Ah, this makes the Christian long to die. It makes him say—  
***“Oh, that the word were given!  
O Lord of Hosts, the wave divide,  
And land us all in Heaven!”***  
And now, Friends, does this belong to you all? Can you claim an interest in it? Are you living to Christ? Does Christ live in you? For if not, your death will not be gain. Are you a Believer in the Savior? Has your heart been renewed and your conscience washed in the blood of Jesus? If not, my Hearer, I do truly weep for you. I will save my tears for lost friends. There, with this handkerchief I’d staunch my eyes forever for my Beloved that shall die, if those tears could save you. O, when you die, what a day! If the world were hung in sackcloth, it could not express the grief that you would feel. You *die*.  
O Death! O Death! How hideous are you to men that are not in Christ! And yet, my Hearer, you shall soon die. Save me your bed of shrieks, your look of gall, your words of bitterness! Oh that you could be saved from the dread hereafter! Oh, the wrath to come! The wrath to come! The wrath to come! Who is he that can preach of it? Horrors strike the guilty soul! It quivers upon the verge of death—no, on the verge of Hell. It looks over, clutching hard to life and it hears there the sullen groans, the hollow moans and shrieks of tortured ghosts, which come up from the pit that is bottomless and it clutches firmly to life, clasps the physician and bids him hold on lest he should fall into the pit that burns.  
And the spirit looks down and sees all the fiends of everlasting punishments and back it recoils. But die it must. It would barter all it has to gain an hour. But no, the Fiend has got its grip and down it must plunge. And who can tell the hideous shriek of a lost soul? It cannot reach Heaven. But if it could it might well be imagined that it would suspend the melodies of angels—it might make even God’s redeemed weep, if they could hear the wailings of a damned soul.  
Ah, you men and women, you have wept. But if you die unregenerate, there will be no weeping like that—there will be no shrieks like that—no wails like that. May God spare us from ever hearing it or uttering it ourselves! Oh, how the grim caverns of Hades startle and how the darkness of night is frightful when the wail of a lost soul comes up from the ascending flames—while it is descending in the pit. “Turn you, turn you. Why will you die, O house of Israel?”  
Christ is preached to you. “This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.” Believe on Him and live, you guilty, vile, perishing. Believe and live. But this know—if you reject my message and despise my Master—in that day when He shall judge the world in righteousness by that man, Jesus Christ—I must be a swift witness against you. I have told you—by your soul’s peril reject it.  
Receive my message and you are saved. Reject it—take the responsibility on your own head. Behold, my garments are clear of your blood. If you are damned, it is not for want of warning. Oh God grant you may not perish!

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**÷Php 1.23**

“FOREVER WITH THE LORD”  
NO. 1136

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, OCTOBER 12, 1873, *BY C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“To be with Christ, which is far better.”***Php 1:23***.***

THE Apostle was confined in the guardroom of the Praetorian. It is very probable that he had a soldier chained to his right hand and another to his left. And it is very possible that this position suggested to him the expression, “I am in a strait betwixt two.” He was literally held by two forces and he was mentally in the same condition—exercised with two strong desires—influenced by two master passions, and he did not know to which he should yield. He says, “Between the two I am in perplexity,” or, as some render it, “I am straitened by the pressure of the two things.” Picture yourself sitting in a gloomy dungeon, a captive in the hands of the cruel tyrant, Nero, and under the supervision of the infamous prefect, Tigellinus, the most detestable of all Nero’s satellites.

Conceive yourself as expecting soon to be taken out to death—perhaps to such a horrible death as the refined cruelty of the monster had often devised—as, for instance, to be smeared over with bituminous matter and burned in the despot’s garden to adorn a holiday. What would be your feelings? If you were not a Christian I should expect you to tremble with the fear of death. And even if you were a Believer, I should not marvel if the flesh shrunk from the prospect. Paul was an utter stranger to any feeling of the kind. He had not the slightest dread of martyrdom. He calls his expected death a departure, a loosing of the cable which holds his ship to the shore and a putting forth upon the main ocean.

So far from being afraid to die, he stands fully prepared. He waits patiently and even anticipates *joyfully* the hour when his change shall come. On the other hand, I can readily imagine that amidst the miseries of a wretched prison, subject to frequent insults from rude soldiers, you might be seized with a desire to escape from life. Good men have felt the power of that feeling. Elijah said, “Let me die: I am no better than my fathers.” Job sighed to be hidden in the grave and oftentimes under far less afflictions than those which vexed the Apostle, good men have said, “Would God this life were at an end and these miseries over. I am weary, I am weary—when will Death release me?”

I see nothing of that feeling in the Apostle. He is not restive under the chain. There is not a trace of impatience about him. He admits, and joyfully admits, that to be with Christ is far better. But upon consideration he sees reasons for his remaining here and, therefore, he cheerfully submits to whatever may be the Lord’s will. He does not choose. His mind is so wrapped up with God and free from self, that he *cannot* choose. What a blessed state of heart to be in! One might be willing to wear Paul’s chain on the wrist to enjoy Paul’s liberty of mind! He is a free man whom the Lord makes free and such a man, Nero, himself cannot enslave. He may confine him in the military prison, but his soul walks at liberty through the earth, yes, and climbs among the stars.

Paul, instead of being either weary of life or afraid of death, sits down and coolly considers his own case as calmly, indeed, as if it had been the case of someone else. Do you observe how he weighs it? He says to depart and to be with Christ is, in itself considered, far better—he therefore *desires* it. But looking round upon the numerous churches which he had formed, which in their feebleness and exposure to many perils needed his care, he says, on the other hand, “To abide in the flesh is more necessary for *you*.” He holds the balance with unquivering hands and the scales quietly vibrate in equilibrium—one rises and then the other—gently swaying his heart by turns. He is in a strait, a blessed strait betwixt two, and he does not say that he knew not which of two things to *avoid*, or which to *deprecate*, but his mind was in such a condition that either to live or to die seemed equally desirable, and he says, “What I shall choose I know not.”

It is a poor choice, to choose to live in a dungeon, and an equally poor business, as men judge it, to choose to die, but the Apostle regards both of them as choice things, so choice that he does not know which to select! He deliberates as coolly and calmly as if he were not at all concerned about it, and, indeed, it is fair to say he was not at all concerned about it. He was moved by a higher concern than any which had to do with himself, for his main object was the Glory of God. He desired the Glory of God when he wished to be with Christ. He desired the same when he was willing to remain with Christ’s people and to labor on.

His mind, as we have seen, hung in an equilibrium between two things, but he is clear enough upon *one* matter, namely, that considering his own interests, only, it would greatly increase his happiness to depart and to be with Christ! He had said the same before, when he declared that, “To die is gain.” He had no doubt that to be loosed from the body and allowed to fly away to Jesus would be a great blessing to him. Of that assurance we will now speak.

**I.** The first thing to which I shall call your attention is THE APOSTLE’S CERTAINTY CONCERNING THE DISEMBODIED STATE—“Having a desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better.” Now, the Apostle was an eminently conscientious man. At the time when he was a Jewish teacher, whatever else he might *not* be, he was very conscientious—he verily thought that he did God service in persecuting the Christians. And throughout the whole of his subsequent career, in every incident of his history we mark him as pre-eminently a man guided by conscience. If he believed a thing to be right, he attended to it. And if anything struck him as being wrong, he could not be persuaded to countenance it. He would not do or say that which he did not fully believe to be right and true.

It is a grand thing to meet with a witness of this order, for his testimony can be relied on. What such a man affirms we may be quite certain is correct, so far as he knows. And also, the Apostle was eminently cool. He was a man of wellbalanced reason. I should think that logic greatly preponderated among his faculties. John has a warm and glowing heart and one does not wonder that he is rather a warm lover of Jesus than a systematic unfolder of doctrine. Peter is impulsive and when he writes he writes with force, but it is not the force of reasoning. Paul is calm, collected. You never find him excited beyond the bounds of reason. He is as orderly, correct and argumentative as a Grecian sage. He is enthusiastic to a white heat, but regardless, he still holds himself well in hand.

The coursers of his imagination can outstrip the wind, but he always holds the reins with a strong hand and knows how to turn them, or to make them stand still at his pleasure. It is a great thing to receive the testimony of a man who is both conscientious to tell what he believes to be true and calm and logical to form a clear judgment as to what is really fact. Now this man, Paul, was convinced that there is a future state for Believers. He was quite sure about it and he believed it to be a future *conscious* state which commenced the *moment* one died, and was beyond measure full of blessedness. He did not believe in purgatorial fires through which Believers’ souls must pass—much less did he believe the modern and detestable heresy which some have endorsed that, like the body, the soul of the saint dies until the Resurrection.

No, but he was known to speak of being “absent from the body and present with the Lord,” and here he speaks about departing not to sleep or to lie in the cold shade of oblivion till the trumpet should awaken him, but to depart and *immediately* to be with Christ, which is far better. What had made this very conscientious and very collected man come to this conclusion? I suppose he would have replied, first, that he had been converted by a sight of the Lord Jesus Christ. On the road to Damascus, while desperately set against the religion of Jesus, the Lord Himself had appeared to him, so that he had seen Jesus with his own eyes and had heard Him speak.

About that sight and sound he had no question. He was sure that he had seen the Lord Jesus and heard His voice. He was so certain of this that he was led to give up his position in society, which was a very elevated one; to lose his reputation, which he greatly valued; to be rejected by his countrymen whom he loved with more than ordinary patriotism and to run continual risk of death for the sake of the Truth to which he was a witness. He was content to be made the offscouring of all things for the love of that once-despised Savior who, out of the windows of Heaven, had looked down upon Him in mercy.

Now, he was quite sure that Jesus Christ came from somewhere and went back to some place or other. He felt sure that there must be a place where the Man, Jesus Christ, dwelt, and he felt quite certain that wherever that might be it would be a place of happiness and glory. Recollecting the prayer of the Lord Jesus, which John had recorded, “Father, I will that they, also, whom You have given Me be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory,” he was quite certain that as soon as saints died they would be where their glorious Lord Jesus was and would share His honors. Remember, also, that this judicious and truthful witness tells us that he had, on other occasions, distinct evidence of the disembodied state. He informs us that he was caught up into the third Heaven and there heard things which it was not lawful for a man to utter.

He observes that he does not understand how he went there, but of the fact, he is quite sure. His body was here on earth still alive and yet his spirit was caught away into Heaven. The question with him was whether he was in the body or out of the body, and I dare say his metaphysical mind often tried to untie that knot. His soul must have remained in the body to keep the body alive, and if so, how could it go up to Heaven? And yet into Heaven he was quite clear that he had entered. At last the Apostle came to the conclusion that whether in the body or out of the body he could not tell, but God knew. This, however, he was sure of—that he had been caught up into Paradise, or the third Heaven—and therefore there w*a*s a Paradise! He had heard words which it was not possible for him to utter, therefore there was a place where glorious words were to be heard and glorious words to be said! And he was quite sure, not merely as a matter of belief, but as a matter of *observation*, that there was a place into which disembodied spirits go—where they are with Jesus, their Lord—which is far better.

It is clear that it would *not* be far better for a saint to die and sleep till the Resurrection than it would be to work on here. It would be evidently, by far, a better thing for saints to continue in life till Christ came, than to lie dormant in oblivion. Yet he says it is far better for them to depart—and the ground of his judgment lies in the fact that there is a place of real happiness—of intense joy—where it is far better for the disembodied spirit to be than for it to remain here in the body! About this Paul expressed no sort of doubt. There was such a state. It was a state of great joy, so that even to him who was one of the greatest Apostles, the most useful of the saints and the most honored with his Master’s blessing—even to him to depart and to be with Christ would be far better!

I want you to notice, also that he does not express any sort of doubt about his own entrance into a state of felicity so soon as he should depart. He does not say, as I am afraid many here would have done, “It would be far better, certainly, for me to die if I were sure I should be with Christ.” Oh, no! He had risen above such hesitation. Dear Brothers and Sisters, it is a wretched state to be in to be saying, “It would be sweet for me to depart if, indeed, these glories were for me.” He had got beyond all doubt as to whether eternal bliss would be his! He was *sure* of that, and why are *we* not sure, too? Why do we hesitate where he spoke so confidently? Had Paul something to ground his confidence upon which we have not?

Do you suppose that Paul reckoned he should be saved because of his abundant labors, his earnest ministry and his great successes? Far from it! Don’t you know that he, himself, said, “God forbid that I should glory save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ”? As for anything that he had ever *done*, he declared that he trusted to be found in Christ, not having his own righteousness, which was of the Law, but the righteousness which is of God by faith. Now, where Paul built we build, if we build aright. Our hope is founded upon the righteousness of Christ, upon the Grace of God, upon the promise of our heavenly Father. Well, I dare to say it—he, the chief of the Apostles, had not a solitary grain of advantage over any one of us as to the basis and essence of his hope! Mercy, Grace, atoning blood, the precious promise—these, alone, he built on—for other foundation can no man lay.

If Paul was sure of eternal bliss, I should be sure of it, too. No, I *am*! Are you, Beloved? Are you equally as sure of being with Christ as Paul was? You should be, for you have the same reason for certainty as the Apostle had, if, indeed, you are believing in the Lord Jesus. God is not a God of perhapses, and ifs, and buts—He is a God of shalls and wills, of faithful Truth and everlasting verities. “He that believes on Him is not condemned.” “There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.” “He that believes and is baptized, shall be saved.” “Who shall lay anything to the charge of”—whom?—Paul, the Apostle? No, but “of God’s elect”?

Of all of them, of any one of them whom you shall please to select, however humble, however obscure—they are ALL safe in Jesus! He was made sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him, and we may, each one of us, cry, “I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed to Him until that day.” So much, then, concerning the Apostle’s certainty as to the disembodied state, its happiness and his own possession of it before long.

**II.** It is very interesting to notice THE APOSTLE’S IDEA OF THAT STATE. He says, “To be with Christ.” It is a one-sided idea and it is almost a one-worded description of it. “To be with Christ.” I have no doubt Paul had as enlarged ideas as to what the state of disembodied spirits would be as the most intelligent and best-read Christian that ever lived. I have no doubt he would have said, “Yes, there is fellowship among the saints—we shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of Heaven. It will certainly be as true in Heaven as it is on earth that we have fellowship one with another.”

I have no doubt he believed that Heaven was a place of a far clearer knowledge than any we possess below. He said so once—“Here I know in part, but there shall I know even as I am known.” Some Christians have entertained the idea that they shall gaze upon the various works of God in distant parts of His universe and enjoy infinite happiness in beholding the manifold wisdom of God—very possible, and if it will conduce to their happiness—very probable. Perhaps Paul believed all that, but we do not know whether he did or not. Here it is plain that he gives us only *one* idea. He was a man of great mind and much information, but here he gives us only one idea—for my part, one that perfectly satisfies me and I think one which charms and fills to overflowing the heart of every Believer.

He describes the disembodied state as “to be with Christ.” A very exclusive idea! No, a very inclusive idea—for it takes in all the Heaven which the largest mind can conceive! It does seem to omit a great many things, but I dare say Paul felt that they were such trifles that it did not matter about forgetting them. Being with Christ is so great a thing that he mentioned only it. I think he did this, first, because his love was so concentrated upon Christ that he could think of nothing else in connection with going away to Heaven.

There is a wife here, perhaps, and her husband has accepted an appointment in India. He has been gone a long time and the years of his forced absence have been weary to her. She has had loving messages from him and kind letters, but often she has sighed and her heart has looked out of the windows towards the east, yearning for his return. But now she has received a letter entreating her to go to her husband and, without hesitation, she has resolved to go. Now, if you ask her what she is going to India for, the reply will be, “I am going to my husband.” But she has a brother there. Yes, she will see him, but she does not tell you that—her great thought is that she is going to her husband! She has many old friends and companions there, but she is not drawn to the far-off land by desire for *their* company—she crosses the sea for the sake of her beloved.

But her husband has a handsome estate there and he is wealthy. He has a well-furnished house and many servants. Yes, but she never says, “I am going to see my husband’s home,” or anything of that kind. She is going to her husband. That is the all-absorbing object. There may be other inducements to make the voyage, but to be with her beloved is the master reason of her journey. She is going to the man she loves with all her soul and she is longing for the country, whatever that country may be, because he is there. It is so with the Christian, only enhanced in a tenfold degree! He does not say, “I am going to the songs of angels and to the everlasting chorales of the sanctified,” but, “I am going to be with Jesus!” It would argue unchastity to Christ if that were not the first and highest thought.

To come back to the figure—and it is one which Christ, Himself, would approve of, far He continually uses the metaphor of marriage in relation to Himself and the soul—if that woman did regard as the first thing in that journey out to the East, the sight of some other person, or the mere enjoyment of wealth and possessions—it would argue that she had little love to her husband. It would mean that she was not such a wife as she ought to be. And if it could be so that the Christian should have some higher thought than being with Christ, or some other desire worth mentioning in the same day with it, it would look as if he had not presented himself as a chaste virgin to Christ, to be His and His alone.

I see, therefore, why Paul calls the disembodied state a being with Christ, because his love was all with his Lord. And, no doubt, there was this further reason among others—he was persuaded that Heaven could not be Heaven if Christ was not there. Oh, to think of Heaven without Christ! It is the same thing as thinking of Hell. Heaven without Christ? It is day without the sun! Existing without life, feasting without food, seeing without light. It involves a contradiction in terms. Heaven without Christ? Absurd! It is the sea without water, the earth without its fields, the heavens without their stars. There cannot be Heaven without Christ! He is the sum total of bliss! He is the fountain from which Heaven flows, the element of which Heaven is composed! Christ is Heaven and Heaven is Christ!

You shall change the words and make no difference in the sense. To be where Jesus is is the highest imaginable bliss and bliss away from Jesus is inconceivable to the child of God. If you were invited to a marriage feast and you were, yourself, to be the bride, and yet the bridegroom were not there—do not tell me about feasting. In vain they ring the bells till the Church tower rocks and reels. In vain the dishes smoke and the red wine sparkles. In vain the guests shout and make merry. If the bride looks around her and sees no bridegroom, the dainties mock her sorrow and the merriment insults her misery. Such would a Christless Heaven be to the saints. If you could gather together all conceivable joys and Christ were absent, there would be no Heaven to His beloved ones. Therefore it is that Heaven is to be where Christ is—

***“To dwell with Christ, to feel His love,   
Is the full Heaven enjoyed above.   
And the sweet expectation now,   
Is the young dawn of Heaven below.”***

And, Beloved, just to be with Christ *is* Heaven—that bare thing. Excuse my using such words, I only want to make the sense stronger. That bare thing—just to be with Christ is all the Heaven a Believer needs! The angels may be there or not, as they will. And the golden crowns and harps present or absent as may be. But if I am to be where Jesus is, I will find angels in His eyes and crowns in every lock of His hair. To me the golden streets shall be my fellowship with Him and the music of the harpers shall be the sound of His voice. Only to be near Him, to be with Him—this is all we need. The Apostle does not say, “to be in Heaven, which is far better.” No, but, “to be *with Christ*, which is far better,” and he adds no description—he leaves the thoughts just as they are—in all their majestic simplicity. “To be with Christ, which is far better.”

But what is it to be with Christ, Beloved? In some sense we are with Christ now, for He comes to us. We are no strangers to Him. Even while we are in this body we have communion with Jesus and yet it must be true that a higher fellowship is to come, for the Apostle says that while we are present in the body we are absent from the Lord. There is a sense in which, so long as we are here, we *are* absent from the Lord. One great saint used to say upon his birthday that he had been so many years in banishment from the Lord. To abide in this lowland country, so far from the ivory palaces, is a banishment at the very best. All that we can see of Christ here is through a glass darkly. Face to face is true nearness to Him and that we have not reached as of yet.

What will it be, then, to be with Christ? Excuse me if I say it will be, first of all, exactly what it says, namely, to be with Him. I must repeat that word—it is Heaven only to *be* with Him! It is not merely what comes out of being with Him—His company is Heaven. Why, even to have seen Jesus in his flesh was a privilege—

***“I think when I read that sweet story ofold,   
When Jesus was here among men,   
How He took little children like lambs to His fold   
I should like to have been with Him then.   
I wish that His hands had been placed on my head,   
That His arms had been thrown around me,   
And that I might have seen His kind look when He said,   
‘Let the little ones come unto Me.’ ”***

I think I should have found a little Heaven in gazing on that blessed form!

But our text speaks of a different sort of being with Him, for there were people near Him here in body who were a long way off from Him in spirit. The text speaks of being with Him in the spirit when the soul shall have shaken itself loose of the flesh and blood—and left all its slough behind it—and gone right away to bask in the Glory of Jesus, to participate in the Nature of Jesus and, best of all, to abide near His Person, with the God-Man Mediator, who is Lord of all! Still, there will flow out of that nearness the following things among many others. We shall enjoy, first of all, a clearer vision of Him. Oh, we have not seen Him yet! Our views of Him are too dim to be worth calling sights. The eyes of faith have looked through a telescope and seen Him at a distance and it has been a ravishing vision. But when the eyes of the soul shall really see Him—Him, and not another—Him for ourselves, and not another for us, oh, the sight!

Is not the thought of it a burning coal of joy? The sight of His very flesh will charm us. His wounds, still fresh, the dear memorials of His passion, still apparent. The perception of His soul will also delight us, for our soul will commune with His soul and this is the soul of communion! The sight of His Godhead, so far as created spirit can see it, will also ravish us with joy. And then we shall have a brighter knowledge of Him. Here we know in part—we know the names of His offices, we know what He has worked, we know what He is working for us—but there those offices will shine in their splendor and we shall see all that He did for us in its real weight and value! We shall comprehend, then, the height and depth and know the love of Christ which passes knowledge, as we do not know it at this hour.

And with that will come a more intimate communion. Our soul will lean her head on Jesus’ bosom, our heart will get into His heart and hide herself in His wounds. What must it be to speak to Him, as our soul will speak to Him, as our spirit nature will commune with His inmost *Nature—*His spirit speaking to our spirits without a veil between? We shall not see Him looking down from the windows, but we shall rest in His arms, in a far more intimate communion than any we can enjoy this side the grave. Today I see Him through the grating of my prison windows and my heart is ready to leap out of my body! What will it be when His left hand shall be under my head and His right hand shall embrace me?

And then, Beloved, when we shall be with Him it will be unbroken fellowship. There will be no sin to blind our eyes to His charms, or to entice us away from His love. Blessed be God, there will be no Monday mornings to call us back to the world, but our sacred Sunday will last on forever! Doubts, backslidings and spiritual chills will then be gone forever. No more shall we cry, “Have you seen Him whom my soul loves?” but we shall *hold* Him and never let Him go. There will be no need, ever, for the spirit to fall asleep and so suspend its joy—it will find its true rest in constant communion with Jesus! It is possible to live in fellowship with Jesus here always—possible, but, oh, how few ever reach it! But there we shall *all* have reached it! The very lowest among us—we shall be with the Lord forever!

And then we shall have a sight of His Glory and though I put this after a sight of Himself, yet, remember, our Lord thinks much of it. He prayed, “Father, I will that they, also, whom You have given Me be with Me where I am, that they may behold My Glory.” We have seen something of His *shame* and have been partakers in the *reproach* that is poured upon His Gospel. But we shall see Him, then, with silver sandals on the feet that once were mired by the clay of earth and a crown of gold upon the once thorn-pierced brow! We shall see Him when His hands shall gleam as with gold rings set with beryl, and look no more like a malefactor’s hand nailed to the cruel wood—

***“Then shall we see His body like bright ivory   
With sapphires overlaid,   
His limbs like marble pillars   
In golden sockets stayed.”***

Then, looking on His face we shall understand Solomon’s Song, when he said, “His countenance is as Lebanon, excellent as the cedars; His voice is most sweet, yes, He is altogether lovely.” One would wish to leap right away out of this body to behold Him in His Glory!

And then, Beloved, we shall *share* in the Glory, too, for His joy will be our joy. His honor will be our honor. Our spirits which wrestled hard here below and had to strive against a thousand outward enemies and inward doubts and fears, will then be all light, joy, gladness, full of the life of God and beaming with ecstatic bliss! The Lord grant us to know this in due season, and so we shall, if, indeed, we are Believers in Jesus! So you see Paul’s one idea was that he should be with Jesus. That was all. He cared little for anything else.

**III.** Very briefly, let us consider THE APOSTLE’S ESTIMATE OF THIS DISEMBODIED STATE. He says, “To be with Christ, which is far better.” Now, the Greek has a triple comparative. We could not say, “far more better,” in our language, but that would be a fair translation. We will therefore read, “It is far rather preferable,” or it is much better to be with Christ away from the body, than it would be to abide here. Now, you must remember that Paul does not claim that the disembodied state is the highest condition of a Believer, or the ultimate crown of his hopes. It is a state of perfection so far as it goes—the *spirit* is perfect—but the entire manhood is not perfect while the body is left to mold in the tomb.

One half of the saint is left behind in the grave. Corruption, earth and worms have seized upon it, and the grand concluding day of our manifestation can only come when the redemption of the body is fully achieved. The fullness of our Glory is the Resurrection, for then the body will be united to our spirit and perfected with it. At present the saints who are with Jesus are without their bodies and are pure spirits. Their humanity is in that respect maimed—only half their manhood is with Jesus—yet even for that, half of their manhood to be with Christ is far better than for the whole of their being to be here in the best possible condition!

Now, the Apostle does not say that to be with Christ is far better than to be here and to be rich, young, healthy, strong, famous, great, or learned—Paul never thinks of putting those petty things into contrast with being with Christ! He had got above all that. There he was sitting chained in the dungeon, the poorest man in the emperor’s dominions, and often, I have no doubt—for he was getting on to be, “such an one as Paul the aged,” and wrote particularly about an old cloak he had left at Troas—often he felt rheumatic pains shooting through him. And he did not find this life to have many attractions of wealth or ease, though he might have had them if he had chosen them as his portion. He had given them all up and counted them as insignificant trifles, not to be mentioned at all, for Jesus’ sake.

He is not speaking of the low joys of this world—he is far above such considerations. He means that to be with Christ is infinitely superior to all the joys of Christians. Anything that the most of Christians know about Christ and heavenly joys and heavenly things is very poor compared with being *with* Christ. But he meant more than that. He meant that the highest joys which the best taught Believer can here possess are inferior to being with Christ. For, let me say, Paul was no obscure Believer. He was a leader among the followers of Christ. Could he not say. “Thanks be unto God, who always makes us to triumph in every place”?

He knew the graces of the Holy Spirit, he had them abundantly. He was head and shoulders above the most brilliant Christian here. He had the highest experience of any man out of Heaven and it was that which he contrasted with being with Christ. And he said that the most that we could get here of heavenly things was not to be compared with being with Christ. That was far, far, far better. And truly, Brothers and Sisters, so it is. Thanks be to God for all the mercies of the pilgrimage, for all the dropping manna and the following stream, but oh, the wilderness with all its manna, is *nothing* compared with the land that flows with milk and honey! Let the road be paved with mercy—it is not so sweet as the Father’s house of the many mansions to which it leads.

It is true that in the battle our head is covered, the wings of angels often protect us, and the Spirit of God, Himself, nerves our arm to use the sword. But who shall say that the victory is not better than the battle? The warrior who has won the most of victory will tell you that the best day will be when the sword rattles back into the scabbard and the victory is won forever. Oh, the wooing of Christ and the soul, this is very sweet—the rapturous joys we have had in the love-making between Christ and us, we would not exchange with emperors and kings—even if they offered us their crowns! But the marriage day will be better by far—the glorious consummation of our soul’s highest desire when we shall be with our Well-Beloved where He is.

Far better, said the Apostle, and he meant it. Far better it is. He did not say—and I want you to notice this again— though he might have said it, “We shall be better in condition. No poverty there, no sickness there.” He did not say, “We shall be better in character.” He might have said it—there will be no sin, no depravity, no infirmity, no temptation there. He did not say, “We shall be better in employment,” though surely it will be better to wait on the Master, close at His hand, than to be here among sinners and often among cold-hearted saints. He did not say, “We shall have better society there.” Though, truth to tell, it will be better to be with the perfect than with the imperfect. Neither did he say we should see fairer sights there, though we shall see the city that has foundations of jasper, whose light is the light of the Lamb’s own Presence! But he did say, “To be with Christ.” He summed it up *there*. The bare being with Christ would be far better. And so it will be. Our spirit longs for it!

Yet mark you, for all that, he said he felt a pull the other way. He had a twitch towards staying on earth, as well as a pull towards going to Heaven, for he said, “To abide in the flesh is more necessary for you.” How I love Paul for thinking of the churches here when he had Heaven before him! Anthony Farindon says it is like a poor beggar woman outside the door and she carries a squalling child, and someone says, “You may come in and feast, but you must leave the babe outside.” She is very hungry and she needs the feast. But she does not like to leave the baby and so she is in a strait betwixt two.

Or, he says again, it is like a wife who has children at home, five or six little ones, and her husband is on a journey. And suddenly there comes a letter which says that he needs her and she must go to him, but she may do as she thinks best. She desires to go to her husband, but who will take care of the last little baby and who is to see to all the rest? And so she is in a strait betwixt two. She loves him and she loves them. So stood the Apostle, and oh, it is blessed to think of a man having such a love for Christ that for Christ’s sake he loves poor souls well enough to be willing to stay out of Heaven awhile! “Oh,” he says, “it is all gain for me to go to Heaven. For me to die is far better. Yet there are some poor sinners who need to be called, some poor trembling saints to be comforted and I do not know which is the best.” And the Apostle stands puzzled. He does not know which it shall be. There we leave him.

May we get into the same blessed predicament ourselves! The last word shall be this. Concerning our beloved friends gone from us, we do not sorrow as those who are without hope. What is more, we do not sorrow at all. If we chance to sorrow, it is for ourselves, that we have lost their present company. But as for them it is far better with them and if the lifting of our little finger could bring them back again, dear as they are to us, we would not be so cruel as to subject them, again, to the troubles of this stormy sea of life. They are safe! We will go to them. We would not have them return to us.

Then, with regard to ourselves, if we have believed in Jesus we are on our journey Home and all fear of death is now annihilated. You notice the Apostle does not say anything at all about *death.* He did not think it worth mentioning. In fact, there is no such thing to a Christian! I have heard of people being afraid of the pains of death. There are no pains of death—the pain is in life! Death is the end of pain. It is all over. Put the saddle on the right horse. Do not blame Death for what he does not do. It is Life that brings pain! Death to the Believer ends all evil. Death is the gate of endless joy and shall we dread to enter there? No, blessed be God, we will not!

And this points us to the Fountain of bliss while we are here, for if Heaven is to be with Christ, then the nearer we get to Christ, here, the more we shall participate in that which makes the joy of Heaven! If we want to taste Heaven’s blessed dainties while here below, let us walk in unbroken fellowship with Him—so we shall get *two* heavens, a little Heaven below, and a boundless Heaven above when our turn shall come to go Home! Oh, I wish you were all on the way to being with Christ! If you do not go to be with Christ, where can you go? Answer that question and go to Jesus, now, by humble faith, that afterwards He may say, “Come, you did come on earth, now come again, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from before the foundation of the world.”

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Philippians 1**  
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PAUL’S DESIRE TO DEPART  
NO. 274

**DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, SEPTEMBER 11, 1859, *BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT THE MUSIC HALL, ROYAL SURREY GARDENS.**

***“Having a desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better.”*** Php 1:23***.***

WE know that death is not the end of our being. By a confident faith we are persuaded that better things await us in another state. We are speeding onwards through our brief life like an arrow shot from a bow and we feel that we shall not drop down at the end of our flight into the dreariness of annihilation, but we shall find a heavenly target far across the flood of death. The force which impels us onwards is too mighty to be restrained by death. We have that within us which is not to be accounted for, if there is not a world to come and especially, as Believers, we have hopes and desires and aspirations, which cannot be fulfilled and which must have been given us purposely to make us miserable and to tantalize us, if there is not a state in which everyone of these shall be satisfied and filled to the brim with joy.

We know, too, that the world into which we shall soon be ushered is one which shall never pass away. We have learned full well by experience that all things here are but for a season. They are things which shall be shaken and, therefore, will not remain in the day when God shall shake both Heaven and earth. But equally certain are we that the inheritance which awaits us in the world to come is eternal and unfailing, and that the cycles of ages shall never move it. The on-flowing of eternity itself shall not diminish its duration. We know that the world to which we go is not to be measured by leagues, nor is the life thereof to be calculated by centuries. Well does it become everyone of us, then, professing the Christian name, to be questioning ourselves as to the view which we take of the world to come.

It may be there are some of you now present who call yourselves Believers, who look into a future state with shuddering and awe. Possibly there may be but few here who have attained to the position of the Apostle, when he could say, that he had a desire to depart and to be with Christ. I take it that our view of our own death is one of the readiest tokens by which we may judge of our own spiritual condition. When men fear death it is not certain that they are wicked, but it is quite certain that if they have faith it is in a very weak and sickly condition. When men desire death we may not rest assured that they are therefore righteous, for they may desire it for wrong reasons. But if for right reasons they are panting to enter into another state, we may gather from this not only that their minds are right with God, but that their faith is sanctified and that

their love is fervent.

I hope that the service of this morning may have the effect of leading every one of us to self-examination. I shall endeavor while preaching to search myself and I pray that each one of you may be led to hear for himself and I beseech you to put home each pertinent and personal question to your own souls, while in a quiet, but I hope in a forcible manner, I shall endeavor to describe the Apostle’s feelings in prospect of departure. Three things I shall observe this morning. First of all, the Apostle’s description of death. Secondly, his desire for it and thirdly, the reasons which justified such a desire.

**I.**THE APOSTLE’S DESCRIPTION OF DEATH. We are to understand this, of course, as being a description not of the death of the wicked, but of the death of the righteous. And you will remark the Apostle does not call it an arrest. In the death of the wicked, the sheriff’s officer of justice does lay his clay-cold hand upon the man’s shoulder and he is his prisoner forever. The sergeant-at-arms in the name of the justice which has been incensed, puts the fetters about his wrists and conducts him to the prison of despair and everlasting torment.

In the Christian’s case, however, there is no such thing as an arrest, for there is no one that can arrest him. We sometimes talk of death arresting the Believer in the midst of his career, but we misuse terms. Who shall arrest a man against whom there is neither conviction nor accusation? Who is he that condemns the man for whom Christ has died? No, further, who shall so much as lay anything to the charge of God’s elect? How, then, can the Christian be arrested? It is no such thing. It is an arrest of the ungodly, but not of the Believer.

Nor does Paul speak of the Believer’s death as being a sudden plunge. This is a proper description of the death of the ungodly. He stands upon the brink of a precipice and beneath him there is a yawning and bottomless gulf. Through thick darkness he must descend and into it his unwilling spirit must take a desperate leap. Not so the Believer. His is no leap downwards—it is a climbing upwards. He has his foot upon the first rung of the ladder and joyful is the hour when his Master says unto him, “Come up higher. Ascend to another guest-chamber and here feast upon richer dainties than those I have given you below.” Yes, it is no leap in the dark. It is no plunge into a cold sea—it is simply a departure.

Let me describe what I think the Apostle means by the figure of a departure. Many deaths are preceded by a long season of sickness and then I think we might picture them by the departure of a ship from its moorings. There lies the ship in its haven. There is a friend of yours about to journey away to some distant clime. You will never see his face again in the flesh. He is going to emigrate. He will find a home in another, and he hopes, a happier land. You stand upon the shore. You have given him the last embrace. The mother has given her son the last kiss, the friend has shaken him by the hand for the last time and now the signal is given.

The anchor is taken up. The rope which held the ship to the shore is loosed and lo, the ship is moving and she floats outward towards the sea. You look, you still wave your hand as you see the ship departing. Your friend stands on some prominent spot on the deck and there he waves his handkerchief to the last. But the most sharp-sighted of friends in such scenes must lose sight of one another. The ship floats on. You just now catch a sight of the sails, but with the strongest telescope you cannot discover your friend. He is gone—it is his departure. Weep as you may, you cannot bring him back again. Your sorrowful tears may mingle with the flood that has carried him away, but they cannot entice a single wave to restore him to you.

Now even so is the death of many a Believer. His ship is quietly moored in its haven. He is calmly lying upon his bed. You visit him in his chamber. Without perturbation of spirit he bids you farewell. His grip is just as hearty as he shakes your hand, as ever it was in the best hour of his health. His voice is still firm and his eyes are still bright. He tells you he is going to another and a better land. You say to him, “Shall I sing to you”—

***“Be gone unbelief, my Savior is near”?***  
“Oh, no” says he, “sing me no such a hymn as that—sing me—

***“Jerusalem my happy home,  
Name ever dear to me,  
When shall my labors have an end  
In joy and peace and you?”***

He bids you a last farewell. You see him for a little season even after that, although he is too far gone again to address you. It may be a partial insensibility seizes hold of him. He is like a ship that is just going out of sight. You look at his lips and as you bow down your ear, you can catch some faint syllables of praise. He is talking to himself of that precious Jesus who is still his joy and hope. You watch him till the last heaving breath has left the body and you retire with the sweet reflection that His Spirit on a glassy sea has floated joyously to its post. Thus the Believer’s death is a departure. There is no sinking in the wave. There is no destruction of the vessel—it is a *departure*. He has gone. He has sailed over a calm and quiet sea and he is gone to a better land.

At other times deaths are more sudden and are not heralded by protracted sickness. The man is in health and he is suddenly snatched away and the place which knew him once knows him no more forever. I am about to use a figure which will seem to you extremely homely and certainly could not be classical. I remember to have been once a spectator in a sorrowful scene. A company of villagers, the younger branches of a family, were about to emigrate to another land. The aged mother who had not for some years left her cottage and her fireside, came to the railway station from which they must start on their departure. I stood among the sorrowful group as a friend and minister. I think I see the many embraces which the fond mother gave to her son and daughter and the little ones, her grand-children.

I see them even now folding their arms about her aged neck and then bidding farewell to all the friends in the village who had come to bid them adieu. And well I remember her, who was about to lose the props of her household. A shrill sound is heard, as if it were the messenger of death—it sends a pang through all hearts. In great haste at the small village station the passengers are hurried to their seats They thrust their heads out of the carriage window. The aged parent stands on the very edge of the platform that she may take the last look. There is a sound from the engine and away goes the train. I remember well the instant when that poor woman leaning on her staff sprang up from the chair with which she had been accommodated and jumping from the platform, rushed alone the railway with all her might, crying, “My children! My children! My children! They are gone and I shall never see them again.”

The figure may not be classical, but nevertheless I have been reminded of it by many a death. When I have seen the godly suddenly snatched away—no time to watch them—they are gone, swift as the wind itself could bear them, as if the hasty waves of the sea had buried them out of sight. It is our affliction and our trouble, and we must stand behind and weep, for they are gone beyond recall. Regardless, there is something pleasant in the picture. It is but a departure. They are not destroyed. They are not blown to atoms, they are not taken away to prison. It is but a departure from one place to another. They still live. They still are blessed.

While we weep they are rejoicing. While we mourn they are singing Psalms of praise. Remember this, my Brethren, in the apparel of mourning and, if you have lost friends of late, this may tend to console your spirits. Death to a Believer is but a departure, yet what a departure it is! Can you and I think calmly of it? The time must come when I must depart from wife and children and from house and home, when I must depart from everything that is dear to me on earth. The time is coming to you, oh rich Christian, when you must depart from all the comforts of your estate, from all the luxuries of your household, from all the enjoyments which your rank confers upon you.

And oh, poor Christian, lover of your home, the time is coming when you must depart from your cot, homely though it is, still dear unto you. You must leave the place of your toil and the sanctuary of your rest. We must mount as on eagle’s wings far from this world. We must bid adieu to its green fields as well as its dreary streets. We must say farewell to its blue skies and to its dusky clouds—farewell to foe and friend—farewell to all we have, alike to trial and to joy. But blessed be God, it is not the last look of a criminal condemned to die, it is the farewell of one who departs to another and a happier land.

The Apostle’s description of death, however, is not finished. He has here only pictured that which is visible. We now come to notice his description of the invisible part of death—

***“In vain the fancy strives to paint  
The moment after death—  
The glories which surround the saint  
When yielding up his breath.  
This much—and this is all we know,  
They are supremely blest,  
Have done with sin and care and woe,  
And with their Savior rest.”***

This is precisely the Apostle’s description of the state of the Believer after death. They depart—yes, but where? To be with Christ. Just observe how quickly these scenes follow each other. The sail is spread. The soul is launched upon the deep. How long will be its voyage? How many wearying winds must beat upon the sail before it shall be reefed in the port of peace? How often shall that soul be tossed upon the waves before it comes to the sea that knows no storm? Oh tell it, tell it everywhere—yon ship that has just departed is already at its haven. It did but spread its sail and it was there. Like the old ship on the lake of Galilee, there was a storm that tossed it, but Jesus said, “Peace, be still,” and immediately it came to land.

Yes, think not that there is a long period between the instant of death and the eternity of glory. There is not so much as space for the intervening of a lightning’s flash. One gentle sigh, the fetter breaks, we scarce can say it is gone before the ransomed spirit takes its mansion near the throne. We depart, we are with Christ. More quickly than I can say the words, swifter than speech can express them they become true. They depart and they are with Christ. The same instant they have closed their eyes on earth they have opened them in Heaven.

And what is this invisible part of death? “To be with Christ.” Who can comprehend this but the Christian? It is a Heaven which the worldling cares not for. If he could have it, be would not pawn his meanest lust to gain it. To be with Christ is to him a thing of nothing, as gold and silver are of no more value to little children than the pieces of platter with which they will amuse themselves. So Heaven and being with Christ is of no value to the childish sons of earthly mirth. They know not what a mass of glory is crowded into that one sentence, “To be with Christ.”

To the Believer who understands it, it means, first, vision. “Your eyes shall see Him.” I have heard of Him and though I have not seen His face, unceasingly I have adored Him. But I shall *see* Him. Yes, we shall actually gaze upon the exalted Redeemer. Think of it! Is there not a young Heaven within it? You shall see the hand that was nailed for you. You shall kiss the very lips that said, “I thirst.” You shall see the thorn-crowned head— and bow with all the blood-washed throng—you, the chief of sinners— shall adore Him who washed you in His blood, when you shall have a vision of His glory!

Faith is precious but what must *sight* be? To view Jesus as the Lamb of God through the glass of faith makes the soul rejoice with joy unspeakable. But oh, to see Him face to face, to look into those dear eyes! To be embraced by those Divine arms—rapture begins at the very mention of it! While I speak of Him, my soul is like the chariots of Amminadib and I desire to depart and to be with Him. But what must the vision be when the veil is taken from His face and the dimness from our eyes and when we

shall talk with Him even as a man talks with his friend? It is not only vision, it is *communion*. We shall walk with Him, *He* shall walk with us, He shall speak to us and we shall speak to Him! All that the spouse desired in Solomon’s Song, we shall have and ten thousand times more.

Then will the prayer be fulfilled, “Let Him kiss me with the kisses of His lips, for His love is better than wine.” Then we shall be able to say, “His left hand is under my head and His right hand does embrace me.” Then will He tell us His love. Then will He rehearse the ancient story of the Everlasting Covenant, of His election of us by His own true love, of His betrothal of us through His boundless affection, of His purchase of us by His rich compassion, of His preservation of us by His Omnipotence and of His bringing us safe at last to Glory as the result of His promise and His blood. And then will we tell Him of our love, then into His ear will we pour out the song of gratitude, a song such as we have never sung on earth, unmixed and pure, full of serenity and joy, no groans to mar its melody! A song rapt and seraphic, like the flaming sonnets which flash from burning tongues above. Happy, happy, happy day, when vision and communion shall be ours in fullness! “To be with Christ which is far better.”

Nor is this all, it means fruition of Christ. Here we look and long to taste, or if we taste, it is but a sip and we long to drink to the full. Here we are like Israel in the wilderness, who had but one cluster from Eschol. There we shall be in the vineyard. Here do we have the manna falling small, like coriander seed—there shall we eat the bread of Heaven and the old corn of the kingdom. We have sometimes on earth, lusts, ungratified desires that lack satisfaction—but there the lust shall be slain and the desire shall be satiated. There shall be nothing we can want. Every power shall find the sweetest employment in that eternal world of joy. There will be a full and lasting fruition of Christ and last of all upon this point there shall be a sharing with Christ in His glory and that forever.

“We shall see Him,” yes and let us have the next sentence and “shall be like He when we shall see Him as He is.” Oh Christian, predate Heaven for a few years! Within a very little time you shall be rid of all your trials and your troubles—your aching head shall be girt with a crown of glory, your poor panting heart shall find its rest and shall be satisfied with fullness as it beats upon the breast of Christ! Your hands that now toil shall know no harder labor than harp-strings can afford. Your eyes now suffused with tears shall weep no longer. You shall gaze in ineffable rapture upon the splendor of Him who sits upon the Throne. No, more—upon His Throne shall *you* sit. He is King of kings, but *you* shall reign with Him. He is a priest after the order of Melchisedec, but *you* shall be a priest with Him!

Oh rejoice! The triumph of His glory shall be shared by you. His crown, His joy, His Paradise, these shall be yours and you shall be co-heir with Him who is the heir of all things. Does not this very description of the unseen part of death stir up in the heart of the Believer a longing “to depart and to be with Christ which is far better”?

**II.**I have thus, as well as I was able, spoken upon the first part. And now my Friends, let us consider THE APOSTLE’S DESIRE. How differently do men regard death. We have seen men shriek at the prospect of it. I have seen the man driven to madness when the skeleton king has stared him in the face. Pacing up and down his chamber he has declared with many a curse and imprecation that he would not and could not die— shrieking so that you could scarcely bear his company. He has looked forward to death as the concentration of all despair and agony and he has vainly strived, with all his might, not to die. When he felt at last that death was stronger than he and that he must get a desperate fall in the struggle—then has he began to shriek and to cry in such a strain that scarce demons themselves could excel the despair concentrated in each shriek.

Others have we seen who have met death somewhat more calmly. Biting their lips and setting fast their teeth, they have endeavored to keep up appearances, even in the last moment, but they have endured the inward suffering, betrayed to us most plainly by the staring eyes and the awful look. Others, too, we have seen, who, callous through sin, totally deserted by God’s Spirit and given up to a seared conscience—have gone to their death with idiot resignation. They have even played the madman yet more fully and have tried to brag and bully even in the jaws of Hell. Many Christians, have we met—true Believers—who can go so far as to say they were willing to die. Please God, whenever the solemn hour should come, they were prepared to go up to their chamber and stretch themselves upon their bed and say, “Lord, now let Your servant depart in peace.”

But the Apostle had gone further than they. He said he had a *desire* to depart and the desire was a strong one. The Greek word has much force in it. He pants, he longs to be gone. I might paraphrase it by one of the verses of an old hymn—

***“To Jesus, the crown of my hope,  
My soul is in haste to be gone.”***

He desired not to get away from earth for he loved to serve his Master, but he desired to be with Christ, which he declared to be far better. I ask you if you were in Paul’s condition would not such a desire contain the very fullness of wisdom? There is a ship at sea, fully laden. It has a precious cargo of gold on board. Happy is the kingdom that shall receive the wealth which is contained within its hold. Would you not, if you were a possessor of such a vessel, long to be safe in port? The empty ship needs scarcely fear the water for what has she to lose? If it casts its ballast into the sea, what is it the poorer? But when the ship is full of treasure, well may the captain long to see it safely moored.

Now Paul was full of faith and love. He could say, “I have finished my course, I have kept the faith.” And what wonder, therefore, that he was longing to be safely anchored at home. So the soldier, who in the midst of battle has smitten down foe after foe, knows that a high reward awaits him. He has charged upon the enemy and driven them back in many a desperate struggle. He has already been victor. Do you wonder he wishes the fight now were over, that his laurels may be safe? If he had played the

coward he might long that the campaign should be protracted, that he might redeem his disgrace. But having so far fought with honor he may well desire that the garment rolled in blood, may be rolled up forever.

Yes! And so was it with the Apostle. He had fought a good fight and knew that the crown was laid up for him in Heaven and he anticipated the triumph which Christ would give him. And panting and longing, he said, “I have a desire to depart and to be with Christ which is far better.” Upon this point I am constrained to be brief, because the next division involves the whole matter and upon this, I would be somewhat longer. And may God grant that what I shall say upon it may be impressive.

**III.**PAUL’S REASONS FOR LONGING TO DEPART. There have been—it is the part of candor to admit it—there have been other men besides Christians who have longed to die. There is the suicide who, mad, from life’s history hangs to be hurled, even though Hell receive him. Tired of all life’s troubles he thinks he sees a way to escape from his toil and from his sorrow through the grim gate of death. He stains his hand with his own blood and red with his own gore appears before his Maker. Ah Fool, to leap from one evil to a myriad! Ah, Madman, to plunge from little streams of woe into an unfathomable gulf of agony! There can be no more absurd, revolting, and insensible act, than for a man to take away his own life. Setting aside the horrors of crime that surround it, how foolish is the attempt to escape by rushing into the very midst of danger!

The ostrich who buries her head in the sand and when she cannot see the hunter thinks the hunter cannot see her, is sensible and wise compared with such a man, who, rushing into the very thick of the battle hopes in this way to escape from his enemy. How can it be, you foolish man? The stream is too deep for you already and instead of seeking to find a shore by faith in God, do you seek the center of the stream that you may get a firmer footing *there*? Oh foolish generation and unwise, “Put up your sword into your scabbard and do yourself no harm,” for harm you will do if you rush into a greater evil to escape the lesser.

There have been other men, who with a so-called philosophic spirit, have desired to die. Some men are sick altogether of mankind. They have met with so many ungrateful and deceitful wretches that they say, “Let me get rid of them all—

***‘Oh for a lodge in some vast wilderness, Where rumor of oppression never more  
May reach mine ear.’ ”***

And they have thought to find this lodge in the wilderness of death. And so they long for the wings of a dove to flee away from the degenerate race of men. Not so this Apostle. He was no such coward as to fly from evils— he sought to better them. The Apostle loved his race. He was no manhater. He could say that he loved them all and thus he had prayed for them all and had carried them in the heart of Christ continually to the throne of mercy.

Others, too, have thought by getting out of the world they should get rid of their disappointments. They have struggled very hard to get rich, or they have strived for fame and they have not succeeded, in their ambitious designs and then they have said, “Let me die.” Now the Apostle was never disappointed in seeking wealth for he never cared for it. He had no desires whatever beyond food and raiment. He wished for nothing more and as for rank, that he utterly despised. He did tread beneath his feet as the mire of the streets all the honors that man could give him. Nor was the Apostle in any sense a disappointed man. He had sought to spread his Master’s fame and he had done it. He had a standard to plant and right well had he planted it. He had a Gospel to preach and he did preach it everywhere with all his might. He was a singularly happy man and therefore he had no such cowardly reasons for desiring to depart.

Others, too, have said that they wished to depart because of their great suffering. Now the Apostle thought of no such dastardly flight. He was ready for all weathers. He had been beaten with rods. He had been stoned. He had been shipwrecked. But he could say, “None of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto me.” He did not wish to escape from persecution. He rejoiced in it. He had often sung a hymn in prison, besides that hymn which he had sung with Silas for his companion. He had often shouted in the prospect of the block or the flames. Nor did he wish to die because of old age, for he was not an aged man when he wrote this Epistle. He was just then, I suppose, in full vigorous health and though in prison I do think that an angel might have ransacked the whole world before he could have found a happier man than the Apostle Paul— for a man’s happiness consists not in the wealth which he possesses. In the bare dungeons of Rome, Paul, the tent maker, had a glory about him which Nero never had in all his palaces. And there was a happiness there to which Solomon in all his glory never had attained. So then, the desire of Paul to depart is for these reasons far superior to the desire of the mere philosopher, or of the disappointed worldling.

What, then, made Paul wish to depart? I shall put it thus—the same reasons prompt the desires of every true Believer. But they can have no power whatever with many here, who have no desire to depart—because for you to die would be not happiness and bliss, but an eternal weight of misery. First, the Apostle felt a desire to depart because he knew that in departing and being with Christ he should be clean rid of sin. Paul hated sin. Every true Believer does the same. There have been times with us, Brothers and Sisters, when we could say, “Oh, wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?”

Sin has been our plague. Like righteous Lot in Sodom, the sins of others have vexed us. But, alas, we have had to bear a Sodom in our own hearts, which has vexed us still more. As to the trials and troubles of this world, they are nothing at all to the Believer compared with the annoyance of sin. Could he get rid of his unbelief, of his murmuring disposition, of his hasty temper—could he get rid of the various temptations of Satan, could he be clean and pure and perfect, he would be thoroughly satisfied. And this made the Apostle long to depart. “Oh,” said he to himself, one

Baptism in the stream of death and I am perfect—but to pass the chill and dreary stream and I shall stand—without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing—before the Throne of God.”

The dog of Hell shall follow us to the very edge of Jordan, but he cannot swim that stream. The arrows of temptation will be shot at us as long as we are here, but on the other side of Jordan these darts can never wound us again. Rejoice, then, Believer, in the prospect of death, because in dying you are once and for all clean rid of sin! When I lay down this body I have laid down every infirmity and every lust and every temptation—and when clothed upon with that house which is from Heaven, I have girt about my loins perfection and unsullied purity.

But oh—you that believe not in Christ—you do not desire to die for such a reason as this. For you there is no such a prospect. For you to die will be but to plunge deeper into sin. You sin now and when you die your spirit will descend to Hell, where, in the midst of fit companions, whose guilt is ripened, you shall spend an eternity in oaths and curses and blasphemies. O Sinner! Today you sow your sins in the furrows and when you die you shall reap the harvest. Today you break the clods, today you work in the husbandry of iniquity, then there shall be a shouting of an awful harvest home. When pressed down with the sheaves of your sins, Divine justice shall bring forth the harvest of misery and torment to you. You have reason enough to long to *live*, because for you to die is to reap the reward of your iniquities.

Again—Paul longed to die for another reason, because he knew that as soon as he should depart he would meet his Brethren in faith who had gone before. This desire also prompts you and me. I long to see, though it is but a few hours since we have lost their society, those two sisters and the dear brother who during this week have departed in Christ. Worshipping among us but a few days ago, it seems a strange thing to talk of them as being in Heaven. But there they are, far from the reach of mortal vision. At our departure we shall see them. It was our happiness to see them not long before their departure and to mark it down as one of the notables of our life, that these three, all of them alike died in quiet peace singing themselves into Heaven, never staying their song, so long as memory and breath held out. We shall see them. But we have others we are longing for.

Some of you may remember the departed wife, scarce cold within her grave. Many of you look back to dear little ones taken away in their infancy, carried off to their father’s God. Many of you remember aged parents—those that taught you in the way of God. The mother from whose lips you learned the first verse of Scripture and the father upon whose arms you were carried for the first time up to the House of God. They are gone. But the joyous reflection remains that we are going in the same direction and that we shall meet them soon. Some of us can look back through generations and trace our pedigree through the saints and we are longing for the time when the whole band of us, those who have gone in olden times and those who remain may sing together that new song of praise to our common God. Beloved, we have high joys in prospect—we shall soon join the general assembly and Church of the first-born, whose names are written in Heaven.

Our companions now are but poor and despised, but we shall soon be Brethren with princes. Moses who was king in Jeshurun and David who ruled over Israel, shall not be ashamed to call us Brethren, for the highest himself shall acknowledge us and He that on the Throne does sit shall lead us unto living fountains of waters and in His gracious fellowship shall wipe away all tears from off our faces. I think that the company of Apostles and Prophets and holy martyrs and confessors, who have gone before, will be a very sweet part of the bliss of the redeemed. And all this may make us pant to depart.

But O, you ungodly ones! You who have never been converted and who fear not God, this hope is not for you. You must go to your own place. And where must you go? To your drunk companions damned before you? Must you go down to the pit with harlots and with the profane? Where to, where to, you careless man, you lover of sin? Where are you going when you die? Your answer might well be this doleful ditty—“I am going to be the guest of devils. I am going to feast with fiends. I am going to abide with murderers and whoremongers and adulterers and with such as God has condemned. These must be my companions forever.”

Methinks I see the wheat of God standing in the valley every year, about to be gathered into the garner of Heaven in its own place and yonder I see the tares and what is the message for them? “Gather up the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them.” And who knows in what bundle you may be? You may be bound up in the same bundle with murderers and suicides. Yes, the men that you despise may be your companions in the bundle of the wicked. The drunkard and the swearer, whom some of you supposedly good people look down upon with scorn, may be your bundle companions, your bed-fellows forever when you make your bed in Hell and abide in everlasting torment.

But last of all, Paul’s grand reason for desiring to depart was to be with Christ. Again I say, simple though the words be—*to be with Christ—*have all Heaven condensed in them. Like the sounding of the silver trumpet of jubilee rings this precious sentence, “to be with Christ.” Like the harps of the glorified—like the singing of the redeemed, like the hallelujahs of Paradise, does this ring upon my ears, “To be with Christ.” Lift up your voices, you seraphim! Tune your hearts anew, you seraphs! Shout for joy you blood-washed—but your loudest strains cannot excel the thundering glory of this magnificent but brief sentence, “to be with Christ, which is far better.”

This, my Beloved—this shall well repay the tiresome pilgrimage of life. This reward shall be sufficient for all our contests with temptation, for all the shame we have endured in following Christ, in the midst of a wicked generation. This, this shall be all the Heaven that our largest desires shall crave. This immensity of bliss shall stretch across eternity.

But O unbeliever, what have you to do with such a hope as this? You cannot desire to depart and to be with Christ, for what is Christ to you? Today you despise Him. The Man of Sorrow you esteem not. Jesus of Nazareth you do not regard. He is preached to you every Sabbath Day, but you despise Him. With many tears have I presented Him to you, but you have shut your heart against Him. He has knocked at your door and there He stands shivering even now, but you will not admit Him. Beware, you that despise Jesus, for in another world you shall see Him after another fashion. You, too, shall be with Him, but it shall be but for an instant— summoned before His bar, dragged reluctantly to His dread tribunal, you shall see Him Whom you despise. You shall see Him and not another.

But oh, with what astonishment will you behold Him and what amazement shall seize upon you! You shall see him, but no longer as the humble man! His eyes shall be as flames of fire. Out of His mouth shall go a two-edged sword. About Him shall be wrapped “the rainbow wreath and robes of storm,” and He shall speak in louder tones than the noise of many waters and in great thundering shall He address you, “Depart you cursed into everlasting fire in Hell, prepared for the devil and his angels.” Oh “Kiss the Son, lest He be angry and you perish from the way when His wrath is kindled but a little.” Oh, go to your houses. May God the Spirit draw you to your chambers and may you there be led to fall upon your knees, confess your guilt and humbly seek for pardon, through that precious blood which flows freely this day and which will freely give pardon to you if with all your heart you seek it.

May God’s Spirit lead you to seek that you may find and may you and I and all of us, in the day of our departure, see the land before us—the happy shore of Heaven. May we know that as our vessel sails from earth it shall only take a hasty voyage “to be with Christ which is far better.” God the Spirit visit you now, God the Son bless you, God the Father remember you, through Jesus. Amen.

[The absence of the regular reporter is the publishers’ apology for the incorrectness of this sermon. Mr. SPURGEON has found it utterly impossible to recall the words which he uttered and which many of his hearers declare to have been attended with peculiar power.]

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**÷Php 1.27**

THE GOSPEL’S POWER IN A CHRISTIAN’S LIFE

NO. 640

**A SERMON PREACHED  
*BY C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“Only let your conversation be as it becomes the Gospel of Christ.”*** Php 1:27***.***

THE word “conversation” does not merely mean our talk, one with another, but the whole course of our life and behavior in the world. The Greek word signifies the actions and the privileges of citizenship and we are to let our whole citizenship—our actions as citizens of the new Jerusalem—be such as becomes the Gospel of Christ. Observe, dear Friends, the difference between the exhortations of the legalists and those of the Gospel. He who would have you perfect in the flesh exhorts you to *work* that you may be saved, that you may accomplish a meritorious righteousness of your own and so may be accepted before God.

But he who teaches the doctrines of Divine Grace urges you to holiness for quite another reason. He teaches you are saved because you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and he speaks to as many as are saved in Jesus and asks them to make their actions conformable to their position. He only seeks what he may reasonably expect to receive—“Let your conversation be such as becomes the Gospel of Christ. You have been saved by it, you profess to glory in it, you desire to extend it. Let, then, your conversation be such as becomes it.”

The one, you perceive, bids you to *work* that you may enter Heaven by your working. The other exhorts you to labor because Heaven is yours as the *gift* of Divine Grace and he would have you act as one who is made meet to be a partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light. Some persons cannot hear an exhortation without at once crying out that we are legal. Such persons will always find this Tabernacle the wrong place for them to feed in. We are delighted to preach good high doctrine and to insist upon it that salvation is of Grace alone! But we are equally delighted to preach good high *practice* and to insist upon it, that that grace which does not make a man better than his neighbors is a grace which will never take him to Heaven, nor render him acceptable before God!

I have already remarked that the exhortation is given in a form which is highly reasonable. The followers of any other religion, as a rule, are conformed to their religion. No nation has ever yet risen above the character of its so-called gods. Look at the disciples of Venus—were they not sunk deep in licentiousness? Look at the worshippers of Bacchus—let their Bacchanalian rebels tell how they entered into the character of their deity. The worshippers to this day of the goddess Kale—the goddess of thieves and murderers—the Thugs—enter most heartily into the spirit of the idol that they worship.

We do not marvel at the crimes of the ancients when we recollect the gods whom they adored—Moloch, who delighted in the blood of little children. Jupiter, Mercury and the like, whose actions stored in the classical dictionary are enough to pollute the minds of youth. We marvel not that licentiousness abounded, for “like gods, like people.” “A people are never better than their religion,” it has often been said—but in most cases they are rather worse. It is strictly in accordance with nature that a man’s religion should season his conversation. Paul puts it, therefore, to you who profess to be saved by Jesus Christ, “Let your conversation be as it becomes the Gospel of Christ.”

To get at this we must meditate for two or three minutes upon what the Gospel is, then take up the points in which our conversation ought to be like to the Gospel. And finally, utter a few earnest words to press upon professors of religion here the stern necessity of letting their conversation be such as becomes the Gospel of Christ.

**I.**“THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST!” WHAT IS IT? We look at the last two words, “of Christ.” Indeed, if you understand Christ you understand the Gospel. Christ is the Author of it. He, in the council chamber of eternity proposed to become the Surety for poor fallen man! He, in the fullness of time, worked out eternal redemption for as many as His Father had given Him. He is the Author of it as its Architect and as its Builder. We see in Christ Jesus the Alpha and the Omega of the Gospel. He has provided, in the treasury of Grace, all that is necessary to make the Gospel the Gospel of our salvation.

And as He is the Author of it, so He is the matter of it. It is impossible to preach the Gospel without preaching the Person, the work, the offices, the Character of Christ. If Christ is preached, the Gospel is promulgated and if Christ is put in the background, then there is no Gospel declared. “God forbid that I should know anything among you,” said the Apostle, “save Jesus Christ and Him crucified.” And so saying, he was carrying out his commission to preach the Gospel both to Jews and to Gentiles. The sum total, the essential, the marrow—what the old Puritans would have called the *quintessence* of the Gospel—is Christ Jesus! So that when we have done preaching the Gospel we may say, “Now of the things which we have spoken He is the sum,” and we may point to Him in the manger, to Him on the Cross, to Him risen, to Him coming in the second advent, to Him reigning as Prince of the kings of the earth—yes, point to Him everywhere—as the sum total of the Gospel.

It is also called “the Gospel of Christ,” because it is He who will be the Finisher of it. He will put the finishing stroke to the work as He laid the foundation stone. The Believer does not begin in Christ and then seek perfection in himself. No, as we run the heavenly race we are still looking to Jesus! As His hand first tore away the sin which does so easily beset us and helped us to run the race with patience, so that same hand shall hold out the olive branch of victory, shall weave it into a chaplet of Glory and put it about our brow. It is the Gospel of Jesus Christ—His property. It glorifies His Person. It is sweet with the savor of His name. It bears throughout the mark of His artistic fingers. If the heavens are the work of God’s fingers and the moon and the stars are by His ordinance, so we may say of the whole plan of salvation—the whole of it, great Jesus, is Your workmanship and by Your ordinance it stands fast!

It is “the Gospel of Jesus Christ,” and though hundreds of times this has been explained, it will not be amiss to go over it again. It is the “goodspell,” the “good news” of Jesus Christ and it is “good news” emphatically, because it clears away sin—the worst evil on earth. Better still, it sweeps away death and Hell! Christ came into the world to take sin upon His shoulders and to carry it away, hurling it into the red sea of His atoning blood. Christ, the Scapegoat, took the sin of His people upon His own head and bore it all away into the wilderness of forgetfulness, where, if it is searched for, it shall be found no more forever.

This is “good news,” for it tells that the cancer at the vitals of humanity has been cured! That the leprosy which rose even to the very brow of manhood has been taken away! Christ has filled a better stream than the river Jordan and now says to the sons of men, “Go, wash and be clean.” Besides removing the worst of ills, the Gospel is “good news” because it brings the best of blessings. What does it do but give life to the dead? It opens dumb lips, unstops deaf ears and unseals blind eyes! Does it not make earth the abode of peace? Has it not shut the doors of Hell upon Believers and opened the gates of Heaven to all who have learned to trust in Jesus’ name? “Good news?” Why that word “good” has got a double meaning when it is applied to the Gospel of Jesus Christ!

Well were angels employed to go and tell it and happy are the men who spend and are spent in the proclamation of such glad tidings of great joy. “God is reconciled!” “Peace on earth!” “Glory to God in the highest!” “Goodwill towards men!” God is glorified in salvation, sinners are delivered from the wrath to come and Hell does not receive the multitudes of men,

but Heaven is filled with the countless host redeemed by blood! It is “good news,” too, because it is a thing that could not have been invented by the human intellect. It was news to angels!—They have not ceased to wonder at it yet! They still stand looking upon the Mercy Seat, desiring to know more of it. It will be news in eternity! We shall—

***“Sing with rapture and surprise,  
His loving kindness in the skies.”***

The “good news,” put simply into a few words, is just this—“that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.” “God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” “This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.” So much, then, for what the Gospel is.

**II.**Now I am not going to speak to those who do not welcome the Gospel—I will speak to them another time. I pray God helps them to believe it, but today I have especially to speak to Believers. The text says we are to LET OUR CONVERSATION BE SUCH AS BECOMES THE GOSPEL. What sort of conversation, then, shall we have? In the first place the Gospel is very simple. It is unadorned—no meretricious ornaments to clog the pile. It is simple—“not with enticing words of man’s wisdom.” It is grandly sublime in its simplicity. Let the Christian be such. It does not become the Christian minister to be arrayed in blue and scarlet and fine linen and vestments and robes—these belong to Antichrist and are described in the book of the Revelation as the sure marks of the whore of Babylon.

It does not become the Christian man or the Christian woman to be guilty of spending hours in the adornment of his or her person. Our adornment should be “the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit.” There should be about our manner, our speech, our dress, our whole behavior that simplicity which is the very soul of beauty. Those who labor to make themselves admirable in appearance, by gaudy ornaments, miss the road. Beauty is its own adornment and, “she is most adorned when unadorned the most.”

The Christian man ought always to be simple in all respects. I think wherever you find him, you ought not to need a key to him. He should not be like certain books that you cannot make out without having somebody tell you the hard words. He should be a transparent man like Nathaniel— “an Israelite, indeed, in whom there is no guile.” The man who catches the spirit of his Master is, like Christ, a child-man, a man-child. You know they called Him, “that holy Child, Jesus.” So let us be, remembering that, “Except we are converted and become as little children,” who are eminently simple and child-like, “we cannot enter into the kingdom of Heaven.”

In the next place, if our conversation is such as becomes the Gospel, we shall remember that the Gospel is pre-eminently true. There is nothing in the Gospel which is false—no admixture, nothing put in as an “argumentum ad hominem” to catch the popular ear. It tells the Truth—the naked Truth—and if men dislike it, the Gospel cannot help it. It is gold without dross. It is pure water without admixture. Now such should the Christian be. He should make his conversation true. The saints are men of honor, but sometimes, Brethren, I think that many of us talk too much to speak nothing but the Truth of God.

I do not know how people could bring out broadsheets every morning with so much news if it were all true! I suppose there must be a little padding to fill it up and some of that is very poor stuff. And people that keep on talking, talking, talking, cannot grind all meal—surely it must be, some of it—rather coarse bran. And in the conversation of a good many professing Christians, how munch there is that is scandal, if not slander, uttered against other Christians? How much uncharitableness, if not willful falsehood, is spoken by some professors? Too often a rebuke is taken up heedlessly and repeated without any care being taken to ascertain whether it is true or not.

The Christian’s lips should speak truth when falsehood drops from the lips of all other men. A Christian man should never need to take an oath because his word is as good as an oath—his, “yes,” should be, “yes.” And his, “no, no.” It is for him to so live and speak that he shall be in good repute in all society—if not for the etiquette of his manners, certainly for the truthfulness of his utterances! Show me a man that is habitually or frequently a liar and you show me a man who will have his portion in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone!

I do not care to what denomination of Christians he may belong, if a man speaks the thing that is not, I am sure he is none of Christ’s. And it is very sad to know that there are some in all fellowships who have this great and grievous fault—that you cannot trust them in what they say. God deliver us from that! Let our conversation be such as becomes the Gospel of Christ and then it will be invariably truthful! Or, if there is error in it, it will always be through misadventure and never on purpose or from carelessness.

In the next place, the Gospel of Jesus Christ is a very fearless Gospel. It is the very reverse of that pretty thing called “modern charity.” The last created devil is “modern charity.” “Modern charity” goes cap in hand round to us all, and it says, “You are *all* right, every one of you! Do not quarrel any longer! Sectarianism is a horrid thing—down with it! Down with it!” And so it tries to induce all sorts of persons to withhold a part of

what they believe—to silence the testimony of all Christians upon points wherein they differ. I believe that that thing called Sectarianism nowadays is none other than true honesty.

Be a Sectarian, my Brother—be profoundly a Sectarian! I mean, by that, hold everything which you see to be in God’s Word with a tighter grasp and do not give up even the little pieces of Truth. At the same time, let that Sectarianism which makes you hate another man because he does not agree with you—let that be far from you! But never consent to that unholy league and covenant which seems to be rife throughout our country which would put a padlock on the mouth of every man and send us all about as if we were dumb—which says to me, “You must not speak against the errors of such-and-such a Church.” And to another, “You must not reply.” We cannot but speak! If we did not, the stones in the street might cry out against us!

That kind of charity is unknown to the Gospel. Now hear the Word of God! “He that believes and is baptized shall be saved. He that believes not”—what?—“shall get to Heaven some other way?” NO!—“shall be *damned*”! That is the Gospel. You perceive how boldly it launches out its censure? It does not *pretend*, “you may reject Me and go by another road and at last get safely to your journey’s end!” No, no, no!—You “shall be damned,” it says! Do you not perceive how Christ puts it? Some teachers come into the world and say to all, “Yes, Gentlemen, by your leave, you are all right. I have a point or two that you have not taught, just make room for me—I will not turn you out. I can stand in the same temple as yourself.”

But hear what Christ says—“All that ever came before Me were thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them.” Hear what His servant Paul says, “Though we, or an angel from Heaven, preach any other Gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you,”—what then?—“Let him be excused for his mistake?” No! But, “Let him be accursed”! Now this is strong language, but mark you, this is just how the Christian ought to live! As the Gospel is very fearless in what it has to say, so let the Christian always be. It strikes me that a “living” which becomes the Gospel of Christ is always a bold and fearless kind of living!

Some people go crawling through the world as if they asked some great man’s permission to live. They do not know their own minds. They take their words out of their mouths and look at them and ask a friend or two’s opinion. “What do you think of these words?” And when these friends censure them they put them in again and will not say them. Like jellyfish, they have no backbone. Now God has made men upright and it is a noble thing for a man to stand erect on his own feet. And it is a nobler thing, still, for a man to say that in Christ Jesus he has received that freedom which is freedom, indeed, and therefore he will not be the slave of any man.

“O God,” says David, “I am Your servant, for You have loosed my bonds.” Happy is he whose bonds are loosed! Let your eyes be like that of an eagle, yes, let them be brighter still! Let them never be dimmed by the eyes of any other man. Let your heart be like that of the lion, fearless! Say of yourself—

***“Careless, myself a dying man,***

***Of dying men’s esteem,”***  
I must live as in the sight of God, as I believe I should live, and then let man say his best or say his worst—it shall be no more than the chirping of a grasshopper when the sun goes down. “Who are you that you should be afraid of a man that shall die, or the son of man that is but a worm?” Make yourselves like men! Be strong! Fear not! For only so will your conversation be such as becomes the Gospel of Christ.

But again, the Gospel of Christ is very gentle. Hear it speak! “Come unto Me all you that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest.” Here is its spirit in its Founder—“He will not quench the smoking flax. A bruised reed He will not break.” Moreover, bad temper, snapping off of people’s heads, making men offenders for a word—all this is quite contrary to the Gospel. There are some people who seem to have been nursed upon vinegar and whose entire attitude far better suits Sinai than Zion. You might think that they had always come to the mount that might not be touched, which burns with fire, for they seem, *themselves*, to burn with fire. I may say to them that the best of them is sharper than a thorn hedge.

Now, dear Friends, let it never be so with us. Be firm, be bold, be fearless—but be cautious! If you have a lion’s heart, have a lady’s hand. Let there be such a gentleness about your carriage that the little children may not be afraid to come to you and the publican and harlot may not be driven away by your hostility, but invited to goodness by the gentleness of your words and acts. Again, the Gospel of Christ is very loving. It is the speech of the God of Love to a lost and fallen race. It tells us, “God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

It proclaims in every Word the Divine Grace of Him “who loved us and gave Himself for us.” “Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.” This same mind which was in Christ Jesus should dwell richly in us. His last command to His disciples was, “Love one another.” He that loves is born of God, while without this Grace, whatever we may think of ourselves, or others may think of us, we are really, in God’s sight, nothing better than sounding brass and tinkling

cymbals. Is not this an age in which we shall do well to direct our attention to the flower of Paradise? The atmosphere of the Church should foster this heavenly plant to the highest perfection. The world ought to point to us and say, “See how these Christians love one another? Not in word only, but in deed and in truth!”

I care not for that love which calls me a dearly beloved Brother and then if I happen to differ in sentiment and practice, treats me as a schismatic, denies me the rights of the brotherhood, and if I do not choose to subscribe to an arbitrarily imposed contribution to its funds, seizes my goods and sells them in the name of the law, order and Church of Christ! From all such shall our good Lord deliver us! But oh, for more real hearty union and love to all the saints—for more of that realization of the fact that we are *one* in Christ Jesus.

At the same time pray for more love to *all* men. We ought to love all our hearers, and the Gospel is to be preached by us to every creature. I hate sin everywhere, but I love and wish to love yet more and more every day the souls of the worst and vilest of men. Yes, the Gospel speaks of love and I must breathe it forth, too, in every act and deed. If our Lord was Love Incarnate, and we are His disciples, “let all take knowledge of us that we have been with Jesus and learned of Him.”

The Gospel of Christ, again, is the Gospel of mercy and if any man would act as becomes the Gospel, he must be a man of mercy. Do I see him? He is praying. He has been to the sacramental table and he has been drinking the wine which betokens the Savior’s blood—what a good man he is! See him on Monday—he has got his hands on his Brother’s throat, with—“Pay me what you owe!” Is that such as becomes the Gospel of Christ? There he sits—he will give his subscription to a charity, but he will grind down the needle-woman! He will get fat on her blood and bones! He will take a grasp, if he can, of the poor and sell them and devour them as though they were bread and yet, at the same time, “for a pretense he will make long prayers.”

Is this such as becomes the Gospel of Christ? I think not. The Gospel of Christ is mercy, generosity, liberality. It receives the beggar and hears his cry! It picks up even the vile and undeserving and scatters lavish blessings upon them and it fills the bosom of the naked and of the hungry with good things. Let your conversation be such as becomes the Gospel of Christ! You *miserly* and *stingy* people have not a conversation such as becomes the Gospel of Christ! There might be plenty of money for God’s treasury, for God’s Church and for God’s poor if there were not some who seem to live only to amass and to hoard!

Their life is diametrically opposed to the whole current and spirit of the Gospel of Christ Jesus. Forgive all who offend you! Help all, as far as you are able to do it, live a life of unselfishness! Be prepared, as much as lies in you, to do good unto all men and especially to the household of faith! And so shall your conversation be such as becomes the Gospel of Christ. I must not, however, omit to say that the Gospel of Christ is *holy*. You cannot find it excusing sin. It pardons it, but not without an Atonement so dreadful that sin never seems so exceedingly sinful as in the act of mercy which puts it away.

“Holy! Holy! Holy!” is the cry of the Gospel—and such is the cry of cherubim and seraphim. Now, if our conversation is to be like the Gospel, we must be holy, too. There are some things which the Christian must not even name, much less indulge in. The grosser vices are to him things to be hidden behind the curtain and totally unknown. The amusements and pleasures of the world, so far as they may be innocent, are his, as they are other men’s. But wherein they become sinful or doubtful, he discards them with disgust, for he has secret sources of joy and needs not, therefore, to go and drink of that muddy river of which thirsty worldlings are so fond. He seeks to be holy, as Christ is holy. And there is no conversation which becomes the Gospel of Christ except that.

**III.**Dear Friends, I might thus continue, for the subject is a very wide one. But I stop because, unhappily for me, though perhaps happily for your patience, my time has gone. Having just indicated what the Christian life ought to be, I must, in a few words, plead with you that by the power of God’s Holy Spirit you will seek to make your lives such. I could mention many reasons—I will only give you one or two.

The first is, if you do not live like this, you will make your fellow members who are innocent of your sin, suffer. This ought to be a very convincing motive. If a Christian man could dishonor himself and bear the blame alone, why he might put up with it, but you cannot! I say, Sir, if you are seen intoxicated, or if you are known to fall into some sin of the flesh, you will make the life of every poor girl in the Church harder than it is. And every poor young man who has to put up with persecution will feel that you have put a sting into the arrows of the wicked which could not otherwise have been there. You sin against the congregation of God’s people!

I know there are some of you here that have to suffer a good deal for Christ’s sake. The jeer rings in your ears from morning to night and you learn to put up with it manfully. But it is very hard when they can say to you, “Look at So-and-So—he is a Church member! Look at what he did— you are *all* a parcel of hypocrites!” Now, my dear Friends, you know that is not true! You know that there are many in our churches of whom the world is not worthy—the excellent, the devout, the Christ-like. Do not

sin, then, for their sakes, lest you make them to be grieved and sorely vexed.

Again, do you not see how you make your Lord to suffer, for they do not lay your sins at *your* door merely, but they say that springs from your *religion*. If they would impute the folly to the fool I might not care! But they impute it to the wisdom which must have made that fool wise if he could have learned. They will lay it to my door—that does not matter much—I have long lost my character! But I cannot bear it should be laid at Christ’s door—at the door of the Gospel.

When I said just now that I had lost my character, I meant just this— that the world loathes me and I would not have it do otherwise! So let it, I say—there is no love lost between us. If the world hates Christ’s minister, he can only say he desires that he may never inherit the curse of those who love the world, “in whom the love of the Father is not.” Yet it has ever been the lot of the true Christian minister to be the butt of slander and, nevertheless, to glory in the Cross with all its shame.

But I know, dear Friends, you would not, any of you, wish that I should bear the reproach of your sins and yet I have to do it very often—not very often for many, but for some. There are those, of whom I might tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the Cross of Christ. And some others whom we would pluck out of the fire, hating the garment spotted with the flesh—they bring sad dishonor upon us, upon the ministry— upon the Gospel and upon Christ Himself. You do not want to do that! At least, I hope you do not. Then let your conversation be such as becomes the Gospel of Christ!

And then, remember, dear Friends, unless your conversation is such, you will pull down all the witness that you have ever borne for Christ. How can your Sunday school children believe what you tell them when they see your actions contradict your teaching? How can your own children at home believe in your religion when they see the godlessness of your life? The men at the factory will not believe in your going to Prayer Meeting when they see you walking inconsistently among them. Oh, the great thing the Church needs is more holiness! The worst enemies of the Church are not the infidels—really, one does not know who the infidels are nowadays—they are so small a fry and so few of them, that one would have to hunt to find them out!

No, the worst enemies of the Church are the hypocrites, the formalists, the mere professors, the inconsistent walkers. You, if there are any such here—you pull down the walls of Jerusalem, you open the gates to her foes and, as much as lies in you, you serve the devil! May God forgive you! May Christ forgive you! May you be washed from this atrocious sin! May you be brought humbly to the foot of the Cross to accept mercy, which, until now, you have rejected! It is shocking to think how persons dare to remain members of Christian churches and even to enter the pulpit when they are conscious that their private life is foul! Oh, how can they do it?

How is it that their hearts have grown so hard? What? Has the devil bewitched them? Has he turned them away from being men and made them as devilish as himself that they should dare to pray in public and to sit at the sacramental table and to administer ordinances while their hands are foul and their hearts unclean, and their lives are full of sin? I charge you, if there are any of you whose lives are not consistent, give up your profession, or else make your lives what they should be!

May the eternal Spirit, who still winnows His Church, blow away the chaff and heave only the good golden wheat upon the floor! And if you know yourselves to be living in any sin, may God help you to mourn over it, to loathe it, to go to Christ about it tonight—to take hold of Him, to wash His feet with your tears, to repent unfeignedly—and then to begin anew in His strength a life which shall be such as becomes the Gospel. I think I hear some ungodly person here saying, “Well I do not make any profession, I am all right.”

Now, listen, dear Friend, listen! I have got a word for you. A man is brought up before the magistrates and he says, “Well, I never made any profession of being an honest man.” “Oh,” says the magistrate, “there is six months for you then.” You see, he is a villain outright! And you that say “Oh, I never made any profession,” why, by putting yourselves on*that* ground, you place yourselves among the condemned ones! But some people make a boast of it. “I never made a profession.” Never made a profession of doing your duty to your Maker? Never made a profession of being obedient to the God in whose hands your breath is? Never made a profession of being obedient to the Gospel?

Why, it will be very short work with you, when you come to be tried at last. There will need to be no witnesses, for you never made a profession— you never pretended to be right. What would you think of a man who said, “Well, I never made a profession of speaking the truth.” “Well,” says another, “I never made a profession of being chaste.” Why, you would say, “Let us get out of this fellow’s company, because evidently nothing but evil can come from him for he is not good enough even to make a profession!”

Now I put that strongly that you may remember it! Will you go home and just meditate on this—“I never made a profession of being saved. I never made a profession of repenting of my sins and therefore I am every day making a profession of being God’s enemy—of being impenitent, of being unbelieving! And when the devil comes to look for his own he will know me, for I make a profession of being one of his by not making a

profession of being one of Christ’s” ?

The fact is, I pray God to bring us all here first, to be Christ’s, and then to make a profession of it. Oh that your heart might be washed in Jesus’ blood and then, having given it to Christ, give it to Christ’s people! The Lord bless these words of mine for Jesus’ sake. Amen.

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**÷Php 1.29**

CHRIST’S MOTIVE AND OURS  
NO. 2232

**A SERMON INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S-DAY, NOVEMBER 29, 1891,  
*DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“For your sakes.”***2Co 8:9***.  
“For His sake.”***Php 1:29***.***

The true test of any action lies in its motive. Many a deed which seems to be glorious is really mean and ignoble because it is done with a base intention. While other actions which appear to be poor and paltry, if we truly understood them, would be seen to be full of the glory and beauty of a noble purpose. The mainspring of a watch is the most important part of it. The spring of an action is everything. My sermon from these two texts will be on the motive which inspired Christ’s redeeming work and the motive which should inspire our service for Him. He *did all* for our sakes—we should *do all* for His sake. Fix your attention, then, chiefly, not on the deed, but on the *motive* which is its root.

The less of self in any effort, the nobler it is. A great work, undertaken and completed from selfish motives, is much less praiseworthy than the feeble endeavor put forth to help other people. Selfishness is, perhaps, the worst of all meanness, but *spiritual* selfishness is the form of the evil most to be dreaded. With Christ there was no self-seeking. Not for Himself did He come to earth—not for Himself did He suffer. He lived for others and died for others. “For you know the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you, through His poverty, might be rich.” In this glorious unselfishness Christ is not only our Savior, He is also our Example. As He did not live for self, we, too, must learn to deny ourselves and live like He. It is in living and acting, “for His sake,” that we shall most truly “follow His steps.”

We are often told, in these days, that we should live for the good of others, and we ought to heed the call. But there is so little in our fellow men to call forth the spirit of self-sacrifice that if we have no higher motive, we shall soon become tired of our efforts on their behalf. The true way is to live for *Christ* and then, “for His sake,” seek to save our fellow men. With such a constraining power we shall not be weary in well-doing, for though men may fail us, and frequent discouragement meet us in our toil, our impelling force will always be the same. As we whisper it to ourselves again and again, “for His sake,” we shall be made strong to do or to suffer.

If you thus go forth to the service of each day, “for His sake,” realizing that He, “for your sakes,” gave Himself to toil and agony, and even to death, itself, you will daily grow into sympathy with Christ. His Divine compassion for men will take hold upon you—you will be lifted up above the life of the world and, as you go about doing good, you will be able to touch the sorrow of the earth with a tender hand. You will grow like He you serve.

I have heard of a man who lived in a certain town and while he lived, was greatly misunderstood. It was known that he had a large income, yet he lived a miserly life, and loud were the murmurs at the scanty help he gave to those around him. He stinted himself in many ways and hoarded his money. But when he died, the popular verdict was reversed, for *then* the motive of all his economy was manifested. He left his fortune to build a reservoir and an aqueduct, to bring a constant supply of pure water to the town where he had been despised and misunderstood! This was the chief need of the people and for a long time they had suffered much from drought and disease because of the scanty water supply. All the years that they had misjudged him, he was silently and unselfishly living for their sakes. When they discovered his motive, it was too late to do anything for him further than to hand down to future generations the memory of his noble and generous deed. But *we* can do much, “for His sake,” who has brought to us the *living water* and who, though He died for us, is now alive, again, and will live forevermore. If He thus loved me, and lived for me, nothing that I can do is too much for Him—

***“When often, like a wayward child,  
I murmur at His will,  
Then this sweet word, ‘For Jesus’ sake,’  
My restless heart can still.  
I bow my head and gently led,  
His easy yoke I take—  
And all the day, and all the way,  
An echo in my heart shall say—  
‘For Jesus sake!’”***

Without dwelling on the immediate connection of the words which I have chosen from two familiar and beautiful verses, I would, with these two texts, weave a fabric of love. See what Jesus did for us and then think what we can do for Jesus. “For your sakes” Christ did His deeds of love. “For His sake” we are called upon to live and labor among the sons of men. May His love enkindle ours!

**I.**First, let us consider THE MOTIVE OF CHRIST’S WORK. “*For your sakes*.” As many of you as have believed in Christ Jesus may know that, “*for your sake*s,” the Lord of Glory stooped to be a suffering, dying Man.

In meditating on the motive that moved the Lord Jesus to come to your rescue, consider, first, *the august Person*who undertook your salvation and died, “for your sakes.” He was God. “He thought it not robbery to be equal with God.” He made the heavens. “Without Him was not anything made that was made.” The angels delighted to do Him homage! Every seraph’s wing would fly at His bidding—all the host of Heaven worshipped at His feet. All the powers of Nature were under His control. He needed *nothing* to make Him glorious—all things were His and the power to make more than all! He might truly say, “If I were hungry, I would not tell you: for the world is Mine and the fullness thereof.”

Hymned day without night by all the sacred choristers, He did not lack for praise. Nor did He lack for servants—legions of angels were always ready to do His commands, hearkening unto the voice of His word. It was this God, this Ever-Blessed One who was, from eternity with the Father, and in whom the Father had infinite delight, who looked upon men with the eye of love! He that was born in Bethlehem’s manger was the Infinite as well as the Infant. And He that lived, here, the life of a peasant, toiling and suffering, was that same God who made the heavens and the earth, but who deigned to be Incarnate for our sakes. Well might Isaiah, in his prophetic vision, proclaim the royal titles of the “Child” who was to be born and the “Son” who, in the fullness of time, would be given to us and for us—“The government shall be upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.”

Let this Truth of God sink into your souls, that it was *God* who came from Heaven, “for your sakes.” It was no inferior being, no one like yourselves, but it was very God of very God who loved you with an everlasting and infinite affection! I have often turned that thought over in my mind, but I have never been able to express it as I have wished. If I were told that all the sons of men cared for me, that would be but as a drop in a bucket compared with Jehovah, Himself, regarding me! If it were said that all the princes of the earth had fallen at some poor man’s feet and laid aside their dignities that they might relieve his necessities, it would be counted condescending kindness—but such an act would not be worthy to be spoken of in comparison with that infinite condescension and unparalleled love which brought the Savior from the skies to rescue and redeem such worthless rebels as we were! It is not possible that all the condescension of all the kind and compassionate men who have ever lived should be more than as a small grain that could not turn the scale compared with the everlasting hills of the Savior’s wondrous love!

Think, too, of *the insignificant clients* on whom all this wealth of affection was poured. As you remember the Person who came here, “for your sakes,” and then, wonderful stoop! consider who you are—who *we* are— for whose sakes He died, do not our hearts melt at the thought? Brothers and Sisters, if we truly know ourselves, we have a very poor opinion of ourselves when compared with Christ! Humility has been rightly said to be a correct estimate of ourselves. What were we but the most insignificant creatures? If our whole race had been blotted out, there need have been no gap in the creation of God, or if there had seemed to be a void for a moment, He had but to speak the word and myriads of creatures, prompt to obey His will, would have filled up the space! How was it that Jesus, the Son of God, should suffer for such insignificant worms—such insects of an hour as we are?

But we are not only insignificant, we are also wicked. “We have sinned with our fathers. We have committed iniquity, we have done wickedly.” Even the Lord’s children have to confess, “All we, like sheep, have gone astray; we have turned, everyone, to his own way.” But, oh, wonder of love, they can add, “and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all!” As sinners, we deserve nothing but God’s thunderbolts, yet, trusting in His dear Son, we receive nothing but His mercy! Having desperately sinned and broken all His Commandments, if He had said, “Perish forever, you guilty rebels,” He would have spoken only the sentence that strict justice required. Instead of that, He said to His Only-Begotten, “You shall die that they may not die. I will take You, My Son, My Isaac, and offer You upon the altar of sacrifice that through Your death men may live.” This is, indeed, a marvel of Grace! This must be one of the things the angels desire to look into! Our thoughts cannot compass this wondrous work, nor can our words describe it!

Many of us, also, were not only sinful, as the whole race is, but we were peculiarly sinful. Some of us feel inclined to dispute with Saul of Tarsus for the title, “chief of sinners.” It will always remain a wonder to me that the Son of God should have condescended to die *for me*. Were you a drunk and has the Holy Spirit shown you that Jesus died for you? And are you now rejoicing that you are washed in His precious blood? Were you one of the women who, like Mary Magdalene, were rightly called sinners? And have you, like she, washed your robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb? Then you are constrained to exclaim with wonder and gratitude—

***“Depth of mercy, can there be  
Mercy still reserved for me?  
Can my God His wrath forbear?  
Me, the chief of sinners, spare?”***

I fancy that I hear one and another of you adoring God’s matchless mercy and saying, with wonder and surprise, “Is it really true that mercy is brought *to me* by God’s own Son? Could nothing less than the death of the Only-Begotten save my sinful soul? Did He condescend to *die* for *me*? Well may I admire the Grace thus manifested and raise my glad song of thanksgiving to Him who has done such great things for me!” Each of us can see some peculiarity in his own case. Some of us have not offended so grievously in outward conduct as others have done, but, then, we had better instruction in our childhood and, consequently, our sins were *doubly* heinous, for we sinned against light and knowledge! Some of us have had to violate our conscience terribly in order to sin as we have done. It may be that some of you lived 40 or 50 years as unbelievers and yet, at last, you were brought to bow at the dear feet that were pierced for you. Oh, I am sure you bless His name that ever He shed His blood for you—and I dare say you feel as I do, sometimes, that none in the Glory Land will be able to raise such a song of adoring gratitude as you will when all Heaven shall ring with the grand chorus of those who have been redeemed from among men!

Thus have we considered, first, the august Person who accomplished the great work of our redemption. And, secondly, the poor sinful creatures for whose sake He suffered.

Now let me invite you to consider *the wondrous work* which this master motive inspired. “For your sakes” God became Incarnate—the Son of God took into union with Himself *our nature*—without which He could not have suffered and died. We read concerning Him, “Being found in fashion as a Man, He humbled Himself.” If we had never heard of that fact, before, our ears and heart would be astonished at the words! At the end of each clause I feel inclined to pause, and say, “Look! Look! Was there ever such a wonder as this—the Infinite became Incarnate! He ate and He hungered! He drank and He thirsted! He needed to be housed from the wintry storm, but He “had not where to lay His head.” He wanted human sympathy, but, “all His disciples forsook Him and fled.” He was the “Man of Sorrows, and acquainted with grief,” and all, “for your sakes.”

The words that follow our text tell us that, “He became poor.” You know that, in this world, the poverty of a man is usually reckoned in proportion to the position of affluence from which he has come down. One who was born a pauper is not relatively so poor as the man who was once a king, but has been reduced to beggary, for in the one case there is no experience of the luxury which riches can command, and in the other no adaptability to the shifts and privations of those who have always been in poverty. When the Christ of God, the King of Kings, the Lord of Lords, was forsaken by His Father, deserted by His friends, and left alone to suffer, “for your sakes,” that was the direst poverty that was ever known!

See your Lord beneath the olives of Gethsemane! Bloody sweat falls to the ground as, being in an agony, He prays more earnestly—“If it is possible, let this cup pass from Me”—but it must not pass from Him. “For your sakes” He must drink it! “For your sakes” every bitter drop must be drained! Then see Him as He stands, without an advocate, before Herod, Pilate and Caiaphas—“taken from prison and from judgment.” Mark His sufferings as they hound Him through the streets of Jerusalem, along the Sorrowful Way! Behold Him as, at last, they fasten His hands and His feet to the cruel wood and lift Him up ‘twixt earth and Heaven, to suffer the death of the Cross! Let those who will, depreciate the sufferings of Christ—I believe there was in the God-Man, Christ Jesus, an infinite capacity for suffering and that His body, so wondrously formed, was able to endure and did endure, infinitely more than human thought can imagine—while, at the same time, the sufferings of His soul were the very soul of His sufferings! Well did the Spirit-taught poet, Joseph Hart, write—

***“Much we talk of Jesus’ blood,  
But how little’s understood!  
Of His sufferings, so intense,  
Angels have no perfect sense.  
Who can rightly comprehend  
Their beginning or their end?  
‘Tis to God and God alone  
That their weight is fully known.”***

All this Christ suffered, “ *for your sakes*.” What love and gratitude ought to fill your heart as you think of all that Jesus bore on your behalf! If you had a wife who, when you lay sick, watched you with such anxious care that she undermined her own health and brought herself down to the grave through her devotion to you, oh, with what love you think of her, that she should suffer even unto death for your sake! If you were ever delivered from a watery grave, and the brave fellow who rescued you, himself, sank back into the water and was drowned, you can never forgot his noble self-sacrifice, but you will always cherish his memory, for he died for your sake!

There is a story I have often read, of an American gentleman who was accustomed to go frequently to a tomb and plant fresh flowers. When someone asked why he did so, he said that when the time came for him to go to the war, he was detained by some business and the man who lay beneath the sod became his substitute, performed his duty and died in the battle. Over that carefully-kept grave, he had the words inscribed, “He died for me!” There is something melting in the thought of another dying for you—how much more melting is it when that One is the Christ of Calvary! Why, you feel, “Here is One of whom I never deserved anything, taking my place! Here is One whom I have badly treated and against whom I have offended—yet *He*suffered for me—He took my place, He bore my sins, He *died* for me! Therefore I will live for Him. I will love Him. I will give myself wholly and unreservedly to Him and to His blessed service.” “For your sakes” Christ died. If you believe that, you cannot help loving and serving Him! It is an old theme which I am bringing before your minds, but it is the grandest theme that ever inspired a mortal tongue, or stirred a human heart!

I want you that love the Lord to consider, next, *the comprehensive motive*for which He worked the wondrous work which I have so imperfectly described—“For your sakes.” I would have you remember that everything He was and everything He did was, “for your sakes.” “For your sakes” the midnight prayer upon the bleak mountain’s side. “For your sakes” the scoffing and the jeering that followed Him wherever He went. “For your sakes” the agony in the garden. “For your sakes” the flagellation of the Roman lash. “For your sakes” He gave His back to the smiters and His cheeks to them that plucked off the hair. “For your sakes” the shame and the spitting. “For your sakes,” He “became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross.” Say it, my Brothers and Sisters! Let your hearts say it now and wet the words with tears—“For our sakes He suffered all this.”

Think of Him for a moment as He is taken down from the Cross. In fair white linen they wrap that blessed body, covered with its own blood. I think I see Mary Magdalene and the other Mary, and Joseph of Arimathea, looking on that poor mangled frame. Those dear eyes, once so bright with love, now closed in death. Those wonder-working hands that multiplied the loaves and fishes, now stiff and cold. And those blessed feet that trod the sea, now all lifeless. O Joseph, and you, Mary, this was for you—“for your sakes”! But also for mine and for the sake of all my Brothers and Sisters who are resting by faith on that finished Sacrifice! They laid the dear body in Joseph’s new tomb, the virgin sepulcher wherein never man had lain, and there they left our great Champion sleeping a while in the darkness of death. As He lay there, it was “for your sakes.”

Yes, and blessed be His name, when the appointed morning came, He lived again, the stone was rolled away from the sepulcher and He came forth from the tomb! It was, “for your sakes,” He rose. The 40 days He lived on earth were “for your sakes.” And when from off the brow of Olivet He ascended to His Father’s right hand, it was, “for your sakes.” He said to His disciples, “I go to prepare a place for you.” There, seated on His Throne of Glory, He holds the scepter and rules all worlds, “for your sakes.” There as an Intercessor, He pleads with God, “for your sakes.” There is not a gem in His crown but it is there, “for your sakes.” There is not a jewel on His breastplate but it is there, “for your sakes.” From head to foot He is what He is, “for your sakes.” And when He shall come a second time—as soon He will—to judge the world in righteousness, and to “gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of Heaven to the other” to usher in the reign of truth and establish His Throne forever, it will be all, “for your sakes,” who have believed on His name! “For all things are for your sakes, that the abundant Grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God.”

We might thus continue, but we will not. May God make this thought burn in your heart—All that Christ has done for us is for our sakes! I suppose it is because we are such fallen creatures that these considerations do not move us as they should. Granite is wax compared with our hearts! Oh, that we did but feel the fire of Jesus’ love! Like coals of juniper which have a most vehement flame, our hearts should burn within us while we talked of that dear love which brought Him to the grave and took Him from the grave to the heavens—and shall bring Him back from the heavens to take His people up to be with Him where He is and to live with Him forever!

**II.**Having meditated on the motive which moved Christ in the work He accomplished for us, let us consider THE MOTIVE WHICH SHOULD INSPIRE ALL OUR SERVICE FOR HIM—“*For His sake*.”

This second text is in the Epistle to the Philippians, first chapter, and 29th verse. “Unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake.” What are we that we should be allowed the high honor of suffering, “for His sake”? It is a great privilege to do, or to be, or to bear *anything* for Him. Our suffering can never be worth a thought when compared with His—and any sacrifice that we could offer, “for His sake,” would be small, indeed, when contrasted with the infinite Sacrifice that He has already made for our sakes. If you are rejoicing in the fact that Christ died for you, it will be very easy to prompt in your hearts the desire to do something, “for His sake.”

I find in Scripture that the thought expressed in the words, “for His sake,” may be enlarged and assume six or seven phases. For instance, in the Gospel of Matthew, fifth chapter, and 10th verse, our Lord puts it, “*for righteousness’ sake*”—“Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness’ sake.” I understand, then, that if a man suffers as a Christian for doing that which is right, he is suffering for Christ’s sake. If he cannot and will not act disreputably and contrary to the commands of God, as others do, the suffering which he willingly bears, the loss which he cheerfully incurs because of his uprightness, is so much borne for Christ’s sake.

If a man is out-and-out righteous in this world, he will be sure to be pointed at by certain persons as an oddity. He cannot lie, as others lie, nor practice tricks in trade as others do—nor frequent their places of amusement, nor indulge in their lusts and, therefore, straightway they say—“He is a hypocrite! He is a cant!” And as they cannot understand the principle which inspires him, they impute to him motives which he abhors. This is how they talk—“He is doing it for the sake of being thought a saint,” “He is paid for it.” “He has some sinister motive or other.” Or else they sum up the whole matter by declaring, “He is a downright impostor.”

Now, if in any of these ways you are made to suffer for that which is right—for speaking the truth and acting the truth—never mind, Brothers and Sisters, but rather rejoice that you are permitted to suffer for Christ’s sake! Say within yourself, “If my dear Lord lost all things for me, I may well lose some things for Him. If He was stripped to the last rag for me, I may well be content to be poor, ‘for His sake.’” Set your face like a flint and say, “We can be poor, but we cannot be dishonest. We can suffer, but we cannot sin.” Many men say, when we talk to them thus, “But, you know, we must live.” I do not see that there is any necessity for your living if you cannot live honestly. It would be better to die than to do wrong— any amount of suffering would be better than that we should deny our Lord and Master! Remember Peter’s words, “If you suffer for righteousness’ sake, happy are you: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled; but sanctify the Lord God in your hearts,” or, as the Revised Version has the last clause, “Sanctify in your hearts Christ as Lord.”

In the Word of God, yet another form is given to this suffering or doing for Christ’s sake, and it assumes this shape—“*for the Gospel’s sake*.” In His first Epistle to the Corinthians, ninth chapter, and 23rd verse, Paul writes of what he did, “for the Gospel’s sake,” and our Lord speaks of some who, when there was persecution, “for the Word’s sake,” were offended. Now, if you are put to any shame for the sake of the Gospel, you suffer, “for His sake.” And if you labor to spread the Gospel and publish the Word of God—if it is your daily endeavor to tell to others God’s way of salvation, you are doing something, “for His sake,” for the Gospel and Christ are so wrapped up together that what is done for the Gospel’s sake, is done, “for His sake.”

Yet another view of the subject is given to us when the Apostle, in his letter to the Colossians, first chapter, and 24th verse, speaks of certain saints honoring Christ by suffering, “*for His body’s sake*, which is the Church.” That is another form of rendering homage to Christ and doing what we do, “for His sake.” O Brothers and Sisters, we ought to do much more than we do for God’s people! They are the body of Christ. We should, everyone of us, feel it an honor to be allowed to unloose the laces of His shoes and to wash His feet—well, poor saints are Christ’s feet! When you are feeding them, you are feeding Him, for certainly, if Paul, in persecuting them, persecuted Christ, it is clear that you, when you are helping them for Christ’s sake, are doing it for Him! Oh, lay out your lives for His Church’s sake! His dear people deserve it at your hands and their Lord deserves it, too.

Then, again, Paul, in His second Epistle to Timothy, second chapter, and 10th verse, uses the phrase, “f*or the elect’s sakes*,” by which I think he comprehends, not only those who are in the Church as yet, but those who are to be. Happy is that man who spends all his time in seeking out poor wanderers, that he may bring in God’s elect! Happy is he who lays all his talents and all his strength upon the altar of God, consecrated to this aim—that he may find out the chosen of the Father, the redeemed by the blood of Jesus and, in the hand of the Spirit, be the instrument of bringing them back to their Father’s house from which they have wandered. When you serve Christ’s people, always do it, “for His sake.”

Further, we have the expression, “ *the Kingdom of God’s sake*,” when our Master tells Peter, as recorded in the 18th chapter of Luke, 29th verse, that no one who has left anything for Him and for it, shall fail of present and eternal reward. This is another way in which we can serve Christ our King, by being willing to sacrifice “house, or parents, or brothers and sisters, or wife, or children, for the Kingdom of God’s sake.”

There is one other remarkable expression used by John in his second Epistle, at the second verse. He there speaks of something done, “*for the Truth’s sak*e, which dwells in us.” Ah, it is not merely the Gospel we are to defend, but we are to defend that living Seed which the Holy Spirit has put into us, that Truth of God which we have tasted, handled and felt— that theology which is not that of the Book, only, but that which is written on the fleshy tablets of our hearts. I hope there are many of you who keep back your hand from sin because the Truth that is in you will not let you touch it—and who put forth *both* your hands to serve the Lord because the Truth that is in you compels you to it! The new nature, that living, incorruptible Seed, constrains you and you judge that if Christ died for you, you must live and, if necessary, you will die for Him. I would ask great things from those for whom Christ has done great things. When you make sin little, and Hell little, you also make Christ little—and then, in consequence, you think you owe Him but little and you will render Him but little. But when you feel the weight of sin and see the preciousness of your Redeemer and feel, in some measure, the obligations under which you are to Him, then you say—

***“Oh! what shall I do, my Savior to praise.”***

There have been, in the Christian Church, at different times, men and women of highly consecrated spirit who seem to have realized what their Lord expected of them. I dare say that they were very dissatisfied with themselves, but as we read their biographies, we are charmed with their consecration of spirit. The Truth of God and especially the Christ, who *is* the Truth, had such influence over their lives, that they truly lived, “for His sake.” May we have many such in our ranks! I do not know whether it may be the duty of any of you to go to foreign lands, “for His sake.” I only hope there are some young men here who will offer themselves for missionary service, for blessed are they that bear the Gospel into “the regions beyond,” carrying their lives in their hands! They shall stand very near to the eternal Throne of God in the day when the King rewards His faithful servants.

I do not know whether there may be any of our Sisters here who are bound to consecrate their lives to the nursing of the sick where fevers are rife, or where pestilence abounds, but they who can do such service to humanity, for Christ’s sake, shall receive no light word of approbation at the Last Great Day. But, probably, the mass of us will have to abide in our calling and, therefore, I would say, if we must do so, let our life be all, “for His sake.” I would desire never to come to this platform but, “for His sake.” Never to say even a word about the Gospel but, “for His sake.” And you, in your home, dear mother, go and bring up your children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, “for His sake.” Take those dear little ones and present them to Him. Say, “Jesus, I give them to You—accept and save them. I devote them to Your service, as Hannah gave Samuel to the Lord.” Then, “for His sake,” teach them holiness. “For His sake” be patient with them and, “for His sake,” bring them up, always, in the fear of the Lord.

You men of business, go out and labor, “for His sake.” I could almost envy some of you who have acquired an adequate income. Keep the warehouse or shop open, “for His sake,” and give more largely to His cause. And you who are not in a position of competence, but are struggling for your daily bread, “for His sake,” never do a wrong thing. Sometimes, when you are half inclined to yield to the tempter, imagine that your Savior is standing by your side and that He puts His pierced hand upon your shoulder and says, “If you are, indeed, bought with My blood, let there be justice in all your dealings with your fellows. No, more, be generous as well as just, for My sake, for I would have you so act that all men shall know that you are My disciple.”

Perhaps some of you, who profess to be Christians, are living altogether for yourselves, instead of living unto God. When you are at home tonight, sitting quietly in your room, alone, I could half wish that the Lord Jesus would enter and say to you, “I have loved you with an everlasting love, and laid down My life for you. What are you doing for Me in return?” Suppose He looked at you with those gentle, yet heart-searching eyes of His, and you looked into that face which was marred more than any man’s, what would you say? Oh, I think I should have to cover my face for very shame! And yet I am not living in forgetfulness of Him and I am trying to do Him some humble service. But as for those who do nothing, with the exception of sitting to hear sermons, or sometimes dropping in at a Prayer Meeting, or, now and then, giving a little to the cause of God—perhaps as little as they dare—oh, what would they say in His Presence? You will all be in His Presence, soon! Perhaps sooner than you expect—and among the sorrows that will trouble you on your death-bed, if you are unfaithful to your Lord, will be this—that you have done so little for Him while you had the opportunity.

When sitting by the side of one of our dying members, a poor weak girl, wasted by consumption, I was charmed as she whispered in my ear that when she was brought to Jesus, she had such joy that she had striven to do something for Him but mourned that she could accomplish so little. Poor child! She tried to teach a class of boys and half killed herself in the struggle to keep them quiet. She felt constrained, by love to her Lord, to try to do something for Him, and as there happened to be nothing else to do, she began to teach some rough children who were far too wild for her. But she did not regret it. Oh, no! I am sure, if she could be raised up, she would take to such work, again, “for His sake.” And I am sure that any of you, if you have given of your substance, or given of your time, or given of your abilities, “for His sake,” will never have to say, when you are lying as she was, and breathing out your life, “I did too much for my Savior.” You will rather bless His name that He accepted the little that you could do! And like our young Sister, mourn that it is so little compared with what He deserves!

I therefore say to each one of you, Brothers and Sisters—If you have, indeed, been washed in the blood of Christ, spend yourself for Him—do not mock Him. If it was in play that you were redeemed and if the Crucifixion was but a sport, then go and trifle with the service of Christ. But if, indeed, the blood-mark of a real Savior is upon you and you have been washed in the fountain filled with His precious blood, go and live really useful, consecrated lives into which you shall throw your whole heart and soul and strength, “for His sake!”

Who shall pile a monument worthy of the Savior who did so much, “for your sakes?” Who shall compose a song sweet enough for the Christ of God who came for our redemption? Who shall sound the trumpets loudly enough for Immanuel, who, though He was rich, yet for our sakes became poor? Who shall bring offerings of gold and frankincense rich enough for Him who gave up all for His people? Crown Him, you angels! You seraphim, adore Him! O God, You alone can give Him the recompense of honor which He merits! Glory be to His name forever! Let us take as our motto, from now on, these words, “For His sake.” “For His sake,” let us put up with poverty, counting it to be richest to be poor if He would have it so. “For His sake,” let us cheerfully endure bodily sufferings, being glad if they make us more useful for Him. “For His sake,” let us live in toil and die in obscurity, if so we can best glorify Him. Let our song be that of the gifted songstress, of whose hymn I have already quoted one verse—

***“In suffering sore, or toilsome task,  
His burden light I’ll bear;  
‘For Jesus’ sake’ shall sweeten all,  
Till His bright home I share.  
And then this song more sweet, more strong, In Heaven my harp shall wake—  
Led all the way, till that glad day  
Eternally, my heart shall say,  
‘For Jesus sake.’”***

I will close when I have only added that if any of you have not at present any interest in this sacrifice and this service of which my two texts speak, I have just this word for you. It is, at least, a blessing that you are still permitted to listen to the Gospel. Let me very briefly tell once more, “the old, old story of Jesus and His love.” Jesus Christ died in the place of sinners. We deserved to be punished for our sins. Under the Law of Moses there was no pardon for sin except through the blood of a sacrifice. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is *the one Sacrifice* for sins forever, of which the thousands of bullocks and lambs slain under the Law were but types. Every man who trusts to the death of the Lamb of God may know that Jesus Christ was punished in His place, so that God can be just and yet forgive the guilty. He can, without violating His justice, remit sin and pardon iniquity because a Substitute has been found whose death has an infinite value because of the Divine Nature of the Sufferer. He has borne the iniquities of all who trust Him. “He that believes on the Son has everlasting life.” Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall go your way a saved soul, even though you came into this house steeped in sin, or through terrible conviction on the very verge of despair. God grant that many of you may trust in Jesus this very hour, “for His sake!” Amen.

***PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—2 Corinthians 8.*HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—282, 296, 709.**

**TO THE READERS OF MY SERMONS:**  
MY DEAR FRIENDS—This morning I read in*The Times* that “Mr. Spurgeon is *rapidly* recovering.” These words exactly describe what I am *not* doing. The symptoms are the same as when I was at home. I am tossed up and down upon the waves of my disease and what is thought progress, today, is gone tomorrow. I have seasons of utter prostration. Always weak, it seems at times that I have no strength whatever and must altogether collapse. *I shall recover*, for this is the tenor of the prayers which our God has so far answered, but there are no traces or signs of anything *rapid* about my condition. *Emphatically*, any advance I make is *the slowest of all slow things*. I write this at once to prevent disappointment to sanguine friends. I know not why I should be the object of so much tender sympathy, but as I am thus privileged I would have a sensitive regard for the feelings of such benefactors and warn them against statements for which there is no basis in truth. Their friend remains feeble and has no hasty recovery to expect. Please continue prayer. Have great patience. Relieve me of anxiety as to the institutions and praise God for what He has already done.  
Your deeply-indebted servant, for Christ’s sake,  
Mentone, November 21, 1891,  
***C. H. SPURGEON.***

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**÷Php 2.1**

CONSOLATION IN CHRIST  
NO. 348

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, DECEMBER 2, 1860, *BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT EXETER HALL, STRAND**

***“If there is therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy.”*** Php 2:1***.***

THE language of man has received a new coinage of words since the time of his perfection in Eden. Adam could scarce have understood the word *consolation* for the simple reason that he did not understand in Eden the meaning of the word *sorrow*. O how has our language been swollen through the floods of our griefs and tribulations! It was not sufficiently wide and wild for man when he was driven out of the Garden into the wide, wide world. After he had once eaten of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, as his knowledge was extended so must the language be by which he could express his thoughts and feelings.

But, my Hearers, when Adam first needed the word *consolation*, there was a time when he could not find the fair jewel itself. Until that hour when the first Promise was uttered, when the Seed of the woman was declared as being the coming Man who should bruise the serpent’s head Adam might masticate and digest the word sorrow. But he could never season and flavor it with the hope or thought of consolation—or if the hope and thought might sometimes flit across his mind like a lightning flash in the midst of the tempest’s dire darkness—yet it must have been too transient, too unsubstantial, to have made glad his heart, or to soothe his sorrows.

Consolation is the dropping of a gentle dew from Heaven on desert hearts beneath. True consolation, such as can reach the heart, must be one of the choicest gifts of Divine mercy. And surely we are not erring from sacred Scripture when we avow that in its full meaning, consolation can be found nowhere except in Christ who has come down from Heaven and who has again ascended to Heaven to provide strong and everlasting consolation for those whom He has bought with His blood.

You will remember, my dear Friends, that the Holy Spirit, during the present dispensation, is revealed to us as the Comforter. It is the Spirit’s business to console and cheer the hearts of God’s people. He does convict of sin. He does illuminate and instruct. But still the main part of His business lies in making glad the hearts of the renewed, in confirming the weak and lifting up all those that are bowed down. Whatever the Holy Spirit may not be, He is evermore the Comforter to the Church and this age is peculiarly the dispensation of the Holy Spirit in which Christ cheers us not by His personal presence, as He shall do by-and-by, but by the indwelling and constant abiding of the Holy Spirit the Comforter.

Now, mark—as the Holy Spirit is the Comforter, Christ is the Comfort.

The Holy Spirit consoles, but Christ *is the Consolation.*If I may use the figure, the Holy Spirit is the Physician, but Christ is the Medicine. *He* heals the wound, but it is by applying the holy ointment of Christ’s name and grace. He takes not of His own things, but of the things of Christ. We are not consoled today by new revelations, but by the old Revelation explained, enforced and lit up with new splendor by the Presence and power of the Holy Spirit the Comforter. If we give to the Holy Spirit the Greek name of*Paraclet*e, as we sometimes do, then our heart confers on our blessed Lord Jesus the title of the *Paraclesis.* If the one is the Comforter the other is the Comfort.

I shall try this morning, first, to show how *Christ in His varied positions is the Consolation of the children of God in their varied trials.* Then we shall pass on, secondly, to observe that *Christ in His unchanging nature is the Consolation to the children of God in their continual sorrows. And* lastly, I shall close by dwelling awhile upon the question as to *whether Christ is a consolation to us—*putting it personally, “Is Christ a present and available consolation for me.”

**I.**First, CHRIST IN HIS VARIED POSITIONS IS THE CONSOLATION FOR THE MANY ILLS OF THE CHILDREN OF GOD.  
Our Master’s history is a long and eventful one. But every step of it may yield abundant comfort to the children of God. If we track Him from the highest Throne of Glory to the Cross of deepest woe and then through the grave up again the shining steeps of Heaven and onward through His mediatorial kingdom, on to the day when he shall deliver up the Throne to God even our Father—throughout every part of that wondrous pathway there may be found the flowers of consolation growing plenteously and the children of God have but to stoop and gather them. “*All*His paths drop fatness, all His garments which He wears in His different offices smell of myrrh and aloes and cassia, out of the ivory palaces whereby He makes His people glad.”  
To begin at the beginning—there are times when we look upon the past with the deepest grief. The withering of Eden’s flowers has often caused a fading in the garden of our souls. We have mourned exceedingly that we have been driven out to till the ground with the sweat of our brow—that the curse should have glanced on us through the sin of our first parent and we have been ready to cry, “Woe was the day in which our parent stretched forth his hand to touch the forbidden fruit.” Would to God that he had rested in unsullied purity, that we his sons and daughters might have lived beneath an unclouded sky, might never have mourned the ills of bodily pain or of spiritual distress.  
To meet this very natural source of grief, I bid you consider Christ in old eternity. Open now the eye of your faith, Believer and see Christ as your Everlasting Covenant-head stipulating to redeem you even before you had become a bond-slave, bound to deliver even before you had worn the chain. Think, I pray you, of the eternal council in which your restoration was planned and declared even before the Fall and in which you were established in an eternal salvation even before the necessity of that salvation had begun. O, my Brethren, how it cheers our hearts to think of the anticipating mercy of God! He anticipated our Fall, foreknew the ills which it would bring upon us and provided in His eternal decree of predestinating love an effectual remedy for all our diseases—a certain deliverance from all our sorrows.  
I see You, You fellow of the Eternal, You equal of the Almighty God! Your goings forth were of old. I see You lift Your right hand and engage Yourself to fulfill Your Father’s will—“In the volume of the book it is written of Me, ‘I delight to do Your will, O God.’” I see You forming, signing and sealing that Everlasting Covenant by which the souls of all the redeemed were there and then delivered from the curse and made sure and certain inheritors of Your kingdom and of Your glory. In this respect Christ shines out as the Consolation of His people.  
Again—if ever your minds dwell with sadness upon the fact that we are at this day absent from the Lord because we are present in the body, think of the great Truth that Jesus Christ of old had delights with the sons of men and He delights to commune and have fellowship with His people now. Remember that your Lord and Master appeared to Abraham in the plains of Mamre under the disguise of a pilgrim. Abraham was a pilgrim and Christ, to show His sympathy with His servant, became a pilgrim, too.  
Did He not appear also to Jacob at the brook Jabbok? Jacob was a wrestler and Jesus appears there as a wrestler, too. Did He not stand before Moses under the guise and figure of a flame in the midst of a bush? Was not Moses at the very time the representative of a people who were like a bush burning with fire and yet not consumed? Did He not stand before Joshua—Joshua the leader of Israel’s troops and did He not appear to him as the captain of the Lord’s host? And do you not well remember that when the three holy children walked in the midst of the fiery furnace, *He*was in the midst of the fire, too—not as a king—but as one in the fire with them?  
Cheer then your heart with this consoling inference. If Christ appeared to His servants in the olden time and manifested Himself to them as bone of their bone and flesh of their flesh—in all their trials and their troubles—He will do no less for you today. He will be with you in passing through the fire—He will be your rock, your shield and your high tower. He will be your song, your banner and your crown of rejoicing. Fear not, He who visited His saints of old will surely not be long absent from His children today—His delights are still with His people and still will He walk with us through this weary wilderness. Surely this makes Christ a most blessed Consolation for His Israel.  
And now to pursue the Master’s footsteps as He comes out of the invisible glories of Deity and wears the visible garment of humanity. Let us view the Babe of Bethlehem, the child of Nazareth, the Son of Man. See Him, He is in every respect a man. “Of the substance of His mother” is He made, in the substance of our flesh He suffers. In the trials of our flesh He bows His head—under the weakness of our flesh He prays and in temptation of our flesh He is kept and maintained by the grace within.  
*You*today are tried and troubled and you ask for consolation. What better can be afforded you than what is presented to you in the fact that Jesus Christ is one with you in your nature? That He has suffered all that you are now suffering? That your pathway has been aforetime trod by His sacred foot? That the cup of which you drink is a cup which He has drained to the very bottom? That the river through which you pass is one through which He swam and every wave and billow which rolls over your head did in old time roll over Him?  
Come! Are you ashamed to suffer what your Master suffered? Shall the disciple be above his Master and the servant above his Lord? Shall He die upon a Cross and will not you bear the Cross? Must He be crowned with thorns and shall you be crowned with laurel? Is He to be pierced in hands and feet and are your members to feel no pain? O cast away the fond delusion, I pray you, and look to Him who “endured the Cross, despising the shame,” and be ready to endure and to suffer even as He did.  
And now behold our Master’s humanity. Clothed even as ours has been since the Fall He comes not before us in the purple of a king, in the garb of the rich and the respectable, but He wears a garment in keeping with His apparent origin. He is a carpenter’s son and He wears a garment which becomes His station. View Him, you sons of poverty, as He stands before you in His seamless garment, the common dress of the peasant. And if you have felt this week the load of want—if you have suffered and are suffering this very day the ills connected with poverty, pluck up courage and find a consolation in the fact that Christ was poorer than you are—that He knew more of the bitterness of want than you ever can guess.  
You cannot say, “Foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but I have not where to lay my head,” or if you could go as far as that, you have never known a forty day’s fast. You have *some* comforts left to you— you do know at least the sweet taste of bread to the hungry man and of rest to the weary. But these things were often denied to Him. Look at Him and see if there is not to you comfort in Christ.  
We pass now, O Jesus, from Your robe of poverty to that scene of shame in which Your garments were rent from You and You did hang naked before the sun. Children of God, if there is one place more than another where Christ becomes the joy and comfort of His people, it is where He plunged deepest into the depths of woe. Come, see Him, I pray you, in the garden of Gethsemane. Behold Him as His heart is so full of love that He cannot hold it in—so full of sorrow that it must find a vent. Behold the bloody sweat as it distils from every pore of His body and falls in gouts of gore upon the frozen ground.  
See Him all red with His own blood—wrapped in a bloody mantle of His own gore. He is brought before Herod and Pilate and the Sanhedrim. See Him now as they scourge Him with their knotted whips and afresh bloody Him—as though it were not enough for Him to be dyed once in scarlet— but He must again be enwrapped in purple. See Him, I say, now that they have stripped Him naked. Behold Him as they drive the nails into His hands and into His feet. Look up and see the sorrowful image of your dolorous Lord. O mark Him, as the ruby drops stand on the thorn-crown and make it the blood-red diadem of the King of Misery.  
O see Him as His bones are out of joint and He is poured out like water and brought into the dust of death. “Behold and see, was there ever sorrow like unto His sorrow that is done unto Him?” All you that pass by, draw near and look upon this spectacle of grief. Behold the Emperor of Woe who never had an equal or a rival in His agonies! Come and see Him. And if I read not the words of consolation written in lines of blood all down His side then these eyes have never read a word in any book. If there is not consolation in a murdered Christ, there is no joy, no peace to any heart.  
If in that finished ransom price, if in that efficacious blood, if in that all-accepted sacrifice there is not joy, you harpers of Heaven, there is no joy in you and the right hand of God shall know no pleasures. I am persuaded, Brothers and Sisters, that we have only to sit more at the Cross to be less troubled with our doubts and our fears and our woes. We have but to see *His* sorrows and lose *our*sorrows. We have but to see His wounds and heal our own. If we would live, it must be by contemplation of His death. If we would rise to dignity it must be by considering His humiliation and His sorrow—  
***Lord, Your death and passion give  
Strength and comfort in my need,  
Every hour while here I live,  
On Your love my soul shall feed.”***  
But come, troubled Heart, and follow the dead body of your Master, for though dead, it is as full of consolation as when alive. It is now no more naked, the loving hands of Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus and the Magdalene and the other Mary have wrapped it in cerements and have laid it in the new tomb. Come, saints, not to weep but to dry your tears. You have been all your lifetime subject to fear of death—come, break your bonds asunder, be free from this fear. Where your Master sleeps, you may surely find an easy couch. What more could you desire than to lie upon the bed of your royal Solomon?  
The grave is now no more a charnel-house or a dark prison—*His* having entered it makes it a blessed retiring-room, a sacred house in which the King’s aromas purify their bodies—to make them fit for the embraces of their Lord. It becomes now not the gate of annihilation, but the portal of eternal bliss—a joy to be anticipated, a privilege to be desired. “Fearless we lay us in the tomb and sleep the night away, for You are here to break the gloom and call us back today.”  
I am certain, Brethren, that all the consolations which wise men can ever afford in a dying hour will never be equal to that which is afforded by Jesus Christ ascending from the tomb. The maxims of philosophy, the endearments of affection and the music of hope will be a very poor compensation for the light of Jesus’ grave. Death is the only mourner at Jesus’ tomb and while the whole earth rejoices at the sorrow of its last enemy, I would be all too glad to die that I might know Him and the power of His resurrection.  
Heir of Heaven! If you would be rid once and for all of every doubting thought about the hour of your dissolution, look, I pray you, to Christ risen from the dead. Put your finger into the print of the nails and thrust your hand into His side and be not faithless but believing. He *is*risen, He saw no corruption. The worms could not devour Him and as Jesus Christ has risen from the dead He has become the first fruits of them that slept.  
Inasmuch as He has risen, you shall rise. He has rolled the stone away not for Himself alone, but for you also. He has unwrapped the grave clothes not for His own sake, but for your sake, too. And you shall surely stand in the latter day upon the earth when *He*shall be here and in your flesh you shall see God.  
Time would fail us if we should attempt to track the Master in His glorious pathway after His resurrection. Let it suffice us briefly to observe that having led His disciples out unto a mountain where He had delighted often to commune with them, He was suddenly taken up from them and a cloud received Him out of their sight. We think we may conjecture, by the help of Scripture, what transpired after that cloud had covered Him. Did

not the angels— ***“Bring His chariot from on high  
To bear Him to His Throne,  
Clap their triumphant wings and cry,  
His glorious work is done”?***

Do you not see Him, as he mounts His triumphal chariot—  
***“And angels chant the solemn lay,  
Lift up your heads, you golden gates,  
You everlasting doors give way”?***

Behold angels gazing from the battlements of Heaven asking their comrades who escort the ascending Son of Man, “Who is the King of Glory?” And this time those who accompany the Master sing more sweetly and more loudly than before, while they cry, “The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle! Lift up your heads, O you gates and be you lifted up, you everlasting doors, that the King of Glory may come in.” And now the doors—

***“Loose all their bars of massy light,***

***And wide unfold the radiant scene,”***  
and He enters. “He claims those mansions as His right,” and all the angels rise to “receive the King of Glory in.”

Behold Him as He rides in triumph through Heaven’s streets. See Death and Hell bound at His chariot wheels. Hark to the “Hosannas” of the spirits of the just made perfect! Hear how cherubim and seraphim roll out in thunders their everlasting song—“Glory be unto You. Glory be unto You, You Son of God, for You were slain and You have redeemed the world by Your blood.” See Him as He mounts His Throne and sits near His Father. Behold the benignant complacency of the paternal Deity. Hear Him as He accepts Him and gives Him a name which is above every name.

And I say, my Brethren, in the midst of your trembling and doubts and fears, anticipate the joy which *you*shall have when you shall share in this triumph. Know you not that you ascended up on high in Him? He went not up to Heaven alone, but as the representative of all the blood-bought throng. *You*rode in that triumphal chariot with Him. You were exalted on high and made to sit far above principalities and powers in Him. For we are risen in Him. We are exalted in Christ.

Even at this very day in Christ that Psalm is true—“You have put all things under His feet. You made Him to have dominion over all the works of Your hands.” Come, poor Trembler, you are little in your own esteem and but a worm and no man! Rise, I say, to the height of your nobility. For you are in Christ greater than angels are, more magnified and glorified by far. God give you grace—you who have faith—that you may now, in the fact of Jesus Christ’s exaltation, find consolation for yourself!

But now, today, methinks I see the Master as He stands before His Father’s Throne dressed in the garments of a priest. Upon His breast I see the Urim and Thummim glittering with the bejeweled remembrances of His people. In His hand I see still the remembrance of His sacrifice, the nail mark—and there I see still upon His feet the impress of the laver of blood in which He washed Himself not as the priest of old with water but with His own gore. I hear Him plead with authority before His Father’s face, “I will that they also whom You have given Me be with Me where I am.”

O my poor prayers, you shall be heard! O my faint groans, you shall be answered! O my poor troubled soul, you are safe, for—  
***“Jesus pleads and must prevail,  
His cause can never, never fail.”***

Come, my poor Heart, lift up yourself now from the dunghill. Shake yourself from the dust—ungird your sackcloth and put on your beautiful garments. *He*is our Advocate today, our eloquent and earnest Pleader and He prevails with God. The Father smiles—He smiles on Christ. He smiles on *us* in answer to Jesus Christ’s intercession. Is He not here also the Consolation of Israel?

I only remark once more that He who has gone up into Heaven shall so come in like manner as He was seen to go up into Heaven. He ascended in clouds, “Behold He comes with clouds.” He went up on high with sound of trumpet and with shout of angels. Behold He comes! The silver trumpet shall soon sound. ‘Tis midnight. The hours are rolling wearily along. The virgins wise and foolish are all asleep. But the cry shall soon be heard— “Behold the Bridegroom comes, go forth to meet Him.” That same Jesus who was crucified shall come in glory. The hand that was pierced shall grasp the scepter. Beneath His arm He shall gather up all the scepters of all kings. Monarchs shall be the sheaves and *He*shall be the kingly Reaper.

On His head there shall be the many crowns of universal undisputed dominion. “He shall stand in the latter day upon the earth.” His feet shall tread on the mount of Olivet and His people shall be gathered in the valley of Jehoshaphat. Lo, the world’s great battle is almost begun, the trumpet sounds the beginning of the battle of Armageddon. To the fight, you warriors of Christ! To the fight, for it is your last conflict and over the bodies of your foes you shall rush to meet your Lord—He fighting on the one side by His coming—you on the other side by drawing near to Him.

You shall meet Him in the solemn hour of victory. The dead in Christ shall rise first and you that are alive and remain shall be changed in a moment—in the twinkling of an eye—at the last triumphant sounding of the dread tremendous trump. *Then* shall you know to the full how Christ can console you for all your sorrows—all your shame and all your neglect which you have received from the hand of men. Yes, today there awaits the recompense of an earthly splendor for your earthly poverty—there

awaits earthly dignity for your earthly shame.

You shall not only have spiritual, but you shall have *temporal* blessings. He who takes away the curse will take it away not only from your soul, but from the very ground on which you tread. He who redeems you shall redeem not only your spirit, but your body. Your eyes shall *see* your Redeemer. Your hands shall be lifted up in acclamation and your feet shall bear your leaping joys in the procession of His glory. In your very body in which you have suffered for Him you shall sit with Him upon the Throne and judge the nations of the earth. These things, I say, are all full of the purest and highest consolation to the children of God.

**II.**Having taken nearly all my time upon the first point, I can only say a word or two upon the second and on the third. The second point was to be this—CHRIST IN HIS UNCHANGING NATURE. The Consolation for our continual sorrows.

Christ is to His people a *surpassing* Consolation. Talk of the consolations of philosophy? We have all the philosopher can pretend to. But we have it in a higher degree. Speak of the charms of music which can lull our sorrows to a blessed sleep?—

***“Sweeter sounds than music knows,  
Charm us in our Savior’s name.  
“Jesus, the very thought of You,  
With rapture fills my breast.”***

Speak we of the joys of friendship? And sweet they are indeed. But “there is a Friend that sticks closer than a brother”—“a brother born for adversity.” There is One who is better than all friends, more able to cheer than those who are dearest and nearest to our hearts.

Or, speak we of the joys of hope? And certainly hope can console us when nothing else can do it. *He*is our Hope. We cast the anchor of our hope into that which is within the veil where the forerunner has for us entered. The consolations of Christ are unrivalled by any which can be offered by wit, by wisdom, by mirth, by hope itself. They are incomparable and can never be surpassed. Again, the consolations of Christ, from the feet of his unchanging nature, are *unfailing—*

***“When every earthly prop gives way,  
He still is all our strength and stay.”***  
Look at Job and see the picture of how Christ can console. The messenger rushes in—“The Sabeans have taken away the oxen and the asses!” “Well, well,” Job might console himself and say, “but the sheep are left.” “But the fire of God has fallen on the sheep! And the Chaldeans have

carried away the camels and slain the servants!” “Alas!” the good man might say, “but my children are left and if they are spared then I can still have joy.” “The wind has come from the wilderness and smitten the four corners of the house and all your sons and daughters are dead!”

Ah! Penniless and childless, the Patriarch might weep. But, looking on his wife, he would say, “There still remains one sweet comforter, my wellbeloved spouse.” *She*bids him “curse God and die,” speaking as one of the foolish women speaks. Yet might Job say, “Though my wife has failed me, there remains at least three friends. There they sit with me on the dunghill and *they* will console me.” But they speak bitterness till he cries, “Miserable comforters are you all.”

Well, at least he has his own body in health, has he not? No. He sits down upon a dunghill and scrapes himself with a potsherd—for his sores have become intolerable. Well, well, “skin for skin, yes, all that a man has will he give for his life.” He may at least cheer himself with the fact that he lives. “Why should a living man complain?” Yes, but he fears he is about to die. And now comes out the grandeur of his hope: “I know that my Redeemer lives and though the worms devour this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God.” All the other windows are darkened. But the sun shines in at the window of redemption. All the other doors are shut but this great door of hope and joy still stands wide open. All other wells are dry. But this flows with an unceasing stream. Brothers and Sisters—when all things else depart—an unchanging Christ shall be your unchanging joy.

Furthermore, the consolations of Christ are *all powerful* consolations. When a poor soul is so deep in the mire that you cannot lift it with the lever of eloquence, nor draw it up with the hands of sympathy, nor raise it with wings of hope, *He*can touch it with His finger and it can spring up from the mire and put its feet upon a rock and feel the new song in its mouth and its goings well established. There is no form of melancholy which will not yield before the grace of God. There is no shape of distress which will not give way before the divine energy of the Holy Spirit the Comforter, when he uses Christ as the Consolation.

Again—this consolation is *everlasting*consolation. It consoled you, O aged sire when as a youth you gave your heart to Christ. It was your joy in the mid-winter of your manhood. It has become your strength and your song in the days of your old age. When tottering on your staff you shall go down to Jordan’s brink He will be your Consolation then. In the prospect of your coming dissolution, yes, when you walk through the valley of the shadow of death you shall fear no evil, for He is with you—His rod and His staff shall comfort you. All other things shall pass away as a dream when one awakes. But this substantial support shall abide with you in the midst of the swellings of Jordan, in the hour of the departure of your spirit from your body.

And then remember that He is the Consolation which is always within the believer’s reach. He is “a very present help in time of trouble.” You may always cheer your heart with Christ when other things are far away. When friends visit you not and your chamber becomes lonely—when spouse has forgotten to speak the kind word to you and children have become ungrateful—He will make your bed in your sickness. He will be your never-failing Friend and abide with you in every dark and gloomy hour, till He brings you into His dear arms where you will be in Heaven forever and ever.

**III.**I close now with my last point—the grave and serious question, IS CHRIST AN AVAILABLE CONSOLATION FOR ME?  
Who are you, Friend? Are you one who needs no consolation? Have you a righteousness of your own? Let me put it in your own words. You are a *good*man, kind to the poor, charitable, upright, generous, holy. You believe there may be *some* faults in yourself, but they must be very few and you trust that what with your own merits and with God’s mercy you may enter Heaven.  
In the name of God, I do solemnly assure you that Christ is *not* an available Consolation for you. Christ will have nothing to do with you so long as you have anything to do with yourself. If you are trusting in any measure whatever upon anything that you have ever *done* or hope*to do*, you are trusting in a *lie* and Christ will never be friends with a lie. He will never help *you*to do what He came to do Himself. If you will take His work as it is, as a *finished* work—well and good. But if you must add to it your own, God shall add unto you the plagues which are written in this Book. He shall by no means give to you any of the Promises and the comforts which Christ can afford.  
But instead thereof, I will suppose that I address myself this morning to a man who says, “I was once, I think, a believer in Christ. I made a profession of religion, but I fell from it and I have lost for years all the hope and joy I ever had. I think I was a presumptuous man that I pretended to have what I never had and yet at the time I really thought I had it. May I think that there is consolation in Christ for a backslider and a traitor like I? Often, Sir, do I feel as if the doom of Judas must be mine—as if I must perish miserably, like Demas, who loved this present world.”  
Ah! Backslider, Backslider, God speaks to you this morning and He says, “Return you backsliding children of men, for I am married to you.” And if married, there has never been a divorce between Christ and you. Has He put you away? Unto which of His creditors has He sold you? Where do you read in His Word that He has divided from the affection of His heart one whose name was ever written in His Book? Come, come, Backslider, come again to the Cross. He who received you once will receive you again. Come where the blood is flowing. The blood that washed you once can wash you yet once more. Come, come, you are naked and poor and miserable. The raiment which was given to you once shall array you again with beauty. The unsearchable riches which were opened up to you before, shall be yours again—  
***“To your Father’s bosom pressed,  
Once again a child confessed  
From His hand no more to roam,  
Come, backsliding sinner, come.”***  
But I hear another say, “I am not a backslider but simply one who desires to be saved. I can say honestly I would give my right arm from its socket if I might but be saved. Why, Sir, if I had ten thousand worlds I would freely cast them away as pebble stones and worthless if I might but find Christ.” Poor Soul and does the devil tell you you shall never have Christ? Why you have a warrant to lay hold on Christ today. “No,” you say, “I have no right whatever.” The fact that you say you have no right should at least comfort the minister in addressing himself freely to you. The right of a sinner to come to Christ does not lie in the sinner nor in any feelings which the sinner may have had, it lies in the fact that Christ *commands* him to come.  
If one of you should receive as you went out of yonder door a command to go at once to Windsor and have an interview with the Queen—as soon as you had received the order and were sure it came from her, you might say, “Well, but if I had known this, I should have put on other clothes.” But the order is peremptory, “Come now. Come just as you are.” You would, I think, without any very great doubt, though greatly wondering, take your place and ride there at once. When you came to the gate, some tall grenadier might ask you what you were doing. “Why,” he might say, “you are not fit to come and see Her Majesty. You are not a gentleman, you have not so many hundreds a year. How can *you* expect to be admitted?”  
You show the command and he lets you pass on. You come to another door and there is an usher there. “You are not in a court dress,” he says. “You are not properly robed for the occasion.” You show the command and he lets you pass on. But suppose when at last you should come into the ante-room you should say, “Now I dare not go in, I am not fit. I feel I shall not know how to behave myself”? Suppose you are silly enough not to go—you would be disobedient and ten times more foolish in disobeying than you could have been by any blunders in behavior if you had obeyed.  
Now it is just so with you today. Christ says, “Come unto Me.” He does not merely invite you, because He knows you would think you did not deserve the invitation, but He gives the *comman*d and He bids me say to you, “Repent and be baptized everyone of you.” He bids me command you in His name, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved.” Of His grace and mercy He puts it as a command. “*But*,” you say. Ah, what right have you to say, *“but*” to the Lord’s commands? Again, I say, away with your “buts.” What right have you to be “buting” at His Laws and His commands? “But,” you say, “do hear me for a moment.” I will hear you then. “Sir, I cannot imagine that if such a hard-hearted sinner as I am were really to trust Christ I should be saved.”  
The English of that is that you call God a liar. He says you shall be and do you think He speaks an untruth? “Ah!” says another, “but it is too good to be true. I cannot believe that just as I am, if I trust in Christ my sin shall be forgiven.” Again, I say, the simple English of that is, that you think you know better than God and so you do in fact stand up and say to His promise, “You are false.” He says, “Him that comes unto Me I will in no wise cast out.” “Ah!” you say, “but that does not mean me!” Can any language speak more plainly? “*Him*.” What “him”? Why, any “him” in the world.  
“Yes,” says one “but the invitations are made to *character*—“Come unto Me all you that labor and are *heavy laden*. I am afraid I am not heavy laden enough.” Yes, but you will mark while the invitation is given to character, yet the *promise* is not given to the character. It is given to those who come—“Come unto Me and I will give you rest.” And while that one invitation may be confined to the weary and heavy laden, yet there are scores of others that stand as wide and free as the very air we breathe. If you have that qualification, do not come even with it, because you are unqualified when you *think* you are qualified. You are unfit when you *think* you are fit.  
And if you have a *sense of need* which you think makes you fit to come to Christ—it shows you are *not f*it and do not know your need—for no man knows his need till he thinks he does not know his need and no man is in a right state to come to Christ till he thinks he is *not* in a right state to come to Christ. But he who feels that he has not one good thought or one good feeling to recommend him—*he is the man who may come*. He who says, “But I may not come,” is the very man that is bid to come. Besides, my Friends, it is not what *you think*, or what *I think*—it is what Christ says and is it not written by the hand of the Apostle John, “This is the Commandment, that you believe on Jesus Christ whom He has sent”?  
Men who say it is not the duty of sinners to believe I cannot think what they make out of such a text as that—“This is the commandment, that you believe on Jesus Christ, whom He has sent.” Nor that one where God expressly says, “He that believes not is condemned already, *because*he believes not.” Why, I should think I was addressing heathens if I addressed a company of men who thought that God did not I men to repent! For Scripture is so plain upon the point and I say—if God commands you to do it—you may do it.  
Let the devil say, “No,” but God says “Yes.” Let him stand and push you back. But say to him, “No, Satan, no, I come here in God’s name.” And as devils fear and fly before the name of Christ, so will Satan and your fears all fly before His command. He *commands* you to believe—that is, to trust Him. Trust him, Soul, trust Him. Right or wrong, trust Him.  
But some of you want a great temptation and a great deal of despair before you will trust Him. Well, the Lord will send it to you if you will not trust Him without it. I remember John Bunyan said he had a black temptation and it did him a great deal of good—for, he said, “Before I had the temptation I always questioned God’s Promises saying, ‘May I come, or may I not come?’ Yes, often I felt as if the Lord would refuse my soul forever—I was often as if I had run upon the pike and as if the Lord had thrust at me, to keep me from Him as with a flaming sword.”  
Ah, and perhaps you may be driven to that. I pray you may. But I would infinitely rather that the sweet love and grace of God would entice you now to trust Jesus Christ just as you are. He will not deceive you, Sinner. He will not fail you. Trusting Him you shall build on a sure foundation and find Him who is the Consolation of Israel and the joy of all His saints.

Adapted from*The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307

**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.** Sermon #2281 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

**÷Php 2.8**

OUR LORD IN THE VALLEY OF HUMILIATION  
NO. 2281

**INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S-DAY, NOVEMBER 6, 1892. *DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON THURSDAY EVENING, JUNE 5, 1890.**

***“And being found in fashion as a Man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross.”*** Php 2:8***.***

PAUL wishes to unite the saints in Philippi in the holy bands of love. To do this, he takes them to the Cross. Beloved, there is a cure for every spiritual disease in the Cross. There is food for every spiritual virtue in the Savior. We never go to Him too often. He is never a dry well or a vine from which every cluster has been taken. We do not think enough of Him. We are poor because we do not go to the gold country which lies round the Cross. We are often sad because we do not see the bright light that shines from the constellation of the Cross. The beams from that constellation would give us instantaneous joy and rest if we perceived them. If any lover of the souls of men would do for them the best possible service, he would constantly take them near to Christ. Paul is always doing so—and he is doing it here.

The Apostle knew that to create concord, you need, first, to beget lowliness of mind. Men do not quarrel when their ambitions have come to an end. When each one is willing to be least—when everyone desires to place his fellows higher than himself—there is an end to party spirit. Schisms and divisions are all passed away. Now, in order to create lowliness of mind, Paul, under the teaching of the Spirit of God, spoke about the *lowliness of Christ*. He would have *us* go down and so he takes us to see our Master going down. He leads us to those steep stairs down which the Lord of Glory took His lowly way and Paul bids us stop while, in the words of our text, he points us to the lowly Christ—“Being found in fashion as a Man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross.”

Before Paul thus wrote, he had indicated, in a word or two, the height from which Jesus originally came. He says of Him, “Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God.” You and I can have no idea of how high an honor it is to be equal with God! How can we, therefore, measure the descent of Christ, when our highest *thoughts* cannot comprehend the height from which He came? The depth to which He descended is immeasurably below any point we have ever reached—and the height from which He came is inconceivably above our highest thoughts! Do not, however, forget the Glory that Jesus laid aside for a while. Remember that He is very God of very God, and that He dwelt in the highest Heaven with His Father. But, though He was thus infinitely rich, for our sakes He became poor, that we, through His poverty, might be rich.

The Apostle, having mentioned what Jesus was, by another stroke of his pen, reveals Him in our Human Nature. He says concerning Him that, “He made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a Servant, and was made in the likeness of men.” A great marvel is that Incarnation, that the eternal God should take into union with Himself our human nature, and should be born at Bethlehem, and live at Nazareth, and die at Calvary on our behalf!

But our text does not speak so much of the humiliation of Christ in becoming Man, as of His humiliation after He took upon Himself our Nature. “Being found in fashion as a Man, He humbled Himself.” He never seems to stop in His descent until He comes to the lowest point—obedience unto death and that death the most shameful of all—“even the death of the Cross.” Said I not rightly, that as you cannot reach the height from which He came, you cannot fathom the depth to which He descended? Here, in the immeasurable distance between the Heaven of His Glory and the shame of His death, is room for your gratitude! You may rise on wings of joy, you may dive into depths of self-denial, but in neither case will you reach the experience of your Divine Lord, who thus, for you, came from Heaven to earth, that He might take you up from earth to Heaven!

Now, if strength is given me for the exercise, I want to guide you, first, while we consider *the facts of our Lord’s humiliation*. And, secondly, when we have considered them, I want you to learn, from them, some practical useful lessons.

**I.**First of all, CONSIDER THE FACTS OF OUR LORD’S HUMILIATION. Paul speaks first of *the point from which He still descends*—“Being found in fashion as a Man, He humbled Himself.” My gracious Lord, You have come far enough, already, do You not stop where You are? In the form of God, You were—in the form of Man, You are. That is an unspeakable stoop! Will You *still* humble Yourself? Yes, says the text, “Being found in fashion as a Man, He humbled Himself.” Yet, surely one would have thought that He was low enough! He was the Creator and we see Him here on earth as a creature—the Creator, who made Heaven and earth, without whom was not anything made that was made, and yet He lies in the virgin’s womb! He is born and He is cradled where the horned oxen feed! The Creator is also a Creature! The Son of God is the Son of Man. Strange combination! Could condescension go farther than for the Infinite to be joined to the Infant, and the Omnipotent to the feebleness of a new-born Baby?  
Yet, this is not all. If the Lord of Life and Glory must be married to a creature, and the High and Mighty One must take upon Himself the form of a created being, yet why does He assume the form of *man*? There were other creatures brighter than the stars! There were noble spiritual beings, seraphim and cherubim, sons of the morning, presence angels of the eternal Throne of God! Why did He not take*their* nature? If He must be in union with a *creature*, why not be joined to the angels? But, “He took not on Him the nature of angels; but He took on Him the seed of Abraham.” A man is but a worm, a creature of many infirmities. Death has written on his brow with his terrible finger. He is corruptible and he must die. Will the Christ take that nature upon Him, that He, too, must suffer and die? It was even so! But when He had come so far, we feel as if we must almost put ourselves in the way to stop Him from going farther. Is not this stoop low enough? The text says that it was not, for, “Being found in fashion as a Man, He humbled Himself,” even then.  
What will not Christ do for us who have been given to Him by His Father? There is no measure to His love—you cannot comprehend His Grace. Oh, how we ought to love Him and serve Him! The lower He stoops to save us, the higher we ought to lift Him in our adoring reverence! Blessed be His name. He stoops, and stoops, and stoops and, when He reaches our level and becomes Man, He still stoops, and stoops, and stoops lower and deeper—“Being found in fashion as a Man, He humbled Himself.”  
Now let us notice, next, the way in which He descended after He became a man—“He humbled Himself.” We must assume that He has stooped as low as our humanity, but His humanity might have been, when born, cradled daintily. He might have been among those who are born in marble halls and clothed in purple and fine linen. But He chose not to be. If it had pleased Him, He might have been born a man and not have been a child. He might have leaped over the period of gradual development from childhood to youth and from youth to manhood—but He did not. When you see Him at home at Nazareth, the apprenticed Son, obedient to His parents, doing the little errands of the house, like any other child, you say, as our text says, “He humbled Himself.” There He dwelt in poverty with His parents, beginning His life as a workman’s boy and, I suppose, running out to play with youthful companions. All this is very wonderful. The apocryphal gospels represent Him as having done strange things while yet a child, but the true Gospels tell us very little of His early days. He veiled His Godhead behind His childhood. When He went up to Jerusalem and listened to the doctors of the law, though He astonished them by His questions and answers, yet He went home with His parents and was subject to them, for, “He humbled Himself.” He was by no means pushing and forward, like a petted and precocious child. He held Himself in, for He determined that, being found in fashion as a Man, He would humble Himself.  
He grew up, and the time of His appearing unto men arrived. But I cannot pass over the 30 years of His silence without feeling that here was a marvelous instance of how He humbled Himself. I know young men who think that two or three years’ education is far too long for them. They want to be preaching at once—running away, as I sometimes tell them— like chickens with the shell on their heads! They want to go forth to fight before they have buckled on their armor! But it was not so with Christ— 30 long years passed over His head and still there was no Sermon on the Mount. When He did show Himself to the world, look how He humbled Himself! He did not knock at the door of the High Priests, or seek out the eminent Rabbis and the learned scribes! No, He took for His companions, fishermen from the lake, infinitely His inferiors, even if we regarded Him merely as a Man! He was full of manly freshness and vigor of mind and they were scarcely able to follow Him, even though He moderated His footsteps out of pity for their weakness. He preferred to associate with lowly men, for He humbled Himself.  
When He went out to speak, His style was not such as aimed at the gathering together of the elite—He did not address a few specially cultured folk. “*Then drew near unto Him all the scribes and Pharisees for to hear Him.*” Am I quoting correctly? No, no—“*Then drew near unto Him all the publicans and sinners for to hear Him.*” They made an audience with which He was at home—and when they gathered about Him, and when little children stood to listen to Him—then He poured out the fullness of His heart, for He humbled Himself. Ah, dear Friends, this was not the deepest humiliation of the Lord Jesus! He allowed *Satan* to tempt Him. I have often wondered how His pure and holy mind, how His right royal Nature could bear conflict with the Prince of Darkness, the foul fiend, full of lies. Christ allowed Satan to put Him to the test—and spotless purity had to bear the nearness of infamous villainy! Jesus conquered, for the Prince of this world came and found nothing in Him. But He humbled Himself when, in the wilderness, on the pinnacle of the Temple, and on the exceedingly high mountain, He allowed the devil to assail Him three times.  
Personally, in His body, He suffered weakness, hunger, thirst. In His mind He suffered rebuke, contumely, falsehood. He was constantly the Man of Sorrows. You know that when the head of the apostate church is called, “the man of sin,” it is because it is always sinning. And when Christ is called, “the Man of Sorrows,” it is because He was always sorrowing. How amazing it is that He should humble Himself so as to be afflicted with the common sorrows of our humanity, but it was so! “Being found in fashion as a Man,” He consented, even, to be belied, to be called a drunk and a wine-bibber, to have His miracles ascribed to the help of Beelzebub, to hear men say, “He has a devil, and is mad; why do you listen to Him?”  
“He humbled Himself.” In His own heart there were, frequently, great struggles. And those struggles drove Him to prayer. He even lost consciousness of God’s Presence, so that He cried in sore anguish, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” All this was because He still humbled Himself. I do not know how to speak to you upon this great subject! I give you words, but I pray the Holy Spirit to supply you with right thoughts about this great mystery! I have already said that it was condescension enough for Christ to be found in fashion as a Man. But after that, He still continued to descend the stairway of condescending love by humbling Himself yet more and more!  
But notice, now, *the rule of His descent*. It is worth noticing—“He humbled Himself, and became *obedient*.” I have known persons try to humble themselves by will-worship. I have stood in the cell of a monk, when he has been out of it, and I have seen the whip with which he flagellated himself every night before he went to bed. I thought that it was quite possible that the man deserved all he suffered—and so I shed no tears over it. That was *his* way of humbling himself, by administering a certain number of lashes. I have known persons practice voluntary humility. They have talked in very humble language and have decried themselves in words, though they have been as proud as Lucifer all the while! Our Lord’s way of humbling Himself was by *obedience*. He invented no method of making Himself ridiculous! He put upon Himself no singular garb which would attract attention to His poverty. He simply obeyed His Father and, mark you, there is no humility like obedience—“To obey is better than sacrifice, and to listen than the fat of rams.” To obey is better than to wear a special dress, or to clip your words in some peculiar form of supposed humility! Obedience is the best humility—laying yourself at the feet of Jesus and making your will active only when you know what is God’s will for you. This is to be truly humble!  
In what way, then, did the Lord Jesus Christ, in His life, obey? I answer—There was always about Him the spirit of obedience to His Father. He could say, “Lo, I come: in the Volume of the Book it is written of Me, I delight to do Your will, O My God: yes, Your law is within My heart.” He was always, while here, subservient to His Father’s great purpose in sending Him to earth! He came to do the will of Him that sent Him and to finish His work. He learned what that will was, partly from Holy Scripture. You constantly find Him acting in a certain way, “that the Scripture might be fulfilled.” He shaped His life upon the prophecies that had been given concerning Him. Thus He did the will of the Father.  
Also, there was within Him the Spirit of God who led and guided Him, so that He could say, “I do always those things that please the Father.” Then He waited upon God continually in prayer. Though infinitely better able to do without prayer than we are, yet He prayed much more than we do! With less need than we have, He had a greater delight in prayer than we have, and thus He learned the will of God as Man, and did it, without once omitting, or once transgressing in a single point.  
He did the will of God, also, obediently, by following out what He knew to be the Father’s great design in sending Him. He was sent to save and He went about saving—seeking and saving that which was lost. Oh, dear Friends, when we get into unison with God, when we wish what He wishes. When we live for the great objective that fills God’s heart. When we lay aside our wishes and whims—and even our lawful desires, that we may do only the will of God, and live only for His glory—then we shall be truly humbling ourselves!  
Thus, I have shown you that Jesus did descend after He became man, and I have pointed out to you the way and the rule of His descending. Now, let us look, with awe and reverence,*at the abyss into which He descended*. Where did He arrive, at last, in that dreadful descent? What was the bottom of the abyss ? It was *death*—“He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross.” Our Lord died willingly. You and I, unless the Lord should come quickly, will die, whether we are willing or not—“It is appointed unto men once to die.” He needed not to die, yet He was willing to surrender His life. He said, “I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of My Father.” He died willingly, but, at the same time, He did not die by His own hands. He did not take His own life as a suicide—He died *obediently*. He waited till His hour had come, when He was able to say, “It is finished.” Then He bowed His head and gave up the ghost. He humbled Himself, so as to die *willingly*.  
He proved the obedience of His death, also, by the meekness of it, as

Isaiah said, “As a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He opens not His mouth.” He never spoke a bitter word to priest or scribe, Jewish governor or Roman soldier. When the women wept and bewailed, He said to them, “Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children.” He was all gentleness. He had not a hard word even for His murderers. He gave Himself up to be the Sin-Bearer, without murmuring at His Father’s will, or at the cruelty of His adversaries. How patient He was! If He says, “I thirst,” it is not the petulant cry of a sick man in His fever—there is a royal dignity about Christ’s utterance of the words. Even the, “Eloi, Eloi, lama Sabachthani,” with the unutterable gall and bitterness it contains, has not even a trace of impatience mingled with it! Oh, what a death Christ’s was! He was obedient in it, obedient not only till He came to die, but obedient in that last dread act! His obedient life embraced the hour of His departure.  
But, as if death were not sufficiently humbling, the Apostle adds, “even the death of the Cross.” That was the worst kind of death. It was a violent death. Jesus fell not asleep *gently*, as good men often do, whose end is peace. No, He died by murderous hands. Jews and Gentiles combined and, with cruel hands, took Him and crucified and slew Him. It was, also, an extremely painful death of lingering agony. Those parts of the body in which the nerves were most numerous, were pierced with rough iron nails. The weight of the body was made to hang upon the most tender part of the frame. No doubt the nails tore their cruel way through His flesh while He was hanging on the tree. A cut in the hand has often resulted in lockjaw and death, yet Christ’s hands were *nailed* to the Cross. He died in most exquisite pain of body and of soul. It was, also, a death most shameful. Thieves were crucified with Him. His adversaries stood and mocked Him. The death of the Cross was one reserved for slaves and the basest of felons—no Roman citizen could be put to death in such a way as that— hung up between earth and Heaven as if neither would have Him, rejected of men and despised of God! It was, also, a penal death. He died, not like a hero in battle, nor as one who perishes while rescuing his fellow men from fire or flood—He died as a *criminal*. Upon the Cross of Calvary He was hung up. It was an accursed death, too. God Himself had called it so—“Cursed is everyone that hangs on a tree.” He was made a curse for us! His death was penal in the highest sense. He “bore our sins in His own body on the tree.”  
I have not the mental, nor the physical, nor the spiritual strength to speak to you aright on such a wondrous topic as that of our Lord in the Valley of Humiliation. There have been times with me when I have only needed a child’s finger to point me to the Christ and I have found enough in a sight of Him without any words of man. I hope that it is so with you tonight. I invite you to sit down and watch your Lord, obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross. All this He did that He might complete His own humiliation. He humbled Himself even to this lowest point of all, “unto death, even the death of the Cross.”  
**II.**If you have this picture clearly before your eyes, I want you, in the second place, to LEARN SOME PRACTICAL LESSONS FROM OUR LORD’S HUMILIATION.  
The first is, learn to have *firmness of faith* in the atoning Sacrifice. If my Lord could stoop to become Man and if, when He had come as low as that, He went still lower, and lower, and lower, until He became obedient unto *death*, even the death of the Cross, I feel that there must be a potency about that death which is all that I can require. Jesus, by dying, has vindicated law and justice. Look, Brothers and Sisters, if God can punish sin upon His own dear Son, it means far more than the sending of us to Hell! Without shedding of blood there is no remission of sin, but His blood was shed, so there *is* remission! His wounds let out His life blood. One great gash opened the way to His heart. Before that, His whole body had become a mass of dripping gore, when, in the Garden, His sweat was, as it were, great drops of blood falling to the ground. My Lord, when I study Your Sacrifice, I see how God can be “just, and the Justifier of him which believes in Jesus.” Faith is born at the Cross of Christ! We not only bring faith *to* the Cross, but we*find* it there. I cannot think of my God bearing all this grief in a human body, even to the death on the Cross, and then doubt. Why, doubt becomes harder than faith when the Cross is visible! When Christ is set forth evidently crucified among us, each one of us should cry, “Lord, I believe, for Your death has killed my unbelief.”  
The next lesson I would have you learn from Christ’s humiliation is this—cultivate a great *hatred of sin*. Sin killed Christ. Let Christ kill sin. Sin made Him go down, down, down—then pull sin down, let it have no throne in your heart. If it will live in your heart, make it live in holes and corners, and never rest till it is utterly driven out. Seek to put your foot upon its neck and utterly kill it. Christ was crucified—let your lusts be crucified! And let every wrong desire be nailed up, with Christ, upon the felon’s tree. If, with Paul, you can say, “God forbid that I should glory, save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world”—with Him you will also be able to exclaim—“From henceforth let no man trouble me: for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus.” Christ’s branded slave is the Lord’s freeman!  
Learn another lesson, and that is *obedience*. Beloved, if Christ humbled Himself and became obedient, how obedient ought you and I to be? We ought to stop at nothing when we once know that it is the Lord’s will. I marvel that you and I should ever raise a question or seek a moment’s delay in our obedience to Christ. If it is the Lord’s will, let it be done, and done at once. Should it rend some fond connection, should it cause a flood of tears, let it be done. He humbled Himself, and became obedient. Would obedience humble me? Would it lower me in man’s esteem? Would it make me the subject of ridicule? Would it bring contempt upon my honorable name? Should I be elbowed out of the society wherein I have been admired if I were obedient to Christ? Lord, this is a question not worth asking! I take up Your Cross right joyfully, asking Grace to be perfectly obedient by the power of Your Spirit!  
Learn next, another lesson, and that is *self-denial*. Did Christ humble Himself? Come, Brothers and Sisters, let us practice the same holy art! Have I not heard of some saying, “I have been insulted. I am not treated with proper respect. I go in and out and I am not noticed. I have done eminent service and there is not a paragraph in the newspaper about me.” Oh, dear Friend, your Master *humbled* Himself, but it seems to me that *you* are trying to *exalt* yourself! Truly, you are on the wrong track! If Christ went down, down, down, it ill becomes us to be always seeking to go up, up, up! Wait till God exalts you, which He will do in His own good time. Meanwhile, it behooves you, while you are here, to humble yourself! If you are already in a humble position, should you not be contented with it, for *He* humbled Himself? If you are now in a place where you are not noticed, where there is little thought of you, be quite satisfied with it. Jesus came just where you are—you may well stay where you are—where God has put you. Jesus had to bring Himself down and to make an effort to come down to where you are.  
Is not the Valley of Humiliation one of the sweetest spots in all the world? Does not the great geographer of the heavenly country, John Bunyan, tell us that the Valley of Humiliation is as fruitful a place as any the crow flies over and that our Lord formerly had His country house there, and that He loved to walk those meadows, for He found the air was pleasant? Stay there, Brothers and Sisters! “I should like to be known,” says one. “I should like to have my name before the public.” Well, if you ever had that lot, if you felt as I do, you would pray to be *unknown* and to let your name drop out of notice, for there is no pleasure in it! The only happy way seems to me, if God would only let us choose, is to be known to nobody, and to glide through this world as pilgrims and strangers, to the land where our true kindred dwell, and to be known there as having been followers of the Lord.  
I think that we should also learn from our Lord’s humiliation to have *contempt for human glory*. Suppose they come to you and said, “We will crown you king!”? You may well say, “Will you? All the crown you had for my Master was a crown of thorns—I will not accept a diadem from you.” “We will praise you.” “What? Will you praise *me*, you who spat in His dear face? I need none of your praises.” It is a greater honor to a Christian to be maligned than to be applauded. Yes, I do not care where it comes from, I will say this—if he is slandered and abused for Christ’s sake—no odes in his honor, no articles in his praise can do him one-tenth the honor! This is to be a true knight of the Cross, to have been wounded in the fray, to have come back adorned with scars for His dear sake! O despised one, look upon human glory as a thing that is tarnished, no longer golden, but corroded because it came not to your Lord.  
And, O Beloved, I think when we have meditated on this story of Christ’s humbling Himself, we ought to feel our *love to our Lord growing very vehemently*! We do not half love Him as we ought. When I read the sentences of Bernard, half Romanist, but altogether saint, I feel as if I had not *begun* to love my Lord! And when I turn over Rutherford’s letters and see the glow of his heart toward his Divine Master, I could smite on my breast to think that I have such a heart of stone where there ought to be a heart of flesh! If you hear George Herbert sing his quaint, strange poetry, suffused with love for his dear Lord, you may well think that you are a rookie in the school of love! Yes, and if you ever drink in the spirit of McCheyne, you may go home and hide your head, and say, “I am not worthy to sing—  
***“Jesus, lover of my soul,’***  
for I do not return His love as I ought to do.” Come, seek His wounds and let your hearts be wounded! Come, look to His heart that poured out blood and water, and give your heart up to Him! Put your whole being among the sweet spices of His all-sufficient merit, set all on fire with burning affection, and let the fragrance of it go up like incense before the Lord!  
Lastly, let us be inflamed with a strong desire *to honor Christ*. If He humbled Himself, let us honor Him. Every time that He seems to put away the crown, let us put it on His head. Every time we hear Him slandered— and men continue to slander Him—let us speak up for Him right manfully—  
Do you not grow indignant, sometimes, when you see how Christ’s professed Church is treating Him and His Truth? They are still shutting Him out till His head is wet with dew, and His locks with the drops of the night. Proclaim Him King in the face of His false friends! Proclaim Him and say that His Word is infallibly true and that His precious blood, alone, can cleanse from sin! Stand out the braver because so many Judases seem to have leaped up from the bottomless Pit to betray Christ again. Be firm and steadfast, like granite walls, in the day when others turn their backs and fly like cowards.  
The Lord help you to honor Him who humbled Himself, who became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross! May He accept these humble words of mine and bless them to His people, and make them to be the means of leading some poor sinner to come and trust in Him! Amen.

***“You that are men, now serve Him, Against unnumbered foes.  
Your courage rise with danger, And strength to strength oppose.”***

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON**Php 2:1-18***.***

**Verses 1, 2.** *If there is, therefore, any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any heart and mercies, fulfill you my joy, that you be like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.*Paul did not mean to doubt that there is “any consolation in Christ, any comfort of love, any fellowship of the Spirit, any heart and mercies,” for no one knew better than he did how those blessings abound to them that are in Christ Jesus. He put it by way of argument. If there is consolation in Christ, since there is consolation in Christ, since there is comfort of love, since there is fellowship of the Spirit, be one in Christ. Be not divided. Love one another—“be like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.”

**3.***Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory.* “Nothing.” Never give to exceed other givers. Never preach that you may be a better preacher than anybody else. Never work in the Sunday school with the idea of being thought a very successful teacher. “Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory.”

**3.***But in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than themselves.* There is some point in which your friend excels you. Notice *that* rather than the point in which you excel him! Try to give him the higher seat. *Seek* for yourself to take the *lowest* place.

**4.***Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.* Have a large heart, so that, though you care for yourself in spiritual things and desire your own soul’s prosperity, you may have the same desire for every other Christian man or woman.

**5.***Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.* What an example we have set before us in the Lord Jesus Christ! We are to have the mind of Christ and that in the most Christly way, for here we have Christ set out to the life.

**6.***Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God.*For He*was* equal with God.  
**7.***But made Himself of no reputation, emptied Himself of all His honor, of all His glory, of all His majesty.*And of all the reverence paid to Him by the holy spirits around the Throne of God.  
**7, 8.***And took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a Man, He humbled Himself.* He had not descended low enough, yet, though He had come down all the way from the Godhead to our manhood—“He humbled Himself.”  
**8, 9.***And became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross. Therefore God also has highly exalted Him.* He stooped, who can tell how low? He was raised, who shall tell how high? “Therefore God also has highly exalted Him.”  
**9.***And given Him a name which is above every name.*He threw away His name. He emptied Himself of His reputation. How high is His reputation now! How glorious is the name that God has given Him as the reward of His redemptive work!  
**10, 11.***That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in Heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.* Now is He higher than the highest! Now everyone must confess His Divinity! With shame and terror, His adversaries shall bow before Him! With delight and humble adoration, His friends shall acknowledge Him Lord of All—“that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” See how the greatest Glory of Christ is the Glory of the Father. He never desired any other Glory but that. The highest honor you can ever have, O child of God, is to bring honor to your Father who is in Heaven! Do you not think so? I know you do!  
**12.***Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.* Get out of *self*! Work out your salvation from pride, from vainglory, from disputations and strife.  
**13.***For it is God which works in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure.*You may very well work out what God works in. If He does not work it in, you will never work it out—but while He works within your spirit both to will and to do, you may safely go on to will and to do, for your willing and your doing will produce lowliness of spirit and unity of heart with your Brothers and Sisters.  
**14.***Do all things without murmuring and disputes.* Do not say, “You give me too much to do! You always give me the hard work; you put me in the obscure corner.” No, no! “Do all things without murmurings.” And do not begin fighting over a holy work, for, if you do, you spoil it in the very beginning—and how can you then hope for a blessing upon it? “Do all things without murmurings and disputes.”

**15.***That you may be blameless and harmless.*None finding fault with you and you not finding fault with others—neither harming nor harmed— “blameless and harmless.”

**15.***The sons of God, without rebuke.*So that men cannot rebuke you and will have to invent a lie before they can do it—and even then the falsehood is too palpable to have any force in it—“without rebuke.”

**15.***In the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom you shine as lights in the world.*You cannot straighten them, but you can shine. They would destroy you if they could, but all you have to do is to shine. If Christians would give more attention to their shining, and pay less attention to the crooked and perverse generation, much more would come of it. But *now* we are advised to “keep abreast of the times” and to, “catch the spirit of the age.” If I could ever catch that spirit, I would hurl it into the bottomless abyss, for it is a spirit that is antagonistic to Christ in all respects! We are to stay clear of all that and, “shine as lights in the world.”

**16.***Holding forth the Word of Life.* You are to hold forth the Word of Life as men hold forth a torch. Your shining is largely to consist in holding forth the Word of Life.

**16.***That I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither labored in vain.* God’s ministers cannot bear the thought of having labored in vain. And yet if some of us were to die, what would remain of all we have done? I charge you, Brothers and Sisters, to think of what your life-work has been. Will it remain? Will it abide? Will it stand the test of your own departure? Ah, if you have any fear about it, you may well go to God in prayer and cry, “Establish You the work of our hands upon us; yes, the work of our hands, establish You it.” Paul cared much about God’s work, but he did not trouble about *himself*.

**17.***Yes, and if I am offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy, and rejoice with you all.*If he might be poured forth as a drink-offering on their behalf, or offered up as a whole burnt-offering in the service of the Savior, he would be glad. He could not bear to have lived in vain—but to spend his life for the glory of his Lord would always be a joy to him.

**18.***For the same cause also do you joy, and rejoice with me.* To live and to die for Jesus Christ with the blessing of the Father resting upon us— this is a matter for us to joy in unitedly and continually. God help us so to do!

Adapted from*The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #101 New Park Street Pulpit 1

**÷Php 2.9**

THE EXALTATION OF CHRIST  
NO. 101

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, NOVEMBER 2, 1856, *BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.**

***“Wherefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him a name which is above every name. That at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow, of things in Heaven and things in earth, and things under the earth. And that every tongue should confess that***

***Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”*** Php 2:9-11

I almost regret, this morning, that I have ventured to occupy this pulpit because I feel utterly unable to preach to you for your profit. I had thought that the quiet and repose of the last fortnight had removed the effects of that terrible catastrophe. I feel somewhat of those same painful emotions which well-nigh prostrated me before. You will, therefore, excuse me this morning if I make no allusion to that solemn event, or scarcely any. I could not preach to you upon a subject that should be in the least allied to it. I would be obliged to be silent if I should bring to my remembrance that terrible scene in the midst of which it was my solemn lot to stand. God shall doubtless overrule it. It may not have been so much by the malice of men, as some have asserted. It was, perhaps, simple wickedness—an intention to disturb a congregation—and certainly with no thought of committing so terrible a crime as that of the murder of those unhappy creatures. God forgive those who were the instigators of that horrid act! They have my forgiveness from the depths of my soul. *It shall not stop us, however*. We are not in the least degree daunted by it. I shall preach there, again, yes and God shall give us souls there and Satan’s empire shall tremble more than ever! “God is with us; who is he that shall be against us?” The text I have selected is one that has comforted me and, in a great measure, enabled me to come here today—the single reflection upon it had such a power of comfort on my depressed spirit. It is this—“Wherefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow, of things in Heaven and things in earth, and things under the earth. And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father”—Php 2:9-11.

I shall not attempt to preach upon this text. I shall only make a few remarks that have occurred to my own mind. For I could not preach today. I have been utterly unable to study, but I thought that even a few words might be acceptable to you, this morning, and I trust to your loving hearts to excuse them. Oh, Spirit of God, magnify Your strength in Your servant’s weakness and enable him to honor his Lord, even when his soul is cast down within him!

When the mind is intensely set upon one object, however much it may, by different calamities, be tossed to and fro, it invariably returns to the place which it had chosen to be its dwelling place. You have noticed, in the case of David, when the battle had been won by his warriors, they returned flushed with victory. David’s mind had doubtless suffered much perturbation in the meantime—he had dreaded, alike, the effects of victory and defeat—but have you not noticed how his mind, in one moment, returned to the darling object of his affections? “Is the young man, Absalom, safe?” he asked, as if it mattered not what else had occurred, if his beloved son were but secure! So, Beloved, is it with the Christian in the midst of calamities, whether they are the wreck of nations, the crash of empires, the heaving of revolutions, or the scourge of war—the great question which he asks himself and asks of others, too, is this—is Christ’s Kingdom safe? In his own personal afflictions, his chief anxiety is—will God be glorified and will His honor be increased by it? If it is so, he says, although I am but as smoking flax, yet if the sun is not dimmed, I will rejoice, and though I am a bruised reed, if the pillars of the temple are unbroken, what does it matter if my reed is bruised? He finds it sufficient consolation, in the midst of all the breaking in pieces which he endures, to think that Christ’s Throne stands fast and firm and that though the earth has rocked beneath *his* feet, yet Christ stands on a rock which can never be moved! Some of these feelings, I think, have crossed our minds. Amidst much tumult and different rushing to and fro of troublous thoughts, our souls have returned to the darling Object of our desires and we have found it no small consolation, after all, to say, “It matters not what shall become of us—God has highly exalted *Him* and given *Him* a name which is above every name—that at the name of *Jesus*every knee should bow.”

This text has afforded sweet consolation to every heir of Heaven. Allow me, very briefly, to give you the consolations of it. *To the true Christian, there is much comfort in the very fact of Christ’s exaltation*. In the second place, *there is no small degree of consolation in the reason of it*. “*Wherefore*, also, God has highly exalted Him.” That is because of His previous humiliation. And thirdly, there is no small amount of really Divine solace in the thought of*the Person who has exalted Christ*. “Wherefore *God*also”—although men despise Him and cast Him down— “God also has highly exalted Him.”

**I.**First, then, IN THE VERY FACT OF CHRIST’S EXALTATION, THERE IS, TO EVERY TRUE CHRISTIAN, A VERY LARGE DEGREE OF COMFORT. Many of you who have no part nor lot in spiritual things, not having love to Christ nor any desire for His Glory, will but laugh when I say that this is a very bottle of cordial to the lips of the weary Christian, that Christ, after all, is glorified. To you it is no consolation, because you lack that condition of heart which makes this text sweet to the soul. To you there is nothing of joy in it—it does not stir your bosom, it gives no sweetness to your life, for this very reason—that you are not joined to Christ’s cause, nor do you devoutly seek to honor Him. But the true Christian’s heart leaps for joy, even when cast down by different sorrows and temptations, at the remembrance that Christ is exalted—for in that he finds enough to cheer his own heart! Note here, Beloved, that the Christian has certain features in his character which make the exaltation of Christ a matter of great joy to him. First, he has, in his own opinion, but not only in his own opinion, but in reality, *a relationship to Christ.* And, therefore, he feels an interest in the success of his kinsman. You have watched the father’s joy when, step by step, his boy has climbed to opulence or fame. You have marked the mother’s eyes as they sparkled with delight when her daughter grew up to womanhood and burst forth in all the grandeur of beauty. You have asked why they should feel such interest—you have been told, because the boy was his, or the girl was hers. They delighted in the advancement of their little ones because of their *relationship*. Had there been no relationship, they might have been advanced to kings, emperors, or queens and they would have felt but little delight. But from the feet of kindred, each step was invested with a deep and stirring interest! Now, it is so with the Christian. He feels that Jesus Christ, the glorified Prince of the kings of the earth, is his Brother. While he reverences Him as God, he admires Him as the Man-Christ, bone of His bone and flesh of His flesh. He delights in his calm and placid moments of communion with Jesus, to say to Him, “O Lord, You are my Brother.” His song is, “My Beloved is mine and I am His.” It is his joy to sing—

***“In ties of blood with sinners one,”***  
Christ Jesus is—for He is Man, even as we are—and He is no less and no more Man than we are, save only sin. Surely, when we feel we are related to Christ, His exaltation is the source of the greatest joy to our spirits! We take a delight in it, seeing it is one of our family that is exalted! It is the Elder Brother of the great one family of God in Heaven and earth—it is the Brother to whom all of us are related!

There is also in the Christian, not only the feeling of relationship, but there is a feeling of *unity in the cause*. He feels that when Christ is exalted, it is himself exalted, in some degree, seeing he has sympathy with His desire of promoting the great cause and honor of God in the world. I have no doubt that every common soldier who stood by the side of the Duke of Wellington felt honored when the commander was applauded for the victory, for, he said, “I helped him. I assisted him. It was but a mean part that I played. I did but maintain my rank. I did but sustain the enemy’s fire. But now the victory is gained, I feel an honor in it, for I helped, in some degree, to gain it.” So the Christian, when he sees his Lord exalted, says, “It is the Captain that is exalted and in His exaltation, all His soldiers share. Have I not stood by His side? Little was the work I did and poor the strength which I possessed to serve Him, but still, I aided in the labor.” And the most common soldier in the spiritual ranks feels that he, himself, is, in some degree, exalted when he reads this—“Wherefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him a name which is above every name.” A name above every name—“that at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow.”

Moreover, the Christian knows not only that there is this unity in design, but that there is a *real union*between Christ and all His people. It is a Doctrine of Revelation seldom sung upon, and never too much thought of—the Doctrine that Christ and His members are all One! Know you not, Beloved, that every member of Christ’s Church is a member of Christ, Himself? We are “of His flesh and of His bones,” parts of His great mystical body! And when we read that our Head is crowned, O rejoice, you members of His! Though the crown is not on you, yet being on your Head, you share the glory, for you are one with Him! See Christ yonder, sitting at His Father’s right hand? Believer! He is the Pledge of your glorification! He is the Surety of your acceptance. And, moreover, He is your Representative. The seat which Christ possesses in Heaven, He has not only by His own right, as a Person of the Deity, but He has it, also, as the Representative of His whole Church, for He is their Forerunner and He sits in Glory as the Representative of everyone of them. O rejoice, Believer, when you see your Master exalted from the tomb, when you behold Him exalted up to Heaven! Then, when you see Him climb the steps of light and sit upon His lofty Throne—when you hear the acclamations of a thousand seraphs—when you note the loud pealing choral symphony of millions of the redeemed—think, when you see Him crowned with light—think that you are exalted, too, *in Him*, seeing that you are a part of Himself! Happy are you if you know this, not only in Doctrine but in sweet *experience*, too! Knit to Christ, wedded to Him, grown into His parts and portions of His very Self, we throb with the heart of the body! When the Head, itself, is glorified, we share in the praise. We feel that His glorification bestows an honor upon us! Ah, Beloved, have you ever felt that unity to Christ? Have you ever felt a unity of desire with Him? If so, you will find this rich with comfort. But if not—if you know not Christ—it will be a source of grief rather than a pleasure to you that He is exalted, for you will have to reflect that He is exalted to*crush* you—He is exalted to *judge* you and *condemn* you. He is exalted to sweep this earth of its sins and pull the curse up by the roots—and you with it—unless you repent and turn to God with full purpose of heart!

There is yet another feeling which I think is extremely necessary to any very great enjoyment of this Truth of God, that Christ is exalted. It is a feeling of *entire surrender of one’s whole being to the great work of seeking to honor Him*. Oh, I have strived for that—would to God I might attain unto it! I have now concentrated all my prayers into one and that one prayer is this—that I may die to self—and live wholly to Him! It seems to me to be the highest stage of man—to have no wish, no thought, no desire but Christ! To feel that to die were bliss, if it were for Christ. That to live in penury and woe and scorn and contempt and misery were sweet for Christ. To feel that it did not matter what became of one’s self, so that one’s Master was but exalted. To feel that though, like a sear leaf, you are blown in the blast, you are quite careless where you are going—as long as you feel that the Master’s hand is guiding you according to His will! Or rather to feel that though, like the diamond, you must be cut, that you care not how sharply you may be cut so that you may be made fit to be a brilliant jewel in *His* crown. That you care little what may be done to you, if you may but honor *Him!* If any of you have attained to that sweet feeling of self-annihilation, you will look up to Christ as if He were the sun and you will say of yourself, “O Lord, I see Your beams, I feel myself to be not a beam from You—but darkness, swallowed up in Your light. The most I ask is that You would live in me— that the life I live in the flesh may not be my life, but Your life in me— that I may say with emphasis, as Paul did, ‘For me to live is Christ.’” A man that has attained to this never need care what is the opinion of this world! He may say, “Do you praise me? Do you flatter me? Take back your flatteries! I ask them not at your hands—I sought to praise my Master. You have laid the praises at my door. Go, lay them at His and not at mine! Do you scorn me? Do you despise me? Thrice happy am I to hear it, if you will not scorn and despise *Him*!” And if you will, yet know this, that He is beyond your scorn! Therefore smite the soldier for his Captain’s sake—yes, strike, strike—but the King you cannot touch! He is highly exalted—and though you think you have gotten the victory, you may have routed one soldier of the army—but the main body is triumphant! One soldier seems to be smitten to the dust, but the Captain is coming on with His victorious cohorts and shall trample you, flushed with your false victory, beneath His conquering feet!

As long as there is a particle of selfishness remaining in us, it will mar our sweet rejoicing in Christ—till we get rid of it—we shall never feel constant joy. I think that the root of sorrow is self. If we once got rid of that, sorrow would be sweet, sickness would be health, sadness would be joy, penury would be wealth, as far as our feelings with regard to them are concerned. *They* might not be changed, but *our feelings* under them would be vastly different! If you would seek happiness, seek it at the roots of your selfishness. Cut up your selfishness and you will be happy. I have found that whenever I have yielded to the least joy, when I have been praised, I have made myself effeminate and weak. I have then been prepared to feel acutely the arrows of the enemy. But when I have said of the praises of men, “Yes, what are you? Worthless things!”—then I could also say of their contempt—“Come on! Come on! I’ll send you all where I sent the praises. You may go together and fight your battles with one another, but as for me, let your arrows rattle on my mail—they must not, and they shall not reach my flesh!” But if you give way to one, you will to another. You must seek and learn to live wholly on Christ—to sorrow when you see *Christ* maligned and dishonored, to rejoice when you see *Him* exalted. Then you will have constant cause for joy! Sit down, now, O reviled one, poor, despised and tempted one. Sit down, lift up your eyes, see Him on His Throne and say within yourself, “Little though I am, I know I am united to Him! He is my love, my life, my joy! I care not what happens, so long as it is written, ‘The Lord reigns.’”

**II.**Now, briefly upon the second point. Here, also, is the very fountain and wellspring of joy, in THE REASON OF CHRIST’S EXALTATION. “Wherefore God also has highly exalted Him.” Why? Because, “He, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made Himself of no reputation and took upon Him the form of a Servant and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross. Wherefore God also has highly exalted Him.” This, of course, relates to the Manhood of our Lord Jesus Christ. As God, Christ needed no exaltation. He was higher than the highest, “God over all, blessed forever.” But the symbols of His Glory, having been for a while obscured, having wrapped His Godhead in mortal flesh—His flesh with His Godhead ascended up on high and the Man-God, Christ Jesus, who had stooped to shame and sorrow and degradation, was highly exalted “far above all principalities and powers”—that He might reign Prince Regent over all worlds, yes, over Heaven itself! Let us consider, for a moment, that depth of degradation to which Christ descended. And then, my Beloved, it will give you joy to think that for that very reason His Manhood was highly elected. Do you see that Man—

***“The humble Man before His foes,  
The weary Man and full of woes?”***  
Do you mark Him as He speaks? Note the marvelous eloquence which

pours from His lips and see how the crowds attend Him. But do you hear in the distance the growling of the thunders of calumny and scorn? Listen to the words of His accusers! They say He is “a gluttonous Man and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners.” “He has a devil and is mad.” All the whole vocabulary of abuse is exhausted by abusive censure upon Him. He is slandered, abused, persecuted! Stop! Do you think that He is by this cast down, by this degraded? No, for this very reason—“God has highly exalted Him.” Mark the shame and spit that have come upon the cheeks of yonder Man of Sorrows! See His hair plucked with cruel hands. Mark how they torture Him and how they mock Him. Do you think that this is at all dishonorable to Christ? It is apparently so, but listen to this—“He became obedient” and, therefore, “God has highly exalted Him.” Ah, there is a marvelous connection between that shame and spit and the bending of the knee of seraphs! There is a strange, yet mystic link, which unites the calumny and the slander with the choral sympathies of adoring angels! The one was, as it were, the seed of the other. Strange that it should be, but the black, the bitter seed brought forth a sweet and glorious flower which blooms forever! He suffered and He reigned! He stooped to conquer and He conquered, for He stooped and was exalted, for He conquered!

Consider Him still further. Do you mark Him in your imagination nailed to yonder Cross! Oh yes! Oh, how I mark the floods gushing down His cheeks! Do you see His hands bleeding and His feet, too, gushing gore? Behold Him! The bulls of Bashan gird Him round and the dogs are hounding Him to death! Hear Him! “Eloi, Eloi, lama Sabacthani?” The earth is startled with fright! A God is groaning on a Cross! What? Does not this dishonor Christ? No. It honors Him! Each of the thorns becomes a brilliant jewel in His diadem of Glory! The nails are forged into His scepter and His wounds clothe Him with the purple of empire! The treading of the winepress has stained His garments, but not with stains of scorn and dishonor. The stains are embroideries upon His royal robes forever. The treading of that winepress has made His garments purple with the empire of a world—and He is the Master of a universe forever! O Christian! Sit down and consider that your Master did not mount from earth’s mountains into Heaven but from her valleys! It was not from heights of bliss on earth that He strode to eternal bliss, but from depths of woe He mounted up to Glory! Oh, what a stride was that, when, at one mighty step from the grave to the Throne of the Highest, the Man-Christ, the God, did gloriously ascend! And yet reflect He, in some way, mysterious, yet true, was exalted because He suffered! “Being found in fashion as a Man, He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross. Wherefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him a name which is above every name.” Believer, there is comfort for you here, if you will take it! If Christ were exalted through His degradation, so shall you be! Count not your steps to triumph by your steps upward but by those which are seemingly downward! The way to Heaven is downhill! He who would be honored forever, must sink in his own esteem and often in that of his fellow men. Oh, think not of yon fool who is mounting to Heaven by his own light opinions of himself, and by the flatteries of his fellows, thinks that he shall safely reach Paradise! No, that shall burst on which he rests and he shall fall and be broken in pieces. But he who descends into the mines of suffering shall find unbounded riches there—and he who dives into the depths of grief shall find the pearl of Everlasting Life within its caverns!

Remember, Christian, that you are exalted when you are disgraced. Read the slanders of your enemies as the plaudits of the just. Count that the scoff and jeer of wicked men are equal to the praise and honor of the godly—their blame is censure and their censure praise. Reckon, too, if your body should ever be exposed to persecution, that it is no shame to you, but the reverse. And if you should be privileged, (and you may), to wear the blood-red crown of martyrdom, count it no disgrace to die! Remember that the most honorable in the Church are “the noble army of martyrs.” Reckon that the greater the sufferings they endured, so much the greater is their “eternal weight of glory.” And so do you, if you stand in the brunt and thick of the fight. Remember that you shall stand in the midst of Glory—if you have the hardest to bear, you shall have the sweetest to enjoy! On with you, then—through floods, through fire, through death, through Hell, if it should lie in your path! Fear not. He who glorified Christ because He stooped, shall glorify you! For after He has caused you to endure, awhile, He will give you “a crown of life which fades not away.”

**III.**And now, in the last place, Beloved, here is yet another comfort for you. THE PERSON WHO exalted Christ is to be noticed. “GOD also has highly exalted Him.” The emperor of all the Russians, crowns himself. He is an autocrat and puts the crown upon his own head—but Christ has no such foolish pride! Christ did not crown Himself. “GOD also has highly exalted Him.” The crown was put upon the head of Christ by God! And there is to me a very sweet reflection in this—that the hand that put the crown on Christ’s head will one day put the crown on ours—that the same Mighty One who crowned Christ, “King of kings and Lord of lords,” will crown us, when He shall make us “kings and priests unto Him forever.” “I know,” said Paul, “there is laid up for me a crown of glory which fades not away, which God, the righteous Judge, shall give me in that day.”

Now, just pause over this thought—that Christ did not crown Himself, but that His Father crowned Him. That He did not elevate Himself to the Throne of Majesty, but that His Father lifted Him there and placed Him on His Throne. Why, reflect thus—man never highly exalted Christ. Put this, then, in opposition to it. “*God*also has highly exalted Him.” Man hissed Him, mocked Him, hooted Him. Words were not hard enough— they would use stones. “They took up stones again to stone Him.” And stones failed. Nails must be used and He must be Crucified. And then there comes the taunt, the jeer, the mockery, while He hangs languishing on His Cross. Man did not exalt Him. Set the black picture there. Now put this with this glorious—this bright scene, side by side with it—and one shall be a foil to the other! Man dishonored Him—“God also exalted Him.” Believer, if all men speak ill of you, lift up your head and say, “Man exalted not my Master. I thank him that he exalts not me. The servant should not be above his Master, nor the servant above his Lord, nor he that is sent, greater than He that sent him”—

***“If on my face for His dear name,  
Shame and reproach shall be,  
I’ll hail reproach and welcome shame—  
For He’ll remember me.”***

God will remember me and highly exalt me, after all, though man casts me down.

Put it, again, in opposition to the fact that Christ did not exalt Himself. Poor Christian! *You*feel that you cannot exalt yourself. Sometimes you cannot raise your poor depressed spirits. Some say to you, “Oh, you should not feel like this.” They tell you, “Oh, you should not speak such words, nor think such thoughts.” Ah, “The heart knows its own bitterness and a stranger intermeddles not therewith”—yes, and I will improve upon it, “nor a friend, either.” It is not easy to tell how another ought to feel and how another ought to act. Our minds are differently made, each in its own mold, which mold is broken afterwards and there shall never be another like it. We are all different, each one of us. But I am sure there is one thing in which we are all brought to unite in times of deep sorrow, namely, in a sense of helplessness. We feel that we cannot exalt ourselves. Now remember, our Master felt just like it. In the 22nd Psalm, which, if I read it rightly, is a beautiful soliloquy of Christ upon the Cross, He says to Himself, “I am a worm and no man.” As if He felt Himself so broken, so cast down that instead of being more than a man, as He was, He felt for awhile less than man. And yet, when He could not lift a finger to crown Himself, when He could scarcely heave a thought of victory, when His eyes could not flash with even a distant glimpse of triumph—then His God was crowning Him! Are you so broken in pieces, Christian? Think not that you are cast away, forever, for ,“God also has highly exalted Him” “who did not exalt Himself.” And this is a picture and prophecy of what He will do for you!

And now, Beloved, I can say little more upon this text save that I bid you, now, for a few minutes, meditate and think upon it. Oh, let your eyes be lifted up. Bid Heaven’s blue veil divide. Ask power of God—I mean *spiritual* power from on high—to look within the veil. I bid you not look to the streets of gold, nor to the walls of jasper, nor to the pearlygated city. I do not ask you to turn your eyes to the white-robed hosts who forever sing loud hallelujahs—but yonder, my Friends, turn your eyes—

***“There, like a man, the Savior sits! The God, how bright He shines! And scatters infinite delight On all the happy minds!”***

Do you see Him?—  
***“The head that once was crowned with thorns, Is crowned with glory now!  
A royal diadem adorns  
That mighty Victor’s brow!  
No more the bloody crown,  
The Cross and nails no more—  
For Hell itself shakes at His frown  
And all the heavens adore.”***

Look at Him! Can your imagination picture Him? Behold His transcendent glory! The majesty of kings is swallowed up. The pomp of empires dissolves like the white mist of the morning before the sun, the brightness of assembled armies is eclipsed! He, in Himself, is brighter than the sun, more terrible than armies with banners! Look at Him! Look at Him! Oh, hide your heads, you monarchs! Put away your gaudy pageantry, you lords of this poor narrow earth! His Kingdom knows no bounds. Without a limit His vast empire stretches out itself. Above Him all is His! Beneath Him many a step are angels and they are His. And they cast their crowns before His feet. With them stand His elect and ransomed and *their* crowns, too, are His! And here upon this lower earth stand His saints and they are His and they adore Him! And under the earth, among the infernal, where devils growl their malice, even there is trembling and adoration—and where lost spirits, with wailing and gnashing of teeth forever lament their being—even there, there is the acknowledgement of His Godhead, even though the confession helps to make the fire of their torments hotter! In Heaven, in earth, in Hell, all knees bend before Him and every tongue confesses that He is God! If not now, yet in the time that is to come this shall be carried out, that every creature of God’s making shall acknowledge His Son to be “God over all, blessed forever. Amen.” Oh, my soul anticipates that blessed day when this whole earth shall willingly bend its knee before its God. I do believe there is a happy era coming, when there shall not be one knee unbent before my Lord and Master. I look for that time, that latter-day Glory, when kings shall bring presents, when queens shall be the nursing mothers of the Church, when the gold of Sheba and the ships of Tarshish and the camels of Arabia shall, alike, be His. When nations and tribes of every tongue shall—

***“Dwell on His name with sweetest song,  
And infant voices shall proclaim  
Their early blessings on His name.”***

Sometimes I hope to live to see that all-auspicious era—that tranquil age of this world, so much oppressed with grief and sorrow by the tyranny of its own habitants. I hope to see the time when it shall be said, “Shout, for the great Shepherd reigns and His unsuffering Kingdom now is come”—when earth shall be one great orchestra of praise and every man shall sing the glorious hallelujah anthem of the King of kings! But even now, while waiting for that era, my soul rejoices in the fact that every knee does virtually bow, though not willingly, yet really. Does the scoffer, when he mouths high Heaven, think that he insults God? He thinks so, but his insult dies long before it reaches half-way to the stars. Does he conceive, when in his malice he forges a sword against Christ, that his weapon shall prosper? If he does, I can well conceive the derision of God when He sees the wildest rebel, the most abandoned despiser still working out his great decrees, still doing that which God has eternally ordained—and in the midst of his wild rebellion still running in the very track which in some mysterious way from before all eternity had been marked as the track in which that being should certainly move! “The wild steeds of earth have broken their bridles, the reins are out of the hands of the charioteer”—so some say—but they are not, or if they are, the steeds run the same round as they would have done had the Almighty still grasped the reins! The world has not gone to confusion. Chance is not God. God is still Master and let men do what they will and hate the Truth we now prize, they shall, after all, do what God wills and their direst rebellion shall prove but a species of obedience, though they know it not!

But you will say, “Why do you yet find fault, for who has resisted such a will as that?” “No, but O man, who are you that replies against God? Shall the thing formed say to Him that formed it, why have You made me thus? Has not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honor and another unto dishonor? What if God, willing to show His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much long-suffering, the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction—and that He might make known the riches of His Glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had afore prepared unto Glory?” Who is he that shall blame Him? Woe unto him that strives with his Maker! He is God—know that, you inhabitants of the land—and all things, after all, shall serve His will! I like what Luther says in his bold hymn, where, notwithstanding all that those who are haters of Predestination choose to affirm, he knew and boldly declared, “He everywhere has sway and all things serve His might.” Notwithstanding all they do, there is God’s sway, after all! Go on, Reviler! God knows how to make all your reviling into songs! Go on, you warrior against God, if you will. But know this, your sword shall help to magnify God and carve out Glory for Christ—when *you* thought it might slaughter His Church! It shall come to pass that all you do shall be frustrated, for God makes the diviners mad and says, “Where is the wisdom of the scribe? Where is the wisdom of the wise?” Surely, “Him has God exalted and given Him a name which is above every name.”

And now, lastly, Beloved, if it is true, as it is, that Christ is so exalted that He is to have a name above every name and every knee is to bow to Him, will we not bow our knees this morning before His Majesty? You must, whether you will or not, one day bow your knee. O iron-sinewed Sinner, bow your knee now! You will have to bow it, Man, in that day when the lightning shall be loosed and the thunder shall roll in wild fury. You will have to bow your knee, then. Oh, bow it now! “Kiss the Son, lest He be angry and you perish from the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little.” O Lord of Hosts! Bend the knees of men! Make us all the willing subjects of Your Divine Grace, lest afterward, we should be the unwilling slaves of Your terror—dragged with chains of vengeance down to Hell! O that now those who are on earth might willingly bend their knees, lest in Hell it should be fulfilled, “Things under the earth shall bow the knee before Him.” God bless you, my Friends. I can say no more but that. God bless you, for Jesus’ sake! Amen.

Adapted from*The C.H. Spurgeon Collection*, Version 1.0.  
**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.** Sermon #1003 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

**÷Php 2.12**

YOUR OWN SALVATION  
NO. 1003

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, JULY 30, 1871, *BY C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“Your own salvation.”***Php 2:12***.***

WE select the words, “ *your own salvation*,” as our text this morning, not out of any singularity, or from the slightest wish that the brevity of the text should surprise you—but because our subject will be the more clearly before you if only these three words are announced. If I had nominally taken the whole verse I could not have attempted to expound it without distracting your attention from the topic which now weighs upon my heart. O that the Divine Spirit may bring home to each one of your minds the unspeakable importance of “your own salvation”!

We have heard it said by hearers that they come to listen to us and we talk to them upon subjects in which they have no interest. You will not be able to make this complaint today, for we shall speak only of “your own salvation.” And nothing can more concern you. It has sometimes been said that preachers frequently select very unpractical themes. No such objection can be raised today—for nothing can be more practical than this— nothing more necessary than to urge you to see to “your own salvation.”

We have even heard it said that ministers delight in abstruse subjects, paradoxical dogmas, and mysterious surpassing comprehension. But, assuredly, we will keep to plain sailing this morning. No sublime doctrines, no profound questions shall perplex you. You shall only be called on to consider “your own salvation”—a very homely theme, and a very simple one, but for all that—the most weighty that can be brought before you. I shall seek after simple words, also, and plain sentences to suit the simplicity and plainness of the subject, that there may be no thought whatever about the speaker’s language, but only concerning this one, sole topic, “your own salvation.”

I ask you all, as reasonable men and women who would not injure or neglect yourselves, to lend me your most serious attention. Chase away the swarming vanities which buzz around you, and let each one think for himself upon his “own salvation.” O may the Spirit of God set each one of you apart in a mental solitude and constrain you, each one, to face the Truth of God concerning his own state! Each man apart, each woman apart! The father apart, and the child apart—may you now come before the Lord in solemn thought and may nothing occupy your attention but this—“your own salvation.”

**I.**We will begin this morning’s meditation by noting THE MATTER UNDER CONSIDERATION—*Salvation*! Salvation! A great word, not always understood, often narrowed down, and its very marrow overlooked. Salvation! This concerns everyone here present. We all fell in our first parent. We have all sinned personally. We shall all perish unless we find salvation. The word salvation contains within it *deliverance from the guilt of our past sins*. We have broken God’s Law, each one of us, more or less flagrantly. We have all wandered the downward road, though each has chosen a different way.

Salvation brings to us the blotting out of the transgressions of the past, acquittal from criminality, purging from all guilt that we may stand accepted before the great Judge. What man in his sober senses will deny that forgiveness is an unspeakably desirable blessing! But salvation means more than that—it includes *deliverance from the power of sin*. Naturally we are all fond of evil and we run after it greedily. We are the bond slaves of iniquity, and we love the bondage. This last is the worst feature of the case. But when salvation comes it delivers the man from the power of sin. He learns that it is evil and he regards it as such—he loathes it—repents that he has ever been in love with it.

He turns his back upon it, becomes, through God’s Spirit, the master of his lusts, puts the flesh beneath his feet and rises into the liberty of the children of God. Alas, there are many who do not care for this—if this is salvation they would not give a farthing for it. They love their sins. They rejoice to follow the devices and imaginations of their own corrupt hearts. Yet be assured, this emancipation from bad habits, unclean desires, and carnal passions is the main point in salvation, and if it is not ours, salvation in its other branches is not and cannot be enjoyed by us.

Dear Hearer, do you possess salvation from sin? Have you escaped the corruption which is in the world through lust? If not, what have you to do with salvation? To any right-minded man, deliverance from unholy principles is regarded as the greatest of all blessings. What do *you* think of it? Salvation includes *deliverance from the present wrath of God* which abides upon the unsaved man every moment of his life. Every person who is unforgiven is the object of Divine wrath. “God is angry with the wicked every day. If he turn not, He will whet His sword.” “He that believes not is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.”

I frequently hear the statement that this is a state of probation. This is a great mistake—for our probation has long since passed. Sinners have been tried and found to be unworthy. They have been “weighed in the balances,” and “found wanting.” If you have not believed in Jesus condemnation already rests upon you—you are reprieved awhile—but your condemnation is recorded. Salvation takes a man from under the cloud of Divine wrath, and reveals to him the Divine love. He can then say, “O God, I will praise You though You were angry with me. Your anger is turned away and You comfort me.”

Oh, it is not Hell hereafter which is the only thing a sinner has to fear— it is the wrath of God which rests upon him now! To be unreconciled to God, now, is an awful thing—to have God’s arrow pointed at you as it is at this moment, even though it flies not from the string as yet—is a terrible thing! It is enough to make you tremble from head to foot when you learn that you are the target of Jehovah’s wrath—“He has bent His bow, and made it ready.” Every soul that is unreconciled to God by the blood of His Son is in the gall of bitterness. Salvation at once sets us free from this state of danger and alienation. We are no longer the “children of wrath, even as others,” but are made children of God and joint heirs with Christ Jesus. What can be conceived more precious than this?

And then we, lastly, receive that part of salvation which ignorant persons put first—and make to be the whole of salvation—in consequence of our being delivered from the guilt of sin, and from the power of sin, and from the present wrath of God, we are *delivered from the future wrath of God*. Unto the uttermost will that wrath descend upon the souls of men when they leave the body and stand before their Maker’s bar if they depart this life unsaved. To die without salvation is to enter into damnation! Where death leaves us, there judgment finds us. And where judgment finds us, eternity will hold us forever and ever.

“He which is filthy, let him be filthy still,” and he that is wretched as a punishment for being filthy, shall be hopelessly wretched still. Salvation delivers the soul from going down into the pit of Hell. We, being justified, are no longer liable to punishment because we are no longer chargeable with guilt. Christ Jesus bore the wrath of God that we might never bear it. He has made a full Atonement to the justice of God for the sins of all Believers. Against him that believes there remains no record of guilt. His transgressions are blotted out, for Christ Jesus has finished transgression, made an end of sin, and brought in everlasting righteousness.

What a comprehensive word, then, is this—“salvation!” It is a triumphant deliverance from the guilt of sin, from the dominion of it, from the curse of it, from the punishment of it, and ultimately from the very existence of it! Salvation is the death of sin, its burial, its annihilation—yes, and the very obliteration of its memory. For thus says the Lord—“their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.” Beloved Hearers, I am sure that this is the weightiest theme I can bring before you, and therefore I cannot be content unless I see that it grasps you and holds you fast. I pray you give earnest heed to this most pressing of all subjects.

If my voice and words cannot command your full attention, I could wish to be dumb that some other pleader might, with wiser speech, draw you to a close consideration of this matter. Salvation appears to me to be of the first importance—when I think of what it is in itself—and for this reason I have, at the outset, set it forth before your eyes. But you may be helped to remember its value if you consider that God the Father thinks highly of salvation. It was on His mind before ever the earth was. He thinks salvation a lofty business, for He gave His Son that He might save rebellious sinners.

Jesus Christ, the Only-Begotten, thinks salvation most important for He bled, He died to accomplish it. Shall I bide with that which cost Him His life? If He came from Heaven to earth, shall I be slow to look from earth to Heaven? Shall that which cost the Savior a life of zeal and a death of agony be of small account with me? By the bloody sweat of Gethsemane, by the wounds of Calvary, I beseech you be assured that salvation must be worthy of your highest and most anxious thoughts! It could not be that God the Father and God the Son should, thus, make a common sacrifice—the one giving His Son and the other giving Himself for salvation, and yet salvation should be a light and trivial thing.

The Holy Spirit thinks it no trifle, for He condescends to work continually in the new creation that He may bring about salvation. He is often vexed and grieved, yet He continues, still, His abiding labors that He may bring many sons unto Glory. Despise not what the Holy Spirit esteems, lest you despise the Holy Spirit Himself. The sacred Trinity thinks much of salvation. Let us not neglect it. I beseech you who have gone on trifling with salvation to remember that we who have to preach to you dare not trifle with it.

The longer I live, the more I feel that if God does not make me faithful as a minister, it had been better for me never to have been born. What a thought that I am set as a watchman to warn your souls, and if I warn you not aright, your blood will be laid at my door! My own damnation will be terrible enough, but to have your blood upon my skirts as well! God save any one of His ministers from being found guilty of the souls of men. Every preacher of the Gospel may cry with David, “Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, God of my salvation!”

Do you think, O careless Hearers, that God’s Church considers salvation to be a little matter? Earnest men and women, by thousands, are praying day and night for the salvation of others, and are laboring, too, and making great sacrifices—and are willing to make many more—if they may, by any means, bring some to Jesus and His salvation. Surely, if gracious men, and wise men, think salvation to be so important, you who have, up to now, neglected it, ought to change your minds upon the matter and act with greater care for your own interests.

The angels think it a weighty business. Bowing from their thrones, they watch for repenting sinners. And when they hear that a sinner has returned to his God, they waken anew their golden harps and pour forth fresh music before the Throne, for “there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repents.” It is certain, also, that devils think salvation to be a great matter for their arch-leader goes about seeking whom he may devour. They never tire in seeking men’s destruction! They know how much salvation glorifies God and how terrible the ruin of souls is. And therefore they compass sea and land if they may destroy the sons of men.

Oh, I pray you, careless Hearer, be wise enough to dread that fate which your cruel enemy, the devil, would gladly secure for you! Remember, too, that lost souls think salvation important. The rich man, when he was in this world, thought highly of nothing but his barns and the housing of his produce. But when he came into the place of torment, then he said—“Father Abraham, send Lazarus to my father’s house, for I have five brothers: that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment.”

Lost souls see things in another light than that which dazzled them here. They value things at a different rate from what we do here, where sinful pleasures and earthly treasures dim the mental eye. I pray you, then, by the blessed Trinity, by the tears and prayers of holy men, by the joy of angels and glorified spirits, by the malice of devils and the despair of the lost—arouse yourselves from slumber, and neglect not this great salvation! I shall not depreciate anything that concerns your welfare, but I shall steadfastly assert that nothing so much concerns any one of you as salvation.

Your health, by all means, let the physician be fetched if you are sick. Care well for diet and exercise, and all sanitary laws. Look wisely to your constitution and its peculiarities. But what matters it, after all, to have possessed a healthy body if you have a perishing soul? Wealth, yes, if you must have it, though you shall find it an empty thing if you set your heart upon it. Prosperity in this world, earn it if you can do so fairly, but, “what shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?”

A golden coffin will be a poor compensation for a damned soul. To be cast away from God’s Presence—can that misery be assuaged by mountains of treasure? Can the bitterness of the man’s death be sweetened by the thought that the wretch was once a millionaire, and that his wealth could affect the polities of nations? No, there is nothing in health or wealth comparable to salvation! Nor can honor and reputation bear a comparison with it. Truly they are but baubles, and yet, for all that, they have a strange fascination for the soul of men. Oh, Sirs, if every harp string in the world should resound your glories, and every trumpet should proclaim your fame, what would it matter if a louder voice should say, “Depart from Me, you cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels”?

Salvation! *Salvation*! SALVATION! Nothing on earth can match it, for the merchandise of it is better than silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold! The possession of the whole universe would be no equivalent to a lost soul for the awful damage it has sustained and must sustain forever. Pile up the worlds, and let them fill the balance—yes, bring as many worlds as there are stars, and heap up the scale on the one side. Then in this other scale place a single soul endowed with immortality, and it outweighs the whole! Salvation! Nothing can be likened unto it. May we feel its unutterable value, and therefore seek it till we possess it in its fullness!

**II.**But now we must advance to a second point of consideration, and I pray God, the Holy Spirit, to press it upon us, and that is, WHOSE MATTER IS IT? We have seen what the matter is—salvation. Now, consider whose it is. “*Your own*salvation.” At this hour nothing else is to occupy your thoughts but this intensely personal matter—and I beseech the Holy Spirit to hold your minds fast to this one point. If you are saved it will be “your own salvation,” and you yourself will enjoy it. If you are not saved, the sin you now commit is your own sin, the guilt your own guilt. The condemnation under which you live, with all its disquietude and fear, or with all its callousness and neglect is your own—all your own.

You may share in other men’s sins, and other men may become participators in yours, but a burden lies on your own back which none besides can touch with one of his fingers. There is a page in God’s Book where your sins are recorded unmingled with the transgressions of your

fellows. Now, Beloved, you must obtain for all this sin a personal pardon, or you are undone forever! No other can be washed in Christ’s blood for you. No one can believe and let his faith stand instead of your faith. The very supposition of human sponsorship in religion is monstrous.

You must *yourself* repent, *yourself* believe, *yourself* be washed in the blood, or else for *you* there is no forgiveness, no acceptance, no adoption, no regeneration. It is all a *personal* matter through and through—“your own salvation” it must be, or it will be your own eternal ruin. Reflect anxiously that you must personally die. No one imagines that another can die for him. No man can redeem his brother or give to God a ransom. Through that iron gate I must pass alone, and so must you.

Dying will have to be our own personal business. And in that dying we shall have either personal comfort or personal dismay. When death is past, salvation is still our “own salvation.” For if I am saved, *my* “eyes shall see the King in His beauty: they shall behold the land that is very far off.” My eyes shall see Him, and not another on my behalf. No brother’s head is to wear your crown. No stranger’s hand to wave your palm. No sister’s eye to gaze for you upon the Beatific Vision, and no sponsor’s heart to be filled as your proxy with the ecstatic bliss. There is a personal Heaven for the personal Believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. It must be, if you possess it, “your own salvation.”

But if you have it not, reflect again, that it will be your own *damnation*. No one will be condemned for you! No other can bear the hot thunderbolts of Jehovah’s wrath on your behalf. When you shall say, “Hide me, you rocks! Conceal me, O mountains,” no one will spring forward, and say, “You can cease to be accursed, and I will become a curse for you.” A Substitute there is, today, for everyone that believes—God’s *appointed* Substitute, the Christ of God. But if that Substitution is not accepted by you, there can never be another—and there remains only for you a personal casting away to suffer personal pangs in your own soul and in your own body *forever*.

This, then, makes it a most solemn business. O be wise, and look well to “your own salvation.” You may be tempted today and very likely you are to forget your own salvation by thoughts of other people. We are all so apt to look abroad in this matter, and not to look at home. Let me pray you to reverse the process and let everything which has made you neglect your own vineyard be turned to the opposite account and lead you to begin at home, and see to “your own salvation.”

Perhaps you dwell among the saints of God, and you have been rather apt to find fault with them, though for my part I can say these are the people I desire to live with and desire to die with—“your people shall be my people, and your God my God.” But, O if you live among the saints ought it not to be your business to see to—“your own salvation”? See that you are truly one of them, not merely written in their Church-book, but really engraved upon the palms of Christ’s hands. Not a false professor, but a real possessor. Not a mere wearer of the name of Christ, but a bearer of the nature of Christ.

If you live in a gracious family be afraid lest you should be divided from them forever. How could you endure to go from a Christian household to the place of torment! Let the anxieties of saints lead you to be anxious. Let their prayers drive you to prayer. Let their example rebuke your sin and their joys entice you to their Savior. O see to this! But perhaps you live most among ungodly men, and the tendency of your conversation with the ungodly is to make you think as they do of the trifles and vanities and wickedness of this life. Do not let it be so—on the contrary, say, “O God, though I am placed among these people, yet gather not my soul with sinners, nor my life with bloody men. Let me avoid the sins into which they fall and the impenitence of which they are guilty. Save me, I pray You, O my God! Save me from the transgressions which they commit.”

Perhaps today some of your minds are occupied with thoughts of the dead who have lately fallen asleep. There is a little one unburied at home, or there is a father not yet laid in the grave. Oh, when you weep for those who have gone to Heaven, think of “your own salvation,” and weep for yourselves—for you have parted with them forever unless you are saved. You have said, “Farewell” to those beloved ones, *eternally* farewell, unless you, yourselves, believe in Jesus. And if any of you have heard of persons who have lived in sin and died in blasphemy, and are lost, I pray you think not of them carelessly lest you also suffer the same doom—for what says the Savior—“Suppose you that these were sinners above all the sinners?” “I tell you, No: but except you repent, you shall all likewise perish.”

It seems to me as if everything on earth, and everything in Heaven, and everything in Hell, yes—and God Himself—calls upon you to seek “your own salvation” first and foremost, and above all other things. It may be profitable to mention some persons upon whom this theme needs much pressing. I will begin at home. There is great need to urge this matter upon official Christians, such as I am, such as my Brethren, the deacons and elders are. If there are any persons who are likely to be deceived, it is those who are called by their office to act as shepherds to the souls of others. Oh, my Brethren, it is so easy for me to imagine, because I am a minister, and have to deal with holy things, that therefore I am safe!

I pray I may never fall into that delusion, but may always cling to the Cross as a poor, needy sinner resting in the blood of Jesus. Brother ministers, co-workers, and officials of the Church—do not imagine that office can save you. The son of perdition was an Apostle—greater than we are in office—and yet at this hour he is greater in destruction. See to it, you that are numbered among the leaders of Israel, that you, yourselves, are saved! Unpractical doctrinalists are another class of persons who need to be warned to see to their own salvation. When they hear a sermon they sit with their mouths open, ready to snap at half a mistake.

They make a man an offender for a word, for they conclude themselves to be the standards of orthodoxy, and they weigh up the preacher as he speaks with as much coolness as if they had been appointed deputy judges for the Great King Himself. Oh, Sir, weigh yourself! It may be a great thing to be sound in the head, in the faith—but it is a greater thing to be sound in the *heart*. I may be able to split a hair between orthodoxy and heterodoxy, and yet may have no part nor lot in the matter. You may

be a very sound Calvinist, or you may happen to think soundness lies in another direction—but, oh, it is nothing—it is *less* than nothing unless your souls feel the power of the Truth of God, and you yourselves are born again. See to “your own salvation,” you wise men in the letter, who have not the Spirit.

So, too, certain persons who are always given to curious speculations need warning. When they read the Bible it is not to find whether they are saved or not, but to know whether we are under the third or fourth vial, when the millennium is going to be, or what is the battle of Armageddon. Ah, Sir, search out all these things if you have time and skill, but look to your own salvation first! The book of Revelation—blessed is he that understands it—but not unless, first of all, he understands this, “He that believes and is baptized shall be saved.” The greatest doctor in the symbols and mysteries of the Apocalypse shall be as certainly cast away as the most ignorant, unless he has come to Christ and rested his soul in the atoning work of our great Substitute.

I know some who greatly need to look to their own salvation. I refer to those who are always criticizing others. They can hardly go to a place of worship but what they are observing their neighbor’s dress or conduct. Nobody is safe from their remarks—they are such keen judges—and make such shrewd observations. You fault-finders and talebearers, look to “your own salvation.” You condemned a minister the other day for a supposed fault, and yet he is a dear servant of God who lives near his Master. Who are you, Sir, to use your tongue against such a one as he? The other day a poor humble Christian was the object of your gossip and your slander, to the wounding of her heart. Oh, see to yourself, see to yourself!

If those eyes which look outward so piercingly would sometimes look inward they might see a sight which would blind them with horror. Blessed horror if it led them to turn to the Savior who would open those eyes afresh, and grant them to see His salvation! I might also say that in this matter of looking to personal salvation, it is necessary to speak to some who have espoused certain great public designs. I trust I am as ardent a Protestant as any man living, but I know too many red-hot Protestants who are but little better than Romanists. Though the Romanists of old might have burnt them, they would certainly withhold toleration from Romanists today, if they could. And therein I see not a pin to choose between the two bigots.

Zealous Protestants, I agree with you—but I warn you that your zeal in this matter will *not* save you—or stand in the place of personal godliness. Many an orthodox Protestant will be found at the left hand of the Great Judge. And you, too, who are forever agitating this and that public question, I would say to you, “Let politics alone till your own inward politics are settled on a good foundation.” You are a Radical Reformer! You could show us a system of political economy which would right all our wrongs and give to every man his due. Then I pray you right you own wrongs, reform yourself, yield yourself to the love of Jesus Christ—or what will it signify to you, though you knew how to balance the affairs of nations, and to regulate the arrangement of all classes of society—if you, yourself, shall be blown away like chaff before the winnowing fan of the Lord?

God grant us Grace, then, whatever else we take up with, to keep it in its proper place and make our calling and election sure.  
**III.**And now, thirdly, and O, for Grace to speak aright, I shall try to ANSWER CERTAIN OBJECTIONS. I think I hear somebody say, “Well, but don’t you believe in *predestination*? What have we to do with looking to our own salvation? Is it not all fixed?” You fool! For I can scarcely answer you till I have given you your right title! Was it not fixed whether you should get wet or not in coming to this place? Why, then, did you bring your umbrella? Is it not fixed whether you shall be nourished with food today or shall go hungry? Why, then, will you go home and eat your dinner?  
Is it not fixed whether you shall live or not tomorrow? Will you, therefore, cut your throat? No, you do not reason so wickedly, so foolishly from destiny in reference to anything but “your own salvation!” And you know it is not reasoning, it is just mere talk. Here is all the answer I will give you, and all you deserve. Another says, “I have a difficulty about this looking to our own salvation. Do you not believe in*full assurance*? Are there not some who know that they are saved beyond all doubt?”  
Yes, blessed be God, I hope there are many such now present! But let me tell you who these are *not*. These are *not* persons who are afraid to examine themselves. If I meet with any man who says, “I have no need to examine myself any more. I know I am saved and therefore have no need to take any further care,” I would venture to say to him, “Sir, you are lost already! This strong delusion of yours has led you to believe a lie.” There are none so cautious as those who possess full assurance, and there are none who have so much holy fear of sinning against God, nor who walk so tenderly and carefully as those who possess the full assurance of faith. Presumption is *not* assurance, though, alas, many think so. No fully assured Believer will ever object to being reminded of the importance of his own salvation.  
But a third objection arises. “This is very *selfish*,” says one. “You have been exhorting us to look to ourselves, and that is sheer selfishness.” Yes, so you say. But let me tell you it is a kind of selfishness that is absolutely *necessary* before you can be *unselfish*. A part of salvation is to be delivered from selfishness, and I am selfish enough to desire to be delivered from selfishness. How can you be of any service to others if you are not saved yourself? A man is drowning. I am on London Bridge. If I spring from the parapet and can swim, I can save him. But suppose I cannot swim—can I render any service by leaping into sudden and certain death with the sinking man? I am disqualified from helping him till I have the ability to do so.  
There is a school over yonder. Well, the first enquiry of him who is to be the master must be, “Do I know, myself, that which I profess to teach?” Do you call that enquiry selfish? Surely it is a most unselfish selfishness, grounded upon common sense. Indeed, the man who is not so selfish as to ask himself, “Am I qualified to act as a teacher?” would be guilty of gross selfishness in putting himself into an office which he was not qualified to fill. I will suppose an illiterate person going into the school and saying, “I will be master here, and take the pay,” and yet he cannot teach the children to read or write.  
Would he not be very selfish in not seeing to his own fitness? But surely it is not selfishness that would make a man stand back and say, “No, I must first go to school myself, otherwise it is but a mockery of the children for me to attempt to teach them anything.” This is not selfishness, then, when looked at aright, which makes us see to our own salvation—for it is the basis from which we operate for the good of others.  
**IV.**Having answered these objections, I shall, for a minute, attempt to RENDER SOME ASSISTANCE to those who would gladly be right in the best things. Has the Holy Spirit been pleased to make anyone here earnest about his own salvation? Friend, I will help you to answer two questions. Ask yourself, first, “Am I saved?” I would help you to reply to that very quickly. If you are saved this morning, you are the subject of a work within you. As says the text, “Work out your own salvation. For it is God which works in you.” You cannot work it in, but when God works it in you, work it out.  
Have you a work of the Holy Spirit in your soul? Do you feel something more than unaided human nature can attain unto? Have you a change worked in you from above? If so, you are saved. Again, does your salvation rest wholly upon Christ? He who hangs anywhere but upon the Cross hangs upon that which will deceive him. If you stand upon Christ, you are on a Rock. But if you trust in the merits of Christ in part, and your own merits in part, then you have one foot on a Rock but another on the quicksand. And you might as well have both feet on the quicksand—for the result will be the same—  
***“None but Jesus, none but Jesus  
Can do helpless sinners good.”***  
You are not saved unless Christ is All in All in your soul—Alpha and Omega, beginning and ending, first and last. Judge by this, again—if you are saved you have turned your back on sin. You have not left off sinning—would to God we could do so—but you have left off *loving* sin. You sin not willfully, but from infirmity. And you are earnestly seeking after God and holiness. You have respect to God, you desire to be like He, you are longing to be with Him. Your face is towards Heaven. You are as a man who journeys to the Equator. You are feeling more and more the warm influence of the heavenly heat and light.  
Now, if such is your course of life—that you walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit, and bring forth the fruits of holiness—then you are saved. May your answer to that question be given in great honesty and candor to your own soul. Be not too partial a judge. Conclude not that all is right because outward appearances are fair. Deliberate before you return a favorable verdict. Judge yourselves that you be not judged. It were better to condemn yourself and be accepted of God than to acquit yourself and find your mistake at the last.  
But suppose that question should have to be answered by any here in the negative (and I am afraid it must be), then let those who confess that they are not saved hear the answer to another enquiry—“How can I be saved?” Ah, dear Hearer, I have not to bring a huge volume nor a whole armful of folios to you, and to say, “It will take you months and years to understand the plan of salvation.” No, the way is plain, the method simple! You shall be saved within the next moment if you believe!  
God’s work of salvation is, as far as its commencement and essence is concerned, instantaneous. If you believe “that Jesus is the Christ,” you are born of God now! If you do now stand in spirit at the foot of the Cross, and view the incarnate God suffering, bleeding, and dying there—and if as you look at Him your soul consents to have Him for her Savior, and casts herself wholly on Him—you are saved! How vividly there comes before my memory this morning the moment when I first believed in Jesus! It was the simplest act my mind every performed, and yet the most wonderful— for the Holy Spirit worked it in me!  
It was, by His Grace, simply to have done with reliance upon myself. To have done with confidence in all but Jesus, and to rest alone my undivided confidence in Him and in what He had done. My sin was in that moment forgiven me, and I was saved, and may it all be so with you, my Friends, even with you, if you also trust the Lord Jesus. “Your own salvation” shall be secured by that one simple act of faith. And from now on, kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, you shall tread the way of holiness till you come to be where Jesus is in everlasting bliss!  
God grant that not a soul may go out of this place unsaved! Even you, little children, who are here—you youngsters, you young boys and girls—I pray that you may in early life attend to “your own salvation.” Faith is not a Grace for old people only—nor for your fathers and mothers only. If your little hearts shall look to Him who was the holy Child Jesus, if you know but little—yet, if you trust Him—salvation shall be yours. I pray that to you who are young, “your own salvation” may become, while you are yet in your youth, a matter of joy, because you have trusted it in the hands of your Redeemer.  
Now I must close—but one or two thoughts press me. I must utter them before I sit down. I would anxiously urge each person here to see to this matter of his own salvation. Do it, I pray you, and in earnest, for no one can do it for you. I have asked God for your soul, my Hearer, and I pray I may have an answer of peace concerning you. But unless you also pray, vain are my prayers. You remember your mother’s tears? Ah, you have crossed the ocean since those days, and you have gone into the deeps of sin! But you remember when you used to say your prayers at her knee, and when she would lovingly say “Amen,” and kiss her boy and bless him, and pray that he might know his mother’s God?  
Those prayers are ringing in the ears of God for you, but it is impossible that you can ever be saved unless it is said of you, “Behold, *he* prays!” Your mother’s holiness can only rise up in judgment to condemn your willful wickedness unless you imitate it. Your father’s earnest exhortations shall but confirm the just sentence of the Judge unless you hearken to them and yourselves consider and put your trust in Jesus. Oh, think, each one of you—there is but *one* hope, and if that one hope is lost—it is gone forever!  
Defeated in one battle, a commander attempts another and hopes that he may yet win the campaign. Your life is your *one* fight, and if it is lost, it is lost forever. The man who was bankrupt yesterday commences again in business with good heart and hopes that he may yet succeed. But in the business of this mortal life, if you are found bankrupt, you are bankrupt forever and ever. I do therefore charge you by the living God, before whom I stand, and before whom I may have to give an account of this day’s preaching before another day’s sun shall shine—I charge you see to your own salvation!  
God help you, that you may never cease to seek unto God till you know by the witness of the Spirit that you have, indeed, passed from death unto life. See to it now, *now*. NOW! NOW! This very day the voice of warning comes to certain of you from God with special emphasis because you greatly need it—for your time is short. How many have passed into eternity during this week! You may yourself be gone from the land of the living before next Sunday.  
I suppose, according to the calculation of probabilities, out of this audience there are several who will die within a month. I am not conjecturing now, but according to all probabilities these thousands cannot all meet again, even if all have a mind to do so. Who, then, among us will be summoned to the unknown land? Will it be you, young woman, who has been laughing at the things of God? Shall it be yonder merchant who has not time enough for religion? Shall it be you, my foreign friend, who has crossed the ocean to take a holiday? Will you be carried back a corpse?  
I do implore you think of yourselves, all of you. You who dwell in London will remember years ago when the cholera swept through our streets—some of us were in the midst of it and saw many drop around us, as though smitten with an invisible but deadly arrow. That disease is said to be on its way here again. It is said to be rapidly sweeping from Poland across the Continent, and if it comes and seizes some of you, are you ready to depart?  
Even if that form of death does not afflict our city, as I pray it may not, yet is death ever within our gates, and the pestilence walks in darkness every night! Therefore consider your ways. Thus says the Lord, and with His Word I conclude this discourse—“Prepare to meet your God, O Israel.”

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—**Heb 10:23-39**.**  
Adapted from*The C.H. Spurgeon Collection*, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #820 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

WORKING OUT WHAT IS WORKED IN  
NO. 820

**DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, JULY 12, 1868, *BY C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which works  
in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure.”*** Php 2:12-13***.***

I HAVE frequently heard these words addressed to an indiscriminate audience and it has always struck me that they have thereby been twisted from their right meaning. These words, as they stand in the New Testament, contain no exhortation to *all* men, but are directed to the people of God. They are not intended as an exhortation to the unconverted. They are, as we find them in the Epistle, beyond all question addressed to those who are already saved through a living faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

No proof can be needed of this assertion, for the whole Epistle is directed to the saints. It begins, “To all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons.” And the verse before us contains within itself conclusive evidence that Paul was not speaking to unbelievers, for he calls the persons addressed, “my Beloved,” and he says of them, “As you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence.” He was, therefore, writing to persons who had been obedient to the Gospel! And all true obedience springs from saving faith—he was, therefore, addressing those who, through faith in Christ, had been rendered obedient to the Gospel commands.

To obedient Believers he writes, “Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.” It may be right to use a text apart from the connection, and I will not venture to censure those who have dealt so with this passage, but it is never right to attempt to draw authoritative doctrine from a text apart from the context, and therefore nothing can be drawn from the text before us in reference to the *duty* or to the *power* of the *unconverted—* seeing that from its connection it is tied and bound to those who are Believers in Christ Jesus—and to those who were and still continue to be obedient to the Gospel which Paul proclaimed.

If we sometimes looked a little more to the connection of sentences we should be kept from very dangerous errors. The Bible ought to be treated in conformity with common sense, as you would use any other book. If you took the writings of any author, however carefully he might express himself, if you picked out a sentence here, and a sentence there, you might make the man say what he never believed. No, even make him to be the supporter of opinions which he abhors! So it is with the Bible—if you pay no regard to the connection and general run of the passage, you miss the mind of the Spirit of God—and thrust *your* own mind into God’s Words than bring out God’s mind from the Words of the Holy Spirit.

The exhortation before us is given solely to the people of God and I feel it to be more than my conscience could endure to force it into any other service. To as many as are obedient to the Gospel, the Word of the Holy Spirit comes this morning, “Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God that works in you.” In a certain sense, the salvation of every person who believes in Christ is complete—and complete without any working out on his part—seeing that “it is finished,” and we are complete in Jesus. Observe that there are two parts of our salvation, the one complete, the other as yet incomplete—though guaranteed to be brought to perfection.

The first part of our salvation consists of a work *for* us. The second, of a work *in* us. The work for us is perfect—none can add to it. Jesus Christ our Lord has offered a complete Atonement for all the offenses of His people. He took His people into union with Himself, and by that union they became entitled to all the merit of His righteousness. They became partakers of His everlasting life, and inheritors of His Glory. Saints are, therefore, saved *completely* so far as substitutionary work is concerned. Such was the meaning of those majestic death-words of our Lord, “It is finished.” He had finished transgression, made an end of sin and brought in everlasting righteousness. Thus He perfected forever them that are set apart.

Now with the work of Christ we cannot intermeddle—we are never told to work *that* out, but to receive it by faith. The blessing comes “to him that works not, but believes on Him that justifies the ungodly.” Justification is not at all by human effort, but by the free gift of God. The second part of salvation consists of a work *in* us—this is the operation of God the Holy Spirit. As many as were redeemed by the blood of Jesus are also, in due time, renewed in the spirit of their minds. The Holy Spirit, in regeneration, descends *into* a man and creates in him a new nature. He does *not* destroy the old that remains still to be battled with and to be overcome.

Though the nature which the Spirit implants is perfect in its kind and in its degree, yet it is not perfect in its development. It is a seed which needs to work itself out into a tree. It is an infant which requires to grow into the stature of a perfect man. The new nature has in it all the elements of entire perfection, but it needs to be expanded—brought out. To use the words of the text, worked out with fear and trembling. God, having first worked it in, it becomes the business of the Christian life to work out the secret inner principle till it permeates the entire system—till it overcomes the old nature—till it, in fact, utterly destroys inbred corruption and reigns supreme in the man’s every part—as it shall do when the Lord takes us to dwell with Himself forever.

Understand then, it is not at all to the mediatorial work of Christ—it is not at all with regard to the pardon of our sins, or the justification of our persons that Paul speaks—but only with regard to our inner spiritual life. He says of that, “Work it out with fear and trembling. For it is God that works in you.” This morning I am sure I shall have your attention while I shall note, first, the matter to be worked out. Secondly, the model to be worked to. Thirdly, the spirit in which we are to work. And, fourthly, the great encouragement which is suggested in the text for such working.

**I.**THE MATTER TO BE WORKED OUT is spoken of in the text as “your own salvation.” Every Christian is to be a worker for the good and salvation of others. It is very doubtful whether a man knows the Lord unless he desires to extend the boundaries of the Master’s kingdom—but on no account is any Christian to think that he can safely neglect the interests of his *own* soul. “Work out your *own* salvation.” Your charity must begin at home.

You ought to seek the spread of the Truth of God, but you must first know the Truth yourself, and you must daily seek to understand it better. You are bound to attempt the reclaiming of the wandering, but you must take heed lest you, yourself, wander, for however unselfish you may become—and God grant that you may have much unselfishness—yet still it is a law of Nature, and equally a law of Divine Grace that you should see to self-preservation. Indeed, if you neglect this, you will become utterly unable to do anything for the salvation of other people. “Work out your own salvation.”

Plowing another man’s field, suffer not your own to lie fallow. Indicating to another the mote in his eye, do not permit a beam to blind yourself. You preach against the sluggard—let not the thorn and the thistle grow in your own garden. You testify of the medicine which Christ can give, but physician, see to it that you are yourself healed! The first business of a Christian man should be to see that all his own Graces are in a vigorous condition—Repentance always weeping for sin, Faith always looking to the Cross, Patience becoming stronger to bear her cross—Hope’s eyes are clear to behold the coming Glory! Then to faith we add courage, and to courage patience, and to patience brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness charity.

We are never to sit down and fold our arms, and say, “My lifework is over. I am saved. I have no pilgrimage to make to the Celestial City. I wage no war for driving out the Canaanites.” O Beloved, the time of rest will come on the other side of the Jordan, but as yet it is for you to press forward like the racer whose prize is not yet won, and to watch like a warrior whose conflict is not ended! Your own salvation is your first concern.

The text speaks of working out “your own salvation.” Now, the matter to be worked *out* is a something which the text tells us is at the same time worked *in*. We may safely defy anybody to work a thing out which is not first in. God, we are told in the second verse of our text, works *in* us. Therefore it is that we are to work the *inward* towards the *outward*. We work out, bring out, educe from within ourselves to our exterior life, that which God constantly works in us in the interior secret recesses of our spiritual being.

An unconverted man cannot work any good thing out, for there is nothing worked in. If he works out that which is within, apart from what God has worked in him, he will naturally work out that which is of his own nature or of the devil—strife, envy, murder, and I know not what. Work out the human heart—work out what Nature has worked in, what the devil has worked in—and you work out the hideous criminal, or else the proud and self-righteous Pharisee. But, Believer, there are better principles in you, and you are to see to the *education*—perhaps that is the word—to the working out from within your own soul that which God has worked in you.

You have faith, work it out, then—act like a Believer, trust God in daily life. You possess the incorruptible seed—bring it out, then—let your whole conduct be incorruptibly pure and heavenly. You profess that the Holy Spirit dwells in you, and He does so if you are a Christian. Well, then, let your whole conduct be saturated with the sacred influence—let it be yours to lead the heavenly life of one in whom dwells the Lord from Heaven! Be you Christ-like, inasmuch as the Spirit of Christ dwells in you. This is the matter to be attended to, then—the bringing out, the working out, and developing the mine of Divine Grace which God has worked in us.

“Your own salvation,” the text says, and that is correct enough. Holiness is salvation. We are not to work out our salvation from the *guilt* of sin—that has been done by Christ. We have now to work out our salvation from the *power* of sin. God has, in effect, worked that in us—He has broken the yoke of sin in our hearts. It lives, and struggles, and contends— but it is dethroned and our life is to be the continual overthrow and dethronement of sin in our members. A man may be saved from the guilt of sin, and yet at present he may not be altogether saved from the power of pride. For instance, a saved man may be defiled by being purse-proud, or proud of his position, or of his talents.

Now the Believer must, with fear and trembling, work out his salvation from that most intolerable evil. A man may be the subject of a quick and hasty disposition. He may be often angry without a cause. My Brother, your salvation from sin is not *complete* until you are saved from a bad temper. Day by day, with solemn resolution, you should work out your salvation from that. I might take any form of besetting sin or any one of the temptations which come from the world, the flesh, and the devil, and in each case bid you labor for salvation from its bondage.

Our business is to be continually fighting for liberty from sin, contending earnestly that we may not wear the shackles of any infirmity, that we may not be the bond-slaves in any shape or form of the works of the devil. We need to be working out, by vehement efforts, after holiness. We need to be working out our entire deliverance from sin that dwells in us, and from sin that contends without us. This, I believe, is to be the great business of the Christian’s life. I have heard it said that the good sculptor, whenever he sees a suitable block of marble, firmly believes that there is a statue concealed within it and that his business is but to take away the superfluous material and so unveil the “thing of beauty” which shall be “a joy forever.”

Believer, you are that block of marble! You have been quarried by Divine Grace and set apart for the Master’s service. We cannot see the image of Christ in you, yet, as we would wish. True, there are some traces of it, some dim outlines of what it is to be. It is for you, with the chisel and the mallet, with constant endeavor and holy dependence upon God, to work out that image of Christ in yourself till you shall be discovered to be by all men like unto your Lord and Master! God has sketched the image of His Son in you—in the but slightly carved marble, He has fairly outlined it— and you have but to go on chipping away those sins, infirmities, and corruptions till the fair likeness of the Incarnate God shall be seen by all.

You are this day, Christian, like the seed of Israel in Canaan. You have not to escape from Egypt—you are already free. With a high hand and with an outstretched arm God has set you free from the Pharaoh of your sin. You have already passed through the wilderness of your convictions— the fiery serpents and howling wilderness are all over now—you have crossed the river, and by His Grace you are a saved man! Jesus is the Joshua in command. He reigns and rules in your spirit. You have not to fight your way towards the land—you are *in* it—for we that have believed do enter into rest.

So what have you to do now? Why, you have to extend the kingdom within yourself by routing one nation of sins after another! You have, in the power of the Spirit, to hang up your corruptions before the light of the sun—to destroy them utterly, and let not one escape! Canaan will never be a place of rest to you till you have driven away the Canaanites and live in the land without association with sin. This is the matter, then, to which you are earnestly invited to attend. May the Holy Spirit grant you Grace never to forget it so long as you live.

**II.**Secondly, what is THE MODEL TO BE WORKED TO? Every artist requires some pattern or idea in his mind to which he is to work. I must beg to refer you to the chapter itself. Taking the text according to its connection, Paul has been urging the people here addressed to be “likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind”—in which four expressions we have the same idea. Paul would have all God’s people to be unanimous. He would have them *think* alike—that is the precise interpretation of the Greek—he would have them hold the same views, receive the same truth, contend for the same faith.

He would have them as much alike in heart as in head. They are to be all found in the same love, not some loving the rest, but each loving *all*, and not even a single person exempted. Every soul flaming with the sacred fire! He would have them knit together in every sacred enterprise, being of one accord, or as the Greek has it, of one soul—as though, instead of a hundred souls enshrined in a hundred persons, they had but one soul incarnate in a hundred bodies! He would have all the people of God to be fused into one race, made to love each other, in *fact*, fervently with a pure heart.

Now by this may we tell whether we are becoming like our Lord. What is our standing, today, towards our fellow Christians? If there are strifes and divisions among you, you are carnal and walk as men. From where come divisions? Come they not from fleshly passions? Brothers and Sisters, if you cannot work with your fellow Believers. If you cannot feel a love towards your fellow members—you may, perhaps, feel justified in keeping aloof from them, and speaking after the manner of *men* and before *men*, your justification may be a good one—but, rest assured, were you fully developed in the *Divine* life, you would have enough patience to bear with the infirmity of a Brother and to overlook his errors. You would have enough Divine Grace, also, to overcome your own infirmities, which may, after all, be the *real cause* of the division.

Brethren, when we set up different opinions, one of us must be wrong and therefore we are not complete in knowledge. When we set up different policies in a Church, we cannot all be equally wise. Therefore some of us need to be better led of the Spirit of God. But, oh, when a Church marches like the old Roman legion—every man keeping step, and each warrior inspired as with one soul when he saw the eagle brought to the front, and followed it to victory or death—then the Church has life and vigor, and only then! I thank God we have had much of this for many years, and I rejoice in it, but we still want more. There are some hard pieces of metal among us which have not been melted, and, therefore, are not essentially one with the general mass. And I pray God, if at any time we shall begin to be separated in heart from one another, the eternal Spirit would put us in the fire again and melt us down and cast us in the same mold—and may God send the like unity to all Christian Churches.

Melancthon mourned, in his day, the divisions among Protestants and sought to bring the Protestants together by a parable of the war between the wolves and the dogs. The wolves were somewhat afraid, for the dogs were many and strong, and therefore they sent out a spy to observe them. On his return, the scout said, “It is true the dogs are many, but there are not many mastiffs among them. There are dogs of so many sorts one can hardly count them. And as for the most of them,” said he, “they are little dogs, which bark loudly but cannot bite. However, this did not cheer me so much,” said the wolf, “as this—that as they came marching on, I observed they were all snapping right and left at one another, and I could see clearly that though they all hate the wolf, yet each dog hates every other dog with all his heart.”

I fear it is true, still, for there are many professors who snap right and left—at followers of Jesus, too—when they had better save their teeth for the wolves! If our enemies are to be put to confusion, it must be by the united efforts of all the people of God—unity is strength. The Lord send purity and unity to Zion, and then woe be to your gates, O Philistia! The standard of Judah’s Lion shall lead the way to certain victory when the divisions of Reuben are healed, and Ephraim ceases to envy her sister. Heal our divisions, O Lord, so we shall tread down our adversaries in Your strength!

The third verse gives us another rule for guidance in our sacred statuary, as I shall call it—it is humiliation. “Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than themselves.” Speak of great works that have been achieved by engineers, bridges cast over ravines, mountains bored? Here is a work far more tremendous and which no man might venture to attempt if it were not for the encouragement that God has already worked it in him! *Nothing* is to be done through strife. But how much of religious service is from top to bottom carried out in strife?

Sometimes one sect will seek to increase itself merely for the sake of becoming larger and more influential than another. Do Sunday school teachers ever try to get good classes and to obtain conversions that they may be more honored than others? Does that ever enter the classroom? Do street preachers ever wish to preach better than others, and only in order that they may win more applause? I know this from experience that the spirit of strife may easily enough come into the pulpit and that the minister may be seeking to outrun his neighbor when he thinks he is filled with zeal for God. The devil has had a finger in the building of many places of worship—the people have strived with one another and then they have separated and built a new chapel, fancying that it has been all for the glory of God! Meanwhile, the devil has felt that it has been for *his* glory, and he has rejoiced therein.

Whenever I serve God out of any motive of emulation or strife, I prove to myself that I have not worked out my salvation, from at least one evil passion, and I have need to fear and tremble—to begin again and labor diligently till the spirit of pride shall be driven out of my soul. “Let nothing,” again, “be done out of vainglory.” But how much is done out of vainglory? How many people dress themselves out of vainglory? The thought is uppermost, “How do I look in this?” How many give to God’s cause out of vainglory, that they may seem to be liberal? How often does a preacher polish his sentences and pick his words that he may be thought to be an able orator and an eloquent preacher? Vainglory! It is a wonder that God accepts us in any of our works at all—in fact He never could if He did not see them washed in the precious blood of Jesus, for in almost everything, from the lowest member up to the most useful minister of Christ, this vainglory will thrust itself in.

Ah, Brethren, you must work out your own salvation from this spirit of vainglory, and do it with fear and trembling, God helping you. It is unworthy of you to be vainglorious. It is dishonorable to God. You must be brought down from it. The Divine arm will aid you in the struggle, and I beseech you, as you have obeyed full many a Gospel precept from our lips, so be obedient now, and strive against all vainglory. Whenever I have noticed it (and I have noticed it among you) I have been greatly pained, and pained because I may have set the example myself. Too often workers are disposed to magnify their own labors and think lightly of the work of others. It is remarked that such an institution is flourishing, but somebody says at once, “Yes, yes, there are many conversions, but I wonder whether they will all last?”

It is a miserable vice of workers to depreciate the work of other workers—it is quite melancholy to see it in the best of people—and I see it everywhere. People will, if they can, pull other people’s work down in order to make their own work appear to be rising rapidly. This vainglory is all wrong! It shows all that we are not yet conformed to the image of that great Model of perfection, Jesus Christ, the Apostle and High Priest of our own profession.

Next, the Apostle says, “In lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than themselves.” Alas, how far we fall below this standard! How few have attained this Divine Grace! Bunyan beautifully portrays Christiana and Mercy coming up out of the Interpreter’s house. They have had jewels put upon them, and when they are both washed, Mercy says to Christiana, “How comely and beautiful you look!” “No,” Christiana said, “My Sister, I see no beauty in myself, but how lovely *you* look! I think I never saw such loveliness.” They were both lovely because they could see other people’s loveliness!

Your own spiritual beauty may be very much measured by what you can see in other people. When you say, “Ah, there are no saints now,” it is to be feared that *you* are not one. When you complain that love is dead in the Christian Church it must be dead in *your* heart, or you would not say so. As you think of others, that *you* are. Out of your own mouth shall you be condemned. Your corn shall be measured with your own bushel. When we come to admire the good in other people that we have not yet attained ourselves, instead of depreciating other people because they have not something which we have—when we get to that—we shall be evidently approaching nearer to Christ!

If the popular preacher can say, “My beloved Brother A has a smaller congregation, and is not a very attractive preacher, yet he visits his flock so carefully, and looks after each individual so well that I admire him greatly, and must endeavor to imitate him.” And if the man with the small congregation says, “My Brother B studies to find out acceptable words, and commend himself to the people of God, and he is very earnest, and is a great soul-winner. I wish I were as earnest. I admire it in him.”

Why, these interchanges of loving estimate are infinitely more Christlike than for the minister with the large congregation to say, “Brother A has mistaken his calling. He cannot get above a hundred people to hear him—what is the good of his preaching?” And for the lesser light to reply spitefully, “Ah, B’s work is just a flash in the pan—fine words and excitement—there’s nothing in it.” *Satan* greatly approves of our railing at each other, but God does not! Let us learn, this morning, to esteem others instead of depreciating them—for in proportion as we exhibit a meek and lowly spirit, we shall be working out our own salvation.

The Apostle lingers for one moment more to inculcate as a part of the salvation worked out the development of the spirit of mutual love and charity. “Look not every man on his own interests, but every man also on the interests of others.” In temporal matters do not think it to be enough if your own business prospers—have a desire to see your Brethren obtaining a sufficiency. Do not be so greedy as to scrape everything to your own dish, but let other men have some share in your concerns. If they are poor and you wealthy, help them. If they are in straits and you possess abundance, minister to their necessities. Let not Christ be naked and you able but unwilling to clothe Him. Let not Christ be sick and you visit Him not. But if one member suffers, do, as another member, suffer with him.

In spiritual things think it not enough yourself to live near to God—take the cases of others who may have backslidden and lay them before the Throne of Grace, and seek, by loving rebuke or gentle admonition, to restore such as are fallen—remembering yourself, lest you, also, be tempted. Be anxious for the good of all the members of the Church to which you belong. In fact, so far as you can, seek the soul prosperity of *all* the people of God. Observe then, my Brothers and Sisters, the drift of the Apostle is this—if we are to work out our own salvation it must be by putting self down in the dust and becoming unselfish! In proportion as we are selfish we are sold under sin, but in proportion as we are *unselfish* and live for others for Christ’s sake—in proportion as we value others and set a low estimate upon ourselves—in that proportion we are advancing in Divine Grace and are working out our own salvation from sin.

As I said before, here is the work, here is the difficulty. The descent into the crater of sin is easy enough. How many slide into sin as swiftly as travelers sliding down the snowy side of an Alp! But to toil *upward.* To climb the hill of God—this is the work, this is the difficulty. Blessed is that man who, leaning on the eternal arm, works out his own salvation and is permitted to ascend the hill of the Lord and stand in His holy place!

Before the Apostle had done with his subject, he set before the Philippians the best model in the world. Read the next verse and see after what image we are to be fashioned. “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men. And being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross.”

There is your Model! Jesus stoops from Godhead to manhood, from the Throne above the cherubim to the manger, side by side with the cattle! Stoop, my Brother, if you would rise! If you would be great, be little! If you would be high, be low! If you would be exalted, condescend! Yes, and be like the Master was, for you never can be perfect without it—willing even to give up life itself if it is for God’s Glory. Renouncing His reputation and being numbered with the transgressors, and crucified with malefactors— He then gave up His life to death—death in its most shameful and painful shape—the death of the Cross! We shall not have thoroughly worked out our salvation from the bondage of this fleshly body till we are willing to give up reputation and honor.

If we may but serve Christ, and are willing to put our neck upon the block, our property to shipwreck, and to give all up for Him, if so He wills it, *then* we shall have thoroughly worked out our salvation! But this is hard work! The roots of our selfishness go very deep. The deadly cancer of self-love has thrust its horrible roots into our souls, intertwisting them with the vital fibers of our heart. I suppose when the last root of pride is torn away we shall ascend to be with God. Until we are wrapped up in our death clothes we shall never have completely worked out our own salvation. The battle ends only with life, but we shall earn the victory, by God’s Grace, for His power within us shall help us to bring ourselves down to that heavenly nothingness in which God is All in All.

Only then shall we master our members, subdue our inclinations, conquer our lofty thoughts, lay low our pride—and then, then will God also highly exalt us—as He has His dear Son! And then shall we partake in the honor which belongs to Him and reign with Him forever and ever. Seeing that we are humbled with Him and willing to die with Him, we shall be exalted with Him and made to live with Him world without end!

I have thus brought before you the Model to which we are to work, as well as the matter which we are to work out.  
**III.**We have, in the third place in the text, THE SPIRIT IN WHICH THIS MATTER IS TO BE WORKED OUT. First it is to be an energetic spirit. “Work out.” From the Greek word for “work” we get our English word “energy.” The bringing out of the new nature into actual exposition in our life is a work of superlative difficulty. Some professors appear to have imbibed the notion that the Grace of God is a kind of opium with which men may drug themselves into slumber, and their passion for strong doses of sleepy doctrine grows with that which it feeds on. “God works in us,” they say, “therefore there is nothing for us to do.”  
Bad reasoning! False conclusion! God works, says the text, therefore *we* must work out because God works in. The assistance of Divine Grace is not given to us to put aside our own efforts, but to excite them. God comes to us to work in us—what? To work in us to be indifferent? Ah, no, to work in us to will with resolution and firmness! Does He work in us, having willed, to sit still? Ah, no, He works in us to *do*. The direct effect of the influence of Grace upon the heart is to make a man *active—*and the more Divine Grace he has the more energetic he becomes! A man will never overcome sin except by energy. You cannot get your pride down, I am sure, by merely resolving to do it—you will have to watch that old enemy and keep your eye on him as a detective watches a thief—for when you think, “At last I have really overcome him,” you will discover him at work under another shape—and your conflict will commence anew.  
So with a hot temper. How some Brethren have had to struggle with it, and when they have thought, “Now I really have mastered it, by the Grace of God,” then something has occurred in which the temptation has assailed him from another corner, and the old man has set the tongue on fire again. Yes, our life must be spent in constant watching, and, as we find ourselves tripping, we must add constant *repentance—*perpetually praying to be upheld for the future—unceasingly struggling to attain something yet beyond, pressing forward evermore. Evermore, I say, for to pause is to retreat, to halt is to be driven back.  
The text further says, work out your own salvation “with fear.” What kind of fear is that? If you read a Romish author, he will tell you, “this is the fear of ‘purgatory,’ or the fear of Hell.” And if you go to an Arminian author, he will assure you that it is the fear of falling from Grace and being ultimately lost. I do not believe that this fear is ever necessary to a child of God at all. This is the fear that genders to bondage. If I am sure that I believe in Jesus, I am no more afraid of being lost than I am afraid that God Himself should die, because we have Christ’s word for it: “I give unto My sheep *eternal life*, and they shall *never* perish, neither shall any pluck them out of My hand.”  
You do not suppose that Paul, who knew that fear “has torment,” and is cast out by perfect love, would tell us to work out our salvation under so disheartening an influence, do you?! The fear of the text is that which makes a fear to offend so good a God—a hallowed, childlike fear, of which we read—“Blessed is the man that fears always.” A reverential awe of the Most High. A pious dread of offending—this is the fear which is to be cultivated by us. It is *not* the fear which is the enemy of full assurance, but it is the fear which is opposed to carnal security or recklessness.  
But the “trembling”—what is that? Is that the slave’s trembling? No, this belongs not to heirs of Divine Grace—they have a trembling which is akin to*joy*, for they “rejoice with trembling.” Before the Lord we do not tremble with fright, but we are moved even to quaking with a holy awe! Under a sense of the Presence of God we tremble lest we should sin, we tremble lest that Presence should leave, lest we should grieve the Spirit and vex the Holy One of Israel. We know what it is to tremble with the exceeding joy and glory of the love of God shed abroad in our souls by the Holy Spirit. Strangers do not understand us, but men of God will.  
George Fox was called a Quaker most probably because his whole frame seemed to shiver under the consciousness of the Divine power. We know what it is to contend with sin under a Divine impulse, and to be filled with tremulous anxiety while wrestling with our foe. Sin is to be trembled at, and God also, so that there is a double cause for a solemn awe in the business of the soul’s inner life. It is no child’s play, but an awful weighty business. I pray God we may know more of holy trembling— that the awful majesty of Divine love may be so revealed to us that we may lie prostrate beneath its force, wondering how it is that we are permitted to stand in the midst of such a blaze of love, a bush burning but unconsumed. “Even our God is a consuming fire.”  
Many learn by that text that the Lord, out of Christ, is a consuming fire to the wicked, and so indeed He is, but the passage means far more. The Lord is a consuming fire to *us*. “Who may abide the day of His coming? For He shall be as a refiner’s fire!” He will consume in us all that can be consumed. His own Nature in us cannot be consumed, but all of earth and evil will be. What trembling may well seize us as we think of this! Only that which is Himself in us will come forth out of the furnace—that will live and flourish in the very heat of the fire—but all else must go. Every sacrifice must be salted with fire—this is sharp discipline—and well may we tremble at it.  
**IV.**Lastly, without detaining you much longer, let us notice THE SWEET ENCOURAGEMENT WHICH THE TEXT AFFORDS. We are to work out our salvation for this reason—“It is God which works in you to will and to do of His good pleasure.” Here is help in an exercise beyond your power! Here is help all-sufficient for every emergency! Here is help which it ennobles you to receive. Divine help, help which—if Satan shall put on his utmost force, and if your corruptions shall arrive at their utmost power—shall yet be more than equal to the day.  
Grace all-sufficient dwells in you, Believer! There is a living well springing up within you! Use the bucket, then! Keep on drawing! You will never exhaust it! There is a living source within. Continue to struggle—you will not exhaust the life-force which God has placed within you. There is a growing mine of gold. Spend it! Keep on scattering right and left. Inexhaustible, Divine wealth is yours, therefore cease not to work it out! Observe what God works in us—He works in us to *will*—the desire after holiness, the resolution to put down sin, the pang of grief because we have sinned, the stern resolve that we will not fall into that sin again—all, all is of God! And He who gave the desire will surely fulfill it!  
But He that gave you the will does not leave you there—He works in you the power to *do*. The power to achieve the victory. The power to smite down the loftiest plume of pride shall come from Him. God is equal to all emergencies, therefore fear not. Though your inner life shall be subject to 10,000 dangers, He will give you power to do the right, the just, the lovely and the true. He works gloriously in you. That which He works in you is pleasing in His sight. Note the words, “according to His good pleasure.” It gives God pleasure to see you holy! It is His delight to see you selfdenying—if you conquer yourself it will give Him pleasure.  
Depend upon it, then, since He is pleased with the result and has put forth His own strong hand to bring it about. You, as you work, will not work at a perhaps, but in absolute certainty of success. O Brothers and Sisters, my heart glows with the hope of being altogether rid of the power of sin! Oh, what a day that shall be when neither sin nor Satan shall vex the pleasures of our purified spirits! What bliss will it be to see God face to face, because the un-godlike and un-heavenly have been altogether cast out of us! O long expected day, begin! The best Heaven I could wish would be perfectly to be rid of myself! Perfectly to be free from tendencies to evil! Is not this the Heaven you are panting after? If it is, you shall have it. If you have Grace enough to pine after it—Grace enough to labor for it—you shall yet have Grace enough to win it! I have thus addressed God’s people, and I leave the matter with them.  
I wish I could have addressed you all as Believers, but, alas, you rebel against the Lord! You will not come to Christ, you will not trust in Jesus! Yet, to you unbelievers I have a message—it is but a sentence, and I have done—“Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved.” You have nothing to do with working yet. *Believe* first, and when you have believed, then set to work. But, now, the first Gospel message to you is this, “He that believes and is baptized shall be saved.” Then its awful alternative, “He that believes not shall be damned.” God save you, for Christ’s sake. Amen.

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**÷Php 2.14**

BELIEVERS—LIGHTS IN THE WORLD  
NO. 472

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, SEPTEMBER 28, 1862, *BY REV. C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“Do all things without murmurings and disputing, that you may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom you shine as lights in the world; holding  
forth the Word of Life, that I may rejoice in  
the day of Christ, that I have not run in  
vain, neither labored in vain.”***Php 2:14-16***.***

We shall be very far from the truth if we suppose that Christian precepts have suffered any degeneration of meaning. If we imagine that the precepts of the Gospel were more stern in Apostolic times than in these later ages, we labor under a very gross and dangerous delusion. Fresh from the abominations of heathenism the early converts would naturally be placed under the mildest rules, rather than the more severe. If the Gospel could have known a change, the Apostle would have given its easiest precepts at the first, and then in these better days the whole Revelation would have been brought out and more stringent precepts would have been proclaimed.

Since, however, it is contrary to the genius of the Gospel to be progressive in its Revelation, since it was all revealed at once, we must never imagine that the precepts given by Paul may be toned down and diluted to suit the present age. I say again, Brethren, if these men, fresh from the foul Stygian ditch of heathen abomination and lasciviousness, were nevertheless exhorted to the greatest sublimity of holiness, much more is it incumbent upon us to arrive at a very high state of Christian perfection and walk very near to God and be very close imitators of Christ.

May God help us to hear, this morning, the address which Paul gave to the Church in Philippi. May we feel its full forge in our consciences and embody its full meaning in our lives.

The Apostle says, “ *Do all thing*s”—by which he seems to teach the activity of the Christian Church, for the Christian religion is not mere thinking or feeling but *doing* and working for God. “*Do all things without murmurings*,” without murmuring at *God’s Providence*—which was a common vice of the heathen, who, on their tombstones often recorded their protest against God for having removed their darlings and upbraided Him as cruel and unkind for taking away their relatives.

“Do all things without murmurings *against one another*.” Let your love be so hearty and sincere that you do not envy your richer or more talented Brethren. Let there be no low whispers traveling through your assemblies against those who ought to be esteemed among you. Whatever you do, let no murmuring be mixed with it, but labor with delight and suffer with patience. Let there be no murmurings even against *the ungodly world*. If they are unjust, bear their injustice in silence. Be not always offering complaints. There are a thousand things which you might speak of, but it is better that, like Aaron, you should hold your peace. To suffer in silence shall dignify you, and make you greater than ordinary manhood—for then you shall become like He—who before His accusers opened not His mouth.

The Apostle continues, do all things without “ *disputing*.” Dispute not with God. Let Him do what seems good to Him. Dispute not with your fellow Christians, raise not railing accusations against them. When Calvin was told that Luther had spoken ill of him, he said, “Let Luther call me a devil if he please, I will never say of him but that he is a most dear and valiant servant of the Lord.” Raise not intricate and knotty points by way of controversy. Remember, you have adversaries upon whom to use your swords, and therefore there is little need that you should blunt their edges by dashing at the armor of your fellows.

Dispute not even with the world. The heathen philosophers always sought occasions for debate. Be it yours to testify what God has told you, but court not controversy. Be not ashamed to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints, but never do it in a spirit of mere debating—never because you wish to gain a victory, but only because you would tell what God has bid you reveal. “*That you may be blameless*.” Men *will* blame you, but you must seek, as Christians, to lead lives that give no occasion for blame. Like Daniel, compel them to say of you, “We shall not find any occasion against this Daniel, except we find it against him concerning the Law of his God.”

Erasmus writes of his great adversary, Luther, “Even Luther’s enemies cannot deny but that he is a good man.” Brethren, force this tribute from an unwilling world. Live so that as in Tertullian’s age, men may say as they did in his time, “Such-and-such a man is a good man, even though he is a Christian.” The heathens thought the Christians the worst of men, but were compelled to confess them to be the best, even though they were Christians. “Be you blameless *and harmless*,” says the Apostle. The Greek word might be translated “hornless,” as if you were to be creatures not only that do no harm but *could not* do any.

Like sheep that not only *will not* devour but *cannot* devour, for it were contrary to their nature. For they have no teeth with which to bite, no fangs with which to sting, no poison with which to slay. If you carry arrows, let them be dipped in love. If you bear a sword, let it be the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. But otherwise, be everywhere, even among those that would harm you, “holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners.” “*As the sons of God*,” the Apostle goes on to say—as if the dignity of our relationship should beget in us an equally dignified deportment. “Remember,” says the old philosopher—“Remember, O Antigonus, that you are a king’s son!” Remember, O Christian, that you are a son of the King of kings—even God Himself!

Soil not the fingers which are soon to sweep celestial strings. Let not those eyes become the windows of lust which are soon to see the King in His beauty—let not those feet be defiled in miry places, which are soon to walk the golden streets—let not those hearts be filled with pride and bitterness which are soon to be filled with Heaven, and to overflow with ecstatic joy. As “the sons of God,” remember that the eyes of all are upon you. More is expected from you than from other men, because you have a higher pedigree, for you are descended from the very highest, Himself, and therefore should be the highest and best in the world.

The Apostle then adds, “ *without rebuke*.” Men whom the world cannot rebuke. Men who can stand right straight up and defy their enemies to find any real fault in them. Men who can say without any Phariseeism, as Job did, “Lord, You know that I am not wicked.” My Brethren, I would you were such that men must lie before they can revile you. I would have you men upon whose snow-white garments filth will not stick—who may be, and must be slandered, but cannot be really rebuked. O Beloved, to use Paul’s own words, “Be you sons of God without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation.”

I have expounded the address of Paul. Permit me to remind you that all the while he is telling us to do this as the means to an end—and what is the end? Why, that we may, “shine as lights in the world in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation.” The means themselves are precious. To be “holy, harmless and undefiled,” is a glorious matter of itself. But when such a bright thing becomes but a *means*, how excellent must the end be! How desirable that you and I, and each one of us who has named the name of Jesus, should “shine as lights in the world, holding forth the Word of Life”!

This brings me to the subject which I want to impress upon your hearts this morning. I would that every Believer here, whether member of this Church or of any of the part of Christ’s family, might see to it, that from now on he should shine as a light in the midst of the darkness of this world, giving light to those that come within the range of his influence. There seems to me to be four things about which I may well speak. First, here is *publicit*y *required*—they cannot shine without it. Here is, secondly, *usefulness intended*. Here is thirdly, *position indicated*—they are “in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation.” And here is, fourthly, *an argument suggested*, that in the day of Christ I may rejoice that I have not run in vain, neither labored in vain.

**I.**First then, here is A MEASURE OF PUBLICITY REQUIRED. You will note the text says they are to be *lights*. Now how can they be lights without being seen, and of what use would they be if they could be unseen lights? I cannot tell! But then, they are to *shine*, and how can they shine unless there is some radiance proceeding from them, and how this if they live in secret, and if they are never understood to be Christians at all? But then, where does the text say they are to shine as lights?—in their house? No, “*in the world*.” True, they are to be lights in their own family—but moreover if they come up to the full standard of what they should be, they are to be lights *in the world*.

These three words—lights, lights shining, and lights in the world—most positively teach that a Christian must have some degree of publicity, and that it is hardly possible for him to carry out his true character if he lives in such retirement and secrecy as never to be known to be a Christian. Some timid hearts there are, some gentle spirits, that shun altogether the exposure of their religion. They quote Nicodemus as if they did not know

that Nicodemus is rather a beacon than an example. I would be far from crushing a tender spirit, far from laughing at the nervousness which may keep a man in the back rank when he ought to stand in the forefront of the battle.

But if I should, by some Scriptural remarks, lead Christians to see that they are not to be always seeking retirement, but rather they must stand out and avow the Master. And if I can persuade the gentle spirit to bear its willing witness to Christ, thrice happy shall I be! Pharisees of old courted publicity. They could not give away one halfpenny in the street but they must sound a trumpet that everybody might see their splendid charity. They could not pray in their closet, but they must seek some corner of the street that every passerby might hold up his hands in amazement at the man who was so good that he prayed even in the street!

The world has found this trick out. We usually say of ladies, when we find them working at parties, that they do not work at home. And we should surely think of people who pray in the streets, that they pray nowhere else. And of persons who show their charity publicly, that they show all that they have to show. Ostentatious religion nowadays is soon discovered and detected. But while we must be warned against the pride of the Pharisee, we must take care that we run not into another extreme. “Am I always to serve God by stealth? Am I never to speak a good word for Christ lest somebody should say I am proud?”

Your own conscience will be your guide in that matter. If you detect in yourself any desire to glorify yourself—then you are wrong in making your religion public at all. Plainly, if you discover that you are keeping back in order to get an easier path for yourself—then you are grievously wrong in seeking to hide your religion. If it is for God’s honor for you to publish on the housetops what He has told you in the closet, do it. And if it is for Christ’s honor to do only in the closet that which another man would do in the street, do it. Your conscience will always teach you, if it is an enlightened conscience, when you might act boldly and when, on the other hand, you would be cowardly.

I think there is no difficulty in steering between this Scylla and Charybdis. Any man with a little wisdom will soon discern what he ought to do. But do not, I pray you, make the Pharisee’s pride an excuse for your cowardice. Never say, “I do not like to make a profession because there are so many hypocrites!” The more reason why *you*should make a profession that there may be some honest ones. Do not say, “Oh, I would not, for fear people should think I am proud!” Why should you look at the fear of man which brings a snare—is it not yours to obey God, rather than man?

I cannot understand Christ’s words—“You are a city set on a hill which cannot be hid.” Nor these, “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in Heaven.” Nor these, “He that with his mouth confesses and with his heart believes on the Lord Jesus Christ shall be saved.”—I cannot understand these passages, if you are never to avow your faith, but keep your religion hidden up in a secret place and go to Heaven by stealth.  
How much publicity, then, do we really think is necessary in a Christian? It is becoming that *he should make a public avowal of his faith*. He should come out from among the world and declare himself to be on the Lord’s side. There is an ordinance which God has Himself ordained, which is the proper way in which to make this profession—to be baptized in water, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit— thus openly being buried in water to show our death to the world, and rising out of the water to show that we hope to live a new life as the result of the resurrection of Christ from the dead.

If you should differ as to the form in which this profession is to be made, yet the profession should be made. If you would be honest and true, you must in answer to the Master’s summons, “Who is on the Lord’s side?” come out and say, “Here am I, Lord, I am Your servant and I would serve You even to the end.” You should also be *associated constantly with Christian people*. The one act of profession is not enough—it should be continued by union with some visible Church of Christ. We find in the Apostle’s days that those who were converted were added to the Church. It is written, “They first gave their own selves to the Lord and unto us by the will of God.”

Christianity requires you to unite yourselves with those who are united to Christ. If the Church of Christ is the spouse of Jesus, you should seek to be a member of her visibly, as well as invisibly—especially you that are lately converted, for your presence in the Church is for your good, and much for the Church’s comfort. The man that was healed stood *with* Peter and John. And it is written, when they saw the man that was healed standing with Peter and John, they could say nothing against them. The gathering together of the converts to sustain the minister is a very great help in the propagation of the Truth of God as it is in Jesus.

Besides this association with Christians, there should be *a daily carrying out of your Christianity in your life*. It is not all that we say that shines. That may be only a flash, a sparkle, a display of fireworks—it is our *daily* acting which is the true shining out of Christ within. Let the servant prove her Christianity by being more attentive than any other. Let the master prove his by being more generous than any other master. Let the rich man shine in his liberality. Let the poor man shine in his patience. Let each in every sphere seek to excel those who are not in Christ, that so everyone may prefer us in our position to the worldling in the same office, and take knowledge of us that we have been with Jesus and have learned of Him.

But to shine as lights, we must add *the open testimony of our words*. I will not give a rusty nail for your religion if you can be quiet about it. I do not believe you have any. That which is nearest to the heart is generally most on the tongue. You must be constantly bearing your witness by the words of your mouth for Christ, seeking to teach the ignorant, to warn the careless, to reclaim the backsliding and to bring the wanderers to the Cross. You will have many opportunities in the sphere in which you move, avail yourself of them all, and so shall you shine as a light in the *world*.

And there are times when you cannot shine without *a very bold and stern decision for Christ*. When the old Roman senator, in the days of Vespasian, was told by the emperor that he might go into the senate house but he must hold his tongue, he answered, “I, being a senator, feel

impelled to go into the senate house, and being in the senate, it is the part of a senator to speak what his conscience dictates.” “Then,” said Vespasian, “if you speak you will die.” “Be it known to you, O Emperor,” said he, “that I never hoped to be immortal, nor did I ever wish to live when I might not speak my mind.”

Brave Roman! We must have brave Christians, too, who say, “Being a Christian, it is mine to speak, and if that should cost me all I have, and life itself, I never thought myself immortal, and I wish to die when I may not speak out that which God has written in my heart.” There are times, I say, when if we should falter, or delay, we become traitors at once—make sure that in those “crises of your being”—you promptly follow your Lord.

So much of publicity I think is needed then—an open profession, a constant association with the Christian Church, a perpetual living out of godliness, an open declaration of the same, and a deliberate decision when occasion shall present itself. Look you, Sirs, Christians are *soldie*rs. If our soldiers were to take it into their heads that they ought never to be seen, a pretty pass things would come to. What were the soldiers worth when they shunned parade, and dreaded battle? Take off your regimentals, and be packing, Sirs! We want not men who must always lie skulking behind a bush, and dare not show themselves to friend or foe.

Christians are *runners,* too and what sort of runners are men who run in the dark? Not so, says the Apostle? He says, we are “encompassed about by so great a cloud of witnesses,” and therefore bids us, “lay aside every weight and the sin that does so easily beset us.” What? Running match and no spectators! Ave Imperator! The champion salutes you! He prays you to dismiss the spectators. Conscript fathers, leave your seats and you knights of the empire retire from the race! You common herd retire, or put your fingers to your eyes—here comes a runner who is so dainty that he cannot be looked at, a swift-footed racer who must be scrutinized by no vulgar eye or he will faint and lose the crown.

Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha! The mob laughs. “Ah,” they say, “these are not the men to make a Roman holiday, these timid fools had better play with babes in the nursery, they are not fit to consort with men.” What do you think of Christians who must have the stadium cleared before they can enter the course? Rather, O sons of God, defy all onlookers. Crowd the seats and look on, you angels, and men, and devils, too—and see what you will. What matters it to the Christian, for he is looking unto Jesus! He runs not for you but for the reward—and whether you look or look not—his zeal and earnestness are still the same. Christ is in him, and run he must, look on who will.

**II.**Secondly, here is in the text, USEFULNESS. “Well” says one, “if I were known to be a Christian what use would it be?” We will soon show you. One remark, however, I will make—the better Christian you are, the more public you will be—but the less will be thought *of you*! You have noticed at night a star, it is only a little spark, but still it is very bright, and everybody says, “Do you see that star?” Yes, but there is a moon, why does not everybody say, “Look what a beautiful moon?” They notice the star first, because it is not usual to see stars so brilliant. By-and-by, of a moonlight night, you will hear people say, “What a lovely moon!”

Now, in the daylight people do not say, “What a lovely sun!” No. “What a lovely landscape! What a beautiful view! Look at the tints of those trees now the sun is shining!” Just so, the little Christian is like a star, bright in his little sphere. Others are like the moon, they excite admiration and attention to themselves. But a full-grown Christian, who should be perfectly conformed to the image of Christ, though giving more light than either the moon or the star, would not be half so much looked at, for men would be looking at what he shed light upon, rather than upon him. They would look to the doctrine that he taught rather than to how he taught it. They would be looking rather at the lesson of his life than at the life itself. So that if I should urge you to more and more publicity, it will not be for *your* sake, but that you may be more and more forgotten, while the *Truth of God* is the more clearly seen.

But what is the use of lights, what is the use of Christians as lights? The answer is manifold. We use lights to *make manifest*. A Christian man should so shine in his life that those who come near him can see their own character in his life, can see their sins, can see their lost estate. He should so live that a person could not live with him a week without knowing the Gospel. His conversation should be such that all who are about him should perfectly understand the way to Heaven. Things that men will not see and cannot see without him, should be very clear wherever he is.

Men sometimes read their Bibles and they do not understand the Bible because they want light. Like Philip, we should be willing to sit in the chariot and instruct the passerby, making manifest the meaning of God’s Word, the power of God’s Word, the way of salvation, the life of godliness, and the force of the Truth of God. May I ask each one of you, have you made men understand the Gospel better? “Ah,” says one, “I leave that to the minister.” Then you have neglected your duty—repent of your great sin and ask God, now, to help you to be making manifest to all persons who come near you their sin and the Savior.

The next use of a light is *to guide*. The mariner understands this. When our sailors, some years ago had a Nore light, they thought they were getting on marvelously. But when they had the Mouse, the Maplin, the Swin Middle, and all the other lights on the sands, they soon found navigation much easier than it had been before. Every Christian should light some part of the voyage of life, and there should not be a channel without its light. Blessed pole star! How many a slave have you guided from the swamps and whips of the South up to the country of the free? Blessed are you, O Christian, if your light has led some soul to Jesus, to the land of the free, where the slave can never wear his fetters again. I hope that you have often, when men have scarcely known it, pointed them the way to Christ, by saying, “Behold the Lamb of God.”

Lights are also used for *warnin*g. On our rocks and shoals a lighthouse is sure to be erected. Christian men should know that there are plenty of false lights shown everywhere in the world. The wreckers of Satan are always abroad, tempting the ungodly to sin under the name of pleasure. We must put up the true light upon every dangerous rock, to point out every sin and tell what it leads to, so that we may be clear of the blood of all

men, shining as lights in the world.

Lights also have a very *cheering*influence, and so have Christians. Late one night we had lost our way in a park not far from the suburbs of London, and we were walking along and wondering where we were. We said, “There is a light over there,” and you cannot tell what a source of comfort that candle in a cottage window proved to us. I remember riding in a third class carriage, crowded full of people, on a dark night, when a woman at the end of the carriage struck a match and lit a candle—with what satisfaction was everybody’s face lit up, as all turned to see it. A light really does give great comfort. If you think it does not, sit in the dark an hour or two. A Christian ought to be a comforter—with kind words on his lips and sympathy in his heart—he should have a cheering word for the sons of sorrow.

Light, too, also has its use in *rebuking sin*. I think our street gas lamps are the best police we have. If those lamps were out, we should need ten times the number of watchers, and there would be far more crimes. Why is it that thieves do not like the light?—because their dark deeds can only be done in darkness. And how is it ungodly men do not like Christians? Why, because they rebuke them. And just as lights tend to make a city safe, and stop robberies and crime, so Christian men, when they are in sufficient numbers to act upon the commonwealth, will make crime less common—certainly they will compel it to hide its deformity under the shadows of night, whereas, before it might have walked in the blaze of day with approbation.

But the Christian is a light in a very peculiar sense—he is a *light with life in it*. Turn the lantern upon that dead man’s face. You can see it cold and white, like the chiseled marble. Shoot the light right into his eyes. He does not see. You cannot make him live by the power of any human light. But the Believer is God’s lantern, full of the Holy Spirit—and it happens often that through our testimony God shoots into the eyes of the dead a light which makes them live—so that the darkness of Hades gives way to the brightness of Glory and the midnight darkness of the spirit is made to fly before the rising Sun of righteousness.

We have dwelt long enough upon the uses of these lights, and I may only say, in concluding this point, I wonder what is the good of a Christian who is not thus useful to the world? He has a treasure but he hoards it. What is the good of misers while they live? They are like swine which only eat—they are of no service till they die. Then they are cut up and their estates are pulled into pieces. And perhaps some good may be gotten by those who gets something to eat from them. Vile is the wretch who hoards gold, but what is he who hoards bread? The world is starving and they hoard the Bread of Life. It is like manna—it breeds worms and they cannot eat it themselves, but they will not give it to others.

A religion that is no blessing to others, is no blessing to me—I am just laying up for myself a mass of putridity. It will never do my soul good, or else it would have compelled me to do good to others. But they are hoarding water, the Living Water. They are damming up the stream to keep enough for themselves, and what is it doing? It is covered with rank weeds. It breeds malaria. It turns foul. All manner of loathsome creatures are in it. They are more foolish still, they are trying to hoard up the light, as if they would have any the less if they let others have it. Hoard up light as if there were only a scant supply.

Infamous! Diabolical! I wish there were a stronger word than that, “If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha,” says Paul. And I question whether that dreadful anathema does not include within it those who do not love souls, and therefore prove they do not love Christ. For if they loved Christ they must love sinners. If they loved Jesus they must seek to extend His kingdom and to let Him see of the travail of His soul.

**III.**But time waits not for me and I must proceed to touch with brevity upon the third point—POSITION INDICATED.  
“But,” says one, “I cannot shine, it is of no use talking about it, I am not in a position to do any good.” The Apostle anticipates you. He says, “In the midst of a crooked and perverse nation.” “If I were to remove from this,” says one, “I might serve the Lord’s cause, but I cannot where I am.” But, dear Friend, you are not to get out of it, you are to speak for your Lord where you are.  
In the midst of that crooked and perverse nation you are to shine as lights in the world. Your position teaches you three things. First of all, it should be *an incentive to you*. The worse the people are among whom you live, the more need have they of your exertions. If they are crooked, the more necessity that you should set them straight. And if they are perverse, the more need have you to turn their proud hearts to the Truth of God. The worse your position is, the more thankful you ought to be that you are in it. Where should the physician be but where there are many sick? Where is honor to be won by the soldier but in the hottest fire of the battle?  
Do not blame your position if you are an unprofitable servant, but lay the blame upon yourself. If you find it hard to do good where you are, it will be harder anywhere else. As the bird that wanders from her nest, so is the man that wanders from his place. Lazy workmen find fault with their tools and employers. If you transplant a tree to make it produce more fruit, you may possibly succeed, but there are nine chances to one that you will kill it altogether.  
Again, as you are in such a position, let it *administer a caution* to you. They are a crooked and perverse nation, do not wonder, therefore, if they hate your light and try to blow it out. Be the more anxious not to give them any unnecessary offense. Let your goodness be the only fault they can find in you. Ask the Lord to keep your lamp well trimmed for you. Beseech Him to protect it from their malicious breath. Be the more anxious to cultivate a close acquaintance with Christ, because a crooked nation would decoy you from Him. Do not try to please men—make not the opinion of this generation your rule, for it is very crooked—and if you travel one way you will not please them unless you turn the other way, and then turn again to humor their crooks.  
One is often amused to find one’s self publicly abused for doing the very thing the opposite of which one was abused for the week before! And sometimes in the same newspaper article you will nowadays catch the writer first falling foul with you for doing one thing, and then falling foul with you for not doing it again. It is a crooked and perverse nation—the man who tries to please man shall find himself in a labyrinth of the most mazy kind. He shall be a wretched time server all his life and a detestable hypocrite even to his death. Such a man, to use a rustic simile, is like a toad under a harrow, he will have to be crawling continually to escape the spikes on the right and the iron ties on the left. And he will probably die a miserable death with the iron in his soul at the last. Be cautious, but be particularly cautious against excessive caution. Please the Lord and let men please themselves.  
Once more, while the eyes of perverse men should be an incentive and a caution to you, do not forget the *rich consolation*afforded by the fact that all the saints have endured the like trial. Are you in the midst of a crooked people? So was Paul. So was the Church at Philippi—so are all the saints. Remember that as they won their crowns in a strife which was none of their choosing, so must you. They were not carried on beds of down to Heaven, and you must not expect to travel more easily than they. They had to hazard their lives unto the death in the high places of the field, and you shall not be crowned till you also have endured hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.  
The road of your pilgrimage will not be smooth if it is the way of the Apostles and Prophets. Soft raiment, delicate nursing, dainty feeding and luxurious ease belong to the palaces of earth—but not to the company without the camp who bear their Lord’s reproach. I charge you, O servants of the Lord, and you who are members of this Church especially, stand fast, wait, watch and wrestle. Be steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.  
**IV.**To conclude, there is an ARGUMENT SUGGESTED. It is a very affectionate and touching one which I mean to take the liberty of applying to you, my Beloved flock. “That I may not run in vain, nor labor in vain in the day of Christ.” The Apostle was the founder of the Church at Philippi. He had watched over them with all the anxiety of one who had planted and watered, and who looked for the increase. He therefore appealed to the affection which he knew they had for him. “I have run,” argues the Apostle, “with all men looking on and gazing—many of them hating and scoffing. I have run with all my might, would you have me run in vain? I have labored, I have labored more than they all,” the Apostle could say, “would you have me labor for nothing?”  
He knew the answer they would give him would be, “No, Beloved Paul, we would see you win the prize for which you did run, and reap the fruit for which you did labor.” “Well,” argues the Apostle, “but I cannot, except you shine as lights in the world. You disappoint my hopes, you snatch the prize from my grasp, you fill me with anguish, if you are not holy, heavenly-minded witnesses for Christ.” I use the same argument with you. To the stranger here today it will have no force. But with many of you I know it will be an argument of power.  
How many out of this congregation first learned of Jesus from my lips? A multitude of you were brought to Christ through the preaching of the Word here, or in Park Street, or the Surrey Gardens, or Exeter Hall. The Word was feebly preached in rough language, then, as now—but God owned it—not to tens nor twenties, but to hundreds yes, to thousands of you—and, by His Grace, not to you only—but to people in every land and of every kindred. The Lord has made my spiritual children as many as the stars of Heaven for multitude. I rejoice, yes, I must rejoice, when I hear continually of the multitudinous conversions which are worked by the Holy Spirit through the sermons both printed and preached.  
God is with us and He does not let one Word fall to the ground. But what if you, as a Church, should be idle? What if your lives should be unholy? What if you should lack zeal and faith to testify for Christ? What then? My best expectations are defeated, my life has been a failure, and all that I have done falls to the ground. I have thought it in my heart, and I earnestly pray to my God that it may come to pass that here, as in a barracks, a great army may find its constant lodging place. That afterwards the Lord may pour you out like a vast conquering host, upon all parts of the world, to teach and testify, and live and labor, and speak for Christ. Surely, my Brothers and Sisters, you would desire this yourselves! I pray for it! Will you unite in desiring it and praying for it with me?  
It has happened of late, especially to me, to see God’s hand very visibly. Never in my experience have I seen so much spiritual activity as just now, and while it is true of all sections of the Christian Church, it has been peculiarly so of that section over which it is my lot to preside. The sermons have been now for eight years scattered in English, Welsh, French, Dutch, German, Swedish—in fact, in all Protestant languages. At first there were many conversions—there are still. Next I find that those who were regular subscribers to the sermons begin to receive the doctrine of the preacher. The converts to Christ grow and get clear views of the Truth of God. Even in the point of Baptism there are great numbers who are convinced that it is most Scriptural that only Believers should be baptized. Very many have come here, and in the pool beneath, I have baptized them into the name of Christ.  
Our denomination does not increase. I am not very anxious that it should, for as it stands at present I have no great love for it. But our principles are spreading marvelously, and in this I must rejoice. As the result of this I have constantly letters like this, “Sir, Sir, I live in a village where the Gospel is not preached. There is a Church, it is true, but we have a Puseyite clergyman. Cannot you do something for us? You have many young men training for the ministry, could you not send a friend to preach in my drawing room?”  
Then comes another—“Sir, the Chapel has been shut up in our village a long time, could you not come and help us?” Then there are many of this kind—two Christian men write, wishing to be baptized into Christ—they come, they go back. Within a month there are four more from the same village. They go back and I almost forget them, but they do not forget me. Soon, the whole six will write a letter—this is a common thing—and say, “Could not we be formed into a Church? We will find a room—can you send someone to preach to us?” This happens every week, and your minister feels that as long as ever he has a man, he will say, “I will do it for you.” And as long as he has any money of his own he will say, “Oh, yes, I will do it for you.”  
But every now and then he wishes that he had some who would stand by him in larger attempts. Cheerfully you give week after week for the support of our young ministers, and I think our friends will continue to do this. At any rate, the Lord will provide and friends far away may be moved to assist us. I want still more aid, for the field is ripe, and we want more harvest men to reap it. It grows, the thing grows—every day it increases. It started but as a little flake of snow and now like an avalanche it sweeps the Alps’ sides bare before its tremendous force.  
I would not now that you should prove unworthy of the day in which you live, or the work to which God has called us as a Church. Four Churches of Christ have sprung of our loins in one year and the next year shall it not be the same? And the next and the next, if the Holy Spirit is with us, and He has promised to be with us, if we are with Him.  
Now, in regard to the particular effort at Wandsworth, for which a collection is to be made. When I was sore sick some three years or more ago, I walked about to recover strength and walked through the town of Wandsworth. I thought, “How few attend a place of worship here. Here are various Churches but there is ample room for one of our own faith and order. Something must be done,” I thought, “If I could start a man here preaching the Word, what good might be done.” The next day, some four friends from the town called to see me, one a Baptist and the three others were desirous of Baptism, “Would I come there and form a Church?”  
We took the large rooms at a tavern and preaching has been carried on there ever since. Beginning with four, the Church has increased to one hundred and fifty. I have greatly aided the interest by going there continually and preaching and helping to support the minister. Now, a beautiful piece of ground has been taken, and a Chapel is to be erected, and I firmly believe there will be a very strong cause raised. We have many rising Churches, but this one has just come to such a point, that a House of Prayer is absolutely needed. I should not have asked you for this aid so soon, but the rooms in which they worship are now continually used for concerts on Saturday evenings and are not altogether agreeable on Sunday.  
I would just as soon worship in one place as another, for my own part, but I see various difficulties are now in the way, which a new Chapel will remove. I hope you will help them in so doing. Help me in the earnest effort of my soul to hold forth the Word of Life and to let Christ’s kingdom come and His will be done. You that feel no desire to honor the Master— you that care nothing for the spread of His kingdom—you that are satisfied to hold your heads down and not boast and glory in Him—stand back and assist us not.  
But you who would help His kingdom—you who love His name—you who are the debtors of His Grace—help the cause everywhere, and help it this day. For Christ’s sake, I ask it of you and by His Grace you will not deny me.

Adapted from*The C.H. Spurgeon Collection*, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #2154 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

**÷Php 3.7**

**THE PASTOR’S JOY AND CONFIDENCE  
NO. 2154**

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, JULY 13, 1890, *BY C. H. SPURGEON,*AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy, for your fellowship in the Gospel from  
the first day until now being confident of this very thing that He which has begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ: even as it is meet for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart; inasmuch as both in my bonds and in the defense and confirmation of the Gospel, you all are partakers of my grace.”***Php 3:7***.***

THE Epistle to the Philippians is the epistle of joy. Bengel sums it up in two Latin words, which, being interpreted, signify, “I rejoice, rejoice you.” Here we come to that sweet fruit of the Spirit which we call “Joy.” The statement Paul makes about the Philippian Church shows to what a high estate a Church can come. Beloved, we of the Tabernacle never wish to be like the Church in Galatia which was bewitched by false teachers who led away the people from the vital doctrine of justification by faith. Paul had to be very sharp with them and to lay down the grand fundamentals of Free Grace so as to bring them back to the one sure Rock on which they ought to have built. Into that condition, by the Grace of God, we have never fallen.

At the same time I am afraid we have never reached as far as the Philippians went and this morning it is my intense desire that while I show you what they attained, every member of this Church may resolve, in the Holy Spirit, that he will labor to bring us to that happy condition. May God the Holy Spirit fire us with a devout ambition not to be a whit behind the best of the Apostolic Churches! The possibilities of a great Church like this are immeasurable. We may not sit down and *dream* of what we can do. We must feel our heart pulsing with a strong desire that whatever God can do with us and by us may be carried out to the fullest. If in anything there has been a falling short, may each member be determined that the responsibility shall not lie at his door!

I invite you to think, first, that the Apostle speaks of the Church of Philippi as of *a people whom he always remembered with joy.* Secondly, as of *a people whom he regarded with confidence*, for he says of them, “Being confident of this very thing, that He which has begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.” And thirdly, we perceive that he viewed them as *a people concerning whom he gave all the glory to God alone*. This fact is very conspicuous throughout the whole passage.

**I.**First, in the Church at Philippi we see A PEOPLE WHOM THE APOSTLE REMEMBERED WITH JOY. This is seen in his declaration that *all his memory of them was happy—*“I thank my God upon every remembrance of you.” A better rendering is, “I thank my God upon all my remembrance of

you.” Taking the long run of his acquaintance with them—remembering them from the time when he preached by the riverside and Lydia was converted—even until the moment of his writing to them as a prisoner in Rome—he knew nothing of them but that which gave him joy. He thought how they had, of their own free, will ministered again and again to his necessities when no other Church was mindful of him.

He says, “Now you Philippians know, also, that in the beginning of the Gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no Church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but you only.” Their grateful benevolence caused him to thank God. He had no dash of bitter in the cup of his happy memory of them. As long as he remembered their prayers, their courage, their faith, their labor, their unity, their constancy, their zeal, their thoughtfulness and their liberality, he felt unmingled gratitude to the Author of all these excellent things. I trust there are many ministers who, with perhaps some slight reserve, can say of their people, “I thank my God upon every remembrance of you.”

If any man can say this, I claim to be that man! All have not been faithful to God in the long years of my ministry, but, taking you as a whole, you have been true to the core. This was a great wonder at Philippi, for wanderings from sound doctrine, or noticeable departures from the way of rectitude, or acts of unkindness to their spiritual leader would have destroyed this happy memory of Paul. A consistent life may be marred in any one Christian—and when there are many united in fellowship—what a risk there is to the whole Church from the power for mischief which lies in any one person! One cantankerous, over-bearing, changeable mind, or one hypocritical professor may blot the record of a Church of God. Truly, “one sinner destroys much good.”

It had not been so at Philippi. Again, *all the Apostle’s remembrance of them was tender*. I am sure it was so because he does not say, “I thank God,” but, “I thank *my* God upon every remembrance of you.” When his faith was lively and his joy in God was overflowing—when in his closest approaches to the Throne, in his most hallowed familiarities with his great Lord, he could say—“I thank my God upon every remembrance of you.” There existed between Paul and the Philippians a loving tenderness. They had been most kind to him personally and most hearty in their cooperation with him in his labor of love so that when he was thanking his own God for His choicest mercies, his mind brought before him these dear people.

Brethren, in the relation of pastor and people I notice in many places an absence of anything like tender affection. And when that is gone the very joy of the Gospel is gone from the preacher and, to a very large extent, from the people. They invite him to take office. They pay him a wage more or less scanty and then they send him about his business because they are tired of him. Can they expect a blessing upon such a hireling ministry from which every element of holy relationship is absent? But in the case in which the pastor is the spiritual father of his Church and a true shepherd of souls, how different is the relationship! When they were sad, he has cheered them. When they were in difficulties, he has guided them. When their hands hung down, he has strengthened them. And because of all this, there exists a near fellowship and a tender love, as of children to a father, or of brother to brother—so that he rejoices in them and they rejoice in him. May it be so among us forevermore! If it is not so among *us*, where is it so?

Again, *all Paul’s memory of Philippi excited gratitude in his mind*. He could not have said of the *Galatians*, “I thank my God upon every remembrance of you.” Oh, no! He said, “O foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you?” There were persons of whom he said, “I thank God that I baptized none of you.” He was pleased that Believers should be baptized, but he was glad that he had not baptized certain persons who would have made capital out of it and boasted that they were baptized by the hands of Paul! All good people are not equally good. There are some in the world whom we hope to meet in Heaven with whom fellowship is difficult. If they were on the other side of the Atlantic we might love them better than when we see much of them. I know several Christian people with whom I would sooner sit in Heaven throughout all eternity than sit ten minutes with them on a sofa here below—distance—in their case, might add enchantment to the view.

It was not so with the Philippians—Paul thought of them with devout gratitude to his God that there were such people and that he had come into personal contact with them. He knew the ins and outs of them and yet he could thank his God whenever he thought of them. Dear Friends, may it be so with us, that men of God may thank God for the existence and the work of this Church! It is well with a man when he so rejoices in the excellence of others that he thanks God about it and prays about it. It is well with men when there is a something in their lives for which holy men can devoutly thank God. I have seen a good deal of testimony-giving and of public laudation of prominent men—but the happiest condition of things would have arrived if in our heart of hearts we delighted in the holiness of other Christian men and made a point of praising God on that account. To see another to be more gracious than oneself and then to praise God for it—is this common? We pray for those that err—do we praise those who stand firm? It is a beautiful spirit to cultivate. May the Holy Spirit increase it in us all!

Again, *all his prayers for them were joyful*. He says, “Always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy.” For some we have had to pray with tears and sighs and for others with trembling. But the Lord so heard Paul in the past with regard to these Philippians that every time he began to pray he felt liberty in prayer—a joy in bearing their names before the Lord—and a sweet assurance that he was not praying in vain. His was not the cry of anguish but the request of delight! When we pray for those who are our joy and for that which will be *their* joy, we may well mingle joy with earnestness. For these beloved ones Paul approached the Mercy Seat with boldness and confidence—he felt sure of being heard on their account.

In very truth, I can say the same of you all in this place. Never can I pray with greater peace of soul than when I plead for you. I believe, on the other hand, thousands of godly people find a joy in making request for me. So I am constantly told and I have no doubt upon the matter. Now, why was all this joy in the Apostle’s mind with regard to the saints in Philippi? This is the point I desire to press upon you. Paul rejoiced because *all along they had been in hearty fellowship with him in the best things*. Observe—“For your fellowship in the Gospel from the first day until now.” There are Churches wherein the minister is nominally the leading officer, but he cannot lead for the Church does not follow. See that young officer, sword in hand, leap the rampart. He looks back, but alas, his troop is yards behind him!

He cries, “Come on! Come on!” But there is no answer. He might as well call to stones. This is poor work. But see another—wherever he advances his soldiers are at his side—they are as eager as he is, the victory is as much for them as for him and they feel it is so. Well may there be an outcry against “the one-man ministry” when the one man is not backed up by all who are in Church fellowship! But, Brothers and Sisters, it need not be so—indeed, it is not so among us! True and hearty have been the efforts of many in this Church. Paul seemed to stand alone when he was with the Galatians, but the Philippians were at his side and all around him, bearing him on from victory to victory by their unanimous fellowship.

For this he thanks God and well he might! They were in fellowship with him concerning his one sole object—“For your fellowship in the Gospel.” If you look at the Revised Version it is, “for your fellowship in furtherance of the Gospel.” The Apostle longed to spread the Gospel! And so did they. He was earnest to carry it to the regions beyond—so were they. If he preached, they would be there to encourage him. If he held special meetings, they were ready to help. If money was required, every man was ready according to his means, without pressing. Each one felt as earnest about the work as did his minister. They were enthusiastic for the furtherance of the Gospel—they were heartily with him where he most valued their sympathy.

This fellowship began early—“from the first day” of their conversion. I think we can predict what converts will be from what they are at first. Some begin warmly and gradually cool down—and we seldom know them to develop much heat or zeal if they begin in lukewarmness. When we join a Church, it is well that from the first day we enquire of the Lord, “What would You have me do?” The kind of recruits which we desire in Christ’s army are those who are in fellowship with us for the furtherance of the Gospel from the very first! I like to see the convert at the Prayer Meeting, the cottage meeting, the Bible-class, or the Ragged-school, or the Sunday school, or the Tract Society doing what he can to help others! He that begins early begins hopefully. Concerning some older Christians, we could not speak of their fellowship in the Gospel from the first day, for they were slow in coming forward—but I hope they will do all the more *now* to make up for it.

I have heard of an advertisement of a burial club which began thus, “Seeing that many persons find it extremely difficult to bury themselves.” That is not my experience, for I would have to say, “Seeing that many Church members find it exceedingly *easy* to bury themselves”—we receive them into our number with pleasure but we hear no more of them. We have the distinguished privilege of enrolling their names in our book and that is all. We give them our right hand of fellowship, but they do not give us their right hand of labor. Where are they? Where? Echo answers, *Where?*The Philippians had fellowship in furthering the Gospel from the first day! Then mark that they were men of good wind, who could keep up the running. They were as patient and persevering as they were zealous at the first. “From the first day until now.” *Until now*.

Some run well for a time but that time is short. Oh, for the men who will live as long as they live and not die while they are alive! How many who should have been our helpers are lost to us! They have grown indifferent or they have become advanced in years and fancy that they can now do nothing because they cannot do all they once did. We can always do something for Jesus if we are willing! As we are not too old to receive Grace, let us not think ourselves too old to use it—for it is given to be used. The aged are capable of the noblest work which can be performed. Encouragement of the sad and feeble almost necessitates an experience which only age can bring. There is as truly a service in the Church for the most venerable as for the most active. Let no man cut himself off from the privilege of serving the Lord Jesus “from the first day until now.”

And what they did appears to have been so general as to be practically unanimous. He speaks of them all as in full fellowship with him in his lifework. When shall we get Churches alive all through? When false doctrine taints a Church it usually sours the whole of it, for “a little leaven leavens the whole lump.” But if they are good Churches, I am sorry to say the perfume of consecration does not sweeten every part. In most Churches there are a few who, to a large extent, do everything and give everything—then another portion assist occasionally—so far as they are urged on by the consecrated ones. And after these you find a large number who are practically the baggage of the Church—the lumber which has to be carried by the efficient members. Alas, that we have so many in ambulances when every hand is needed in the fight! A Church is in a poor condition when it is largely so—but it is in fine health when all are hearty in the service of the Lord, as at Philippi.

It was practical fellowship. Some of them preached, all of them prayed. Some of them contributed money and all gave love. Nobody shirked his work—which was not looked upon as a labor—but as a privilege. You will not wonder that Paul rejoiced, for it gives joy to every earnest man to see others earnest! The great cause is as much yours as it is mine. A Church which feels that holy service is not for a few, but for all the members, is a credit to Divine Grace. It is a lovely piece of Divine mosaic work in which jewels of costly price are set about with solid gold and the whole exhibits a design of matchless beauty. Fellowship with the Holy Spirit and fellowship with great saints is a rare jewel—may we each one possess it! I will not stay longer on this point, for I shall have to return to it when considering our next head.

**II.** Paul saw in the Philippians A **PEOPLE** **WHOM** **HE** **REGARDED** **WITH** **THE** **UTMOST** **CONFIDENCE**—"Being confident of this very thing, that He which has begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." What was Paul's confidence, then? His confidence was *that the work in their hearts was a Divine work*. The Lord Himself had begun a good work in them! This is a vital matter. Everything turns upon the question, "Is this conversion a Divine work or not?"

The man is altered for the better. The woman is certainly improved. A work has been done—but is it God's work? Or is it the work of the flesh? Ah, dear Friends, a moral change may sometimes look so much like a *spiritual* change that onlookers cannot detect the difference! The child of Nature, finely dressed, is not the living child of Divine Grace—and how are we to tell the one from the other? "By their fruits you shall know them." The Apostle had found the Philippians true in their partnership in the Lord's work. They suffered for their Lord patiently. They defended the faith bravely. They spread it zealously and their lives confirmed it! And so Paul said to himself, "This is the finger of God! The Lord Himself has begun this work." How happy we are when we can have this confidence of every member of the Church—that from the beginning of their religion God has been at work in their hearts!

I pray you, do not be satisfied, any of you, with the most promising religiousness if it is not God's work! If you have undergone a change, take care that it is such a change as only the Creator could have worked in you—a resurrection from the dead, an opening of blind eyes, a turning from darkness to light! If you have not undergone a renewal which betokens heavenly handiwork, be uneasy. Be restless until God Himself, who made you, makes you new in Christ Jesus! My heart silently entreats the Lord to begin this good work in you at once—and may there be signs following which shall give us the joy of knowing that, indeed, and of a truth, the Lord has done it!

Paul could see, in the next place, that *it was a growing work*, for the Lord was still performing it. The work of God is always a *growing* work. If things do not grow they lack one of the chief marks of life. You put into the ground something which looks like a living plant and after it has been there six months you find it just the same, without a single bud or shoot. What do you say of it? Why, you conclude that it is an artificial production devoid of life. If we do not grow better, surely it is because we have no goodness worked in us! If we do not grow in Divine Grace it must be because we have no Divine Grace! Paul saw God carrying on the work in the heart of the Philippians so that they went from strength to strength and about this he was confident.

He was also confident *that God would perfect it*. He says, "He will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." Shall we be absolutely perfect until then? I think not. Perfection in a modified sense is possible through Divine Grace—but not absolute perfection. Old Master Trapp very well says a Christian may be perfect, but not *perfectly* perfect. Perfection in the Scriptural use of it is not at all what those make of it who boast of perfection in the flesh! A child is perfect when it is newly born—there is every toe on the tiny foot and its eyes, ears, nose and other organs are all there—but if you tell me that a child is a perfect man, I smile at you. So the Christian may be perfect as to all his parts, "perfect and entire, lacking nothing," and yet he may not be perfect as to development by a very long way.

One says, "We shall be perfect at death, shall we not?" It is not so written here, but, "He will perform it *until the day of Jesus Christ*." We may be perfect in death, doubtless, as to the *moral* and *spiritual* Nature—but a man has a *body* as well as a soul—and it needs both parts to make the *perfect* man. While the worms are devouring the body the man is not yet perfect. He will be perfect as to his whole manhood when the Lord shall come and the trumpet shall sound and the dead shall be raised incorruptible! Paul delights to make the Christian leap over that little rivulet called death and swallow up the thought of dissolution in the far grander fact of the coming of the Lord!

The Second Advent ought to be much more on our minds than the hour of our death! The Lord will perform the work which He has begun until He perfects it in the day when the Lord Jesus Christ shall receive His Church unto Himself. Then shall be the general judgment and oh, what a blessing to be found perfect in *that* day of decision! He shall separate the righteous from the wicked as the shepherd divides his sheep from the goats. When that great day is ended, then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun! Our Lord Jesus will be covered with the Infinite splendor of God in that day and then shall we be like He—His Glory will be reflected upon all Believers. You have no idea of what a perfect man will be like. "You see not that body that shall be." God will give us such a body as it pleases Him and to each one a body of his own.

If you had never seen wheat growing, you would never imagine that the shriveled grain of corn would produce the blade, the ear and the full corn in the ear. Take an example still more striking—many very tiny seeds produce flowers which excel in beauty of form and color—could you have ever guessed that the insignificant seeds could have come to this? Even so, the body is sown in weakness but it is raised in power! It is sown in corruption but it is raised in incorruption! The star of today will be the sun of tomorrow. All glory lies in the bud of our struggling humanity when once Divine Grace has quickened it. O Brothers and Sisters, He that has begun a good work in us will not only give us perseverance until death, but what is even more, He will give us perfection in the day of Christ! It is altogether a more comprehensive thought than the great Truth of God of Final Perseverance—it includes that blessed Truth of God within its sweep, but it also secures eternal glory both to soul and body!

*Was Paul justified in being so confident*, not only that these people were converted, but that they would be eternally saved? Leave out of the question his writing as an Inspired man—how did he gain his confidence? *His confidence partly arose out of his love—*"Even as it is meet for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart." His love to them was not the mere glow of Nature, but the flame of Divine Grace! He saw so much of Christ in them that he could not help admiring and loving them. And he felt sure that they were of the sort that never draw back unto perdition, but believe to the salvation of their souls. He perceived that the Grace which was in him was in them, also—and therefore, as he hoped to be kept to the end—he felt that they would, also, be so kept. As he felt sure that the work of Grace in them was of God, and of God alone, so he was confident that they would never fail. A good foundation is a grand security that the house will be substantial. Those we love in the Lord, because of what the Lord has done for them, we feel sure about as to their future.

Furthermore, *their long-continued character confirmed the Apostle in his confidence,* for he adds, "Inasmuch as both in my bonds and in the defense and confirmation of the Gospel, you all are partakers of my grace." When he was bound they were not ashamed of his chains. When he was in prison the jailer washed his stripes and refreshed him at his table and this proved an omen of loving liberality throughout life. When Paul was taken away to Rome, the Philippians took care that he should not be left penniless—they sent out of their poverty to his assistance. He felt confidence in a people who could do this. Shame turns many of the weaker sort aside, but the faithful despise it. Those who love holiness when others despise and ridicule it are the people to stand fast. Besides, they were partners with Paul in the defense of the Gospel.

If any Galatian teachers came their way, they gave them the cold shoulder for they would not give up the grand old Gospel to please the wise men of the period. In this way, my Brothers and Sisters, have you also stood by your own minister in those protests against error which have cost him so dear. Your faithfulness gives me great confidence concerning you. The people who can bear the attacks made upon you and the baits held out to you can be relied upon under God. You are not ashamed of my bonds, for you are heartily with me in the defense of the Gospel in this day of falsehood. They were also with the Apostle as to the confirmation of the Gospel. Their lives proved the truth of the Word of Grace. When Paul was preaching, if he wanted to show that the Gospel is the power of God, he pointed to what had been accomplished in Philippi—and none could deny the argument.

A living argument is invincible. Reasoning is very well, but *fact* is overwhelming. Oh, that every Christian would so live as to prove the power of the Gospel! He adds another reason why he was so sure of them, namely, that *they were partakers of his grace*. The same Grace which had saved him saved them. They ascribed their salvation to Sovereign Grace even as he did. The life in them as babes in Grace was the same life which dwelt in him as a father in Israel. Their Gospel and his Gospel were identical— and their spirit and his spirit were cast in the same mold. His Grace was such that he could not be seduced into hoping for salvation by works and nor could they. He believed in Divine Sovereignty, in electing love, in effectual Atonement—and so did they. They were with him in all things—not in a forced union, but in hearty love to the same Truths of God. Besides, he loved the souls of men and was always laboring to lead men to Jesus and they did the same. He delighted best to preach where Christ had never been made known and not to build upon another man's foundation. And in this they supported him. They were with him in every loving endeavor to spread the Gospel.

Now, it is a grand thing when a minister has great confidence in his people based upon the fact that he sees the Grace of God in them bringing forth fruit unto the Glory of God. Foolish fondness is to be avoided, but a confidence which is justified by evidence is a great solace to the heart. What strength holy living in his people gives to the preacher of the Word of God! A man comes before you and says, "There is, somewhere about here, an invisible lake containing the purest, coolest and most refreshing water that you ever drank. You never saw water so pure and delicious." We ask the gentleman to let us see this lake. No, he cannot show the lake, but he will allow us to examine the streams which flow out of it. That is a fair test and we agree to abide by it.

Here is one of the outflows. We fill a glass from it and hold it up to the light. Why, here are little whales and elephants swimming in it and no end of tiny sea monsters disporting themselves—that lake is hardly the place to drink from unless one would have meat as well as drink at every draught! Our informant assures us that there must be a mistake somewhere. So we hope. This stream has evidently gone wrong—he will take us to another outflow. Again we dip our cup, and lo, it is filled with water of a strange color as if the filth of some great city had run into it. We loathe to drink. Again we are told that there is some failure here, also, and we are begged to try again. After three or four such experiments, we feel quite unable to believe in this crystal lake. Such streams as these have not come out of an expanse of purity—we will keep to our old-fashioned waterworks till we have more reliable information.

See the parallel? If Paul had begun praising the Gospel and the people had said, "Show it to us by its effects," he might have said, "Let us pay a visit to Lydia, the seller of purple." They go to her store and look at her wares. Somehow her purple does not seem to be dyed after the ancient Tyrian fashion. The color is not true or fast. If she tries to pass off a base imitation as the original article we reckon the woman an old cheat and by no means a good evidence of the power of the Gospel! If she uses a trademark which does not belong to her, we conclude that her religion is worthless! Let us call upon the jailer, who is another instance of the work of Grace in Philippi.

When we come to the jail the porter tells us that the jailer is beating the prisoners! And on enquiry we find that the prison is a little Hell and those in it are wretched in the extreme under his tyrannical hand. "He is worse," says the porter, "since Paul came here. He talks a great deal about religion, but we do not see much of it unless it lies in being harsh, suspicious, cruel and selfish." If these things happened, Paul would feel sorry that he brought us to Philippi and he would be unable to preach the Word with boldness. I will not make any application, dear Friends—you can do that for yourselves. **III.** My third point is this, that although Paul speaks concerning the excellence of the Philippians, he views them as A **PEOPLE** **FOR** **WHOM** **HE** **GAVE** **ALL** **GLORY** **TO** **THE** **GRACE** **OF** **GOD**. He did not praise them, but the Lord who had saved them. Observe how he began, "I thank my God." *In what was done he sees reason for gratitude to God*. Brothers and Sisters, if we win a single soul, let us humbly thank God for it. If, after years of labor, any one of you should bring but two or three children to Jesus, you will have reason to thank God for all eternity! A friend said to me on Wednesday, when the sun was shining, "We ought to be grateful for this fine weather." I replied, "I go farther than that—I *am* grateful for it."

We should not only acknowledge what we *ought* to do, but we should do it. If God gives you any success in His service, do not say, "I ought to be thankful," but *be thankful* from the bottom of your heart up to the brim of it. I remember a Brother who used to pray, "The Lord has done great things for us, whereof *we desire to be* glad." The Bible does not say so— the Bible says, "whereof we *are* glad." Another cries, "The love of Christ ought to constrain us." The Bible does not talk in that fashion. It says, "The love of Christ constrains us." What we ought to do we should do. A Christian's life should be the Decalogue written large and somewhat more.

But Paul also, after he had thanked God, *kept on praying for what was still needed*. "Always in every prayer of mine for you all making request." See, dear Brethren—at Philippi he has not only begun with God, but he goes on with God. He has much more to do but he does not attempt to do it without his Lord. Oh, that all workers were of this mind! We deal with God too little. A person exclaimed, "Let us get up a revival." The revivals which men can get up had better be left alone—we need to get revivals *down*. If we get a revival up it must come from beneath—but if we get a revival down, it comes from above. Lord, revive us! We pray for it and when it comes we will praise You for it. Brothers and Sisters, we must mix up our constant service with more prayer and praise if we desire it to be largely effectual. If the work is worth anything, it is God's work in us and by us—He begins it, carries it on and completes it!

What, then, can we do, if we do not draw near to Him? Our labor must have a constantly distinct reference to God. Sunday school teachers, your work requires you to begin with God—do not dare to go to the class even once without fervent prayer in the Spirit. When you have given the lesson, go straightway and ask God's blessing on it. Do not omit this even once! Paul's way is to thank God and to pray to God—and it must be yours if you would have Paul's joy. As to *his confidence about the future of his converts, it was all in God*. It was not confidence in them apart from the work of God in them. He says God began it and God will carry it on. He does not depend on the strength of their principles, nor the force of their resolutions, nor the excellence of their habits—he relies upon God, who will perform what He has begun.

Did not Paul begin it? No, no! For if he had begun it he would have to carry it on and that could not be. Did not they begin it themselves? Certainly not! Does the sinner take the first step? How can he? He is dead in sin! If he does take the first step apart from the Spirit of God, he can take all the rest without God. It is with the sinner as with the Romish Saint Denis. You have heard the old fable that when he had his head cut off he picked it up and walked a thousand miles with it in his hand! A scoffer said that the thousand miles' walk was not at all remarkable—it was only the first step that had any difficulty in it.

Just so, when a soul goes to Heaven, if it takes the first step in its own strength, it can walk all the way—and then it will have all the glory. Brothers and Sisters, we may truly sing—

***"No sinner can be Beforehand with You."***

God commences the good work, however faint and feeble the beginning may appear. The tiny brook at the riverhead of repentance is of God as much as the broad river of heavenly character. This is a solemn Truth of God. How deeply it should humble us! We cannot even begin—we cannot dig the foundation—how can we bring forth the top stone? All is of Grace from first to last. While the Apostle is so practical, as I have shown him to be, yet see how sound in doctrine he is! He never quits the grand doctrine of free, Sovereign, effectual Grace—"He which has begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ."

Beloved Friends, I close when I say *the Apostle derives his confidence from a great principle*. The great principle is that what God begins He will perfect. For if He did not do so, where was the wisdom of beginning? It is a word of derision when those who pass by a half-finished building say, "This man began to build and was not able to finish." We never praise a man for wisdom who makes an attempt which he does not carry through. Could angels rejoice in a work which God began and then left to fall through? It might also suggest a lack of power. If a man is wise in his beginnings, he may break down because, through unforeseen difficulty, he has not sufficient means to complete his design. You often see the carcass of a house and it is never a happy sight—it suggests lack of means.

But can there be any lack of power with *God*? Nothing is impossible with Him. But there might also be lack of perseverance. Some men are always great at beginnings but they have no stay in them—they change their minds. Does the Eternal God suffer change? Is it not said that He is "without variableness or shadow of turning"? Granted an Immutable God we may be sure that Divine Grace will complete what Divine Grace begins. Nor can God forsake the work of His own hands from lack of longsuffering. A man might begin to bless another and that other might be so ungrateful that the benefactor grows impatient and gives up on him. Will God fail in Divine Grace? Assuredly not. "His mercy endures forever." The top and bottom of it is that our confidence in one another must only be confidence in *God—*and our confidence for ourselves must rest in God or it will be sheer delusion.

But, Beloved, albeit that where God has begun a good work He will carry it on, this does not put prayer aside, for Paul prays for these very people. Neither does this lessen the necessity of a holy life, for Paul is only confident about saints who were hearty "in the defense and confirmation of the Gospel" and partakers of Divine Grace. He felt confident of the ultimate perfection of those only who had a Divine work within them and proved it by their fellowship in the furtherance of the Gospel. How can we profess that Grace is in our hearts by Divine implanting if we live in secret sin? How can we hope to persevere if we have not begun? If we do not join in the prayers and efforts of the Church of God, how can we hope to partake in the reward at the coming of the Lord?

The question as to whether God has begun saving work in us must be answered by our faith and our life—and if it is satisfactorily proved that He has begun it, we can depend upon Him to finish it! If, on the contrary, we have reason to fear that He has not begun it at all, we should not deceive ourselves, but take up our true position. We may still cry to Him as sinners and look to Jesus as the Author of faith. This will be wise and this will be successful, for Jesus says He will cast out none that come to Him. "This Man receives sinners."

I hope every unconverted person here this morning who sees that salvation is God's work, will say to himself, "I will even look out of myself to Him who is able to begin the work in me. If He begins, carries on and completes salvation, then my lack of strength need not make me despair, for He is able, though I am not. He will work all my works in me and I shall praise His name."

Oh, that the Spirit of God would lead my hearers to think of these things! Come and trust in Jesus Christ, the only Savior, and the good work will then have begun in you—a work which neither the world, the flesh, nor the devil can destroy! And then in the day of judgment you shall stand perfect in Christ Jesus before the Truth of God.

***PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—******Philippians 1.***

**HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK"—427, 742, 739.**

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A BUSINESS-LIKE ACCOUNT  
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**DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, JUNE 3, 1877, *BY C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yet indeed, I also count all things loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but dung, that I may***

***win Christ, and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.”***Php 3:7-9***.***

OUR Savior’s advice to those who wished to be His disciples was, “Count the cost.” He did not wish to entice any man to enlist in His army by keeping him in ignorance as to the requirements of His service. Again and again He tested professed converts Himself—and He frequently exhorted men to try themselves, lest they should begin a profession and be unable to maintain it. True religion is a matter of enthusiasm, but at the same time its Truths and precepts can endure the severest examination. The exercise of our judgments upon the Gospel is invited, yes, *required*! It is true that many persons are brought to Christ in earnest assemblies, where they are addressed in fervent language. But also, a man may sit down in his study or his counting house with his pen in his hand, and in the coolest possible manner he may calculate and, if under the Holy Spirit’s guidance, he shall be led to calculate truthfully—he will come to the conclusion that the cause of the Lord Jesus is worthiest and best.

Do not imagine, as some do, that religion consists in a wild fanaticism which never considers, calculates, judges, estimates, or ponders—for such an imagination will be the reverse of the truth. Ardor, fervor, enthusiasm—these are desirable and we cannot have too much of them—but at the same time, as I have already said, we can justify our attachment to Christ by the most calm logic, by the most patient consideration. We may make a lengthy and deliberate estimate, taking both things temporal and things eternal into review, and yet we may challenge all gainsayers while we declare that it is the wisest and the best thing in all the world to be a disciple of Jesus Christ!

In our text the Apostle gives us the word, “count,” three times over. He was skilled in spiritual arithmetic and very careful in his reckoning. He cast up his accounts with caution and observed with a diligent eye his losses and his gains. In his reckoning he does not ignore any losses that may be supposed to be sustained, or really may be sustained. But he does not, on the other hand, forget for a moment that blessed gain for which he counts it worthwhile to suffer surprising loss. Paul, here, seems to be in a mercantile frame of mind, adding and subtracting, counting and balancing, with much quiet and decision of mind.

I commend the text to businessmen. I invite them to follow the Apostle’s example, to use their best judgments upon eternal things, to sit down, take out their pen and figure as he did, and make out estimates and calculations as to themselves and Christ, their own works and the righteousness of faith. The subject this morning will be, first, the Apostle’s calculations and, secondly, our own. The objective being, in the second part, to put questions to ourselves as to whether we estimate things after the Apostolic fashion.

**I.**First, then, let us consider THE APOSTLE’S CALCULATIONS. Looking at the text, you will notice that he made three distinct counts. They all came to much the same thing, with this difference, that each one, as it succeeded its fellow, was more emphatic in its result. The result was the same, but it was more and more forcibly expressed. And, first, we have his counting at the outset of his Christian life. When he became a Believer, he says of himself, “what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ.” That is to say, at the first and earliest period when, from being Saul the Rabbi, the intense Pharisee, he became Paul the convert and the preacher of the faith which once he destroyed, those things which had seemed very splendid gains all dissolved into one great loss. At that time he says he made a calculation and formed a deliberate opinion that what had appeared to him to be most advantageous was really, so far as Christ was concerned, a positive disadvantage and hindrance to him—the gains were a loss.

Now, you will notice that in this first calculation he dwelt upon the separate items, noting each with great distinctness. The list of the things of which he might glory in the flesh reads like a catalog. “Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of Hebrews. As touching the Law, a Pharisee. Concerning zeal, persecuting the Church. Touching the righteousness which is in the Law, blameless.” These are the things which were gains to him and the list is very comprehensive, beginning at his birth and circumcision and running right on to the date of his conversion.

He dwells with a high degree of interest upon the items of his Jewish advantages. They had been as precious pearls to him, once, and while he freely renounces them, yet he remembers that they were once dear as the apple of his eye. They had been his pride, his patent of nobility and his daily boast. He felt himself to be, in these respects, far in advance of the most of mankind and second to none, even of his favored race, for even now he says, “If any other man thinks that he has whereof he might trust in the flesh, I have more.” “Circumcised the eighth day”—the rite which introduced him to the outward Covenant of Abraham had been performed exactly when ordained by the Law—he was not one who had been circumcised as proselytes were, late in life, nor at an irregular season on account of ill health, traveling, or parental neglect. But to the moment as the Mosaic ritual required, he had, as a baby, been received into the congregation of Israel.

Next, he was of “the stock of Israel.” He was not one who had been converted to the Israelite faith, nor a descendant of Gibeonites or of proselytized parents—he was of the pure stock of Israel, descended by a clear line which, probably, he was able, genealogically, to trace from that Israel who was a prevailing prince with God. He was proud of this descent and well he might be, for every Jew is of noble lineage. Speak of ancient families who can match the seed of Israel! Theirs is the best blood in the universe, if one blood is better than another.

Paul, also, boasted that he was “of the tribe of Benjamin”—the tribe which Moses called the Beloved of the Lord! The tribe within whose canton the temple stood! The tribe which was descended from the beloved wife of Jacob, even Rachel, and not from the sons of either of the bondwomen. The tribe of Benjamin was that from which the first king of Israel was chosen and he bore the same name as that by which Paul had been known among his Jewish brethren. Paul was, therefore, of the very choicest branch of that vine which the Lord, Himself, brought out of Egypt.

He next adds that he was a “Hebrew of the Hebrews.” He was the cream of the cream, the very pick and choice out of the choice nation and the elect people. If there was any benefit to be had by being of the seed of Abraham, the Hebrew, he had all that benefit in the highest possible degree. Then he had appended to all the advantages of birthright and of nationality that of entering into a peculiar sect, the most orthodox, the most devout—for “as touching the Law, he was a Pharisee,” and belonged to the sect which attached importance to the minutest details of the Law and tithed its mint and its anise, and its cumin. What more could he be?

He was a Jesuit among the Catholics, one who went to the extreme among extremists, one of those initiated into the innermost secrets of the faith! Then, as to personal character, he felt that here, in his natural state, he had something which was gain, for he was so full of zeal that those who appeared to speak against the Law of Moses by declaring the Gospel were counted as his enemies. He hunted them down with all his might—“concerning zeal, persecuting the Church.” This he had done in all honesty of purpose as the result of his thorough self-righteousness. He finishes by saying that he, himself, was, as to every detail of the Law, every little point of ritual and every particular rubric, altogether blameless. This was no small thing to say, but he spoke no more than the truth. These things all put together are what he counted gains, (for the Greek word is in the plural), and I think he dwells somewhat lingeringly upon each separate point, as very well he might, for they had been very dear to him in former days. And these privileges were, in themselves, things of no mean worth.

But now, what was to be set on the other side? Here is a long list on one side, what is to be placed per contra? He says, “What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for *Christ*.” What? What? Nothing on the other side but one item? One? Only one? And yet there were so many privileges on the other side! There was but one name, one Person in that scale, while in the other there were so many advantages! Why, one begins to think that the calculation will soon come to an end in favor of Saul’s Israelite descent and the rest of it! But not so—the One outweighed the many!

Here I want you to notice that Paul does not say that those he counted loss for *Christianity*, or for the *Church*, or for the orthodox faith. There would have been truth in such a statement, but the *center* of the truth lies here—he counted these things loss for Christ, that is, for the Lord Jesus Christ Himself! He thought of that Divine One, blessed be His name, that Brother of our souls who was born at Bethlehem, the Kinsman, Redeemer of His people—Christ! The living, loving, bleeding, dying, buried, risen, ascended, glorified Christ! This was the glorious Person whom he placed on the other side of the balance sheet!

And now see the result. He says, “What things were gain to me, those I counted loss.” An amazing result. Not only that after putting the one under the other and making a subtraction, he found that all his carnal advantages were less than Christ, but, far more than this! He found those gains actually transformed into a loss! They were not a plus on that side to stand in proportion to the plus on this side—but they were turned into a minus of actual deficit! He felt that his fleshly advantages, when he came to look at them in regard to Christ, were disadvantages and what he had reckoned to be gains operated rather against him than for him when he began to know Christ!

My Brothers and Sisters, he does not mean that to be a “Hebrew of the Hebrews” was, in itself, a loss, nor that to be of the stock of Israel was a loss, for there was a natural advantage about all this. “What advantage, then, has the Jew?” he says in another place. And he replies, “Much every way.” But he meant that with respect to *Christ*, those things which were naturally an advantage became a *disadvantage* because their tendency had been to keep him from trusting Christ. And their tendency was still to tempt him away from simple faith in Jesus. “Alas,” he seemed to say to himself, “it was because I gloried that I was of the stock of Israel that I rejected the Christ of God! It was because I boasted that as touching the Law I was blameless that, therefore, I refused to accept the glorious righteousness of Jesus Christ by faith. These advantages were scales upon my eyes to keep me from seeing the beauty of my Lord! These privileges were stumbling blocks in my way to prevent my coming as a poor, humble, needy sinner and laying hold on the atoning Sacrifice of Jesus.”

My Brothers and Sisters, it is a grand thing to have led a virtuous life. It is a matter for which to praise God to have been kept in the very center of the paths of morality. But this blessing may, by our own folly, become a curse to us if we place our moral excellences in opposition to the righteousness of our Lord Jesus and begin to dream that we have no need of a Savior! If our character is, in our own esteem, so good that it makes a passable garment for us and, therefore, we reject the robe of Christ’s righteousness, it would have been better for us if our character had been, by our own confession, a mass of rags—for then we should have been willing to be clothed with the vesture which Divine Love has prepared!

Yes, it were better, so far as this matter is concerned, to be like the open sinner who will not readily be tempted that way because he is too foul, too bankrupt to pretend to be righteous before God! I say again, Paul does not say that these things are not advantages, but that for *Christ*— and when he comes to look at them in the light of *Christ*—he regards them as being a loss rather than a gain! If I had, this day a righteousness of my own, yet would I fling it to the winds to lay hold of the righteousness of Christ, fearing all the while lest so much as the smell of it should cling to my hands! Had I never sinned in one solitary open sin and if but one secret transgression of my heart had ever been committed, yet would I loathe my righteousness as filthy rags and only *tremble* lest my proud spirit should be so foolish as to cling to such a useless thing! Adam fell through *one* sin and lost Paradise, and lost us all—so that one sin suffices to curdle the purest righteousness into utter sourness. Away, then, with the very shadow of self and legal righteousness!

But let us now proceed to notice that Paul gives us his second calculation, which is his estimate for the time then present. “Yet indeed,” he says, “I also count”—not, “I counted”—as he said before, but, “I also count all things loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.” We are always anxious to hear what a man has to say about a thing after he has tried it. It is all very well to begin with eagerness, but how does the venture answer after a trial? After 20 years or more of experience, Paul had an opportunity of revising his balance sheet and, looking again at his estimates and seeing whether or not his count was correct.

What was the result of his latest search? How do matters stand at his last stock-taking? He exclaims with very special emphasis, “Yet indeed, I also count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.” The two words, “Yet indeed,” are a very strong affirmation. He is speaking very positively as to his present confirmed assurance and established judgment. Look at him, then, again, making his estimate today, after he has been, for some time, a Christian and has been made to suffer as the result of his earnest service. You perceive that He has not forgotten the things that were gains, for, as we have already seen, he has given us a detailed list of them.

On this second occasion he does not repeat the catalog, partly because there was no need for it and partly because he cares less for each item. But mainly because, for fear anything should have been omitted, he succinctly sums up the whole by saying, “all things.” He as good as says—yet indeed, I also count as loss all the advantages of birth, nationality and self-righteousness which once I reckoned to be gains. If I have left out anything of which, as an Israelite I might have gloried, I beg you to insert it in the list, for I mean that all should be included when I say that I count all things loss for Christ’s sake.

So you see he has not altered the original summary. He has even made it more comprehensive—but he stands to the same estimate as always— the gain is still “loss.” But we perceive that now he dwells longer and evidently with greater delight of expression upon the other side, for now he uses not barely the word, “Christ,” but the fuller expression, “for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.” Now he has come to *know* the Christ in whom before he trusted. He spoke of Him, before, as one for whom he counted gain as loss, but now he perceives so great an excellency in Him that even to *know* Him he reckons to be a supereminent blessing! Our Divine Lord is better loved as He is better known! The closer our inspection, the greater is the manifest excellency of His Character.

The words used by the Apostle show us the points upon which he had the fullest knowledge. He knew the Lord as Christ, or as the Messiah, sent and anointed of the Father. He understood more fully than at the first, the fullness, power and exceeding efficacy of the anointing of our Lord which He had received above His fellows. He saw Him to be the woman’s promised Seed, the Coming One, the promised Light of Israel, the ordained Prince and Savior of the sons of men! And he saw all His qualifications for this wonderful Character! He perceived His anointing as Prophet, Priest and King. He delighted to see the Spirit of the Lord resting upon Him and descending from Him to His people, as the sacred oil from the head of Aaron distilled to the skirts of his garments.

He saw great excellency in the knowledge of the Lord’s Anointed, whose garments smell of myrrh, aloes and cassia. But this was not all, for he proceeds to call Jesus, Christ Jesus. “You shall call His name Jesus; for He shall save His people from their sins.” Paul knew Him as the anointed Savior, yes, as the actual Savior who had saved *him*—saved him from the madness for his blasphemy and persecution, saved him from all his past guilt—saved him and made him to be an instrument of the salvation of others. He delights in the title of Savior, as we all do who know the savor of it. How sweetly musical is the name of Jesus! How fragrant is it, even as ointment poured forth! Excellent, indeed, is the knowledge of our Lord in this Character!

How delicious are the Apostle’s next words, “my Lord.” Not merely the Lord, but, “my Lord.” His knowledge was an appropriating knowledge. He knew the Redeemer as anointed for him, as saving him, as Lord over all for him and now, as Lord to him. The honey of the sentence lies in that word, “*my*.” I do not know how it seems to your hearts, but to me it is one of the sweetest words that can possibly be used by mortal lips, “the knowledge of Christ Jesus *my* Lord.” Whether He is your Lord or not, He is surely mine! Whether He is accepted as Lord by the sons of men or not, He is joyfully acknowledged as Lord to me and Master of my spirit, sole Monarch of my whole nature— “Christ Jesus *my* Lord.”

You see, then, how truly, fully, practically and *personally* he knew the Lord Jesus. The text implies that he knew Him by faith. He had *seen* Him in the flesh, but in that he did not glory, for he had now come to value only the things of *faith*, desiring mainly that the righteousness which is of God, by faith, might be imputed unto him. He believed, and therefore he *knew*. There is no knowledge so gracious as the knowledge of faith, for a man may know a great deal in a natural way and yet perish, but that which comes of *faith* is saving. If a man only knows Christ in the head, but does not trust Him with the heart, what is the good of His knowledge? It will rather ruin than save him. So to know the Lord Jesus Christ as to lean your soul’s full weight upon Him. To know Him as to experience peace because you trust in Him. To know Him as to feel that you can rest in Him more and more, from day to day, because He is all your salvation and all your desire—this is to know Him, indeed!

But Paul also knew the Lord by *experience*, for he speaks of knowing Him and “the power of His resurrection.” This is excellent knowledge, indeed, when the power of a fact is realized within and shown in the life. When we are raised from the death of our sin and feel that we are so, then is our knowledge of the risen Christ excellent, indeed. When we feel a new life within us, quickening us unto spiritual things, and know that this springs from the Resurrection of our Lord and is worked in us according to the mighty power which raised Jesus Christ from the dead, then, indeed, can we rejoice in the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord!

More than that, Paul knew something of Christ and was aiming to know more by a growing likeness to Him. “That I may know Him and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death.” He had entered, in some measure, into his Master’s sufferings. He had been persecuted and despised of men for much the same reason as his Master. He had, in a degree, felt Christ’s motives, Christ’s love for man, Christ’s zeal for God, Christ’s self-sacrifice, Christ’s readiness to die on behalf of the Truth of God. This is an excellent knowledge, indeed, and Paul might well esteem it as far more precious than all legal privileges. He spoke of it as supereminent knowledge, for such is his meaning, and he reckoned it to be beyond all price.

Beloved, there is no knowledge in the world which can be compared with such a knowledge of Christ Jesus as I have tried to describe just now, for it is a knowledge which concerns the highest conceivable objective—even the Son of God! To know the science of Nature, to be familiar with rocks, to read the stars, to comprehend all things besides is a comparative *trifle* when we consider what it is to know God in the Person of the Lord Jesus! He in whom dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily is most worthy to be known—and angels and principalities unite with all the saints in thinking so! *One* truth about Christ is more precious than the total of all other knowledge! This is a knowledge which no man has unless it is given him by the Holy Spirit—and therefore is excellence.

We may say to all who know Christ, “Flesh and blood has not revealed this unto you.” Divinely taught must he be who has learned Christ. This science cannot be acquired in schools nor imparted by learned professors, nor even gathered by years of diligent research. To the heart, renewed by the Holy Spirit, the Lord Jesus must be revealed by the Spirit, Himself, for no man can say that Jesus Christ is Lord but by the Holy Spirit! That is a superlative knowledge which requires, in each case, to be communicated by God, Himself. If you would see the excellency of this knowledge, look at its effects. Some knowledge puffs up, but this knowledge makes us humble and the more we have of it the less are we in our own esteem.

This knowledge sanctifies, purges and delivers from the love of sin. It saves the soul—saves it from present sin and from eternal woe. This knowledge elevates the motives, sweetens the feelings and gives nobility to the entire life, for the man who knows Christ lives after a loftier order of life than those who are ignorant of Him. This knowledge. indeed, Beloved,

is excellent because it can never be lost—it is a knowledge which will continue to *progress*, even in eternity! The most of the subjects which mortals study here will be forgotten in the world to come. The most profound of them will be too trifling to be pursued amid angelic thrones. The honors of classical and mathematical attainments will shine but dimly amidst the glories of Heaven. But the knowledge of Christ Jesus will still be priceless and it will cause those who possess it to shine as the sun! He that knows Christ shall go on to sit at His feet and to learn—and as he learns, he will tell to principalities and powers the manifold wisdom of God in the Person of Jesus Christ!

See, then, Beloved, that the Apostle, for the sake of the knowledge of Christ Jesus His Lord, still counted all the things that he had once gloried in to be but loss. This was his calculation when he was writing. It was not merely the estimate of his younger days, but it was his present renewed and confirmed judgment. My Friends, is it ours? The great Apostle gives us a third counting which may be regarded as his life estimate. Not of the past only, nor of the present merely, but of the past and present inclusively. Here it is, “For whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in Him.”

Here, Beloved, you see that his estimate sets out with actual test and practical proof. He is sitting down, I suppose, in the guard room of the Praetorian at Rome where he was a prisoner. He has chains on his wrists and if he likes, he needs no blotting paper, but may powder his writing with the rust of his fetters. He has nothing in all the world. He has lost all his old friends. His relations disown him, His countrymen abhor him and even his Christian Brothers and Sisters often distress him. No name made the Jew gnash his teeth more maliciously than did the name of Saul of Tarsus who was adjudged to be the vilest of renegades! He has lost caste and lost all ground of glorying. He has, no longer, a righteousness of his own wherein to glory, but is stripped of every rag of legal hope.

Christ is his All and he has nothing else. He has no worldly property. He has no provision for his most common needs and most true are his words as he writes—“For whom I have suffered the loss of all things.” Let us enter the prison and put a personal question to the good man. Paul, your faith has brought you to absolute penury and friendlessness. What is your estimate of it now? Theory is one thing, but does practice bear it out? The sea looks smooth as glass, but seafaring is more pleasant to talk of than to practice. The embarking was a fine spectacle, but what do you think of a sea voyage when the storm rages? What about it, Paul?

“Well,” he says, “I confess I have suffered the loss of all things.” And do you deeply regret it, Paul? “Regret it?” he asks, “regret the loss of my Phariseeism, my circumcision, my Israelite dignity? Regret it? No,” he says, “I am glad that all these are gone, for I count it to be a deliverance to be rid of them.” In his first and second counts he called his former gains loss, but now he sets them down as dung. He could not use a stronger word! He calls all his boasts in the flesh mere *offal*—something to get rid of and no loss when it is gone—but rather a subject for congratulation that it is removed from him. The word signifies that which is worthless and is used to express the lees and dregs of wine, the settlement which a man finds in his cup and drains out upon the ground when he has drunk his liquor, the refuse of fruit, the dross of metals and the chaff and stubble of wheat.

In fact, the root of the word signifies things cast to dogs—dog’s meat, bones from the plates, crumbs and stale pieces brushed from the table— and such things as one is anxious to be rid of. The Apostle puts down the whole of the fine things which he had enumerated as no better than dung. “Of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews,” he shakes out the whole lot for the dogs and is glad to be rid of it all for Christ’s sake! It reminds me of a ship in a storm. When the captain leaves the harbor, he has a cargo on board of which he takes great care to protect. But when a tremendous wind is blowing and the ship labors, being too heavily laden—and there is great fear that she will not ride out the storm—see how eagerly the sailors lighten the ship!

They bring up from the hold, with all diligence, the very things which before they prized! And they seem rejoiced to heave them into the sea! Never were men more eager to get, than these are to throw away! There go the casks of flour, the bars of iron, the manufactured goods. Overboard go valuable bales of merchandise. Nothing seems to be worth keeping! Why is this? Are these things not good? Yes, but not good to a sinking ship! Anything must go to save life, anything to ride out the storm. And so the Apostle says that in order to win Christ and to be found in Him, he flung the whole cargo of his beloved confidences overboard and was as glad to get rid of them as if they were only so much dung! This he did to win Christ—and that fact suggests another picture.

An English warship of the olden times is cruising the ocean and she spies a Spanish galleon in the distance laden with gold from the Indies. Captain and men are determined to overtake and capture her, for they have a relish for prize money, but their vessel sails heavily. What then? If she will not move because of her load, they fling into the sea everything they can lay their hands on, knowing that if they can capture the Spanish vessel the booty will make amends for all they lose and vastly more! Do you wonder at their eagerness to lose the little to gain the great? Sailor, why cast overboard those useful things? “Oh,” he says, “they are nothing compared with that prize over yonder. If we can but get side by side and board her we will soon make up for all that we now throw into the sea.”

And so it is with the man who is in earnest to win Christ and to be found in Him. Overboard go circumcision and Phariseeism and the blamelessness touching the Law and all that, for he knows that he will find a better righteousness in Christ than any which he foregoes, yes, find everything in Christ which he now, for his Lord’s sake, counts but as the slag of the furnace! Now, Beloved, notice how much nearer Paul had got to Christ than he was before, for in his second estimate he spoke of knowing Him, but now he speaks of *winning* Him for his own. The word meant and should have been translated, “gain”—“that I may *gain* Christ”—for the Apostle keeps to the *mercantile* figures all the way through and means that I may *gain* Christ and know Him as my own. That I may have Him

and hold Him and sing with the spouse “My Beloved is mine.” For this cause we may wisely count all things but dung, that we may have the Lord Jesus in everlasting possession!

Then Paul adds, “and be found in Him.” He longs to be hidden in Jesus and to abide in Him as a bird in the air, or a fish in the sea. He pants to be one with Christ and so to be in Him as a member is in the body. He desires to get into Christ as a fugitive shelters himself in his hiding place. He aspires to be so in Christ as never to come out of Him, so that whenever anyone looks for Jesus, he may find *him* in Jesus, and that when the Great Judge of All calls for him at the Last Great Day, He may find *him* in Christ! It would be ill to be found where Adam was, shivering under the trees of the garden with his fig leaves. But to be found beneath the Tree of Life, wearing the robe of His righteousness—this will be bliss, indeed! We are lost out of Christ but we are found *in* Him! Once met with by the Great Shepherd, we are found *by* Him, but when safely folded in His love, we are found *in* Him.

Notice how Paul sticks to what he began with, namely, the unrobing himself of his sins in the flesh and His aligning himself with Christ. He desires to be found in Christ, but he adds, “not having my own righteousness, which is of the Law.” No, he will have nothing to do with *that*. He has already despised it as loss and thrown it overboard as dross. Now he will not have it or call it his own at all. It is strange for a man to say, “not having my own,” but he does. He disowns his own righteousness as eagerly as other men disown their sins and he highly esteems the righteousness which Christ has worked out for us, which becomes ours by faith! He calls it “the righteousness which is of God by faith,” and he sets great store by it. Yes, it is all he desires.

My Brothers and Sisters, this is the thing we ought to be seeking after—to be more and more conscious that we have Christ, to abide in Him more continually, to be more like He is, even in His sufferings and in His death, and to feel the full power of His resurrection-life within ourselves. May God grant us Grace to do this, and the more we do it the more we shall coincide with the Apostle in his slight esteem for everything else. This matter is like a balance, if one scale goes down, the other must go up. The weightier Christ’s influence, the lighter will be the world and selfrighteousness—and when Christ is All in All—then the world and self will be nothing at all!

**II.**I shall not weary you, I hope, by taking a few minutes for the last head, which is OUR OWN CALCULATIONS. First, do we join in Paul’s earliest estimate? At the outset of his spiritual life he saw all his own natural advantages and excellences and he counted them loss for Christ. Every true Christian here remembers the time when he, also, counted all in which he had formerly trusted to be of no value whatever and betook himself to Jesus. But perhaps I speak to some who have never done so. You are, at this time, my Friend, still confident that you never did anybody any harm. You think that your life has been amiable and upright, that you have been just, charitable and kind. And you think that all this certainly qualifies you for Heaven.

You count your natural virtues to be great gains. I spoke but three days ago to an old man, more than 80, and when he told me of his great age I said, “I hope that when you die you will go to Heaven.” “Ah, Master,” he said, “I never did anything why I should go anywhere else.” There are multitudes who believe that creed—they do not speak it out quite so plainly as the aged peasant did—but they mean it, all the same. Ah, dear Friends, you *must* be brought out of that delusion and all these moral excellences and virtues must be loss to you, that Christ’s righteousness may be your only gain! May the Holy Spirit teach you this distasteful Truth of God! I wish your heart would sing—

***“No more, my God, I boast no more  
Of all the duties I have done!  
I quit the hopes I held before,  
To trust the merits of Your Son.  
Yes, and I must and will esteem  
All things but loss for Jesus’ sake!  
O may my soul be found in Him,  
And of His righteousness partake.”***

You will never be saved till you lose all your legal hopes.

Now, secondly, after years of profession which many of you have made, do you still continue in the same mind and make the same estimate? I have known, I am sorry to say, some professors who have, by degrees, settled down upon something other than Christ. Beloved, are you resting, right now, upon your years of manifest improvement since conversion? Are you beginning to depend upon the regularity of your attendance at the means of Grace, upon your private prayer, upon what you have given, or upon your preaching or anything else? Ah, it will not do! We must continue to stand where we stood at first, saying, “Yet indeed, I also count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.”

Come now, Christian, if you could go back, would you begin at the Cross? If you could retrace your steps, would you begin, again, by resting upon Christ and by taking Him to be your All in All? I will tell you *my* answer—I have no other Foundation upon which I could begin, I must rest on my Lord—

***“To whom or where should I go   
If I should turn from You?”***

Lone Refuge of my spirit, sole Port of my poor laboring boat, to you I fly today, if never I did so before! Or if before, to you I fly anew! Do you say the same, Brothers and Sisters? I am sure you do! Now, again, you cannot join Paul in the third calculation and say, “For whom I have suffered the loss of all things,” but still, I must put it to you—do you think you *could have* suffered the loss of all things if it had been required of you for Christ’s sake?

If it had come to this, that you must be banished or renounce your Savior, would you go into banishment? If the alternative were the spoiling of your goods, would you let all go rather than renounce your Lord? Your forefathers did so and, what the Spirit worked in them, I doubt not He would have worked in you had the times been of a severer character. But I will ask you a more practical question—since you have not had to suffer the loss of all things, do you hold all things at God’s disposal? Are you ready to part with comfort and honor for Him? Can you take up the social Cross and join with the most despised sect for the Truth of God’s sake?

Can you lose the respectability which attaches to popular creeds and can you cast in your lot with the despised Redeemer when religion no more walks in her silver slippers, but travels barefooted through the mire? Can you be content to share with the, “despised and rejected of men”? If you can, then you could, also, suffer the loss of all things—but see to it that it is, indeed, so. Let me ask another practical question. You have not suffered the loss of all things, but seeing God has left your worldly comforts to you, have you used all things for His sake? Have you given to His cause all that cause might fairly ask? I hope you can say, “Yes, I hope I have and, as the world judges, vastly more, for I have said in my soul—

***‘And if I must make some reserve,   
And duty did not call,   
I love my God with zeal so great   
That I would give Him all.”’***

Well, then, you, also, may make your estimate as the Apostle did. Though you have not had, practically, to endure the loss of all things, yet you do count them but dung for Christ’s sake. But one thing more. Beloved, if Christ is so to you that all things else in comparison to Him are dross and dung, do you not want Him for your children? Do you not desire Him for your friends? Do you not wish all your kinsfolk to have Him? Whatever a man values for himself, he values for others. You want your boy to follow your trade if you believe it to be a very good one. You desire to see your children well placed in life—but what position in life can be equal to being found in Christ—and what under Heaven can be compared with winning Christ?

You may judge your own sincerity by the measure of your desire for the salvation of others and I earnestly entreat you be not afraid to tell others the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus your Lord! And be not slow to impress upon them the absolute necessity of being found in Him. Loathe the idea of having a righteousness of your own, but grasp with all your faith the righteousness of Jesus Christ! I commend to you Christians that you give your whole selves to Christ, that from this day forward you serve Him with spirit, soul and body, for after all, there is nothing worth living for, nothing worth even giving a single tear for if you lose it, nor worth a smile if you gain it, save only that which comes from Christ, and can be used for Christ, and is found in Christ. Christ is ALL! May He be so to you. Amen.

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**÷Php 3.8**

THE PRICELESS PRIZE  
NO. 3209

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, AUGUST 4, 1910.  
*DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.  
*“That I may win Christ.”***Php 3:8***.*

THE very high value that the Apostle Paul set upon the Savior is most palpable when he speaks of *winning*Him. This shows that the Savior held the same place in Paul’s esteem as the crown did in the esteem of the runner at the Olympic games. To gain that crown, the competitor strained every nerve and sinew, feeling as though he were content to drop down dead at the goal if he might but win it. Paul felt that were he to run with all his might, if that were the way of winning Christ—were he to strain soul and body to win Him, He would be well worth the effort. He shows his value of Christ by speaking of Him as the prize he panted to win. He uses the very same words which the soldier would use concerning the victory when, with garments rolled in blood, amidst confused noise and clouds of smoke, he counts all things but little if he may but hear the shout of triumph. So, Paul, regarding Christ as more glorious and excellent than mountains of prey, considered such a prize to be worth all the fighting, even though he should agonize and sweat with blood! He would be well worth dying to win. I take it that he speaks of Christ here as though he felt that He was the very climax of his desire, the summit of his ambition. If he might but get Christ, he would be perfectly satisfied—but if he could not get Him—whatever else he might have, he would still remain unblessed.

I would to God that you all felt the same. I wish that the ambition of every one of my fellow creatures here assembled—and, indeed, the wide world over—were this, that they might win Christ! Oh, if they did but know His preciousness, if they did but understand how happy and how blessed He makes those to be who gain Him, they, too, would give up everything else for this one desire—that they may win Christ! I hope that, perhaps, a few words of mine may be blessed of God the Spirit to stir up such a desire in the hearts of the congregation now assembled. How, then, shall I begin?

**I.**WHILE YOU HAVE NOT CHRIST, YOU ARE IN A VERY BAD CONDITION—SHOULD NOT THIS MAKE YOU LONG FOR HIM?

Consider, my dear Hearer, you who are Christless tonight, *what you are and where you are*. You are a sinner—that you know. Without Christ you are an unpardoned sinner, a condemned sinner and, before long you will be a sinner judged, sentenced and cast into Hell! Do you not know that? You are a diseased sinner. Sin is the leprosy which is in you and, without Christ, you are sick without a physician. For you there is no balm in Gilead, no physician there. Your sickness is mortal! It will certainly be your ruin, for you have no Savior. You are a mortal—you cannot doubt it. You will soon die and can you tell what it will be to die without Christ? Have you ever formed an idea of what it will be to pass into the realm of separate spirits with no rod to lean on and no staff to comfort you in the dark valley? Man, you are an*immortal* being! You know that, too! You will not cease to be when you die. You will live again—and what will it be to live again without Christ? It will be to live the life of a condemned spirit, withered by the wrath of God, scathed by the lightning of Divine Justice! Can you think of that without dismay?—

***“Sinner, is your heart at rest?  
Is your bosom void of fear?  
Are you not by guilt oppressed?  
Speaks not conscience in your ear?  
Can this world afford you bliss?  
Can it chase away your gloom?  
Flattering, false, and vain it is—  
Tremble at the worldling’s doom!”***

Why, even now, I think I can see you. You are like the ship upon the lake of Gennesaret, tempest-tossed. The winds howl about her, every timber creaks, the sail is torn to pieces and the mast is going by the board! And for you there is no Savior to come and walk the billows, and to say, “It is I, be not afraid!” At the helm of your ship there sleeps no Savior who can arise and say to the waves, “Peace, be still!” You are a ship in a storm, with none to rescue you, seeing that you have no Savior. The devil has scuttled you. There are holes bored through and through your spirit’s hope and confidence—and it will go down, before long, in depths of unutterable woe!

I think I see you again. You are like Lazarus in the grave, and by this time you are foul and noxious, for you have been dead these 30 or 40 years and that death has festered into putrid corruption. Yes, there you are, and you have no Christ to say, “Roll away the stone.” You have no Christ to say, “Lazarus, come forth!” No Savior to bid your friends loosen you and let you go! I think I see you yet again. You have been singing of the dying thief. We often sing of him. And you will die as the thief died, *only—*only there will be no Christ hanging on the Cross from whom you shall hear the words—“This day shall you be with Me in Paradise.”

Unto what shall I liken you and with what shall I compare you? A soul without Christ! Why, it were better for you that you had never been born if you continue so! You would be better off with the millstone about your neck and cast into the sea, if that would make an end of you! You would be far happier, then, than you now are without Christ, for without Christ you are without God and without hope in the world! You are a sheep lost on the mountains and no Shepherd to find you—a soul wandering in the blackness of darkness, and no lamp to guide your wandering footsteps! And soon you will be a desolate spirit, without a ray of comfort, without a home, shut out in the blackness of darkness forever! Does not that make you long for Christ? It would if I could make you feel what I can only say! I can only deal with your outward ears—my Master must deal with your hearts—and I do pray Him, by His Almighty Spirit, to make you feel so wretched without Christ that you will not dare to sleep tonight until you have sought Him, laid hold upon Him and said to Him, “I will not let You go, except You bless me.”

O you souls out of Christ, I could, with half a moment’s thought, stop and burst into tears and say no more! But I must command myself, for I must speak to you—and I do pray you, by the living God, unless you are beside yourselves, if you have any love to your own souls, fly to Christ! Seek the Lord! Try to lay hold upon Him, for as you now are, your position is perilous in the extreme!—

***“Come, guilty souls, and flee away  
Like doves to Jesus’ wounds!  
This is the welcome Gospel-Day,  
Wherein Free Grace abounds!  
God loved the Church and gave His Son  
To drink the cup of wrath.  
And Jesus says He’ll cast out none  
That come to Him by faith.”***

**II.**We will now change the strain, but not the objective. Remember that ALL THE THINGS IN THE WORLD ARE VAIN WITHOUT CHRIST.  
The world’s goods, its substance, its riches, its pleasures, its pomp, its fame—what are all these without Christ? They are a painted pageantry to go to Hell in! They are a mockery to an immortal spirit! They are a mirage of the wilderness, deluding the traveler, but not yielding to his desires one substantial drop of joy! There have been those in this world who have tried it, and they say, “It sounds, it sounds, it sounds, because it is empty and hollow as a drum.” It is—  
***“False as the smooth, deceitful sea,  
And empty as the whistling wind.”***  
There is nothing in it all—  
***“Honor’s a puff of noisy breath,  
And gain a heap of yellow clay.”***  
And what is even power itself, but anxiety and care? Solomon knew the world at its best and his verdict upon her was, “Vanity of vanities, says the Preacher, vanity of vanities; all is vanity.” Without Christ, Sinner, you will find the world to be unsatisfactory. When you have tried it at its best, you will turn from it and say, “I have been deceived! I have eaten the wind and I am not satisfied. I am like one that feasts in a dream, and wakes and, lo—he is hungry!” Without Christ you will not even find this world to be comfortable. Perhaps there are none so unhappy as those who are surrounded with what we think to be the means of happiness. I know this—if I had to find the extreme of wretchedness, I should not go to the dens of poverty, but I should go among men surrounded with the trappings of wealth and find you hearts broken with anguish and spirits wrung with griefs which they could not tell! Oh, yes, the world is a heap of chaff! The only solid treasure is to be found in Christ! But if you neglect Him, you neglect all that is worth having!  
Besides, *all this world must soon pass away*. See how it melts! Or, if it melts not from you, you must melt from it. Down goes the ship! She floated gaily but an hour before, but she foundered and she is gone! And now, merchant, what will you do? Your vessel has gone down with all your treasure on board and you are left penniless! Oh, happy are they who lay up their treasure in Christ, for no shipwreck need they fear! But, oh!—  
***“This world’s a dream, an empty show”—***which cannot satisfy an immortal soul!  
Further than this, let me remind you, my dear Hearer, that if you have not Christ, nothing else will be of use for you. A profession of religion will only be a sort of respectable pall to throw over the corpse of your dead soul! No, a profession of religion, if you have not Christ in it, will be a swift witness against you to condemn you! What right have you to profess to be a follower of Christ unless Christ is, in you, the hope of Glory? And to have listened to the ministry of the Word will be of no use to you if you do not get Christ. Alas, alas, what can our poor sermons do? Our prayers, our hymns—what are they? Ah, and what will your Baptism be—and what will the Lord’s Supper be unless by faith you grasp a Savior? These ordinances, though ordained by God, Himself, are wells without water and clouds without rain unless they get us Christ, who is the sum and substance of them all! It will be of no use to you that you were regular in your private prayers, that you were good to the poor, that you were generous to the Church, that you were constantly in attendance upon the outward means of Grace. I say, as I said before, that all these are but a painted pageantry for your soul to go to Hell in, unless you have Christ! You may as surely go down to the Pit by the religious road as by the irreligious. If you have not Christ, you have not salvation, whatever else you may have—  
***“Give me Christ, or else I die”—***  
should be your daily and nightly prayer, for all else will destroy you if you have not the Savior!  
And let me tell you, dear Hearer, that your repentance, if it does not lead you to Christ, will need to be repented of! And your faith, if it is not based upon His atoning Sacrifice, is a faith that is not the faith of God’s elect! And all your convictions of sin—all the visions that have scared you, all the fears that have haunted you—will only be a prelude to something worse unless you get Christ! There is one door and if you go not through that, climbing up some other way, though it is never so tedious, will not answer your turn. You must go down to Hell after all your efforts, all your repentings, all your believing, unless your soul can say— ***“My hope is built on nothing less  
Than Jesus’ blood and righteousness!  
I dare not trust the sweetest frame,  
But wholly lean on Jesus’ name—  
On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand,  
All other ground is sinking sand!”***  
Oh, how this ought to make you long for Christ, when you think that everything else is but a bauble when compared with Him! And think what a state you are in as long as you are destitute of Him!  
**III.**I must not tarry, so let me remind you, my dear Hearer, though you cannot possibly know how anxious I am to speak so that you may feel what I say, that NOTHING CAN MAKE AMENDS TO YOU FOR LOSING CHRIST.  
I know how it is with some of you. *You say you cannot afford to follow Christ*. Your trade—your wicked trade—you would have to give that up, for it happens to be an ungodly calling. Well now, Friend, let me take you by the button-hole a minute. Which had you better be—a beggar and go to Heaven, or a duke—and go to Hell? Come, now, which had you better do—go to Heaven with an empty pocket or go down to the Pit with a full one? All you who worship Mammon, I know how you will answer, but you who have souls above earth, I hope you will reply, “Nothing in the form of wealth will compensate us for losing our souls.” Men have been known, on their dying beds, to have their money-bags brought to them—and they have put them to their hearts and have said, “This won’t do,” and they have taken up another and put it to their palpitating hearts, and said again, “This won’t do.” Ah, no, it cannot cure a heartache! What can it do for a soul in eternity? Is it not a painful thing to attend upon some men who die rich in ill-gotten gain? What are they the better for their wealth? They only have it said of them, “He died worth so much.” That is all, but they sleep in the same earth and the same worms devour them! There is more fighting over their graves among the heirs who divide the plunder *and* more joy because they are gone! While oftentimes the poor man has the honest tears of his children shed upon a coffin which they have had to contribute to purchase out of their little savings and the grave, itself, has been prepared by the charity of some who found in their father’s character the only patrimony which he had to bequeath. Oh, may God grant you Grace to perceive that all the riches you can ever get would never make up for losing Christ!  
*Some lose Christ for the sake of fame*. It is not a fashionable thing to be a Christian. To be a Christian after the world’s sort, I grant you—is but after the sort of the New Testament, it is not! And many say, “Well, it is not fashionable,” and they bend to the fashion. And many do the same in another way, for young men are laughed out of going to the House of God and young women are decoyed from attending the means of Grace by the laughter, jeers and jokes of their companions. Remember that they can laugh you into Hell, but they can never laugh you out again! And that though their jokes may shut the door, their jokes can never open that door again. Oh, is this all? Will you sell your souls to escape from a fool’s laughter? Then, what a fool you must be! What? Are you so thin-skinned that you cannot bear to be questioned, or to be asked whether you are a follower of the Lord Jesus? Ah, Sir, you shall have that thin skin of yours tormented more than enough in the world to come, when *shame*, which you dread so much, shall be your everlasting portion! O Soul, how can you sell Christ for the applause of men? How can you give Him up for the laughter of fools?  
*Some give Jesus Christ up for the pleasures of the world*, but can the giddy dance for a few minutes of this life be worth the torments of the world to come? Oh, weigh, like wise men—as merchants weigh their goods against the gold—I pray you, weigh your souls against the pleasures of this world! Oh, where is the pleasure? Even Tiberius, in his desert island, when he had ransacked the world to find a new joy, could not, if he could give us all the mirth he knew, tell us of anything that would be worth the casting away of the soul! This pearl is too priceless for the world to attempt to purchase! I pray you, be wise enough to feel that nothing can compensate you for this loss! Seek Jesus and may you find Him tonight!  
**IV.**A fourth observation upon which I shall not enlarge, is this— DEPEND UPON IT, THAT WHATEVER YOU LOSE FOR CHRIST’S SAKE WILL BE A BLESSED LOSS FOR YOU!  
Gregory Nazianzen, a foremost father of the Christian Church, rejoiced that he was well versed in the Athenian philosophy—and why do you think he rejoiced in that? Because he had to give it all up when he became a Christian! And he said, “I thank God that I had a philosophy to throw away.” He counted it no loss, but a gain, to be a loser of such learned lumber when he found a Savior! An old Divine said, “Who would refuse to give up a whole sky full of stars if he could buy a sun with them? And who would refuse to give up all the comforts of this life if he could have Christ at so goodly a price?” That grand old Ignatius, one of the earliest of the Church fathers, said, “Give me burning, give me hanging, give me all the torments of Hell if I may but get my Savior! I would gladly be content to bear them all as a price.” And so might we! Did I not tell you of the martyrs sitting and singing in old Bonner’s damp coalhole, and one of them writing, “There are six brave companions with me in this paradise, and we do sit and sing in the dark all day”? Ah, yes, they were no losers! Did not Rutherford say when he declared that he had but one eye and his enemies had put that out—for that one eye was the preaching of the Gospel, an eye to the glory of God—and his enemies had made him silent in Aberdeen, so that he used to weep over his dumb and silent Sabbaths? Yet did he not say, “But how mistaken they are! They thought they sent me to a dungeon, but Christ has been so precious to me that I thought it to be the king’s parlor and the very Paradise of God”?  
And did not Renwick say that oftentimes, when he had been out among the bogs on the Scotch mountains, hunted over the mosses, with the stars of God looking down upon the little congregation, that they had far more of God’s fellowship than bishops had ever had in cathedrals, or than they, themselves, had ever had in their circles when, in brighter days, they had worshipped God in peace? The dragoons of Claverhouse and the uniformity of Charles II were incapable of quenching the joy of our Puritan and Covenanting forefathers! Their piety drew its mirth from deeper springs than kings could stop, or persecution could dry up. The saints of Christ have given Christ their all—and when they have given all, they have felt that they were the richer for their poverty and the happier for their sorrows! And when they have been in solitude for Christ, they have felt that they have had good company, for He has been with them to be their strength and their joy. You may have Christ at whatever price you will, but you will make a good bargain of it! I charge you, my dear Hearer, if it should come to this—that if you should have to sell your house and your home, if the wife of your bosom should become your enemy, if your children should refuse to know their own father or to look him in the face, if you should be banished from your country, if there should be a halter for your neck, and no grave for your body—you would make a good bargain in taking up my Lord and Master, for oh, He will claim you in the day when men disown you—and in the day when He comes, there shall be none so bright as those who have suffered for Him—  
***“And they who, with their Leader,  
Have conquered in the fight,  
Forever and forever  
Are clad in robes of white!”***  
Yes, if you suffer with Him, you shall also be glorified together! God grant you Grace to feel this to be true and to make any sacrifice as long as you can but “win Christ, and be found in Him.”  
**V.**IF EVER YOU GET CHRIST, YOU WILL FIND HIM ALL GAIN AND NO LOSS!  
The Apostle says, “That I may *win Christ*.” It is all winning and no losing. Why, *if you get Christ, you will get life!* Does He not give life and immortality to those that have Him? Yes, for He says, “he that believes in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live.” *If you get Christ, you will get light*. He said, “I am the light of the world: he that follows Me shall not walk in darkness.” The Sun of Righteousness shall arise upon you!*Get Christ and you shall get health*—your soul shall leave her sicknesses with Him who bore her sickness in the days of His flesh. *Get Christ and you shall get riches*, “the unsearchable riches of Christ.” You may be poor, perhaps, outwardly, but you shall be rich, yourselves, and be able to make many others rich—rich in faith, giving glory to God! Get Christ and prosperity shall not hurt you—your feet shall be like hinds’ feet, to stand upon your high places. Get Christ and He will turn your bitter Marahs into sweet Elims. He is the Tree which, when put into the brackish water, makes it sweet to the taste. Affliction is no longer affliction when Christ is with us! Then the furnace glows, not with heat, alone, but with a golden Radiance, a present Glory when Christ treads the burning coals!  
*Get Christ, Beloved, and you have got all your soul can wish for*. Now may you stretch your capacious powers to the utmost and, with a holy covetousness and a sacred greediness, desire all you can! You may open your mouth wide, for Christ will fill it. You may enlarge your desires, but the infinite riches of Christ will satisfy them at their largest and widest stretch. Get Christ and you have Heaven on earth, and shall have Heaven forever! Get Christ, and angels shall be your servitors! The wheels of Providence shall grind for your good, the chariot of God, which brings on the events prophesied in apocalyptic vision, shall bring only joy and peace to you—and you shall hear it said, both in time and in eternity— ***“‘Tis with the righteous well.”*** *Get Christ and you have nothing to fear, and everything to hope for.*Get Christ and sin is buried in the Red Sea of Jesus’ blood, while you are arrayed in the spotless righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ—Jehovah Tsidkenu, Himself! Get Christ and—what more shall I say? Then may you swim in seas of bliss! Then may you walk Elysian fields of holy joy even here on earth! Get Christ and you need not envy the angels! Get Christ and you may count yourselves to be raised up together and made to sit together in heavenly places with Him!  
Surely all this ought to make the sinner’s mouth water to get Christ! It ought to make his heart ache till he gets Christ! It ought to set his soul a-hungering and a-thirsting till he gets Jesus! It ought to make him resolve that he will not be kept back till at last he gets a firm hold upon the Crucified!  
**VI.**My last remark shall be this—WE SHALL UNDERSTAND ALL THIS A GREAT DEAL BETTER VERY SOON.  
There is a curtain, but it is lifting, it is lifting, it is lifting—and when it is lifted, what do I see? The spirit world! ‘Tis death that lifts the curtain and when it is lifted, these present things will vanish, for they are but shadows. The world of eternity and reality will then be seen. I would summon a jury of the spirits that have passed that curtain and they would not be long debating about the question whether Christ is worth the winning! I care not where you select them from—whether from among the condemned in Hell, or from among the beatified in Heaven. Let them sit, let *even those who are in Hell*sit and judge upon the matter. And if they could for once speak honestly, they would tell you that it is a dreadful thing to despise Christ, now that they have come to see things in a true light—now that they are lost forever, forever, forever—now that they are crushed with knowledge and feeling which have come too late to be profitable—now they wish that they had listened to the ministrations of the Truth of God, to the proclamations of the Gospel! If they could have a sane mind back again, they would shriek, “Oh, for one more Sabbath! Oh, to listen once more to an honest preacher, though his words might be clumsy and uncouth! Oh, to hear a voice once more say, ‘Come to Jesus while the Day of Mercy lasts!’ Oh, to be once more pressed to come to the marriage feast—once more bid to look to Jesus and to live!” I tell you Sirs, some of you who make so light of Sundays and think preaching is but a pastime, so that you come here to hear us as you would go to hear some fiddler on a weeknight—I tell you, Sirs, the lost in Hell reckon these things at a very different rate! And so will you before long, when another preacher, with skeleton fingers, shall talk to you upon your deathbed. Ah, then you will see that we were in earnest and you were the players— then you will comprehend that what we said to you demanded earnest, immediate attention, though, alas, you would not give it—and so played false to your own soul, committed spiritual suicide and went your way like a bullock to the slaughter—to be the murderers of your own spirits!  
But suppose I summoned a jury of bright spirits from Heaven? Ah, they would not need to consider, but I am sure they would unanimously say to you, if they might, “Seek you the Lord while He may be found! Seek the Lord and His strength. Seek the Lord and His face always—put your trust in Jesus, for He is sweet beyond all sweetness.” May you do this and may you sing—  
***“Oh, spread Your savor on my frame,  
No sweetness is so sweet!  
Till I get up to sing Your name  
Where all Your singers meet.”***  
Pray that prayer. Ask Him to save you and may the Lord bless you, for Jesus’ sake! Amen.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: *Philippians 3.***

**Verse 1.** *Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord*. Let this be the end of everything, before you get to the end of it. And when you do get to the end of it, “rejoice in the Lord.” It is incumbent upon us, as Christians, to rise out of our despondencies. Joy should be the normal state of the Christian. What a happy religion is ours in which it is a duty to be happy! “Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord.”

**1.***To write the same things to you, to me, indeed, is not grievous, but for you it is safe.* To go over the same old Truths again and again, to proclaim the same precepts and teach the same Doctrines is not grievous to us, and it is safe for you to hear these things again and again. If they have not made their due impression upon you, already, perhaps they will do so when they are repeated in your hearing. At any rate, it is safe for you to hear or read over and over again the old, old story with which you are already familiar.

**2.***Beware of dogs.*Contentious persons—persons of coarse and corrupt habits. “Beware of dogs.”  
**2.***Beware of evil workers.*However prettily they may talk, if they are workers of evil, beware of them. “By their fruits you shall know them.” Their speech may be clever, but if their lips are unclean, beware of them.  
**2.***Beware of the concision.*Beware of the cutters off, those who excommunicate and cut off others because they do not happen to agree with them in certain rites and ceremonies.  
**3.***For we are the circumcision which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.*This is the real circumcision which is of the spirit and not of the flesh. The men who have abandoned all confidence in themselves. The men who have come to rely upon Christ, alone. The men who “rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh,” those who care not for outward rites and ceremonies, but who worship God in the spirit—these are the true circumcision!  
**4.***Though I might also have confidence in the flesh.* “If any man might trust in outward religion, I might,” said Paul, yet he was the very man who would not do so, and who warned others against doing it!  
**4-6.***If anyone else thinks he may have confidence in the flesh, I more: circumcised the eight day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the Law, a Pharisee; concerning zeal, persecuting the Church; touching the righteousness which is in the Law, blameless.* So that if anybody could have boasted of what he was by birth, what he was by profession, what he was by the display of religious zeal—Paul could have boasted as boldly as anyone could, for in all those respects he was second to nobody! You know that it is a very easy thing, or it ought to be a very easy thing, for some people to be humble, for they have nothing to be proud of—but here is a man who had much of which he might have been proud! According to the letter of the Law, he was a diamond of the first water, yet see what a different verdict he gives after Divine Grace has opened his eyes!  
**7-9.***But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yes, indeed, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is of the Law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by*

*faith*. [See Sermon #1357, Volume 23—A BUSINESS-LIKE ACCOUNT—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.] Everything else must go in or

der to secure that. Paul thinks that to be righteous by faith is infinitely better than all the righteousness that can come by works and ceremonies. He therefore utterly despises that which he once thought to be more precious that gold! And he takes possession of, as his greatest treasure, that which he once trampled in the mire. Now his great desire is—

**10-12.***That I may know Him, and the power of His Resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made comfortable unto His death; if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect.* You, perhaps, suppose that Paul’s present satisfaction arises out of a consciousness of personal perfection, but it is not so. He has not won the race yet—his joy arises from the fact that he is on the right course and that he is running in the right direction! “Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect.”

**12.***But I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am  
apprehended of Christ Jesus*. [See Sermon #2315, Volume 39—PAUL APPREHENDED AND APPREHENDING—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at

http://www.spurgeongems.org.] “I want to lay hold of that for which Christ has laid hold of me. He has grasped me in order to make me perfect and I want to grasp that perfection. He has laid hold of me to rid me of my sin and I want to lay hold of a clean riddance of sin, apprehending that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.”

**13-15.***Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Let us therefore, as many as are mature, be thus minded: and if in anything you are otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you.*If you are a true Believer in Jesus, be of this mind—always to be pressing forward to something higher and better. If God has given you one form of maturity, press onward to a much higher form. Seek continually to rise. The eagle’s motto is, “Higher, Higher!” Let it be your motto, too. Many of God’s people do not believe that He can make them what He means to make them, or, at least, they act as if they did not believe that He can. They apparently are not conscious of what their privileges really are and are living far below where they might live in the happy enjoyment of peace and power and usefulness! May God help us, by His gracious Spirit, to know all of Christ that we can and to be as much like Christ as we can.

**16-18.***Nevertheless, to the degree we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing. Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as you have us for an example. (For many walk)—*I suppose Paul is referring to many even in the Church of his day. “For many walk”—

**18.***Of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the Cross of Christ*. [See Sermons #102, Volume 2—FALSE  
PROFESSORS SOLEMNLY WARNED and #2553, Volume 44—THE ENEMIES OF THE CROSS OF CHRIST—Read/download both sermons, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.] The  
worst enemies that the Cross of Christ has are the enemies inside the professing Church of Christ!

**19.***Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.*They call themselves spiritual, yet they live for earthly things, indulging their appetites, living for self, yet pretending to be Christians, whereas selfishness is the very reverse of Christianity.

**20, 21.***For our conversation is in Heaven; from where also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself*. [See Sermon #973,

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**÷Php 3.10**

THE POWER OF HIS RESURRECTION  
NO. 2080

**DELIVERED ON LORD’S DAY MORNING, APRIL 21, 1889, *BY C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection.”*** Php 3:10***.***

PAUL, in the verses before the text, had deliberately laid aside his own personal righteousness. “But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is of the Law.” It is insinuated in these days that a belief in the righteousness of faith will lead men to care little for good works—that it will act as a sedative to their zeal, and therefore they will exhibit no ardor for holiness. The very reverse is seen in the case of the Apostle and in the case of all who cast aside the righteousness of the Law—that they may be clothed with that righteousness “which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.”

Paul made a list of his advantages as to confidence in the flesh and they were very great. But he turned his back upon them all for Christ’s sake. Accepting Christ to be everything to him, did he, therefore, sit down in self-content and imagine that personal character was nothing? By no means! A noble ambition fired his soul—he longed to know Christ—the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings. If by any means he might attain unto the resurrection from the dead, he became a holy walker and a heavenly runner—because of what he saw in Christ Jesus.

Be sure of this—the less you value your own righteousness—the more will you seek after true holiness. The less you think of your own beauty, the more ardently will you long to become like the Lord Jesus. Those who dream of being saved by their own good works are usually those who have no good works worth mentioning. Those who sincerely lay aside all hope of salvation by their own merits are fruitful in every virtue to the praise of God. Nor is this a strange thing. For the less a man thinks of himself, the more he will think of Christ and the more will he aim at being like He is. The less esteem he has of his own past good works, the more earnest will he be to show his gratitude for being saved by Divine Grace through the righteousness of Christ. Faith works by love, purifies the soul and sets the heart running after the prize of our high calling in Christ Jesus. Therefore it is a purifying and active principle, and by no means the inert thing which some suppose it to be.

What, then, was the great object of the Apostle’s ardor? It was, “that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection.” Paul already knew the Lord Jesus by faith. He knew so much of Him as to be able to teach others. He had looked to Jesus and known the power of His death. But he

now desired that the vision of his faith might become still better known by *experience*. You may know a man and have an idea that he is powerful. But to know him*and his power over you*, is a stage further. You may have read of a man so as to be familiar with his history and his character and yet you may have no knowledge of him and of his personal influence over yourself.

Paul desired intimate acquaintance with the Lord Jesus—personal communion with the Lord to such a degree that he should feel His power at every point and know the effect of all that He had worked out in His life, death and resurrection. He knew that Jesus died and he aspired to rehearse the history in his own soul’s story—he would be dead with Him to the world. He knew that Jesus was buried and he would gladly be “buried with Him in Baptism unto death.” He knew that Jesus rose and his longing was to rise with Him in newness of life. Yes, he even remembered that his Lord had ascended up on high and he rejoiced to say, “He has raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.”

His great desire was to have reproduced in himself the life of Jesus so as to know all about Him by being made like He is. The best Life of Christ is not by Canon Farrar, or Dr. Geikie—it is written in the experience of the saint by the Holy Spirit.

I want you to observe, at the very outset, that all Paul desired to know was always in connection with our Lord, Himself. He says, “That I may know HIM and the power of His resurrection.” Jesus first, and then the power of His resurrection. Beware of studying doctrine, precept, or experiences apart from the Lord Jesus, who is the soul of all. Doctrine without Christ will be nothing better than His empty tomb. Doctrine with Christ is a glorious high throne—with the King sitting on it. Precepts without Christ are impossible commands. But precepts from the lips of Jesus have a quickening effect upon the heart. Without Christ you can do nothing. But abiding in Him you bring forth much fruit.

Always let your preaching and your hearing look towards the personal Savior. This makes all the difference in preaching. Ministers may preach sound doctrine by itself and be utterly without unction. But those who preach it in connection with the Person of the blessed Lord have an anointing which nothing else can give. Christ Himself, by the Holy Spirit, is the savor of a true ministry.

This morning we will confine our thoughts to one theme and unite with the Apostle in a strong desire to know our Lord in connection with the power of His resurrection. The resurrection of the Lord Jesus was, in itself, a marvelous display of power. To raise the dead body of our Lord from the tomb was as great a work as the *creation*. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit each worked this greatest miracle. I need not stay to quote the texts in which the resurrection of our Lord is ascribed to the Father—who brought again from the dead that great Shepherd of the sheep.

Nor need I mention Scriptures in which the Lord is said to have been quickened by the Holy Spirit. Nor those instances in which that great work is ascribed to the Lord Jesus, Himself. But assuredly the Sacred Writings represent the Divine Trinity in Unity as gloriously co-operating in the raising again from the dead the Person of our Lord Jesus Christ. It was, however, a especial instance of our Lord’s own power. He said, “Destroy this Temple and in three days *I* will raise it up.” He also said, concerning His life, “I have power to lay it down and I have power to take it again.”

I do not know whether I can convey my own thought to you. What strikes me very forcibly is this—no mere man going to his grave could say, “I have power to take my life again.” The departure of life leaves the man necessarily *powerless*—he cannot restore himself to life. Behold the sacred Body of Jesus embalmed in spices and wrapped about with linen. It is laid within the sealed and guarded tomb—how can it come back to life? Yet Jesus said, “I have power to take My life again.” And He proved it. Strange power—that spirit of His which had traveled through the under lands and upwards to the eternal Glory—had power to return and to re-enter that holy Thing which had been born of the virgin and to revivify that flesh which could not see corruption.

Behold the dead and buried One makes Himself alive again! Herein is a marvelous thing. He was master over death, even when death seemed to have mastered Him—He entered the grave as a captive but left it as a conqueror. He was compassed by the bonds of death but He could not be held by them. Even in His burial garments He came to life—from those wrappings He unbound Himself—from the sealed tomb He stepped into liberty. If, in the extremity of His weakness He had the power to rise out of the sepulcher and come forth in newness of life, what can He not accomplish now?

I do not think, however, that Paul is here thinking so much of the power displayed in the resurrection as of the power which comes out of it—which may most properly be called, “the power of His resurrection.” This the Apostle desired to apprehend and to know. This is a very wide subject and I cannot encompass the whole region. But many things may be said under four heads. The power of our Lord’s resurrection is an evidencing power, a justifying power, a life-giving power and a consoling power.

**I.**First, the power of our Lord’s resurrection is AN EVIDENCING POWER. Here I shall liken it to a seal which is set to a document to prove its authenticity. Our Lord’s resurrection from the dead was a proof that He was the Messiah. That He had come upon the Father’s business. That He was the Son of God, and that the Covenant which Jehovah had made with Him was henceforth ratified and established. He was “declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.” Thus said Paul at Antioch—“The promise which was made unto the fathers, God has fulfilled the same unto us, their children, in that He has raised up Jesus again. As it is also written in the second Psalm, You are My Son, this day have I begotten You.”

Nobody witnessing our Lord’s resurrection could doubt His Divine Character and that His mission upon earth was from the eternal God.

Well did Peter and John declare that it was the Prince of Life that God had raised from the dead. Our Lord had given this for a sign unto the mocking Pharisees—that as Jonah lay in the deep till the third day and then came forth—even so would He, Himself, lie in the heart of the earth till the third day and then arise from the dead. His rising proved that He was sent of God and that the power of God was with Him.

Our Lord had entered into a Covenant with the Father before all worlds, wherein He had, on His part, engaged to finish redemption and make atonement for sin. That He had done this was affirmed by His rising again from the dead—the *resurrection* was the attestation of the Father to the fulfillment on the part of the Second Adam of His portion in the Everlasting Covenant. His blood is the blood of the Everlasting Covenant and His resurrection is the seal of it. “Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father” as the witness of the Eternal God to the glory of the Son.

So much is the resurrection the proof of our Lord’s mission that it falls to the ground without it. If our Lord Jesus had not risen from the dead, our faith in Him would have lacked the cornerstone of the foundation on which it rests. Paul writes most positively—“If Christ is not risen, then is our preaching vain and your faith is also vain.” He declares that the Apostles would have been found false witnesses of God, “Because,” he says, “we have testified of God that He raised up Christ: whom He raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not.” “If Christ is not raised, your faith is vain; you are yet in your sins.” The resurrection of Jesus is the keystone of the arch of our holy faith. If you take the resurrection away, the whole structure lies in ruins.

The death of Christ, albeit that it is the ground of our confidence for the pardon of sin, would not have furnished such a foundation had He not risen from the dead. Were He still dead, His death would have been like the death of any other person—and would have given us no assurance of acceptance. His life, with all the beauty of its holiness, would have been simply a perfect example of conduct but it could not have become our righteousness if His burial in the tomb of Joseph had been the end of all. It was essential for the confirmation of His life-teaching and His deathsuffering, that He should be raised from the dead. If he had not risen but were still among the dead, you might as well tell us that we preach to you a cunningly devised fable.

See, then, the power of His resurrection—it proves without a doubt the faith once delivered to the saints. Supported by infallible proofs it becomes itself the infallible proof of the authority, power and glory of Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God.

I beg you further to notice that this proof had such power about it in the minds of the Apostles that they preached with singular boldness. These chosen witnesses had seen the Lord after His resurrection—one of them had put his finger into the print of the nails and others had eaten and drunk with Him. They were sure that they were not deceived. They knew that He was dead, for they had been present at His burial—they knew that He lived again, for they had heard Him speak and had seen Him eat a piece of a broiled fish and honeycomb. The fact was as clear to them as it was wonderful. Peter and the rest of them, without hesitation, declared, “this Jesus has God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses.”

They were sure that they saw the man who died on Calvary alive again and they could not but testify what they had heard and seen. The enemies of the faith wondered at the boldness with which these witnesses spoke. Theirs was the accent of conviction—for they testified what they knew of as fact. They had no suspicion lurking in the background. They were sure that Jesus had risen from the dead and this unquestionable certainty made them confident that He was, indeed, the Messiah and the Savior of men. The power of this fact upon those who believe it is great. But upon those who saw it as eyewitnesses it must have been inconceivably mighty!

I wonder not that they defied contradiction, persecution and even death. How could they disbelieve that of which they were so certain? How could they withhold their witness to a fact which was so important to the destiny of their fellow men? In the Apostles and the first disciples we have a cloud of witnesses to a fact more firmly attested than any other recorded in history—and that fact is the witness to the truth of our religion. Honest witnesses, in more than sufficient number, declare that Jesus Christ who died on Calvary and was buried in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea, did rise again from the dead. In the mouth of many witnesses the fact is established—and this fact established proves other blessed facts.

If the cloud of witnesses might not seem sufficient in itself, I see that cloud tinged with crimson. Reddened as by the setting sun, the cloud of witnesses in life becomes a cloud of martyrs in death. The disciples were put to cruel deaths asserting still the fact that Jesus had risen from the grave. They and their immediate followers, never doubting, “counted not their lives dear to them,” that they might witness to this Truth of God. They suffered the loss of all things—were banished and were accounted the offscouring of all things—but they could not, and would not, contradict their faith.

They were nailed to crosses and bound to stakes to be burned. But the enthusiasm of their conviction was never shaken. Behold an array of martyrs reaching on through the centuries! Behold how they are all sure of the Gospel, because sure of their Lord’s endless life! Is not this a grand evidence of “the power of His resurrection”? The Book of Martyrs is a record of that power. The resurrection of Christ casts a sidelight upon the Gospel by proving its reality and literalness. There is a tendency in this generation to spirit away the Truth and in so doing lose both the Truth and its Spirit.

In these evil days fact is turned into myth and truth into opinion. Our Lord’s resurrection is a literal fact—when He rose from the dead He was no specter, ghost, or apparition. But as He was a real Man who died the cruel death of the Cross, so He was a real Man who rose again from the dead, bearing in His body the marks of the crucifixion. His appearance to His familiar companions was to them no dream of the night—no fevered imagination of enthusiastic minds. Jesus Christ took pains to make them sure of His real Presence and that He was really among them in His proper Person—

***“A Man there was, a real Man,  
Who once on Calvary died,  
That same blest Man arose from death—  
The mark is in His side!”***

There was as much reality about the rising of our Lord as about His death and burial. There is no fiction here. This literal fact gives reality to all that comes from Him and by Him. Justification is no mere easing of the conscience—it is a real arraying of the soul in righteousness. Adoption into the family of God is no fancy, but brings with it true and proper sonship. The blessings of the Gospel are substantial facts and not mere theological opinions. As the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ from the dead was a plain visible matter of fact—so are the pardon of sin and the salvation of the soul matters of actual experience and not the creatures of religious imagination.

Brethren, such is the evidencing power of the resurrection of Christ, that when every other argument fails your faith, you may find safe anchorage in this assured fact. The currents of doubt may bear you towards the rocks of mistrust. But when your anchor finds no other hold, it may grip the fact of the resurrection of Christ from the dead. This must be true. The witnesses are too many to have been deceived. And their patient deaths on account of their belief proved that they were not only honest men but good men who valued the Truth of God more than life. We know that Jesus rose from the dead—whatever else we are forced to question, we have no question on that score.

We may be tossed about upon the sea in reference to other statements, but we step to shore again and find terra firma in this unquestionable, firmly-established Truth—“The Lord is risen, indeed.” Oh, that any of you who are drifting may be brought to a resting place by this fact! If you doubt the possibility of your own pardon, this may aid you to believe—for Jesus lives. I read the other day of one who had greatly backslidden and grievously dishonored his Lord. But he heard a sermon upon the resurrection of Christ from the dead and it was life to him. Though he had known and believed that Truth before, yet he had never realized it vividly. After service he said to the minister, “Is it so, that our Lord Jesus has really risen from the dead and is yet alive? Then He can save me.”

By His Grace! A living Christ can say assuredly to you, “Your sins are forgiven you.” He is able now to breathe into you eternal life. The Lord is risen indeed—in this see the evidence of His power to save to the uttermost. From this first solid stone of the resurrection you may go, step by step, over the streams of doubt till you land on the other side fully assured of your salvation in Christ Jesus.

Thus, you see, there is an evidencing power in the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. I pray that you may feel it now. You cannot have too much holy confidence. You cannot be too sure. He that died for you is alive and is making intercession for sinners. Believe that firmly and realize it vividly. Then you will be filled with rest of heart and will be bold to testify in the name of your Lord. The timid by nature will become lion-like in witnessing when the resurrection has borne to them overwhelming evidence of their Redeemer’s mission and power.  
**II.**We will dwell next UPON THE JUSTIFYING POWER OF HIS RESRECTION. Under the first head I compared the resurrection to a seal. Under this second head I must liken it to a note of acquittal, or a receipt. Our Lord’s rising from the dead was a discharge in full from the High Court of Justice and from all those liabilities which He had undertaken on our behalf.

Observe, first, that our Lord must have fully paid the penalty due to sin. He was discharged because He had satisfied the claim of justice. All that the Law could possibly demand was the fulfillment of the sentence, “The soul that sins, it shall die.” There is no getting away from that doom—life must be taken for sin committed. Christ Jesus is our Substitute and Sacrifice. He came into the world to vindicate the Law and He has achieved it by the offering of Himself. He has been dead and buried and He has now risen from the dead because He has endured death to the fullest and there remains no more to be done. Brothers and Sisters, consider this and let your hearts be filled with joy—the penalty which has come upon you through breaches of the Law is paid.

Yonder is the Receipt. Behold the Person of your risen Lord! He was your Hostage till the Law had been honored and Divine authority had been vindicated—that being done, an angel was sent from the Throne to roll back the stone and set the Hostage free. All who are in Him—and all are in Him who believe in Him—are set free by His being set free from the prison of the sepulcher—

***“He bore on the tree the ransom for me,***

***And now both the sinner and Surety are free”***Our Lord has blotted out the record which was against us and that in a most righteous way. Through the work of Jesus, God is just and the Justifier of him that believes. Jesus *died* for our sins but *rose again* for our justification. As the rising of the sun removes the darkness, so the rising of Christ has removed our sin. The power of the resurrection of Christ is seen in the justifying of every Believer. For the justification of the Representative is the virtual justification of all whom He represents.

When our Lord rose from the dead it was certified that the righteousness, which He came to work out, was finished. For what remained to be done? All was accomplished, and therefore He went up unto His Father’s side. Is He toiling there to finish a half-accomplished enterprise? No, “This Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God.” Our righteousness is a finished one, for Jesus quit the place of humiliation and arose to His reward. He cried upon the Cross, “It is finished!”—and His Word is true. The Father endorsed His claim by raising Him from the dead. Put on, therefore, O you faithful, this matchless robe of perfect righteousness! It is more than royal—it is Divine.

It is for you that this best robe is provided. Wear it and be glad. Remember that in Christ Jesus you are justified from all things. You are, in the sight of God, as righteous as if *you* had kept the Law. For your Covenant Head kept it. You are as justified as if you had been obedient unto death—for Jesus Christ obeyed the Law on your behalf. You are this day justified by Christ who is “the end of the Law for righteousness to everyone that believes.” Because He is delivered from the tomb, we are delivered from judgment and are sent forth as justified persons. “Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God.”

Oh, that a deep peace, profound as the serenity of God, may fall upon all our hearts as we see Jesus risen from the dead! His resurrection did not only prove our pardon and our justification but it proved our full acceptance. “He has made us accepted in the Beloved.” Christ is never separated from His people, and therefore, wherever He is they are in Him. He is the Head. And as the Head, such are the members. I will suppose that a dead body lies before us. See, the head comes to life. It opens its eyes. It lifts itself. It rises from the ground. It moves to the table. I need not tell you that the arms, the feet and the whole body must go with the head. It cannot be that there shall be a risen head and yet the members of the body shall still be dead!

When God accepted Christ, my Head, He accepted *me*. When He glorified my Head, He made me a partaker of that glory through my Representative. The infinite delight of the Father in His Only-begotten is an infinite delight in all the members of His mystical body. I pray that you may feel the power of His resurrection in this respect and become flooded with delight by the conviction that you are accepted, beloved, and delighted in by the Lord God. The resurrection will make your heart dance for joy if you fully see the pardon, justification and acceptance which it guarantees you. Oh that the Holy Spirit may now take of the things of Christ’s resurrection and apply them to us with justifying power!

**III.**Thirdly, let us now notice THE LIFE-GIVING POWER OF THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST.  
This will be seen if we perceive that our Lord has life in Himself. I showed you this earlier—in the fact that He raised Himself from the dead. He took up the life which He laid down. *He only* has immortality— essential and underived. Remember how He said, “I am the resurrection and the life”? Do not say, “I believe in Christ and desire life.” You have it. Christ and life are not two things. He says, “I am the resurrection and the life.” If you have Jesus Christ, you have the resurrection. Oh, that you might now realize what power lies in Him who is the Resurrection and the Life! All the power there is in Christ is there for His people.  
“It pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell,” and “of His fullness have all we received.” Christ has a life in Himself and He makes that life flow into every part of His mystical body according to His own word, “Because I live, you shall live also.” Triumph, therefore, that you possess as a Believer this day, that same life which is inherent in the Person of your glorious Covenant Head.  
Moreover, our Lord has power to quicken whom He will. If the Lord Jesus Christ will, this morning, speak to the most cold heart in this assembly, it will glow with heavenly life. If the salvation of souls depended upon the *preacher*, nobody would be saved. But when the preacher’s Master comes with him—however feeble his utterance—the life flashes forth and the dead are raised. See how the dry bones come together! Behold how, at the coming of the Divine Wind they stand upon their feet an exceeding great army! Our risen Redeemer is the Lord and Giver of life. What joy to Christian workers is found in the life-giving power of the resurrection! The warrant of Jesus will run through the domain of death and set dead Lazarus free. Where is he this morning? Lord, call him!  
This life, whenever it is imparted, is *new* life. In reading the four Evangelists have you ever noticed the difference between Jesus after resurrection and before? A French Divine has written a book entitled “The Life of Jesus Christ in Glory.” When I bought it, I hardly knew what the subject might be. But I soon perceived that it was the life of Jesus on earth after He was risen from the dead. That was, indeed, a glorious life. He feels no more suffering, weakness, weariness, reproach, or poverty—He is no more mocked or opposed by men. He is in the world but He scarcely seems to touch it and it does not at all touch Him.  
He was of another world and only a temporary sojourner on this globe to which He evidently did not belong. When we believe in Jesus we receive a *new life* and rise to a higher state. The spiritual life owes nothing to the natural life—it is from another source and goes in another direction. The old life bears the image of the first and earthy Adam. The second life bears the image of the second and heavenly Adam. The old life remains, but becomes to us a kind of death—the new life which God gives is the true life, which is part of the new creation and links us to the heavenly and Divine. To this, I say, the old life is greatly opposed. But that evil life, by God’s Grace, does not get the upper hand.  
Wonderful is the change worked by the new birth! Faculties that were in you before are purged and elevated. But at the same time, new spiritual faculties are conferred and a new heart and a right spirit are put within you. Wonder at this—that the risen Christ is able to give us an entirely new life! May you know, in this respect, the power of His resurrection! May you know the peace, the repose, the power of your risen Lord! May you, like He, be a stranger here, soon expecting to depart unto the Father! Before His death our Lord experienced stress because His work was unaccomplished—after His death He was at ease—because His work was done.  
Brethren, we may enter into His rest, for we are complete in Him! We are working for our Lord as He was for His Father during the forty days. But yet the righteousness in which we are accepted is finished and therefore we find rest in Him.  
Once more—the resurrection of Christ is operating at this present time with a quickening power on all who hear the Word aright. The sun is, to the vegetable world, a great source of growth. In this month of April he goes forth with life in his beams and we see the result. The buds are bursting, the trees are putting on their summer dress, the flowers are smiling and even the seeds which we buried in the earth are beginning to feel the vivifying warmth. They see not the lord of day but they feel his smile. Over what an enormous territory is the returning sun continually operating! How potent are his forces when he crosses the line and lengthens the day!  
Such is the risen Christ. In the grave He was like the sun in His winter solstice but He crossed the line in His resurrection. He has brought us all the hopes of Spring and is bringing us the joys of Summer. He is quickening many at this hour and will yet quicken myriads. This is the power with which the missionary goes forth to sow. This is the power in which the preacher at home continues to scatter the seed. The risen Christ is the great Producer of harvests. By the power of His resurrection men are raised from their death in sin to eternal life.  
I said eternal life, for wherever Jesus gives life, it is everlasting life. “Christ being risen from the dead, dies no more. Death has no more dominion over Him.” And as we have been raised in the likeness of His resurrection, so are we raised into a life over which death has no more dominion. We shall not die again but the water which Jesus gives us shall be in us a well of water springing up into *everlasting life*.  
I wish I could venture further to unveil this secret force and still more fully reveal to you the power of our Lord’s resurrection. It is the power of the Holy Spirit. It is the energy upon which you must depend when teaching or preaching. It must all be “according to the working of His mighty power, which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead.” I want you to feel that power today. I would have you feel eternal life throbbing in your bosoms, filling you with glory and immortality!  
Are you feeling cast down? Are your surroundings like those of a morgue? When you return will you seem to go home to endure the rottenness and corruption of profanity and lewdness? Your remedy will lie in eternal life flooding you with its torrents and bearing you above these evil influences. May you not only have life but have it more abundantly and so be vigorous enough to throw off the baneful influences of this evil world!  
**IV.**The last point is THE CONSOLING POWER OF THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST.  
This consoling power should be felt as to all departed saints. We are often summoned to the house of mourning in this Church. We seldom pass a week without one or two deaths of beloved ones. Here is our comfort— Jesus says, “Your dead men shall live, together with My dead body shall they arise.”  
***“As the Lord our Savior rose  
So all His followers must.”***  
He is the first fruits from among the dead. The cemeteries are crowded, precious dust is closely heaped together. But as surely as Jesus rose from the tomb of Joseph all those who are in Him shall rise also. Though bodies may be consumed in the fire, or ground to powder, or sucked up by plants and fed upon by animals. Though they are made to pass though ten thousand changeful processes—yet there are no difficulties where there is a God. He that gave us bodies when we had none can restore those bodies when they are pulverized and scattered to the four winds. We sorrow not as those that are without hope. We know where the souls of the godly ones are—they are “forever with the Lord.” We know where their bodies *will be* when the clarion blast shall wake the dead and the sepulcher shall give up its spoils. Sweet is the consolation which comes to us from the empty tomb of Jesus. “God has both raised up the Lord and will also raise up us by His own power.”  
Here, too, is comfort in our inward deaths. In order that we should know the resurrection of Christ we must be made conformable unto His death. Have we not to die many deaths? Have you ever felt the sentence of death in yourself that you might not trust in yourself? Have you not seen all your fancied beauty decay and all your strength wither “like the leaves of the forest when autumn has blown”? Have not all your carnal hopes perished and all your resolves turned to dust? If any of you are undergoing that process today, I hope you will go through with it till the sword of the Spirit has slain you.  
You must die before you can be raised from the dead. If you are undergoing the process of crucifixion with Christ—which means a painful, lingering death within—remember that this is the needful way to resurrection. How can you know your Lord’s resurrection except by knowing His death? You must be buried with Him to rise with Him. Is not this sweet consolation for a bitter experience?  
I think there is here great consolation for those of us who mourn because the cause of Christ seems to be in an evil case. I may say to the enemy, “This is your hour and the power of darkness.” Alas, I cry with the holy woman, “They have taken away my Lord and I know not where they have laid Him.” In many a pulpit the precious blood no longer speaks. They have taken the heart out of the doctrine of propitiation and left us nothing but the name of it. Their false philosophy has overlaid the Gospel and crushed out its life, so far as they are concerned. They boast that we are powerless—our protest is despised, error shows her brazen forehead and seizes the strongholds of truth.  
Yet we despair not—no, we do not even fear. If the cause of Christ were dead and buried—and the wise men had fixed the stone and set their seal and appointed their guards—regardless, at the appointed hour, the Lord’s Truth would rise again. I am not uneasy about ultimate issues. It is the mischief of the time being that grieves me. But the Lord will yet avenge His own elect which cry day and night unto Him. Jesus must live if they kill Him. He must rise if they bury Him—herein lies our consolation. This Truth affords choice consolation to persecuted saints.  
In Paul’s day to be a Christian was a costly matter. Imprisonment was the lightest of their trials—stripes and tortures of every kind were their portion. “Christians to the lions!” was the cry heard in the amphitheatre. And nothing pleased the people better unless it was to see saints of God smeared with pitch from head to foot and set on fire. Did they not call themselves the lights of the world? Such were the brutal pleasantries of the Romans. Here was the backbone of saintly comfort—they would rise again and share in the glory of their Lord forever! Though they might find a living grave between a lion’s jaws, they would not be destroyed—even the body would live again—for Jesus lived again—even the Crucified One in whom they trusted.  
My Brethren, my text is like a honeycomb dripping with honey. It has in it comfort for the ages to come. There will be a living issue for these dead times. Do you see that train steaming along the iron way? See, it plunges into a cavern in yonder hill! You have now lost sight of it. Has it perished? As on an angel’s wing you fly to the top of the hill and you look down on the other side. There it comes steaming forth again from the tunnel, bearing its living freight to its destination. So, whenever you see the Church of God apparently plunging into a cavern of disaster or a grave of defeat, think not that the spirit of the age has swallowed it up!  
Have faith in God! His Truth will be uppermost yet—  
***“The might with the right,  
And the right with the might shall be—  
And, come what there may  
To stand in the way,  
That day the world shall see.”***  
The opposition of men might have proved a dark den in which the cause of God should have been hopelessly buried. But in the resurrection of our Lord we see a cavern turned into a tunnel and a way pierced through death itself. “Who are you, O great mountain?” The Alps are pierced— God’s way is made clear. He triumphs over all difficulties. “The glory of the Lord shall be revealed and all flesh shall see it together—for the mouth of the Lord has spoken it.”  
That is my close. I desire that you should feel resurrection power. We have many technical Christians who know the *phrases* of godliness but know not the *power* of godliness. We have ritualistic Christians who treasure the outward but know not the power. We have many moral religionists, but they also know not the power. We are pestered with conventional, regulation Christians. Oh, yes, no doubt we are Christians. But we are not enthusiasts, fanatics, nor even as this bigot. Such men have a name to live and are dead. They have a form of godliness but deny the power of it.  
I beseech you, my Hearers, be not content with a Truth of God till you feel the force of it. Do not praise the spiritual food set before you, but eat of it till you know its power to nourish. Do not even talk of Jesus till you know His power to save. God grant that you may know the powers of the world to come, for Jesus’ sake! Amen.

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DO YOU KNOW HIM?  
NO. 552

**DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, JANUARY 31, 1864, *BY THE REV. C. H SPURGEON,*  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“That I may know Him.”***Php 3:10***.***

THE object of the Apostle’s life—that for which he sacrificed everything—country, kindred, honor, comfort, liberty and life itself, was that he might know Christ. Observe that this is not Paul’s prayer as an unconverted man—that he may know Christ and so be saved—for it follows upon the previous supplication that he might win Christ and be found in Him. This is the desire of one who has been saved, who enjoys the full conviction that his sins are pardoned and that he is in Christ. It is only the regenerated and saved man who can feel the desire, “That I may know Him.” Are you astonished that a saved man should have such a desire as this? A moment’s reflection will remove your astonishment.

Imagine for a moment that you are living in the age of the Roman emperors. You have been captured by Roman soldiers and dragged from your native country. You have been sold for a slave, stripped, whipped, branded, imprisoned and treated with shameful cruelty. At last you are appointed to die in the amphitheatre, to make holiday for a tyrant. The populace assemble with delight. There they are, tens of thousands of them, gazing down from the living sides of the spacious Coliseum.

You stand alone and naked, armed only with a single dagger—a poor defense against gigantic beasts. A ponderous door is drawn up by machinery and there rushes forth the monarch of the forest—a huge lion. You must slay him or be torn to pieces. You are absolutely certain that the conflict is too stern for you and that the sure result must and will be that those terrible teeth will grind your bones and drip with your blood. You tremble. Your joints are loosed. You are paralyzed with fear, like the timid deer when the lion has dashed it to the ground. But what is this? O wonder of mercy!—a deliverer appears!

A great unknown leaps from among the gazing multitude and confronts the savage monster. He quails not at the roaring of the devourer, but dashes upon him with terrible fury, till, like a whipped cur, the lion slinks towards his den, dragging himself along in pain and fear. The hero lifts you up, smiles into your bloodless face, whispers comfort in your ears and bids you be of good courage, for you are free. Do you not think that there would arise at once in your heart a desire to know your deliverer? As the guards conducted you into the open street, and you breathed the cool, fresh air, would not the first question be, “Who was my deliverer, that I may fall at his feet and bless him?”

You are not, however, informed, but instead of it you are gently led away to a noble mansion, where your many wounds are washed and healed with salve of rarest power. You are clothed in sumptuous apparel. You are made to sit down at a feast. You eat and are satisfied. You rest upon the softest down. The next morning you are attended by servants who guard you from evil and minister to your good. Day after day, week after week, your wants are supplied. You live like a courtier. There is nothing that you can ask which you do not receive.

I am sure that your curiosity would grow more and more intense till it would ripen into an insatiable craving. You would scarcely neglect an opportunity of asking the servants, “Tell me, who does all this, who is my noble benefactor, for I must know him?” “Well, but,” they would say, “is it not enough for you that you are delivered from the lion?” “No,” you say, “it is for that very reason that I pant to know him.” “Your wants are richly supplied—why are you vexed by curiosity as to the hand which gave you the gift? If your garment is worn out, there is another. Long before hunger oppresses you, the table is well loaded. What more do you want?” But your reply is, “It is because I have no wants, that, therefore, my soul longs and yearns even to hungering and to thirsting that I may know my generous loving friend.”

Suppose that as you wake up one morning, you find lying on your pillow a precious love-token from your unknown friend, a ring sparkling with jewels and engraved with a tender inscription, a bouquet of flowers bound about with a love-motto? Your curiosity now knows no bounds. But you are informed that this wondrous being has not only done for you what you have seen, but a thousand deeds of love which you did not see, which were higher and greater still as proofs of his affection. You are told that he was wounded and imprisoned and scourged for your sake, for he had a love to you so great that death itself could not overcome it—you are informed that he is every moment occupied in your interests, because he has sworn by himself that where he is, there you shall be.

His honors you shall share and of his happiness you shall be the crown. Why, I think you would say, “Tell me, men and women, any of you who know him, tell me who he is and what he is.” And if they said, “But it is enough for you to know that he loves you and to have daily proofs of his goodness,” you would say, “No, these love-tokens increase my thirst. If you see him, tell him I am sick of love. The flagons which he scuds me and the love-tokens which he gives me, they stay me for awhile with the assurance of his affection, but they only impel me onward with the more unconquerable desire that I may know him. I must know him! I cannot live without knowing him. His goodness makes me thirst and pant, and faint and even die, that I may know him.”

Have I imagined emotions which would not be natural? I think not. The most cool and calculating would be warmed with desires like these. I think what I have now pictured before you will wake the echoes in your breasts and you will say, “Ah, it is even so! It is because Christ loved me and gave Himself for me that I want to know Him. It is because He has shed His blood for me and has chosen me that I may be one with Him forever that my soul desires a fuller acquaintance with Him. “Now may God the Holy Spirit, very graciously lead me onward that I may also quicken in you the desire to know Him.

**I.**Beloved, let us PASS BY THAT CROWD OF OUTER-COURT WORSHIPPERS WHO ARE CONTENT TO LIVE WITHOUT KNOWING CHRIST.  
I do not mean the ungodly and profane! We will not consider them just now—they are altogether strangers and foreigners to Him—I mean children of God—the visible saints. How many there are of these whom I must call outer-court worshippers, for they are strangers to this panting to know Him. They can say with Paul, “That I may win Him and be found in Him”—that they do want. But this higher wish, “That I may *know* Him,” has not stirred their hearts. How many Brothers and Sisters we know who are content to know Christ’s historic life! They read the Evangelists and they are charmed with the perfect beauty of the Savior’s history. “Never man spoke like this Man,” they say. And they confess that never man acted with such love as He did.  
They know all the incidents of His life, from His manger to His Cross. But they do not know *Him*. They are as men who have read “Caesar’s Commentaries,” but who have never seen Caesar. They know the battles which Caesar fought. They can even recognize the mantle which Caesar wore “that day he overcame the Nervii,” but they do not know Caesar himself. The Person of the Lord Jesus is as much hidden from their eyes us the golden pot of manna when concealed in the ark. They know the *life* of Christ, but not Christ the Life. They admire His way among men, but they see Him not as the Way.  
Others there are who know Christ’s doctrine and prize it, too, but they know not Him. All which He taught is dear to them. Orthodoxy—for this they would burn at Smithfield, or lay down their necks at Tower Hill! Many of them are well-instructed and Divinely-illuminated in the doctrine of Christ. And the wonder is that they should stop there, because, Beloved, it does seem to me when I begin to know a man’s teaching, that the next thing is the desire to know his person. Addison, in one of the “Spectators,” tells us that the reason why so many books are printed with the portraits of the authors is just this—that as a man reads a book, he feels a desire to know what sort of appearance the author had.  
This, indeed, is very natural. If you have ever been refreshed under a minister’s printed sermons. If you have at any time received any benefit from his words, I know you have said, “I would like to see that man. I would like to hear the truth flow hot and fresh from his living lips. I would like to know just how he said that sentence, and how that passage sounded as it came from his earnest heart.”  
My Beloved, surely if you know the doctrine of Jesus, if you have so been with Christ as to sit at His feet and hear what He has to say, you must, I hope, have had some longings to know Him—to know His Person. And if you have, you will have had to pass by multitudes of followers of Jesus who rest satisfied with His words, but forget that He is, Himself, “THE WORD.”  
Beloved, there are others—and against them I bring no complaint. They go as far as they can—they are delighted with Christ’s example. Christ’s Character is in their esteem the mirror of all perfection. They desire to walk in His footsteps. They listen to His Sermon upon the Mount. They are enchanted with it—as well they may be. They pray to be obedient in all things to Christ, as their Master and their Lord. They do well. Mark, I am finding no fault with any of these who prize the history, or who value the doctrine, or who admire the precept. But I want more. I do want, Beloved, that you and I should “know HIM.”  
I love His precepts, but I love HIM better! Sweet is the water from Bethlehem’s well. And well worth the struggle of the armed men to win but a bucket from it. But the well *itself* is better and deserves all Israel’s valor to defend it. As the source is ever more valuable than the stream, so is Christ ever better than the best words of His lips, or the best deeds of His hands. I want to know Him. I do care for His actions—my soul would sit down and admire those masterly works of holy art—His miracles of humiliation, of suffering, of patience and of holy charity. But better far I love the hands which worked these master-works, the lips which spoke these goodly Words and the heart which heaved with that matchless love which was the cause of all. Yes, Beloved, we must get farther than Immanuel’s achievements, however glorious—we must come to “KNOW HIM.”  
Most Believers rest perfectly at ease with knowing Christ’s *Sacrifice*. They see Jesus as the great High Priest, laying a great Sacrifice upon the altar for their sins and with their whole heart they accept His Atonement. By faith they know that all their sins are taken away by precious blood. This is a most blessed and hallowed attainment, I will grant you. But it is not every Christian who perceives that Christ was not only the Offerer of a sacrifice, but was Himself the Sacrifice, and therefore loves Him as such. Priest, Altar, Victim—Christ was everything! He gathers up all in Himself and when I see that He loved me and gave Himself for me, it is not enough to know this fact—I want to know Him, the glorious Person who does and is all this.  
I want to know the Man who thus gave Himself for me. I want to behold the Lamb once slain for me. I want to rest upon the bosom which covers the heart which was pierced with the spear. I pray Him to kiss me with the kisses of that mouth which cried, “Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?” I love Calvary, the scene of woe, but I love Christ better, the great Object of that agony. And even His Cross and all His sufferings, dear though these must ever be to the Christian mind, only occupy a second place—the first seat is for Himself—His Person, His Deity and Humanity.  
Thus, you see, we have to leave a great many Believers behind. Nor have we enumerated all, for I believe that even some of those saints who have received Grace to look for the coming of Christ, yet in their vision of His coming too much forget Him. Is it not possible for men to pant for the Second Advent as to lose sight of Him who is to make that advent? So to long for a millennium that I may forget Him who is to reign King of kings? So to pant after that Glory of Israel that I may forget Him who is Israel’s Glory? Anywhere short of knowing Him, I would not have you stop, Beloved. And even when you know Him, I would urge you still to be impelled with the same desire and to press forward, crying with the Apostle, “That I may know Him.”  
Beloved, how many there are who have heard of Christ and read about Christ and that is enough for them! But it is not enough for me and it should not be enough for you. The Apostle Paul did not say, “I have heard of Him, on whom I have believed,” but, “I*know* whom I have believed.” To hear about Christ may damn you—it may be a savor of death unto death to you. You have heard of Him with the ear—but it is essential that you *know* Him in order that you may be partakers of eternal life. My dear Hearers, be not content unless you have this as your soul’s present portion.  
Others there are who have been persuaded by the judgment and encouragement of others that they know something about the great Redeemer. They do not know Him, but still they are persuaded by others that they have an interest in Him. Let me warn you of second-hand spirituality! It is a rotten, soul-deceiving deception. Beware of all esteeming of yourself according to the thoughts of others or you will be ruined.  
Another man’s opinion of me may have great influence over me—I have heard of a man in perfectly good health killed by the opinion of others. Several of his friends had foolishly agreed to play a practical trick on him, whereupon one of them met him and said, “How ill you look this morning.” He did not feel so. He was very much surprised at the remark. When he met the next, who said to him, “Oh, dear, how bad you look,” he began to think there might be something in it. And as he turned round the corner, a third person said to him, “What a sight you are ! How altered from what you used to be!” He went home ill, he took to his bed and died.  
So goes the story and I should not marvel if it really did occur. Now, if such might be the effect of persuasion and supposed belief in the *sickness* of a man, how much more readily may men be persuaded into the idea of spiritual health! A Believer meets you and by his treatment seems to say, “I welcome you as a dear Brother”—and he means it, too. You are baptized and received into Church fellowship and so everybody thinks that you must be a follower of Christ. And yet you may not know Him. Oh, I do pray you—do not be satisfied with being persuaded into something like an assurance that you are in Him but do not know Him—know Him for yourself.  
There are many who I hope will be saved before long. But I am in great doubt of them, because they can only say they half think they know Christ. They do not quite believe in Him, but they do not disbelieve in Him. They halt between two opinions. Ah, dear Hearer, that is a very dangerous place to stand! The borderland is the devil’s hunting ground. Undecided souls are fair game for the great fowler. God give you once and for all the true decision by which, through Grace, you shall know Him. Do not be satisfied with *thinking* you know Him. *Hoping* you know Him, but *know* Him.  
Oh, it is nothing to have *heard* about Him, to have *talked* about Him, to have eaten and have drank with Him, to have *preached* Him, or even to have *worked miracles* in His name. To have been charmed by His eloquence, to have been stirred with the story of His love, to have been moved to imitate Him—this shall gain you nothing unless you win Him and are found in Him. Seek with the Apostle, to give up everything of your own righteousness and all other objects and aims in life and say, “This I seek after, that I may know Him.” Thus much, on the first point. Leaving those behind who do not know Him, let us make an advance.  
**II.**Secondly, let us DRAW CURTAIN AFTER CURTAIN WHICH SHALL ADMIT US TO KNOW MORE OF CHRIST.  
Did you ever visit the manufactory of splendid porcelain at Sevres? I have done so. If anybody should say to me, “Do you know the manufactory at Sevres?” I should say, “Yes, I do and no, I do not. I know it, for I have seen the building. I have seen the rooms in which the articles are exhibited for sale and I have seen the museum and model room. But I do not know the factory as I would like to know it, for I have not seen the process of manufacture and have not been admitted into the workshops, as some are.”  
Suppose I had seen, however, the process of the molding of the clay and the laying on of the rich designs? If anybody should still say to me, “Do you know how they manufacture those wonderful articles?” I should very likely still be compelled to say, “No, I do not, because there are certain secrets, certain private rooms into which neither friend nor foe can be admitted, lest the process should be open to the world.” So, you see, I might say I knew, and yet might not half know. And when I half knew, still there would be so much left that I might be compelled to say, “I do not know.” How many different ways there are of knowing a person—and even so there are all these different ways of knowing Christ, so that you may keep on all your lifetime, still wishing to get into another room and another room, nearer and nearer to the great secret, still panting to “know Him.”  
Good Rutherford says, “I urge upon you a *nearer* communion with Christ and a *growing* communion. There are curtains to be drawn by, in Christ, that we never shut and new foldings in love with Him. I despair that ever I shall win to the far end of that love. There are so many plies in it. Therefore, dig deep and set by as much time in the day for Him as you can—He will be won by labor.”  
To begin with. We know a person when we recognize him. You know the Queen. Well, I do. I recollect seeing her and if I were to see any quantity of ladies, I think I should know which was the Queen and which was not. You may say honestly that you know her to that extent. Beloved, every Christian must in this sense know Christ. You must know Him by a Divine illumination so as to know who He is and what He is. When Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Whom do you say that I am,” he said, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” And the Lord replied, “Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, for flesh and blood has not revealed this unto you.”  
It is an early step in this knowledge of Christ, to know and to believe that Jesus Christ is Lord. To know that Christ is God, Divine to me. That Christ is Man—Brother to me—bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh. And that as such He is a sin-subduing Savior. That He is for me an Intercessor, pleading before the Throne. That He is my Prophet, Priest and King—in this sense I trust that most of you know Him. If you do not, breathe the silent prayer now, “Lord, help me that I may know Him.” But this knowledge of recognition is comparatively a low attainment, one of the lowest rounds of the ladder of light.  
In the second place, a Believer knows Christ to a higher degree when he knows Him by practical experience at acquaintance with what He does. For instance, I know Christ as a Cleanser. They tell me He is a Refiner, that He cleanses from spots. He has washed me in His precious blood and to that extent I know Him. They tell me that He clothes the naked—He has covered me with a garment of righteousness and to that extent I know Him. They tell me that He is a Breaker and that He breaks fetters—He has set my soul at liberty and therefore I know Him. They tell me that He is a King and that He reigns over sin—He has subdued my enemies beneath His feet and I know Him in that Character.  
They tell me He is a Shepherd—I know Him, for I am His sheep. They say He is a Door—I have entered in through Him and I know Him as a Door. They say He is Food—my spirit feeds on Him as on the Bread of Heaven and, therefore, I know Him as such. You know if anyone says, “Do you know doctor So-and-So?” it is a very satisfactory answer if you can reply, “Oh, yes, I know him, for he attended me the last time that I was ill.” There is more knowledge in that, than if on could only say, “Oh, yes, I know him—he wears such-and-such a hat,” or “he is a man of such-andsuch an appearance.” So, Christian, there is a second and higher step to know Christ—when you have experienced in your own soul that He is just what God has revealed Him to be.  
But we know a man in a *better* sense than this when we are on*speaking terms* with him. “Do you know So-and-So?” “Yes,” you say, “I not only know him by name, so as to recognize him. I not only know him as a tradesman having dealt with him, but I know him because when we pass each other in the morning, we exchange a word or two. And if I had anything to say upon matters—any request to make—I should feel no difficulty about asking him.” Well now, the Christian knows His Lord in this sense, too. He has, every day, official communication with Christ, He is on speaking terms with Him.  
There may be persons here, perhaps, who know the Queen in a sense in which I do not know her—perhaps they speak to her. They have so done—I have never done that. They go beyond me there. But you see, dear Friends

this is not a very great thing because you may be on speaking terms with a man—you may not know much of him for all that. So you may be in the habit of daily prayer and you may talk with Christ every morning and every evening—but you may know exceedingly little of Him. You are on speaking terms with Him. But there is something beyond this, very far beyond this! I might say that I know a man merely because I meet him every day and ask him for what I want and understand that he is kind and generous. But how shallow is such an acquaintance, for I do not know his private character nor his inward heart. Even so a Believer may have constant dealings with Christ in his prayers and in his praises and yet, for all that, he may have only gone a certain distance and may have need still to pray, “That I may know Him.”  
But you are said to know a person better still when he invites you to his house. At Christmas time there is a family party and a romp—and he asks you there and you are like one of his children and enter into all their sports around the fireside. And you indulge, as they do, in the genialities of social life. You are asked again. You go there pretty often. In fact, if there is a happy evening in that house they generally expect to see friend So-and-So there. Well, now, that is better. We are getting now into something like knowing a man.  
And I do trust there are many of you, Beloved, who have got as far as this with regard to your Divine Lord. Christ has entertained you with some rare visits from His gracious Presence. He brought you into His banqueting house and His banner over you was love. When He manifested Himself, He did it unto you as He did not unto the world. He was pleased in the majesty of His condescension, to take you aside and show you His hands and His side. He called you “Friend.” He treated you as such and permitted you to enjoy your sweets of being one of the family. Ah, but you may go into a man’s house as a constant visitor and yet you may not know him—that is to say, not in the *highest* sense.  
You speak to the man’s wife and say, “Your husband is a marvelously charming man. What a cheerful, joyful, spirited man he is! He never seems to have any depressions of spirit and experiences no changes whatever.” She shakes her head, and she says, “Ah, you do not know him, you do not know him as I do.” Because she sees him at all times and at all hours she can read the very heart of the man. That Christian has grown much in Grace who has advanced not only to be the friend of Christ, having occasional fellowship with Him, but who comes to recognize his marriage union with the Person of his Lord and of whom it can be said, “The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him. And He will show them His Covenant.” *Now* we have the intimacy of love with its perfect frankness, nearness, sweetness, joyousness, delight! The rending away of every separating veil makes the communion to be as near as it well can be this side of the black river. But a Christian may get farther than this!  
Even the spouse may not know her husband. The most loving wife who ever entered into the cares of her husband must have discovered that there is a something which separates his experience from her powers of comprehension. Luther’s wife, Catherine, was, of all women, the wife for Luther. But there were times in Luther’s gigantic tribulations when he must leave Kate behind. There were extraordinary times within him— times both of ecstatic joy—when, like a great angel, he stretched his mighty wings and flew right up to Heaven! And there were times of awful misery when he seemed to sink down to the very depths of Hell. And in either case, no other heart could keep pace with him.  
Then it was Christ alone who had communion with him. And a Christian may so grow in Grace as to become *identified* with Christ, a member of His body—not so much married to Him as a *part* of Him. He becomes a member of the great body of Christ so that he suffers with Christ. He sympathizes with Jesus. His heart beats to the same dolorous tune. His veins swell with the same floods of grief—or else his eyes sparkle with that same gleam of joy, according to the Master’s Word—“That My joy might remain in you and that your joy might be full.”  
Well, have not you waded out of your depth, some of you? I have certainly got out of my own. I feel as if the Master might come on this platform, look round on many of us and say, “Have I been so long a time with you, and yet have you not known Me, Philip?” For truly, even in the minor sense, though I trust we are saved, though we have believed in Jesus, yet we have not reached the height of this great text—“That I may know Him.”  
**III.**Having taken you so far, let us SIT DOWN A FEW MINUTES AND CONSIDER WHAT SORT OF KNOWLEDGE THIS KNOWLEDGE OF CHRIST IS—“That I may know Him.” Then it is clear, if I know Him I shall have a very vivid sense of His Personality. “That I may know Him.” He will not be to me a myth, a vision, a spirit, but a Person, a real, solid Person, as much real as I am myself, or as my dearest friend can be to me. My Soul, never be satisfied with a shadowy Christ. My Heart, never be content until He has embraced your soul and proved to you that He is the lover of His people.  
This knowledge, then, must be a knowledge of Him in His Personality. Then, Beloved, it must be a *personal* knowledge on our part. I cannot know Christ through another person’s brains. I cannot love Him with another man’s heart and I cannot see Him with another man’s eyes. Heaven’s delight is, “My eyes shall see Him and not another.” These eyes shall behold the King in His beauty. Well, Beloved, if this is Heaven, we certainly cannot do without a personal sight of Christ here. I am so afraid of living in a second-hand religion. God forbid that I should get a biographical experience! Lord save us from having borrowed communion. No, I must know Him myself! O God, let me not be deceived in this! I must know Him without fancy or proxy. I must know Him on my own account.  
And now these few thoughts upon what sort of knowledge we must have. It must be an *intelligent* knowledge—I must know Him. I must know His Natures, Divine and Human. I must know His offices—I must know His attributes—I must know His works—I must know His shame—I must know His Glory—for I do not know Him if He is merely a subject of passion and not of intellect. I must let my head consciously meditate upon Him until I own something like an idea of Him that I may, “Comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length and depth and height. And to know the love of Christ, which passes knowledge.”  
Then I must have an *affectionate* knowledge of Him. And indeed, if I know Him at all, I must love Him. As it is said of some men that there is such a charm about them that if you once get into their company you cannot criticize any longer, but must admire—so you feel with Christ. It is said of Garibaldi, that if you are in his society he charms all, so that even malice and slander must be silent in his presence. Infinitely, supremely, so is it with Christ! Being near Him, His love warms our hearts till we glow with intense love to Him.  
Then I shall find, if I know Christ, that this is a *satisfying* knowledge. When I know Christ my mind will be full to the brim—I shall feel that I have found that which my spirit panted after. “This is that Bread whereof if a man eats he shall never hunger.” At the same time it is an*exciting* knowledge. The more I know of Christ, the more I shall want to know. The deeper I plunge, the greater the deeps which will be revealed. The higher I climb, the loftier will be the summits which invite my eager footsteps. I shall want more as I get more. My spiritual thirst will increase, though in another sense it will be entirely quenched.  
And this knowledge of Christ will be a most *happy* one! In fact, so happy that sometimes it will completely bear me up above all trials, doubts and sorrows. And it will, while I enjoy it, make me something more than, “Man that is born of a woman who is of few days and full of trouble,” for it will fling about me the immortality of the ever-living Savior and gird me with the golden girdle of His eternal happiness. To be near to Christ is to be near to the pearly gates of the golden-streeted city. Say not, “Jerusalem, my happy home, my labors have an end in you,” but say, “Jesus, You are my Rest and when I have You, my spirit is at peace.” I might thus keep on speaking in praise of this knowledge, but I will not.  
Only permit me to say what a *refreshing*, what a *sanctifying* knowledge is this, to know Him! When the Laodicean Church was neither hot nor cold, but lukewarm, how did Christ seek her revival? Did He send her precious doctrines? Did He send her excellent precepts? Mark you, He came Himself, for thus it is said, “Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hears My voice and opens the door, I will come into him and will sup with him, and he with Me.” That is a cure for it all, you see. No matter how lukewarm, though God may say, “I will spew you out of My mouth,” yet, if Christ comes, that is the cure! The Presence of Christ with His Church puts away all her sicknesses.  
When the disciples of Christ were at sea in a storm, do you remember how He comforted them? Did He send them an angel? No. “It is I, do not be afraid.” And when they knew Him they had no more fears. They were assembled one night, “the doors being shut for fear of the Jews.” How did He comfort them? Jesus Himself stood in the midst of them and said, “Peace be unto you.” There was Thomas, full of doubts and fears. How did Jesus Christ take away his doubts? “Reach here your finger and behold My hands. And reach here your hand and thrust it into My side.” Oh, it is Christ, it is Christ who cures all!  
The company of Christ is the only thing which a Christian wants. I will undertake that if his heart is like an iceberg, as soon as Jesus comes, it shall flame like Vesuvius. His spirit shall be dead and like a rotten corpse. But if Jesus comes he shall leap like a hart and become strong as a young unicorn. Your Presence makes me like the chariots of Amminadib! Now do not think I am talking what I do not know. Do not imagine that I am talking mere fanatical slip-slop which I cannot prove. I do assert (and God who searches all hearts knows how true this is)—I do assert that from the depths of doubt, of dullness, of worldliness—I have leaped in one moment into love and life and holy enthusiasm when Jesus Christ has manifested Himself to me.  
I cannot describe the difference between my spirit, water-logged, wormeaten, ready to sink to the bottom without Christ—and that same spirit like a strong staunch ship, with sails full, with favorable wind, speeding into harbor with a golden freight. Like yon poor little bird which some cruel boy has torn from the nest and almost killed—it is not fledged yet and cannot fly—and it lies down to die. It is soon trampled in the mire in the streets—that is my heart without Christ.  
But see that other bird! The cage door is opened, its wings vibrate, it sings with all its might and flies up to talk with the sun—that is my heart when I have the conscious Presence of my Lord Jesus Christ! I only bring in my own consciousness because I do not know yours. But I think I will now venture to say that every Believer here will admit it is the same with him—  
***“Midst darkest shades if He appears  
My dawning is begun!  
He is my soul’s bright morning star,  
And He my rising sun.”*  
IV.**I shall close by *urging* you, dearly Beloved, who know the Lord to take this desire of the Apostle, and by *exhorting* you—make it your own, “That I may know Him.” I wish I had time this morning—time will fly—I wish I had time to urge and press you Believers onward to seek to know Him. Paul, you see, gave up everything for this—you will be seeking what is worth having. There can be no mistake about this. If Paul will renounce all, there must be a reward which is worthy of the sacrifice. If you have any fears—if you seek Christ and find Him—they will be removed. You complain that you do not feel the guilt of sin, that you cannot humble yourself enough. The sight of Christ is the very best means of setting sin in its true colors. There is no repenting like that which comes from a look from Christ’s eyes—the Lord turned and looked upon Peter and he went out and wept bitterly. So it is not a sight of the Law—it is the sight of Christ looking upon us which will break our hearts.  
There is nothing like this to fill you with courage. When Dr. Andrew Reed found some difficulties in the founding of one of his orphan asylums, he sat down and drew upon a little piece of paper the Cross, and then he said to himself, “What? Despair in the face of the Cross?” And then he drew a ring round the Cross and wrote in it, “nil desperandum!” and took it for his coat of arms. Oh, there cannot be any despair in the presence of the Cross! Dying Lamb, did You endure the Cross, despising the shame—and shall I talk of difficulties when Your Glory is in the way? God forbid!  
O holy Face bedewed with bloody sweat, I pledge myself in Your solemn and awful Presence, that though this face of mine should be bedewed with sweat of the like sort to accomplish any labor upon which You shall put me! By Your will and in Your strength, I will not shrink from the task. A sight of Christ, Brethren, will keep you from despondency and doubts and despair. A sight of Christ!  
How shall I stir you to it? It will fire you to duty. It will deliver you from temptation. It will, in fact, make you like He. A man is known by his company. And if you have become acquainted with Christ, and know Him, you will be sure to reflect His light. It is because the moon has converse with the sun that she has any light for this dark world’s night. And if you talk with Christ, the Sun, He will shine on you so gloriously, that you, like the moon, shall reflect His light and the dark night of this world shall be enlightened by your radiance. The Lord help us to know Him!  
But I do seem, this morning, to have been talking to you about Him and not to have brought Him forward. O that I knew how to introduce you to Him! You who do not love Him—O that I could make you seek after Him! But you who do love Him and have trusted in Him—O that I could make you hunger and thirst until you were filled with Him! There He is, nailed to His Cross—suffering—oh how much He suffers for you! There He is, risen, ascended, pleading before the Throne of God for you. Here He is—“Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.”  
Here He is, waiting to be comforted with your company, desiring communion with you, panting that His sister, His spouse, would be no longer a stranger to Him. Here He is, waiting to be gracious, saying, “Come unto Me all you that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest.” Come, Christian, come! Let this be your desire, “That I may know Him.” And you who do not know Him and have not loved Him, I pray you will breathe this prayer with me, “Lord, be merciful to me a sinner.” O Sinner, He is a gentle Christ! He is a loving Savior and they that seek Him early shall find Him! May you seek and find Him, for His name’s sake. Amen.

Adapted from*The C.H. Spurgeon Collection,*Version 1.0 . Ages Software, 1.800.297.4308 Sermon #2315 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

**÷ Php 3.12**

PAUL APPREHENDED AND APPREHENDING  
NO. 2315

**INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S-DAY, JULY 2, 1893. *DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON THURSDAY EVENING, MAY 30, 1889.**

***“Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfected; but I press on, that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.”***Php 3:12***.***

OBSERVE the Apostle’s condition when he wrote these words. I do not think that either you or I will be found to be in a better one. If any are, or think they are, I would suggest a question. I, for my part, would be satisfied to be just as Paul was.

He was in a position of conscious safety. He was a saved man. He knew that he was saved, for he rejoiced in Christ Jesus and had no confidence in the flesh. He knew that he was justified by faith in Christ Jesus and he counted all his own works, which formerly were his ground of trust, to be as dross and dung, that he might win Christ. He was a saved man and he knew it! I do not think that he often had doubts about that point, but yet he was in a state of conscious imperfection—“Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfected.” He had not yet reached his own ideal of what a Christian might be. He had not yet obtained from Christ all that he expected to obtain. He was not sitting down to rest and be thankful, but he was still hurrying on, reaching after something which was yet beyond him. He could not say, “Soul, take your ease, you have much goods laid up for many years,” but he still felt his own spiritual poverty, and he cried, “Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfected.”

But, Beloved, let not that thought be any kind of solace to you, for I would remind you that though consciously imperfect, Paul was zealously making progress. He says, “I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” I know many who say that they are imperfect and they seem to be quite satisfied to be so. That was never the case with the Apostle—as long as any trace of a sinful nature or a sinful tendency remained in him, it made him cry out, “O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” It was not because he was dead in sin that he cried in that way. It would be a new thing in this world for a sinner dead in sin to cry so, but because he was already largely delivered from sin and the reigning power of it had been broken! Therefore he felt the burden of any sort of contact with sin. A man who is in the sea, taking a plunge deep down under the water, does not feel the weight of the water. But bring him out on the shore, put a great tub of water on his head—and see what a weight that is to him! So, while a man is in sin as his element, it is no burden to him, but when he is out of it, and not under its power, then he feels the weight of it, he grows weary under it and would gladly be rid of every particle of it.

The Apostle, I say, was conscious of imperfection, but he was also conscious that he was making progress, that he was running towards a mark, that he was leaving much behind him, and was pressing toward that which was before him. He was also in a state of anxious aspiration. He desired that he might be found in Christ, that he might attain unto the resurrection from among the dead, that he might, in a word, grasp that for which Christ had grasped him. I am going to talk about that double grasp, tonight—“That I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus,”

Notice that there are two forces here mentioned which are at work in every gracious man. There is Christ’s power by which He apprehends us and then there is the new power, the new life of God-given faith, by which we, in our turn, seek to apprehend that for which Christ has apprehended us. Christ has apprehended us for a purpose—we wish to realize that purpose even to the fullest. That is the intent of the Apostle’s words. Let us consider them in detail.

**I.**First, let us think of PAUL’S APPREHENSION BY CHRIST JESUS. We do not often use the word, “apprehended,” now, in the sense in which it is here used. The only instance that I remember is when we speak of a policeman apprehending a person, that is, *laying hold* upon him, seizing him. At his conversion, Paul had been apprehended by his Lord. Take the word, “apprehend,” in the sense of arresting him, and it stands true of Saul of Tarsus. I need not repeat the story—you all know how that desperate rebel was going down to Damascus to persecute the saints of God. Nothing was further from his mind than the thought of becoming a Christian, but while he was riding the high horse and Damascus lay below him, just like a sheep within reach of a wolf, the Lord Jesus Christ stepped in and laid His hand on his shoulder—  
***“Thus the eternal counsel ran,  
‘Almighty Grace, arrest that man!’”***  
And almighty Grace arrested him! He fell to the earth at the first blow. He was blinded with the second. No, not so much by a blow as by the greatness of the Light of God that shone round about him! And there he lay prostrate, broken in heart and blind in eyes—he had to be led into the city—and one of those poor men whom he had determined to haul to prison had to come and pray for him, that his eyes might be opened, that he might be baptized, and that he might thus make his confession of faith in Christ! He well says that he was “apprehended of Christ Jesus.” The King sent no sheriff’s officer to arrest him, but *He* came, *Himself*, and took him into Divine custody, laid him by the heels for three days in the dark— and then let him out into glorious liberty, an altogether changed man—to go forth to preach that faith which before he had sought to destroy!  
You may not all be able to remember any special day when you were apprehended by Christ, but some of us do. We remember when we, who had been formerly carried captive by the devil at his will, found ourselves arrested by One stronger than Satan. We managed, by Divine Grace, to escape from the clutches of the devil, but we could not escape from that dear pierced hand when once it was laid upon us! We surrendered ourselves prisoners. There was no resisting, any longer, when His mighty Grace came in to arrest us. I say that some of us remember that day. Other days, notable for great events, have been forgotten, but the day when we were apprehended of Christ Jesus is stamped upon our memory, and always must be, even throughout eternity!  
Since then, dear Friends, we have always felt that grip, just as *Paul always felt himself in Christ’s grasp*. We have never got away from that one arrest. It was not the work of a few minutes to be remembered and to be then ended, and all over. No, at this moment we feel the same Divine hand upon us! We are prisoners, this day, unto Christ, who alone has set us free by capturing us! There was a legend among the heathen of old times, that if persons saw certain spirits in the woods, they became, from that moment, wonderfully changed—they became possessed by the spirit which they saw! They had, as we say in our language, a twist. I remember when—  
***“I saw One hanging on a tree,  
In agonies and blood,  
Who fixed His languid eyes on me,  
As near His Cross I stood”***  
and I have had a twist ever since! I never got over it and never expect to. I hope that twist will get a more and more powerful hold over me. It turned everything upside down. It changed the right into the left. It made the bitter sweet and the sweet bitter—the light darkness, and the darkness light. It was a wonderful twist and, as I say again, that twist still continues! When it has once been experienced, there is no escaping from it. We can say not only, “I was apprehended,” but as the text has it, “I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.” He still binds us with the fetters of His love. We still sit at His dear feet, enthralled by His beauties. We are still under the Omnipotent fascination of His altogether lovely face. We could not depart from Him if we would and we could not if we could! If we went away from Christ, to whom would we go? He has the Words of eternal life! His love holds and binds us faster than fetters of brass. We must forever be apprehended by Christ Jesus our Lord.  
Now, Beloved, *this arrest of Paul by Christ was the force and motive of his whole later life*. Because Paul had been apprehended by Christ, he began to live differently from what he had ever lived before. He had an apprehension that he had lived amiss. He had an apprehension that his evil life would end in eternal destruction. He fled away from all his apprehensions of the wrath to come, to the Christ who had apprehended him in quite another sense! He had thus been apprehended, pressed into the service of Christ and made, by that pressure, to become a volunteer, for here there is a paradox—all Christ’s soldiers are pressed men and volunteers, too! There are two senses, the one in which Grace constrains them, and the other in which their will, being made truly free, runs delightfully after Christ! But having once been apprehended, the Apostle never shook off Christ’s grasp—he began to live as an apprehended man. He said to himself, “I cannot follow the world, for Christ has apprehended me. I cannot go after false doctrine, for Christ has apprehended me and crucified me with Himself. I cannot cease to preach the Gospel. I cannot become a selfseeker. I cannot do anything but live for Him who died for me, for the Master has apprehended me. He has put me under parole to keep close to Him forever and I must not, cannot, dare not, would not leave Him! I am His apprehended one henceforth and even forever.”  
I want your hearts to talk over this first part of the sermon. Never mind my faltering tongue—let your own hearts speak. If Christ has never apprehended you, well then, you have nothing to do with this matter, and you may leave it alone. But if He has arrested you, acknowledge the soft impeachment, tonight. Say in your heart, “Yes, He has, indeed, laid hold on me, and my heart’s desire is that He would bring every thought into captivity to Him. From henceforth I would be led in triumph by Him, His captive all the days of my life, to show the power of His illustrious love, the victories of His Grace!” Oh, that we might, each one, say with Paul, “I am apprehended of Christ Jesus”!  
Ah, dear Souls, you who have never been apprehended of Him, I hope that you will be, tonight! I pray God that you may run away from your old master, the devil, and not give him even five minutes’ notice, but just start off directly! And while you are a runaway slave, may my Divine Master come and lay His hand upon you and say, “You are Mine. You never did really belong to your old master and even though you promised and swore that you would be his, thus says the Lord, ‘Your Covenant with death shall be disannulled, and your agreement with Hell shall not stand.’ I have redeemed you, I have called you by your name, you are Mine, and now I only take what I bought on the tree. I take by power, by might, by main force, by Grace, what I purchased with the blood of My hands and feet and heart. I will have you, for you are Mine.” Lord, will You thus arrest some sinner, tonight, to the praise of the glory of Your Grace?  
**II.**Now let us notice PAUL’S DESIRE TO APPREHEND THAT FOR WHICH THE LORD HAD APPREHENDED HIM.  
Well, why did Christ apprehend Paul? First, it was *to convert him completely—*to make a new man of him, to turn him from all his old ways and pursuits—and put him on quite a different road. Now, Brothers and Sisters, that is why the Lord apprehended us—to make us new creatures in Christ Jesus! Let us pray God to carry out that design to the fullest, to make us altogether new creatures. Do not let us be satisfied while there are any remains of the old nature—let us cry to the Lord to drive the Canaanites out—and though they have chariots of iron, let us, by Divine Grace, drive them all out! Pray, “Lord Jesus, You have come to turn me from every sin—turn me and I shall be turned! You have provided medicine for every disease—Lord, heal me and I shall be healed!”  
Do not be satisfied, any of you, with half a conversion! I am afraid that there are a great many who have not much more than half a conversion. I know a man—I hope he is converted, but I wish that the Lord would convert his temper. He prays very nicely, but you should see him when he is red in the face with anger at his wife! I know a man—I hope he is a Christian, it is not for me to judge—but I wish that the Lord would convert his pocket. It needs a button taken off, for it is very difficult to get it open! It is very easy to put something in, but hard to get anything out for any good purpose. I know a great many professing Christians who do not seem to have had what we might call a thorough conversion. We need the power which has arrested us to do its work completely—till there is not any part of us but what has been renewed by Grace and sanctified to the service and Glory of God. Brethren, seek to apprehend that for which Christ has apprehended you, namely, a thorough conversion, a turning of yourself from every evil way!  
But the Lord apprehended each one of His people, in the next place, *to make them like to Christ*. This is the great design of electing love—“Whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son.” That is the great objective of the very first act of Divine Love— and whatever the Holy Spirit does in us, He does it with this aim to make us like unto the Firstborn among many brethren. This will be our satisfaction in eternity—“I shall be satisfied when I awake with Your likeness.” Come, then, Beloved, if Christ has arrested us to make us like Himself, let us not rest till we have become more like He! Perhaps the Lord has made you like Christ in some respects, but not in all. Or if you are like Christ in all respects, yet the likeness is dim, shadowy, rather in outline than in filling-up. Though we may be likenesses of Christ, there is not one of us who does not need many touches before we shall be good likenesses! Some, I fear, are *caricatures* of Christ. May the Lord have pity upon us if that is the case, and go on with His work, and take out all the blotches and blemishes, and paint the true portrait till. at last. everybody who sees us will say, “There is Christ in that man—he is a likeness of Christ”!  
We may not all be paintings on ivory. We may not all be taken on a sheet of silver, but the Lord’s portrait, even though it is on a piece of clay, has still great beauties in it. And as He intends to make us like Christ, O Beloved, let us aspire to this! Come, get it into your voice and get it into your heart! You are to be like Christ and as you are to be so, and this is the very reason why Christ has arrested you, pine after it, thirst after it, labor after it! Trust God to work in you to will and to do of His own good pleasure, and while He is doing that, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling because it is God that works in you!  
If you turn to Paul’s description of his own conversion, which he gave to Agrippa, you will find that the Lord said to him that He had appeared to him to *make him a witness* of that which he had seen, and of that which He would afterwards reveal to him. So, in the third place, we have been apprehended of Christ that we may be *witnesses* for Him, first *seeing* a great deal and then *telling* what we have seen, which is the other sense of the word, “witness.” A witness sees or hears and then he tells in court what he has seen or heard and so he becomes a witness to others as once he was a witness to himself. Now, the Lord has apprehended every Christian, here, to see their Savior, to see His Grace, to see His love, to see His power, to see all the wonders which the Holy Spirit works among men— and then to go and talk of these things to others, that they, also, hearing from the lips of a witness, may be led to believe by the power of the Holy Spirit!  
Beloved, if the Lord Jesus Christ has apprehended you that you may be a witness, be on the lookout! Keep your eyes open! See all that you can see. Every Prophet of olden times was called a Seer. You cannot prophesy to others until you have been a *seer* yourself! Pray that you may see all that is in the Word. Cry, “Open You my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of Your Law.” Pray that you may see the movements of God in Providence, and may see the hand of God in your own heart and your own experience. Pray God, first, to make you a witness, an observer—and then tell out to others what you have tasted and

handled and felt of the Word of life—and be a faithful witness for your Lord and Master all your days. Do not some professing Christians, who are here, tonight, feel a little uncomfortable? You have not yet seen all that you should see and have you not kept very much to yourselves what you have seen? I would that you could apprehend that for which also you are apprehended of Christ Jesus, seeing what He means you to see and then, telling out what He means you to tell. May the Lord instruct us more and more that we may fulfill all His good pleasure!  
But, next, we were converted in order *to be the instruments of the conversion of others*. Paul, when he was speaking to Agrippa, expressly mentioned how the Lord said, “Delivering you from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send you, to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in Me.” So, you see, there was a certain number of souls for whom Paul was apprehended that he might be the instrument of their salvation! Our Lord Jesus Christ prayed, “Father, the hour is come; glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You: as You have given Him power over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him.”  
Now, that power Christ distributes among His people. There is a certain number of persons who will receive eternal life through my ministry. There is a certain number who will receive eternal life through another man’s ministry. I wonder how many have, in this way, been appointed to you, that you might be the means of their salvation? You were not saved that you might only go to Heaven—you were saved that you might take others there with you! In the olden days, when a man needed pigeons, he used to take a dove of his own and smear its wings all over with perfume, and then, when it was very sweet to smell, he threw it up into the air and it went into other dovecots, and all the pigeons went after it. And when it came back, it brought them home to its master. That was a roguish trick, but it is a blessed method of bringing poor flying doves to Christ! When your wings are sweet with Christ’s love. When every time that you move, you perfume the air with holiness and mercy and Grace, others will flock around you and fly with you like doves to their windows!  
I like to think of the many that God has appointed me to bring to Him. I cannot tell you how many I have met during the past week—they have made my heart dance for joy. Last Tuesday, when we had a large company of deacons of our Metropolitan Churches here, one would steal up to me, as I sat there shaking hands, and say, “On such a day, I heard you preach from such a text. I was a careless young man, but you brought me to the Savior.” Another would come and say, “God bless you, Sir! I remember when you were the means of leading me to the Savior.” One took my hand with a ferocious grip and could not say a word till he had shed many a tear. These things make us very happy and my heart’s desire is that I may get all that Christ means me to get, that I may apprehend all that, or *them*, for which He apprehended me!  
I want every Christian Brother and Sister, here, to feel the same. There is somebody in the world whom you have to bring to Christ. I do not know where he is, or who he is, but you had better look out for him. Come, seek now. Say, “I would not lose a single pearl, though it lies deep under the waves of the sea, if my great Lord intends me to dive for it, and bring it up into the Light.” Get to your searching after the hidden treasures and be intent, day and night, in the power of the Spirit, that you may apprehend that measure of usefulness for which you were apprehended of Christ Jesus! It will be a high honor to appear, at last, as a winner of souls! Kings might doff their diadems and forget that they ever wore them, in comparison with that crown which God will give to those who turn many to righteousness, for they shall shine “as the stars forever and ever!” Aspire to this, my dear Friends, and lose none of those for which you have been apprehended of Christ Jesus your Lord.  
In the Acts of the Apostles we read that the Lord said to Ananias about Paul, “I will show him how great things he must suffer for My name’s sake.” Well, now, some of you were apprehended on purpose *that you might suffer for Christ’s sake*. Did I see you wince at that word? Well, but if usefulness by labor is an honor, usefulness by suffering is a still greater honor! In Heaven, the brightest crown that any saint wears is that which is set with the rubies of martyrdom. When I have read the stories of those holy men and women who died in Roman amphitheatres, or were burned to death over at Smithfield, yonder, I must confess that I have envied them. To preach Christ seems so little compared with having Grace enough to suffer for His name’s sake! As one reads of their intense suffering, one naturally shrinks from it and says, “I thank God that I am not called to endure that trial.” But yet, if we were called to it, we would have *Grace given to us to bear it*! What an honor it was for them, for the sake of the Prince of martyrs, the Leader of the sacramental hosts of God’s elect, to be able and willing to give themselves up to death!  
Well, you may be called to suffer for Christ’s sake, but, at any rate, you *are* called to this—to lay your all upon His altar, to devote yourself, your substance, all that you are and all that you have, to His honor and Glory! You are apprehended of Christ Jesus for this purpose—try to apprehend it. Oh, Brothers and Sisters, let us resolve to live wholly unto Christ! Let us bid Him take our hands, feet, heart, eyes, brain and every faculty of our being! May God get as much glory as He can, out of us, or reflect as much of His Glory as is possible through even our weakness and infirmities! But this is why we have been apprehended of Christ Jesus, that we may be wholly and only the Lord’s, “For the love of Christ constrains us because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then all died, and that He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them, and rose again.” Here is the prize of your high calling—are you ready to run for it? God help you to do so, to apprehend, in personal self-sacrifice, all that for which Christ has apprehended you!  
But that is not all. Paul said that he regarded himself as having been arrested by Christ that he might attain unto the resurrection from among the dead. Oh, when that trumpet peals out and the righteous arise, shall I arise? Or shall I lie rotting in the tomb another thousand years? And when He calls His saints together, when—  
***“East and west, and south and north,  
Speeds each glorious angel forth,  
Gathering in with glittering wings  
Zion’s saints to Zion’s King,”***  
shall we be there? Shall we behold the splendor of Christ’s appearing? Shall we sit upon the Throne of God with Him, judging mankind? Shall we be forever with the Lord? It is for this that we are apprehended. Are you getting ready for this? Are you preparing, by His Grace, for that eternal future? I believe that all the saints will get to Heaven, but every saint ought to aspire not only to get there, but to carry, there, with him, that which will make his Heaven more glorious to God than it otherwise would be. Part of the joy of Heaven will be to remember what the Lord did by us. We are not going there to go to bed forever—we are going there to do some glorious work for Christ. How does He describe it? He says that if His servants have been faithful and diligent, He will say to one, “Have authority over ten cities,” and another shall be ruler over five cities. As we have proved our ability, such will be the dominion that Christ shall give us throughout the ages to come! And a little failing, today, as it were the loss of a penny, may mean the loss of thousands of pennies in the world to come. You shall be as full as the greatest vessel, but you shall have smaller capacity. Look to that matter, now.  
I believe that every action in this mortal life thrills through eternity. Time and eternity are like one tremulous mass of jelly—if you touch one particle of it here, it trembles right through, and right throughout the ages. Not a word is spoken but the echo of it shall be heard when time shall be no more. Not a deed is done that dies, especially the deeds of quickened men and women! They know not what they do—they will be astonished to find, at the Last Great Day—what they have done, for the Lord will evidently surprise His people when He says, “I was hungry, and you gave Me meat: I was thirsty, and you gave Me drink.” They will say, “Lord, when did we see You hungry, and feed You? Or thirsty, and gave You drink?” And if you apprehend to the fullest the great purpose of Christ in apprehending you, that it is not of debt, but of Grace—not of works, but of faith, yet, in the ages to come, you shall be surprised to find how the little that you did shall bring you great reward! God gives His people good works and then rewards them for them! He works in us to will and to do, and then we will and do and He gives us a reward for willing and doing!  
I wish, dear Friends, that in Heaven we might feel, “Well, I did as God helped me. I apprehended that for which my Master apprehended me.” You have no idea what you are going to do in Glory. I expect, one day, to preach to an assembled universe concerning my Lord and Master, to tell to principalities and powers what Christ has done—not to sit with a lot of you good people, some listening to me, and some, perhaps, not—but to have angels, and principalities, and powers to be my congregation! And I want to learn to preach well, here, that they may be attentive to me. Each one of you who has served your Lord shall be a monument of His love and His mercy—and the angels shall stop and read what is inscribed on you! Oh, that there might be some good letters written on you, that when Gabriel stops to read, he may clap his hands and then fly with swifter flight, as he says, “Bless the Lord for what He did for that poor man, for what He worked in that poor woman! His Grace is conspicuous there.” As you are to be seen throughout all eternity, may you be fit to be seen! May the Lord, of His Grace, work in you that which shall be to the praise of His Glory!  
**III.**I have done when I just take a minute or two to show THE LESSONS WHICH PAUL IS TEACHING US BY THIS TEXT.  
The first is this, *make sure of your apprehension by Christ Jesus*, so that you can talk like Paul about it, “That for which I am apprehended.” Pray the Lord that you may feel His hand on your shoulder, that you may feel His Grace in your heart, His blessed fetters on your feet, His Divine manacles upon your wrists. Pray that you may have no doubt about it, but may know beyond all doubt that the Lord has arrested you.  
This being known, *do not let it make you idle*. Do not say, “Christ has arrested me; I am saved; nothing more is needed.” No. Why has He arrested you? He has a purpose in it. That arrest was but the beginning of a great lifework. Let it not make you idle, but let it be your encouragement. If Christ has arrested you to be holy, He will make you holy. If Christ has arrested you for usefulness, be confident in seeking it. If Christ has arrested you to make you an eternal monument of His Grace, believe that you will be, and press forward to the mark for the prize of your high calling!  
Finally, let this lead *you to hope for the salvation of others*. Go forward hopefully in your service for others. Teach that Sunday school class with a firm belief that you were apprehended on purpose that John and Tom might be converted! Go and teach the girls and say, “I was apprehended to bring Mary, and Jane, and Louisa to Christ—and do not be at all doubtful about it.” This is the purpose of God—expect it to be worked out! Go to your street corner, my beloved Brother, and preach away—even when the mob disturbs you! Go from door to door with your tracts, even though they may be cast in your face. Go, city missionaries and Bible-women, to your holy and righteous toil. Go, each one of you, to the work for which God has apprehended you, for as the Lord has apprehended you, it is for a purpose! And rest not until that purpose is fully established.  
May the Lord arrest some sinners, tonight! Pray, as you go down the aisles, “Lord, arrest them! Bring them to Your dear feet and save them this night, for Jesus’ sake!” Amen.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON. *Philippians 3.***

The Holy Spirit indited this Epistle by the pen of His servant, Paul. May He also write it on our hearts!  
**Verse 1.***Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord.* When you get to, “finally.” When you are very near the end of your journey, still, “rejoice in the Lord.” “Finally,” says Paul, as if this were the end of his Epistle, the conclusion of all his teaching—“Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord.” But never do it finally! Never come to an end of it! Rejoice in the Lord and yet, again, rejoice, and yet, again, rejoice—and as long as you live, rejoice in the Lord.  
**1.***To write the same things to you, to me, indeed, is not grievous, but for you it is safe.*Some hearers are like the Athenian academicians—they want continually to hear something new. The Apostle says, “To have the same things written to you, is safe.” So is it for you, dear Friends, to have the same Gospel, the same Jesus, the same Holy Spirit made known to you, is safe. New doctrine is dangerous doctrine!  
**2.***Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers.* They are like dogs. If they fawn upon you, they will dirty you, if they do not bite you.  
**2, 3.***Beware of the concision. For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.* There were some who had confidence in circumcision, who greatly troubled Paul. The Apostle says that they were, “the concision,” the cutters off, of whom he would have the Philippians beware.  
**4.***Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinks that he has of which he might trust in the flesh, I more.*If any man might have had confidence in the flesh, truly Paul might.  
**5, 6.***Circumcised the eighth day, the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the Law, a Pharisee; concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the Law, blameless.* So that I do not know what more he could have had. If a Jew had tried to select a man who had something to glory in, he could not have picked any man to stand in the front of Paul! He was truly a Jew. He had received the initiatory rite and on the right day. He was born of Law of God to the extreme. He tithed his mint and his cummin. Nobody could have anything to glory in which Paul had not.  
**7.***But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ.*So that, when we come to Christ, whatever we have to trust to, we must put away. We must write it on the other side of the ledger. We had entered it as a gain—now we must set it down as a loss—it is of no value, whatever! It is a loss if it shall tempt us to trust any less in Christ.  
**8.***Yes doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.*Those are sweet words, “my Lord.” Remember how Thomas cried, in ecstasy, “My Lord and my God”? Paul, by faith putting his finger into the prints of the nails, says, “My Lord.”  
**8, 9.***For whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in Him.* Oh, what a precious place to be found in, “in Him,” trusting in Him, hidden away in Him, a member of His body, as it were, losing myself in Him!  
**9.***Not having my own righteousness, which is of the Law.* He does not say, not *trusting* it, but not even *having* it, not counting it, not *thinking* it worthwhile to put down among his possessions that which he once prized so much.  
**9, 10.***But that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: that I may know Him.* Paul means, “That I may know Him more than I now do,” for he knew Him and delighted in Him, but he felt as if he had not really begun to know Christ. He was like a child at school who has learned to read and to write, and knows so much that he begins to want to know more.  
**10, 11.***And the power of His Resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death; if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.* He knew that all the dead would rise again, but he aspired to the *first* resurrection—“The rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished.”  
**12, 13.***Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended*. He did count himself as saved—he knew that he was Christ’s— but he did not count himself as having realized all that Christ meant to do for him and by him. He did not reckon that he had reached as far as he could reach, or learned all that he could learn, or done all that he could do.  
**13, 14.***But this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.* You have seen a man running very fast. How he leans forward, as though he would send his heart before him and go quicker than his legs can carry him! So did the Apostle, “press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.”  
**15, 16.***Let us, therefore, as many as are mature, be thus minded: and if in anything you are otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you. Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing.*Let us keep all the good that we have received. Let us not give up the Truth of God that we have learned. Let us not leave the way along which we have traveled so far—and let us keep together—let perfect unanimity prove that the work of Grace is going on in one as well as in another.

**17.***Brethren, be followers together of me.*In these days, certain people find fault with Paul and speak of him as if he were not Inspired, and not to be followed as Christ was, But here he expressly says what no man like Paul would ever say unless moved of the Holy Spirit, for he was modest and, by no means, anxious to push himself forward—“Brethren, be followers together of me.”

**17.***And mark them which walk so as you have us for an example.*Mark them, but do not *follow* them. See how they walk, but do not imitate them—“Have us for an example.”

**18.***(For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the Cross of Christ.*I lay a stress upon the article—“They are the enemies of *the* Cross of Christ.” Professors of religion who get into the Church and yet lead ungodly lives, are the worst enemies that the Cross of Christ has! These are the sort of men who bring tears into the minister’s eyes! These are they who break his heart! They are the enemies of the Cross of Christ.

**19.***Whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things).* “Who mind earthly things”— even when they profess to be minding *spiritual* things—pretending to be followers of Christ up to Heaven and yet really making a gain of the things of God here below.

**20.***For our conversation is in Heaven.*Can you say that, dear Friend? Is your citizenship in Heaven? Is your conversation there? Do you often commune with your Lord upon the Throne? Judge yourselves whether it is so or not. It is a very poor thing to have a name to be in Heaven and yet never to have any converse with Heaven! I wish that we could all say that we talk more to God than we do to men, and have more business upward than we have here below.

**20.***From whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.*He is coming! He is coming! Are we looking for Him? This is the true position of the Christian—looking for the appearing of his Lord!

**21.***Who shall change our vile body.*“The body of our humiliation.” We have only part of the redemption while we are here. The soul is regenerated, newly-born, but the *body* is not. “The body is dead because of sin, but the spirit is life because of righteousness.” The redemption of the purchased possession will be perfect at the resurrection. The resurrection will be, to the body, what regeneration is to the soul! We sometimes wonder why we are sick when Christ could make us well in a moment—but the reason is that, as yet, He has not fully brought His Divine Power to bear upon the body.

**21.***That it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself.* May He show some part of that blessed power in us tonight! Amen.

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**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.** Sermon #2315 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

**÷Php 3.13**

A THREEFOLD SLOGAN  
NO. 3536

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 2, 1916.  
*DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.  
*“One thing is necessary.” “One thing I know.” “One thing I do.” Luke 10:44.* **Joh 9:25***.* **Php 3:13***.*  
[The original title of this sermon was A THREEFOLD MOTTO.]

I HAVE “one thing” in view—“one thing” on which I want to rivet your attention. Forbear with me if I detain you a few minutes before announcing a text. It has been said that a man of one book is terrible in the force of his convictions. He has studied it so well, digested it so thoroughly and understands it so profoundly, that it is perilous to encounter him in controversy. No man becomes eminent in any pursuit unless he gives himself up to it with all the powers and passions of his nature—body and soul. Michelangelo had never been so great a painter if his love of art had not become so enthusiastic that he frequently did not take off his garments to sleep by the week together—nor had Handel ever been such a great musician if his ardor for celestial sounds had not led him to use the keys of his harpsichord till, by constant fingering, they became the shape of spoons. A man must have one pursuit and consecrate all his powers to one purpose if he would excel or rise to eminence among his fellows.

When streams of water divide themselves into innumerable streams, they usually create a swamp which proves dangerous to the inhabitants of the neighborhood. Could all those streams be dammed up into one channel, and made to flow in one direction, they might resolve themselves into a navigable river, bearing commerce to the ocean and enriching the people who dwelt upon its banks. To obtain one thing, one comprehensive blessing from Heaven, has been the objective of many a saintly prayer, like that of David, “Unite my heart to fear Your name.” The advice of Paul was, “Set not your affection upon things on earth,” not, “your affection*s*,” as it is often misquoted. The Apostle would have all the affections tied up into one affection—and that one concentrated affection not set upon earthly things—but upon things above, where Christ sits at the right hand of God! The concurrence of all our powers and capacities with one single impulse, to obtain one objective and to produce one result, is one great aim of the Gospel of Jesus Christ!  
The “one thing” concerning which I am now about to talk very seriously to you will require three texts to elucidate it. There are three pithy passages of Holy Scripture which I shall endeavor to press home on your heart and conscience.

**I.**ONE THING NECESSARY.  
Our first text is to be found in the Gospel according to Luke 10:44, “One thing is necessary.” This one thing, according to this passage, is *faith in Christ Jesus*, the sitting down at the Master’s feet, the drinking in of His Word. If I may expand for a minute the “one thing,” without seeming to make 20 things of that which is but one, I will refer it to the possession of a new life. This life is given to us when, by the power of the Holy Spirit, we are created anew in Christ Jesus. And it develops itself in a simple confidence in Jesus, in a hearty obedience to Jesus, in a desire to be like Jesus and in a constant yearning to be near to Jesus. “One thing is necessary”—that one thing is *salvation*—worked in us by the Holy Spirit, through faith which is in Jesus Christ our Lord. The new heart, the right spirit, a filial fear of God, love to Jesus—this is the “one thing necessary.” How I trust you all know how to distinguish things essential from things convenient, and that you are more concerned about necessary things than about things merely attractive, or, at most, but an accessory to your welfare! The little child may admire the field which is covered with red and blue flowers. The farmer cares nothing for these flowers—he delights in the wheat that is ripening for the sickle. So our childish minds are often fascinated with the flaunting flowers of fortune and fashion—craving after wealth, fame and worldly distinction—but our better reason, if it is allowed to speak, will prefer the necessary things, the things which we must have, or else must perish. We may do without earthly goods, for thousands have been happy in life and triumphant in death without any of the luxury which riches can purchase. The heart’s love of his fellow creatures has been fairly won by many a humble man who never courted popular applause. The patience of the poor has often counted for fine gold, while the pride of the affluent has passed for nothing but foul dross. Even lack of health, Heaven’s priceless blessing to mortals here below, has not hindered some precious sufferers from serving their generation, glorifying God in a martyrdom of pain and bequeathing treasures of piety to a grateful posterity. Ten thousand things are convenient. Thousands of things are desirable. Hundreds of things are to be sought for, but there is one thing, only *one thing*, the one thing we have described to you, of which our Savior speaks as the “one thing necessary.”  
And, oh, how necessary it is! Necessary for your children—they are growing up about you and much joy they give you—for you can see in them many budding excellences. To your partial eyes they give promise of goodness, if not of greatness! They will be the comfort of your declining years. You have carefully watched their education. Not a whit of their moral habits have you failed to overlook. To give them a fair start in the world has been your fond desire till their portion is the fruit of your providence. From perils you would protect them. Lest they should have to rough it, perhaps, as much as their father before them, you would pilot them through the straits. Good! But, dear parents, do remember that “one thing is necessary” for your children, that they may commence life, continue in life and close life honorably. It is well that they should be educated. It is well that morality should be instilled into them, but this is not enough! Alas, we have seen many leave the purest parental influences to plunge into the foulest sins! Their education has become but a tool for iniquity, and the money with which they might have helped themselves to competence has been squandered away in vice. “One thing is necessary” for that bright-eyed boy! Oh, if you can take him to the Savior, and if the blessing of the Good Shepherd shall alight upon him and renew him while yet a child, the best will have been done for him—yes, his one chief need supplied! And if that dear girl, before she comes to womanhood, shall have been led to that blessed Savior who rejects none that come to Him, she will have received all she shall need for time and for eternity! Quicken your prayers, then, dear parents. Think of your children, to seek their welfare more intelligently. Be more importunate in intercession on their behalf! Truly, this is the one thing necessary for them.  
One thing, too, is necessary for that young man just leaving home to go out as an apprentice and learn his trade. That is a trying time for an untried hand. The heart may well flutter as one, young and inexperienced, reflects that he is now about to sail, not on a coasting voyage, but to put fairly out to sea. Before long it will be seen whether those fair professions had the Truths of God as a foundation. He will get to London—many of you have passed through this ordeal! The Metropolis, what a maze it seemed to you at first, and with what amazement you surveyed it! What with propensities within your breast, and profuse attractions outside—temptation held you spell-bound! What could not be done in the village—what you dared not *think* of in the little market town, seems easy to be done unobserved in the great city! Hundreds of fingers point you to the haunts of pleasure, the home of vice, the path to Hell! Ah, mother and father, you present the Bible as your parting gift. You write the youth’s name on the flyleaf. You offer your prayers and you shed your tears for him. Steals there not over you the conviction that the one thing he needs you cannot pack in his trunk, nor can you send it up to him by a post office order? The one thing necessary is that Christ should be formed in his heart the hope of glory! With that he would begin life well. A sword of the true Jerusalem metal, that will not break in the heat of the conflict, will be serviceable all his journey through. Do I address some young man who has not forgotten his mother’s kind remarks when he left home? Let me just echo them, and say to him, One thing you lack! Oh, seek it, seek it now! Before going out of this house, seek till, through Grace, you obtain this one thing necessary which shall bear you safely to the skies!  
But “one thing is necessary,” not merely for those youngsters at home, or for those about to go abroad in the world. One thing is necessary *for the business man*. “Ah,” he says, “I need a great many things.” But what, I ask, is the one thing? You speak of “the necessary.” You call ready cash “*the indispensable*.” “Give me this,” says the man of the world, “and I don’t care about anything else! Recommend your religion to whom you please, but let me have solid gold and silver, and I will be well content.” Ah, Sirs, you delude yourselves with phantoms! You fondly dream that wealth in your hands would count for more than it has ever done for your fellows. You must have seen some men make large fortunes whom you knew to be very miserable. They have retired from business to get a little rest, and yet they could find no rest in their retirement! You must have known others who, the more they got, the more they have wanted, for they have swallowed a horseleech, and it has cried, “Give, give!” Of course, you never suspected that the money did the mischief, or that the precious metal poisoned the heart. But are you in quest of happiness? It lies not in investments, whether in government bonds or mortgages, or stocks or debentures, or gold or silver. These properties are profitable. They can be used to promote happiness. As accessories to our welfare, they may often prove to be blessings, but if accredited with intrinsic worth they will eat as does a canker! Money circulated is a medium of public benefit, while money hoarded is a means of private discomfort! A man is but a muckraker who is forever seeking to scrape everything to himself. A miser is bound to be miserable. Before high Heaven, he is an object to make the angels weep! One thing is necessary for you merchants, brokers and warehousemen to keep you from sinking under your anxieties and losses, or to preserve you from becoming sordid and selfish through your successes and lest your greed should increase with your gains! One thing is necessary that your life may be a true life, or else, when it comes to its end, all that can be said of you will amount to this, “He died worth so much.” Must that be your only memorial? When you depart from this world, the poor and needy will not miss you. Widow and orphans will not grieve for you! The Church militant will not mourn! The bright spirits above will not be waiting to greet you. The grand climax of your career—a will! A testament sworn under a very large sum! What shall it profit any man what fortune he may have amassed, if he loses his soul?  
Do you think that riches possessed in this world will procure any respect in the nether regions? I have heard that in the old Fleet Prison, the thief who was put into jail for stealing ten thousand pounds thought himself a gentleman in comparison with those common fellows who were put in for some paltry debt of 20 or 25 pounds! There are no such distinctions in Hell! You who can boast your talents of gold and talents of silver, if cast away, shall be as complete wrecks as those who never had copper or sliver, but lived and died in privation and poverty! You need one thing, and if you get this one thing, your wealth shall prove a blessing—otherwise it will be a curse! With this one thing your sufficiency for the day guaranteed to you by promise shall make you as one of Heaven’s favorites, fed by the hand of God, always needy, but never neglected. You aged folk—there are some such here—shall I have to remind any of you that one thing is necessary—yes, most necessary to you? Death has already put his bony palm upon your head and frozen your hair to the whiteness of that winter in which all your strength must fail, and all your beauty fade. Oh, if *you* have no Savior! You will soon have to quit these transitory scenes. The young may die, but the old *must*. To die without a Savior will be dreary and dreadful! Then, after death, the judgment! Brave old man, how will your courage stand that outlook, if you have none to plead your cause? Oh, aged woman, you will soon be in the scales—very soon must your character be weighed. If it is said of you, “Tekel, she is weighed in the balances and found wanting,” there will be no opportunity to get right or adjust your relations to God or to your fellow creatures. Your lamp will have gone out. There will be no chance of rekindling it! If lost, forever lost—forever in the dark—forever cast away! Little enough will it avail you, then, that you have nourished and brought up children. It will not suffice

you, then, that you paid your debts honestly. Vain the plea that you attended a place of worship and were always respected in the neighborhood! ONE THING is necessary! Lacking that, you will turn out to have been a fool! Notwithstanding many opportunities and repeated invitations, you have rejected the one thing—the one only thing—what an irreparable mistake! Oh, how you will weep as one disappointed! How you will gnash your teeth as do those who upbraid themselves! You will mourn forever, and your self-reproach shall know no end!  
I wish I could move you, as I desire, to feel as I feel, myself—that this one thing is necessary to every unconverted person here present. Some of you have already got this one choice thing that is so necessary. Hold it fast! Never let it go! Grace gave it to you—Divine Grace will keep it for you—Grace will hold you true to it. Never be ashamed of it. Prize it beyond all cost! But as for you who have it not—I think I hear your funeral knell pealing in my ears, and as you speed away, your spirits made to fly for very fear, right into the arms of Justice, I think I hear your bitter cry, “The harvest is past, the summer is ended and we are not saved!” I would gladly pluck you by the skirts, if I could, and say to you, “Why not seek the one thing necessary without more ado? Get it now! It will not in any way hurt you. It will make you happy, here, and blessed hereafter.” It is as necessary for this life as for the next, as necessary for the exchange as for the sick chamber, as necessary for the street and for the shop as for the dying bed and for the Day of Judgment. One thing— one thing is necessary! And now allow me to stop before taking you a stage further. Allow me, as it were, to change horses. I must take another text—  
**II.**ONE THING KNOWN.  
It is in the Gospel according to John, the 9th Chapter, and the 25th verse, and these are the words, “One thing I know.”  
The man who was born blind, whose eyes were opened at the pool of Siloam, said, “One thing I know.” This simple statement I want to turn into a pointed question. Among the many things, dear Friends, that you are acquainted with, do you know the one thing that this poor man knew, “Whereas I was blind, now I see”? Here is a wealth of selfknowledge in this single avowal. Little enough, I daresay, he knew about other people, but he knew a great deal about himself! He was well aware that he once was blind—and he was quite positive that he now could see. Oh, can you say it with sincerity, “I know that I was once blind—I could see no beauty in Christ, though I thought I saw great beauties in the world. Then I could not love God. I did not hate sin. I had no repentance, nor had I any faith. I was blind, but now—oh, blessed change—now I see my sin and weep over it! Now I see a Savior, and I trust Him! Now I see His beauties and I admire Him! Now I see His service and I delight to spend my strength in it! One thing I know.” What a marvelous experience of a marvelous change this implies! Nor can its importance be overrated. There is no going to Heaven unless you undergo a change which shall make you entirely new and make all things entirely new to you. A young convert once said, “I do not know what is happening—either the world is changed, or else I am, for nothing seems to me to be the same as once it was.” Ah, this old Bible, what a dry Book it used to be, but, oh, how it abounds in marrow and fatness now! Prayer—what a tedious duty, once, but what a delightful exercise now! The going up to God’s House on the Sabbath—used it not to be a weariness of the flesh? How much better to be in the fields! Yet now, how delightful we feel, to assemble with the Lord’s saints! With what pleasure we hail the festal morn! All things are altered. Behold, all things are become new! What we once hated, we love, and what we loved, we hate! Is it so, dear Hearer—is it so with you?  
Do not, I pray you, be content with mere reformation. Were you before a drunk, and are you now a teetotaler? Good—very good! Yet, good as it is, it will not save your soul! Dishonest and knavish you once were, but truthful and trustworthy you may now be—yet rely not upon it for salvation! In former days, unchaste—by stern resolve you may have given up the favorite lust—but even that will not save you! Those who never fell into your foul sloughs need the change, too. “You must be born-again.” You must have an entire renewal—a radical change! It is not cutting off the limbs of a tree, nor shifting it to another place, that will convert a bramble into a vine. The sap must be changed. The heart must be renewed. The inner man must be made completely new. Is it so with you? Why, I think if some of us were to meet our old selves walking down the street, we would hardly know ourselves! ‘Tis true, old self has taken good care to knock at our door pretty often since. Of all the knocks we hear, not even excepting that of the devil, there is none we dread so much! The knock of the old man when he says, “Let me in with my corruptions and lusts, and let me reign and have my own way.” No, old man, you were once ourselves, but go your way, for we have put off the old man with his deeds, and put on the new man—we cannot know you, for one thing we know now that we knew not before—whereas we were blind, now we see!  
Need I linger any longer upon this point? Let it suffice if I leave it as a kind of awakening question upon the heart and conscience. There are not 20 things, but there is ONE THING you have to enquire about. Do you know for sure this one thing—that you are not now what you used to be? Do you know that Jesus has made the difference? That Jesus has opened the eyes that were once without sight? That you now see Jesus, and seeing, you love Him? Our third subject is—  
**III.**ONE THING DONE.  
The text is in the 3rd Chapter of the Epistle to the Philippians, at the 13th verse. There the Apostle Paul says, “One thing I do.”  
Pray observe that I did not introduce “*doing*” first. That would not be appropriate. We do not begin with *doing*. The one thing necessary is not doing. Coming to Christ and trusting Him, must take the lead. Not until after you have got the one thing necessary, and know that you have got it, and are conscious that, whereas you were blind, now you see, can you be fit to take the next step—“one thing I do.” And what is that one thing? “Forgetting the things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” It seems, then, that the Apostle gave his whole mind up to the glorifying of God by his spiritual life. He was never content with what he was. If he had a little faith, he sought for more. If he had a little hope, he aimed to obtain more. If he had some degree of virtue, he coveted more. Oh, Christians, never be satisfied with being merely saved! Up with you! Away! Off! Go onward to the high mountains, to the clearer light, to the brighter joy! If saved and brought, like the shipwrecked mariner, to shore—is that enough? Yes, for the moment it is enough to guarantee the purest satisfaction and the warmest congratulations. But the mariner must seek a livelihood as long as he lives. He must put forth his energies. Whatever avocations open up before him, he must vigorously seek such favors of fortune as may possibly be within his reach. Just so, let it be with you. Saved from the deep which threatened to swallow you up, rejoice that you are preserved from death, but resolve that the life vouchsafed to you shall be active, earnest, vigorous, fruitful in every good deed and work! Be diligent as your traders are! See how they wake their servants up in the morning, how they scold them if they are not diligent. This man must be hurried to one place, and that man to another. How sharp they speak! How quickly they move about! They will do their business and they spare no pains to increase it. Oh, that we were half as diligent in the service of God! Here we are driveling away our time. We do not put out all our talents, augment our faith, or enlarge our coast. Why are we so indolent in going to that great giver of every good and perfect gift for fresh supplies? Why do we not wait upon Him to be enriched? Would to God that we were as diligent in spiritual as we are in temporal things! Oh, that we were burning with a holy covetousness for the best gifts God can bestow and the choicest blessings saints can receive!  
Paul was anxious to do more good, to get more good, to be more good. He sought to win souls. He needed to make Christ’s name known. An ardent passion inflamed him! A high enthusiasm inspired him. Tentmaking, it is true, was his trade, but tent-making did not monopolize quite all his heart, and soul, and strength! Does your secular vocation absorb all your thoughts? Though Paul was proud of his industry, and could say conscientiously, “My own hands have ministered to my necessities,” yet preaching was the one thing he pursued as his life-work. He was a workman, just as many of you are—but where were his tools? They were ready to hand when he needed them. And did they, do you think, ever creep up into his heart? I believe never. “For us to live,” said he, “is Christ.” That was as true, I will guarantee you, when he was tentmaking, or picking up sticks on the island of Malta, as when he was talking heavenly wisdom to the worldly-wise, addressing the Athenians on Mars’ Hill or when he discoursed touching the resurrection of the dead to the Jews, or when he expounded the way of justification to the Gentiles! He was a man of one idea, and that one idea had entirely possessed him! In the old pictures they put a halo around the head of the saints. But, in fact, that halo encircles their hearts and penetrates every member of their bodies. The halo of disinterested consecration to Christ should not be about their brows, alone, to adorn their portraits, for it encompassed their entire being, their spirit, soul and body! It environed them, their whole being. “This one thing I do,” was the slogan of early saints. Let it be your slogan!  
Beloved, I address you as the saints of this generation. My earnest desire is that you should not come behind in Grace or in gifts. When the Believers of all ages muster, and are marshaled, may you be found among the faithful and true. If not among the first or second class of worthies in the army of the Son of David, yet good soldiers of Jesus Christ! Our God is a loving Father. He likes to praise His people. To this end do be clear about the one thing you need, the one thing you know, and the one thing you do! So will you stand well in that day. Amen.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: *John 9.***

**Verses l-3.***And as Jesus passed by He saw a man who was blind from his birth. And His disciples asked Him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind? Jesus answered, Neither has this man sinned, nor his parents, but that the works of God should be made manifest in him.*We are not to look upon such afflictions as any indication of special sin on the part either of the person or the parent. Of course, sin lies at the root of all our suffering as a great generic fact, but not so that we may attribute such an affliction to any one sin. The disciples, you see, dear Friends, are thinking about difficult problems. Their Master is thinking about how, practically, to meet the difficulty, and to this day there are a large number of Christians, professors and even ministers who occupy their time about questions which really are to no profit. If they could be answered, nobody would be the holier or the better! What does it matter to us what is the origin of evil? Far more important to turn the evil out than it is to find out how it came in! Very frequently, you know, after there is a terrible calamity or accident, we have an inquiry as to how it was done, and then we think the thing is all attended to. It would have been better, perhaps, to have an inquiry, before it was done, as to how it could be prevented. Our Lord has that wisdom— that practicalness. He begins to deal with the evil rather than to raise questions about it. Yes, and He sees in that evil a good coming out of it! He says that this man was blind, that the works of God might be made manifest in him.

**4-7.***I must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day: the night comes, when no man can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world. When He had thus spoken, He spat on the ground and made clay of the spittle, and He anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay. And said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam, (which is by interpretation, Sent). He went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing.*Our Lord used instrumentality. It did not appear, however, to be very likely to achieve His purpose. The clay seemed more likely to blind than to give sight, yet if the Lord chooses to use the poor and weak instruments that seem nothing better than dust and spittle, He has the glory of the grand result! If He takes the humble ministry of His servants and uses it in the pulpit, or in the Sunday school, or anywhere else*,*He has all the more Glory and is the less likely to be robbed of it because He uses such unlikely means.

**8, 9.***The neighbors therefore, and they who before had seen him that he was blind, said, Is not this he that sat and begged? Some said, This is he—*We are sure of it.

**9.***Others said, He is like he—*They were cautious bodies.  
**9.***But he said, I am he.*He knew there was no mistaking his witness!  
**10, 11.***Therefore said they unto him, How were your eyes opened? He answered and said, A man that is called Jesus made clay, and anointed my eyes, and said unto me, Go to the pool of Siloam, and wash: and I went and washed, and I received sight.* Very straightforward, very concise, very accurate—and when we make answer about our conversion, it is always well to take this for a copy—not too many flourishes, no coloring. He even leaves out about the spittle, but he gives it all as he can recollect it. So when you are talking about the Lord’s love to you and His way of converting you, it is quite sufficiently remarkable, without any touch of rouge. Let it be given just as it is.  
**12.***Then said they unto him, Where is He? He said I do not know.* Enough for him to know what he did know—that his eyes were opened and how it was done! So sometimes I have known persons come upon the new convert with a question which has rather baffled him, and he has been troubled because he could not answer it. Do not let it trouble you! You are not expected to know everything. The very best and most honest thing is to say, “I do not know”  
**13-14.***They brought to the Pharisees him that before was blind. And it was the Sabbath Day when Jesus made the clay, and opened his eyes.*So you may be sure that the Pharisees would be down upon Him for that, because, according to the Rabbis, the making of the clay to put upon this man’s eyes would be a kind of brick-making—and they would bring Him in guilty of brick-making directly! So did these men pervert things and make men guilty where no offense had been committed whatever.  
**15.***Then again the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight. He said unto them, He put clay upon my eyes, and I washed, and do see.*He is shorter with them. Some tales grow in telling. His gets shorter. Besides, he has to deal with captious people—and then the least said, the sooner mended—and this shrewd man thought so.  
**16, 17.***Therefore said some of the Pharisees, This Man is not of God, because He keeps not the Sabbath. Others said, How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles? And there was a division among them. They said unto the blind man, again, What say you of Him, that He has opened your eyes? He said, He is a Prophet.* He could see that.  
**18-24.***But the Jews did not believe concerning him, that he had been blind, and received his sight, until they called the parents of him that had received his sight. And they asked them, saying, Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How, then, does he now see? His parents answered them and said, We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind. But by what means he now sees, we know not; he is of age; ask him. He shall speak for himself. These words spoke his parents because they feared the Jews: for the Jews had agreed already that if any man did confess that he was the Christ, he would be put out of the synagogue. Therefore said his parents, He is of age; ask him. Then again called they the man that was blind, and said unto him, Give God the praise: we know that this Man is a sinner.* How piously these Pharisees can talk—and generally in the name of God, all sorts of mischief begins. When men are persecuting the Son of God, yet still they take the name of God upon their lips. Did they not burn the martyrs to the glory of God? Oh, yes, and so did these men thus slander Christ by saying, “We know that this Man is a sinner,” and yet they spoke about giving God praise!  
**25.***He—*Our shrewd friend of the opened eyes.  
**25-27.***Answered and said, Whether He is a sinner or not, I know not: one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see. Then said they to him again, What did He do to you? How did He open your eyes? He answered them, I have told you already, and you did not hear: therefore would you hear it again? Will you also be His disciples?* The man is sharp, acute, cutting.  
**28, 29.***Then they reviled him and said, You are His disciple; but we are Moses’ disciples. We know that God spoke unto Moses: as for this Fellow, we know not from where He comes.*The word, “fellow,” is supplied by the translators. There is no such word there because they did not know a word bad enough with which to express their scorn.  
**30-33.***The man answered and said unto them, Why herein is a marvelous thing, that you know not from where He comes and yet He has opened my eyes. Now we know that God hears not sinners: but if any man is a worshipper of God, and does His will, him He hears. Since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind. If this Man were not of God, He could do nothing.* He proves! He administrates! The thing is as clear as possible, and yet they refuse to see it.  
**34.***They answered and said unto him, You were altogether born in sins.*It is the old rule, “Abuse the plaintiff.” Nothing could be said. Now abuse the man! He has answered you and his arguments are too difficult for you. Now throw hard words at him. “You were altogether born in sins.”  
**34.***And do you teach us?*Wonderful, that, “us.” “Do you teach us?” Folly, ignorance and pride go together. This man, in the simplest and most unaffected manner, had told his tale and urged his argument—and now they abuse him and exalt themselves. “Do you teach us?” No, great Pharisees, he does not teach you, for you will not learn!  
**34.***And they cast him out.* That is the last argument. Out with him! Now we have defeated him.  
**35.***Jesus heard that they had cast him out: and when He had found him.* What a blessed thing to be cast out, if Christ finds us! Many and many have been put out of the synagogue and treated with contempt, but then outside Jerusalem they found their Lord, for there He died outside the camp, and His people need not be ashamed to go after Him bearing His reproach. “When He had found him.”  
**35-38.***He said unto him, Do you believe in the Son of God? He answered and said, Who is He, Lord, that I might believe in Him? And Jesus said unto him, You have both seen Him, and it is He who is talking with you. And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped Him.* He does not appear to have been a Unitarian, therefore, and if those persons had their eyes opened, they would do the same. “He said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped Him.”  
**39.***And Jesus said, For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind.* Christ is the turner of the tables. Did not the virgin mother sing, “He has put down the mighty from their seats, and He has exalted them of low degree. He has filled the hungry with good things, but the rich He has sent away empty”? So He always does.  
**40.***Jesus said unto them, If you were blind—*Really could not see.  
**41.***You would have no sin.*If you really did not know better, were totally and altogether without knowledge—then you would have no sin compared with what you now have.  
**41.***But now you say, We see; therefore your sin remains.* You acknowledge that you have sinned with your eyes open and, therefore, your sin is all the greater.

—Adapted from the *C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Version 1.0, Ages Software.  
PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #1114 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

**ONWARD!**  
NO. 1114

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, MAY 25, 1873, *BY C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.”***Php 3:13-14***.***

SO far as his acceptance with God is concerned, a Christian is complete in Christ as soon as he believes. Those who have trusted themselves in the hands of the Lord Jesus are saved—and they may enjoy holy confidence upon the matter, for they have a Divine warrant for so doing. “There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.” To this salvation the Apostle had attained. But while the work of Christ for us is perfect and it were presumption to think of adding to it, the work of the Holy Spirit in us is not perfect—it is continually carried on from day to day—and will need to be continued throughout the whole of our lives.

We are being “conformed to the image of Christ,” and that process is in operation as we advance towards Glory. The condition in which a Believer should always be found is that of progress. His motto must be, “Onward and upward!” Nearly every figure by which Christians are described in the Bible implies this. We are plants of the Lord’s field, but we are sown that we may grow—“First the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear.” We are born into the family of God, but there are babes, little children, young men, and fathers in Christ Jesus. Yes, and there are none who are perfect or fully developed men in Christ Jesus. It is always a growing process.

Is the Christian described as a pilgrim? He is no pilgrim who sits down as if rooted to the place. “They go from strength to strength.” The Christian is compared to a warrior, a wrestler, a competitor in the games— these figures are the very opposite of a condition in which nothing more is to be done. They imply energy, the gathering up of strength and the concentration of forces in order to the overthrowing of adversaries. The Christian is also likened to a runner in a race and that is the figure now before us in the text. It is clear that a man cannot be a runner who merely holds his ground, content with his position—he only runs aright who each moment nears the mark. Progress is the healthy condition of every Christian and he only realizes his best estate while he is growing in Divine Grace, “adding to his faith virtue,” “following on to know the Lord,” and daily receiving Grace for Grace out of the fullness which is treasured up in Christ Jesus.

Now, to this progress the Apostle exhorts us—no, he does more than exhort—he *allures* us. He stands among us. He does not lecture us, “ex cathedra,” standing like a learned master far above his disciples, but he

puts himself on our level. And though not a whit behind the very chief of the Apostles, he says, “Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended.” He does not give us the details of his own imperfections and deficiencies, but in one word he confesses them in the gross. And then he declares that he burns with eager desire for perfection, so that it is the one passion of his soul to press onward towards the great goal of his hopes, the prize of his high calling in Christ Jesus. We cannot desire to have a better instructor than a man who sympathizes with us because he humbly considers himself to be of the same rank as ourselves. Teaching us to run, the Apostle, himself, runs. Wishing to fire our holy ambition, he bears testimony to that same ambition flaming within his own spirit.

Paul’s statements in the text call us to look at him under four aspects— first, as forming a just estimate of his present condition—“Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended.” Secondly, as placing his past in its proper position—“forgetting the things which are behind.” Thirdly, as aspiring eagerly to a more glorious future—“reaching forth unto those things which are before.” And fourthly, as practically putting forth every exertion to obtain that which he desired—“I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.”

**I.** First, admire our Apostle as PUTTING A JUST ESTIMATE UPON HIS PRESENT CONDITION. He was not one of those who consider the state of the Believer’s heart to be a trifling matter. He was not indifferent as to his *spiritual* condition. He says, “I count”—as if he had taken stock, had made a careful estimate and had come to a conclusion. He is not a wise man who says, “I am a Believer in Christ and therefore it little matters what are my inward feelings and experience.” He who so speaks should remember that keeping the heart with all diligence is a precept of Inspiration and that a careless walk usually comes to a very sorrowful ending.

The Apostle took account. And when he had done so he was dissatisfied—“I count not myself to have apprehended.” Nor was that dissatisfaction to be regretted. It was a sign of true Grace, a conclusion which is always arrived at when saints judge themselves rightly. Most weighty is that word of Chrysostom, “He who thinks he has obtained everything, has nothing.” Had Paul been satisfied with his attainments he would never have sought for more. Most men cry, “hold,” when they think they have done enough. The man who can honestly write, “I press forward,” you may be quite sure is one who feels that he has not yet apprehended all that might be gained. Self-satisfaction rings the death-knell of progress. There must be a deep-seated discontent with present attainments, or there will never be a striving after the things which are yet beyond.

Now, Beloved, mark that the man who in our text tells us that he had not apprehended was a man vastly superior to any of us. Among them that were born of women there has never lived a greater than Paul the Apostle. In sufferings for Christ, a martyr of the first class. In ministry for Christ an Apostle of foremost degree. Where shall I find such a man for Revelations? He had been caught up into the third Heaven and heard words which it was not lawful for him to utter! Where shall I find his match for character? A character splendidly balanced, as nearly apmating to that of his Divine Master as we well expect to see in mortal men. Yet, after having duly considered the matter, this notable saint said, “I count not myself to have apprehended.”

Shame, then, on any of us poor dwarfs if we are so vain as to count that we *have* apprehended! Shame upon the indecent self-conceit of any man who congratulates himself upon his own spiritual condition when Paul, himself, said, “Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect.” The injury which self-content will do a man would be hard to measure—it is the readiest way to stunt him and the surest method to keep him weak. I should be sorry, indeed, if I should be addressing one who imagines that he has apprehended, for his progress in Divine Grace is barred from this time forth! The moment a man says, “I have it,” he will no longer try to obtain it. The moment he cries, “It is enough,” he will not labor after more.

Yet, Brothers and Sisters, far too often, of late, have I come across the path of those who speak as if they *have* apprehended—Brethren whose own lips praise themselves, who sing upon their own fullness of Grace with an unction rather too exaggerated for my taste. I am not about to condemn them. I cannot say I am not about to *censure* them, for I intend to do so, from a deep sense of the necessity that they *should be* censured. These friends assure us that they have reached great heights of Grace and are now in splendid spiritual condition. I should be very glad to know that it is so if it were true. But I am grieved to hear them act as witnesses for themselves, for then I know that their witness is not true. If it *were* so, they would be the *last* men to publish it abroad.

There are Brethren abroad whose eminent graciousness is not very clear to others, but it is very evident to themselves—and equally as vivid is their apprehension of the great inferiority of most of their Brethren. They talk to us, not as men of like passions with ourselves and Brethren of the same stock, but as demigods, thundering out of the clouds—giants discoursing to the little men around them! If it is true that they are so superior, I rejoice! Yes, and *will* rejoice. But my suspicion is that their glorying is not good and that the spirit which they manifest will prove a snare to them. I meet, I say, sometimes with Brothers and Sisters who feel content with their spiritual condition. They do not ascribe their satisfactory character to themselves, but to the Grace of God. But for all that, they feel that they are what they ought to be and what others ought to be but are not.

They see in themselves a great deal that is good, very much that is commendable and a large amount of excellence which they can hold up for the admiration of others. They have reached the “higher life” and are wonderfully fond of telling us so—and explaining the phenomena of their self-satisfied condition. Though Paul was compelled to say, “In me, that is, in my flesh, there dwells no good thing,” their flesh appears to be of a better quality. Whereas he had spiritual conflicts and found that without were fights and within fears, these very superior persons have already trod Satan under their feet and reached a state in which they have little else to do but to divide the spoil.

Now, Brothers and Sisters, whenever we meet with persons who can congratulate themselves upon their personal character, or whenever we get into the state of self-content ourselves, there is an ill savor about the whole concern. I do not know what impression it makes upon you, but whenever I hear a Brother talk about himself, and how full he is of the Spirit of God and all that, I am distressed for him. I think I hear the voice of that stately professor, who said, “God, I thank you that I am not as other men are.” I feel that I would prefer to listen to that other man, who said, “God be merciful to me a sinner,” and went down to his house justified rather than the other.

When I hear a man crow about himself, I think of Peter’s declaration— “Though all men should deny You, yet will not I,” and I hear another cock crow. Self-complacency is the mother of spiritual declension. David said, “My mountain stands firm: I shall never be moved.” But before long the face of God was hidden and he was troubled. In the presence of a professor who is pleased with his own attainments, one remembers that warning text—“Let him that thinks he stands, take heed lest he fall.” Great I! Great I! Wherever you are, you must come down! Great I is always opposed to great Christ. John the Baptist knew the Truth when he said, “He must increase, but I must decrease.” There is no room in this world for God’s Glory and man’s glory. He who is less than nothing magnifies God, but he “who is rich, and increased in goods, and has need of nothing,” dishonors God. And he “is naked and poor and miserable.”

Furthermore, we have observed that the best of men do not talk of their attainments. Their tone is self-depreciation, not self-content. We have known some eminently holy men, who are now in Heaven, and in looking back upon their lives we note that they were never conscious of being what we all thought them to be. Everybody could see their beauty of character except themselves. They lamented their imperfections while we admired the Grace of God in them. I remember a minister of Christ, now with God—I will not mention his name—if I did, it would be as familiar to your ears as household words. It was proposed by some of us, when he left the ministry in his old age, that we should hold a meeting to bid him farewell and testify our esteem for him.

It was my duty to propose the fraternal act, but I hesitated as I saw the blush mantle his cheek and I paused when he rose and besought us never to think of such a thing, for he felt himself to be one of the most unworthy of all the servants of the Lord. Every man of the associated ministers, that day assembled, felt that our venerable friend was by far the superior of us all—and yet his own estimate of himself was lowest of the lowly. He had sacrificed much, but I never heard him speak of his sacrifices. He lived in habitual fellowship with God, but I never heard him declare it, much less glory in it. Shallow streams brawl and babble, but deep waters flow on in silence! Of all the departed saints whom it has been my lot to esteem highly in love for their works’ sake, I do not remember one who dared to praise himself, though I can remember several poor little spiritual babes who did so to their own injury.

If ever true saints speak of what God has done by them, they do it in such a modest way that you might think they were talking of someone 500 miles away, rather than of themselves. They have scrupulously laid all their crowns at the Savior’s feet, not in word only, but in spirit. When I remember these sacred names of the great departed, I feel it hard to have patience with the unspiritual, unholy boastings of personal holiness and high spirituality which are getting common in these days. Drums make much noise, but we know by observation that it is not their fullness which makes the sound.

Again, we have noticed that we, ourselves, in our own holiest moments, do not feel self-complacent. Whenever we get near to God and really enter into fellowship with Him, the sensations we feel are the very reverse of self-congratulation. Job, in this, was the type of every believing man. Till he saw God he spoke up for his innocence and defended himself against the charges of his friends. But when the Lord revealed Himself to him, he said, “My eyes see You, therefore I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes.” We never see the beauty of Christ without, at the same time, perceiving our own deformity. When we neglect prayer and self-examination we grow into mighty vain fellows, but when we live near to God in private devotion and heart-searching, we put off our ornaments from us. In the light of God’s Countenance we perceive our many flaws and imperfections, and instead of saying, “I am clean,” we cry out, “Woe is me, for I am a man of unclean lips!”

Now if this is our own experience, we infer from it that those who think well of themselves must know little of that revealing light which humbles all who dwell in it. My observation of personal character has been somewhat wide and I cannot help bearing my testimony that I am greatly afraid of men who make loud professions of superior sanctity. I have had the misfortune to have known, on one or two occasions, superfine Brethren, who were, in their own ideas, far above the rest of us and almost free from human frailties. I confess to have felt very much humbled by their eminent goodness until I found them out. They talked of complete sanctification, of a faith which never staggered, of an old nature entirely dead until I wondered at them. But I wondered more when I found that all the while they were rotten at the core, were negligent of common duties while boasting of the loftiest spirituality and were even immoral while they condemned others for comparative trifles.

I have now become very suspicious of all who cry up their own wares. I had rather have a humble, timid, fearful, watchful, self-depreciating Christian to be my companion than any of the religious exquisites who crave our admiration. These great-winged eagles who fly so loftily will, I fear, turn out to be unclean birds. The excessive verdure of a super finely flourishing religiousness often covers a horrible bog of hypocrisy. Let me add, once more, that whatever shape self-satisfaction may assume—and it bears a great many—it is at bottom nothing but a shirking of the hardship of Christian soldierhood. The Christian soldier has to fight with sins every day and if he is a man of God and God’s Spirit is in him, he will find he needs all the strength he has, and a great deal more, to maintain his

ground and make progress in the Divine life.

Now, self-contentment is a shirking of the battle, I do not care how it is come by. Some people shirk watchfulness, repentance and holy care by believing that the only sanctification they need is already theirs by imputation. They use the work of the Lord Jesus for them as though it could thrust away the necessity of the Spirit’s work in them. Personal holiness they will not hear of—it is *legal*. If they come across such a text as, “Without holiness no man shall see the Lord,” or, “Be not deceived, God is not mocked, whatever a man sows that shall he also reap,” they straightway force another meaning upon it, or else forget it altogether.

Another class believe that they have perfection in the flesh, while a third attain to the same complacent condition by the notion that they have overcome all their sins by believing that they have done so—as if believing your battles to be won was the same thing as winning them! This, which they call faith, I take the liberty to call a lazy, self-conceited presumption. And though they persuade themselves that their sins are dead, it is certain that their carnal security is vigorous enough and highly probable that the rest of their sins are only keeping out of the way to let their pride have room to develop itself to ruinous proportions. You can reach self-complacency by a great many roads. I have known enthusiasts reach it by sheer intoxication of excitement, while Antinomians come at it by imagining that the Law is abolished and that what is sin in others is not sin in saints.

There are theories which afford an evil peace to the mind by throwing all blame of sin upon *fate*. And others which lower the standard of God’s demands so as to make them reachable by fallen humanity. Some dream that a mere dead faith in Jesus will save them, let them live as they like. And others that they are already as good as need be. Many have fallen into the same condition by another error, for they have said, “Well, we cannot conquer all sin and therefore we need not aim at it. Some of our sins are constitutional and will never be gotten rid of.” Under these evil impressions they sit down and say, “It is well, O Soul, you are in an excellent condition. Sit still and take your ease, there is little more to be done, there is no need to attempt more.”

All this is evil to the last degree. I have used few theological terms, because it does not matter how we get to be self-satisfied, whether by an orthodox or a heterodox mode of reasoning—it is a mischievous thing in any case. The fact is, my Brothers and Sisters, the Lord calls us to this high calling of contending with sin within and without until we die! It is of no use of our mincing the matter—we must fight if we would reign—our sins will have to be contended till our dying day and probably we shall have to fight upon our death-bed. Therefore, every day we are bound to be upon our watchtower against sin around and within us. It is of no use our deluding ourselves with pretty theories which act only as spiritual opium to cause unhealthy dreams.

Sin is a real thing with each one of us and must be daily wrestled with—there is an evil heart of unbelief within us and the devil without us—and we must watch, and pray, and cry mightily, and strive, and struggle, and admit that we have not yet apprehended. If we dream that we are at the goal already, we shall stop short of the prize. The full soul loathes the honeycomb. A man full of self cares for nothing more. Shake off these slothful bands, my Brethren! Be strong. You are as weak as others and as likely to sin. Watch, therefore, and pray lest you enter into temptation.

What is it, at bottom, that makes men content with themselves? It may be, first of all, a forgetfulness of the awful holiness of the Law of God. If the Law of the Ten Commandments is to be read only as its letter runs, I could imagine a man’s judging himself and saying, “I have apprehended.” But when we know that the Law is *spiritual*, how can we be selfcomplacent? My dear Brothers and Sisters, if you think you have reached its perfect height, I ask you to hear these words—“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength, and your neighbor as yourself.”

Can you say, in the sight of a heart-searching God, “I have fulfilled all that”? If you can, I am staggered at you and think you the victim of a strong delusion which leads you to believe a lie! Brethren who can take delight in themselves must have lost sight of the heinousness of sin. The least sin is a desperate evil—an assault upon the Throne of God—an insult to the majesty of Heaven. The simple act of plucking the forbidden fruit cost us Paradise. There is a bottomless pit of sin in every transgression, a Hell in every iniquity. If we keep clear of sins of action and if our tongue is so bridled that we avoid every hasty and unadvised speech, yet do we not know that our *thoughts* and *imaginations*, our looks and longing of heart, have in them an infinity of evil?

If, after having learned that sin can only be washed out by the death of the Son of God, and that even the flames of Hell cannot make atonement for a single sin, a man can then say, “I am content with myself,” it is to be feared that he has made a fatal mistake as to his own character. Is there not a failure, in such cases, to understand the highest standard of Christian living? If we measure ourselves among ourselves, there are many Believers here who might be pretty well satisfied. You are as generous as other Christians are, considering your income. You are as prayerful as most other professors and as earnest in doing good as any of your neighbors. If you are worldly, yet you are not more worldly than most professors, nowadays, and so you judge yourself not to be far below the standard. But what a standard! Let us seek a better!

Brothers, it is a very healthy thing for us who are ministers to read a biography like that of M’Cheyne. Read that through, if you are a minister, and it will burst many of your windbags. You will find yourselves collapse most terribly. Take the life of Brainerd among the Indians, or of Baxter in our own land. Think of the holiness of George Herbert, the devoutness of Fletcher, or the zeal of Whitfield. Where do you find yourself after reading their lives? Might you not peep about to find a hiding place for your insignificance? When we mix with dwarfs we think ourselves giants. But in the presence of giants we become dwarfs. When we think of the saints departed and remember their patience in suffering, their diligence in labor,

their ardor, their self-denial, their humility, their tears, their prayers, their midnight cries, their intercession for the souls of others, their pouring out their hearts before God for the glory of Christ—why, we shrink into less than nothing and find no word of boasting on our tongue!

If we survey the life of the only perfect One, our dear Lord and Master, the sight of His beauty covers our whole countenance with a blush. He is the lily and we are the thorns. He is the sun and we are as the night. He is all good and we are all evil. In His Presence we bow in the dust, we confess our sins and count ourselves unworthy to unloose His shoe laces. It is to be feared that there is springing up in some parts of the Christian Church a deceitful form of self-righteousness which leads even good people to think too highly of themselves. It is a fashionable form of fanaticism, very pleasing to the flesh, very fascinating and very deadly. Many, I fear, are not really living so near to God as they think they are—neither are they as holy as they dream.

It is very easy to frequent Bible readings, conferences and excited public meetings, and to fill one’s self with the gas of self-esteem. A little pious talk with a sort of Christian who always walks on high stilts will soon tempt you to use the stilts yourself. But indeed, dear Brothers and Sisters, you are a poor, unworthy worm and a nobody—and if you get one inch above the ground you get just that inch too high. Remember, you may think yourself to be very strong in a certain direction because you do not happen to be tried on that point. Many of us are exceedingly goodtempered when nobody provokes us. Some are wonderfully patient because they have a sound constitution and have no racking pains to endure. And others are exceedingly generous because they have more money than they need.

A ship’s seaworthiness is never quite certain till she has been out at sea. The grand thing will be to be sound before the living God in the day of trial. I pray every Believer here to get off his high horse and to remember that he is, “naked and poor and miserable” apart from Christ—and only in Jesus Christ is he anything at all! And if he thinks himself to be something when he is nothing, he deceives himself, but does not deceive God.

**II.** In the second place, look at Paul as PLACING THE PAST IN ITS TRUE LIGHT. He says, “Forgetting those things which are behind.” What does he mean? Paul does not mean that he forgot the mercy of God which he had enjoyed. Far from it! Paul does not mean that he forgot the sins which he had committed. Far from it—he would always remember them to humble him. We must follow out the figure which he is using and so read him.

When a man ran in the Grecian games, if he had run half way and passed most of his fellows, and had then turned to look round and to rejoice over the distance which he had already covered, he would have lost the race. Suppose he had commenced singing his own praises and said, “I have come down the hill, along the valley, and up the rising ground on this side. See, there are one, two, three, four, five, six runners far behind me.” While thus praising himself he would lose the race. The only hope for the runner was to forget all that was behind and occupy his entire thoughts with the piece of ground which lay in front! Never mind though you have run so far—you must let the space which lies between you and the goal engross all your thoughts and command all your powers.

It must be so with regard to all the sins which we have overcome. Perhaps at this moment you might honestly say, “I have overcome a very fierce temper,” or, “I have bestirred my naturally indolent spirit.” Thank God for that! Stop long enough to say, “Thank God for that,” but do not pause to congratulate yourselves as though some great thing had been done, for then it may soon be undone. Perhaps the very moment you are rejoicing over your conquered temper it will leap back upon you like a lion from the covert, and you will say, “I thought you were dead and buried, and here you are roaring at me again.” The very easiest way to give resurrection to old corruptions is to erect a trophy over their graves—they will at once lift up their heads and howl out, “We are still alive!”

It is a great thing to overcome any sinful habit, but it is necessary to guard against it, still, for you have not conquered it so long as you congratulate yourself upon the conquest. In the same light we must regard all the Grace we have obtained. I know some dear friends who are mighty in prayer and my soul rejoices to join in their supplications. But I should be sorry, indeed, to hear them praise their own prayers. We love yonder Brother for his generosity, but we hope he will never tell others that he is liberal. Yonder dear friend is very humble, but if he were to boast of it, that would be the end of it. Self-esteem is a moth which eats the garments of virtue. Those flies, those pretty flies of self-praise, must be killed, for if they get into your pot of ointment they will spoil it all.

Forget the past! Thank God who has made you pray so well. Thank God who has made you kind, gentle, or humble. Thank God who has made you give liberally. But forget it all and go forward since there is yet very much land to be possessed! And so with all the work for Jesus which we have done. Some people seem to have very good memories as to what they have performed. They used to serve God wonderfully when they were young! They began early and were full of zeal! They can tell you all about it with much pleasure. In middle life they worked marvels and achieved great wonders. But now they rest on their oars. They are giving other people an opportunity to distinguish themselves! Their own heroic age is over.

Dear Brothers and Sisters, as long as ever you are in this world forget what you have already done and go forward to other service! Living on the past is one of the faults of old Churches. We, for instance, as a Church, may begin to congratulate ourselves upon the great things God has done by us, for we shall be sure to put it in that pretty shape, although we shall probably mean the great things *we* have done ourselves. After praising ourselves thus, we shall gain no further blessing, but shall decline by little and little. The same is true of denominations. What acclamations are heard when allusion is made to what our fathers did! Oh, the name of Carey, Knibb, and Fuller! We Baptists think we have nothing to do now but to go upstairs and go to bed, for we have achieved eternal glory through the names of these good men! And as for our Wesleyan friends, how apt they are to harp upon Wesley, Fletcher, Nelson and other great

men!

Thank God for them! They were grand men! But the right thing is to forget the past and pray for another set of men to carry on the work. We should never be content, but, “On, on, on,” should be our cry! When they asked Napoleon why he continually made wars, he said, “I am the child of war. Conquest has made me what I am and conquest must maintain me.” The Christian Church is the child of *spiritual* war. She only lives as she fights and rides forth conquering and to conquer. God deliver us from the self-congratulatory spirit, however it may come, and make us long and pine after something better!

**III.** And now the third point. Paul, having put the present and past into their right places, goes on to the future, ASPIRING EAGERLY TO MAKE IT GLORIOUS, for he says, “reaching forth unto those things which are before.” Does he not here give us the picture of a runner? He reaches forth. The man, as he runs, throws himself forward, almost out of the perpendicular. His eyes are already at the goal. His hands are far in advance of his feet. His whole body is leaning forward—he runs as though he would project himself to the end of the journey before his legs can carry him there. That is how the Christian should be—always throwing himself forward after something more than he has yet reached—not satisfied with the rate at which he advances. His soul always going at 20 times the pace of the flesh.

John Bunyan gives us a little parable of the man on horseback. He is bid by his master to ride in a hurry to fetch the physician. But the horse is a sorry jade. “Well,” says Bunyan, “if his master sees that the man on the horse’s back is whipping and spurring, and pulling the bridle and struggling with all his might, he judges that the man would go if he could.” That is how the Christian should always be, not only as devout, earnest and useful as he can be, but panting to be a great deal more so— spurring this old flesh and striving against this laggard spirit—if perhaps he can do more. Brothers and Sisters, we ought to be reaching forward to be like Jesus! Never may we say, “I am like So-and-So, and that is enough.” Am I like Jesus? Perfectly like Jesus? If not—away, away, away from everything I am or have been! I cannot rest until I am like my Lord.

The aim of the Christian is to be *perfect*—if he seeks to be anything less than perfect, he aims at an object lower than that which God has placed before him. To master every sin and to have and possess and exhibit every virtue—this is the Christian’s ambition. He who would be a great artist must not follow low models. The artist must have a perfect model to copy—if he does not reach to it, he will reach far further than if he had an inferior model to work by. When a man once realizes his own ideal, it is all over with him. A great painter once had finished a picture and he said to his wife with tears in his eyes, “It is all over with me. I shall never paint again, I am a ruined man.” She enquired, “Why?” “Because,” he said, “that painting contents and satisfies me. It realizes my idea of what painting ought to be and therefore I am sure my power is gone, for that power lies in having ideals which I cannot reach, something yet beyond me which I am striving after.”

May none of us ever say, “I have reached my ideal, now I am what I ought to be, there is nothing beyond me.” Perfection, Brothers and Sisters, absolute perfection—may God help us to strive after it! That is the model, “Be you perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect.” “Shall we ever reach it?” asks one. Thousands and millions have reached it— there they are before the Throne of God—their robes are washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb! And we shall possess the same, only let us be struggling after it by God’s good help. Let every Believer be striving that in the details of common life, in every thought, in every word, in every action, he may glorify God. This ought to be our objective—if we do not reach it, it is that which we must press for—that from morning light to evening shade we shall live unto God. Whether we eat or drink, or whatever we do, we should do all in the name of the Lord Jesus.

This is what we are to seek after, praying always in the Holy Spirit to be sanctified wholly, spirit, soul and body. “It is a wonderfully high standard,” says one. Would you like me to lower it, Brother? I should be very sorry to have it lowered for myself. If the highest degree of holiness were denied to any one of us, it would be a heavy calamity. Is it not the joy of a Christian to be perfectly like his Lord? Who would wish to stop short of it? To be obliged to live under the power of even the least sin forever would be a horrible thing! No, we never can be content short of perfection! We will reach forward towards that which is before.

**IV.** And now the Apostle is our model, in the fourth place, because he PUTS FORTH ALL HIS EXERTIONS TO REACH THAT WHICH HE DESIRES. He says, “This one thing I do,” as if he had given up all else and addicted himself to one sole object—to aim to be like Jesus Christ! There were many other things Paul might have attempted, but he says, “this one thing I do.” Probably Paul was a poor speaker—why did he not try to make himself a rhetorician? No. He came not with excellency of speech. But you tell me Paul was busy with his tent making. I know he was—what with tent-making, preaching, visiting and watching night and day, he had more than enough to do! But all these were a part of his pursuit of the one thing—he was laboring to serve his Master perfectly and to render himself up as a whole burnt offering unto God.

I invite every soul that has been saved by the precious blood of Christ to gather up all its strength for this one thing—to cultivate a passion for Divine Grace and an intense longing after holiness. Ah, if we could but serve God as God should be served, and be such manner of people as we ought to be in all holy conversation and godliness, we should see a new era in the Church. The greatest need of the Church at this day is holiness. Why did Paul pursue holiness with such concentrated purpose? Because he felt God had called him to it. He aimed at the prize of his high calling. God had elected Paul to be a champion against sin. Selected to be Jehovah’s champion, he felt that he must play the man.

Moreover, it was “God in Christ Jesus” who was the choice, and as the

Apostle looked up and saw the mild face of the Redeemer and marked the crown of thorns of the King of Sorrows, he felt he must overcome sin. He could not let a single evil live within him and, though he had not yet apprehended, he felt he must press forward till he had apprehended that to which God in Christ had called him. Moreover, the Apostle saw his crown, the crown of life that fades not away, hanging bright before his eyes. “What,” said he, “shall tempt me from that path of which yon crown is the end? Let the golden apples be thrown in my way, I cannot even look at them, nor stay to spurn them with my feet. Let the sirens sing on either side and seek to charm me with their evil beauty to leave the holy road, but I must not, and I will not. Heaven! Heaven! Heaven! Is not this enough to make a man dash forward in the road there? The end is glorious, what if the running is laborious? When there is such a prize to be had, who will grudge a struggle?”

Paul pressed forward towards the mark for the prize of his high calling in Christ Jesus. He felt he was a saved man and he meant, through the same Grace, to be a *holy* man. He longed to grasp the crown and hear the, “Well done, good and faithful servant,” which his Master would award him at the end of his course. Brothers and Sisters, I wish I could stir myself and stir you to a passionate longing after a gracious, consistent, godly life! Yes, for an eminently, solidly, thoroughly devoted and consecrated life. You will grieve the Spirit if you walk inconsistently. You will dishonor the Lord that bought you. You will weaken the Church. You will bring shame upon yourself. Even though you are “saved so as by fire,” it will be an evil and a bitter thing to have in any measure departed from God. But to be always going onward, to be never self-satisfied, to be always laboring to be better Christians, to be aiming at the rarest sanctity—this shall be your honor, the Church’s comfort and the glory of God!

May the Lord help you to perfect holiness in the fear of God. Amen. **PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Philippians 3.**  
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**÷Php 3.18**

FALSE PROFESSORS SOLEMNLY WARNED  
NO. 102

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, AUGUST 24, 1856, *BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT EXETER HALL, STRAND.**

***“For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the Cross of Christ: whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.”***

Php 3:18-19***.***

PAUL was the very model of what a Christian minister should be. He was a *watchful* shepherd over the flock. He did not simply preach to them and consider that he had done all his duty when he had delivered his message. His eyes were always upon the churches, marking their spiritual welfare, their growth in Divine Grace, or their declension in godliness. He was the unsleeping guardian of their spiritual welfare. When he was called away to other lands to proclaim the everlasting Gospel, he always seems to have kept an eye upon those Christian colonies which he had founded in the midst of heathen darkness. While lighting other lamps with the torch of Truth, he did not fail to trim the lamps already burning. Here you observe he was not indifferent to the character of the little Church at Philippi, for he speaks to them and warns them.

Note, too, that the Apostle was a very *honest* pastor—when he marked anything amiss in his people, he did not blush to tell them. He was not like your modern minister, whose pride is that he never was personal in his life and who thus glories in his shame. For if he were honest, *he would be personal*, for he would deal out the Truth of God without deceitfulness and would reprove men sharply, that they might be sound in the faith. “I tell you,” says Paul, “because it concerns you.” Paul was very honest—he did not flinch from telling the whole Truth and telling it often, too, though some might think that once from the lip of Paul would be of more effect than a hundred times from anyone else. “I have told you often,” says he, “and I tell you yet again that there are some who are the enemies of the Cross of Christ.”

And while faithful, you will notice that the Apostle was, as every true minister should be, extremely *affectionate*. He could not bear to think that any of the members of the Churches under his care should swerve from the Truth. He wept while he denounced them—he knew not how to wield the thunderbolt with tearless eyes. He did not know how to pronounce the threat of God with a dry and husky voice. No—while he spoke terrible things, the tears were in his eyes and when he reproved sharply, his heart beat so fast with love that those who heard him denounce so solemnly were yet convinced that his harshest words were dictated by affection! “I have told you often, and I tell you, even weeping, that they are the enemies of the Cross of Christ.”

Beloved, I have a message to deliver tonight which is to the same effect as that of the Apostle Paul and I am afraid it is as necessary, now, as it was in his time. There are many now among us, as there were then, who walk in such a manner that we recognize them at once as the “enemies of the Cross of Christ.” I fear that the evil, instead of having decreased, has multiplied and grown in danger! We have more profession, now, than there was in the age of Paul and, consequently, we have more hypocrisy. It is a crying sin with our Churches that there are many in their midst who never ought to be there—who would be fit members of an ale-house or any favorite resort of the merry and frivolous, but who never ought to sip the sacramental wine or eat the holy bread, the emblems of the sufferings of our Lord! We have—O Paul, how would you have said it, tonight, and how would you have wept while saying it!—we have many in our midst who are the “enemies of the Cross of Christ,” because “their god is their belly, they mind earthly things,” and their life is not consistent with the great things of God!

I shall endeavor, for a short time, tonight, to tell you the reason of the Apostle’s extraordinary sorrow. I never read that the Apostle wept when he was persecuted. Though they plowed his back with furrows, I believe that never was a tear seen to gush from his eyes while the soldiers scourged him! Though he was cast into prison, we read of his singing, never of his groaning! I do not believe he ever wept on account of any sufferings or dangers to which he, *himself,* was exposed for Christ’s sake. I call this an extraordinary sorrow because the man who wept was no soft piece of sentiment and seldom shed a tear even under grievous trials! He wept for three things—he wept on account of *their guilt—*on account of *the ill effects of their conduct* and on account of *their doom*.

**I.**First, Paul wept on account of the GUILT of those persons who, having a name to live, were dead. While uniting themselves with a Christian Church, they were not walking as they should among men and before God. Notice the sin with which he charges them. He says, “Their god was their belly.” By this I understand that *they were sensual persons*. There were those in the early Church who, after they sat at God’s Table, would go away and sit at the feasts of the heathen and there indulge in gluttony and drunkenness. Others indulged in lusts of the flesh, enjoying those pleasures (so miscalled) which, afterwards, bring unutterable pain even to the body, itself, and are disgraceful to men—much more to professors of religion! Their god was their belly. They cared more about the dress of their body than the dress of their soul. They regarded more the food of the outward carcass than the life of the inner man. Ah, my Hearers—are there not many everywhere in our churches who still bow before their belly-god and make themselves their own idols? Is it not notorious, in almost every society, that professing men can pamper themselves as much as others?—I mean not all, but some. Yes, I have heard of drunken professors. Not men who positively reel through the street, who are drunk in midday, or intoxicated before their fellow men, but men who go to the very verge of drunkenness in their social parties. Men who take so much that while it would be an insult to their respectability to call them intoxicated, it would equally be an insult to the truth to call them sober! Have we not some men in our Churches (it is idle to deny it) who are as fond of the excesses of the table and of the good things of this life as any other class of men? Have we not persons who spend a very fortune upon the dress of their bodies, adorning themselves far more than they adorn the Doctrine of their Savior—men whose perpetual business it is to take good care of their bodies, against whom flesh and blood never had any cause to complain—for they not only serve the flesh, but make a god of it? Ah, Sirs, the Church is not pure! The Church is not perfect—we have scabbed sheep in the flock. In our own little communion, now and then, we find them out and then comes the dread sentence of excommunication, by which they are cut off from our fellowship. But there are many of whom we are not aware, who creep like snakes along the grass and are not discovered till they inflict a grievous wound upon religion and do damage to our great and glorious cause. Brothers and Sisters, there are some in the Church (both Established and Dissenting)—let us say it with the deepest sorrow—“whose god is their belly.”

Another of their sins was that they *did mind earthly things*. Beloved, the last sentence may not have touched your consciences, but this is a very sweeping assertion! I am afraid that a very large proportion of Christ’s Church are verily guilty here. It is an anomaly, but it is a fact that we hear of ambitious Christians. Although Christ has told us that he who would be exalted, must humble himself, there are among the professed followers of the humble Man of Galilee men who strive to gain the topmost round of the ladder of this world! Their aim is not to magnify Christ, but to magnify themselves at any cost. It had been thought at one time that a Christian would be a holy, a humble and contented man— but it is not so nowadays! We have (oh, shame on you Churches!) mere professors—men who are as worldly as the worldliest and have no more of Christ’s Holy Spirit in them than the most carnal who never made a profession of the Truth of God. Again, it is a paradox, but it stares us in the face every day, that we have covetous Christians. It is an inconsistency. We might as well talk of unholy seraphim, of perfect beings subject to sin, as of covetous Christians! Yet there are such men—whose purse strings were never intended to slide, at least at the cry of the poor—who call it*prudence*to amass wealth and never use it in any degree in the cause of Christ. If you want men that are hard in business, that are grasping after wealth, that seize upon the poor debtor and suck the last particle of his blood—if you want the men who are grasping and grinding, that will skin the flint and take away the very life from the orphan, you must come—I blush to say it, but it is a solemn truth—you must sometimes come to our Churches to find them! Some such there are among the highest of her officers, who “mind earthly things” and have none of that devotion to Christ which is the mark of pure godliness! These evils are *not* the fruits of religion—they are the diseases of mere profession! I rejoice that the remnant of the elect are kept pure from these, but the “mixed multitude” are sadly possessed therewith.

Another character which the Apostle gives of these men is that they *gloried in their shame*. A professing sinner generally glories in his shame more than anyone else. In fact, he miscalls it. He labels the devil’s poisons with the names of Christ’s medicines! Things that he would reckon vices in any other man, are virtues with himself. If he could see in another man the same action which he has just performed—if another could be the mirror of himself—oh, how he would thunder at him! He is the very first man to notice a little inconsistency. He is the very strictest of Sabbatarians. He is the most upright of thieves. He is the most tremendously generous of misers. He is the most marvelously holy of profane men. While he can indulge in his favorite sin, he is forever putting up his glass to his eye to magnify the faults of others. *He*may do as he pleases, *he*may sin with impunity—and if his minister should hint to him that his conduct is inconsistent, he will make a storm in the Church and say the minister was personal and insulted him! Reproof is thrown away upon him. Is he not a member of the Church? Has he not been so for years? Who shall dare to say that he is unholy? O Sirs, there are some of your members of Churches who will one day be in Hell! We have some united with our churches who have passed through Baptism and sit at our sacramental tables, who, while they have a name to live, are dead as corpses in their graves as to anything spiritual! It is an easy thing to palm yourself off for a godly man, nowadays. There is little self-denial, little mortification of the flesh, little love to Christ. Oh, no. Learn a few religious hymns—get a few phrases and you will deceive the very elect! Enter into the Church, be called respectable and if you cannot make all believe you, you will yet smooth your path to destruction by quieting an uneasy conscience! I am saying harsh things, but I am saying true things. My blood sometimes boils when I meet with men whom I would not acknowledge, whom I would not sit with anywhere and yet, who call me, “Brother.” They can live in sin and yet call a Christian, “Brother.” God forgive them! We can feel no brotherhood with them—nor do we wish to do so until their lives are changed and their conduct is made more consistent!

You see, then, in the Apostle’s days there were some who were a disgrace to godliness and the Apostle wept over them because he knew their guilt. Why, it is guilt enough for a man to make a god of his belly without being a professor—but how much worse for a man who knows better? Worse, even, for one who even sets up to teach other people, still to go on and sin against God and against his conscience by making a solemn profession, which is found, in his case, to be a lie. Oh, how dreadful is such a man’s guilt! For him to stand up and say—

***“ ‘Tis done; the great transaction’s done.***

***I am th e Lord’s and He is mine,”***and yet to go and sin like others—to use the same conversation, to practice the same chicanery, to walk in as ungodly a manner as those who have never named the name of Christ—ah, what guilt is here! It is enough to make us weep if we have been guilty ourselves! Yes, to weep tears of blood that we should so have sinned against God.

**II.** But the Apostle did not so much weep for them as for THE MISCHIEF THEY WERE DOING, for he says, emphatically, that they are, “The enemies of the Cross of Christ.” “*The* enemies.” As much as to say, the infidel is *an* enemy. The curser, the swearer, the profane man, is an enemy. Herod, yonder, the persecutor, is an enemy—but these men are the chief soldiers—the lifeguards in Satan’s army. “*The* enemies of the Cross of Christ” are Pharisaic professors, bright with the whitewash of outside godliness, while they are rotten within. Oh, methinks there is nothing that should grieve a Christian more than to know that Christ has been wounded in the house of His friends.

See, there comes my Savior with bleeding hands and feet. O my Jesus, my Jesus, who shed that blood? Where did You get that wound? Why do You look so sad? He replies, “I have been wounded, but guess where I received the blow?” Why, Lord, surely You were wounded in the gin palace. You were wounded where sinners meet, in the seat of the scornful. You were wounded in the infidel hall. “No, I was not,” says Christ, “I was wounded in the house of My friends. These scars were made by those who sat at My table and bore My name and talked My language. *They* pierced Me and crucified Me afresh and put Me to an open shame.”

Far worst of sinners, they that pierce Christ thus, while professing to be friends. Caesar wept not until Brutus stabbed him. Then it was that he was overcome and exclaimed, “*Et tu, Brute*?” And you, “Have *you* stabbed me?” So, my Hearers, might Christ say to some of you. “What? You and you and you, Professors, have you stabbed Me?” Well might our Savior muffle up His face in grief, or rather bind it in clouds of wrath and drive the wretch away that has so injured His cause.

If I must be defeated in battle, let me be defeated by my enemies, but let me not be betrayed by my friends. If I must yield the citadel which I am willing to defend even to the death, then let me yield it and let my foes walk over my body. But oh, let not my friends betray me. Let not the warrior who stands by my side open the gate and admit the enemy. That were enough to break one’s heart twice—once for the defeat and the second time at the thought of treachery.

When a small band of Protestants were striving for their liberties in Switzerland, they bravely defended a pass against an immense host. Though their dearest friends were slain and they themselves were weary and ready to drop with fatigue, they stood firm in the defense of the cause they had espoused. On a sudden, however, a cry was heard—a dread and terrible shriek. The enemy was winding up a steep acclivity and when the commander turned his eye to see, O how his brow gathered with storm! He ground his teeth and stamped his foot, for he knew that some coward Protestant had led the blood-thirsty foe up the goat track to slay his friends. Then turning to his friends, he said, “On!” and like a lion on his prey, they rushed upon their enemies—ready now to die—for a friend had betrayed them.

So feels the bold-hearted Christian, when he sees his fellow member betraying Christ, when he beholds the citadel of Christianity given up to its foes by those who pretended to be its friends. Beloved, I would rather have a thousand devils out of the Church, than have one in it. I do not care about all the adversaries outside. Our greatest cause of fear is from the crafty “wolves in sheep’s clothing” that devour the flock. It is against such that we would denounce in holy wrath the solemn sentence of Divine indignation and for such we would shed our bitterest tears of sorrow. They are “the enemies of the Cross of Christ.”

Now, for a moment, let me show you how it is that the wicked professor is the greatest enemy to Christ’s Church. In the first place, *he grieves the Church more than anyone else*. If any man in the street were to pelt me with mud, I believe I should thank him for the honor if I knew him to be a bad character and knew that he hated me for righteousness sake. But if one who called himself a Christian should injure the cause with the filthiness of his own licentious behavior—ah, that were more injurious then the stakes of Smithfield, or the racks of the Tower. The deepest sighs the Christian has ever heaved have been fetched from him by carnal professors. I would not weep a tear if every man should curse me who was a hater of Christ. But when the professor forsakes Christ and betrays His cause—ah, that indeed is grievous—and who is he that can keep back the tear on account of so vile a deed?   
Again—*nothing divides the Church more*. I have seen many divisions in journeying through the country and I believe almost every division may be traced to a deficiency of piety on the part of some of the members. We should be more one, if it were not for cants that creep into our midst. We should be more loving to each other, more tender-hearted, more kind, but that these men, so deceptive, coming into our midst, render us suspicious. Moreover, they themselves find fault with those who walk worthily in order to hide their own faults against God and against justice. The greatest sorrows of the Church have been brought upon her, not by the arrows shot by her foes, not by the discharge of the artillery of Hell— but by fires lit in her own midst by those who have crept into her in the guise of good men and true but who were spies in the camp and traitors to the cause.   
Yet again—*nothing has ever hurt poor sinners more than this*. Many sinners coming to Christ would get relief far more easily and find peace far more quickly if it were not for the ill lives of false professors. Now let me tell you a story, which I remember telling once before—it is a very solemn one. I hope to feel its power myself and I pray that all of you may do the same. A young minister had been preaching in a country village and the sermon apparently took deep effect on the minds of the hearers in the congregation. There was a young man who felt acutely the Truth of the solemn words to which the preacher had given utterance. He sought the preacher after the service and walked home with him. On the road, the minister talked of every subject except the one that had occupied his attention in the pulpit. The poor soul was under great distress and he asked the minister a question or two, but they were put off very coolly, as if the matter was of no great importance.   
Arriving at the house, several friends were gathered together and the preacher commenced very freely to crack jokes, to utter his funny expressions and to set the company in a roar of laughter. That, perhaps, might not have been so bad, had he not gone even farther and uttered words which were utterly false and verged upon the licentious. The young man suddenly rose from the table—and though he had wept under the sermon and had been under the deepest apparent conviction, he rose up and went outside the door. Stamping his foot, he said, “Religion is a lie! From this moment I abjure God, I abjure Christ and if I am damned I will be damned, but I will lay the charge at that man’s door, for he preached just now and made me weep, but now see what he is! He is a liar and I will never hear him again.”   
He carried out his threat. And some time afterwards, as he lay dying, he sent word to the minister that he wanted to see him. The minister had removed to a distant part but had been brought there by Providence, I believe purposely, to chasten him for the great sin he had committed. The minister stepped into the room with a Bible in his hand to do as he was accustomed—to read a chapter and to pray with the poor man. Turning his eyes on him, the man said, “Sir, I remember hearing you preach once.” “Blessed be God,” said the minister, “I thank God for it,” thinking, no doubt, that he was a convert and rejoicing over him.   
“Stop,” said the man, “I do not know that there is much reason for thanking God, at any rate, on my part. Sir, do you remember preaching from such-and-such a text on such-and-such an evening?” “Yes, I do.” “I trembled then, Sir, I shook from head to foot. I left with the intention of bending the knee in prayer and seeking God in Christ, but do you remember going to such-and-such a house and what you said there!” “No,” said the minister, “I cannot.” “Well, then, I can tell you and mark you—through what you said that night my soul is damned and as true as I am a living man I will meet you at God’s bar and lay it to your charge.” The man then shut his eyes and died. I think you can scarcely imagine what must have been the feeling of that preacher as he retired from the bedside. He must carry with him always that horrid, that terrible incubus, that there was a soul in Hell who laid his blood to his charge.   
I am afraid there are some in the ranks of the Church who have much guilt at their doors on this account. Many a young man has been driven from a solemn consideration of the Truth by the harsh and censorious remarks of Scribes and Pharisees. Many a careful seeker has been prejudiced against sound doctrine by the evil lives of its professors. Ah, you Scribes and Pharisees, you enter not in yourselves and them that would enter in you hinder. You take the key of knowledge, lock up the door by your inconsistencies and drive men away by your unholy living.   
Again—they are “the enemies of the Cross of Christ,” because *they give the devil more theme for laughter* and the enemy more cause for joy, than any other class of Christians. I do not care what all the infidel lecturers in the world like to say. They are very clever fellows, no doubt, and good they have to be to prove an absurdity and “make the worse appear the better reason.” But we care little what they say. They may say what they like against us that is false, but it is when they can say anything that is true about us that we do not like it. It is when they can find a real inconsistency in us and then bring it to our charge, that they have got stuff to make lectures of.   
If a man is an upright Christian, he never need fear what others say of him. They will get but little fun out of him if he leads a holy, blameless life. But let him be sometimes godly and at other times ungodly—then he may grieve—for he has given the enemy cause to blaspheme by his unholy living. The devil gets much advantage over the Church by the inconsistency of professors. It is when Satan makes hypocrites that he brings the great battering ram against the wall. “Your lives are not consistent”—ah, that is the greatest battering ram that Satan can use against the cause of Christ. Be particular, my dear Friends, be very particular that you do not dishonor the cause you profess to love by living in sin and walking in iniquity.   
And let me say a word to those of you who, like myself, are strong Calvinists. No class of persons are more maligned than we. It is commonly said that our doctrine is licentious. We are called Antinomians. We are cried down as *hypers.* We are reckoned the scum of Creation. Scarcely a minister looks on us or speaks favorably of us because we hold strong views upon the Divine Sovereignty of God and His Divine electing and special love towards His own people. In many towns the legal ministers will tell you that there is a nasty nest of people there, who they say are Antinomians—such a strange set of creatures. Very likely, if a good minister enters the pulpit, when he has done his sermon, up comes some man and grasps his hand and says, “Ah, Brother, I am glad to see you down here. Sixteen ounces to the pound today—our minister gives us nothing but milk and water.” “Where do you go?” he asks. “Oh, I attend a little room where we labor to exalt free grace alone.” “Ah, then you belong to that nasty set of Antinomians our minister was telling us of just now.”   
Then you begin to talk with him and you find that if he is an Antinomian you should very much like to be one yourself. Very possibly he is one of the most spiritual men in the village. He knows so much of God that he really cannot sit down under a legal ministry. He understands so much of free grace that he is obliged to turn out or else he would be starved to death. It is common to cry down those who love God, or rather, who not only love God, but love all that God has said and who hold the Truth firmly. Let us then, not as Christians only, but as being a peculiar class of Christians, take care that we give no handle to the enemy but that our lives are so consistent that we do nothing to disgrace that cause which is dear to us as our lives and which we hope to maintain faithfully unto death.   
**III.** Lastly, Paul wept, BECAUSE HE KNEW THEIR DOOM. “Their end is destruction.” Mark—the end of a professing man who has been a hypocrite will be *emphatically destruction*. If there are chains in Hell more heavy than others—if there are dungeons in Hell more dark than others—if there are racks that shall more fearfully torment the frame—if there are fires that shall more tremendously scorch the body—if there are pangs that shall more effectually twist the soul in agonies, *PROFESSING Christians* must have them if they are found rotten at last. I had rather die a profligate than die a lying professor. I think I had rather die the worse sweeping of the street than die a hypocrite. Oh, to have had a name to live and yet to have proved insincere!   
The higher the soar the greater the fall. This man has soared high, how low must he tumble when he finds himself mistaken! He who thought to put to his mouth the nectared cup of Heaven, finds when he quaffs the bowl that it is the very draught of Hell. He who hoped to enter through the gates into the city finds the gates shut and he himself bid to depart as an unknown stranger. Oh, how terrible is that sentence, “Depart from Me, I never knew you!” I think I had rather hear it said to me, “Depart accursed, among the rest of the wicked,” than to be singled out and to have it said, after exclaiming, “Lord, Lord,” “Depart from Me. I know you not. Though you ate and drank in My courts, though you came to My sanctuary you are a stranger to Me and I am a stranger to you.” Such a doom, more horrible than Hell, more direful than fate, more desperate than despair, must be the inevitable lot of those “whose God is their belly,” who have “gloried in their shame,” and “minded earthly things.”   
Now I dare say most of you will say, “Well, he has stirred the churches up tonight. If he has not spoken earnestly, he has spoken harshly, at any rate.” “Ah,” says one, “I dare say it is very true. They are all a set of cants and hypocrites. I always thought so. I shall not go among them, none of them are genuine.” Stop a bit, my Friend, I did not say they were *all* so. I should be very wicked if I did. The very fact that there are hypocrites proves that all are not so. “How is that?” you say. Do you think there would be any bad bank notes in the world if there were no good ones? Do you think anyone would try and circulate bad sovereigns if there were no really good ones? No, I think not. It is the good bank note that makes the bad one, by prompting the wicked man to imitate it and produce a forgery. It is the very fact that there is gold in the world that makes another try to imitate the metal and so to cheat his neighbor.   
If there were no true Christians, there would be no hypocrites. It is the excellence of the Christian character which makes men seek after it and because they have not the real heart of oak, they try to grain their lives to look like it. Because they have not the real solid metal, they try to gild themselves to imitate it. You must have a few brains left and those are enough to tell you that if there are hypocrites, there must be some who are genuine. “Ah,” says another, “quite right. There are many genuine ones and I can tell you, whatever you may think, I am genuine enough. I never had a doubt or fear. I know I was chosen of God. And though I do not exactly live as I could wish, I know if I do not go to Heaven, very few will ever have a chance. Why, Sir, I have been a deacon the last ten years and a member twenty. And I am not to be shaken by anything you say. As for my neighbor there, who sits near me, I do not think he ought to be so sure. But I have never had a doubt for thirty years.”  
Oh my dear Friend, can you excuse me? *I will doubt for you*. If you have no doubt yourself, I begin to doubt. If you are quite so sure, I really must suspect you. For I have noticed that true Christians are the most suspicious in the world—they are always afraid of themselves. I never met with a truly good man but he always felt he was not good enough. And as you are so particularly good, you must excuse me if I cannot quite endorse your security. You may be very good but if you will take a trifle of my advice, I recommend you to “examine yourselves, whether you be in the faith,” lest, being puffed up by your carnal fleshly mind, you fall into the snare of the Wicked One. “Not too sure,” is a very good motto for the Christian. “Make your calling and election sure” if you like—but do not make your opinion of yourself so sure.   
Take care of presumption. Many a good man in his own esteem has been a very devil in God’s eyes. Many a pious soul in the esteem of the Church has been nothing but rottenness in the esteem of God. Let us then try ourselves. Let us say, “Search us, O God and try our hearts; see if there is any wicked way in us and lead us in the way everlasting.” If you shall be sent home with such a thought, I shall bless God that the sermon was not altogether in vain.   
But there are some here who say that it does not matter whether they are in Christ or not. They intend to go on trifling still, despising God and laughing at His name. Mark this, Sinner—the cry that does for one day won’t do forever. And though you talk of religion now as if it were a mere trifle, mark you men—you will want it by-and-bye. You are on board ship and you laugh at the life-boat, because there is no storm. You will be glad enough to leap into it if you are able when the storm shall come. Now you say Christ is nothing because you do not want Him. But when the storm of vengeance comes and death lays hold upon you, mark me—you will howl after Christ. Though you will not pray for Him now, you will shriek after Him then. Though you will not call for Him now, your heart will burst for Him then. Though you will not even desire Him now, “Turn you, turn you. Why will you die, O house of Israel.” The Lord bring you to Himself and make you His true and genuine children, that you may not know destruction, but that you may be saved now and saved forever! Amen.

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**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.** Sermon #2553 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

THE ENEMIES OF THE CROSS OF CHRIST NO. 2553

A SERMON  
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S-DAY, JANUARY 23, 1898.

***DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORD’S-DAY EVENING, OCTOBER. 26 1884.**

***“For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the Cross of Christ: whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose***

***glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.*** Php 3:18-19***.***

IT would seem, dear Friends, that there have been trials and difficulties connected with the Church of Christ in every age. We dream that our temptations are worse than those of our fathers, but they are not. We fancy that the Church is subject to worse diseases than in her early days, but it is not so. Paul had to complain that even in the Church at Philippi, which was about as good as any, and in some respects much better than most of the Churches, there were false teachers, and falseliving men, who professed to be followers of Christ, but who were, in fact, the worst enemies of the Cross of Christ. One thing I wish and that is that, instead of brooding over our present difficulties, we would take them to the Lord in prayer and faith—and so triumph over them. But, at the same time, I wish that we had the same tenderness of heart for the Glory of God which was felt by the Apostle. That we were as sensitive as he was of anything that reflected upon the Divine honor, as jealous as he was, even to tears, lest any who professed to be the friends of the Cross should, by their lives, turn out to be its worst enemies. Oh, for more of Paul’s zeal for God as the great motive power of our life, so that we might feel that it mattered little how anything else went so long as the Grace of Christ triumphed, men were saved and God’s name was glorified! The Lord bring us to that state of mind! We shall then feel the sins of today even more acutely than we do at present—and we shall the more confidently trust in God as we seek to overcome them.

I am not going to confine the text to its immediate connection with the church at Philippi, but I shall take it on a somewhat larger scale. Is it not startling to read of, “enemies of the Cross of Christ”? One would naturally have supposed that a remedy so wondrous and so effectual as the Atonement would have been gladly received by souls sick unto death with sin. It might have been predicted by any man who judged, concerning the future, that no sooner would the Son of God descend from Heaven to earth—and die to put away human sin—than men would come flocking by millions to adore Him—and would feel as if they could not give Him a sufficiently hearty welcome! Yes, but the fact that there ever was a Cross shows how depraved is the human heart, how great the Fall that needed such a Sacrifice, how deep the depravity that committed such a murder as that of Calvary! Man, you are beside yourself, indeed, and gone back out of the way and, therefore, it is not far-fetched that you should be an enemy of the Cross of Christ! Yet it seems very startling to me as I picture the scene—a bleeding Christ and enemies gathered about the Cross whereon He dies for them! Then, a weeping Apostle warning the Church of God—the messenger of Christ in tears as he delivers the warning—yet Christ’s enemies still unmoved, perhaps pretending to be His friends, but remaining hostile to Him all the while. It is a strange conglomerate of amazing things—a Savior full of love and man full of hate—a preacher with a heart so broken that he rather weeps than preaches, and a congregation with hearts so hard that, though he has told them the Truth of God again and again, they do not regard it!

Let that striking mixture of opposing elements stand before you, now, while I begin to expound the text.  
**I.**First, let us enquire, WHAT IS THIS CROSS OF CHRIST to which some men are sadly said to be enemies?  
Of course, it *is not the material cross.* It is not anything made in the shape of the cross. There are some who can fall down and adore a cross of wood, or stone, or gold, but I cannot conceive of a greater wounding of the heart of Christ than to pay reverence to anything in the shape of a cross, or to bow before a crucifix! I think the Savior must say, “What? What? Am I the Son of God and do they make even *Me* into an idol? I who have died to redeem men from their idolatries, am I, Myself, taken and carved, and chiseled, and molten, and set up as an image to be worshipped by the sons of men?” When God says, “You shall not make unto you any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in Heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: you shall not bow down yourself to them, nor serve them,” it is a strange fantasy of human guilt that men should say, “We will even take the image of the Son of God, or some ghastly counterfeit that purports to be His image, and will bow down and worship it, as if to make the Christ of God an accomplice in an act of rebellion against the commandment of the holy Law.” No, it is not the material cross to which Paul alludes—we have nothing to do with those outward symbols! We might have used them much more, but they have been so perverted to idolatry that some of us almost shudder at the very sight of them!  
What is the Cross of Christ, then? Well, first, it is that doctrine which is the center of His holy religion, *the Doctrine of the Atonement.* By the Cross we mean that the Son of God did actually and literally die, nailed to a Roman gibbet as a malefactor—numbered with the transgressors— doing this because He had, of His own voluntary will, taken upon Himself the sin of His people and, being found with that sin upon Him, He must expiate it by His death. He must lay down His life, “the Just for the unjust, to bring us to God.” As it is written, “He has made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.” Now, they who oppose this doctrine are “the enemies of the Cross of Christ, and they who accept this Atonement and repose their entire confidence upon it, are the friends of the Cross of Christ. They think of that Sacrifice on Calvary with reverence linked with love. They never know how sufficiently to speak of it with adoring gratitude that ever such a Victim should have been presented—the Father, Himself, giving Him— and that such a Victim should ever have been slain, the Lord resigning His life for us! Oh, it is amazing and more than amazing—a miracle that carries every other miracle within itself—greater and more Divine than all the deeds whereof poets have sung, even though they are the deeds of God, Himself, for in this He has excelled Himself—  
***“God, in the Person of His Son,  
Has all His mightiest works outdone.”***  
They are “the enemies of the Cross of Christ” who try to belittle this great Atonement and to make it out to be a very small affair, next to nothing in importance. As I have often said of some preachers, they teach that Jesus Christ did something or other, which in some way or other, is in some measure or other connected with our salvation. We do not teach any such hazy ideas as that! We say that He laid down His life for the sheep and that for those sheep He has made a perfect, complete and effectual Redemption by which He has delivered them from the wrath to come. Blessed is he who rejoices in that Doctrine of the Cross of Christ!  
But by the Cross is sometimes meant, in Scripture, *the Gospel which is the outflow of that central doctrine.*And what is that Gospel? Why, that, “God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.” And that, “He has committed unto us the word of reconciliation,” which word of reconciliation is this, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved.” “He that believes on the Son has everlasting life.” This is the Gospel which we proclaim—“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” As we preach this Gospel to the sons of men, we hear Christ crying to them through us, “Come unto Me, all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” “Come now, and let us reason together, says the Lord: though your sins are as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool.” It is a promise of free, instantaneous, perfect, irreversible, everlasting pardon to all who will believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, for He is—mark this word—“the Author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him.”  
Other salvation there is none than that which lies in His hands, but He has opened His hands upon the Cross and to-day He supplies the needs of every sinner who comes and trusts Him. He who quarrels with that Doctrine is an enemy of the Cross of Christ! Whether he makes Baptism to be the *modus*of salvation, or sets up any rite or ceremony whatever, whether Divinely-appointed or humanly-invented, he is an enemy of the Cross of Christ! Circumcision was venerable, it pertained to the fathers and was the seal of the ancient Covenant—but even *it* became an evil thing when the false teachers would have had the Gentile converts to be circumcised that they might escape from bearing the Cross of Christ— and might trust in circumcision instead of in Christ, alone! “For,” says Paul, “in Christ Jesus neither circumcision avails anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature.” The Doctrine of Justification by Faith is the Gospel—I know no other, and I wish to know no other. “Be it known unto you, therefore, men and brethren, that through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: and by Him all that believe are justified from all things, from which you could not be justified by the Law of Moses.” But, alas, there are still many who are enemies of that Doctrine, and so are, “enemies of the Cross of Christ.”  
The Cross of Christ is sometimes put in Scripture for *the life which is the result of faith in Christ.* What kind of life should that be? Well, first, a life of self-denial. No man who is the friend of the Cross of Christ will give license to his passions, or indulgence to his appetites. If he does so, he proves that he is the enemy of the Cross of Christ. No man will seek honor for himself who has known that Christ has bought him with His blood. He will not, he cannot, he dare not live for himself, either in the accumulating of wealth, or the getting of fame, or the enjoyment of pleasure. His first, chief, master thought is, “For Jesus Christ all things—all things in Him, and for Him, and to Him, seeing that He has redeemed us with His precious blood.” They who shirk His service, who take no interest in holy enterprises, who just try to live to themselves— your eaters and your drinkers, your hoarders and your men and women who are always adorning the body, but never consecrating their souls to God—these are they who are “the enemies of the Cross of Christ.” It galls their shoulders and they will not bear it, so they turn aside to ways of their own.  
**II.**Now, secondly, WHY ARE MEN ENEMIES OF THIS CROSS OF CHRIST?  
Frankly, I think that *some do not* know *why they are.* “Let me tell you the Gospel,” says a kind friend. “I do not want to hear it.” “Here is a little book which has been very useful to many.” “I do not want your books.” Do you not know the liberal-minded people that we have in the world now? When they speak, or when they write, it is all about charity and liberality—they hate bigots! Dear, dear, dear, is it not amazing that they do not hate themselves because they will not tolerate the very notion of true religion? “Why!” says one, “that Book is not true.” Did you ever read it? “No.” I thought so. We almost always find that the men who reject the New Testament never read it through and never mean to do so. Nicodemus wisely asked, “Does our Law judge any man before it hears him?” Our lawless ones do! And there are multitudes of men who ought to think themselves as mean as dirt because they never gave Christ a hearing—yet they thrust Him from them. “Oh!” says one, “I should never go inside any of those canting Methodist places.” No, you are such a wonderful man that you think you can see through a stone wall and judge of what goes on inside—you do not need to be taught because you imagine you already know everything! I believe that in London there is a vast amount of prejudice against true religion which is based upon nothing at all. The people do not know what the Gospel is and, in part, this is our hope, for if we can but bring the blessed Truth of Christ to bear upon some of these men, it will be like plowing up virgin soil in the western states of America—we may hope to reap a glorious harvest. God grant that we may!  
But there are some who are “enemies of the Cross of Christ” for reasons which they would not like to confess. Some, *because the Cross of Christ hurts their pride.*Why should they need to be pardoned? They have done nothing amiss—they are as good as most people and a great deal better than many! You speak to one of them and he says, “Do not talk to me as if you thought I was going to be lost. I do not know anybody who can find fault with me. I really think that I am an example to others.” Just so and, therefore, of course you hate the Cross of Christ! No man who is well likes medicine—how we laugh at the doctors when we feel all right! What jests we make about their calling! It is only when we begin to feel strange that we send for a medical man. And it is just so with men spiritually—as long as they are whole, they need not the Great Physician. While they think they are righteous, they reject the righteousness of Christ.  
Others, too, abhor the Cross of Christ *because the Gospel is so simple.*They belong to a club and they take in a Quarterly Review. And though they do not know very much about any one thing, yet they know a little about a great many things. They just get a smattering of various kinds of knowledge and they think they are wonderfully clever. Do you not notice the development of their foreheads? You cannot expect that *they* would have anything to do with the Gospel that would suit a servant girl! The religion that fits Jack, Tom and Harry is not grand enough for them. Why, they actually had a distant relative who was connected with a Baronet, so of course we cannot expect such gentlemen as they are to be saved simply by believing on the Lord Jesus Christ! The Gospel is too plain, too easy, for them. O Sirs, would you like to have it made difficult, that all the poor ignorant people in the world might perish just to please you? Let me remind you that such a man as Sir Isaac

Newton, who had one of the greatest of all human minds, gloried in the Gospel of Jesus Christ and felt it all too great for him. And in our days, such a truly scientific man as Faraday bowed meekly before the Divine Savior and looked up and found everything in Him. Yet some foolish people think they know better than the eternal God so they hate the Cross of Christ. Self-conceit is the reason of much of the opposition of men to Christ.  
Besides, although the Cross of Christ is lifted high, as the one hope for guilty sinners, *it is the most terribly holy thing beneath the cope of Heaven.*That Cross, blood red from His dear wounds, frightens away sin, though it draws sinners near itself. That Christ of God, making Atonement with bloody sweat, pierced hands and anguished cry of, “Why have You forsaken Me?” is the most powerful preacher of godly living whose voice was ever heard among the sons of men! Not only do sins acknowledged to be black by society in general flee from the light of the Cross, but even secret sins fly before the blaze of God’s mingled vengeance and love upon the accursed tree! The Cross is the birthplace of Puritans—the men who must be clean, who will not touch your filthy world and its amusements and nine-tenths of its engagements. These are the men who have sat beneath the midday midnight of a dying Savior’s griefs and heard Him cry, “I thirst,” as He bore the guilt of sinners. But, alas, multitudes of men do not want holiness—they want their harlots, they want their wine, they want their carnivals of vice, they want their selfishness and they want everything that Christ does not give, so they cry*,*“Not this Man, but Barabbas,” and they make the awful choice of sin as they neglect their Lord! These are “the enemies of the Cross of Christ.”  
**III.**I cannot go further into that painful part of the subject, for time fails me, and I want next, to enquire, WHAT ARE THE MARKS OF THE ENEMIES OF THE CROSS OF CHRIST IN THE CHURCH?  
Paul is evidently alluding here to some who professed to be followers of Christ, but who were really “the enemies of the Cross of Christ.” I do believe, Brothers and Sisters, that the description given of them is true of many in our day. Here is what the Apostle said of them, “Whose God is their belly.” That surely means *self-indulgence*and applies to professing Christians who never restrain their appetites, or their desires, or their passions—who are sensual while they boast of being spiritual—who are altogether given up to self-indulgence and yet claim to be followers of the Man of Sorrows who gave up everything for the good of others. That is the first kind of “enemies of the Cross of Christ.”  
Next are those who are the subjects of*shameful pride—*“whose glory is in their shame.” That is to say, they boast of things of which they ought to be ashamed. Do you not know some who can grind down the wages of their employees and boast that they have done a clever and business-like thing—and then go and “take the sacrament”? Think of the poor starving needlewomen who, if they sew their souls away, cannot get bread enough to appease their hunger! I do not know who it is who oppresses them so cruelly, but I should not wonder if their taskmasters do not even think that they will go to Heaven—I shall be surprised if they are not very greatly mistaken! Then there are others who are the prey of avarice, and they boast of what they can save. They never give anything to the poor, they seem to think that it is wrong to do so. They even found a Society to stop it! God gives to the evil as well as to the good, but they give to no one! They call their methods, “political economy,” and glory that they save so much which others would have given away. As to the cause of God, one wretched creature boasted that his soul did not cost him a shilling a year! Somebody said that such a sum would be too great an expense for such a miserable soul as his, and we hardly wonder at the sarcasm of the remark. Alas, that there should be those who glory in that kind of thing—pinching, grinding, money-loving wretches! Some of these are even called Christians, but all the while “they are the enemies of the Cross of Christ.”  
There are others who profess to be Christians who go about talking to young people and trying to indoctrinate them with false views. Sometimes they even cause the faith of the old to stagger—and they draw one and another aside to this novelty and to that, which is not according to the Scripture. I believe that such people are the worst “enemies of the Cross of Christ.” When the devil is in the pulpit, he *is*a devil! When we get bad doctrine proclaimed by ministers of Christ, themselves, then have we, indeed, “the enemies of the Cross of Christ,” and there are, nowadays, plenty of them of whom I would speak, even weeping, as I say that, “they are the enemies of the Cross of Christ.”  
Paul adds one other description of these “enemies of the Cross of Christ,” that is, *worldliness—*“who mind earthly things.” This is a very close home-thrust to many professing Christians. Do they ever help the Sunday school? Oh, no, no! Sunday school? They hope somebody or other attends to it, but it is no concern of theirs. Do they ever aid in a Mission? A Mission? Why, they do not get the shutters closed till so late at night that they cannot help in mission work—they have enough to do to look after themselves. But are they doing nothing at all for Christ? No, nothing! And for 20 years together, nothing. What are they minding, then? Well, I do not know. Only I am sure that they cannot be minding anything but “earthly things.” That is all. This is the catechism that they go through every day—“What shall we eat? What shall we drink? With what shall we be clothed?” That is all they live for.  
Now, do not be deceived! If this is true concerning you, you are no friend of Christ, for those who belong to Christ admit that they are not their own, but they are bought with a price and they have some higher and nobler objective than that which takes up the lives of worldlings. They are living for God and for eternity, for Christ and for the good of men! And their great wish is to lay themselves out for the Glory of God and the benefit of the human race. God grant that we may not be found among these characters, “whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things”!  
**IV.**For, next, WHAT WILL BECOME OF THESE PEOPLE?  
We are told that their “end is destruction.” There will be *a total destruction of their profession.*There will be *a destruction of all their hopes.* There will be *a destruction of all their happiness.* There will be *destruction of themselves* and they shall stand forever as destroyed and ruined things, ghastly exhibitions of what sin can do—and what must follow upon a false profession, or any other form of enmity to the Cross of Christ.  
**V.**Now, lastly, How SHOULD WE ACT IN THIS MATTER? If there are still such people as the Apostle describes, what have you and I to do concerning them?  
Well, first, some of us have to *give frequent warning—*“Of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the Cross of Christ.” O Friends, there are so many outside the professing Church who are “the enemies of the Cross of Christ” that it might break one’s heart to think of them! But those who are *inside* the Church, professors who never knew Christ, who have often come to the Communion Table, but have never had fellowship with *Christ*—who are quite satisfied with their outward religion while their hearts are rotten through and through—it is an awful and a dreadful thing that there should be such! But we are bound to keep on exhorting one another and warning one another because there are such “enemies of the Cross of Christ” even inside His nominal Church.  
And*,*let me add, if exhortations are frequently to be given, the *warnings ought to be as frequently taken.*How you and I ought often to pass the Apostolic question round, “Lord*,*is it I?” Suppose He stood on this platform and lifted up those pierced hands and said in majestic sorrow, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, one of you shall betray Me”? Would not that question stir us all to anguish? Well, let it do so! See to it that you make sure work for eternity, my Brothers and Sisters, and while I talk to you—I am talking to myself as well—oh, see to it that you do not have a flimsy profession, a name to live when you are really dead! What is religion worth if it is not in the heart? It is like the pageantry which surrounds the grave—the pomp, the pall, the hearse—death decently covered up! May God, of His infinite mercy, save us from having a dead profession, for, as the Lord lives, He will not endure dead professors! “He is not the God of the dead, but of the living,” and He will one day say, “Bury My dead out of My sight.” These “enemies of the Cross of Christ” shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the Presence of the Lord, and from the Glory of His power.  
But while we speak of these people, *it becomes us to be very tender,*for the Apostle says, “of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping.” Why weeping? Because it is an awful thing for men to hear the Divine and final sentence, “Depart, you cursed.” I would not like to think of anybody here who will have that for his portion at the Day of Judgment! And I would be a gross traitor to your souls if I did not also add that I cannot help fearing that this will be the lot of some of you! You have never come to Christ. Perhaps you have professed to do so, or, possibly, you have neither done it nor professed to do it, but you are openly and avowedly antagonistic to the Cross of Christ. May God’s Grace convert you! Otherwise we may well weep over you that you should die in your sins.  
But we have further tears because of the mischief that such sinners do. “Enemies of the Cross of Christ” do a world of damage to wife and children, neighbors and friends. “One sinner destroys much good.” One graceless life is a great robbery of the treasury of God. One life spent in distinct opposition to the Gospel of Jesus is a terrible thing. A Scotchman took some thistle seed to Australia that he might see a thistle grow on his farm. He only wanted one or two rare old Scotch thistles to make him think that he was at home. But now, thousands of acres are covered with this horrible weed which nobody can destroy and which has become the most gross nuisance of the region! One seed of sin may cover a continent with crime! God save us*,*then, from being numbered with “the enemies of the Cross of Christ”! Why should we not all come to the Cross now? The best homage we can pay to Jesus is to come and receive Him as our Savior. Let us do so! Let us sing this verse while we do it— ***“Just as I am—without one plea  
But that Your blood was shed for me,  
And that You bid me come to You,  
O Lamb of God, I come”***  
Let those who can truly sing it, do *so,* even if they never sang it before. God bless you all, for Christ’s sake! Amen.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: *Philippians 3.***

**Verse 1.***Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord.*As much as to say, “If this were the last sentence that I should write to you, I would say, ‘Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord.’ It is your privilege, it is your duty to rejoice in God—not in your health, your wealth, your children, your prosperity, but in the *Lord*.” There is the unchanging and unbounded source of joy. It will do you no harm to rejoice in the Lord! The more you rejoice in Him, the more spiritually-minded will you become. “Finally, my brethren.” That is, even to the end, not with you, the bitter end, but even to the end of life, rejoice in the Lord. Make this the *finis* of everything, the end of every day, the end of every year, the end of life. “Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord.” Blessed is that religion in which it is a duty to be happy!

**1** ***.****To write the same things to you, to me, indeed, is not grievous, but for you it is safe.*Saying the same thing over and over again is safe, for your minds do not catch the Truth of God at the first hearing, and your memories are slippery.

**2** ***.****Beware of dogs.—*Men of a doggish, captious, selfish spirit. In Paul’s day, there were some who were ca1led Cynics, that is to say, dogs. “Beware of dogs.”

**2** ***.****Beware of evil workers, beware of the concision.*By which Paul meant those Jews who made a great point of circumcision. He calls them here “the cutters,” for they mangled and cut the Church of God in pieces. “Beware of the concision.”

**3** ***.****For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.*These are three marks of the true Israel of God. Have you all of them—worshipping God in the spirit, rejoicing in Christ Jesus and having no confidence in the flesh?

**4** ***.****Though I might also have confidence in the flesh.* If anybody might, Paul might. If birth, if education, or if external religiousness could have saved anybody in the world, it would have saved Saul of Tarsus!

**4, 5.** *If anyone thinks that he may have confidence in the flesh, I more: circumcised the eighth day.*The ritual was observed even to the hour in his case.

**5** ***.****Of the stock of Israel.*Not an Edomite or a Samaritan, but, “of the stock of Israel” and of the very center of that stock.  
**5*.****Of the tribe of Benjamin.* Which remained with Judah, faithful, long after the ten tribes had gone aside.  
**5*.****An Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the Law, a Pharisee.*That is, one who observed all the minutiae and details of the Ceremonial Law and a good deal more—the traditions of the elders which hung like moss about the old stone of Jewish ceremonialism. Paul had observed all that.  
**6*.****Concerning zeal, persecuting the Church!*He was most zealous in the cause that he thought right. Bitterly, cruelly, even to the death, did he persecute the believers in Jesus.  
**6*.****Touching the righteousness which is in the Law, blameless.*Paul had been kept from the vices into which many fell. In his young days, he had been pure. And all his days, he had been upright and sincere. As far as he knew, to the best of his light, he had observed the Law of God. In another place, he calls himself the chief of sinners. And so he was because he persecuted the Church of God. But, in another sense, I may say of him that there is no man who stood so good a chance of being justified by works as Paul did, if there could have been any justification in that way.  
**7*.****But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ.* His faith in Jesus reversed all his former estimates, so that his gains he counted to be losses. He thought it so much the worse, concerning zeal, to have persecuted the Church, and so much to his injury to have imagined that he was blameless in the Presence of God.  
**8*.****Yes doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung.—*Offal, refuse, garbage—  
**8*.****That I may win Christ.* He had every opportunity of advancement. He was a fine scholar and might have reached the highest degree in connection with the Sanhedrim and the synagogue, but he thought nothing of all that—he threw it all away as worthless and declared that *this* was his ambition—“That I may win Christ.”  
**9*.****And be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is of the Law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.* It must be more glorious to be justified by God than by ourselves. It must be more safe to wear the righteousness of Christ than to wear our own. Nothing can so dignify our manhood as to have Christ, Himself, to be “the Lord our Righteousness.” This Paul chose in preference to everything else.  
**10, 11.***That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death; if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.*See to what Paul is looking forward—resurrection—and therefore he lets this life go as of secondary importance. He is willing to suffer as Christ suffered and to die as Christ died. You and I may never be called to make that great sacrifice, but if we are true followers of Christ, we shall be prepared for it. If ever it should happen that Christ and our life shall be put in competition, we must not deliberate for a moment, for Christ is all, and we must be ready to give up all for Christ.  
**12.***Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect.* He does not say that anybody has been perfect, but he does say that *he was not so himself*, and I should think that any man who believed himself to be better than Paul would thereby prove at once that he was not perfect, for he must be sadly lacking in humility.  
**12.***But I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.*“All that Christ meant me to be, I want to be. All that Christ meant to give me, I want to have. All that He meant me to do, I want to do, to apprehend, to lay hold of that for which I am laid hold of by Christ Jesus.”  
**13.***Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended.* That is Paul’s judgment concerning himself—he has not yet attained to the full all that the religion of Christ can give him.  
**13, 14.***But this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.* Always making progress—throwing himself into it, having the reward before him, the prize of perfection in Christ—and running towards it with all his might.  
**15.***Let us, therefore, as many as are mature.*Or, “would be perfect.”  
**15.***Be thus minded: and if in anything you are otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you.*I admire that sentence. If any Brother has not reached a full knowledge of the Truth of God, let us not condemn him, or cast him out of our company, but say to him, “God shall reveal even this unto you.”  
**16.***Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing.*There are some points upon which we are all agreed. There is some standing ground where the babe in Grace may meet with the man in Christ Jesus. Well, as far as we see eye to eye, let us co-operate with one another, let us have our hearts knit together in a holy unanimity. “Let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing.” There are some people who are always looking out for points of difference—their motto seems to be, “If we differ in anything, let us split away from one another.” Their great idea is that by dividing we shall conquer! The fact is that by separating ourselves from one another, we shall miss all hope of strength and play into the hands of the adversaries.  
**17.***Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as you have us for an example.*For the true servant of Christ teaches by his life as much as by his words.  
**18-20.**(*For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you, even weeping, that they are the enemies of the Cross of Christ, whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things*)*. For our conversation*. Or, citizenship—  
**20, 21.***Is in Heaven; from whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body.*Vile so far that it has been defiled by sin. Vile in comparison with that body which shall be—“Who shall change our vile body,” the body of our humiliation.  
**21*.****That it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself.*

**HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—289, 649, 642.**  
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**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.** Sermon #477 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

**÷Php 3.20**

CITIZENSHIP IN HEAVEN  
NO. 476

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SUNDAY EVENING, OCTOBER 12, 1862, *BY REV. C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“For our conversation is in Heaven; from where also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.”***Php 3:20***.***

THERE can be no comparison between a soaring seraph and a crawling worm. Christian men ought so to live that it were idle to speak of a comparison between them and the men of the world. It should not be a comparison but a contrast. No scale of degrees should be possible. The Believer should be a direct and manifest contradiction to the unregenerate. The life of a saint should be altogether above and out of the same list as the life of a sinner.

We should compel our critics not to confess that moralists are good, and Christians a little better. But while the world is darkness, we should manifestly be light. And while the world lies in the Wicked One, we should most evidently be of God, and overcome the temptations of that Wicked One. Wide as the poles asunder are life and death, light and darkness, health and disease, purity and sin, spiritual and carnal, Divine and sensual. If we were what we profess to be, we should be as distinct a people in the midst of this world, as a white race in a community of Ethiopians. There should be no more difficulty in detecting the Christian from the worldling than in discovering a sheep from a goat, or a lamb from a wolf.

Alas, the Church is so much adulterated, that we have to abate our glorying, and cannot exalt her character as we would. “The precious sons of Zion, comparable to fine gold, how are they esteemed as earthen pitchers, the work of the hands of the potter!” O for the time when “our conversation shall be in Heaven,” and the ignoble life of the man, whose god is his belly, and whose end is destruction, shall be rebuked by our unworldly, unselfish character. There should be as much difference between the worldling and the Christian as between Hell and Heaven, between destruction and eternal life.

As we hope at last that there shall be a great gulf separating us from the doom of the impenitent, there should be here a deep and wide gulf between us and the ungodly. The purity of our character should be such that men must take knowledge of us that we are of another and superior race. God grant us more and more to be most clearly a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people, that we may show forth the praises of Him who has called us out of darkness into His marvelous light.

Brethren, tonight I exhort you to holiness, not by the precepts of the Law—not by the thunder from Sinai—not by the perils or punishments which might fall upon you if you are unholy. But by the privileges to which you have been admitted. Gracious souls should only be urged by arguments from Divine Grace. Whips are for the backs of fools, and not

for heirs of Heaven. By the honorable citizenship which has been bestowed upon you, I shall beseech you to let your conversation be in Heaven. And I shall urge that most prevailing argument, that the Lord Jesus Christ is coming, and therefore we should be as men that watch for our Lord, diligently doing service unto Him, that when He comes He may say unto us, “Well done, good and faithful servants.” I know that the Grace which is in you will freely answer to such a plea.

Our text, I think, might be best translated thus—“Our *citizenship* is in Heaven.” The French translation renders it, “As for us, our burgessship is in the heavens.” Doddridge paraphrases it, “But we converse as citizens of Heaven, considering ourselves as denizens of the New Jerusalem and only strangers and pilgrims upon earth.”

**I.**The first idea which is suggested by the verse under consideration is this—if our citizenship is in Heaven, then WE ARE ALIENS HERE. We are strangers and foreigners, pilgrims and sojourners in the earth, as all our fathers were. In the words of Sacred Writ, “Here we have no continuing city,” but, “we desire a better country, that is an heavenly.” Let us illustrate our position. A certain young man is sent out by his father to trade on behalf of the family—he is sent to America, and he is just now living in New York.

A very fortunate thing it is for him that his citizenship is in England. Though he lives in America and trades there, yet he is an alien and does not belong to that afflicted nation. For he retains his citizenship with us on this side of the Atlantic. Yet there is a line of conduct which is due from him to the country which affords him shelter, and he must see to it that he does not fail to render it. Since *we* are aliens, we must remember to behave ourselves as aliens should, and by no means come short in our duty. We are affected by the position of our temporary country.

A person trading in New York or Boston, though a freeman of the city of London, will find himself very much affected by the trade of the United States—when the merchants of his city suffer, he will find himself suffering with them, the fluctuations of their money market will affect his undertakings and the stagnation of commerce will slacken his progress. But if prosperity should happily return, he will find that when the coffers of their merchants are getting full, his will be the better. And the happy development of trade will give buoyancy to his own ventures.

He is not of the nation, and yet every trembling of the scale will affect him. He will prosper as that nation prospers, and he will suffer as that nation suffers. That is to say, not as a citizen, but as a trader. And so we, in this country, find that though we are strangers and foreigners on earth, yet we share all the inconveniences of the flesh. No exemption is granted to us from the common lot of manhood. We are born to trouble, even as others, and have tribulation like the rest. When famine comes we hunger. And when war rages we are in danger.

We are exposed to the same climate, bearing the same burning heat, or the same freezing cold. We know the whole train of ills, even as the citizens of earth know them. When God in mercy scatters liberally with both His hands the bounties of His Providence, we take our share. Though we are aliens, yet we live upon the good of the land, and share the tender mercies of the God of Providence. Therefore we have to take some interest in it. And the good man, though he is a foreigner, will not live even a week in this foreign land without *seeking to do good*among the neighbors with whom he dwells.

The good Samaritan sought not only the good of the Samaritan nation but of the Jews. Though there was no sort of kinship among them (for the Samaritans were not, as we have often heard erroneously said, first cousins or relations to the Jews. Not a drop of Jewish blood ever ran in the Samaritans’ veins. They were strangers brought from Assyria. They had no relation to Abraham whatever), yet the good Samaritan, finding himself traveling between Jericho and Jerusalem, did good to the Jew, since he was in Judea. The Lord charged His people by His servant Jeremiah, “Seek the peace of the city where I have caused you to be carried away captives, and pray unto the Lord for it: for in the peace thereof shall you have peace.”

Since we are here, we must seek the good of this world. “To do good, and to communicate, forget not.” “Love you your enemies and do good and lend, hoping for nothing again. And your reward shall be great, and you shall be the children of the Highest: for He is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil.”

We must do our utmost while we are here to bring men to Christ, to win them from their evil ways, to bring them to eternal life, and to make them, with us, citizens of another, and a better land. For, to tell the truth, we are here as recruiting sergeants for Heaven. Here to give men the enlisting money, to bind upon them the blood red colors of the Savior’s service, to win them to King Jesus, that, by-and-by, they may share His victories after having fought His battles.

Seeking the good of the country as aliens, we must also remember that it behooves aliens to *keep themselves very quiet*. What business have foreigners to plot against the government, or to intermeddle with the politics of a country in which they have no citizenship? An Englishman in New York had best be without a tongue just now. If he should criticize the courage of the generals, the accuracy of their dispatches, or the genius of the President, he might meet with rather rough usage. He will be injudicious, indeed, if he cannot leave America to the Americans.

So, in this land of ours, where you and I are strangers, we must be orderly sojourners, submitting ourselves constantly to those that are in authority, leading orderly and peaceable lives, and, according to the command of the Holy Spirit through the Apostle, “honoring all men, fearing God, honoring the King.” “Submitting ourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake.” I cannot say that I delight in political Christians. I fear that party strife is a serious trial to Believers, and I cannot reconcile our heavenly citizenship with the schemes of the hustling and the riot of the polling-booth.

You must follow your own judgment here, but for my part, I am a foreigner even in England, and as such I mean to act. We are simply passing through this earth and should bless it in our transit but never yoke ourselves to its affairs. An Englishman may happen to be in Spain—he wishes a thousand things were different from what they are, but he does

not trouble himself much about them—says he,” If I were a Spaniard I would see what I could do to alter this government but, being an Englishman, let the Spaniards see to their own matters. I shall be back in my own country by-and-by, and the sooner the better.”

So with Christians here. They are content very much to let the potsherds strive with the potsherds of the earth. Their politics concern their own country, they do not care much about any other. As *men* they love liberty and are not willing to lose it even in the lower sense. But, spiritually, their politics are spiritual, and as citizens they look to the interest of that Divine republic to which they belong. They wait for the time when, having patiently borne with the laws of the land of their banishment, they shall come under the more beneficent sway of Him who reigns in Glory, the King of kings and Lord of lords. If it is possible, as much as lies in you, live peaceably with all men, and serve your day and generation still, but build not your soul’s dwelling place here, for all this earth must be destroyed at the coming of the fiery day.

Again, let us remember that as aliens *we have privileges as well as dutie*s. The princes of evil cannot draft us into their regiments. We cannot be compelled to do Satan’s work. The king of this world may make his vassals serve him, but he cannot raise a conscription upon aliens. He may order out his troops to this villainy, or to that dastardly service, but the child of God claims an immunity from all the commands of Satan. Let evil maxims bind the men that own their sway—we are free and own not the prince of the power of the air. I know that men of this world say we must keep up appearances. We must be respectable. We must do as others do. We must swim with the tide. We must move with the crowd.

But not so the upright Believer—“No,” says he, “Do not expect me to fall in with your ways and customs. I am in Rome, but I shall not do as Rome does. I will let you see that I am an alien, and that I have rights as an alien, even here in this foreign land. I am not to be bound to fight your battles, nor march at the sound of your drums.” Brethren, we are soldiers of Christ. We are enlisted in *His* army. And as aliens here, we are not to be constrained into the army of evil. Let lords and lands have what masters they will, let us be free, for Christ is our Master still. The seventy thousand whom God has reserved, will not bow the knee to Baal. Be it known unto you, O world, that we will not serve your gods, nor worship the image which you have set up. Servants of God we are, and we will not be in bondage unto men.

As we are free from the conscription of the State, we must remember, also, that we are not eligible to its honors. I know you will say that is not a privilege. But it is a great benefit if looked at aright. An Englishman in New York is not eligible for the very prickly throne of the President. I suppose he could not well be made a governor of Massachusetts or any other State, and, indeed, he may be well content to renounce the difficulties and the honor, too. So also, the Christian man here is not eligible to this world’s honors. It is a very ill omen to hear the world clap its hands and say, “Well done,” to the Christian man. He may begin to look to his standing and wonder whether he has not been doing wrong when the unrighteous give him their approbation.

“What, did I do wrong,” said Socrates, “that yonder villain praised me just now?” And so may the Christian say, “What, have I done wrong, that So-and-So spoke well of me, for if I had done right, he would not? He has not the sense to praise goodness—he could only have applauded that which suited his own taste. Christian Brothers and Sisters, you must never covet the world’s esteem. The love of this world is not in keeping with the love of God. “If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.” Treat its smiles as you treat its threats, with quiet contempt. Be willing rather to be sneered at than to be approved, counting the Cross of Christ greater riches than all the treasures of Egypt.

O harlot world, it were a sad dishonor to be your favorite! Tire your head and paint your face, you Jezebel, but you are no friend of ours, nor will we desire your hollow love. The men of this world were mad to raise us to their seats of honor, for we are aliens and citizens of another country. When the Pope sent a noted Protestant statesman a present of some silver goblets, he returned them with this answer—“The citizens of Zurich compel their judges to swear twice in the year that they will receive no presents from foreign princes, therefore take them back.” More than twice in the year should the Christian resolve that he will not accept the smiles of this world and will do no homage to its glory.

“We fear the Greeks even when they bear gifts.” Like the Trojans of old, we may be beguiled with presents even if unconquered in arms. Forswear then, the grandeur and honor of this fleeting age. Say in life, what a proud cardinal said in death, “Vain pomp and glory of the world, I hate you.” Pass through Vanity Fair without trading in its vanities, crying, in answer to their “What will you buy?”—“We buy the Truth of God.” Take up the pilgrim’s song and sing it always—

***“The things eternal I pursue,  
And happiness beyond the view  
Of those who basely pant  
For things by nature felt and seen.  
Their honors, wealth and pleasures mean, I neither have nor want.  
Nothing on earth I call my own—  
A stranger to the world unknown,  
I all their goods despise.  
I trample on their whole delight,  
And seek a country out of sight—  
A country in the skies.”***

Furthermore, as aliens, *it is not for us to hoard up this world’s treasures*. Gentlemen, you who know the exchange of New York, would you hoard up any extensive amount of Mr. Chase’s green-backed notes? I think not. Those stamps which officiate in the States in lieu of copper coinage I should hardly desire to accumulate. Perhaps the fire might consume them, or if not, the gradual process of wear and tear which they are sure to undergo might leave me penniless before long. “No, Sir,” says the British trader, “I am an alien. I cannot very well accept payment in these bits of paper. They are very well for you, perhaps.  
“They will pass current in your state but my riches must be riches in

England, for I am going there to live directly. I must have solid gold, old English sovereigns, nothing else but these can make me rich.” Brethren, so it is with us. If we are aliens, the treasures of this world are like those bits of paper, of little value in our esteem. And we should lay up our treasure in Heaven, “where neither moth nor rust does corrupt and where thieves do not break through nor steal.” The money of this world is not current in Paradise. And when we reach its blissful shore, if regret can be known, we shall wish that we had laid up more treasure in the land of our fatherhood, in the dear fatherland beyond the skies.

Transport your jewels to a safer country than this world. Be rich toward God rather than before men. A certain minister collecting for a Chapel, called upon a rich merchant, who generously gave him fifty pounds. As the good man was going out with sparkling eye at the liberality of the merchant, the tradesman opened a , and he said, “Stop a minute, I find by this letter, I have lost this morning a ship worth six thousand pounds.” The poor minister trembled in his shoes, for he thought the next word would be, “Let me have the fifty pound check back.”

Instead of it, it was “Let me have the check back a moment,” and then taking out his pen he wrote him a check for five hundred pounds. “As my money is going so fast, it is well,” said he, “to make sure of some of it, so I will put some of it in God’s bank.” The man, you doubt not, went his way astonished at such a way of dealing as this, but indeed that is just what a man should do, who feels he is an alien here and his treasure is beyond the sky—

***“There is my house and portion fair;  
My treasure and my heart are there,  
And my abiding home—  
For me my elder Brethren stay,  
And angels beckon me away,  
And Jesus bids me come.”***

**II.**It is our comfort now to remind you that although aliens *on earth*, WE ARE CITIZENS IN HEAVEN.  
What is meant by our being citizens in Heaven? Why, first that *we are under Heaven’s government*. Christ, the king of Heaven, reigns in our hearts. The laws of Glory are the laws of our consciences. Our daily prayer is, “Your will be done on earth as it is in Heaven.” The proclamations issued from the Throne of Glory are freely received by us. The decrees of the Great King we cheerfully obey. We are not without Law to Christ. The Spirit of God rules in our mortal bodies. Divine Grace reigns through righteousness, and we wear the easy yoke of Jesus. O that He would sit as king in our hearts, like Solomon upon his throne of gold. Yours are we, Jesus, and all that we have, You rule without a rival.  
As citizens of the New Jerusalem, *we share Heaven’s honors*. The glory which belongs to beatified saints belongs to us, for we are already sons of God, already princes of the blood imperial. Already we wear the spotless robe of Jesus’ righteousness. Already we have angels for our servitors, saints for our companions, Christ for our Brother, God for our Father, and a crown of immortality for our reward. We share the honors of citizenship, for we have come to the general assembly and Church of the First-Born, whose names are written in Heaven. “Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it does not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like He is. For we shall see Him as He is.”  
As citizens, *we have common rights in all the property of Heaven*. Those wide extensive plains we sung of just now are ours. Ours the yonder harps of gold and crowns of glory. Ours the gates of pearl and walls of chrysolite. Ours the azure light of the city that needs no candle nor light of the sun. Ours the river of the Water of Life, and the twelve manner of fruits which grow on the trees planted at the side thereof. There is nothing in Heaven that belongs not to us, for our citizenship is there. “Things present, or things to come, all are ours. And we are Christ’s. And Christ is God’s.”  
And as we are thus under Heaven’s government, and share its honors and partake of its possessions, so we today *enjoy its delights*. Do they rejoice over sinners that are born to God—prodigals that have returned? So do we. Do they chant the glories of triumphant Grace? We do the same. Do they cast their crowns at Jesus’ feet? Such honors as we have, we cast there, too. Do they rejoice in Him? So, also, do we. Do they triumph, waiting for His second advent? By faith we triumph in the same. Are they tonight singing, “Worthy the Lamb”? We also have sung the same tune, not to such glorious notes as theirs, but with as sincere hearts. With minstrelsy not quite so splendid, but we hope as sincere, for the Spirit gave us the music which we have, and the Spirit gave them the thunders of their acclamations before the Throne. “Our citizenship is in Heaven.”  
Brethren, we rejoice to know, also, that as the result of our being citizens, or rather I ought to have said as the *cause* of it, our *names are written in the roll*of Heaven’s freemen. When, at last, the list shall be read, our names, by His Grace, shall be read, too. For where Paul and Peter, where David and Jonathan, where Abraham and Jacob shall be found, we shall be found, too. Numbered with them we were in the Divine purpose, reckoned with them we were in the purchase on the Cross, and with them shall we sit down forever at the tables of the blessed. The small and the great are fellow citizens and of the same household.  
The babes and the perfect men are recorded in the same great registry, and neither death nor Hell can erase a single name. Our citizenship, then, is in Heaven. We have not time to expand that thought. John Calvin says of this text, “It is a most abundant source of many exhortations, which it were easy for anyone to elicit from it.” We are not all Calvin. But even to our smaller capacities, the subject appears to be one not readily exhausted, but rich with unfathomable joy.  
**III.**We must now come to our third point, which is OUR CONVERSATION IS IN HEAVEN. Our walk and acts are such as are consistent with our dignity *as citizens of Heaven*. Among the old Romans, when a dastardly action was proposed it was thought a sufficient refusal to answer, “Romanus sum—I am a Roman.”  
Surely it should be a strong incentive to every good thing if we can claim to be freemen of the Eternal City. Let our lives be conformed to the glory of our citizenship. In Heaven they are holy, so must we be—so *are* we if our citizenship is not a mere presence. They are happy, so must we be rejoicing in the Lord always. In Heaven they are obedient—so must we be, following the faintest monitions of the Divine will. In Heaven they are active, so should we be, both day and night praising and serving God. In Heaven they are peaceful, so should we find a rest in Christ, and be at peace even now.  
In Heaven they rejoice to behold the face of Christ, so should we be always meditating upon Him, studying His beauties, and desiring to look into the Truths of God which He has taught. In Heaven they are full of love, so should we love one another as Brethren. In Heaven they have sweet communion, one with another. So should we, who though many, are one body, be every one members one of the other. Before the Throne they are free from envy and strife, ill-will, jealousy, emulation, falsehood, anger. So should we be—we should, in fact, seek while we are here, to keep up the manners and customs of the good old fatherland, so that, as in Paris, the Parisian soon says, “There goes John Bull,” so they should be able to say in this land, “there goes a heavenly citizen, one who is with us and among us but is not of us.”  
Our very speech should be such that our citizenship should be detected. We should not be able to live long in a house without men finding out what we are. A friend of mine once went across to America, and landing, I think, at Boston, he knew nobody. But hearing a man say, when somebody had dropped a cask on the quay, “Look out there, or else you will make a Coggeshall job of it,” he said, “You are an Essex man I know, for that is a proverb never used anywhere but in Essex—give me your hand.” And they were friends at once.  
So there should be a ring of true metal about our speech and conversation, so that when a Brother meets us, he can say, “You are a Christian, I know, for none but Christians speak like that, or act like that.” “You also were with Jesus of Nazareth, for your speech betrays you.” Our holiness should act as a sort of beacon by which we know how to give the grip to the stranger, who is not a real stranger, but a fellow citizen with us, and of the household of faith.  
Oh, dear Friends, wherever we wander, we should never forget our beloved land. In Australia, on the other side the world, or in the Cape of Good Hope, or wherever else we may be exiled, surely every Englishman’s eye must turn to this fair island—and with all her faults, we must love her still. And surely let us be where we may, our eyes must turn to Heaven, the happy land unstained by shadow of fault. We love her still and love her more and more, praying for the time when our banishment shall expire, and we shall enter into our Fatherland to dwell there forever and ever.  
Shenstone says, “The proper means of increasing the love we bear our native country is to reside some time in a foreign land.” Sure am I that we who cry, “Woe is me, for I dwell in Mesech and sojourn in the tents of Cedar!” are sure to add, “O that I had wings like a dove, for then would I fly away and be at rest.”  
**IV.**The text says, “Our conversation is in Heaven,” and I think we may also read it, as though it said, “OUR COMMERCE IS IN HEAVEN.” We are trading on earth, but still the bulk of our trade is with Heaven. We trade for trinkets in this land but our gold and silver are in Heaven.  
We commune with Heaven and how? Our trade is with Heaven by *meditation*, we often think of God, our Father, and Christ, our Brother. And, by the Spirit, the Comforter, we are brought in contemplative delight to the general assembly and Church of the First-Born, whose names are written in Heaven. Brethren, do not our *thoughts* sometimes burn within us, when we trade with that blessed land? When I have sent the ships of understanding and consideration to that land of Ophir, which is full of gold, and they have come back again laden with all manner of precious things, my thoughts have been enriched—my soul has longed to journey to that good land.  
Black and stormy are you, O sea of death, but I would cross you to reach that land of Havilah, which has dust of gold. I know that he who is a Christian will never have his mind long off that better land. And do you know we sometimes trade with Heaven in our *hymns*? They tell us of the Swiss soldiery in foreign countries, that there is a song which the band is forbidden to play, because it reminds them of the cowbells of their native hills. If the men hear it, they are sure to desert, for that dear old song revives before their eyes the wooden chalets and the cows and the pastures of the glorious Alps and they long to be away.  
There are some of our hymns that make us homesick, until we are hardly content to stop, and therefore, well did our poet end his song—

***“Filled with delight, my raptured soul,  
Can here no longer stay.  
Though Jordan’s waves around us roll,  
Fearless we launch away.”***

I feel the spirit of Wesley, when he said—  
***“O that we now might see our Guide!  
O that the word were given!  
Come, Lord of Hosts, the waves divide,  
And land us all in Heaven.”***

In times of high, hallowed, heavenly harmony of praise, the songs of angels seem to come astray and find their way down to us. And then our songs return with them, hand in hand, and go back to God’s Throne, through Jesus Christ.

We trade with Heaven, I hope, too, not only thus by meditation and by thought, and by song, but *by hopes and by loves*. Our love is toward that land. How heartily the Germans sing of the dear old fatherland. But they cannot, with all their Germanic patriotism, they *cannot* beat the genial glow of the Briton’s heart, when he thinks of his fatherland, too. The Scotchman, too, wherever he may be, remembers the land of “brown heath and shaggy wood.” And the Irishman, too, let him be where he will, still thinks the “Emerald Isle” the first gem of the sea.

It is right that the patriot should love his country. Does not our love fervently flame towards Heaven? We think we cannot speak well enough of it, and, indeed, here we are correct, for no exaggeration is possible. When we talk of that land of Eschol, our mouths are watering to taste its clusters. Already, like David, we thirst to drink of the well that is within the gate. And we hunger after the good corn of the land. Our ears are wanting to have done with the discords of earth, that they may open to the harmonies of Heaven. And our tongues are longing to sing the melodious sonnets, sung by flaming ones above. Yes, we do love Heaven, and thus it is that we prove that our commerce is with that better land.

Brethren, just as people in a foreign land that love their country always are glad to have plenty of letters from the country, I hope we have much *communication with the old fatherland*. We send our prayers there as letters to our Father, and we get His letters back in this blessed volume of His Word. You go into an Australian settler’s hut, and you find a newspaper. Where from, Sir? A gazette from the south of France, a journal from America? Oh no, it is a newspaper from England, addressed to him in his old mother’s handwriting, bearing the postage stamp with the good Queen’s face in the comer.

And he likes it, though it is only a newspaper from some little pottering country town, with no news in it. Yet he likes it better, perhaps, than the “Times” itself, because it talks to him about the village where he lived, and consequently touches a special string in the harp of his soul. So must it be with Heaven. This book, the Bible, is the newspaper of Heaven, and therefore we must love it. The sermons which are preached are good news from a far country. The hymns we sing are notes by which we tell our Father of our welfare here, and by which He whispers into our soul His continued love to us. All these are, and must be pleasant to us, for our commerce is with Heaven.

I hope, too, we are sending a good deal home. I like to see our young fellows, when they go out to live in the bush, remember their mother at home. They say, “She had a hard struggle to bring us up when our father died, and she scraped her little together to help us to emigrate.” John and Tom mutually agree, “the first gold we get at the diggings we will send home to mother.” And it goes home. Well, I hope you are sending a great many things home.

Dear Friends, I hope as we are aliens here, we are not laying up our treasure here, where we may lose it, but packing it off as quickly as we can to our own country. There are many ways of doing it. God has many banks. And they are all safe ones. We have but to serve His Church, or serve the souls which Christ has bought with His blood, or help His poor, clothe His naked, and feed His hungry—and we send our treasures beyond sea in a safe ship. And so we keep up our commerce with the skies.

**V.**Time has gone. Those clocks will strike when yours ought not. There is a great reason why we should live like aliens and foreigners here, and that is because CHRIST IS COMING SOON. The early Church never forgot this. Did they not pant and thirst after the return of their ascended Lord? Like the twelve tribes, day and night they instantly watched for Messiah.

But the Church has grown weary of this hope. There have been so many false prophets who tell us that Christ is coming, that the Church thinks He never will come. And she begins to deny, or to keep in the background the blessed doctrine of the second advent of her Lord from Heaven. I do not think the fact that there have been many false prophets should make us doubt our Lord’s true word. Perhaps the very frequency of these mistakes may show that there is truth at the bottom.

You have a friend who is ill, and the doctor says he cannot last long. He must die. You have called a great many times expecting to hear of his departure but he is still alive. Now the frequent errors of the physicians do not prove that your friend will not die one of these days, and that speedily, too. And so, though the false prophets have said, “Lo, here,” and “Lo, there,” and yet Christ has not come—that does not prove that His glorious appearing will never arrive.

You know I am no prophet. I do not know anything about 1866. I find quite enough to do to attend to 1862. I do not understand the visions of Daniel or Ezekiel. I find I have enough to do to teach the simple word such as I find in Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, and the Epistles of Paul. I do not find many souls have been converted to God by exquisite dissertations about the battle of Armageddon, and all those other fine things. I have no doubt prophesying is very profitable, but I rather question whether they are so profitable to the hearers, as they may be to the preachers and publishers.

I conceive that among religious people of a certain sort, the abortive explanations of prophecy issued by certain doctors gratify a craving which irreligious people find its food in novels and romances. People have a panting to know the future. And certain divines pander to this depraved taste, by prophesying for them and letting them know what is coming byand-by. I do not know the future and I shall not pretend to know. But I do preach this, because I know it, that *Christ will come*, for He says so in a hundred passages.

The Epistles of Paul are full of the advent, and Peter’s, too, and John’s letters are crowded with it. The best of saints have always lived on the hope of the advent. There was Enoch—he prophesied of the coming of the Son of Man. So there was another Enoch who was always talking of the coming, and saying, “Come quickly.” I will not divide the house tonight by discussing whether the advent will be premillennial or postmillennial, or anything of that. It is enough for me that *He will com*e, and, “in such an hour as you think not, the Son of Man will come.”

Tonight He may appear, while here we stand. Just when we think that he will not come, the thief shall break open the house. We ought, therefore, to be always watching. Since the gold and silver that you have will be worthless at His advent. Since your lands and estates will melt to smoke when He appears. Since,*then* the righteous shall be rich and the godly shall be great, lay not up your treasure *here*, for it may at any time vanish, at any time disappear, for Christ at any moment may come.

I think the Church would do well to be always living as if Christ might come today. I feel persuaded she is doing ill if she works as if He would not come till 1866, because He may come before, and He may come this moment. Let her always be living as if He would come *now*, still acting in her Master’s sight, and watching unto prayer. Never mind about the last vials—fill your own vial with sweet odors and offer it before the Lord. Think what you like about Armageddon. But forgot not to fight the good fight of faith. Guess not at the precise era for the destruction of Antichrist, go and destroy it yourself, fighting against it every day. But be looking forward and hastening unto the coming of the Son of Man. And let this be at once your comfort and excitement to diligence—that the Savior will

soon come from Heaven.

Now, I think you foreigners here present—and I hope there are a great many true aliens here—ought to feel like a poor stranded mariner on a desolate island. You have saved a few things from the wreck and built yourself an old log hut. You have a few comforts round about you, but for all that you long for home. Every morning you look out to sea and wonder when you shall see a sail. Many times while examining the wide ocean to look for a ship, you have clapped your hands, and then wept to find you were mistaken. Every night you light a fire that there may be a blaze, so that if a ship should go by, they may send relief to you.

Ah, that is just the way we ought to live. We have heard of one saint who used to open his window every morning when he woke, to see if Christ had come. It might be fanaticism, but better to be enthusiastic than to mind earthly things. I would have us look out each night, and light the fire of prayer, that it may be burning in case the ships of Heaven should go by—that blessings may come to us poor aliens and foreigners who need them so much. Let us wait patiently till the Lord’s convoy shall take us on board, that we may be carried into the glories and splendor of the reign of Christ.

Let us always hold the log hut with a loose hand and long for the time when we shall get to that better land where our possessions are, where our Father lives, where our treasures lie, where all our Brethren dwell. Well said our poet —

***“Blest scenes,  
Through rude and stormy seas  
I onward press to You.”***

My Beloved Friends, I can assure you it is always one of the sweetest thoughts I ever know, that I shall meet with you in Heaven. There are so many of you members of this Church, that I can hardly get to shake hands with you once in a year. But I shall have plenty of time, then, in Heaven. You will know your pastor in Heaven better than you do now. He loves you now, and you love him. We shall then have more time to recount our experience of Divine Grace, and praise God together, and sing together, and rejoice together concerning Him by whom we were helped to plant and sow, and through whom all the increase came—

***“I hope when days and years are past,  
We all shall meet in Heaven,  
We all shall meet in Heaven at last,  
We all shall meet in Heaven.”***

But we shall not all meet in Glory. Not all, unless you repent. Some of you will certainly perish, unless you believe in Christ. But why must we be divided? Oh, why not all in Heaven? “Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved.” “He that believes and is baptized shall be saved but he that believes not shall be damned.” Trust Christ, Sinner, and Heaven is yours and mine, and we are safe, by His Grace, forever. Amen.

Adapted from*The C.H. Spurgeon Collection*, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #973 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

THE POWER OF CHRIST ILLUSTRATED BY THE RESURRECTION  
NO. 973

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, JANUARY 29, 1871, *BY C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“For our conversation is in Heaven; from where we also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself,”***Php 3:20-21***.***

I should mislead you if I called these verses my text, for I intend only to lay stress upon the closing expression, and I read the two verses because they are necessary for its explanation. It would require several discourses to expound the whole of so rich a passage as this.

Beloved, how intimately is the whole of our life interwoven with the life of Christ! His first coming has been to us salvation, and we are delivered from the wrath of God through Him. We live still because He lives, and never is our life more joyous than when we look most steadily to Him. The completion of our salvation in the deliverance of our body from the bondage of corruption, in the raising of our dust to a glorious immortality— that also is wrapped up with the Personal Resurrection and quickening power of the Lord Jesus Christ. As His first advent has been our salvation from sin, so His second advent shall be our salvation from the grave.

He is in Heaven, but, as the Apostle says, “We look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body.” We have nothing, we are nothing, apart from Him. The past, the present, and the future are only bright as He shines upon them. Every consolation, every hope, every enjoyment we possess, we have received and still retain because of our connection with Jesus Christ our Lord. Apart from Him we are naked, and poor, and miserable.

I desire to impress upon your minds, and especially upon my own, the need of our abiding in Him. As zealous laborers for the glory of God I am peculiarly anxious that you may maintain daily communion with Jesus, for as it is with our Covenant blessings, so is it with our work of faith and labor of love—everything depends upon Him. All our fruit is found in Jesus. Remember His own words, “Without Me you can do nothing.” *Our* power to work comes wholly from *His* power. If we work effectually, it must always be according to the effectual working of His power in us and through us.

Brethren, I pray that our eyes may be steadfastly turned to our Master at this season when our special services are about to commence. Confessing our dependence upon Him, and resorting to Him in renewed confidence, we shall proceed to our labor with redoubled strength. May we remember where our great strength lies, and look to Him and Him alone,

away from our own weakness and our own strength, too—finding all in Him in our work for others as we have found all in Him in the matter of the salvation of our own souls. When the multitudes were fed, the disciples distributed the bread, but the central source of that Divine commissariat was the Master’s own hand.

*He*blessed,*He*broke, *He* gave to the disciples, and then the disciples to the multitude. Significant, also, was one of the last scenes of our Lord’s conversation with His disciples before He was taken up. They had been fishing all night, but they had taken nothing. It was only when He came that they cast the net on the right side of the ship, and then the net was filled with a great multitude of fishes. Ever must it be so—where He is, souls are taken by the fishers of men, but nowhere else. Not the preaching of His servants alone, not the Gospel of itself alone—but His Presence with His servants is the secret of success.

“The Lord working with them.” His cooperating Presence in the Gospel—this is it which makes it “the power of God unto salvation.” Lift up your eyes then, my Brethren, confederate with us for the spread of the Redeemer’s kingdom, to the Savior, the Lord Jesus, who is the Captain of our salvation. It is through Him and Him alone by whom all things shall be worked to the honor of God, but without whom the most ardent desires, and the most energetic efforts must most certainly fail. I have selected this text with no less a design than this—that every eye may, by it, be turned to the Omnipotent Savior before we enter upon the hallowed engagements which await us.

In the text notice, first of all, *the marvel to be worked by our Lord at His coming*. And then gather from it, in the second place, helps to the consideration of *the power which is now at this time proceeding from Him and treasured in Him*. And then, thirdly*, contemplate the work which we desire to see accomplished*, and which we believe will be accomplished on the ground of the power resident in our Lord.

I. First, we have to ask you to CONSIDER, BELIEVINGLY, THE MARVEL WHICH IS TO BE WORKED BY OUR LORD AT HIS COMING. When He shall come a second time He will change our vile body and fashion it like unto His glorious body. What a marvelous change! How great the transformation! How high the ascent! Our body in its present state is called in our translation a “vile body.” But if we translate the Greek more literally it is much more expressive, for there we find this corporeal frame called “the body of our humiliation.” Not “this humble body”—that is hardly the meaning—but the body in which our *humiliation* is manifested and enclosed.

This body of our humiliation our Lord will transform until it is like unto His own. Here read not alone “His glorious body,” for that is not the most literal translation, but “the body of His glory.” The body in which He enjoys and reveals His glory. Our Savior had a body here in humiliation. That body was like ours in all respects except that it could see no corruption, for it was undefiled with sin. That body in which our Lord wept, and sweat great drops of blood, and yielded up His spirit, was the body of His humiliation.  
He rose again from the dead, and He rose in the same body which ascended up into Heaven, but He concealed its glory to a very great extent, else He had been too bright to be seen of mortal eyes. Only when He passed the cloud, and was received out of sight, did the full glory of His body shine forth to ravish the eyes of angels and of glorified spirits. Then was it that His countenance became as the sun shining in its strength.

Now, Beloved, whatever the body of Jesus may be in His Glory, our present body which is now in its humiliation is to be conformed unto it— Jesus is the standard of man in Glory. “We shall be like He is, for we shall see him as He is.” Here we dwell in this body of our humiliation, but it shall undergo a change—“in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.” Then shall we come into our glory, and our body being made suitable to the Glory state, shall be fitly called the body of Glory.

We need not curiously pry into the details of the change, nor attempt to define all the differences between the two estates of our body. For “it does not yet appear what we shall be,” and we may be content to leave much to be made known to us hereafter. Yet though we see through a glass darkly, we nevertheless do see *something*, and would not shut our eyes to that little. We know not yet as we are known, but we do know in part, and that part knowledge is precious. The gates have been ajar at times, and men have looked awhile, and beheld and wondered.

Three times, at least, human eyes have seen something of the body of Glory. The face of Moses, when he came down from the mount, shone so that those who gathered around him could not look upon it, and he had to cover it with a veil. In that lustrous face of the man who had been forty days in high communion with God, you behold some gleams of the brightness of glorified manhood.

Our Lord made a yet clearer manifestation of the glorious body when He was transfigured in the presence of the three disciples. When His garments became bright and glistering, whiter than any fuller could make them, and He Himself was all aglow with Glory, His disciples saw and marveled. The face of Stephen is a third window, as it were, through which we may look at the Glory to be revealed, for even his enemies, as they gazed upon the martyr in his confession of Christ, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel. Those three transient gleams of the morning light may serve as tokens to us to help us to form some faint idea of what the body of the Glory of Christ and the body of our own glory will be.

Turning to that marvelous passage in Corinthians, wherein the veil seems to be more uplifted than it ever had been before or since, we learn a few particulars worthy to be rehearsed. The body while here below is corruptible, subject to decay. It gradually becomes weak through old age and at last it yields to the blows of death, falls into the ground, and becomes the food of worms.

But the new body shall be incorruptible! It shall not be subject to any process of disease, decay, or decline. It shall never, through the lapse of ages, yield to the force of death. It shall be the immortal companion for the immortal spirit. There are no graves in Heaven, no knell ever saddened the New Jerusalem. The body here is weak—the Apostle says, “it is sown in weakness.” It is subject to all sorts of infirmities in life, and in

death loses all strength. It is weak to perform our own will, weaker still to perform the heavenly will. It is weak to do and weak to suffer—but it is to be “raised in power, all infirmity being completely removed.”

How far this power will be physical and how far spiritual we need not speculate—where the material ends and the spiritual begins we need not define. We shall be as the angels, and we have found no difficulty in believing that these pure spirits “excel in strength,” nor in understanding Peter, when he says that angels are “greater in power and might.” Our body shall be “raised in power.”

Here, too, the body is a natural or soulish body—a body fit for the soul, for the lowest faculties of our mental nature. But according to the Apostle in the Corinthians, it is to be raised a *spiritual* body, adapted to the noble portion of our nature, suitable to be the dwelling place and the instrument of our new-born Grace-given life. This body at present is no assistance to the spirit of prayer or praise. It rather hinders than helps us in spiritual exercises. Often the spirit truly is willing, but the flesh is weak.

We sleep when we ought to watch, and faint when we should pursue. Even its joys as well as its sorrows tend to distract devotion—but when this body shall be transformed, it shall be a body suitable for the highest aspirations of our perfected and glorified humanity—a spiritual body like unto the body of the Glory of Christ. Here the body is sinful, its members have been instruments of unrighteousness. It is true that our body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, but, alas, there are traces about it of the time when it was a den of thieves!

The spots and wrinkles of sin are not yet removed. Its materialism is not yet so refined as to be an assistance to the Spirit. It gravitates downwards, and it has a bias from the right line. But it awaits the last change, and then it shall be perfectly sinless, as alabaster white and pure upon which stain of sin did never come. Like the newly driven snow, it will be immaculately chaste. “As we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.”

Being sinless, the body, when it shall be raised again, shall be painless. Who shall count the number of our pains while in this present house of clay? Truly we that are in this tabernacle do groan! Does it not sometimes appear to the children of sickness as if this body were fashioned with a view to suffering? As if all its nerves, sinews, veins, pulses, vessels, and valves were parts of a curious instrument upon which every note of the entire gamut of pain might be produced? Patience, you who linger in this shattered tenement—a house not made with hands awaits you!

Up yonder no sorrow and sighing are met with. The chastising rod shall fall no longer when the faultiness is altogether removed. As the new body will be without pain, so will it be superior to weariness. The Glory body will not yield to faintness, nor fail through lethargy. Is it not implied that the spiritual body does not need to sleep, when we read that they serve God day and night in His temple? In a word, the bodies of the saints, like the body of Christ, will be perfect!

There shall be nothing lacking and nothing faulty. If saints die in the feebleness of age they shall not rise thus. Or if they have lost a sense or a limb or are halt or maimed, they shall not be so in Heaven—for as to body and soul, “they are without fault before the Throne of God.” “We shall be like He,” is true of all the saints, and hence none will be otherwise than fair, and beautiful, and perfect. The righteous shall be like Christ, of whom it is still true that not a bone of Him shall be broken, so not a part of our body after its change shall be bruised, battered, or otherwise than perfect.

Put all this together, Brethren, and what a stretch it is from this vile body to the glorious body which shall be! Yet when Christ comes this miracle of miracles shall be worked in the twinkling of an eye! Heap up epithets descriptive of the vileness of this body. Think of it in all its weakness, infirmity, sin, and liability to death. Then admire our Lord’s body in all its holiness, happiness, purity, perfection, and immortality. And know assuredly that, at Christ’s coming, this change shall take place upon every one of the elect of God.

All Believers shall undergo this marvelous transformation in a moment. Behold and wonder! Imagine that the change should occur to you now. What a display of power! My imagination is not able to give you a picture of the transformation. But those who will be alive, and remain at the coming of the Son of God will undergo it, and so enter Glory without death. “For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality,” and therefore the bodies of living Believers shall in the twinkling of an eye pass from the one state into the other. They shall be transformed from the vile to the glorious, from the state of humiliation into the state of Glory, by the power of the coming Savior.

The miracle is amazing if you view it as occurring to those who shall be alive when Christ comes. Reflect, however, that a very large number of the saints, when the Lord shall appear a second time, will already be in their graves. Some of these will have been buried long enough to have become corrupt. If you could remove the mold and break open the coffin, what would you find but foulness and putrefaction? But those moldering relics are the body of the saint’s *humiliation*—and that very body is to be transformed into the likeness of Christ’s glorious body! Admire the miracle as you survey the mighty change!

Look down into the loathsome tomb, and, if you can endure it, gaze upon the putrid mass. This, even this, is to be transformed into Christ’s likeness! What a work is this! And what a Savior is He who shall achieve it! Go a little further. Many of those whom Christ will thus raise will have been buried so long that all traces of them will have disappeared! They will have melted back into the common dust of earth, so that if their bones were searched for, not a vestige of them could be found—nor could the keenest searcher after human remains detect a single particle. They have slept in quiet through long ages in their lonely graves—till they have become absorbed into the soil as part and parcel of mother earth.

No, there is not a bone, nor a piece of a bone left. Their bodies are as much one with earth as the drop of rain which fell upon the wave is one with the sea—yet they shall be raised! The trumpet call shall fetch them back from the dust with which they have mingled, and dust to dust, bone to bone, the anatomy shall be rebuilt and then refashioned. Does your wonder grow? Does not your faith accept with joy the marvel, and yet feel it to be a marvel none the less?

Son of man, I will lead you into an inner chamber more full of wonder yet! There are many thousands of God’s people to whom a quiet slumber in the grave was denied. They were cut off by martyrdom, were sawn asunder, or cast to the LIONS. Tens of thousands of the precious bodies of the saints have perished by fire. Their limbs have been blown in clouds of smoke to the four winds of Heaven, and even the handful of ashes which remained at the foot of the stake, their relentless persecutors have thrown into rivers to be carried to the ocean, and divided to every shore.

Some of the children of the resurrection were devoured by wild beasts in the Roman amphitheaters or left a prey to buzzards and ravens on the gallows. In all sorts of ways have the saints’ bodies been hacked and hewn, and, as a consequence, the particles of those bodies have, no doubt, been absorbed into various vegetable growths, and having been eaten by animals have mingled with the flesh of beasts. But what of that?

“What of that?” you say, “how can these bodies be refashioned? By what possibility can the selfsame bodies be raised again?” I answer it needs a miracle to make any of these dry bones live, and a miracle being granted, impossibility vanishes. He who formed each atom from nothing can gather each particle again from confusion. The omniscient Lord of Providence tracks each molecule of matter, and knows its position and history as a shepherd knows his sheep. And if it is necessary to constitute the identity of the body, to gather every atom, He can do it. It may not, however, be necessary at all, and I do not assert that it will be, for there may be a true identity without sameness of material.

Even as this, my body, is the same as that in which I lived twenty years ago, yet, in all probability there is not a grain of the same matter in it. God is able, then, to cause that the same body which on earth we wear in our humiliation, which we call a vile body, shall be fashioned like unto Christ’s body. No difficulties, however stern, that can be suggested from science or physical law, shall for a single instant stand in the way of the accomplishment of this transformation by Christ the King.

What marvels rise before me! Indeed, it needs faith, and we thank God we have it. The resurrection of Christ has forever settled in our minds, beyond all controversy, the resurrection of all who are in Him. “For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so they, also, which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him.” Still it is a marvel of marvels, a miracle which needs the fullness of the Deity. Of whom but God, very God of very God, could it be said that He shall change our bodies, and make them like unto His glorious body?

I know how feebly I have spoken upon this sublime subject, but I am not altogether regretful of that, for I do not wish to fix your thoughts on my words for a single moment. I only desire your minds to grasp and grapple with the great thought of the *power of Christ*—by which He shall raise and change the bodies of the saints.

**II.**We will now pass on. Here is the point we aim at. Consider, in the second place, that THIS POWER WHICH IS TO RAISE THE DEAD IS RESIDENT IN CHRIST AT THIS MOMENT. So says the text, “according to the working whereby *He is able*to subdue all things unto Himself.” It is not some *new* power which Christ will take to Himself in the latter days and then for the first time display. No, the power which will arouse the dead is the same power which is in Him at this moment—which is going forth from Him at this instant in the midst of His Church and among the sons of men. I call your attention to this, and invite you to follow the track of the text.

First, notice that all the power by which the last transformation will be worked is ascribed to our Lord Jesus Christ now *as the Savior*. “We look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus.” When Christ raises the dead it will be as a Savior, and it is precisely in that capacity that we need the exercise of His power at this moment. Fix this, my Brethren, in your hearts. We are seeking the salvation of men, and we are not seeking a hopeless thing—for Jesus Christ is able, as a Savior, to subdue all things to Himself. So the text expressly tells us. It does not merely say that as a raiser of the dead He is able to subdue all things, but as the SAVIOR, the Lord Jesus Christ.

His titles are expressly given. He is set forth to us as the Lord, the Savior, the Anointed—and in that capacity is said to be able to subdue all things to Himself. Happy tidings for us! My Brethren, how large may our prayers be for the conversion of the sons of men! How great our expectations, how confident our efforts! Nothing is too hard for our Lord Jesus Christ. Nothing in the way of saving work is beyond His power. If, as a Savior, He wakes the dead in the years to come, He can quicken the spiritually dead even now! These crowds of dead souls around us in this area and in these galleries—He can awaken by His quickening voice and living Spirit.

The resurrection is to be according to the working of His mighty power, and that same energy is in operation now. In its fullness the power dwells in Him. Let us stir Him up! Let us cry unto Him mightily, and give Him no rest till He puts forth that selfsame power now! Think not, my Brethren, that this would be extraordinary and unusual. Your own conversion, if you have truly been raised from your spiritual death, was by the same power that we desire to see exerted upon others.

Your own regeneration was, indeed, as remarkable an instance of Divine power as the resurrection itself shall be. Yes, and I venture to say it, your spiritual life this very day or any day you choose to mention, is, in itself a display of the same working which shall transform this vile body into its glorious condition. The power of the resurrection is being put forth today—it is pulsing through the quickened portion of this audience! It is heaving with life each bosom that beats with love to God! It is preserving the life-courses in the souls of all the spiritual, so that they go not back to their former death in sin. The power which will work the resurrection will be wonderful, but it will be no new thing. It is everywhere to be beheld in operation in the Church of God at this very moment by those who have eyes to see it.

And herein I join with the Apostle in his prayer, “that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of Glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him: the eyes of your understanding being enlightened. That you may know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power, which He worked in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places far above all principality, and power, and might, and

dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and has put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the Head over all things to the Church, which is His body, the fullness of Him that fills All in All.”

Note next that the terms of our text imply *that opposition may be expected to this* power, but that all resistance will be overcome. That word “subdue” supposes a force to be conquered and brought into subjection. “He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself.” Herein is a great wonder! There will be no opposition to the resurrection. The trumpet sound shall bring the dead from their graves, and no particle shall disobey the summons. But to *spiritual* resurrection there is resistance—resistance which only Omnipotence can vanquish.

In the conversion of sinners natural depravity is an opposing force. For men are set upon their sins and love not the things of God. Neither will they hearken to the voice of Mercy. My Brethren, to remove all our fears concerning our Lord’s ability to save, the word is here used, “He is able”— not only to raise all things from the dead, but “*to subdue* all things to Himself.” Here again I would bid you take the encouragement the text presents you. If there is opposition to the Gospel, *He*is able to subdue it. If in one man there is a prejudice, if in another man the heart is darkened with error.

If one man hates the very name of Jesus, if another is so wedded to his sins that he cannot part from them—if opposition has assumed in some a very determined character—does not the text meet every case? “He is able to subdue *all things*,” to conquer them, to break down the barriers that interpose to prevent the display of His power, and to make those very barriers the means of setting forth that power the more gloriously.

“He is able even to subdue all things.” O take this to the Mercy Seat, you who will be seeking the souls of men this month! Take it to Him and plead this Word of the Holy Spirit in simple, childlike faith. When there is a difficulty you cannot overcome, take it to Him, for He is “able to subdue.”

Note next that the language of our text *includes all supposable*cases. He is able to “subdue *all*things unto Himself.” Not here and there one, but “*all* things.” Brethren, there is no man in this world so fallen, debased, depraved, and willfully wicked, that Jesus cannot save him—not even among those who live beyond the reach of ordinary ministry. He can bring the heathen to the Gospel, or the Gospel to them. The wheels of Providence can be so arranged that salvation shall be brought to the outcasts.

Even war, famine, and plague, may become messengers for Christ, for He, too, rides upon the wings of the wind. There lived some few years ago in Perugia, in Italy, a man of the loosest morals and the worst conceivable disposition. He had given up all religion. He loathed God, and had arrived at such a desperate state of mind that he had conceived an affection for the devil, and endeavored to worship the Evil One. Imagining Satan to be the image and embodiment of all rebellion, free-thinking, and lawlessness, he deified God in his own mind and desired nothing better than to be a devil, himself.

On one occasion, when a Protestant missionary had been in Perugia preaching, a priest happened to say in this man’s hearing, that there were Protestants in Perugia and the city was being defiled by heretics. “And who do you think Protestants are?” said he. “They are men who have renounced Christ and worship the devil.” A gross and outrageous lie was this, but it answered far other ends than its author meant. The man, hearing this, thought, “Oh, then, I will go and meet with them, for I am much of their mind.”

And away he went to the Protestant meeting, in the hope of finding an assembly who propagated lawlessness and worshipped the devil. He there heard the Gospel and was saved! Behold in this and in ten thousand cases equally remarkable, the ability of our Lord to subdue all things unto Himself. How can any man whom God ordains to save escape from that eternal love which is as Omnipresent as the Deity itself? “He is able to subdue all things to Himself.” If His sword cannot reach the far-off ones, His arrows can—and even at this hour they are sharp in His enemy’s hearts.

No boastful Goliath can stand before our David. Though the weapon which He uses today is but a stone from the brook, yet shall the Philistine be subdued. If there should be in this place a Deist, an Atheist, a Romanist, or even a lover of the devil—if he is but a man, mercy yet can come to him. Jesus Christ is able to subdue him unto Himself. None have gone too far, and none are too hardened. While the Christ lives in Heaven we need never despair of any that are still in this mortal life—“He is able to subdue all things unto Himself.”

You will observe in the text that *nothing is said concerning the unfitness of the means*. My fears often are lest souls should not be saved by our instrumentality because of faultiness in us. We fear lest we should not be prayerful enough or energetic or earnest enough. Or that it should be said, “He could not do many mighty works there because of their unbelief.” But the text seems to obliterate *man* altogether—“*He*is able to subdue all things unto Himself”—that is to say, Jesus does it, *Jesus* can do it, will do it all.

By the feeblest means He can work mightily, can take hold of us. Unfit as we are for service, He can make us fit, can grasp us in our folly and teach us wisdom—take us in our weakness and make us strong. My Brethren, if we had to find resources for ourselves, and to rely upon ourselves, our enterprise might well be renounced. But since *He*is able, we will cast the burden of this work on Him. We will go to Him in believing prayer, asking Him to work mightily through us to the praise of His glory, for, “He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself.”

Note that *the ability* is said in the text to be *present with the Savior* now. I have already pointed that out to you, but I refer to it again. The resurrection is a matter of the future, but the working which shall accomplish the resurrection is a matter of the present. “According to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself,” Jesus is as strong now as He ever will be, for He changes not. At this moment He is as able to convert souls as at the period of the brightest revival, or at Pentecost itself.

There are no ebbs and flows with Christ’s power. Omnipotence is in the hand that once was pierced, permanently abiding there. Oh, if we could but rouse it! If we could but bring the Captain of the host to the field again, to fight for His Church, to work His servants! What marvels should we see, for He is able. We are not straitened in Him, we are straitened in ourselves if straitened at all.

Once more, for your comfort let it be remembered that the fact of there having been, as it were, a considerable time in which few have been converted to Christ, is no proof that His power is slackening. For it is well known to you that very few have as yet been raised from the dead, only here and there one like Lazarus and the young man at the gates of Nain. But you do not, therefore, doubt the Lord’s power to raise the dead. Though He tarries we do not mistrust His power to fulfill His promise in due time.

Now the power which is restrained, as it were, so that it does not work the resurrection yet, is the same which may have been restrained in the Christian Church for awhile—but which will be as surely put forth before long in conversion as it will be in the end of time to accomplish the resurrection. Let us cry unto our Lord, for He has but to will it and thousands of sinners will be saved. Let us lift up our hearts to Him who has but to speak the word and whole nations shall be born unto Him.

The resurrection will not be a work occupying centuries, it will be accomplished at once. And so it may be in this House of Prayer, and throughout London, and throughout the world, Christ will do a great and speedy work to the amazement of all beholders. He will send forth the rod of His strength out of Zion, and rule in the midst of His enemies. He will unmask His batteries, He will spring His mines, He will advance His outworks. He will subdue the city of His adversaries, and ride victoriously through the Bozrah of His foes. Who shall stay His hand? Who shall say unto Him, “What are You doing?”

I wish we had time to work out the parallel which our text suggests, between the resurrection and the subduing of all things. The resurrection will be worked by the Divine power, and the subduing of sinners is a precisely similar instance of salvation. All men are dead in sin, but He can raise them. Many of them are corrupt with vice, but He can transform them. Some of them are, as it were, lost to all hope—like the dead body scattered to the winds—desperate cases for whom even pity seems to waste her sighs. But He who raises the dead of all sorts, with a word can raise sinners of all sorts by the selfsame power.

And as the dead, when raised, are made like Christ, so the wicked, when converted, are made like Jesus, too. Brilliant examples of virtue shall be found in those who were terrible instances of vice. The most depraved and dissolute shall become the most devout and earnest. From the vile body to the Glory body—what a leap! And from the sinner, damnable in lust—to the saint bright with the radiance of sanctity—what a space! The leap seems very far, but Omnipotence can bridge the chasm.

The Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ is able to do it. He is able to do it in ten thousand thousand cases—able to do it at this very moment. My anxious desire is to engrave this one thought upon your hearts, my Brothers and Sisters, yes, to write it on the palms of those hands with which you are about to serve the Lord. Learn it and forget it not—almighty power lies with Jesus to achieve the purpose upon which our heart is set, namely, the conversion of many unto Himself.

**III.**I said I would ask you to consider, in the third place, THE WORK WHICH WE DESIRE TO SEE ACCOMPLISHED. I will not detain you, however, with that consideration farther than this. Brethren, we long to see the Savior subduing souls *unto Himself*. Not to our way of thinking. Not to our Church. Not to the honor of our powers of persuasion, but “*unto* Himself.” “He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself.”

O Sinner, how I wish you were subdued to Jesus! To kiss those dear feet that were nailed for you, to love in life, Him who loved you to the death! Ah, Soul, it were a blessed subjection for you. Never subject of earthly monarch so happy in his king as you would be. God is our witness, we who preach the Gospel—we do not want to subdue you to *ourselves*—as though we would rule you and be lords over your spirits. It is to Jesus, to Jesus only, that we would have you subdued.

O that you desired this subjection! It would be liberty, and peace, and joy to you! Notice that this subjection is eminently to be desired, since it consists in transformation. Catch the thought of the text. He transforms the vile body into His glorious body, and this is a part of the subjection of all things unto Himself. But do you call that subjection? Is it not a subjection to be longed after with an insatiable desire—to be so subdued to Christ that I, a poor, vile sinner, may become like He—holy, harmless, undefiled?

This is the subjection that we wish for you, O unconverted ones! We trust we have felt it ourselves. We pray you may feel it, too. He is able to give it to you. Ask it of Him at once. Now breathe the prayer, now believe that the Savior can work the transformation even in you—in you at this very moment. And, O my Brethren in the faith, have faith for sinners now. While they are pleading, plead for them that this subjection which is an uplifting, this conquering which is a liberating, may be accomplished in them!

For, remember again, that to be subjected to Christ is, according to our text, to be fitted for Heaven. He will change our vile body and make it like the body of His Glory. The body *of* the Glory is a body fitted *for* Glory, a body which participates *in* Glory. The Lord Jesus can make you, Sinner, though now fitted for Hell, fitted for Heaven, fitted for Glory, and breathe into you now an anticipation of that Glory, in the joy and peace of mind which His pardon will bring to you.

It must be a very sad thing to be a soldier under any circumstances. To have to cut and hack and kill and subdue, even in a righteous cause, is cruel work. But to be a soldier of King Jesus is an honor and a joy. The service of Jesus is a grand service. Brethren, we have been earnestly seeking to capture some hearts that are here present, to capture them for Jesus. It has been a long and weary siege up till this hour. We have summoned them to surrender, and opened fire upon them with the Gospel, but as yet in vain. I have strived to throw a few live shells into the very heart of their city, in the form of warning and threat and exhortation.

I know there have been explosions in the hearts of some of you, which have done your sins some damage, killed some of the little ones that would have grown up to greater iniquity. You have been carefully block

aded by Providence and Divine Grace. Your hearts have found no provision for joy in sin, no helps to peace in unrighteousness. How I wish I could starve you out until you would yield to my Lord, the Crown Prince, who again, today,*demands* that you yield to Him. It is dreadful to compel a city to open its gates unwillingly—to let an enemy come in. For however gentle the enemy is, his face is an unwelcome sight to the vanquished.

But oh, how I wish I could burst open the gates of a sinner’s heart today for the Prince Emmanuel to come in! He who is at your gates is not an alien monarch, He is your rightful prince. He is your Friend and Lover. It will not be a strange face that you will see, when Jesus comes to reign in you. When the King, in His beauty, wins your soul, you will think yourselves a thousand fools that you did not receive Him before. Instead of fearing that He will ransack your soul, you will open all its doors and invite Him to search each room.

You will cry, “Take all, You blessed Monarch, it shall be most mine when it is Yours. Take all, and reign and rule.” I propound terms of capitulation to you, O sinner. They are but these—yield up yourself to Christ. Give up your works and ways, both *good* and bad, and trust in Him to save you. Be His servant henceforth and forever. While I thus invite you, I trust He will speak through me to you and win you to Himself. I shall not plead in vain, the Word shall not fall to the ground. I fall back upon the delightful consolation of our text, “He is able to subdue all things unto Himself.” May He prove His power this morning. Amen and Amen.

***PORTIONS OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Philippians 3.***

MESSRS, PASSMORE AND ALABASTER, Paternoster Row, beg to inform the sermon readers that the second volume of MR. SPURGEON’S GREAT WORK UPON THE PSALMS is receiving the most favorable notice of the reviewers. The first edition of Vol. I is nearly exhausted, and a second edition will be issued. The large volumes, unusually crowded with matter, are published at 8s. each, a price far below the usual charge for such books. The following extract is from the *Baptist Magazin*e—“It seems to us that Mr. Spurgeon has got himself not only to the devout and scholarly exposition of the Psalms, but also to the rendering of his work positively fascinating by its many charms…In the possession of this book the young will find themselves at college, with the learned and the good of all ages for their tutors, and maturer Christians will have the largest spiritual knowledge increased, and its richest experiences strengthened.”

Adapted from*The C.H. Spurgeon Collection*, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #1959 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

THE WATCHWORD FOR TODAY— “STAND FAST”  
SERMON NO. 1959

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, APRIL 17, 1887, *BY C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“For our citizenship is in Heaven, from where, also, we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body according to the working whereby  
He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself. Therefore, my brethren, dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, stand fast in the Lord my dearly beloved.”***Php 3:20-21***;*** Php 4:1***.***

EVERY doctrine of the Word of God has its practical bearing. As each tree bears seed after its kind, so does every Truth of God bring forth practical virtues. Hence you find the Apostle Paul very full of “therefore”—his therefores being the conclusions drawn from certain statements of Divine Truth. I marvel that our excellent translators should have divided the argument from the conclusion by making a new chapter where there is least reason for it.

Last Lord’s Day I spoke with you concerning the most sure and certain Resurrection of our Lord Jesus [#1958—*The First Appearance of the Risen Lord to the Eleven*]—now there is a practical force in that Truth of God which constitutes part of what is meant by, “the power of His Resurrection.” Since the Lord has risen and will surely come a second time—and will raise the bodies of His people at His coming—there is something to wait for and a grand reason for steadfastness while thus waiting. We are looking for the coming of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ from Heaven and that He shall “fashion anew the body of our humiliation, that it may be conformed to the body of His Glory.” Therefore let us stand fast in the position which will secure us this honor. Let us keep our posts until the coming of the great Captain shall release the sentinels. The glorious resurrection will abundantly repay us for all the toil and travail we may have to undergo in the battle for the Lord. The Glory to be revealed even now casts a light upon our path and causes sunshine within our hearts! The hope of this happiness makes us even now strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.

Paul was deeply anxious that those in whom he had been the means of kindling the heavenly hope might be preserved faithful until the coming of Christ. He trembled lest any of them should seem to draw back and prove traitors to their Lord. He dreaded lest he should lose what he hoped he had gained, by their turning aside from the faith. Hence he beseeches them to “stand fast.” He expressed in the sixth verse of the first chapter his conviction that He who had begun a good work in them would perform it, but his intense love made him exhort them, saying, “Stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved.” By such exhortations, final perseverance is promoted and secured.

Paul has fought bravely and, in the case of the Philippian converts, he believes that he has secured the victory, but he fears lest it should yet be lost. He reminds me of the death of that British hero, Wolfe, who, on the heights of Quebec, received a mortal wound. It was just at the moment when the enemy fled and when he knew that they were running, a smile was on his face—and he cried, “Hold me up. Let not my brave soldiers see me drop. The day is ours. Oh, do keep it!” His sole anxiety was to make the victory sure! Thus warriors die and thus Paul lived. His very soul seems to cry, “We have won the day. Oh, do keep it!”

O my beloved Hearers, I believe that many of you are “in the Lord,” but I entreat you to “stand fast in the Lord.” In your case, also, the day is won, but oh, do keep it! There is the pith of all I have to say to you this morning—may God the Holy Spirit write it on your hearts! Having done all things well up to now, I entreat you to obey the injunction of Jude, to, “keep yourselves in the love of God,” and to join with me in adoring Him who alone is able to keep us from falling and to present us faultless before His Presence with exceedingly great joy. Unto Him be glory forever! Amen.

In leading out your thoughts I will keep to the following order— First, it seems to me from the text that *the Apostle perceived that these Philippian Christians were in their right place—*they were, “in the Lord,” and in such a position that he could safely bid them, “stand fast” in it. Secondly, *he longed for them that they should keep their right place—* “Stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved.” And then, thirdly, *he urged the best motives for their keeping their place*. These motives are contained in the first two verses of our text, upon which we will enlarge further on.  
**I.**Paul joyfully perceived that his BELOVED CONVERTS WERE IN THEIR RIGHT PLACE. It is a very important thing, indeed, that we should begin well. The start is not everything, but it is a great deal. It has been said by the old proverb, that, “Well begun is half done,” and it is certainly so in the things of God. It is vitally important to enter in at the strait gate—to start on the heavenly journey from the right point. I have no doubt that many slips and falls and apostasies among professors are due to the fact that they were not right at first—the foundation was always upon the sand and when the house came down, at last, it was no more than might have been expected. A flaw in the foundation is pretty sure to be followed by a crack in the superstructure! See to it that you lay a good foundation. It is better to have no repentance than a repentance which needs to be repented of! It is better to have no faith than a false faith! It is better to make no profession of religion than to make an untruthful one! God give us Grace that we may not make a mistake in learning the alphabet of godliness, or else in all our learning we shall blunder on and increase in error. We should learn early the difference between Grace and merit, between the purpose of God and the will of man, between trust in God and confidence in the flesh. If we do not start aright, the further we go, the further we shall be from our desired end and the more thoroughly in the wrong shall we find ourselves. Yes, it is of prime importance that our new birth and our first love should be genuine beyond all question.  
The only position, however, in which we can begin aright is to be, “in the Lord.” This is to begin as we may safely go on. This is the essential point. It is a very good thing for Christians to be in the Church, but if you are in the Church before you are in the Lord, you are out of place! It is a good thing to be engaged in holy work, but if you are in holy work before you are in the Lord, you will have no heart for it, neither will the Lord accept it! It is not essential that you should be in this Church or in that Church—but it *is* essential that you should be, “in the Lord!” It is not essential that you should be in the Sunday school, nor in the Working Meeting, nor in the Tract Society—but it*is* essential to the last degree that you should be in the Lord! The Apostle rejoiced over those that were converted at Philippi because he knew that they were in the Lord. They were where he wished them to remain and, therefore, he said, “Stand fast in the Lord.”  
What is it to be, “in the Lord”? Well, Brothers and Sisters, *we are in the Lord vitally and evidently when we fly to the Lord Jesus by repentance and faith* and make Him to be our refuge and hiding place. Is it so with you? Have you fled out of *self*? Are you trusting in the Lord, *alone*? Have you come to Calvary and beheld your Savior? As the doves build their nests in the rocks, have you thus made your home in Jesus? There is no shelter for a guilty soul but in His wounded side! Have you come there? Are you in Him? Then stay there. You will never have a better refuge! In fact, there is no other. No other name is given under Heaven among men whereby we must be saved. I cannot tell you to stand fast in the Lord, unless you are there—hence my first enquiry is—Are you in Christ? Is He your only confidence? In His life, His death and His Resurrection do you find the grounds of your hope? Is He, Himself, all your salvation and all your desire? If so, stand fast in Him.  
Next, these people, in addition to having fled to Christ for refuge, were now *in Christ as to their daily life*. They had heard Him say, “Abide in Me” and, therefore, they remained in the daily enjoyment of Him, in reliance upon Him, in obedience to Him, and in the earnest copying of His example. They were Christians! That is to say, persons upon whom was named the name of Christ. They were endeavoring to realize the power of His death and Resurrection as a sanctifying influence, killing their sins and fostering their virtues. They were laboring to reproduce His image in themselves so that they might bring glory to His name. Their lives were spent within the circle of their Savior’s influence. Are you so, my dear Friends? Then stand fast! You will never find a nobler example! You will never be saturated with a more Divine spirit than that of Christ Jesus your Lord! Whether we eat or drink, or whatever we do, let us do all in the name of the Lord Jesus and so live in Him.  
These Philippians had, moreover, realized that they were *in Christ by a real and vital union with Him*. They had come to feel, not like separated individualities, copying a model, but as members of a body made like their Head. By a living, loving, lasting union, they were joined to Christ as their Covenant Head. They could say, “Who shall separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus, our Lord?” Do you know what it is to feel that the life which is in you is first in Christ and still flows from Him, even as the life of the branch is mainly in the stem? “I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me.” This is to be in Christ! Are you in Him in this sense? Forgive my pressing the question. If you answer me in the affirmative, I shall then entreat you to “stand fast” in Him. It is in Him and in Him, only, that spiritual life is to be sustained, even as only *from* Him can it be received! To be engrafted into Christ is salvation—but to*abide in* Christ is the full enjoyment of it! True union to Christ is eternal life. Paul, therefore, rejoiced over these Philippians because they were joined unto the Lord in one spirit!  
This expression is very short, but very full. “In Christ.” Does it not mean that we are in Christ as the birds are in the air which buoys them up and enables them to fly? Are we not in Christ as the fish are in the sea? *Our Lord has become our element—*vital and all surrounding! In Him we live, move and have our being. He is in us and we are in Him. We are filled with all the fullness of God because all fullness dwells in Christ and we dwell in Him. Christ to us is all. He is in all and He is All in All! Jesus to us is everything in everything. Without Him we can *do*nothing and we *are* nothing! Thus are we emphatically *in* Him. If you have reached this point, “stand fast” in it! If you dwell in the secret place of the tabernacles of the Most high, abide under the shadow of the Almighty! Do you sit at His table and eat of His dainties? Then prolong the visit and think not of removal. Say in your soul—  
***“Here would I find a settled rest,  
While others go and come;  
No more a stranger, or a guest,  
But like a child at home.”***  
Has Jesus brought you into His green pastures? Then lie down in them. Go no further, for you will never fare better. Stay with your Lord, however long the night, for only in Him have you hope of morning!  
You see, then, that these people were where they should be—in the Lord—and this was the reason why the Apostle took such delight in them. Kindly read the first verse of the fourth chapter and see how he loves them and joys over them. He heaps up titles of love! Some dip their morsel in vinegar, but Paul’s words were saturated with honey. Here we not only have sweet words, but they *mean* something—his love was real and fervent! The very heart of Paul is written out large in this verse—“Therefore, my brethren, dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, stand fast in the Lord my dearly beloved.”  
Because they were in Christ, first of all they were Paul’s *Brothers and Sisters*. This was a new relationship, not earthly, but heavenly. What did this Jew from Tarsus know about the Philippians? Many of them were Gentiles. Time was when he would have called them dogs and despised them as the uncircumcised. But now he says, “My brethren.” That poor word has become very hackneyed. We talk of brethren without particularly much of brotherly love, but true Brothers and Sisters have a love for one another which is very unselfish and admirable—and so there is between real Christians a brotherhood which they will neither disown, nor dissemble, nor forget! It is said of our Lord, “For this cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren.” And surely they need never be ashamed to call one another brethren! Paul, at any rate, looks at the jailor, that jailor who had set his feet in the stocks—and he looks at the jailor’s family, at Lydia and many others—in fact, at the whole company that he had gathered at Philippi and he salutes them lovingly as, “My brethren.” Their names were written in the same family register because they were in Christ and, therefore, had one Father in Heaven!  
Next, the Apostle calls them, “my *dearly beloved*.” The verse almost begins with this word and it quite finishes with it. The repetition makes it mean, “My *doubly* dear ones.” Such is the love which every true servant of Christ will have for those who have been begotten to the faith of Christ by his means. Oh, yes, if you are in Christ, His ministers *must* love you! How could there be a lack of affection in our hearts towards you, since we have been the means of bringing you to Jesus? Without cant or display we call you our “dearly Beloved.”  
Then the Apostle calls them his “*longed for*,” that is, his most desired ones. He first desired to see them converted. After that he desired to see them baptized. Then he desired to see them exhibiting all the Graces of Christians. When he saw holiness in them, he desired to visit them and commune with them. Their constant kindness created in him a strong desire to speak with them face to face. He loved them and desired their company because they were in Christ! So he speaks of them as those for whom he longed. His delight was in thinking of them and in hoping to visit them. Then he adds, “My joy and crown.” Paul had been the means of their salvation and when he thought of that blessed result, he never regretted all that he had suffered—his persecutions among the Gentiles seemed light, indeed, since these priceless souls were his reward! Though he was nothing but a poor prisoner of Christ, yet he talks in right royal style—they are his *crown*.  
They were his *stephano*s, or crown given as a reward for his life-race. This, among the Greeks, was usually a wreath of flowers placed around the victor’s brow. Paul’s crown would never fade. He writes as he felt the amaranth around his temples—even now he looks upon the Philippians as his chaplet of honor! They were his joy and his crown! He anticipated, I do not doubt, that throughout eternity it would be a part of his Heaven to see them amid their blessedness and to know that he helped to bring them to that felicity by leading them to Christ! O Beloved, it is, indeed, our highest joy that we have not run in vain, neither labored in vain—you who have been snatched as “brands from the burning” and are now living to the praise of our Lord Jesus Christ—you are our prize, our crown, our joy!  
These converts were all this to Paul simply because they were “in Christ.” They had begun well; they were where they should be and he, therefore, rejoiced in them.  
**II.**But secondly, it was for this reason that HE LONGED THAT THEY SHOULD STAY THERE. He entreated them to stand fast. “So stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved.” The beginning of religion is not the whole of it. You must not suppose that the sum of godliness is contained within the experience of a day or two, or a week, or a few months, or even a few years. Precious are the feelings which attend conversion, but dream not that repentance, faith and so forth are for a season and then all is done with! I am afraid there are some who secretly say, “Everything is now complete. I have experienced the necessary change, I have been to see the Elders and the Pastor. I have been baptized and received into the Church—now all is right forever.”  
That is a false view of your condition! In conversion you have started in the race, but you must run to the end of the course. In your confession of Christ you have carried your tools into the vineyard, but the day’s work now begins. Remember, “He that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.” Godliness is a life-long business. The working out of the salvation which the Lord, Himself, works *in* you is not a matter of certain hours, or of a limited period of life. Salvation is unfolded throughout all our sojourn here. We continue to repent and to believe—and even the process of our conversion continues as we are changed more and more into the image of our Lord. Final perseverance is the necessary evidence of genuine conversion!  
In proportion as we rejoice over converts, we feel an intense bitterness when any disappoint us and turn out to be merely temporary campfollowers. We sigh over the seed which sprang up so speedily, but which withers so soon because it has neither root nor depth of earth. We were ready to say—“Ring the bells of Heaven”—but the bells of Heaven did not ring because these people talked about Christ and said they were in Christ, but it was all a delusion! After a while, for one reason or another, they went back. “They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.” Our Churches suffer most seriously from the great numbers who drop out of their ranks and either go back to the world, or else must be pursuing a very secret and solitary path in their way to Heaven, for we hear no more of them. Our joy is turned to disappointment; our crown of laurel becomes a circle of faded leaves and we are weary at the remembrance of it. With what earnestness, therefore, would we say to you who are beginning the race, “Continue in your course. We beseech you turn not aside, neither slacken your running till you have won the prize!”  
I heard an expression yesterday which pleased me much. I spoke about the difficulty of keeping on. “Yes,” answered my friend, “and it is harder, still, to keep on keeping on.” So it is. There is the pinch. I know lots of fellows who are wonders at the start. What a rush they make! But then there is no stay in them—they soon lose breath. The difference between the spurious and the real Christian lies in this staying power. The real Christian has a life within him which can never die—an incorruptible seed which lives and abides forever—but the spurious Christian begins after a fashion, but ends almost as soon as he begins! He is esteemed a saint, but turns out a hypocrite. He makes a fair show for a while, but soon he quits the way of holiness and makes his own damnation sure. God save you, dear Friends, from anything which looks like apostasy! Hence I would, with all my might, press upon you these two most weighty words— “Stand fast.”  
I will put the exhortation thus—“Stand fast *doctrinally*.” In this age all the ships in the waters are pulling up their anchors! They are drifting with the tide. They are driven about with every wind. It is your wisdom to put down more anchors. I have taken the precaution to cast four anchors out of the stern, as well as to see that the great bower anchor is in its proper place. I will not budge an inch from the old doctrine for any man! Now that the cyclone is triumphant over many a bowing wall and tottering fence, those who are built upon the One Foundation must prove its value by standing fast! We will listen to no teaching but that of the Lord Jesus! If you see a Truth to be in God’s Word, grasp it by your faith—and if it is unpopular, grapple it to you as with hooks of steel! If you are despised as a fool for holding it, hold it the more! Like an oak, take deeper root, because the winds would tear you from your place. Defy reproach and ridicule and you have already vanquished it. Stand fast, like the British squares in the olden times. When fierce assaults were made upon them, every man seemed transformed to rock. We might have wandered from the ranks a little in more peaceful times, to look after the fascinating flowers which grow on every side of our march—but now we know that the enemy surrounds us—so we keep strictly to the line of march and tolerate no roaming. The watchword of the host of God just now is—“Stand fast!” Hold to the faith once delivered to the saints. Hold fast the form of sound words and deviate not one jot or tittle from them. Stand fast doctrinally!  
*Practically*, also, abide firm in the

ight, the true, the holy. This is of the utmost importance. The barriers are broken down—they would amalgamate Church and world—yes, even Church and *stage*. It is proposed to combine God and devil in one service! Christ and Belial are to perform on one stage! Surely now is the time when the lion shall eat straw like the ox and very dirty straw too. So they say. But I repeat to you this Word of God, “Come out from among them, and be you separate, and touch not the unclean thing.” Write, “holiness unto the Lord,” not only on your altars, but upon the bells of the horses! Let everything be done as before the living God. Do all things unto holiness and edification. Strive together to maintain the purity of the disciples of Christ! Take up your cross and go outside the camp bearing His reproach. If you have already stood apart in your decision for the Lord, continue to do so. Stand fast! In nothing be moved by the laxity of the age. In nothing be affected by the current of modern opinion. Say to yourself, “I will do as Christ bids me to the utmost of my ability. I will follow the Lamb wherever He goes.” In these times of worldliness, impurity, self-indulgence and error, it becomes the Christian to gather up his skirts and keep his feet and his garments clean from the pollution which lies all around him. We must be more Puritan and precise than we have been. Oh, for Grace to stand fast!  
Mind also that you stand fast *experimentally*. Pray that your inward experience may be a close adhesion to your Master. Do not go astray from His Presence. Neither climb with those who dream of perfection in the flesh, nor grovel with those who doubt the possibility of present salvation. Take the Lord Jesus Christ to be your sole treasure and let your heart be always with Him. Stand fast in faith in His Atonement, in confidence in His Divinity, in assurance of His Second Advent. I pine to know within my soul the power of His Resurrection and to have unbroken fellowship with Him. In communion with the Father and the Son let us stand fast! He shall fare well whose heart and soul, affections and understanding are wrapped up in Christ Jesus and in no one else. Concerning your inward life, your secret prayer, your walk with God, here is the watchword of the day—“Stand fast.”  
To put it very plainly, “Stand fast *in the Lord,*”*without wishing for another trust*. Do not desire to have any hope but that which is in Christ. Do not entertain the proposition that you should unite another confidence to your confidence in the Lord. Have no hankering after any other fashion of faith except the faith of a sinner in his Savior. All hope but that which is set before us in the Gospel and brought to us by the Lord Jesus is a poisoned delicacy—highly colored, but by no means to be so much as *tasted* by those who have been fed upon the Bread of Heaven! What do we need more than Jesus? What way of salvation do we seek but that of Grace? What security but the precious blood? Stand fast and wish for no other rock of salvation save the Lord Jesus!  
Next, stand fast *without wavering in our trust*. Permit no doubt to worry you. Know that Jesus can save you and, what is more, know that He *has* saved you! So commit yourself to His hands that you are as sure of your salvation as of your existence! The blood of Jesus Christ cleans us from all sin this day—His righteousness covers us and His life quickens us into newness of life. Tolerate no doubt, mistrust, suspicion, or misgiving. Believe in Christ up to the hilt! As for myself, I will yield to be lost forever if Jesus does not save me! I will have no other string to my bow, no second door of hope, or way of retreat. I could risk a thousand souls on my Lord’s Word and feel no risk. Stand fast, without wishing for another trust and without wavering in the trust you have.  
Moreover, stand fast *without wandering into sin*. You are tempted this way and that way—stand fast! Inward passions rise. Lusts of the flesh rebel. The devil hurls his fearful suggestions. The men of your own household tempt you. Stand fast! Only so will you be preserved from the torrents of iniquity. Keep close to the example and spirit of your Master and, having done all, still stand.  
As I have said, stand fast without wandering, so next I must say stand fast *without wearying*. You are a little tired. Never mind, take a little rest and brush up again. “Oh,” you say, “this toil is so monotonous.” Do it better and that will be a change. Your Savior endured His life and labor without this complaint, for zeal had eaten Him up. “Alas,” you cry, “I cannot see *results*!” Never mind. Wait for results, even as the farmer waits for the precious fruits of the earth. “Oh, Sir, I plod along and make no progress.” Never mind, you are a poor judge of your own success. Work on, for in due season you shall reap if you faint not. Practice perseverance. Remember that if you have the work of faith and the labor of love, you must complete the trio by adding the patience of *hope*. You cannot do without this last. “Be steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as you know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.”  
I am reminded of Sir Christopher Wren, when he cleared away old St. Paul’s to make room for his splendid pile. He was compelled to use battering rams upon the massive walls. The workmen kept on battering and battering. An enormous force was brought to bear upon the walls for days and nights, but it did not appear to have made the least impression upon the ancient masonry. Yet the great architect knew what he was doing—he bade them keep on incessantly and the ram fell again and again upon the rocky wall till, at length, the whole mass was disintegrating and coming apart—and then each stroke began to tell. At a blow it reeled! At another it quivered! At another it moved visibly. At another it fell over amid clouds of dust! These last strokes did the work!  
Do you think so? No, it was the *combination of blows*, the first as truly as the last! Keep on with the battering ram. I hope to keep on until I die. And, mark you, I may die and I may not see the errors of the hour totter to their fall, but I shall be perfectly content to sleep in Christ, for I have a sure expectation that this work will succeed in the end! I shall be happy to have done my share of the work, even if I personally see little apparent result. Lord, let Your work appear unto Your servants and we will be content that Your Glory should be reserved for our children. Stand fast, my Brothers and Sisters, in incessant labors, for the end is sure!  
And then, in addition to standing fast in that respect, stand fast *without warping*. Timber, when it is rather green, is apt to go this way or that. The spiritual weather is very bad, just now, for green wood—it is one day damp with superstition, and another day it is parched with skepticism. Rationalism and Ritualism are both at work. I pray that you may not warp! Keep straight; keep to the Truth of God, the whole Truth of God and nothing but the Truth, for in the Master’s name we bid you, “Stand fast in the Lord.”  
Stand fast, for there is great need. Many walk of whom I have told you, often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the Cross of Christ!  
Paul urged them to stand fast because even in his own case, spiritual life was a struggle. Even Paul said, “Not as though I had already attained.” He was pressing forward. He was straining his whole energy by the power of the Holy Spirit. He did not expect to be carried to Heaven on a feather bed! He was warring and agonizing. You, Beloved, must do the same. What a grand example of perseverance did Paul set to us all! Nothing enticed him from his steadfastness. “None of these things move me,” he said, “neither count I my life dear unto me.” He has entered into his rest because the Lord his God helped him to stand fast, even to the end. I wish I had power to put this more earnestly, but my very soul goes forth with it. “Stand fast in the Lord, my dearly Beloved.”  
**III.**Thirdly, THE APOSTLE URGED THE BEST MOTIVES FOR THEIR STANDING FAST.  
He says, “Stand fast *because of your citizenship*.” Read the twentieth verse—“For our citizenship is in Heaven.” Now, if you are what you profess to be, if you are in Christ, you are citizens of the New Jerusalem. Men ought to behave themselves according to their citizenship and not dishonor their city. When a man was a citizen of Athens, in the olden time, he felt it incumbent upon him to be brave. Xerxes said, “These Athenians are not ruled by kings: how will they fight?” “No,” said one, “but every man respects the law and each man is ready to die for his country.” Xerxes soon knew that the same obedience and respect of law ruled the Spartans and that these, because they were of Sparta, were all brave as lions!  
He sends word to Leonidas and his little troop to give up their arms. “Come and take them,” was the courageous reply! The Persian king had myriads of soldiers with him, while Leonidas had only 300 Spartans at his side—yet they kept the pass and it cost the eastern despot many thousands of men to force a passage! The sons of Sparta died rather than desert their post! Every citizen of Sparta felt that he must stand fast—it was not for such a man as he to yield. I like the spirit of Bayard, that “knight without fear and without reproach.” He knew not what fear meant. In his last battle, his spine was broken and he said to those around him, “Place me up against a tree, so that I may sit up and die with my face to the enemy.” Yes, if our backs were broken, if we could no more bear the shield or use the sword, it would be incumbent upon us, as citizens of the New Jerusalem, to die with our faces towards the enemy! We must not yield! We dare not yield if we are of the city of the great King! The martyrs cry to us to stand fast! The cloud of witnesses bending from their thrones above beseech us to stand fast! Yes, all the hosts of the shining ones cry to us, “Stand fast!” Stand fast for God, the truth, holiness—and let no man take your crown.  
The next argument that Paul used was *their outlook*. “Our citizenship is in Heaven; from where, also, we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.” Brethren, Jesus is coming! He is even now on the way. You have heard our tidings till you scarcely credit us, but the Word of God is true and it will surely be fulfilled before long. The Lord is coming, indeed! He promised to come to die and He kept His Word—He now promises to come to reign and you may be sure that He will keep His tryst with His people. He is coming! Ears of faith can hear the sound of His chariot wheels! Every moment of time, every event of Providence is bringing Him nearer. Blessed are those servants who shall not be sleeping when He comes, nor wandering from their posts of duty! Happy shall they be whom their Lord shall find faithfully watching and standing fast in that great day!  
To us, Beloved, He is coming, not as Judge and Destroyer, but as Savior. We look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ! Now, if we do look for Him, let us “stand fast.” There must be no going into sin, no forsaking the fellowship of the Church, no leaving the Truth, no trying to play fast and loose with godliness, no running with the hare and hunting with the hounds. Let us stand so fast in singleness of heart that whenever Jesus comes, we shall be able to say, “Welcome, welcome, Son of God!”  
Sometimes I wait through the weary years with great comfort. There was a ship, some time ago, outside a certain harbor. A heavy sea made the ship roll fearfully. A dense fog blotted out all buoys and lights. The captain never left the wheel. He could not tell his way into the harbor and no pilot could get out to him for a long time. Eager passengers urged him to be courageous and make a dash for the harbor. He said, “No. It is not my duty to run so great a risk. A pilot is required, here, and I will wait for one if I wait a week.” The truest courage is that which can bear to be charged with cowardice! To wait is much wiser than when you cannot hear the foghorn and have no pilot and steam on and wreck your vessel on the rocks! Our prudent captain waited his time and, at last, he spied the pilot’s boat coming to him over the boiling sea. When the pilot was at his work, the captain’s anxious waiting was over. The Church is like that vessel—she is pitched to and fro in the storm and the dark—and the Pilot has not yet come. The weather is very threatening. All around, the darkness hang like a pall. But Jesus will come, walking on the water, before long! He will bring us safely to the desired haven. Let us wait with patience. Stand fast! Stand fast! Jesus is coming and in Him is our sure hope!  
Further, there was another motive. *There was an expectation*. “He shall change our vile body,” or rather, “body of our humiliation.” Only think of it, dear Friends! No more headaches or heartaches, no more feebleness and fainting, no more inward tumor or consumption! The Lord shall transfigure this body of our humiliation into the likeness of the body of His Glory. Our frame is now made up of decaying substances—it is of the earth, earthy. “So to the dust, return we must.” This body groans, suffers, becomes diseased and dies. Blessed be God, it shall be wonderfully changed and then there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain!  
The natural appetites of this body engender sad tendencies to sin and, in this respect, it is a “vile body.” It shall not always be so! The great change will deliver it from all that is gross and carnal. It shall be pure as the Lord’s body! Whatever the body of Christ is now, our body is to be like it. We spoke of it last Sunday, you know, when we heard Him say, “Handle Me.” We are to have a real, corporeal body as He had, for substance and reality! And, like His body, it will be full of beauty, full of health and strength. It will enjoy peculiar immunities from evil and special adaptations for good. That is what is going to happen to me and to you! Therefore let us stand fast. Let us not willfully throw away our prospects of Glory and immortality. What? Relinquish resurrection? Relinquish Heaven? Relinquish likeness to the risen Lord? O God, save us from such a terrible piece of apostasy! Save us from such immeasurable folly! Suffer us not to turn our backs in the day of battle, since that would be to turn our backs from the crown of life that fades not away!  
Lastly, the Apostle urges us to stand fast because of *our resources*. Somebody may ask, “How can this body of ours be transformed and transfigured until it becomes like the body of Christ?” I cannot tell you anything about the process! It will all be accomplished in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. But I can tell you by what power it will be accomplished. The Omnipotent Lord will lay bare His arm and exercise His might, “according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself.” O Brothers and Sisters, we may well stand fast since we have infinite power at our backs! The Lord is with us with all His energy, even with His all-conquering strength which shall yet subdue all His foes! Do not let us imagine that any enemy can be too strong for Christ’s arm. If He is able to subdue all things unto Himself, He can certainly bear us through all opposition. One glance of His eyes may wither all opposers, or, better still, one word from His lips may turn them into friends!  
The army of the Lord is strong in reserves. These reserves have never yet been fully called out. We, who are in the field, are only a small squadron holding the fort. But our Lord has at His back 10,000 times ten thousands who will carry war into the enemy’s camp! When the Captain of our salvation comes to the front, He will bring His heavenly legions with Him. Our business is to watch until He appears upon the scene, for when He comes, His infinite resources will be put in marching order!  
I like that speech of Wellington, (who was so calm amid the roar of Waterloo), when an officer sent word, “Tell the Commander-in-Chief that he must move me, I cannot hold my position any longer, my numbers are so thinned.” “Tell him,” said the great general, “he *must* hold his place! Every Englishman today must die where he stands, or else win the victory.” The officer read the command to stand and he did stand till the trumpet sounded victory! And so it is now. My Brothers and Sisters, we must die where we are rather than yield to the enemy! If Jesus tarries, we must not desert our posts. Wellington knew that the heads of the Prussian columns would soon be visible, coming in to ensure the victory—and so by faith we can perceive the legions of our Lord approaching—in serried ranks His angels fly through the opening Heaven! The air is teeming with them! I hear their silver trumpets. Behold, He comes with clouds! When He comes, He will abundantly recompense all who stood fast amid the rage of battle. Let us sing, “Hold the fort, for I am coming!”

***PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Philippians 3.*HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”— 672, 674, 670 AND, “HOLD THE FORT.”**

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Sermon #2405 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

**÷Php 4.4**

JOY, A DUTY  
NO. 2405

**INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S DAY, MARCH 24, 1895. *DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORD’S-DAY EVENING, MARCH 20, 1887.**

***“Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice.”*** Php 4:4

THERE is a marvelous medicinal power in joy. Most medicines are distasteful, but this, which is the best of all medicines, is sweet to the taste and comforting to the heart. We noticed, in our reading, that there had been a little tiff between two sisters in the Church at Philippi—I am glad that we do not know what the quarrel was about. I am usually thankful for ignorance on such subjects—but, as a cure for disagreements, the Apostle says, “Rejoice in the Lord always.” People who are very happy, especially those who are very happy in the Lord, are not apt either to give offense or to take offense. Their minds are so sweetly occupied with higher things that they are not easily distracted by the little troubles which naturally arise among such imperfect creatures as we are. Joy in the Lord is the cure for all discord. Should it not be so? What is this joy but the concord of the soul, the accord of the heart, with the joy of Heaven? Joy in the Lord, then, drives away the discords of earth.

Further, Brothers and Sisters, notice that the Apostle, after he had said, “Rejoice in the Lord always,” commanded the Philippians to be careful for nothing, thus implying that joy in the Lord is one of the best preparations for the trials of this life. The cure for care is joy in the Lord! No, my Brother, you will not be able to keep on with your fretfulness. No, my Sister, you will not be able to weary yourself, any longer, with your anxieties if the Lord will but fill you with His joy! Then, being satisfied with your God, yes, *more than satisfied*, and overflowing with delight in Him, you will say to yourself, “Why are you cast down, O my Soul? And why are you disquieted in me? Hope you in God, for I shall yet praise Him for the help of His Countenance.”

What is there on earth that is worth fretting for, even, for five minutes? If one could gain an imperial crown by a day of care, it would be too great an expense for a thing which would bring more care with it. Therefore, let us be thankful, let us be joyful in the Lord. I count it one of the wisest things that, by rejoicing in the Lord, we commence our Heaven here below. It is possible to do so—it is profitable to do so—and we are commanded to do so!

Now I come to the text, itself, “Rejoice in the Lord always; and again I say, Rejoice.”  
**I.**It will be our first business at this time to consider THE GRACE COMMANDED, this Grace of joy. “Rejoice in the Lord,” says the Apostle.  
In the first place, *this is a very delightful thing.* What a gracious God we serve, who makes delight to be a duty and who commands us to rejoice! Should we not at once be obedient to such a command as this? It is intended that we should be happy. That is the meaning of the precept, that we should be cheerful—more than that, that we should be thankful! More than that, that we should rejoice! I think this word, “rejoice,” is almost a French word—it is not only joy, but it is joy over again, *re*-joice! You know *re*usually signifies the re-duplication of a thing, the taking of it over, again. We are to joy, and then we are to re-joy. We are to chew the cud of delight—we are to roll the dainty morsel under our tongue till we get the very essence out of it!  
“Rejoice.” Joy is a delightful thing. You cannot be too happy, Brothers and Sisters! No, do not suspect yourself of being wrong because you are full of delight. You know it is said of the Divine Wisdom, “Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.” Provided that it is joy in the Lord, you cannot have too much of it! The fly is drowned in the honey, or the sweet syrup into which he plunges himself, but this heavenly syrup of delight will not drown your soul or intoxicate your heart! It will do you good, not evil, all the days of your life. God never commanded us to do a thing which would harm us and, when He bids us rejoice, we may be sure that this is as delightful as it is safe, and as safe as it is delightful! Come, Brothers and Sisters, I am inviting you, now, to no distasteful duty when, in the name of my Master, I say to you, as Paul said to the Philippians under the teaching of the Holy Spirit, “Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice.”  
But, next, *this is a demonstrative duty—*“Rejoice in the Lord.” There may be such a thing as a dumb joy, but I hardly think that it can keep dumb long. Joy! Joy! Why, it speaks for itself! It is like a candle lighted in a dark chamber—you need not sound a trumpet and say, “Now light has come.” The candle proclaims itself by its own brilliance and, when joy comes into a man, it shines out of his eyes, it sparkles in his countenance! There is a something about every limb of the man that betokens that his body, like a well-tuned harp, has had its strings put in order! Joy—it refreshes the marrow of the bones, it quickens the flowing of the blood in the veins—it is a healthy thing in all respects. It is a speaking thing, a demonstrative thing and, I am sure that joy in the Lord ought to have a tongue! When the Lord sends you affliction, Sister, you generally grumble loudly enough. When the Lord tries you, my dear Brother, you generally speak fast enough about that.  
Now, when, on the other hand, the Lord multiplies His mercies to you, speak about it! Sing about it! I cannot remember, since I was a boy, ever seeing in the newspapers, columns of thankfulness and expressions of delight about the prosperity of business in England. It is a long, long time since I was first able to read newspapers—a great many years, now—but I do not remember the paragraphs in which it was said that everybody was getting on in the world and growing rich. But as soon as there was any depression in business, what gloomy articles appeared concerning the dreadful times which had fallen upon the agricultural interest and every other interest! Oh, my dear Brothers and Sisters, from the way some of you grumble, I might imagine you were all ruined if I did not know better! I knew some of you when you were not worth twopence—and you are pretty well-to-do now. You have got on uncommonly well for men who are being ruined! From the way some people talk, you might imagine that everybody is bankrupt and that we are all going to the dogs together! But it is not so and what a pity it is that we do not give the Lord some of our praises when we have better times! If we are so loud and so eloquent over our present woes, why could we not have been as eloquent and as loud in thanksgiving for the blessings that God formerly granted to us? Perhaps the mercies buried in oblivion have been to Heaven and accused us to the Lord and, therefore, He has sent us the sorrows of today. True joy, when it is joy in the Lord, must speak—it cannot hold its tongue—it must praise the name of the Lord!  
Further, *this blessed Grace of joy is very contagious.*It is a great privilege, I think, to meet a truly happy man, a graciously happy man. My mind goes back, at this moment, to that dear man of God who used to be with us, years ago, whom we called, “Old Father Dransfield.” What a lump of sunshine that man was! I think that I never came into this place with a heavy heart, but the very *sight* of him seemed to fill me with exhilaration, for his joy was wholly in his God! An old man and full of years, but as full of happiness as he was full of days! He was always having something to tell you to encourage you. He constantly made a discovery of some fresh mercy for which we were again to praise God! O dear Brothers and Sisters, let us rejoice in the Lord that we may set others rejoicing! One dolorous spirit brings a kind of plague into the house—one person who is always wretched seems to stop all the birds singing wherever he goes! But, as the birds sing to each other and one morning songster quickens all the rest, and sets the groves ringing with harmony, so will it be with the happy cheerful spirit of a man who obeys the command of the text, “Rejoice in the Lord always.” This Grace of joy is contagious!  
Besides, dear Brothers and Sisters, *joy in the Lord is influential for good.*I am sure that there is a mighty influence wielded by a consistently joyous spirit. See how little children are affected by the presence of a happy person! There is much more in the tone of the life than there is in the particular fashion of the life. It may be the life of one who is very poor, but oh, how poverty is gilded by a cheerful spirit! It may be the life of one who is well read and deeply instructed, but, oh, if there is a beauty of holiness and a beauty of happiness added to the learning, nobody talks about “the blue stocking,” or, “the bookworm” being dull and heavy! Oh, no, there is a charm about holy joy! I wish we had more of it! There are many more flies caught with honey than with vinegar and there are many more sinners brought to Christ by happy Christians than by doleful Christians! Let us sing unto the Lord as long as we live and, perhaps some weary sinner who has discovered the emptiness of sinful pleasure, will say to himself, “Why, after all, there must be something real about the joy of these Christians! Let me go and learn how I may have it.” And when he comes and sees it in the light of your gladsome countenance, he will be likely to learn it, God helping him, so as never to forget it. “Rejoice in the Lord always,” says the Apostle, for joy is a most influential Grace, and every child of God ought to possess it in a high degree.  
I want you to notice, dear Friends, that *this rejoicing is commanded.* It is not a matter that is left to your option. It is not set before you as a desirable thing which you can do without—it is a positive precept of the Holy Spirit to all who are in the Lord—“Rejoice in the Lord always.” We ought to obey this precept because joy in the Lord makes us like God. He is the happy God—ineffable bliss is the atmosphere in which He lives and He would have His people to be happy. Let the devotees of Baal cut themselves with knives and lancets, and make hideous outcries if they will, but the servants of Jehovah must not even mar the corners of their beard! Even if they fast, they shall anoint their head and wash their face, that they appear not unto men to fast, for a joyous God desires a joyous people!  
You are commanded to rejoice, Brothers and Sisters, because this is for your profit. Holy joy will oil the wheels of your life’s machinery. Holy joy will strengthen you for your daily labor. Holy joy will beautify you and, as I have already said, give you an influence over the lives of others. It is upon this point that I would most of all insist—we are commanded to rejoice in the Lord. If you cannot speak the Gospel, *live* the Gospel by your cheerfulness, for what is the Gospel? Glad tidings of great joy and you who believe it must show, by its effect upon you, that it is glad tidings of great joy to you! I believe that a man of God—under trial and difficulty and affliction, bearing up, and patiently submitting with holy acquiescence, and still rejoicing in God—is a real preacher of the Gospel, preaching with an eloquence which is mightier than words can ever be and which will find its secret and silent way into the hearts of those who might have resisted other arguments! Oh, do, then, listen to the text, for it is a command from God—“Rejoice in the Lord always!”  
May I just pause, here, and hand this commandment round to all of you who are members of this Church, and to all of you who are truly members of Christ? You are bid to rejoice in the Lord always! You are not allowed to sit there and fret and fume! You are not permitted to complain and groan. Mourner, you are commanded to put on beauty for ashes and the oil of joy for mourning! For this purpose your Savior came—the Spirit of the Lord is upon Him for this very end, that He might make you rejoice! Therefore, sing with the Prophet, “I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for He has clothed me with the garments of salvation, He has covered me with a robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.”  
**II.**Now we come to the second head, on which I will speak but briefly, that is, THE JOY DISCRIMINATED—“Rejoice *in the Lord.”*  
Notice*the sphere of this joy.*“Rejoice in the Lord.” We read in Scripture that children are to obey their parents “in the Lord.” We read of men and women being married “only in the Lord.” Now, dear Friends, no child of God must go outside that ring, “in the Lord.” There is where you are, where you ought to be, where you *must* be. You cannot truly rejoice if you get outside that ring and, therefore, see that you do nothing which you cannot do “in the Lord.” Mind that you seek no joy which is not joy in the Lord. If you go after the poisonous sweets of this world, woe be to you! Never rejoice in that which is sinful, for all such rejoicing is evil. Flee from it—it can do you no good. That joy which you cannot share with God is not a right joy for you. No! “In the Lord” is the sphere of your joy.  
But I think that the Apostle also means that *God is to be the great Object of your joy.* “Rejoice in the Lord.” Rejoice in the Father, your Father who is in Heaven, your loving, tender, unchangeable God! Rejoice, too, in the Son, your Redeemer, your Brother, the Husband of your soul, your Prophet, Priest and King! Rejoice, also, in the Holy Spirit, your Quickener, your Comforter, in Him who shall abide with you forever. Rejoice in the one God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob—in Him delight yourselves, as it is written, “Delight yourself, also, in the Lord, and He shall give you the desires of your heart.” We cannot have too much of this joy in the Lord, for the great Jehovah is our exceeding joy! Or if, by, “the Lord,” is meant the Lord Jesus, then let me invite, persuade, *command* you to delight in the Lord Jesus, Incarnate in your flesh, dead for your sins, risen for your justification, gone into Glory claiming victory for you, sitting at the right hand of God interceding for you, reigning over all worlds on your behalf and soon to come to take you up into His Glory that you may be with Him forever! Rejoice in the Lord Jesus! This is a sea of delight—blessed are they that dive into its utmost depths!  
Sometimes, Brothers and Sisters, you cannot rejoice in anything else, but you can rejoice in the Lord. Then rejoice in Him to the fullest. Do not rejoice in your temporal prosperity, for riches take to themselves wings and fly away. Do not rejoice, even, in your great successes in the work of God. Remember how the 70 disciples came back to Jesus and said, “Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through Your name,” and He answered, “Notwithstanding, in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice because your names are written in Heaven.” Do not rejoice in your privileges—I mean, do not make the great joy of your life to be the fact that you are favored with this and that external privilege or ordinance—but rejoice in God! He changes not. If the Lord is your joy, your joy will never dry up! All other things are but for a season, but God is forever and ever. Make Him your joy, the *whole* of your joy, and then let this joy absorb your every thought! Be baptized into this joy! Plunge into the deeps of this unutterable bliss of joy in God!  
**III.**Thirdly, let us think of THE TIME APPOINTED for this rejoicing— “Rejoice in the Lord *always*.”  
“Always.” Well, then, that begins at once, certainly. So let us now begin to rejoice in the Lord. If any of you have taken a gloomy view of religion, I beseech you to throw that gloomy view away at once. “Rejoice in the Lord always,” therefore, rejoice in the Lord *now*! I recollect what a damper I had, as a young Christian, when I had but lately believed in Jesus Christ. I felt that, as the Lord had said, “He that believes in Me has everlasting life,” I, having believed in Him, had everlasting life and I said so, with the greatest joy and delight and enthusiasm, to an old Christian man. And he said to me, “Beware of presumption! There are a great many who think they have eternal life, but who have not got it.” That was quite true, but, for all that, is there not more presumption in *doubting* God’s promise than there is in *believing* it?  
Is there any presumption in taking God at His Word? Is there not gross presumption in hesitating and questioning as to whether these things are so or not? If God says that they are so, then they are so, whether I feel that they are so or not—and it is my place, as a Believer— to accept God’s bare Word and rest on it. “We count checks as cash,” said one who was making up accounts. Good checks are to be counted as cash and the promises of God, though as yet unfulfilled, are as good as the blessings, themselves, for God cannot lie, or make a promise that He will not perform! Let us, therefore, not be afraid of being glad, but begin to be glad, at once, if we have, up to now, taken a gloomy view of true religion and have been afraid to rejoice.  
When are we to be glad? “Rejoice in the Lord always.” That is, *when you cannot rejoice in anything or anyone but God.*When the fig tree does not blossom, when there is no fruit on the vine and no herd in the stall. When everything withers and decays and perishes. When the worm at the root of the gourd has made it die, then rejoice in the Lord! When the day darkens into evening and the evening into midnight—and the midnight into a sevenfold horror of great darkness—rejoice in the Lord! And when that darkness does not clear, but becomes more dense and Egyptian. When night succeeds night and neither sun nor moon nor stars appear, still rejoice in the Lord always! He who uttered these words had been a night and a day in the deep. He had been stoned, he had suffered from false brethren. He had been in peril of his life and yet, most fittingly do those lips cry out to us, “Rejoice in the Lord always!” Yes, at the stake, itself, martyrs have fulfilled this Word of God—they clapped their hands amid the fire that was consuming them! Therefore, rejoice in the Lord when you cannot rejoice in any other.  
But also take care that you *rejoice in the Lord when you have other things to rejoice in.* When He loads your table with good things and your cup is overflowing with blessings, rejoice in *Him* more than in *them.* Forget not that the Lord, your Shepherd, is better than the green pastures and the still waters—rejoice not in the pastures or in the waters in comparison with your joy in the Shepherd who gives you all! Let us never make gods out of our goods! Let us never allow what God gives us to supplant the Giver. Shall the wife love the jewels that her husband gave her more than she loves him who gave them to her? That were an evil love, or no love at all! So, let us love God, first, and rejoice in the Lord always when the day is brightest and multiplied are the other joys that He permits us to have.  
“Rejoice in the Lord always.” That is, *if you have not rejoiced before, begin to do so at once. A*nd *when you have long rejoiced, keep on at it.*I have known, sometimes, that things have gone so smoothly that I have said, “There will be a check to this prosperity! I know that there will. Things cannot go on quite so pleasantly always.”—

***“More the treacherous calm I dread  
Than tempests lowering overhead.”***

One is apt to spoil his joy by the apprehension that there is some evil coming. Now listen to this—“He shall not be afraid of evil tidings: his heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord.” “Rejoice in the Lord always.” Do not anticipate trouble. “Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.” Take the good that God provides you and rejoice not merely in it, but in Him who provided it. So may you enjoy it without fear, for there is good salt with that food which is eaten as coming from the hand of God.

“Rejoice in the Lord always.” That is, *when you get into company, then rejoice in the Lord.* Do not be ashamed to let others see that you are glad. *Rejoice in the Lord, also, when you are alone.*I know what happens to some of you on Sunday night. You have had such a blessed Sabbath and you have gone away from the Lord’s Table with the very flavor of Heaven in your mouths! And then some of you have had to go home where everything is against you. The husband does not receive you with any sympathy with your joy, or the father does not welcome you with any fellowship in your delight. Well, but still, “Rejoice in the Lord *always.*” When you cannot get anybody else to rejoice with you, still continue to rejoice! There is a way of looking at everything which will show you that the blackest cloud has a silver lining. There is a way of looking at all things in the Light of God which will turn into sweetness that which otherwise had been bitter as gall!

I do not know whether any of you keep a quassia cup at home. If you do, you know that it is made of wood, and you pour water into the bowl and the water turns bitter, directly, before you drink it. You may keep this cup as long as you like, but it always embitters the water that is put into it. I think that I know some dear Brothers and Sisters who always seem to have one of these cups handy. Now, instead of that, I want you to buy a cup of another kind that shall make everything sweet, whatever it is! Whatever God pleases to pour out of the bowl of Providence shall come into your cup and your contentment, your delight in God, shall sweeten it all! God bless you, dear Friends, with much of this holy joy!

**IV.**So now I finish with the fourth head, which is this, THE EMPHASIS LAID ON THE COMMAND—“Rejoice in the Lord always: *and again I say, Rejoice.*” What does that mean, “Again I say, Rejoice”?

This was, first, *to show Paul’s love for the Philippians.* He wanted them to be happy. They had been so kind to him and they had made him so happy, that he said, “Oh, dear Brothers, do rejoice! Dear Sisters, do rejoice! I say it twice over to you, ‘Be happy, be happy,’ because I love you so much that I am anxious to have you, beyond all things else, rejoice in the Lord always.”

I also think that, perhaps, he said it twice over to suggest the *difficulty of continual joy.*It is not so easy as some think to always rejoice. It may be for you young people, who are yet strong in limb, who have few aches and pains and none of the infirmities of life. It may be an easy thing to those placed in easy circumstances, with few cares and difficulties. But there are some of God’s people who need great Grace if they are to rejoice in the Lord always. And the Apostle knew that, so he said, “Again I say, Rejoice.” He repeats the precept, as much as to say, “I know it is a difficult thing and so I the more earnestly press it upon you. Again I say, Rejoice.”

I think, too, that he said it twice over, *to assert the possibility of it.* This was as much as if he had said, “I told you to rejoice in the Lord always. You opened your eyes and looked with astonishment upon me, but, ‘Again I say, Rejoice.’ It is possible, it is practicable! I have not spoken unwisely. I have not told you to do what you never can do, but with deliberation I write it down, ‘Again I say, Rejoice.’ You can be happy! God the Holy Spirit can lift you above the doldrums of the flesh, and of the world, and of the devil—and you may be enabled to live upon the mountain of God beneath the shinings of His face! ‘Again I say, Rejoice.’”

Do you not think that this was intended, also, *to impress upon them the importance of the duty?*“*Again*I say, Rejoice.” Some of you will go and say, “I do not think that it matters much whether I am happy or not. I shall get to Heaven, however gloomy I am, if I am sincere.” “No,” says Paul, “that kind of talk will not do! I cannot have you speak like that. Come, I must have you rejoice! I really conceive it to be a Christian’s bounden duty and so, ‘Again, I say, Rejoice.’”

But do you not think, also, that Paul repeated the command *to allow for special personal testimony?* “*Again,* I say, Rejoice. I, Paul, a sufferer to the utmost extent for Christ’s sake, even now an ambassador in bonds, shut up in a dungeon—I say to you, Rejoice.” Paul was a greatly-tried man, but he was a blessedly happy man. There is not one of us but would gladly change conditions with Paul, if that were possible, now that we see the whole of his life written out. And tonight, looking across the ages, over all the scenes of trouble which he encountered, he says to us, “Brothers and Sisters, rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice.”

Did you ever notice how full of joy this Epistle to the Philippians is? Will you spare me just a minute while I get you to run your eyes through it to observe what a joyful letter it is? You notice that, in the first chapter, Paul gets only as far as the fourth verse when he says, “Always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy.” Now he is in his right vein! He is so glad because of what God has done for the Philippians that when he prays for them, he mixes joy with his prayer! In the 16th verse he declares that he found joy, even, in the opposition of those who preached Christ in order to rival him. Hear what he says—“The one preaches Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds: but the other of love, knowing that I am set for the defense of the Gospel. What then? Notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretence, or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yes, and will rejoice.”

And he does not finish the chapter till, in the 25th verse, he declares that he had joy, even, in the expectation of not going to Heaven just yet, but living a little longer to do good to these people—“And having this confidence, I know that I shall abide and continue with you all for your furtherance and joy of faith; that your rejoicing may be more abundant in Jesus Christ for me by my coming to you again.” You see it is joy, joy, joy, joy! Paul seems to go from rung to rung of the ladder of the Light of God, as if he were climbing up from Nero’s dungeon into Heaven, itself, by way of continual joy! So he writes, in the second verse of the second chapter, “Fulfill you my joy, that you be like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.” When he gets to the 16th verse, he says, “That I may rejoice in the Day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither labored in vain.”

But I am afraid that I should weary you if I went through the Epistle thus, slowly, verse by verse. Just notice how he begins the third chapter—“Finally, my Brothers and Sisters, rejoice in the Lord.” The word is sometimes rendered “farewell.” When he says, “Rejoice,” it is the counterpart of, “welcome.” We say to a man who comes to our house, “Salve”—“Welcome.” When he goes away, it is our duty to “speed the parting guest” and say, “Farewell.” This is what Paul meant to say here. “Finally, my Brothers and Sisters, fare you well in the Lord. Be happy in the Lord. Rejoice in the Lord.” And I do not think that I can finish up my sermon better than by saying on this Sabbath night, “Finally, my Brothers and Sisters, fare you well, be happy in the Lord.”—

***“Fare you well! And if forever,  
Still forever, fare you well.”***

May that be your position, to so walk with God that your fare shall be that of angels! May you eat angels’ food, the manna of God’s love! May your drink be from the Rock that flows with a pure stream! So may you feed and so may you drink until you come unto the mountain of God, where you shall see His face unveiled and, standing in His exceeding brightness, shall know His Glory, being glorified with the saved! Till then, be happy. Why, even—

***“The thought of such amazing bliss,***

***Should constant joys create.”***  
Be happy! If the present is dreary, it will soon be over. Oh, but a little while and we shall be transferred from these seats below to the thrones above! We shall go from the place of aching brows to the place where they all wear crowns! From the place of weary hands to where they bear the palm branch of victory! From the place of mistake and error and sin, and consequent grief, to the place where they are without fault before the Throne of God, for they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb!

Come, then, let us make a solemn league and covenant together in the name of God, and let it be called, “The Guild of the Happy,” for the— ***“Favorites of the Heavenly King  
May speak their joys abroad.”***

No, they *must* speak their joys abroad! Let us endeavor to do so, always, by the help of the Holy Spirit. Amen and Amen!  
**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:  
*Philippians 4.***

This Epistle was written by Paul when he was in prison with iron fetters about his wrists, yet there is no iron in the Epistle. It is full of light, life, love and joy—blended with traces of sorrow—yet with a holy delight that rises above his grief.

**Verse 1.***Therefore, my Brothers and Sisters dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved.*See how the heart of the Apostle is at work! His emotions are not dried up by his personal griefs. He takes a delight in his friends at Philippi! He has a lively recollection of the time when he and Silas were shut up in prison, there, and that same night baptized the jailor and his household—and formed the Church at Philippi!

***2.****I beseech Euodias, and beseech Syntyche, that they be of the same mind in the Lord.* These two good women had fallen out with one another. Paul loves them so much that he would not have any strife in the Church to mar its harmony and he, therefore, beseeches both of these good women to end their quarrel, and to, “be of the same mind in the Lord.” You cannot tell what hurt may come to a Church through two members being at enmity against each other. They may be unknown persons. They may be Christian women, but they can work no end of mischief and, therefore, it is a most desirable thing that they should speedily come together, again, in peace and unity.

***3.****And I entreat you, also, true yokefellow, help those women which labored with me in the Gospel, with Clement, also, and with other of my fellow laborers, whose names are in the Book of Life.*He tenderly thinks of all those who had helped the work of the Lord and, in return, he would have all of them helped, and kindly remembered, and affectionately cherished. May we always have this tender feeling towards one another— especially towards those who work for the Lord with us! May we always delight in cheering those who serve our Lord!

***4, 5.****Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice. Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand.*We have come to understand this word, “moderation,” in a sense not at all intended here. The best translation would probably be, “forbearance.” Do not get angry with anybody. Do not begin to get fiery and impetuous—be forbearing, for the Lord is at hand. You cannot tell how soon He may appear. There is no time to spare for the indulgence of anger. Be quiet. Be patient and if there is anything very wrong, well, leave it. Our Lord Jesus will come very soon, therefore be not impatient.

***6.****Be careful—*That is, be anxious—  
***6.****For nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.*See how the Apostle would bid us throw anxiety to the winds—let us try to do so. You cannot turn one hair white or black, fret as you may. You cannot add a cubit to your stature, be you as anxious as you please. It will be for your own advantage and it will be for God’s Glory for you to shake off the anxieties which otherwise might overshadow your spirit. Be anxious about nothing, but prayerful about everything—and be thankful about everything as well! Is not that a beautiful trait in Paul’s character? He is a prisoner at Rome and likely soon to die—yet he mingles thanksgiving with his supplication and asks others to do the same! We have always something for which to thank God, therefore let us also obey the Apostolic injunction.

***7, 8.****And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Finally, Brothers and Sisters, whatever things are true, whatever things are honest, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report; if there is any virtue, and if there is any praise, think on these things.*If there is any really good movement in the world, help it, you Christian people! If it is not purely and absolutely religious, yet if it tends to the benefit of your fellow men, if it promotes honesty, justice, purity, take care that you are on that side and do all you can to help it forward.

***9.****Those things, which you have both learned and received, and heard, and seen in me, do.*Paul was a grand preacher to be able to say that—to hold up his own example, as well as his own teaching as a thing which the people might safely follow!

***9.****And the God of peace shall be with you.*In the seventh verse, we had the expression, “the peace of God.” In this ninth verse, we have the mention of, “the God of peace.” May we first enjoy the peace of God and then be helped by the Spirit of God to get into a still higher region where we shall be more fully acquainted with the God of peace!

**10.***But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now, at the last, your care of me has flourished again; wherein you were also careful, but you lacked opportunity.*“I rejoiced.” So Paul was, himself, in a happy mood! These saints in Philippi had sent to him in prison a gift by the hand of one of their pastors, and Paul, in his deep poverty, had been much comforted by their kind thoughtfulness about him.

**11.***Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned in whatever state I am, therewith to be content.*That was not an easy lesson to learn, especially when one of those states meant being in prison at Rome. If he was ever in the Mammertine, those of us who have been in that dungeon would confess that it would take a deal of Grace to make us content to be there! And if he was shut up in the prison of the Palatine Hill, in the barracks near the morass, it was, to say the least, not a desirable place to be. A soldier chained to your hand day and night, however good a fellow he may be, does not always make the most delightful company for you, nor you for him—and it takes some time to learn to be content with such a companion. But, says Paul, “I have learned, in whatever state I am, therewith to be content.”

**12.***I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: everywhere and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.* These are both hard lessons to learn. I do not know which is the more difficult of the two. Probably it is easier to know how to go down than to know how to go up. How many Christians have I seen grandly glorifying God in sickness and poverty when they have come down in the world, and ah, how often have I seen other Christians *dishonoring* God when they have grown rich, or when they have risen to a position of influence among their fellow men! These two lessons, Grace, alone, can fully teach us.

**13.***I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me.*What a gracious attainment! There is no boasting in this declaration. Paul only spoke what was literally the truth.

**14, 15.***Notwithstanding you have done well, that you did communicate with my affliction. Now you Philippians know, also, that in the beginning of the Gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but you, only.*The Philippians were the only Christians who had sent any help to this great sufferer for Christ’s sake in the time of his need.

**16-18.***For even in Thessalonica you sent once and again unto my necessity. Not because I desire a gift, but I desire fruit that may abound to your account. But I have all and abound: I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you, an odor of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God.* I do not suppose that they sent him very much, but he knew the love that prompted the gift— he understood what they meant by it. I always had a fancy that Lydia was the first to suggest that kind deed. She, the first convert of the Philippian Church, thought of Paul, I doubt not, and said to the other Believers, “Let us take care of him as far as we can. See how he spends his whole life in the Master’s service, and now he may, at last, die in prison for lack of even common necessities. Let us send a present to him in Rome.” How grateful is the Apostle for that gift of love! What gladness they had put into his heart! Now he says—

**19.***But my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.* “You have supplied my need out of your poverty. My God shall supply all your need out of His riches. Your greatest need shall not exceed the liberality of His supplies.”

**20, 21.***Now unto God and our Father be glory forever and ever. Amen. Salute every saint in Christ Jesus.*The religion of Christ is full of courtesy and it is full of generous thoughtfulness. I do not think that he can be a Christian who has no knowledge nor care about his fellow Church members.

**21.***The Brothers and Sisters which are with me greet you.*They saw that he was writing a letter and they, therefore, said, “Send our love to the Philippians.”

**2.***All the saints salute you, chiefly they that are of Caesar’s household.* Only think of saints in the household of Nero, saints in the service of such a demon as he was, and saints who were first in every good thing! “Chiefly they that are of Caesar’s household.”

***23.****The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.***HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—136, 720, 870.**  
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**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.** Sermon #1469 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

**÷Php 4.6**

PRAYER PERFUMED WITH PRAISE  
NO. 1469

**DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, APRIL 20, 1879, *BY C. H, SPURGEON,*  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“In everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.”***Php 4:6***.***

ACCORDING to the text we are, both by prayer and supplication, to make known our requests unto God. If any distinction is intended here, I suppose that by prayer is meant the general act of devotion and the mention of our usual needs. And by supplication I think would be intended our distinct entreaties and special petitions. We are to offer the general prayer common to all the saints and we are to add the special and definite petitions which are peculiar to ourselves. We are to worship in prayer, for God is to be adored by all His saints, and then we are to beseech His favors for ourselves according to the words of the text, letting our requests be made known unto God.

Do not forget this second form of worship. There is a good deal of generalizing in prayer and, God forbid that we should say a word against it, so far as it is sincere worship. But we need to have more of specific, definite pleading with God, asking Him for such-and-such things with a clear knowledge of what we ask. You will hear prayers at Prayer Meetings in which everything is asked in general but nothing in particular and yet the reality and heartiness of prayer will often be best manifested by the putting up of requests for distinct blessings.

See how Abraham, when he went to worship the Lord, did not merely adore Him and in general pray for His Glory, but on a special occasion he pleaded concerning the promised heir. At another time he cried, “O that Ishmael might live before You,” and on one special occasion he interceded for Sodom. Elijah, when on the top of Carmel, did not pray for all the blessings of Providence in general, but for*rain*, for rain then and there. He knew what he was driving at, kept to his point and prevailed.

So, my beloved Friends, we have many needs which are so pressing as to be very distinct and definite and we ought to have just as many clearly defined petitions which we offer to God by way of supplication and for the Divine answers to these we are bound to watch with eager expectancy so that when we receive them we may magnify the Lord. The point to which I would draw your attention is this—whether it is the general prayer or the specific supplication—we are to offer either or both, “with thanksgiving.” We are to pray about everything and with every prayer we must blend our thanksgivings.

Therefore it follows that we ought always to be in a thankful condition of heart since we are to pray without ceasing and are not to pray without thanksgiving! It is clear that we ought to be always ready to give thanks unto the Lord. We must say with the Psalmist, “Thus will I bless You while I live, I will lift up my hands in Your name.” The constant tenor and spirit of our lives should be adoring gratitude, love, reverence and thanksgiving

to the Most High. This blending of thanks with devotion is always to be maintained.

Always must we offer prayer and supplication *with* thanksgiving. No matter though the prayer should struggle upward out of the depths, yet must its wings be silvered over with thanksgiving. Though the prayer were offered upon the verge of death, yet in the last few words which the trembling lips can utter there should be notes of gratitude as well as words of petition. The Law says, “With all your sacrifices you shall offer salt,” and the Gospel says with all your prayers you shall offer praise. “One thing at a time” is said to be a wise proverb, but for once I must venture to contradict it and say that *two* things at a time are better when the two are *prayer* and*thanksgiving*.

These two holy streams flow from one common source—the Spirit of Life which dwells within us—and they are utterances of the same holy fellowship with God. Therefore it is right that they should mingle as they flow and find expression in the same holy exercise. Supplication and thanksgiving so naturally run into each other that it would be difficult to keep them separate! Like kindred colors, they shade off into each other. Our very language seems to indicate this, for there is small difference between the words, “to pray,” and, “to praise.”

A Psalm may be either prayer or praise, or both, and there is yet another form of utterance which is certainly prayer, but is used as praise and is really both. I refer to that joyous Hebrew word which has been imported into all Christian languages, “Hosanna.” Is it a prayer? Yes. “Save, Lord.” Is it not praise? Yes, for it is tantamount to, “God save the King,” and it is used to extol the Son of David. While we are here on earth we should never attempt to make such a distinction between prayer and praise that we should either praise without prayer or pray without praise—but with every prayer and supplication we should mingle thanksgiving and thus make known our requests unto God.

This commingling of precious things is admirable. It reminds me of that verse in the Canticles where the king is described as coming up from the wilderness in his chariot, “like pillars of smoke, perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, with all powders of the merchant.” There is the myrrh of prayer and the frankincense of praise! So, too, the holy incense of the sanctuary yielded the smoke of prayer which filled the Holy Place, but with it there was the sweet perfume of choice spices which may be compared to praise.

Prayer and praise are like the two cherubim on the ark—they must never be separated. In the model of prayer which our Savior has given us, saying, “After this manner pray you,” the opening part of it is rather praise than prayer—“Our Father which are in Heaven, hallowed be Your name,” and the closing part of it is praise where we say, “For Yours is the kingdom, the power and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.” David, who is the great tutor and exemplar of the Church as to her worship, being at once her poet and her preacher, takes care in almost every Psalm, though the petition may be agonizing, to mingle exquisite praise.

Take, for instance, that Psalm of his after his great sin with Bathsheba. There, one would think, with sighs and groans and tears so multiplied, he might have almost forgotten or have feared to offer thanksgiving while he was trembling under a sense of wrath! And yet before the Psalm that begins, “Have mercy upon me, O God,” can come to a conclusion, the Psalmist has said, “O Lord, open You my lips, and my mouth shall show forth Your praise,” and he cannot pen the last word without beseeching the Lord to build the walls of Jerusalem, adding the promise, “then shall You be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness, with burnt offering and whole burnt offering: then shall they offer bullocks upon Your altar.”

I need not stop to quote other instances, but it is almost always the case that David, by the fire of prayer, warms himself into praise. He begins low, with many a broken note of complaining, but he mounts and glows and, like the lark, sings as he ascends! When at first his harp is muffled, he warbles a few mournful notes and becomes excited till he cannot restrain his hand from that well-known and accustomed string which he had reserved alone for the music of praise. There is a passage in the 18th Psalm, at the third verse, in which, indeed, he seems to have caught the very idea which I need to fix upon your minds this morning—“I will call upon the Lord who is worthy to be praised: so shall I be saved from my enemies.”

He was in such a condition that he says, “The sorrows of death compassed me and the floods of ungodly men made me afraid. The sorrows of Hell compassed me about: the snares of death prevented me.” Driven by distress, he declares that he will call upon the Lord, that is, with utterances of prayer. But he does not only regard his God as the object of prayer, but as One who is to be praised. “I will call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised” and then, as if inspired to inform us of the fact that the blending of thanksgiving with prayer renders it Infallibly effectual, as I shall have to show you it does, he adds, “So shall I be saved from my enemies.”

Now, if this habit of combining thanksgiving with prayer is found in the Old Testament saints, we have a right to expect it yet more in New Testament Believers who, in clearer light, perceive fresh reasons for thanksgiving. But I shall give you no instance except that of the writer of my text. Does he not tell us in the present chapter that those things which we have seen in him we are to do, for his life was agreeable with his teaching? Now, observe how frequently he commences his Epistles with a blending of supplication and thanksgiving. Turn to Romans and note in the first chapter, at the eighth and ninth verses, this fusion of the precious metals—“First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world. For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the Gospel of His Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers.”

There is, “I thank my God” and, “I make mention of you always in my prayers.” This was not written with a special eye to the precept of our text—it was *natural* to Paul so to thank God when he prayed! Look at the Epistle to the Colossians, in the first chapter, at the third verse, “We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you.” To the same effect we read in the first Epistle to the Thessalonians, chapter one, verse two—“We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers.” Look also at Second Timothy, 1:3—“I thank God, whom I serve from my forefathers with pure conscience, that

without ceasing I have remembrance of you in my prayers night and day.”

And if it is so in other Epistles, we are not at all surprised to find it so in the Philippian Epistle itself, for so we read when we turn to its first chapter, at the third and fourth verses—“I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy.” Nor need I confine you to the language of Paul’s Epistle, since it is most noteworthy that in Philippi, (and those to whom he wrote must have remembered the incident), Paul and Silas prayed and sang praises unto God at midnight, so that the prisoners heard them. It is clear that Paul habitually practiced what he here enjoins. His own prayers had not been offered without thanksgiving—what God has joined together he had never put asunder!

With this as a preface, I invite you to consider, carefully and prayerfully, first, *the grounds of thanksgiving in prayer.* Secondly, *the evil of its absence* and, thirdly, *the result of its presence.*

**I.**First, then, there are REASONS FOR MINGLING THANKSGIVING WITH PRAYER. In the nature of things it ought to be so. We have abundant cause, my Brethren, for thanksgiving at all times. We do not come to God in prayer as if He had left us absolutely penniless and we cried to Him like starving prisoners begging through prison bars. We do not ask as if we had never received a single farthing from God before and hardly thought we should obtain anything now. But on the contrary, having been already the recipients of immense favors, we come to a God who abounds in loving kindness, who is willing to bestow good gifts upon us and waits to be gracious to us.

We do not come to the Lord as slaves to an unfeeling tyrant craving for a gift, but as children who draw near to a loving father, expecting to receive abundantly from his liberal hands. Thanksgiving is the right spirit in which to come before the God who daily loads us with benefits. Think for a while what cause you have for thanksgiving in prayer. And first you have this, that such a thing as prayer is possible—that a finite creature can speak with the infinite Creator—that a sinful being can have audience with the thrice holy Jehovah! It is worthy of thanksgiving that God should have commanded prayer and encouraged us to draw near unto Him and that, moreover, He should have supplied all things necessary to the sacred exercise. He has set up a Mercy Seat, sprinkled blood and He has prepared a High Priest, always living to make intercession. And to these He has added the Holy Spirit to help our infirmities and to teach us what we should pray for as we ought.

Everything is ready and God waits for us to enquire at His hands! He has not only set before us an open door and invited us to enter, but He has given us the right spirit with which to approach. The Grace of supplication is poured out upon us and worked in us by the Holy Spirit. What a blessing it is that we do not attempt prayer with a, “perhaps,” as if we were making a doubtful experiment! Nor do we come before God as a forlorn hope, desperately afraid that He will not listen to our cry. But He has *ordained* prayer to be the ordinary commerce of Heaven and earth and sanctioned it in the most solemn manner. Prayer may climb to Heaven, for God has Himself prepared the ladder and set it down just by the head of His lonely Jacob so that though that head is pillowed on a stone, it may rest in peace.

Lo, at the top of that ladder is the Lord Himself in His Covenant capacity, receiving our petitions and sending His attendant angels with answers to our requests! Shall we not bless God for this? Let us praise His name, dear Friends, especially that you and I are still spared to pray and permitted to pray. What if we are greatly afflicted, yet it is of the Lord’s mercy that we are not consumed! If we had received our just deserts we should not now have been on praying ground and pleading terms with Him. But let it be for our comfort and to God’s praise that we may still stand with bowed head and cry, each one, “God be merciful to me, a sinner!”

Still we may cry like sinking Peter, “Lord save, or I perish!” Like David, we may be unable to go up to the temple, but we can still go to our God in prayer! The prodigal has lost his substance, but he has not lost his power to supplicate! He has been feeding swine, but as yet he is still a man and has not lost the faculty of desire and entreaty. He may have forgotten his Father, but his Father has not forgotten him. He may arise and he may go to Him and he may pour out his soul in His Father’s bosom. Therefore, let us give thanks unto God that He has nowhere said unto us, “Seek you My face in vain.”

If we find a trembling desire to pray within our soul and if, though almost extinct, we feel some hope in the promise of our gracious God—if our heart still groans after holiness and after God though she has lost her power to pray with joyful confidence as once she did—yet let us be thankful that we can pray even if it is but a little! In the will and power to pray there lies the capacity for infinite blessedness—he who has the key of prayer can open Heaven—yes, he has access to the heart of God! Therefore, let us bless God for prayer.

And then, Beloved, beyond the fact of prayer and our power to exercise it, there is a further ground of thanksgiving in that we have already received great mercy at God’s hands. We are not coming to God to ask favors and receive them for the first time in our lives. Why, blessed be His name, if He never granted me another favor, I have enough for which to thank Him as long as I have any being! And this, moreover, is to be remembered—whatever great things we are about to ask, we cannot possibly be seeking for blessings one-half so great as those which we have already received if we are, indeed, His children!

If you are a Christian, you have life in Christ! Are you about to ask for meat and raiment? That life is more than these. You have already obtained Christ Jesus to be yours, then He that spared Him not will deny you nothing! Is there, I was about to say, anything to compare with the infinite riches which are already ours in Christ Jesus? Let us perpetually thank our Benefactor for what we have while we make requests for something more. Should it not be so? Shall not the abundant utterances of the memory of His great goodness run over into our requests till our petitions are baptized in gratitude? While we come before God, in one aspect, empty handed to receive of His goodness, on the other hand we should never appear before Him empty, but come with the fat of our sacrifices offering praise and glorifying God.  
Furthermore, there is this to be remembered, that when we come before God in the hour of trouble, remembering His great goodness to us in the past and, therefore, thanking Him, we ought to have faith enough to believe that the present trouble, about which we are praying, is sent in love. You will win with God in prayer if you can look at your trials in this light—“Lord, I have this thorn in the flesh. I beseech You, deliver me from it, but meanwhile I bless You for it, for though I do not understand the why or the wherefore of it, I am persuaded there is Your love within it. Therefore, while I ask You to remove it, so far as it seems evil to me, yet wherein it may to Your better knowledge work my good, I bless You for it and I am content to endure it so long as You see fit.” Is not that a sweet way of praying?

“Lord, I am in need, be pleased to supply me but, meanwhile, if You do not, I believe it is better for me to be in need, and so I praise You for my necessity while I ask You to supply it. I glory in my infirmity, even while I ask You to overcome it. I triumph before You in my affliction and bless You for it even while I ask You to help me in it and to rescue me out of it.” This is a royal way of praying—such a mixture of prayer and thanksgiving is more precious than the gold of Ophir! Furthermore, Beloved, whenever we are on our knees in prayer, it becomes us to bless God that prayer has been answered so many times before. “Here Your poor petitioner bends before You to ask again, but before he asks he thanks You for having heard him so many times before. I know that You always hear me, therefore do I continue to cry to You. My thanksgivings urge me to make fresh petitions, encouraging me in the full confidence that You will not send me away empty.”

Why, many of the mercies which you possess today and rejoice in, are answers to prayer! They are dear to you because, like Samuel, whom his mother so named because he was, “asked of God,” they came to you as answers to your supplications! When mercies come in answer to prayer they have a double delight about them, not only because they are good in themselves, but because they are certificates of our favor with the Lord. Well, then, as God has heard us so often and we have the proofs of His hearing, should we ever pray with murmurings and complaints? Should we not rather feel an intense delight when we approach the Throne of Grace—rapture awakened by sunny memories of the past?

Again, we ought to pray with thanksgiving in its highest of all senses by thanking God that we have the mercy which we seek. I wish we could learn this high virtue of faith. When I was conversing lately with our dear friend George Muller, he frequently astonished me with the way in which he mentioned that he had for so many months and years asked for suchand-such a mercy and praised the Lord for it. He praised the Lord for it as though he had actually obtained it. Even in praying for the conversion of a person, as soon as he had began to intercede he began, also, to praise God for the conversion of that person! Though I think he told us he had in one instance already prayed for 30 years and the work was not yet done, yet all the while he had gone on thanking God because he knew the prayer would be answered! He believed that he had his petition and commenced to magnify the Giver of it.

Is this unreasonable? How often do we antedate our gratitude among the sons of men? If you were to promise some poor person that you would pay his rent when it came due, he would thank you directly, though not a farthing had left your pocket! We have enough faith in our fellow men to thank *them* beforehand—surely we may do the same with our Lord! Shall we not be willing to trust God for a few months ahead? Yes, and for years beforehand if His wisdom bids us wait. This is the way to win with Him! When you pray, believe that you receive the gifts you ask and you shall have them! “Believe that you have it,” says the Scripture, “and you shall have it.”

As a man’s note of hand stands for the money, so let God’s promise be accounted as the performance! Shall not Heaven’s bank notes pass as cash? Yes, verily, they shall have unquestioned currency among Believers! We will bless the Lord for giving us what we have sought, since our having it is a matter of absolute certainty! We shall never thank God in faith and then find that we were fooled—He has said, “All things whatever you shall ask in prayer, *believing* you shall receive.” And therefore we may rest assured that the thanksgiving of faith shall never bring shame into the face of the man who offers it.

Once again, and then I will say no more upon these grounds of thanksgiving. Surely, Brothers and Sisters, if the Lord does not answer the prayer which we are offering, yet still He is so good, so supremely good, that we will bless Him whether or not. We ought even to praise Him when He does not answer us, yes, and bless Him for refusing our desires. How devoutly might some of us thank Him that He did not answer our prayers when we sought for evil things in the ignorance of our childish minds! We asked for flesh and He might have sent us quails in His anger—and while the flesh was yet in our mouths His wrath might have come upon us—but in love He would not hear us. Blessed be His name for closing His ears in pity!

Let us adore Him when He keeps us waiting at His doors. Let us thank Him for rebuffs and bless Him for refusals, believing always that Ralph Erskine spoke the truth when he said—

***“I’m heard when answered soon or late,  
Yes, heard when I no answer get.  
Yes, kindly answered when refused,  
And treated well when harshly used.”***

Faith glorifies the love of God, for she knows that the Lord’s roughest usage is only love in disguise! We are not so sordid as to make our songs depend upon the weather, or on the fullness of the olive press and the wine vat. Blessed be His name, He must be right even when He seems at cross purposes with His people! We are not going to quarrel with Him or awake silly babes with their nurses because He does not happen to grant us every desire of our foolish hearts. Though He slays us, we will trust in Him, much more if He decline our requests!

We ask Him for our daily bread and if He withholds it, we will praise Him. Our praises are not dependent upon His answers to our prayers. If the labor of the olive should fail and the field should yield no fruit. If the flocks should be cut off from the fold and the herd from the stall, yet still would we rejoice in the Lord and joy in the God of our salvation! Blessed

Spirit, raise us to this state of Grace and keep us there! Of that which we have spoken this is the sum—under every condition and in every necessity, draw near to God in prayer, but always bring thanksgiving with you. As Joseph said to his brothers, “You shall not see my face unless your younger brother is with you,” so may the Lord say to you, “You shall not receive My smile unless you bring thankfulness with you.”

Let your prayers be like those ancient missals which one sometimes sees in which the initial letters of the prayers are gilded and adorned with a profusion of colors, the work of cunning writers. Let even the general confession of sin and the litany of mournful petitions have at least one illuminated letter! Illuminate your prayers! Light them up with rays of thanksgiving all the way through! And when you come together to pray, forget not to make melody unto the Lord with Psalms, hymns and spiritual songs.

**II.**Secondly, I shall drive at the same point while I try to show THE EVIL OF THE ABSENCE OF THANKSGIVING in our prayers. First and foremost we would be chargeable with ingratitude. Are we to be always receiving and never to return thanks? Aristotle rightly observes, “a return is required to preserve friendship between two persons,” and as we have nothing else to give to God except gratitude, let us abound in it! If we have no fruit of the field, let us at least render to Him the fruit of our lips. Have you no thanks to bring? How, then, can you expect further favors? Does not liberality, itself, close its hand when ingratitude stands in the way? What? Never a word of gratitude to Him from whom all blessings flow! Then may even the ungodly despise you!

Next, it would argue great selfishness if we did not combine praise with prayer. Can it be right to think only of ourselves—to pray for benefits and never honor our Benefactor? Are we going to import the detestable vice of avarice into spiritual things and only care for our own soul’s good? What? No thought for God’s Glory! No idea of magnifying His great and blessed name! God forbid that we should fall into a spirit so mean and narrow! Healthy praise and thanksgiving must be cultivated because they prevent prayer from becoming overgrown with the mildew of selfishness. Thanksgiving also prevents prayer from becoming an exhibition of the lack of faith, for, indeed, some prayer is rather a manifestation of the absence of faith than the exercise of confidence in God.

If when I am in trouble I still bless the Lord for all I suffer, my faith is seen. If before I obtain the mercy, I thank God for the Grace which I have not yet tasted, my faith is manifest. What? Is our faith such that it only sings in the sunshine? Have we no nightingale music for our God? Is our trust like the swallow which must leave us in winter? Is our faith a flower which needs the conservatory to keep it alive? Can it not blossom like the flower at the foot of the frozen glacier where the damp and chill of adversity surround it? I trust it can! It ought to do so and we ought to feel that we can praise and bless God when outward circumstances appear rather to demand sighs than songs. Not to thank God in our prayers would argue willfulness and lack of submission to His will. Must everything be ordered according to *our* mind? To refuse to praise unless we have our own way is great presumption and shows that like a naughty child we will sulk if we cannot be master.  
I might illustrate the willfulness of many a supplication by that of a little boy who was very diligent in saying his prayers, but was, at the same time, disobedient, ill-tempered and the pest of the house. His mother told him that she thought it was mere hypocrisy for him to pretend to pray. He replied, “No, Mother, indeed it is not, for I pray God to lead you and Father to like my ways better than you do.” Numbers of people want the Lord to like their ways better, but they do not intend to follow the ways of the Lord! Their minds are contrary to God and will not submit to His will and, therefore, there is no thanksgiving in them. Praise in a prayer is indicative of a humble, submissive, obedient spirit—and when it is absent we may suspect willfulness and self-seeking.

Very much of the prayer of rebellious hearts is the mere growling of an angry obstinacy, the whine of an ungratified self-conceit. God must do this and He must do that, or else we will not love Him. What baby talk! What spoiled children such are! A little whipping will do them good. “I have never believed in the goodness of God,” said one, “ever since He took my dear mother away.” I knew a good man whose child was on the verge of the grave. When I went to see her, he charged me not to mention death to her, “For,” he said, “I do not believe God could do such an unkind action as take my only child away.” When I assured him that she would surely die within a few days and that he must not quarrel with the will of the Lord, he stood firm in his rebellion.

He prayed, but he could not bless God and it was no marvel that his heart sank within him and he refused to be comforted when, at last, his child died, as we all felt sure she would. He became afterwards resigned, but his lack of acquiescence cost him many a smart. This will not do! This quarrelling with God is poor work! Resignation comes to the heart like an angel unawares and when we entertain it, our soul is comforted. We may ask for the child’s life, but we must also thank the Lord that the dear life has been prolonged so long as it has been—and we must put the child and everything else into our Father’s hands and say—“If You should take all away, yet still will I bless Your name, O Most High.”

This is acceptable prayer because it is not soured by the leaven of selfwill, but salted with thankfulness. We must mingle our thanksgivings with our prayers or else we may fear that our mind is not in harmony with the Divine will. Remember, dear Friends, that prayer does not alter the mind of God—it never was the intent of prayer that it should attempt anything of the kind! Prayer is the shadow of the decrees of the Eternal. God has willed such a thing and He makes His saints to will it and express their will in prayer. Prayer is the rustling of the wings of the angels who are bringing the blessing to us. It is written, “Delight yourself in the Lord and He will give you the desire of your heart.” It is not said that He will give the desire of their heart to every Tom, Dick and Harry, but you must first *delight* in the Lord, and when your mind finds all her joy in God, then it is clear that God and you, as far as it can be, are standing on the same plane and moving in the same direction—and now you shall have the desire of your heart because the desire of your heart is the desire of God’s heart!

Character, as much as faith, lies at the basis of prevalence in prayer. I do not mean in the case of the prayer of the sinner when he is seeking mercy, but I mean in the habitual prayers of the godly. There are some

men who cannot pray so as to prevail, for sin has made them weak and God walks contrary to them because they walk contrary to Him. He who has lost the light of God’s Countenance has also lost much of the prevalence of his prayers. You do not suppose that every Israelite could have gone to the top of Carmel and opened the windows of Heaven as Elijah did! No, he must first be Elijah, for it is the effectual, fervent prayer, not of *every* man, but of *a righteous man*, that avails much. And when the Lord has put your heart and my heart into an agreement with Him, then we shall pray and prevail!

What did our Lord say—“If you abide in Me and My Words abide in you, you shall ask what you will and it shall be done unto you.” Doubtless many lose power in prayer because their lives are grievous in the sight of the Lord and He cannot smile upon them. Will any father listen to the requests of a child who has set himself up in opposition to parental authority? The obedient, tender, loving child who would not wish for anything which you did not think right to give is he whose requests you are pleased to consider and fulfill. Yes, more—you even *anticipate* the wishes of such a child and before he calls, you answer him. May we be such children of the great God!

**III.**And now, in the third place, let us consider THE RESULT OF THE PRESENCE OF THIS THANKSGIVING IN CONNECTION WITH PRAYER. According to the context, the presence of thanksgiving in the heart, together with prayer, is productive of *peace*. “In everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God and the peace of God, which passes all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” Now that peace, that conscious calm, that Divine serenity which is described as the peace of God is not produced by prayer, alone, but by prayer with thanksgiving!

Some men pray and they do well. But for lack of mixing thanksgiving with it, their prayer agitates them and they come away from the closet even more anxious than when they entered it. If they mingled in their petitions that sweet powder of the merchants which is called *praise* and mixed it after the art of the apothecary, in due proportions, the blessing of God would come with it causing repose of heart! If we bless our gracious Lord for the very trouble we pray against. If we bless Him for the very mercy which we need, as though it had already come. If we resolve to praise Him whether we receive the gift or not—learning in whatever state we are to be content, then, “the peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep our hearts and minds by Christ Jesus.” Brethren, as you value this Divine rest of spirit—as you prize constant serenity of soul—I beseech you mingle praises with your prayers!

The next effect of it will be this—the thanksgiving will often warm the soul and enable it to pray. I believe it is the experience of many who love secret devotion that at times they cannot pray, for their heart seems hard, cold, dumb and almost dead. Do not pump up unwilling and formal prayer, my Brothers and Sisters! But rather take down the hymnbook and sing! While you praise the Lord for what you have, you will find your rocky heart begin to dissolve and flow in rivers! You will be encouraged to plead with the Lord because you will remember what you have before received at His hands!

If you had an empty wagon to raise to the mouth of a coal pit, it might be a very difficult task for *you*—but the work is managed easily by the common sense of the miners. They make the full wagons, as they run down, pull the empty wagons up the incline. Now, when your heart is loaded with praise for mercy received, let it run down the incline and draw up the empty wagon of your desires and you will thus find it easy to pray! Cold and chill prayers are always to be deplored and, if by so simple a method as entreating the Lord to accept our thanksgiving, our hearts can be warmed and renewed, let us, by all means, take care to use it!

Lastly, I believe that when a man begins to pray with thanksgiving he is upon the eve of receiving the blessing. God’s time to bless you has come when you begin to praise Him as well as pray to Him. God has His set time to favor us and He will not grant us our desire until the due season has arrived. But the time has come when you begin to bless the Lord. Now, take an instance of this in the second Book of Chronicles, 20th chapter and 20th verse. Jehoshaphat went out to fight with an exceedingly great army and mark how he achieved the victory. “They rose early in the morning and went forth into the wilderness of Tekoa: and as they went forth, Jehoshaphat stood and said, Hear me, O Judah, and you inhabitants of Jerusalem; believe in the Lord your God, so shall you be established; believe His Prophets, so shall you prosper.

“And when he had consulted with the people he appointed”—what? Warriors? Captains? No, that was all done, but he, “appointed singers unto the Lord, that they should praise the beauty of holiness as they went out before the army, and to say, Praise the Lord; for His mercy endures forever. And when they began to sing and to praise, the Lord set ambushes against the children of Ammon, Moab and mount Seir, which were come against Judah; and they were smitten.” Victory came when they began to sing and to praise! You shall get your answers to prayer when you multiply your thanksgivings in all your prayers and supplications—rest you sure of that! Our thanksgiving will show that the reason for our waiting is now exhausted—that the waiting has answered its purpose and may now come to a joyful end.

Sometimes we are not in a fit state to receive a blessing, but when we reach the condition of *thankfulness,* then is the time when it is safe for God to indulge us. A professing Christian came to his minister once and said, “Sir, you say we should always pray.” “Yes, my Friend, undoubtedly.” “But then, Sir, I have been praying for 12 months that I might enjoy the comforts of religion and I am no happier than before. I have made that my one perpetual prayer—that I might enjoy the comforts of religion—but I do not feel joy nor even peace of mind. In fact, I have more doubts and fears than I ever had.” “Yes,” said his minister, “and that is the natural result of such a selfish prayer. Why, dear Friend,” he said, “come and kneel down with me and let us pray in another manner. Father, glorify Your name! Your kingdom come! Now,” he said, “go and offer those petitions and get to work to try to make it true and see if you do not soon enjoy the comforts of religion.”  
There is a great deal in that fact—if you will but desire God to be glorified and aim at glorifying Him yourself—then shall the joys of true *godliness* come to you in answer to prayer. The time for the blessing is when you begin to praise God for it! Brothers and Sisters, you may be sure that when you put up thanksgiving on the ground that God has answered your prayer, you really have prevailed with God! Suppose you had promised to some poor woman that you would give her a meal tomorrow? You might forget it, you know. But suppose when the morning came she sent her little girl with a basket for it? I think she would be likely to get it! But suppose that she sent, in addition, a little note in which the poor soul thanked you for your great kindness? Would you have the heart to say, “My dear girl, I cannot attend to you today. Come another time”? Oh dear no, if the cupboard were bare you would send out to get something because the good soul so believed in you that she had sent you thanks for it *before* she received your gift!

Well, now, trust the Lord in the same manner! He cannot run back from His Word, my Brethren. Believing prayer holds Him, but believing thanksgiving *binds* Him! If it is not in your own heart, though you are evil, to refuse to give what you have promised when that promise is so believed that the person rejoices as though he had it—then depend upon it—the good God will not find it in His heart to refuse you! The time for reception is fully come because thanksgiving for that reception fills your heart. I leave the matter with you. If you *are enabled* to pray in that fashion, great good will come to yourselves, to the Church of God and to the world at large by such prayers.

Now, I think I hear in this audience someone saying, “But I cannot pray so. I do not know how to pray. Oh, that I knew how to pray! I am a poor, guilty sinner. I cannot mix any thanksgiving with my supplications.” Ah, my dear Soul, do not think about that just now. I am not so much preaching to you as I am preaching to the people of God. For you, it is quite enough to say, “God be merciful to me a sinner.” And yet I will venture to say that there is praise in such a petition. You are implicitly praising the justice of God and you are praising His mercy by appealing to Him. When the prodigal returned and he began his prayer by saying, “I am not worthy to be called your son,” there was, in that confession, a real *praise* of the father’s goodness, of which he was unworthy to partake.

But you need not think about this matter at present, for you have to find Jesus and eternal life in Him. Go and plead the merit of Jesus and cast yourself upon the love and mercy of God in Him and He will not cast you away! And then another day, when you have found and known Him, take care that the thanksgiving for your salvation never ceases. Even when you are most hungry, poor and needy in the future, continue to bless your saving Lord, and say, “This poor man cried and the Lord heard him! And because the Lord inclined His ear unto me I will praise His name as long as I live.” God bless you, for Jesus’ sake. Amen.

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Sermon #2351 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

PRAYER, THE CURE FOR CARE  
NO. 2351

**A SERMON INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S DAY, MARCH 11, 1984. *DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON THURSDAY EVENING, JANUARY 12, 1888.**

***“Be careful for nothing; but in everything, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which***

***passes all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.***Php 4:6-7***.***

We have the faculty of forethought, but, like all our faculties, it has been perverted, and it is often abused. It is good for a man to have a holy care and to pay due attention to every item of his life, but, alas, it is very easy to make it into an unholy care and to try to wrest from the hand of God that office of Providence which belongs to Him and not to ourselves. How often Luther liked to talk about the birds and the way God cares for them! When he was full of his anxieties, he used to constantly envy the birds because they led so free and happy a life. He talks of Dr. Sparrow, Dr. Thrush and others that used to come and talk to Dr. Luther and tell him many a good thing! You know, Brothers and Sisters, the birds out in the open, yonder, cared for by God, fare far better than those that are cared for by man. A little London girl, who had gone into the country, once said, “Look, mamma, at that poor little bird. It has not got any cage!” That would not have struck me as being any loss to the bird—and if you and I were without *our* cage, and the box of seed, and glass of water, it would not be much of a loss if we were cast adrift into the glorious liberty of a life of humble dependence upon God!

It is that cage of carnal trust and that box of seed that we are always laboring to fill, that makes the worry of this mortal life. But he who has Grace to spread his wings and soar away—and get into the open field of Divine trustfulness—may sing all the day and always have this for his tune—

***“Mortal, cease from toil and sorrow;  
God provides for the morrow.”***

Here, then, is the teaching of the text—“Be careful for nothing.” The word, “careful,” does not now mean exactly what it did when the Bible was translated. At least it conveys a different meaning to me from what it did to the translators. I would say that we should be careful. “Be careful,” is a good lesson for boys and young people when they are starting in life, but, in the sense in which the word, “care-full,” was understood at the time of the translators, we must not be careful, that is, full of care. The text means, be not *anxious*—be not constantly thinking about the needs of this mortal life. I will read it again, stretching the word out a little, and then you will get the meaning of it—“Be care-full for nothing.” Oh, that God might teach us how to avoid the evil which is here forbidden, and to live with that holy carelessness which is the very beauty of the Christian life— when all our care is cast on God, and we can joy and rejoice in His Providential care of us!

“Ah,” somebody says, “I cannot help caring.” Well, the subject, tonight, is to help you to leave off caring or worrying and, first, consider, here, *the substitute for care*. Be careful for nothing, but be prayerful for everything—that is the substitute for care, “prayer and supplication.” Secondly, note *the special character of this prayer* which is to become the substitute for anxiety—“In everything, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God.” And then I hope we shall have a few minutes left in which to consider *the sweet effect of this prayer—*“The peace of God, which passes all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”

**I.**To begin, then, here is, first, THE SUBSTITUTE FOR CARE OR ANXIETY.  
I suppose it is true of many of us that *our cares are numerous*. If you once become careful, anxious, fretful, you will never be able to *count* your cares, even though you might count the hairs of your head. And cares are apt to multiply to those who are care-full and when you are as full of care as you think you can be, you will be sure to have another crop of cares growing up all around you. The indulgence of this evil habit of anxiety leads to its getting dominion over life, till life is not worth living by reason of the care we have about it. Cares are numerous and, therefore, let your *prayers* be as numerous. Turn everything that is a care into a prayer. Let your cares be the raw material of your prayers and, as the alchemists hoped to turn dross into gold, so you, by a holy alchemy, actually turn what naturally would have been a care into spiritual treasure in the form of prayer! Baptize every anxiety into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit—and so make it into a blessing!  
Have you a care to get? Take heed that it does not get you! Do you wish to make gain? Mind you do not lose more than you gain by your gains. I beseech you, have no more care to gain than you dare turn into a prayer! Do not desire to have what you dare not ask God to give you. Measure your desires by a spiritual standard and you will thus be kept from anything like covetousness. Cares come to many from their losses—they lose what they have gained. Well, this is a world in which there is the tendency to lose. Ebbs follow floods and winters crush out summer flowers. Do not wonder if you lose as other people do, but pray about your losses. Go to God with them—and instead of fretting, make them an occasion for waiting upon the Lord and saying—“The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord. Show me why You contend with me, and deliver Your servant, I pray You, from ever complaining of You, whatever You permit me to lose!”  
Perhaps you say that your care is neither about your gaining nor your losing, but about your daily bread. Ah, well, you have promises for that, you know! The Lord has said, “So shall you dwell in the land, and verily you shall be fed.” He gives you sweet encouragement when He says that He clothes the grass of the field—and shall He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? And the Lord Jesus bids you consider the fowls of Heaven, how they sow not, neither do they gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Go, then, to your God with all your cares! If you have a large family, a slender income and much ado to make ends meet, and to provide things honest in the sight of all men, you have so many excuses for knocking at God’s door—so many more reasons for being often found at the Throne of Grace! I beseech you, turn them to good account. I feel free to call upon a friend when I really have some business to do with him—and you may be bold to call upon God when necessities press upon you. Instead of caring for anything with anxious care, turn it at once into a reason for renewed prayerfulness.  
“Ah,” one says, “but I am in perplexity. I do not know what to do.” Well, then, dear Friend, you should certainly pray when you cannot tell whether it is the right hand road, or the left hand, or straight on, or whether you should go back! Indeed, when you are in such a fog that you cannot see the next lamp, *then* is the time that you must pray. The road will clear before you very suddenly. I have often had to try this plan, myself—and I bear witness that when I have trusted to *myself*, I have been a gigantic fool! But when I have trusted in God, then He has led me straight on in the right way, and there has been no mistake about it! I believe that God’s children often make greater blunders over simple things than they do over more difficult matters. You know how it was with Israel, when those Gibeonites came, with their old shoes and clothes, and showed the bread that was moldy, that they said they took fresh out of their ovens. The children of Israel thought, “This is a clear case. These men are strangers, they have come from a far country, so we may make a league with them.” They were certain that the evidence of their *eyes* proved that these were no Canaanites, so they did not consult God! The whole matter seemed so plain that they made a league with the Gibeonites, which was a trouble to them ever afterwards! If we would, in everything, go to God in prayer, our perplexities would lead us into no more mistakes than our simplicities— and in simple things and difficult things we should be guided by the Most High.  
Perhaps another friend says, “But I am thinking about the future.” Are you? Well, first, I beg to ask you what *you* have to do with the future? Do you know what a day will bring forth? You have been thinking about what will become of you when you are old, but are you sure that you will ever *be* old? I knew one Christian woman who used to worry herself about how she would get buried. That question never troubled me and there are many other matters about which we need not worry ourselves. You can always find a stick with which to beat a dog and, if you need a care, you can generally find a care with which to beat your own souls! But that is a poor occupation for any of you. Instead of doing that, turn everything that might be a subject of care into a subject of *prayer*. It will not be long before you have a subject of care, so you will not be long without a subject of prayer. Strike out that word, “care,” and just write in the place of it this word, “prayer”—and then, though your cares are numerous, your prayers will also be numerous.  
Note, next, dear Friends, that *undue care is an intrusion into God’s province.* It is making yourself the father of the household instead of being a child—it is making yourself the master instead of being a servant for whom the master provides his rations. Now, if, instead of doing that, you will turn care into prayer, there will be no intrusion, for you may come to God in prayer without being charged with presumption. He invites you to pray. No, here, by His servant, He bids you, “in everything, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God.” Once more, *cares are of no use to us, and they cause us great damage.* If you were to worry as long as you wished, you could not make yourself an inch taller, or grow another hair on your head, or make one hair white or black! So the Savior tells us and He asks, if care fails in such little things, what can care do in the higher matters of Providence? It cannot do anything! A farmer stood in his fields and said, “I do not know what will happen to us all. The wheat will be destroyed if this rain keeps on. We shall not have any harvest at all unless we have some fine weather.” He walked up and down, wringing his hands, fretting and making his whole household uncomfortable. And he did not produce one single gleam of sunlight by all his worrying—he could not puff any of the clouds away with all his petulant speech, nor could he stop a drop of rain with all his murmurings.  
What is the good of it, then, to keep gnawing at your own heart, when you can get nothing by it? Besides, it weakens our power to help ourselves and especially our power to glorify God. A care-full heart hinders us from judging rightly in many things. I have often used the illustration (I do not know a better) of taking a telescope, breathing on it with the hot breath of our anxiety, putting it to our eye and then saying that we cannot see anything but clouds! Of course we cannot, and we never shall while we breathe upon it. If we were but calm, quiet, self-possessed and Godpossessed, we would do the right thing. We would be, as we say, “all there,” in the time of difficulty. That man may expect to have presence of mind who has the Presence of God. If we forget to pray, do you wonder that we are all in a fidget and a worry, and we do the first thing that occurs to us—which is generally the worst thing—instead of waiting till we saw what would be done and then trustfully and believingly doing it as in the sight of God? Care, or worry, is injurious, but if you only turn this care into prayer, then every worry will be a benefit to you.  
Prayer is wonderful material for building up the spiritual fabric. We are, ourselves, edified by prayer. We grow in Grace by prayer and if we will but come to God every moment with petitions, we shall be fast growing Christians! I said to one this morning, “Pray for me, it is a time of need,” and she replied, “I have done nothing else since I awakened.” I have made the same request of several others and they have said that they have been praying for me. I felt so glad, not only for my own sake, who had received benefit from their prayers, but for *their* sakes, because they are sure to grow thereby! When little birds keep flapping their wings, they are learning to fly. The sinews will get stronger and the birds will leave the nest before long. That very clapping of their wings is an education—and the attempting to pray—the groaning, the sighing, the crying of a prayerful spirit, is, itself, a blessing! Leave off, then, this damaging habit of worry and take to this enriching habit of prayer! See how you will thus make a double gain—first, by avoiding a loss, and secondly, by getting that which will really benefit you and others, too!  
Then, again, *cares are the effect of forgetfulness of Christ’s closeness to us.* Did you notice how the context runs? “The Lord is at hand. Be careful for nothing.” The Lord Jesus Christ has promised to come again and He may come tonight. At any moment He may appear! So Paul writes, “The Lord is at hand. Be careful for nothing; but in everything, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God.” Oh, if we could but stand on this earth as upon a mere shadow! If we could but live as those who will soon have done with this poor transient life! If we held every earthly thing with a very loose hand, then we would not be caring, and worrying, and fretting—but we would take to praying, for thus we would grasp the real, and the substantial, and plant our feet upon the invisible, which is, after all, the eternal! Oh, dear Friends, let the text, which I have read to you over and over again, now drop into your hearts as a pebble falls into a mountain lake and, as it enters, let it make rings of comfort upon the very surface of your soul!  
**II.**Now we need to look into the text a little more closely to see, in the second place, THE SPECIAL CHARACTER OF THIS PRAYER. What sort of prayer is that which will ease us of care?  
Well, first, it is *a prayer which deals with everything*. “In everything” “let your requests be made known unto God.” You may pray about the smallest thing and about the greatest thing—you may not only pray for the Holy Spirit, but you may pray for a new pair of boots. You may go to God about the bread you eat, the water you drink, the garment you wear and pray to Him about *everything*. Draw no line and say, “So far is to be under the care of God.” Dear me, then, what are you going to do with the rest of life? Is that to be lived under the withering blight of a sort of atheism? God forbid! Oh, that we might live in God as to the whole of our being, for our being is such that we cannot divide it! Our body, soul and spirit are one, and while God leaves us in this world and we have necessities which arise out of the condition of our bodies, we must bring our bodily necessities before God in prayer. And you will find that the great God will hear you in these matters. Say not that they are too little for Him to notice—*everything* is little in comparison with Him! When I think of what a great God

e is, it seems to me that this poor little world of ours is just one insignificant grain of sand on the seashore of the universe—and not worth any notice at all. The whole earth is a mere speck in the great world of Nature and, if God condescends to consider it, He may as well stoop a little lower and consider us! And He does so, for He says, “Even the very hairs of your head are all numbered.” Therefore, in *everything* let your requests be made known unto God.  
The kind of prayer that saves us from care is prayer that is repeated— “In everything, by prayer and supplication.” Pray to God and then pray again—“by prayer *and* supplication.” If the Lord does not answer you the first time, be very grateful that you have a good reason for praying again! If He does not grant your request the second time, believe that He loves you so much that He wants to hear your voice again! And if He keeps you waiting till you have gone to Him seven times, say to yourself, “Now I know that I worship the God of Elijah, for Elijah’s God let him go, again, seven times before the blessing was given.” Count it an *honor* to be permitted to wrestle with the Angel of God! This is the way God makes His princes! Jacob had never been Israel if he had obtained the blessing from the Angel at the first asking—but when he had to keep on wrestling till he prevailed, then he became a prince with God! The prayer that kills care is prayer that is continued and importunate.  
Next, it is *intelligent prayer—*“Let your requests be made known unto God.” I heard of a Muslim who spent, I think, six hours in prayer each day and, lest he should go to sleep when on board a ship, he stood upright and only had a rope stretched across, so that he might lean against it. And if he slept, he would fall. His objective was to keep on for six hours with what he called prayer. “Well,” I said to one who knew him, and who had seen him on board his boat on the Nile, “What sort of prayer was it?” “Why,” my friend replied, “he kept on repeating, ‘There is no God but God, and Mohammed is the prophet of God,’ the same thing over, and over, and over again.” I said, “Did he *ask* for anything?” “Oh, no!” “Was he pleading with God to *give* him anything?” “No, he simply kept on with that perpetual repetition of certain words, just as a witch might repeat a charm.”  
Do you think there is anything in *that* style of praying? If you go on your knees and simply repeat a certain formula, it will be only a mouthful of words. What does God care about that kind of praying? “Let your requests be made known unto God.” That is true prayer! God knows what your requests are, but you are to pray to Him as if He did not know. You are to make known your requests, not because the Lord does not know, but, perhaps, because *you* do not know. And when you have made your requests known to Him, as the text tells you, you will more clearly have made them known to yourself. When you have asked intelligently, knowing *what* you have asked, and knowing *why* you have asked it, you will, perhaps, stop and say to yourself, “No, I must not, after all, make that request.” Sometimes, when you have gone on praying for what God does not give you, it may be that there will steal over your mind the conviction that you are not on the right track and *that* result of your prayer will, in itself, do you good, and be a blessing to you.  
But you are to pray making your requests known unto God. That is, in plain English, say what you need, for this is true prayer. Get alone and tell the Lord what you need—pour out your heart before Him. Do not imagine that God needs any fine language! No, you need not run upstairs for your prayer book, and turn to a collect—you will be a long time before you find any collect that will fit you if you are really praying! Pray for what you need just as if you were telling your mother or your dearest friend what your need is. Go to God in that fashion, for that is *real prayer*, and that is the kind of prayer that will drive away your cares.  
So, dear Friends, again, the kind of prayer that brings freedom from care is *communion with God*. If you have not spoken to God, you have not really prayed. A little child has been known (I daresay your children have done it) to go and put a letter down the grating of a drain and, of course, there was never any reply to a letter posted in that way. If the letter is not put into the postbox, so that it goes to the person to whom it is addressed, what is the use of it? So, prayer is real communication with God. You must realize that He *is* and that He is the Rewarder of them that diligently seek Him, or else you cannot pray. He must be a reality to you, a living reality, and you must believe that He hears prayer, and then you must speak with Him and believe that you have the petition that you ask of Him—and so you shall have it. He has never yet failed to honor believing prayer. He may keep you waiting for a while, but delays are *not* denials, and He has often answered a prayer that asked for silver by giving gold! He may have denied earthly treasure, but He has given heavenly riches of ten thousand times the worth—and the suppliant has been more than satisfied with the exchange! “Let your requests be made known unto God.”  
I know what you do when you are in trouble—you go to your neighbor, but your neighbor does not want to see you quite so often about such business. Possibly you go to your brother, but there is a text that warns you not to go into your brother’s house in the day of your calamity. You may call on a friend too often when you are hard up—he may be very pleased to see you till he hears what you are after! But if you go to your God, He will never give you the cold shoulder. He will never say that you come too often. On the contrary, He will even chide you because you do *not* come to Him often enough!  
There is one word which I passed over, just now, because I wanted to leave it for my last observation on this point—“By prayer and supplication, *with thanksgiving,*let your requests be made known unto God.” Now what does that mean? It means that the kind of prayer that kills care is *a prayer that asks cheerfully, joyfully, thankfully.*“Lord, I am poor. Let me bless You for my poverty and then, O Lord, will You not supply all my needs?” That is the way to pray. “Lord, I am ill. I bless You for this affliction, for I am sure that it means some good thing to me. Now be pleased to heal me, I beseech You!” “Lord, I am in a great trouble, but I praise You for the trouble, for I know that it contains a blessing though the envelope is black-edged! Lord, help me through my trouble!” That is the kind of prayer that kills care—“supplication, with thanksgiving.” Mix these two things well! One drachma—no, two drachma of prayer—prayer and supplication, then one drachma of thanksgiving! Rub them together and they will make a blessed cure for care. May the Lord teach us to practice this holy art of the apothecary!  
**III.**I finish with this third point, THE SWEET EFFECT OF THIS PRAYER—“And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”  
If you can pray in this fashion, instead of indulging evil anxiety, the result will be that*an unusual peace*will steal over your heart and mind. Unusual, for it will be “the peace of God.” What is God’s peace? The unruffled serenity of the infinitely happy God, the eternal composure of the absolutely well-contented God! This shall possess your heart and mind. Notice how Paul describes it—“The peace of God, which passes all understanding.” Other people will not understand it. They will not be able to make out how you can be so quiet. What is more, you will not be able to tell them, for if it surpasses all*understanding*, it certainly passes all expression! And what is even more amazing—you will not understand it yourself!  
It will be such a peace that it will be to you, *unfathomable and immeasurable*. When one of the martyrs was about to burn for Christ, he said to the judge who was giving orders to light the pile, “Will you come and lay your hand on my heart? “The judge did so. “Does it beat fast?” enquired the martyr. “Do I show any sign of fear?” “No,” said the judge. “Now lay your hand on your own heart and see whether you are not more excited than I am.” Think of that man of God, who, on the morning he was to be burned, was so soundly asleep that they had to shake him to wake him— he had to get up to be burned! And yet knowing that it was to be so, he had such confidence in God that he slept sweetly. *This* is “the peace of God, which passes all understanding.” In those old Diocletian persecutions, when the martyrs came into the amphitheatre to be torn by wild beasts—when one was set in a red-hot iron chair, another was smeared with honey to be stung to death by wasps and bees—they never flinched!  
Think of that brave man who was put on a gridiron to be roasted to death, who said to his persecutors, “You have done me on one side. Now turn me over to the other.” Why this peace under such circumstances? It was “the peace of God, which passes all understanding.” We do not have to suffer like that, nowadays, but if it ever comes to anything like that, it is wonderful what peace a Christian enjoys! After there had been a great storm, the Master stood up in the prow of the vessel and said to the winds, “Be still.” And we read, “there was a great calm.” Have you ever felt this? You feel it tonight if you have learned this sacred art of making your requests known unto God in everything and the peace of God which passes all understanding is keeping your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.  
This blessed peace keeps our hearts and minds—it is *a guardian peace*. The Greek word implies a garrison. Is it not an odd thing that a military term is used here and that it is*peace* that acts as a guard to the heart and to the mind? It is the peace of God that is to protect the child of God—strange but beautiful figure! I have heard that fear is the housekeeper for a Christian. Well, fear may be a good guardian to keep dogs out, but it has not a full cupboard! But peace, though it seems weakness, is the essence of strength and, while it guards, it also feeds us and supplies all our needs.  
It is also *a peace which links us to Jesus—*“The peace of God which passes all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds.” That is, your affections and your thoughts, your desires and your intellect—your heart—so that it shall not fear. Your mind, so that it shall not know any kind of perplexity—“the peace of God shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” It is all, “through Christ Jesus” and, therefore, it is doubly sweet and precious to us!  
O my dear Hearers, some of you come in here on Thursday nights and you do not know anything about this peace of God and, perhaps, you wonder why we Christian people make such a fuss about our religion! Ah, if you knew, you would, perhaps, make more fuss about it than we do, for if there were no hereafter—and we know that there is—yet the blessed habit of going to God in prayer and casting all our care upon Him helps us to live most joyfully, even in this life! We do not believe in secularism, but if we did, there would be no preparation for the earthly life like this living unto God and living *in* God! If you have a sham god and you merely go to Church or Chapel and carry your prayer book or your hymn book with you and, therefore, think you are Christians, you are deceiving yourselves! But if you have a living God and you have real fellowship with Him and constantly, as a habit, live beneath the shadow of the wings of the Almighty, then you shall enjoy a peace that shall make others wonder and make you, yourself, marvel, too, even, “the peace of God, which passes all understanding.” God grant it to you, my beloved Hearers, for Christ’s sake! Amen.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:  
*Philippians 4.***

**Verse 1.***Therefore, my brethren, dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, do stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved.*You know that the Church at Philippi was very dear to the Apostle’s heart. He could never forget the time when he and Silas prayed with the women at the riverside and afterwards prayed and sang praises unto God in the prison, when the prisoners heard them. Lydia and her household and the Philippian jailor were among the first fruits of Paul’s work at Philippi and there was always a very intimate love between him and the members of the Church in that place. They cared for him and he cared for them. Twice in this one verse he speaks of them as his, “dearly beloved.” He says that he “longed for them, longed to come and see them face to face, longed that they might be happy in the Lord to the very highest degree. So he says, “my brethren, dearly beloved and longed for, my joy.” It was such a joy to him, even, to think of them as his spiritual children and especially to see after what a godly and generous fashion they behaved themselves. Yes, and he calls them his, “crown”—a garland which he had won in spiritual wrestling! The Christian’s converts are his joy, here, and they will be his crown forever in Heaven. Paul bade these Philippians, “stand fast in the Lord.” It looks like a very simple thing to stand fast, but they who try to do it know how difficult a task it is.

**2.***I beseech Euodias, and beseech Syntyche, that they be of the same mind in the Lord.*Only two women who had fallen out with one another, but the Apostle is so anxious for perfect unity that he puts in a, “beseech,” for each of them. He does not say which was right and which was wrong, but he would have them, “of the same mind in the Lord.” Little differences, even between obscure members of the Church, may hinder the work of the Spirit of God. The Holy Spirit is like a dove—and doves love quiet places—they do not come where there is noise and strife. Oh, let us cultivate love towards one another! And if in anything we have disagreed at any time, let us think that we hear Paul saying, tonight, “I beseech Euodias, and I beseech Syntyche, that they be of the same mind in the Lord.” Make up, my Sisters! Make up, my Brothers! Whatever the quarrel is, end it and, “be of the same mind in the Lord.” Bought with the same precious blood, robed in the same perfect righteousness, on the way to the same Heaven, “be of the same mind in the Lord.”

**3.***And I entreat you also, true yokefellow, help those women which labored with me in the Gospel, with Clement, also, and with other of my fellow laborers, whose names are in the Book of Life.*We do not know who this “true yokefellow” was. Very likely it was Epaphroditus who carried this Epistle to Philippi. Whoever it was, it was someone who had worked with Paul shoulder to shoulder. If two bullocks bear the same yoke and yet do not agree, they make it very uncomfortable for one another. If one tries to lie down and the other wants to stand up, or if one goes faster than the other, the yoke becomes doubly galling. Paul speaks of somebody here as having been his “true yokefellow”—and he says to him, “Help those women which labored with me in the Gospel.”

What an eminent place women have always held in the service of the Lord Jesus Christ and here Paul speaks of them as laboring with him in the Gospel! Surely Lydia must have been one of those. “With Clement, also, and with other of my fellow laborers, whose names are in the Book of Life.” According to some learned commentators, a man’s name may be in the Book of Life for a time, but it may be removed. If their teaching is true, that book will be very much scratched and blotted. I thank God that I do not believe in any such book as that! If the Lord Jesus Christ has written my name in the Book of Life, in the great family register of the redeemed, I defy all the devils of Hell to ever get it erased!

**4.***Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice.*If you *ever* rejoice in the Lord, you may *always* rejoice in the Lord, for He is always the same, and always gracious! There is as much reason for rejoicing in God at one time as at another, since He never changes.

**5.***Let your moderation be known unto all men.*The word, “moderation,” in the Greek, is a very difficult word to translate into English. It does not mean moderation in the sense in which some people use the word, for they make it, as I think, almost an accursed one. “Let your moderation”— your *gentleness*, your *willingness*, your *forbearance*—“be known unto all men.” That is what it means. Do not push your own rights too far—stop short of what you might fairly demand and when you feel, at any time, a little vehement in temper, check yourself—hold yourself in, bear and forbear. Go not as far as you may, nor even as far as some think that you ought, in defending your own rights. Let your gentleness, your yieldingness, be known unto all men.

**5.***The Lord is at hand.* Christ is coming—why do you put yourself out? The Lord is near you to help you—why are you so excessively anxious? Why are you so carried away with the present temporary trial? “The Lord is at hand.”

**6.***Be careful for nothing.*Be anxiously careful for nothing! Sing, with Faber—  
***“I have no cares, O blessed Lord, For all my cares are Yours.”***

**6-8.***But in everything, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are honest, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report; if there is any virtue, and if there is any praise, think on these things.* Everything of this kind concerns you, therefore help it as far as you can. Be on the side of every cause that may be thus described. If it vindicates truth, uprightness, reverence, religion, chastity, holiness—be on that side. If there is anything the reverse of this, do not have anything to do with it, but if there is any movement in the world that will help forward things that are true, honest, just, pure, lovely and of good report, “think on these things,” and so think upon them as to increase their influence among the sons and daughters of men!

**9.***Those things, which you have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do.*It is well when a preacher can speak like that—when he has not to say, “Do as I say and not as I do,” but when, like the Apostle, he can say—“those things, which you have both learned, received, heard and seen in me, do.”

**9.***And the God of Peace shall be with you.*The God of Peace is always with those who receive His dear Son and who help His Gospel. It is one of the privileges of true Believers that the God of Peace shall be constantly with them.

**10.***But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now, at the last, your care of me has flourished again; wherein you were also careful, but you lacked opportunity.* Paul was in prison at Rome and these Philippians had made a contribution. And they had sent Epaphroditus with it to relieve the Apostle in his poverty, so he said to them, “You cared for me before; but for a time you had not the opportunity of helping me, and now you have thought of me, again, therefore I rejoice in the Lord greatly.”

**11.***Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatever state I am, therewith to be content.*Is not that a splendid piece of learning? Paul was a learned man and so are you, if you have learned this lesson! You may not be able to put D.D., or LL.D., after your name, but you are a learned man if you can say, “I have learned, in whatever state I am, therewith to be content.”

**12.***I know both how to be abased and I know how to abound.* These are two grand things to learn. There are some who know the first, but who do not know the second. I have known several of God’s children who seemed quite eminent for piety when they were abased, but they were never worth anything after they grew rich. They did not know how to abound—they became top-heavy and far too great for their britches! It was not so with the Apostle, for he could truthfully say, “I know both how to be abased and I know how to abound.”

**12.***Everywhere and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.* Was he not a true Master of Arts? He had mastered the art of being hungry without murmuring, the art of being full without boasting, the art of suffering need without impatience, the art of abounding without setting his affection on worldly things. He was, indeed, a Master of Arts of the very highest order!

**13.***I can do all things—*That looks like bragging, does it not? Finish the sentence.  
**14.***Through Christ which strengthens me.*There is no improper boasting, here, for Paul could do all things through Christ’s mighty power! It has been well said that the angels excel in strength, but the saints excel in their weakness. When we are most weak, and Christ strengthens us, then are the most excellent virtues produced.  
**14-17.***Notwithstanding, you have done well, that you did communicate with my affliction. Now you Philippians know, also, that in the beginning of the Gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no Church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but you, only. For even in Thessalonica you sent once and again unto my necessity. Not because I desired a gift: but I desire fruit that may abound to your account.* Their liberality was set down to their account in God’s book.  
**18, 19.***But I have all, and abound: I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you, an odor of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God. But my God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in Glory by Christ Jesus.*It is Paul’s God who took care of the Philippians and it is Paul’s God who will take care of you and me! “My God,” says Paul, “shall supply all your needs—not as you have supplied mine, out of your poverty, but according to His riches in Glory by Christ Jesus”! Do not imagine that you will ever exhaust God’s riches in Glory, or drain the national treasury of all-sufficiency—that cannot be.  
**20.***Now unto God and our Father be Glory forever and ever. Amen.*He blesses us, let us bless Him! He supplies all our needs according to His riches in Glory—let us extol his Glory forever and ever.  
**21.***Salute every saint in Christ Jesus.* Give him a shake of the hand. Say, “How are you, my Brother? I wish you well.” These hearty salutations ought to be common in every Christian assembly. I always deprecate that wonderful respectability that exists in some places of worship where nobody knows anybody else. They are too respectable to become acquainted with their brethren. If you are in Christ Jesus, get to know one another! “Salute every saint in Christ Jesus.”  
**21, 22.***The brethren which are with me greet you. All the saints salute you, chiefly they that are of Caesar’s household.*I suppose most of these were only slaves in the imperial household. There may have been one or two, perhaps, of a higher class, but, in all probability, the Gospel first reached the slaves in the Roman palace, that pandemonium of vice, where lust and cruelty abounded. There were saints even there—and God still has some of His jewels lying on dunghills!  
**23.***The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.*

**HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—686, 692, 691.** Adapted from*The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #1397 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

**÷Php 4.7**

THE PEACE OF GOD  
NO. 1397

**DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY EVENING, JANUARY 6, 1878, *BY C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”***Php 4:7***.***

“PEACE” is a heavenly word. When at the advent of our Lord angels came to sing among men a midnight sonnet, their second note was “Peace on earth.” Would God the shining ones would chant that song again till yonder Balkans heard the strain and shook off the sulfurous cloud which now hangs around them. Those who have ever seen war, or even come near the trail of its bloody march, will be thankful to God for peace. I am almost of his mind who said that the worst peace is preferable to the very best war that was ever waged—if best there can be where all is bad as bad can be. Peace is most pleasant when religion sits beneath its shade and offers her joyful vows to Heaven.

How grateful we ought to be that we can meet together to worship God after that form which best satisfies our consciences without any fear of being hunted down by the authorities of the land. We have no watchman on the hilltops looking out for Claverhouse’s dragoons. We put none at the front door of our conventicle to watch lest the constable should come to take off worshipper and minister, that they may suffer imprisonment or fine. We worship God in unlimited liberty and we ought to be exceedingly glad of the privilege and infinitely more grateful for it than we are. Do we not sit, every man under his own vine and fig tree, none making us afraid? Blessed is the land in which we dwell and blessed are the days in which we live, when in all peace and quietness we worship God in public and sing His high praises as loudly as we please. Great God of Peace, You have given us this peace, and in remembrance of our hunted forefathers we bless You with our whole hearts!

We have met tonight for the purpose of hearing the Gospel of peace and many of us are afterwards coming to that sacred festival which celebrates peace and is to all time the memorial of the great peace-making between God and man. And yet it may be that even all Believers here are not quite at peace. Possibly you did not leave your family in peace this afternoon. Wars occur even among loving hearts. Alas, even Sabbaths are sometimes disturbed, for evil tempers cannot be bound over to keep the peace, but are riotous even on this sweet restful day! Do Christian men ever permit angry feelings to rise within them? If they do, I am sure that even in coming away from home to the House of God, they come with a disturbed mind.

Ah, how insignificant a matter will mar our peace of mind—some little thing that happened in getting to your pew—some trifling incident even while you are in it waiting for worship to begin, may, like dust in your eye, cause you the greatest distress. Such poor creatures are we that we may

lose our peace of mind even by a word or a look! Peace, in the form of perfect calm and serenity, is a very delicate and sensitive thing and needs more careful handling than a Venice glass. It is hard for the sea of our heart to remain long in a smooth and glassy state—it may be rippled and ruffled by an infant’s breath. Perhaps, too, some of my Brothers and Sisters here have not been walking near to God—and if so, their peace will not be perfect.

It may be, my Brother, that during the week you have backslidden somewhat from your true standing and, if so, your peace has fled. Your heart is troubled and though you are believing in Christ for salvation and are, therefore, safe, yet for all that your inward rest may be broken. Therefore would I turn the text into a prayer and pray for myself and for every Believer in Jesus Christ—that the peace of God which passes all understanding may now keep our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. May you all know the text by *experience*. He who wrote it had felt it—may we who read it feel it, too. Paul had oftentimes enjoyed the brightness of peace in the darkness of a dungeon and he had felt living peace in prospect of a sudden and cruel death. He loved peace, preached peace, lived in peace, died in peace and, behold, he has entered into the fruition of peace and dwells in peace before the Throne of God!

Looking at the text and thinking how we might handle it best to our profit, I thought we would notice, first of all, the unspeakable privilege— “the peace of God, which passes all understanding.” Then, secondly, I thought that we might gather, from its connection, the method of coming at it, for the preceding sentences are linked to our text by the word, “and,” which is not an incidental conjunction, but is placed there with a purpose. Paul means to say that if we do what he bids us do in the 4th, 5th and 6th verses, then the peace of God shall keep our hearts and minds. When we have looked at that matter for a few minutes, I shall need your careful attention, in the third place, to the power of its operation—for the peace of God “shall keep your hearts and minds.”

And then we shall close, in the fourth place, by noticing the sphere of its action, namely, “in Christ Jesus.” The word should have been, “in,” rather than, “through”—“shall keep your hearts and minds *in* Christ Jesus.” May the Holy Spirit, who is the Spirit of Peace, now lead us into the center and secrets of our text.

**I.**First, then, here is AN UNSPEAKABLE PRIVILEGE—one which is very hard to speak of because it passes all understanding and, therefore, you may be sure it must pass all description! It is one of those things which can be more readily experienced than explained. Good Joseph Stennett was right when he spoke of those who—

***“Draw from Heaven that sweet repose***

***Which none but he that feels it knows.”***  
We may talk about inward rest and dilate upon the peace of God. We may select the most choice expressions to declare the delicacy of its enjoyment, but we cannot convey to others the knowledge second hand—they must *feel* it or they cannot understand it. If I were speaking to little children, I would illustrate my point by the story of the boy at one of our mission stations who had a piece of sugar cube given him one day at school.

He had never tasted such essence of sweetness and when he went home to his father, he told him that he had eaten something which was wonderfully sweet. His father said, “Was it as sweet as such-and-such a fruit?” “It was far sweeter than that.” “Was it as sweet as such-and-such a food?” which he mentioned. “It was much sweeter than that. But Father,” he said, “I cannot explain it.” He rushed out of the house back to the mission house, begged a piece of sugar out of it and brought it back. He then said, “Father, taste and see, and then you will know how sweet it is.” So I venture to use that simple illustration and say, “O taste and see that the peace of God is good,” for in very deed it surpasses all the tongues of men and of angels to set it forth!

What is the peace of God? I would describe it, first, by saying it is, of course, peace *with* God. It is peace of conscience, actual peace with the Most High through the atoning Sacrifice. Reconciliation, forgiveness, restoration to favor there must be—and the soul must be aware of it— there can be no peace of God apart from justification through the blood and righteousness of Jesus Christ *received* by faith. A man conscious of being guilty can never know the peace of God till he becomes equally conscious of being forgiven. When his consciousness of pardon shall become as strong and vivid as his consciousness of guilt had been, then will he enter into the enjoyment of the peace of God which passes all understanding!

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ—you that have believed in Jesus— there is perfect peace between you and God now—“Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God.” Your sin was the ground of the quarrel, but it has gone. It has ceased to be! It is blotted out! It is cast into the depth of the sea! As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us! Our Divine Scapegoat has carried our iniquities into the wilderness. Our Lord and Master has finished transgression, made an end of sin. He has brought in everlasting righteousness. The cause of offense is gone and gone forever—Jesus has taken our guilt, has suffered in our place, has made full compensation to the injured Law and vindicated Justice to the very highest—and now there is nothing which can excite the anger of God towards us, for our sin is removed and our unrighteousness is covered.

We are reconciled to God by Christ Jesus and accepted in the Beloved. Now this actual reconciliation brings to the heart a profound sense of peace. O that all of you possessed it! O that those who know it knew it more fully! Remember, O Soul, if Christ did, indeed, suffer in your place and was made a curse for you, Justice can never require at your hands the penalty which your Surety has discharged, for this would be to dishonor His Sacrifice by making it of no effect! If Jesus stood as your Substitute and bore what God required as the vindication of His Law, then you are clear, beyond all doubt clear forever, saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation!

If it were not so, why was there a Substitute permitted? Did God design to tantalize mankind by permitting an ineffectual substitution? What did

He accomplish if He did not save those for whom He died? What meaning is there in the Gospel if it does not reveal an effectual Atonement? But truly the Lord Jesus was made sin for us and the chastisement of our peace was upon Him and by His stripes we are saved! Here the soul rests! At the foot of the Cross it finds a peace it never could have found elsewhere. I hope that many of you are now able to sing—

***“Jesus was punished in my stead,  
Outside the gate my Surety bled  
To expiate my stain.  
On earth the Godhead deigned to dwell,  
And made of Infinite avail  
The sufferings of the man.  
And was He for such rebels given?  
He was! The Incarnate King of Heaven  
Did for His foes expire!  
Amazed, O earth, the tidings hear  
He bore, that we might never bear  
His Father’s righteous ire.”***

There take your full of peace, for by this Sacrifice a Covenant of Peace is now established between you and your God—and it is sealed by atoning blood.

“The peace of God, which passes all understanding” also takes a second form, namely, that of a consequent peace in the little kingdom within. When we know that we are forgiven and that we are at peace with God, things within us come to a sudden and delightful change. By nature everything in our inner nature is at war with itself—it is a cage of evil beasts all tearing and devouring each other. Man is out of order—out of order with God, with the universe and with himself. The machinery of manhood has fallen into serious disorder—its cogs and wheels do not work in due harmony, but miss their touch and stroke. The passions, instead of being ruled by reason, often demand to hold the reins. Reason, instead of being guided by the knowledge which God communicates by His Word, chooses to obey a depraved imagination and demands to become a separate power and to judge God Himself!

There is not a faculty of our nature which is not in rebellion against God and, consequently, in a state of confusion with regard to the rest of our system. A cruel internal war often rages among our mental powers, animal instincts and moral faculties causing distress, fear and unhappiness. There is no cure for this but restoring Grace. O Man, *you* cannot get your heart right! *You* cannot get your conscience right! *You* cannot get your understanding right! *You* cannot bring your various powers to their bearings and make them act in true harmony till first you are right with God! The King must occupy the throne and then the estate of Mansoul will be duly settled—but till the chief authority has due eminence—rebellion and riot will continue.

When the Lord breathes peace into a man and the Holy Spirit descends like a dove to dwell within the soul, then is there quiet—where all was chaos, order appears, the man is created anew and becomes a new creature in Christ Jesus. And though rebellious lusts still try to get the mastery, yet there is now a ruling power which keeps the man in order so that within him there is “the peace of God, which passes all understanding.” This leads on to peace in reference to all outward circumstances by reason of our confidence that God orders them all rightly and arranges them all for our good. The man who believes in Jesus and is reconciled to God has nothing outside of him that he needs to fear. Is he poor? He rejoices that Christ makes poor men rich! Does he prosper? He rejoices that there is Divine Grace to sanctify his prosperity lest it become intoxicating to him!

Does there lie before him a great trouble? He thanks God for His promise that as his day his strength shall be. Does he apprehend the loss of friends? He prays that the trial may be averted, for he is permitted so to pray, even as David begged for the life of his child. But, having so done, he feels sure that God will not take away an earthly friend unless it is with kind intent to gather up our trust and confidence more fully to Himself. Does there lie before him the prospect of speedy death? The hope of resurrection gives peace to his dying pillow! He knows that his Redeemer lives and he is content to let his body sleep in the dust awhile. Is he reminded by Scripture of a Day of Judgment when all hearts shall be revealed? He has peace with regard to that dread mystery and all that surrounds it, for he knows whom he has believed and he knows that He will protect him in that day.

Whatever may be suggested that might alarm or distress the Believer, deep down in his soul he cannot be disturbed because he sees his God at the helm of the vessel holding the rudder with a hand which defies the storm. This is peculiarly advantageous in days like these when all things wear a dreary aspect. The storm signals are flying, the clouds are gathering, flashes of lightning and sounds of distant thunder are all around us. If you read the papers, wars and rumors of wars are incessant! Your eyes light upon narratives of famine and drought. You see distress here, slackness of business there and poverty and starvation in many places—and the fear creeps over you that there are dark days yet to come and seasons in which faces will grow pale and hands hang heavy.

Brothers and Sisters, it is for the Believer, in such a case, to feel no dismay, for our God is in the heavens and He does not forsake the Throne. His purposes will be fulfilled and good will come out of evil, for at this very moment God sits in the council chambers of kings and orders all things according to the counsel of His will. We are not children whose father has gone to sea and left us at home without a guardian. We read just now the words, “I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you,” and we believe that gracious Word of God! God is most near us and we are most safe. Though we cannot see the future and do not wish to pry between the folded leaves of the book of destiny, we are absolutely certain that *nothing* is written upon the unopened page of the future which can contradict the Divine faithfulness so conspicuous in the past. We are sure that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them that are the called according to His purpose—and therefore our soul, as to all external circumstances, casts anchor and enjoys the peace of God which passes all understanding.

Nor is this all. God is pleased to give to His people peace in reference to all His commands. While the soul is unregenerate, it rebels against the mind and will of God. If God forbids, the unrenewed heart longs for the

forbidden thing. If God commands, the natural mind, for that very reason, refuses to do it! But when the change takes place and we are reconciled to God by the death of His Son, then, Beloved, we drop into the same line with God and our deepest desire is to abide in full harmony with Him. His will becomes our delight and our only sorrow is that we cannot be perfectly conformed to it. There is no precept of God which is grievous to a gracious heart. His statutes are our songs in the house of our pilgrimage. We also feel perfect peace with regard to God’s providential doings because we believe that they are helping us to arrive at conformity with Him—and that is just what we want.

Oh that we could never have a thought or wish, from now on, that would be disagreeable to the Lord! We love Him, we love His ways, we love His people, we love His Word, we love His Day, we love His promises, we love His Laws—we are altogether agreed with Him through His rich Grace—and in this sense we have a peace towards God which passes all understanding. What a wonderful description that is of this peace—it “passes all understanding.” It is not only beyond a *common* understanding, but it passes *all* understanding. Some have said it means that the ungodly man cannot understand it. That statement is true, but it is not a tenth of the whole meaning, for even he who enjoys it cannot understand it! It is deeper, it is broader, it is sweeter, it is more heavenly than the joyful saint, himself, can tell. He enjoys what he cannot understand! What a mercy that such a thing is possible, for otherwise our joys would be narrow, indeed! Reason has limits far more narrow than joy. Truly this peace is hid from the eyes of the ungodly and the unbelieving— it is far above, out of their sight.

Now, there are kinds of peace in the world which the ungodly man *can* understand. There were the Stoics who schooled themselves to apathy— they would not feel and so they attained a senseless peace—their secret is easily discovered, it does not pass understanding. Many a Red Indian has been as stolid as the greatest Stoic and has, perhaps, surpassed him in hardening himself so that he would not groan if pierced with arrows or burned with fire. Some men have had such mastery over themselves that it has seemed a matter of perfect indifference whether they suffered pain or not.

But Christianity does not teach us stoicism, nor does it point in that direction. It cultivates tenderness, not insensibility. Its influence tends to make us sensitive rather than callous and gives us a peace consistent with the utmost delicacy of feeling, yes, with a sensitiveness more intense than other men know since it makes our conscience more tender and causes the mind to be deeply distressed by the slightest frown of Heaven. Our peace is not the peace of apathy, but one of a far nobler sort. Others have aimed at the peace of levity, which the world can readily understand. They count it one of the wisest things to drive dull care away and whatever happens of ill they drown reflection of it in the flowing bowl and laugh over it—making mirth when misery devours their souls.

Christians do not attempt to get rid of the trials of life in that fashion. The world, therefore, cannot understand the Believer’s peace since he is neither apathetic nor frivolous. From where does this peace come? The jaunty answer of many a worldling is, “Oh, it comes from some fanatical delusion.” But, indeed, we are not deluded. The grounds of a Christian’s peace are rational, logical and well grounded. They are to be justified by common sense. A person who has been in debt and who is still in debt, ought not to be at peace. But suppose a man is found to be perfectly at his ease—who can blame him if he can say, “I have a right to be so, for my debt is paid”? No one can challenge such an argument!

He who believes that Christ Jesus suffered in his place that which was due to God’s justice has a rational argument for being at peace which he may plead anywhere he pleases. God has forgiven, for Christ’s sake, all his iniquity—why should he not be at peace? And if it is, indeed, so—that the Christian has become the child of God—ought he not to be at peace? If God his Father rules all things for his good, ought he not to be at peace? If for him there remains no danger of eternal death—if for him there is prepared a glorious resurrection—and if he is ultimately to shine with Christ in eternal Glory, why should not the man have peace? It is far more difficult, I should think, to rationally blame him for his happiness than it would be to justify him if he were in alarm. We are not victims of delusion but speak the words of the Truth of God and soberness when we claim to be the most favored of mankind! The folly and the fanaticism lie with those who neglect God, eternity and make a mockery of sin. And so the worldling does not understand our peace and frequently sneers at it because he is puzzled by it.

Even the Christian is sometimes surprised at his own peacefulness. I know what it is to suffer from terrible depression of spirit at times, yet at the very moment when it has seemed to me that life was not worth one single bronze coin, I have been perfectly peaceful with regard to all the greater things. There is a possibility of having the surface of the mind lashed into storm while yet down deep in the caverns of one’s inmost consciousness all is still—I know this by experience. There are earthquakes upon this earth and yet our globe pursues the even tenor of its way and the same is true in the little world of a Believer’s nature. Why, sometimes a Christian will feel himself to be so flooded with a delicious peace that he could not express his rapture! He is almost afraid to sing, lest even the sound of his voice should break the spell. But he says to himself—

***“Come, then, expressive silence, muse His praise.”***

Satan has breathed a whisper into the mind—“It is too good to be true,” but the spirit, firmly believing in the truthfulness of God, has repelled the insinuation and rested in the faithfulness of God, in the Eternal Covenant, in the finished work of Christ, in the love of God manifested towards His people in Christ Jesus. This is the peace of God. “So He gives His beloved sleep.” It is a rest with an emphasis—rest in Jesus’ sense when He said—“Come unto Me, all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” His rest in the most golden sense that we can ever give to the word and much more! It passes understanding, but it does not surpass experience! Do you know it? I pray you will answer the question, each one for himself, for I must come back to where I started from. It is not to be described—it must be tested to be

known.

**II.**Now, I must, in the second place, with very much brevity, indicate, beloved Friends, HOW THIS PEACE IS TO BE OBTAINED. Now, mark you, the Apostle was addressing himself only to Believers in the Lord Jesus and I must beg you to take heed to the limitation. I am not addressing myself to the ungodly—I speak only to Christians. You are always at peace with God though you do not always enjoy the sense of it. If you wish to realize it, how are you to do so? The connection tells you. In the 4th verse Paul says, “Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say, Rejoice.” If you want to have peace of mind, make God your *Joy* and place all your joy in God!

You cannot rejoice in yourself, but you ought to rejoice in God. You cannot always rejoice in your circumstances, for they greatly vary, but the Lord never changes. “Rejoice in the Lord always.” If you have rejoicing in earthly things you must indulge it moderately. But rejoicing in the Lord may be used without the possibility of excess, for the Apostle adds, “Again I say, Rejoice”—rejoice and rejoice again! Delight yourselves in the Lord. Who has such a God as you have? “Their rock is not as our Rock, our enemies themselves being judges.” Who has such a Friend, such a Father, such a Savior, such a Comforter as you have in the Lord your God? To think of God as our exceeding Joy is to find “the peace of God which passes all understanding.”

Go on to the 5th Verse, where the Apostle says, “Let your moderation be known unto all men.” That is to say, While all your joy is in God, deal with all earthly things on the principle of caution. If any man praises you, do not exult. If, on the contrary, you are censured, do not let your spirit sink. If you have prosperity, thank God for it, but do not be assured that it will continue. If property is yours, use it, but do not let it become your treasure or the chief consideration of your mind. Do you suffer adversity? Pray God to help you, but do not be so cast down as to despair. Drink of earthly cups by sips—do not be foolish like the fly which drowns itself in sweets. Use the things of time as not abusing them. Do not wade far out into the dangerous sea of this world’s comfort. Take the good that God provides you, but say of it, “It passes away,” for, indeed, it is but a temporary supply for a temporary need. Never suffer your goods to become your god. Rejoice only in God and as for all else, come or go, rise or fall, let it neither distress you nor make you exult. Take matters quietly and calmly and if you do that you will have peace. If you idolize any earthly good, your peace will depart. Keep the world under your feet and the peace of God shall keep your heart and mind.

Three rules are then added by the Apostle which you will be sure to remember. He tells us to be careful for *nothing*, to be prayerful for *everything* and to be thankful for*anything*. Anyone who can keep these three rules, with the other two, will be quite sure to have a peaceful mind. “Be careful for nothing.” That is, leave your care with God. Having done your best to provide things honest in the sight of all men, take no distressing, disturbing, anxious thought about anything, but cast your burden on the Lord. Then pray about everything, little, as well as great— joyous, as well as sad. “In everything by prayer and supplication let your requests be made known unto God.” That which you pray over will have the sting taken out of it if it is evil and the sweetness of it will be sanctified if it is good. The tribulation which you pray over will become bearable even if it is not changed into a subject for rejoicing. A trouble prayed over is a dead lion with honey in the carcass!

And then we are bid to be thankful for anything, for the Apostle says, “In everything, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God.” Thankfulness is the great promoter of peace—it is the mother and nurse of restfulness. Doubtless our peace is often broken because we receive mercies from God without acknowledging them—neglected praises sour into unquiet forebodings. If we render to the Lord the fragrant incense of holy gratitude we shall find our soul perfumed with the sweet peace of God. Take those five things, then, as the connection sets them before you. Pile up all your joy into the sacred storehouse of your God and be glad in the Lord.

Next, leave, as much as you can, the things of this world alone—touch them with a light finger—“Let your moderation be known unto all men.” And then pray much, care for nothing and bless God from morning to night! In such an atmosphere shall peace grow as rare flowers and fruits bloom beneath sunny skies in well-watered gardens. May the Holy Spirit work these things in us and cause us to rest.

**III.**This brings me to the third point of our subject tonight, which is THE OPERATION OF THIS BLESSED PRIVILEGE UPON OUR HEARTS. It is said that the peace of God will keep our hearts and minds. The Greek word is *phroureo*, which signifies keeping guard, keeping as with a garrison so completely and so effectually does the peace of God keep our hearts and minds. Look, then—our hearts need keeping, keeping from sinking, for our poor spirits are very apt to faint, even under small trials. They also need keeping from wandering, for how soon are they beguiled! What feeble charms are able to attract us away from the altogether lovely One! Our hearts need keeping up and keeping right.

The way to keep the heart, according to the text, is to let it be filled with the peace of God which passes all understanding. A quiet spirit—calm, restful, happy—is one that will neither sink nor wander—how can it? If the peace of God is in you, what can cause you distress? You will be like those great buoys moored out at sea which cannot sink. It matters not what storms may be raging, they always rise above all. Our souls, moored fast and rendered buoyant with peace, will be as fixed marks whereby others may know their way. Moreover, a man who has his heart full of peace is not likely to wander, for he says to himself, “Why should I wander? Where can such sweetness be found as I have tasted in my Lord? Why should I seek elsewhere?” The best way to keep a person in your service is to make it worth his while to stay and if he is so happy and so content that he feels he could not better himself, you are likely to retain him for many a long day.

Now, our Lord and Master has made His service such that we could not better ourselves. When He said to some of His servants, “Will you, also, go away?” They said, “To whom shall we go?” Ah, indeed! To whom *could* we go? Eyes, will you leave the light for the thick darkness? Ears, will you

turn away from the music of Jesus’ voice? Heart, will you leave a faithful lover for a deceiver? Understanding, will you go abroad after novelties when you have found the old, sure, satisfactory Truth of God? Conscience, will you burden yourself, again, with your former load? When you are so perfectly satisfied with the work and Person of Christ, will you not stay where you are? Oh yes, the heart is held with bands as strong as they are tender when it is full of the peace of God which passes understanding!

You young people get tempted, I know, and who among us does not? And the world has many charms for you. I recommend you, therefore, pray to the Lord to maintain your happiness in Christ, your joy in the Lord. If you get out of heart with regard to your Lord and Master, it may be the devil may catch you when you are bad tempered and cross-grained towards your great Lord—and entice you away from your allegiance. But if your heart is always peaceful, you will have a strength about you with which to resist the suggestions of the Evil One. Rivets of peace are good fasteners for Christian loyalty. It is a very serious thing for a Christian to be in an uncomfortable state, for he is then weak in an important point. “Comfort you, comfort you, My people,” are God’s words to His Prophets, because He knows that when we lose comfort, or lose peace, we lose one of the most valuable pieces of armor of which our panoply is composed. But the text also adds that this will keep our mind as well as our heart.

Now in all ages we find that the minds of Christians have been apt to be disturbed and vexed upon vital Truths of God. I think, sometimes, that this is the worst age for error which has ever darkened the world. I get distressed and bowed to the earth as I see the treachery of ministers, professed ministers of Christ, who deny the Inspiration of Scripture and lay the axe at the very root of all the doctrines which we hold dear while they continue to occupy Christian pulpits. But when I look back all through history I find it was always so. From the days of Judas Iscariot until now there have been traitors and there have been men of ready speech and of quick thought who have used both fair speech and subtle thought to turn away simple minds from the Gospel, in that they would deceive, if it were possible, the very elect!

But why are not the elect deceived? As a rule it is because they find such peace—such *perfect* peace—in the Truths of God which they have received, that deceivers vainly attempt to entice them away from it. “Ah,” cries the restful Believer, “I cannot give up the Gospel. It is my life, my strength, my solace, my all! It was the comfort of my dying mother and it remains the mainstay of my aged father. It was that which brought me to a Savior’s feet and gives me Grace to remain there. It has helped me in the hour of trial again and again. I feel I need its consolations and, therefore, I can never part with it.” And so he grows indignant with the man who casts a doubt, especially if he is of the clerical order and a pretender to the Christian ministry. Brothers and Sisters, we cannot move one single inch from the Truth which we have been taught by the Holy Spirit in our soul—and it is only such Truth as that which can bring into the heart the peace of God which passes understanding!

When the Lord has brought His own Truth into our minds by His own power and made the sweet savor of it to pervade our frame—and when He has given us to drink thereof till we have been filled with joy and peace unutterable—we cannot, then, depart from it! Truth taught us by man we may forget, but that which the Holy Spirit engraves upon the inmost heart we cannot depart from. So help us God, we must stand to it even if we die for it! And what are the inventions they offer us instead of the choice things of the Covenant of Peace? They are trifles light as air! If they were true they would not be worth propagating—they might be left among the minor matters which are of no practical value to the sons of men.

They bring us no new grounds of solid peace or fresh discovered arguments for holy joy. The negative theology promises no blessings to mankind. It is an empty-handed plunderer, robbing us of every solace and offering nothing in return. If modern thought could be proved to be true, the next thing that ought to be done would be to hang the world in sackcloth because such vanity of vanities has taken the place of the delightful Truth of God which once gladdened the hearts of men! It would be the saddest of all facts if we were assured that the Doctrines of Grace are, after all, a fiction. But they are not so. They cannot be! They bear their own witness within themselves. Some of us can speak about them as Christian replied to Atheist, when Atheist said, “Go back! Go back!” Christian’s reply was, “We are seeking the Celestial City.” “Oh,” said Atheist, “but I have gone farther than any of you and I tell you that there is no such place. I have met with many learned men who have studied the whole matter and it is all a delusion. Go back! Bo back!”

Then Christian said, “What? No Celestial City? Did we not see it from the top of Mount Clear, when we were with the shepherds and looked through the telescopic glass?” So we say—No Atonement? Have we not felt the peace with which it soothes the conscience? No regeneration? Are we not, ourselves, the living evidence that men are made new creatures in Christ Jesus? No answers to prayer? Surely, then, we are not sane men at all and our senses have failed us! No final perseverance? What, then, has kept us to this day? No work of the Holy Spirit? What? Are we asleep? Is even our *existence* a delusion? No, as we rub our eyes, we feel that we have not been dreaming! We feel sure that some other people are dozing and doting—and we pray that God, in mercy, may end their dream and bring them to know those glorious and substantial Truths which fill us with the peace of God which passes all understanding!

We are bound to the Cross forever! We are nailed to the wood with Christ forever! The blood-red colors of the Atonement are fastened to our masthead, to fly there till our vessel sinks, if sink it must, but never to be struck by man or devil, priest or philosopher! We dare not change, but stand faithful to that which Jesus has taught us, at whose feet we sat in our youth and who still continues to teach us! His peace keeps our heart and mind and, therefore, we will, with heart and mind, keep His Truth, come what may.

**IV.**Lastly, let us observe THE SPHERE OF ITS ACTION. The text says, “In Christ Jesus.” Now, Beloved, I beg you to note this with interest. The Apostle never mentions the name of Jesus too often. You cannot say that he drags it in, but he mentions it as often as he can, for he delights in

the sound of it. “In Christ Jesus.” These words touch every point of our text all the way through. Are we speaking of ourselves? We are in Christ Jesus! Our faith has realized our union with His sacred Person. He is our Head and we are His members. He is the Cornerstone and we are built upon Him. There is nothing about ourselves worth thinking of apart from Him—and it will be well if we dismiss the thought.

Then if we dwell upon the peace of God, we still think of our Lord Jesus, for it is all in Him. No peace is to be found out of Christ! No peace can warm our heart while we forget Christ! “He is our peace.” Never go, dear Brothers and Sisters, for your peace to the Law or to your own experience—to your own past achievements, or even to your own faith! All your peace is in Jesus. And then our hearts and our minds, mentioned in the text, must all be in Jesus—the heart loving Him and loved of Him. The mind believing Him, resting in Him, using its faculties for Him—all in Him! If I leave that last thought with you it will be the best ending for my sermon, namely, that to get peace and to get your hearts and minds kept, the grand necessity is to be in Christ—in your dying, risen, reigning Lord! Let Him be upon your thoughts now and always! His table is now spread, come here to commune with Him. Come here with your Master, to see your Master and to eat His flesh and drink His blood, after a *spiritual* fashion, at His own table!

A word to you who do not know our Lord. How I wish you did know Him! You can never possess peace till you possess Christ! What a blessed beginning of Sabbaths it would be to your souls if you were to seek Christ tonight. You have not far to go to find Him. He is not far from any of us. Cover your eyes and breathe a prayer to Him. Stand behind one of the columns outside or get into the street and let your heart say, “Savior, I need peace, and peace I can never have till I have found You. Behold, I trust You. Manifest Yourself to me at this moment and say unto my soul, ‘I am your salvation.’” God grant you may so pray!

It seems to me very amazing that we should need to *persuade* men to think of their own interests and to care for their own selves! In other things they are always sharp enough to look after what they call, “Number One,” but when it comes to the most solemn concern—the greatest blessing and the purest happiness that can be had—they are so foolish as to let all other things attract them more than the Lord Jesus! The Lord save you all for His infinite mercy’s sake! Amen.

[EARNEST prayer is desired for the special services now being held at the Tabernacle and also for Mr. SPURGEON, that he may be fully restored and may return to his people in the fullness of the blessing of the Gospel of peace. He is, by God’s Grace, already greatly improved in health.]

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HOW TO KEEP THE HEART  
NO. 180

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH EVENING, FEBRUARY 21, 1858, *BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.**

***“The peace of God which passes all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”***Php 4:7***.***

IT is remarkable that when are find an exhortation given to God’s people in one part of the Holy Scripture, we almost invariably find the very thing which they are exhorted to do guaranteed to them and provided for them in some other part of the same blessed volume. This morning my text was, “Keep the heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life.” Now, this evening we have the Promise upon which we must rest if we desire to fulfill the precept—“The peace of God which passes all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”

This evening we shall use another figure distinct from the one used in the morning of *the reservoir*. We shall use the figure of a *fortress* which is to be kept. And the Promise says that it shall be kept—kept by “the peace of God which passes all understanding through Christ Jesus.”

Inasmuch as the heart is the most important part of man—for out of it are the issues of life—it would be natural to expect that Satan, when he intended to do mischief to manhood, would be sure to make his strongest and most perpetual attacks upon the heart. What we might have guessed in wisdom is certainly true in experience. For although Satan will tempt and try us in every way, though every gate of the town of Mansoul may be battered, though against every part of the walls thereof he will be sure to bring out his great guns—the place against which he levels his deadliest malice and his most furious strength is the *heart*. Into the heart, already of itself evil enough, he thrusts the seeds of every evil thing and does his utmost to make it a den of unclean birds, a garden of poisonous trees, a river flowing with destructive water.

Hence, again, arises the second necessity that we should be doubly cautious in keeping the heart with all diligence. For if, on the one hand, it is the most important, and, on the other hand, Satan, knowing this, makes his most furious and determined attacks against it, then, with double force the exhortation comes, “Keep your heart with all diligence.” And the Promise also becomes doubly sweet from the very fact of the double danger—the Promise which says, “The peace of God shall keep your

hearts and minds through Christ Jesus our Lord.”

We shall notice, first of all, *that which keeps the heart and mind*. Secondly, we shall note how to obtain it—for we are to understand this Promise as connected with certain precepts which come before it. And then, when we have noted this, we shall try to show *how it is true that the peace of God does keep the mind free from the attacks of Satan, or delivers it from those attacks when they are made*.

**I.**First, then, Beloved, the preservation which God in this Promise confers upon the saints is “THE PEACE OF GOD WHICH PASSES ALL UNDERSTANDING,” to keep us through Jesus Christ. It is called PEACE. And we are to understand this in a double sense. There is a peace of God which exists between the child of God and God his Judge—a peace which may be truly said to pass all understanding. Jesus Christ has offered so all-sufficient a satisfaction for all the claims of injured justice that now God has no fault to find with His children. “He sees no sin in Jacob nor iniquity in Israel.” Nor is He angry with them on account of their sins—a peace unbroken and unspeakable being established by the atonement which Christ has made on their behalf.

Hence flows a peace experienced in the conscience which is the second part of this peace of God. For, when the conscience sees that God is satisfied and is no longer at war with it, then it also becomes satisfied with *man*. And Conscience, which was front to be a great disturber of the peace of the heart now gives its verdict of acquittal and the heart sleeps in the arms of Conscience and finds a quiet resting place there. Against the child of God Conscience brings no accusation—or if it brings the accusation, it is but a gentle one—gentle chiding of a loving friend who hints that we have done amiss and that we had better change—but does not afterwards thunder in our ears the threat of a penalty. Conscience knows full well that peace is made between the soul and God and, therefore, it does not hint that there is anything else but joy and peace to be looked forward to by the Believer.

Do we understand anything of this double peace? Let us pause here and ask ourselves a question upon this doctrinal part of the matter. Let us make it an experimental question with our own hearts. “Come, my Soul, are you at peace with God? Have you seen your pardon signed and sealed with the Redeemer’s blood? Come, answer this, my Heart—have you cast your sins upon the head of Christ and have you seen them all washed away in the crimson streams of His blood? Can you feel that now there is a lasting peace between yourself and God so that, come what may God shall not be angry with you—shall not condemn you—shall not consume you in His wrath, nor crush you in His hot displeasure?

If it is so, then, my Heart, you can scarcely need to stop and ask the second question—Is my conscience at peace? For, if my heart condemns me not, God is greater than my heart and does know all things. If my conscience bears witness with me that I am a partaker of the precious grace of salvation, then happy am I! I am one of those to whom God has given the peace which passes all understanding. Now, why is this called “the peace of God”?

We suppose it is because it comes *from* God—because it was planned *by* God—because God gave His Son to make the peace—because God gives His Spirit to give the peace in the conscience—because, indeed, it is God Himself in the soul, reconciled to man, whose is the peace. And while it is true that this man shall have the peace—even the Man-Christ, yet we know it is because He was the God-Christ that He was our peace. And hence we may clearly perceive how Godhead is mixed up with the peace which we enjoy with our Maker and with our conscience.

Then we are told that it is “the peace of God which passes all understanding.” What does He mean by this? He means such a peace that the understanding can never comprehend—can never attain to. The understanding of mere carnal man can never comprehend this peace. He who tries with a philosophic look to discover the secret of the Christian’s peace, finds himself in a maze. “I know not how it is, nor why it is,” says he. “I see these men hunted through the earth. I turn the pages of history and I find them hunted to their graves. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, afflicted and tormented. Yet I also see upon the Christian’s brow a calm serenity. I cannot understand this. I do not know what it is. I know that I myself, even in my merriest moments, am disturbed. That when my enjoyments run the highest, still there are waves of doubt and fear across my mind. Then why is this? How is it that the Christian can attain a rest so calm, so peaceful and so quiet?”

Understanding can never get to that peace which the Christian has attained. The philosopher may teach us much. He can never give us rules whereby to reach the peace that Christians have in their conscience. Diogenes may tell us to do without everything and may live in his tub and then think himself happier than Alexander and that he enjoys peace. But we look upon the poor creature after all and though we may be astonished at his courage, yet we are obliged to despise his folly. We do not believe that even when he had dispensed with everything that he possessed a quiet of mind, a total and entire peace such as the true Believer can enjoy.

We find the greatest philosophers of old laying down maxims for life which they thought would certainly promote happiness. We find that they were not always able to practice them themselves. And many of their disciples, when they labored hard to put them in execution, found themselves encumbered with impossible rules to accomplish impossible objects. But the Christian man does with faith what a man can never do himself. While the poor understanding is climbing up the crags, Faith stands on the summit. While the poor understanding is getting into a calm atmosphere, Faith flies aloft and mounts higher than the storm and then looks down on the valley and smiles while the tempest blows beneath its feet. Faith goes further than understanding and the peace which the Christian enjoys is one which the worldling cannot comprehend and cannot himself attain. “The peace of God which passes all understanding.”

And this peace is said to “keep the mind through Christ Jesus.” Without Christ Jesus this peace would not exist. Without Christ Jesus this peace, even where it *has* existed, cannot be *maintained*. Daily visits from the Savior, continual looking by the eye of faith to Him that bled upon the Cross, continual drawings from His ever-flowing fountain make this peace broad and long and enduring. But take Christ Jesus, the channel of our peace away, and it fades and dies and droops and comes to nothing. A Christian has no peace with God except through the atonement of his Lord Jesus Christ.

I have thus gone over what some will call the dry doctrinal part of the subject—“The peace of God, which passes all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” I cannot show you what that peace is if you have never felt it. But yet I think I could tell you where to look for it, for I have sometimes seen it. I have seen the Christian man in the depths of poverty—when he lived from hand to mouth and scarcely knew where he should find the next meal—still with his mind unruffled, calm and quiet. If he had been as rich as an Indian prince, yet could he not have had less care. If he had been told that his bread should always come to his door and the stream which ran hard by should never dry. If he had been quite sure that ravens would bring him bread and meat in the morning and again in the evening—he would not have been one whit more calm.

There is his neighbor on the other side of the street not half so poor, but wearied from morning to night—working his fingers to the bone— bringing himself to the grave with anxiety. But this poor good man, after having industriously labored, though he found he had gained little with all his toil, yet has sanctified his little by prayer and has thanked his Father for what he had. And though he does not know whether he will have more, still he trusted in God and declared that his faith should not fail him, though Providence should run to a lower ebb than he had ever seen. *There* is “the peace of God which passes all understanding.”

I have seen that peace, too, in the case of those who have lost their friends. There is a Peridot—her much loved husband lies in the coffin. She is soon to part with him. Parted with him she has before. But now, of his poor clay-cold corpse—even of *that* she has to be bereaved. She looks upon it for the last time and her heart is heavy. For herself and her children she wonders how they shall be provided for. That broad tree that once sheltered them from the sunbeam has been cut down. Now, she thinks, there is a broad Heaven above her head and her Maker is her Husband. The fatherless children are left with God for their Father and the widow is trusting in Him.

With tears in her eyes she still looks up and she says, “Lord, You have given and You have taken away, blessed be Your name.” Her husband is carried to the tomb. She does not smile. And though she weeps there is a calm composure on her brow and she tells you she would not have it otherwise, even if she could—for Jehovah’s will is right. There, again, is “the peace of God that passes all understanding.”

Picture another man. There is Martin Luther standing up in the midst of the Diet of Worms. There are the kings and the princes and there are the bloodhounds of Rome with their tongues thirsting for his blood. There is Martin rising in the morning as comfortable as possible and he goes to the Diet and delivers himself of the Truth. He solemnly declares that the things which he has spoken are the things which he believes, and God helping him, he will stand by them till the last. There is his life in his hands. They have him entirely in their power. The smell of John Huss’ corpse has not yet passed away and he recollects that princes before this have violated their words. But there he stands, calm and quiet. He fears no man, for he has nothing to fear. “The peace of God which passes all understanding keeps his heart and mind through Jesus Christ.”

There is another scene. There is John Bradford in Newgate. He is to be burned the next morning in Smithfield and he swings himself on the bedpost in very glee and delights—for tomorrow is his wedding day! And he says to another, “Fine shining we shall make tomorrow, when the flame is kindled.” And he smiles and laughs and enjoys the very thought that he is about to wear the bloodied crown of martyrdom. Is Bradford mad! Ah, no. But he has got the peace of God that passes all understanding.

But perhaps the most beautiful, as well as the most common illustration of this great peace is the dying bed of the Believer. Oh, Brethren, you have seen this sometimes—that calm, quiet serenity. You have said, Lord, let us die with him. It has been so good to be in that solitary chamber where all was quiet and so still. All the world shut out and Heaven shut in. And the poor heart nearing its God and far away from all its past burdens and griefs—now nearing the portals of eternal bliss. And you have said, “How is this? Is not death a black and grim thing? Are not the terrors of the grave things which make the strong man tremble?”

Oh yes, they are. But, then, this one has the “peace of God which passes all understanding.” However, if you want to know about this, you must be a child of God and possess it yourselves. And when you have once felt it, when you can stand calm amid the bewildering cry, confident of victory—when you can sing in the midst of the storm, when you can smile when surrounded by adversity and can trust your God, be your way ever so rough, ever so stormy—when you can always repose confidence in the wisdom and goodness of Jehovah—then it is you will have “the peace of God which passes all understanding.”

**II.**Thus we have discussed the first point, what is this peace? Now the second thing was, how Is THIS PEACE TO BE OBTAINED? You will note that although this is a Promise, it has *precepts preceding* and it is only by the practice of the precepts that we can get the Promise. Turn now to the fourth verse and you will see the first rule and regulation for getting peace. Christian, would you enjoy “the peace of God which passes all understanding”?

The first thing you have to do is to “rejoice evermore.” The man who never rejoices but who is always sorrowing and groaning and crying—the man who forgets his God, who forgets the fullness of Jehovah and is always murmuring concerning the trials of the road and the infirmities of the flesh—that man will lose the prospect of enjoying a peace that passes all understanding. Cultivate, my Friends, a cheerful disposition. Endeavor, as much as lies in you, always to bear a smile about with you. Recollect that this is as much a *command* of God as that one which says, “You shall love the Lord with all your heart.” Rejoice evermore is one of God’s commands. And it is your duty, as well as your privilege, to try and practice it. Not to rejoice, remember, is a *sin*. To rejoice is a duty and such a duty that the richest fruits and the best rewards are appended to it.

Rejoice always and then the peace of God shall keep your hearts and minds. Many of us, by giving way to disastrous doubts, spoil our peace. It is as I once remember to have heard a woman say, when I was passing down a lane. A child stood crying at the door and I heard her calling out, “Ah, you are crying for nothing. I will give you something to cry for.” Brethren, it is often so with God’s children. They get to crying for nothing. They have a miserable disposition, or a turn of mind always making miseries for themselves and thus they have something to cry for. Their peace is disturbed. Some sad trouble comes. God hides His face and then they lose their peace. But keep on singing, even when the sun does not keep on shining. Keep a song for all weathers. Get a joy that will stand clouds and storms. And then, when you know how always to rejoice, you shall have this peace.

The next precept is, “Let your moderation be known unto all men.” If you would have peace of mind, be moderate. Merchant, you cannot push that speculation too far and then have peace of mind. Young man, you cannot be so fast in trying to rise in the world and yet have the peace of God which passes all understanding. You must be moderate and when you have got a moderation in your desires, then you shall have peace. Sir, you with the red cheek, you must be moderate in your anger. You must not be quite so fast in flying into a passion with your fellows and not quite so long in getting cool again—because the angry man cannot have peace in his conscience.

Be moderate in that. Let your vengeance stay itself. But if you give way to wrath—if you are angry—“be you angry and sin not.” Be moderate in this. Be moderate in all things which you undertake, Christian—moderate in your expectations. Blessed is he who expects little, for he shall have but little disappointment. Remember never to set your desires very high. He that has aspirations to the moon, will be disappointed if he only reaches half as high. Whereas, if he had aspired lower, he would be agreeably disappointed when he found himself mounting higher than he first expected. Keep moderation, whatsoever you do, in all things—but in your desires after God. And so shall you obey the second precept and get the glimpse of this Promise—“The peace of God shall keep your hearts and minds through Jesus Christ.”

The last precept that you have to obey is, “be careful for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication make known your requests unto God.” You cannot have peace unless you turn your troubles up. You have no place in which to pour your troubles except the ear of God. If you tell them to your friends, you but put your troubles out a moment and they will return again. If you tell them to God, you put your troubles into the grave. They will never rise again when you have committed them to Him. If you roll your burden anywhere else it will roll back again, just like the stone of Sisyphus. But just roll your burden unto God and you have rolled it into a great deep, out of which it will never by any possibility rise.

Cast your troubles where you have cast your sins. You have cast your sins into the depth of the sea, there cast your troubles also. Never keep a trouble half an hour on your own mind before you tell it to God. As soon as the trouble comes—quick, the first thing—tell it to your Father. Remember, that the longer you take telling your trouble to God the more your peace will be impaired. The longer the frost lasts, the more thick the ponds will be frozen. Your frost will last till you go to the sun. And when you go to God—the Sun—then your frost will soon become a thaw and your troubles will melt away. But do not be long because the longer you are in waiting the longer will your trouble be in thawing afterwards. Wait a long while till your trouble gets frozen thick and firm and it will take

many a day of prayer to get your trouble thawed again.

Away to the Throne as quick as ever you can. Do as the child did when he ran and told his mother as soon as his little trouble happened to him. Run and tell your Father the first moment you are in affliction. Do this in *everything*, in every little thing—“in everything by prayer and supplication make known your wants unto God.” Take your husband’s headache, take your children’s sicknesses, take all things. Little family troubles as well as great commercial trials—take them all to God. Pour then all out at once. And so by an obedient practice of this command in everything making known your wants unto God, you shall preserve that peace “which shall keep your heart and mind through Jesus Christ.”

These, then, are the precepts. May God the Holy Spirit enable us to obey them and we shall then have the continual peace of God.  
**III.**Now, the third thing was to show HOW THE PEACE, which I attempted to describe in the first place, KEEPS THE HEART. You will clearly see how this peace will keep the heart full. That man who has continued peace with God will not have an empty heart. He feels that God has done so much for him that he must love his God. The eternal basis of his peace lies in Divine *election*—the solid pillars of his peace, the incarnation of Christ—His righteousness, His death—the climax of his peace, the Heaven hereafter where his joy and his peace shall be consummated. All these are subjects for grateful reflection and will, when meditated upon, cause more love. Now, where much love is, there is a large heart and a full one. Keep, then, this peace with God and you will keep your heart full to the brim.  
And remember that in proportion to the fullness of your heart will be the fullness of your life. Be empty-hearted and your life will be a meager, skeleton existence. Be full-hearted and your life will be full, fleshy, gigantic, strong—a thing that will tell the whole world. Keep, then, your peace with God firm within you. Keep close to this, that Jesus Christ has made peace between you and God. And keep your conscience still. Then shall your heart be full and your soul strong to do your Master’s work.  
Keep your peace with God. This will keep your heart pure. You will say, if temptation comes, “What do you offer me? You offer me pleasure—lo, I have got it. You offer me gold—lo, I have got it. All things are mine, the gift of God. I have a city that hands have not made, ‘a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.’ I will not barter this for your poor gold.” “I will give you honor,” says Satan. “I have honor enough,” says the peaceful heart. “God will honor me in the last great day of His account.” “I will give you everything that you can desire,” says Satan. “I have everything that I can desire,” says the Christian—  
***“I want nothing on earth;  
Happy in my Savior’s love,  
I am at peace with God.”***  
“Away, then, Satan! While I am at peace with God, I am a match for all your temptations. You offer me silver—I have gold. You bring before me the riches of the earth—I have something more substantial than these. Away, Tempter of human kind! Away, you Fiend! Your temptations and blandishments are lost on one who has peace with God.” This peace, too, will keep the heart undivided. He who has peace with God will set his whole heart on God. “Oh,” he says, “why should I go to seek anything else on earth, now that I have found my rest in God? As the bird by wandering, so should I be if I went elsewhere.  
“I have found a fountain. Why should I go and drink at the broken cistern that will hold no water? I lean on the arm of my Beloved. Why should I rest on the arm of another? I know that religion is a thing worth my following. Why should I leave the pure snows of Lebanon to follow something else? I know and feel that religion is rich when it brings forth to me a hundredfold the fruits of peace. Why should I go and sow elsewhere? I will be like the maiden Ruth, I will stop in the fields of Boaz. Here will I ever stay and never wander.”  
Again, this peace keeps the heart rich. My hearers will notice that I am passing over the heads of the morning’s discourse and showing how this peace fulfils the requisites that we thought necessary in the morning. Peace with God keeps the heart rich. The man who doubts and is distressed has got a poor heart. It is a heart that has nothing in it. But when a man has peace with God, his heart is rich. If I am at peace with God I am enabled to go where I can get riches. The Throne is the place where God gives riches. If I am at peace with Him, then I can have access with boldness.  
Meditation is another and a great field of enrichment. When my heart is at peace with God, then I can enjoy meditation. But if I have not peace with God, then I cannot meditate profitably. For “the birds come down on the sacrifice,” and I cannot drive them away unless my soul is at peace with God. Hearing the Word is another way of getting rich. If my mind is disturbed I cannot hear the Word with profit. If I have to bring my family into the Chapel, if I have to bring my business, my ships, or my horses, I cannot hear. When I have cows and dogs and horses in the pew, I cannot hear the Gospel preached. When I have got a whole week’s business and a ledger on my heart, I cannot hear.  
But when I have peace—peace concerning all things and rest in my Father’s will—then I can hear with pleasure and every Word of the Gospel is profitable to me. For my mouth is empty and I can fill it with the heavenly treasures of His Word. So you see, the peace of God is a soul-enriching thing. And because it keeps the heart rich, thus it is it keeps the heart and mind through Jesus Christ our Lord. I need hardly say that the peace of God fulfils the only other requisite which I did not mention, because it was unnecessary to do so. It keeps the heart always peaceable. Of course, peace makes it full of peace—peace like a river and righteousness like the waves of the sea.  
Now, then, Brothers and Sisters, it is of the first importance that you keep your heart right. You cannot keep your heart right but by one way. That one way is by getting, maintaining and enjoying peace of God to your own conscience. I beseech you then, you that are professors of religion, do not let this night pass over your heads till you have a confident assurance that you are now the possessor of the peace of God. For let me tell you, if you go out to the world Monday morning without first having peace with God in your own conscience, you will not be able to keep your heart during the week. If this night, before you rest, you could say that with God as well as all the world you are at peace, you may go out tomorrow and whatever your business I am not afraid for you.  
You are more than a match for all the temptations to false doctrine, to false living, or to false speech that may meet you. For he that has peace with God is armed. He is covered from head to foot in a panoply. The arrow may fly against it but it cannot pierce it, for peace with God is a mail so strong that the broad sword of Satan itself may be broken in two before it can pierce the flesh. Oh, take care that you are at peace with God! For if you are not, you ride forth to tomorrow’s fight unarmed, naked. And God help the man that is unarmed when he has to fight with Hell and earth. Oh, be not foolish—“Put on the whole armor of God” and then be confident, for you need not fear.  
As for the rest of you, you cannot have peace with God because “there is no peace, says my God, to the wicked.” How shall I address you? As I said this morning, I cannot exhort you to keep your hearts. My best advice to you is to get rid of your heart. And as soon as you can, get new ones. Your prayer should be, “Lord, take away my stony heart and give me a heart of flesh.” But though I cannot address you from this text, I may address you from another. Though your heart is bad, there is another heart that is good. And the goodness of that heart is a ground of exhortation to you.  
You remember Christ said, “Come unto Me all you that labor and are heavy laden.” And then His argument would come to this, “for I am meek and lowly of heart and you shall find rest to your souls.” Your heart is proud and high and black and lustful. But look at Christ’s heart—it is meek and lowly. *There* is your encouragement! Do you feel tonight your sin? Christ is meek. If you come to Him He will not spurn you. Do you feel your insignificance and worthlessness? Christ is lowly. He will not despise you. If Christ’s heart were like your heart, you would be damned for sure. But Christ’s heart is not as your heart, nor His ways like your ways. I can see no hope for you when I look into your hearts—but I can see plenty of hope when I look into Christ’s heart.  
Oh, think of His blessed heart! And if you go home tonight, by God’s grace, sad and sorrowful, under a sense of sin—when you go to your chamber, shut your door—you need not be afraid—and talk to that heart so meek and lowly. And though your words be ungrammatical and your sentences incoherent, He will hear and answer you from Heaven, His dwelling place. And when He hears, He will forgive and accept, for His own name’s sake.

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CONTENTMENT  
NO. 320

**DELIVERED ON SABBATH EVENING, MARCH 25, 1860, *BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.**

***“For I have learned, in whatever state I am, therewith to be content.”*** Php 4:11***.***

THE Apostle Paul was a very learned man, but not the least among his manifold acquisitions in science was this—he had learned to be content. Such learning is far better than much that is acquired in the schools. Their learning may look studiously back on the past, but too often those who cull the relics of antiquity with enthusiasm are thoughtless about the present and neglect the practical duties of daily life. Their learning may open up dead languages to those who will never derive any living benefit from them. Far better the learning of the Apostle. It was a thing of everpresent utility and alike serviceable for all generations—one of the rarest—but one of the most desirable accomplishments.

I put the senior wrangler and the most learned of our Cambridge men in the lowest form, compared with this learned Apostle, for this surely is the highest degree in humanities to which a man can possibly attain—to have learned in whatever state he is—to be content. You will see at once from reading the text, upon the very surface, that contentment in all states is not a natural propensity of man. Ill weeds grow apace— covetousness, discontent and murmuring—are as natural to man as thorns are to the soil. You have no need to sow thistles and brambles. They come up naturally enough, because they are native to earth, upon which rests the curse. So you have no need to teach men to complain, they complain fast enough without any education.

But the precious things of the earth must be cultivated. If we would have wheat, we must plow and sow. If we want flowers, there must be the garden and all the gardener’s care. Now, contentment is one of the flowers of Heaven and if we would have it, it must be cultivated. It will not grow in us by nature. It is the new nature, alone, that can produce it and even then we must be specially careful and watchful that we maintain and cultivate the grace which God has sown in it.

Paul says, “I have learned to be content.” As much as to say he did not know how at one time. It do him some pains to attain to the mystery of that great truth. No doubt he sometimes thought he had learned and then broke down, Frequently too, like boys at school, he had his knuckles rapped. Frequently he found that it was not easy learning this task and when at last he had attained unto it and could say, “I have learned, in whatever state I am, therewith to be content,” he was an old gray-headed man upon the borders of the grave—a poor prisoner shut up in Nero’s dungeon at Rome.

We, my Brethren, might well be willing to endure Paul’s infirmities and share the cold dungeon with him, if we, too, might by any means attain unto such a degree of contentment. Do not indulge, any of you, the silly

notion that you can be contented without learning, or learn without discipline. It is not a power that may be exercised naturally, but a science to be acquired gradually. The very words of the text might suggest this, even if we did not know it from experience. We need not be taught to rumor, but we must be taught to acquiesce in the will and good pleasure of the Lord our God. When the Apostle had uttered these words, he immediately gave a commentary upon them. Read the 12th verse, “I know both how to be abased and I know how to abound: everywhere and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry both to abound and to suffer need.”

Notice first, that the Apostle said he knew how to be abased. A wonderful knowledge this. When all men honor us, then we may very well be content. But when the finger of scorn is pointed at us, when our character is held in ill repute and men hiss us by the wayside, it requires much Gospel knowledge to be able to endure that with patience and with cheerfulness. When we are increasing and growing in rank and honor and human esteem, it is easy work to be contented. But when we have to say with John the Baptist, “I must decrease,” or when we see some other servant advanced to our place and another man bearing the palm we had longed to hold, it is not easy to sit still and without an envious feeling cry with Moses, “Would to God that all the Lord’s servants were Prophets.”

To hear another man praised at your own expense, to find your own virtues made as a foil to set forth the superior excellence of some new rival—this, I say, is beyond human nature—to be able to bear it with joy and thankfulness and to bless God. There must be something noble in the heart of the man who is able to lay all his honors down as willingly as he took them up. When he can as cheerfully submit himself to Christ to humble him, as to lift him up and seat him upon a throne. And yet, my Brethren, we have not anyone of us learned what the Apostle knew, if we are not as ready to glorify Christ by shame, by ignominy and by reproach, as by honor and by esteem among men. We must be ready to give up everything for him. We must be willing to go downwards, in order that Christ’s name may ascend upwards and be the better known and glorified among men. “I know how to be abased,” says the Apostle.

His second piece of knowledge is equally valuable, “I know how to abound.” There are a great many men that know a little about how to be abased, that do not know at all how to abound. When they are put down into the pit with Joseph, they look up and see the starry promise and they hope for an escape. But when they are put on the top of a pinnacle, their heads grow dizzy and they are ready to fall. When they were poor they used to battle it, as one of our great national poets has said—

***“Yet many things, impossible to thought, Have been by need to full perfection brought. The daring of the soul proceeds from thence, Sharpness of wit and active diligence;  
Prudence at once and fortitude it gives; And, if in patience taken, mends our lives.”***

But mark the same men after success has crowned their struggles— their troubles are over. They are rich and increased with goods. And have you not often seen a man who has sprung up from nothing to wealth— how purse-proud he becomes, how vain, how intolerant? Nobody would have thought that man ever kept a shop. You would not believe that man at any time ever used to sell a pound of candles, would you? He is so great in his own eyes, that one would have thought the blood of all the Caesars must flow in his veins. He does not know his old acquaintances. The familiar friend of other days he now passes by with scarce a nod of recognition.

The man does not know how to abound. He has grown proud. He is exalted above measure. There have been men who have been lifted up for a season to popularity in the Church. They have preached successfully and done some mighty work. For this the people have honored them, and rightly so. But then they have become tyrants. They have lusted after authority. They have looked down contemptuously upon everybody else, as if other men were small pigmies and they were huge giants. Their conduct has been intolerable and they have soon been cast down from their high places, because they did not know how to abound.

There was once a square piece of paper put up into George Whitfield’s pulpit, by way of a notice, to this effect—“A young man who has lately inherited a large fortune, requests the prayers of the congregation.” Right well was the prayer asked, for when we go up the hill we need prayer that we may be kept steady. Going down the hill of fortune there is not half the fear of stumbling. The Christian far oftener disgraces his profession in prosperity than when he is being abased.

There is another danger—the danger of growing worldly. When a man finds that his wealth increases it is wonderful how gold will stick to his fingers. The man who had just enough thought if he had more than he required he would be exceedingly liberal. With a shilling purse he had a guinea heart—but now with a guinea purse he has a shilling heart. He finds that the money adheres and he cannot get it off.

You have heard of the spider that is called a “money spinner.” I do not know why it is called so, except that it is one of the sort of spiders you cannot get off your fingers. It gets on one hand, then on the other hand, then on your sleeve. It is here and there. You cannot get rid of it unless you crush it outright—so is it with many who abound.

Gold is a good thing when put to use—the strength, the sinews of commerce and of charity—but it is a bad thing in the heart and begets “foul-cankering rust.” Gold is a good thing to stand on, but a bad thing to have about one’s loins, or over one’s head. It matters not, though it be precious earth with which a man is buried alive. Oh, how many Christians have there been who seemed as if they were destroyed by their wealth! What leanness of soul and neglect of spiritual things have been brought on through the very mercies and bounties of God!

Yet this is not a matter of necessity, for the Apostle Paul tells us that he knew how to abound. When he had much, he knew how to use it. He had asked of God that he might be kept humble—that when he had a full sail he might have plenty of ballast—that when his cup ran over he might not let it run to waste—that in his time of plenty he might be ready to give to those that needed—and that as a faithful steward he might hold all he had at the disposal of his Lord. This is Divine learning. “I know both how

to be abased and I know how to abound.”

The Apostle goes on to say, “everywhere and in all things l am instructed both to be full and to be hungry.” It is a Divine lesson, let me say, to know how to be full. For the Israelites were full once and while the flesh was yet in their mouths the wrath of God come upon them. And there have been many that have asked for mercies that they might satisfy their own heart’s lust. As it is written, “the people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play.” Fullness of bread has often made fullness of blood and that has brought on wantonness of spirit. When men have too much of God’s mercies—strange that we should have to say this, and yet it is a great fact—when men have much of God’s providential mercies—it often happens that they have but little of God’s grace and little gratitude for the bounties they have received.

They are full and they forget God. Satisfied with earth, they are content to do without Heaven. Rest assured, my dear Hearers, it is harder to know how to be full than it is to know how to be hungry. To know how to be hungry is a sharp lesson, but to know how to be full is the harder lesson after all. So desperate is the tendency of human nature to pride and forgetfulness of God! As soon as ever we have a double stock of manna and begin to hoard it, it breeds worms and becomes a stench in the nostrils of God. Take care that you ask in your prayers that God would teach you how to be full.

The Apostle knew still further how to experience the two extremes of fullness and hunger. What a trial that is! To have one day a path strewn with mercies and the next day to find the soil beneath you barren of every comfort. I can readily imagine the poor man being contented in his poverty, for he has been accustomed to it. He is like a bird that has been born in a cage and does not know what liberty means. But for a man who has had much of this world’s goods and thus has been full—to be brought to absolute penury—he is like the bird that once soared on highest wing but is now encaged. Those poor larks you sometimes see in the shops always seem as if they would be looking up and they are constantly pecking at the wires, fluttering their wings and wanting to fly away.

So will it be with you unless grace prevents it. If you have been rich and are brought down to be poor, you will find it hard to know “how to be hungry.” Indeed, my Brethren, it must be a sharp lesson. We complain sometimes of the poor, that they murmur. Ah, we should murmur a great deal more than they do, if their lot fell to us. To sit down at the table where there is nothing to eat and five or six little children crying for bread, were enough to break the father’s heart. Or for the mother, when her husband has been carried to the tomb—to gaze round on the gloomstricken home—press her new-born infant to her bosom and look upon the others, with widowed heart remembering that they are without a father to seek their livelihood. Oh, it must need much grace to know how to be hungry.

And for the man who has lost a situation and has been walking all over London—perhaps a thousand miles—to get a place and he cannot get one, to come home and know that when he faces his wife, her first question will be “Have you brought home any bread?” “Have you found anything to do?” and to have to tell her “No. There have been no doors open to me.” It is hard to prove hunger and bear it patiently.

I have had to admire and look with a sort of reverence on some of the members of this Church, when I have happened to hear afterwards of their privations. They would not tell anyone. And they would not come to me. But they endured their pangs in secret, struggled heroically through all their difficulties and dangers and came out more than conquerors. Ah, Brothers and Sisters, it looks an easy lesson when you come to see it in a book but it is not quite so easy when you come to put it in practice. It is hard to know how to be full, but it is a sharp thing to know how to be hungry. Our Apostle had learned both—both “how to abound and to suffer need.”

Having thus expounded to you the Apostle Paul’s own commentary, in enlarging upon the words of my text let me return to the passage itself. You may now ask by what course of study did he acquire this peaceful frame of mind? And of one thing we may be quite certain—it was by no stoic process of self-government but simply and exclusively by faith in the Son of God.

You may easily imagine a nobleman whose home is the abode of luxury traveling through foreign parts for purposes of scientific discovery, or going forth to command some military expedition in the service of his country. In either case he may be well content with his fare and feel that there is nothing to repine at. And why? Because he had no right to expect anything better. Not because it bore any comparison with his rank, his fortune, or his social position at home.

So our Apostle. He had said, “Our conversation or citizenship is in Heaven.” Traveling through earth as a pilgrim and stranger he was content to take travelers fare. Or entering the battle field, he had no ground of complaint that perils and distresses should sometimes encircle his path, while at other times a truce gave him some peaceful and pleasing intervals.

Again—calling attention to the text, you will notice that the word “herewith” is written in italics. If therefore we do not omit it, we need not lay upon it a heavy stress in the interpretation. There is nothing in hunger, or thirst, or nakedness, or peril to invite our contentment. It we are content under such circumstances, it must be from higher motives than our condition itself affords. Hunger is a sharp thorn when in the hands of stern necessity. But hunger may be voluntarily endured for many an hour when conscience makes a man willing to fast. Reproach may have a bitter fang, but it can be bravely endured when I am animated by a sense of the justice of my cause.

Now Paul counted that all the ills which befell him were just incident to the service of his Lord. So for the love he had for the name of Jesus, the hardships of servitude or self-mortification sat lightly on his shoulders and were brooked cheerily by his heart. There is yet a third reason why Paul was content. I will illustrate it. Many an old veteran takes great pleasure in recounting the dangers and sufferings of his past life. He looks back with more than contentment, oftentimes with self-congratulation, upon the terrible dangers and distresses of his heroic career. But the

smile that lights his eyes. and the pride that sits on his lofty wrinkled brow as he recounts his stories, were not there when he was in the midst of the scenes he is now describing. It is only since the dangers are *past* that the fears have subsided and the issue is complete, that his enthusiasm has been kindled to a flame.

But Paul stood on vantage ground here. “In all these things” said he, “we are more than conquerors.” Witness his voyage toward Rome. When the ship in which he sailed was caught and driven before a tempestuous wind. When darkness veiled the skies. When neither sun nor stars in many days appeared, when hope failed every heart—he alone bore up with manly courage. And why? The angel of God stood by him and said, Fear not. His faith was predestinarian, and as such he had as much peaceful contentment in his breast while the tribulation lasted as when it had closed.

And now I want to commend the lesson of my text very briefly to the rich. A little more at length to the poor and then with sympathy and counsel to the sick—those who are sorely tried in their persons by suffering.

First, to the rich. The Apostle Paul says, “I have learned, in whatever state I am, therewith to be content.” Now some of you have, as far as your circumstances are concerned, all that the heart can wish. God has placed you in such a position that you have not to toil with your hands and in the sweat of your face gain a livelihood. You will perhaps think that any exhortation to you to be contented is needless. Alas, my Brethren, a man may be very discontented though he is very rich. It is quite as possible for discontent to sit on the throne, as it is to sit on a chair—a poor brokenbacked chair in a hovel.

Remember that a man’s contentment is in his *mind*, not in the extent of his possessions. Alexander, with all the world at his feet, cries for another world to conquer. He is sorry because there are not other countries into which he may carry his victorious arms and wade up to his loins in the blood of his fellow men—to slake the thirst of his insatiable ambition. To you who are rich, it is necessary that we give the same exhortation as to the poor—“learn to be content.”

Many a rich man who has an estate is not satisfied because there is a little corner-piece of ground that belongs to his neighbor, like Naboth’s vineyard that the king of Israel needed that he might make a garden of herbs by his palace. “What matters it,” says he, “though I have all these acres, unless I can have Naboth’s vineyard?” Surely a king should have been ashamed to crave that paltry half-acre of a poor man’s patrimony. But yet so it is—men with vast estates which they are scarcely able to ride over may have that old horseleech in their hearts, which always cries, “Give, give! more, more!”

They thought when they had but little, that if they had ten thousand pounds it would be enough. They have it—they want twenty thousand pounds. When they have that, they still want more. Yes, and if you had it, it would be, “A trifle more!” So would it continually be. As your possessions increased, so would the host of acquiring property increase. We must, then, press upon the rich this exhortation—“Learn in your state, therewith to be content.”

Besides, there is another danger that frequently awaits the rich man. When he has enough wealth and property, he has not always enough honor. If the queen would but make him a justice of the peace for the county, how glorious would my lord become! That done, he will never be satisfied till he is a knight. And if he were a knight, he would never be content until he became a baron. And my lord would never be satisfied till he was an earl. Nor would he even then be quite content unless he could be a duke. Nor would he be quite satisfied, I think then, unless there were a kingdom for him somewhere.

Men are not easily satisfied with honor. The world may bow down at a man’s feet. Then he will ask the world to get up and bow again and so keep on bowing forever. For the lust of honor is impossible to satisfy. Man must be honored and though king Ahasuerus make Haman the first man in the empire, yet all this availed nothing, so long as Mordecai in the gate does not bow down to my lord Haman. Oh, learn, Brethren, in whatever state you are, therewith to be content.

And here, let me speak to the elders and deacons of this Church. Brethren, learn to be content with the office you hold, not envious of any superior honor to exalt yourselves. I turn to myself. I turn to the ministry. I turn to all of us in our ranks and degrees in Christ’s Church—we must be content with the honor God is pleased to confer upon us. No, let us think nothing of honor, but be content to give it all up, knowing that it is but a puff of breath after all. Let us be willing to be the servants of the Church and to serve them for nothing, if need be even without the reward of their thanks, if we but receive, at last, the right good sentence from the lips of the Lord Jesus Christ. We must learn, in whatever state we are, therewith to be content.

At a little more length I have to counsel the POOR. “I have learned,” says the Apostle, “in whatever state I am therewith to be content.” A very large number of my present congregation belong to those who labor hard and who, perhaps, without any unkindly reflection, may be put down in the catalogue of the poor. They have enough—barely enough and sometimes they are even reduced to straitness. Now remember, my dear Friends, you who are poor, there are two sorts of poor people in the world. There are the Lord’s poor and there are the devil’s poor.

As for the devil’s poor—they become pauperized by their own idleness, their own vice, their own extravagance. I have nothing to say to them tonight. There is another class, the Lord’s poor. They are poor through trying Providences, poor, but industrious—*laboring* to find all things honest in the sight of all men, but yet they still continue through an inscrutable Providence to be numbered with the poor and needy. You will excuse me, Brothers and Sisters, in exhorting you to be contented and yet, why should I ask excuse, since it is but a part of my office to stir you up to everything that is pure and lovely and of good report?

I beseech you, in your humble sphere, cultivate contentment. Be not idle. Seek, if you can, by superior skill, steady perseverance and temperate thriftiness, to raise your position. Be not so extravagant as to live entirely without care or carefulness. For he that provides not for his own

household with careful forethought, is worse than a heathen man and a publican. But at the same time, be contented. And where God has placed you, strive to adorn that position—give thanks to Him and bless His name.

And shall I give you some reasons for so doing? Remember, that if you are poor in this world so was your Lord. A Christian is a Believer who has fellowship with Christ—but a poor Christian has in his poverty a special vein of fellowship with Christ opened up to him. Your Master wore a peasant’s garb, spoke a peasant’s brogue. His companions were the toiling fishermen. He was not one who was clothed in purple and fine linen and fared sumptuously every day. He knew what it was to be hungry and thirsty—no, He was poorer than you—for He had not where to lay His head. Let this console you. Why should a disciple be above his Master, or a servant above his Lord?

In your poverty, moreover, you are capable of communion with Christ. You can say, “Was Christ poor? Now I can sympathize with Him in His poverty. Was He weary and did He sit thus on the well? I am weary, too, and I can have fellowship with Christ in that sweat which He wiped from His brow.” Some of your Brethren cannot go the length you can. It were wrong of them to attempt to do it, for *voluntary* poverty is voluntary wickedness. But inasmuch as God has made you poor, you have a facility for walking with Christ, where others cannot. You can go with Him through all the depths of care and woe and follow Him almost into the wilderness of temptation, when you are in your straits and difficulties for lack of bread. Let this always cheer and comfort you and make you happy in your poverty, because your Lord and Master is able to sympathize as well as to succor.

Permit me to remind you, again, that you should be contented because otherwise you will belie your own prayers. You kneel down in the morning and you say, “Your will be done!” Suppose you get up and want your own will and rebel against the dispensation of your heavenly Father—have you not made yourself out to be a hypocrite? The language of your prayer is at variance with the feeling of your heart. Let it always be sufficient for you to think that you are where God put you.

Have you not heard the story of the heroic boy on board the burning ship? When his father told him to stand in a certain part of the vessel, he would not move till his father bade him, but stood still when the ship was on fire. Though warned of his danger he held his ground. Until his father told him to move there would he stay. The ship was blown up and he perished in his fidelity. And shall a child be more faithful to an earthly parent than we are to our Father who is in Heaven? He has ordered everything for our good and can He be forgetful of us? Let us believe that whatever He appoints is best. Let us choose rather His will than our own. If there were two places, one a place of poverty and another a place of riches and honor—if I could have my choice, it should be my privilege to say, “Nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will.”

Another reflection suggests itself. If you are poor you should be well content with your position, because, depend upon it, it is the fittest for you. Unerring wisdom cast your lot. If you were rich, you would not have so much grace as you have now. Perhaps God knew that if He did not make you poor, He would never get you to Heaven at all. And so He has kept you where you are, that He may conduct you there. Suppose there is a ship of large tonnage to be brought up a river and in one part of the river there is a shallow. Should someone ask, “Why does the captain steer his vessel through the deep part of the channel?” His answer would be, “Because I should not get it into harbor at all if I did not take it by this course.”

So, it may be, you would remain aground and suffer shipwreck if your Divine Captain did not always make you trace the deepest part of the water and make you go where the current ran with the greatest speed. Some plants die if they are too much exposed. It may be that you are planted in some sheltered part of the garden where you do not get so much sun as you would like, but you are put there as a plant of His own righteous planting, that you may bring forth fruit unto perfection. Remember this— had any other condition been better for you than the one in which you are, God would have put you there. You are put by Him in the most suitable place and if you had had the picking of your lot half an hour afterwards, you would have come back and said, “Lord, choose for me, for I have not chosen the best after all.”

You have heard, perhaps, the old fable in Aesop’s, of the men that complained to Jupiter of their burdens and the god in anger bade them everyone get rid of his burden and take the one he would like best. They all came and proposed to do so. There was a man who had a lame leg and he thought he could do better if he had a blind eye. The man who had a blind eye thought he could do better if he had to bear poverty and not blindness, while the man who was poor thought poverty the worst of ills. He would not mind taking the sickness of the rich man if he could but have his riches.

So they all made a change. But the fable said that within an hour they were all back again, asking that they might have their own burdens—they found the original burden so much lighter than the one that was taken by their own selection. So would you find it. Then be content. You cannot better your lot. Take up your cross. You could not have a better trial than you have got. It is the best for you. It sifts you the most. It will do you the most good and prove the most effective means of making you perfect in every good word and work to the glory of God.

And surely, my dear Brethren, if I need to add another argument why you should be content, it were this—whatever your trouble, it is *not for long*. You may have no estate on earth, but you have a large one in Heaven and perhaps that estate in Heaven will be all the larger by reason of the poverty you have had to endure here below. You may have scarcely a house to cover your head, but you have a mansion in Heaven—a house not made with hands. Your head may often lie without a pillow, but it shall one day wear a crown. Your hands may be blistered with toil, but they shall sweep the strings of golden harps. You may have to go home often to a dinner of herbs, but there you shall eat bread in the kingdom of God and sit down at the marriage supper of the Lamb—

***“The way may be rough, but it cannot be long,  
So we’ll smooth it with hope and cheer it with song.”***

Yet a little while, the painful conflict will be over. Courage, Beloved, courage—glittering robes for conquerors. Courage, my Brothers and Sisters, courage, you may sooner become rich than you dream of. You may go home, perhaps, shivering in the cold March wind. But before morning dawns you may be in your Master’s bosom. Bear up with your lot, then, bear up with it. Let not the child of the King, who has an estate beyond the stars, murmur as others do. You are not so poor, after all, as they are who have no hope. Though you seem poor, you are rich. Do not let your poor neighbors see you disconsolate, but let them see in you that holy calmness, that sweet resignation, that gracious submission, which makes the poor man more glorious than he that wears a coronet and lifts the son of the soil up from his rustic habitation and sets him among the princes of the blood-royal of Heaven. Be happy, Beloved, be satisfied and content. God will have you to learn, in whatever state you may be, therewith to be content.

And now just one or two words to SUFFERERS. All men are born to sorrow, but some men are born to a double portion of it. As among trees, so among men, there are different classes. The cypress seems to have been created specially to stand at the grave’s head and be a weeper. And there are some men and some women that seem to have been made on purpose that they might weep. They are the Jeremiahs of our race, they do not often know an hour free from pain. Their poor weary bodies have dragged alone through a miserable life, diseased, perhaps, even from their birth, suffering some sorrowful infirmity that will not let them know even the gaiety and the frolic of youth.

They grow up to mourning and each year’s suffering drives its plowshare deeper into their brows and they are apt—and who can blame them?—they are apt to murmur and say, “Why am I thus? I cannot enjoy the pleasures of life as others can. Why is it?” “Oh,” says some poor Sister, “consumption has looked on me. That fell disease has bleached my cheek. Why should I have to come, scarcely able to breathe, up to the House of God and after sitting here, exhausted with the heat of this crowded sanctuary, retire to my home and prepare to engage in daily labor much too heavy for me? My very bed not yielding me repose and my nights seared with visions and frightened with dreams?—why is this?”

I say if these Brothers and Sisters mourn, we are not the men to blame them, because, when we are sick, we murmur more than they. I do admire patience, because I feel myself so incapable of it. When I see a man suffering and suffering bravely, I often feel small in his presence. I wonder, yes, I admire and love the man who can bear pain and say so little about it. We who are naturally healthy and strong, when we do suffer, we can hardly endure it.

Caesar pulses like a sick girl and so do some of the strongest when they are brought down. While those who are always enduring suffering bear it like heroes—martyrs to pain and yet not uttering a complaint. There was good John Calvin, all his life a victim of sickness. He was a complication of diseases. His visage, when he was a young man, as may, indeed, be judged of from the different portraits of him, exhibited the signs of decay. And though he lived a long while, he seemed as if he were always going to die tomorrow. In the deepest of his agony, suffering from severe spinal pains and acute disease, the only cry he was ever known to utter was, “Domine usquequo?—How long, Lord? How long, Lord?”

A more repining expression than that he never used. Ah, but we get kicking against the pricks, murmuring and complaining. Brothers and Sisters, the exhortation to you is to be content. Your pains are sharp, yet, “His strokes are fewer than your crimes and lighter than your guilt.” From the pains of Hell Christ has delivered you. Why should a living man complain? As long as you are out of Hell, gratitude should mingle with your groans.

Besides, remember that all these sufferings are less than His sufferings. “Can you not watch with your Lord one hour?” He hangs upon the tree with a world’s miseries in His heart. Cannot you bear these lesser miseries that fall on you? Remember that all this chastening work for your good. They are all making you ready—every stroke of your Father’s rod is bringing you nearer to perfection. The flame does not hurt you. It only refines you and takes away your dross. Remember, too, that your pain and sickness have been so greatly blessed to you already, that you never ought to rebel. “Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I have kept Your Word.” You have seen more of Heaven through your sickness than you ever could have seen if you had been well.

When we are well, we are like men in a clay hut, we cannot see much light. But when disease comes and shakes the hut and dashes down the mud and makes the wall tremble and there is a crevice or two, the sunlight of Heaven shines through. Sick men can see a great deal more of Glory than men do when they are in health. This hard heart of ours, when it is undisturbed, waxes gross. When the strings of our harp are all unstrung, they make better music than when they are best wound up.

There are some Heaven-notes that never come to us but when we are shut up in the darkened chamber. Grapes must be pressed before the wine can be distilled. Furnace work is necessary to make us of any use in the world. We should be just the poorest things that can be, if we did not sometimes get sick. Perhaps you that are frequently tried and frequently pained, would have been scarcely worth anything in the vineyard of Christ if it had not been for this trial of your faith. You have sharp filing, but if you had not been well filed, you would not have been an instrument fit for the Master’s use, you would have grown so rusty.

If He had kept you always free from suffering you would have been often lacking those sweet cordials which the Physician of souls administers to His fainting patients. Be content, then, but I feel as if I hardly must say it, because I am not sick myself. When I came to you once, from the chamber of suffering, pale and thin and sick and ill, I remember addressing you from that text, that was blessed to some far away in America—“It needs be you are in heaviness through manifold temptations.” Then I think I might very justly have said to you, “In whatever state you are, be content.” But now that I am not suffering myself, I do not feel as if I can say it so boldly as I could then. But nevertheless, be it so, Brothers and

Sisters, try if you can and imitate this beloved Apostle Paul. “I have learned in whatever state I am, therewith to be content.”

Before I dismiss you there is this one other sentence. You that love not Christ, remember that you are the most miserable people in the world. Though you may think yourselves happy, there is no one of us that would change places with the best of you. When we are very sick, very poor and on the borders of the grave—if you were to step in and say to us “Come, I will change places with you. You shall have my gold and my silver, my riches and my health,” and the like—there is not one living Christian that would change places with you. We would not stop to deliberate, we would give you at once our answer—“No, go your way and delight in what you have, but all your treasures are transient, they will soon pass away. We will keep our sufferings and you shall keep your gaudy toys.”

Saints have no Hell but what they suffer here on earth. Sinners will have no Heaven but what they have here in this poor troublous world. We have our sufferings here and our Glory afterwards. You may have your glory here, but you will have your sufferings forever and ever. God grant you new hearts and right spirits, a living faith in a living Jesus and then I would say to you as I have said to the rest—Man, in whatever state you are, be content.

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**DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, NOVEMBER 18, 1860, *BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT EXETER HALL, STRAND.**

***“I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me.”*** Php 4:13***.***

THE former part of the sentence would be a piece of impudent daring without the latter part to interpret it. There have been some men who, puffed up with vanity, have in their hearts said, “I can do all things.” Their destruction has been sure and near at hand.

Nebuchadnezzar walks through the midst of the great city. He sees its stupendous tower threading the clouds. He marks the majestic and colossal size of every erection and he says in his heart, “Behold this great Babylon which I have built. I can do all things.” A few hours and he can do nothing except that in which the beast excels him. He eats grass like the oxen until his hair has grown like eagles’ feathers and his nails like birds’ claws.

See, too, the Persian potentate. He leads a million men against Grecia, he wields a power which he believes to be omnipotent, he lashes the sea, casts chains upon the wave and bids it be his slave. Ah, foolish pantomime—“I can do all things!” His hosts melt away, the bravery of Grecia is too much for him—he returns to his country in dishonor. Or, if you will take a modern instance of a man who was born to rule and govern and found his way upwards from the lowest ranks to the highest point of empire, call to mind Napoleon.

He stands like a rock in the midst of angry billows. The nations dash against him and break themselves. He, himself puts out the sun of Austria and bids the star of Prussia set. He dares to proclaim war against all the nations of the earth and believes that he, himself shall be a very Briarius with a hundred hands attacking at once a hundred antagonists. “I can do all things,” he might have written upon his banners. It was the very note which his eagles screamed amid the battle.

He marches to Russia, he defies the elements. He marches across the snow and sees the palace of an ancient monarch in flames. No doubt, as he looks at the blazing Kremlin, he thinks, “I can do all things.” But you shall come back to your country alone, you shall strew the frozen plains with men. You shall be utterly wasted and destroyed. Inasmuch as you have said, “I propose and dispose, too,” let Jehovah disposes of you and put you from your seat, seeing you have arrogated to yourself omnipotence among men.

And what shall we say to our Apostle, little in stature, stammering in speech, his personal presence weak and his speech contemptible—when he comes forward and boasts, “I can do all things?” O impudent presumption! What can you do, Paul? The leader of a hated sect, all of them doomed by an imperial edict to death! You, you, who dare to teach the absurd dogma that a crucified Man is able to save souls, that He is

actually King in Heaven and virtually King on earth! You say, “I can do all things.”

What? Has Gamaliel taught you such an art of eloquence, that you can baffle all that oppose you? What? Have your sufferings given you so stern a courage that you are not to be turned away from the opinions which you have so tenaciously held? Is it in yourself you rely? No. “I can do all things,” says he, “through Christ which strengthens me.” Looking boldly around him he turns the eye of his faith humbly towards his God and Savior, Jesus Christ, and dares to say, not impiously, nor arrogantly, yet with devout reverence and dauntless courage, “I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me.”

My Brethren, when Paul said these words, he meant them. Indeed, he had to a great measure already proved the strength of which he now asserts the promise. Have you ever thought how varied were the trials and how innumerable the achievements of the Apostle Paul? Called by grace in a sudden and miraculous manner, immediately—not consulting with flesh and blood—he essays to preach the Gospel he has newly received. Then he retires a little while, that he may more fully understand the Word of God.

From the desert of Arabia, where he has girded his loins and strengthened himself by meditation and personal mortification, he comes out. Not taking counsel with the Apostles, nor asking their guidance or their approbation, but at once, with singular courage, proclaiming the name of Jesus and proclaiming that he, himself, also is an Apostle of Christ. You will remember that after this he undertook many difficult things—he withstood Peter to his face—no easy task with a man so bold and so excellent as Peter was, but Peter might be a timeserver—Paul never. Paul rebukes Peter, even to his face.

And then mark his own achievements, as he describes them himself, “In labors more abundant, in stripes above measure.” “In prisons more frequent, in deaths often. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep. Journeys often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by my own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false Brethren. In weariness and painfulness, in marches often, in hunger and thirst, in fasting, in cold and nakedness. Beside those things that are without, that which comes upon me daily, the care of all the Churches.”

Ah, bravely spoken, Beloved Paul. Yours was no empty boast. You have, indeed, in your life, preached a sermon upon the text, “I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me.”

And now, my dear Friends, looking up to Christ which strengthens *me*, I shall endeavor to speak of my text under three heads. First, the measure of it. Secondly, the manner of it. And thirdly, the message of it.

**I.**As for THE MEASURE OF IT. It is exceeding broad, for it says, “I can do *all* things.” We cannot, of course, mention “all things,” this morning. For the subject is illimitable in its extent. “I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me.”

But let us notice that Paul here meant that he could endure all trials. It matters not what suffering his persecutors might put upon him, he felt that he was quite able through Divine Grace to bear it. And no doubt though Paul had seen the inside of almost every Roman prison, yet he had never been known to quake in any one of them. Though he understood well the devices which Nero had invented to put torment upon Christians—he had heard, in his cell, no doubt, of those who were smeared with pitch and set on fire in Nero’s gardens to light his festivities. He had heard of Nero’s racks and chains and hot pincers, yet he felt persuaded that rack and pincers and boiling pitch, would not be strong enough to break his faith. “I can endure all things,” he says “for Christ’s sake.”

He daily expected that he might be led out to die and the daily expectation of death is more bitter than death itself, for what is death? It is but a pang and it is over. But the daily expectation of it is fearful. If a man fears death he feels a thousand deaths in fearing one. But Paul could say, “I die daily,” and yet he was still steadfast and immovable in the hourly expectation of a painful departure. He was ready to be offered up and made a sacrifice for his Master’s cause.

Every child of God, by faith, may say, “I can suffer all things.” What, though today we are afraid of a little pain, though perhaps the slightest shooting pang alarms us—yet I do not doubt, if days of martyrdom should return—the martyr spirit would return with martyrs’ trials. And if once more Smithfield’s fires needed victims, there would be victims found innumerable—holocausts of martyrs would be offered up before the shrine of the Truth of God. Let us be of good courage under any temptation or suffering we may be called to bear for Christ’s sake, for we can suffer it all through Christ who strengthens us.

Then Paul meant also that he could perform all duties. Was he called to preach? He was sufficient for it, through the strength of Christ. Was he called to rule and govern in the Churches—to be, as it were, a traveling over looker and bishop of the flock? He felt that he was well qualified for any duty which might be laid upon him, because of the strength which Christ would surely give. And you, too, my dear Brother, if you are called this day to some duty which is new to you, be not behind the Apostle, but say, “I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me.”

I have seen the good man disappointed in his best hopes—because he has not won the battle in the first charge, he lays down his arms saying, “I feel that I can do no good in this world. I have tried, but defeat awaits me. Perhaps it were better that I should be still and do no more.” I have seen the same man, too, for a while lie down and faint, “Because,” said he, “I have sown much, but I have reaped little. I have strewed the seed by handfuls, but I have gathered only here and there an ear of precious grain.”

O be not a coward—play the man. Christ puts His hand upon your loins today and He says, “Up and be doing.” And do you reply, “Yes, Lord, I will be doing, for I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me.” I am persuaded there is no work to which a Christian can be called

for which he will not be found well qualified. If his master should appoint him to a throne, he would rule well, or should He bid him play the menial part he would make the best of servants—in all places and in all duties the Christian is always strong enough, if the Lord his God is with him. Without Christ he can do nothing, but with Christ he can do all things.

This is also true of the Christian’s inward struggles with his corruptions. Paul, I know, once said, “O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” But Paul did not stay there—his music was not all in a minor key. Right quickly he mounts the higher chords and sings, “But thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.” I may be addressing some Christians who have naturally a very violent temper and you say you cannot curb it. “You can do all things through Christ which strengthens you.”

I may be speaking to another who has felt a peculiar weakness of disposition, a proneness to be timid and yielding. My Brother, you shall not disown your Lord, for through Christ that strengthens you, the dove can play the eagle and you who are timid as a lamb can be mighty and courageous as a lion. There is no weakness or evil propensity which the Christian cannot overcome. Do not come to me and say, “I have striven to overcome my natural slothfulness, but I have not been able to do it.” I do declare, Brother, that if Christ has strengthened you, you can do it.

I don’t believe there exists anywhere under Heaven a more lazy man than myself naturally. I would scarce stir if I had my will, but if there is a man under Heaven who works more than I do, I wish him well through his labors. I have to struggle with my sloth, but through Christ who strengthens me, I overcome it. Do not say you have a physical incapacity for strong effort. My Brothers and Sisters, you have not. You can do all things through Christ who strengthens you.

A brave heart can master even a sluggish life. Often do I find Brethren who say, “I hope I am not too timid or too rash in my temper, or that I am not idle, but I find myself inconstant, I cannot persevere in anything.” My dear Brothers and Sisters, you can. You can do all things through Christ who strengthens you. Do not sit down and excuse yourself by saying, “Another man can do this, but I cannot. The fact is, I was made with this fault—it was in the mold originally and it cannot be gotten rid of, I must make the best I can of it “

You can get rid of it, Brother, there is not a Hittite or a Jebusite in all Canaan that you cannot drive out. You can do nothing of yourself, but Christ being with you, you can make their high walls fall flat even as the walls of Jericho. You can go upon the tottering walls and slay the sons of Anak and although they are strong men, who like the giants had six toes on each foot and six fingers on each hand, you shall be more than a match for them all. There is no corruption, no evil propensity, no failing that you cannot overcome, through Christ which strengthens you. And there is no temptation to sin from without which you cannot also overcome through Christ which strengthens you.

Sitting one day this week with a poor aged woman who was sick, she remarked that oftentimes she was tempted by Satan. And sometimes she said, “I am a little afraid, but I do not let other people know, lest they should think that Christ’s disciples are not a match for Satan. Why, Sir,” she said, “he is a chained enemy, is he not? He cannot come one link nearer to me than Christ lets him. And when he roars ever so loudly I am not afraid with any great fear of him, for I know it is only roaring—he cannot devour the people of God.”

Now, whenever Satan comes to you with a temptation, or when your companions, or your business, or your circumstances suggest a sin, you are not timidly to say, “I must yield to this. I am not strong enough to stand against this temptation.” You are not in *yourself*, understand that. I do not deny your own personal weakness. But through Christ, that strengthens you, you are strong enough for all the temptations that may possibly come upon you. You may play the Joseph against lust. You need not play the David—you may stand steadfast against sin. You need not to be overtaken like Noah—you need not be thrown down to your shame, like Lot. You may be kept by God and you shall be.

Only lay hold on that Divine strength and if the world, the flesh, and the devil should beleaguer and besiege you day after day, you shall stand not only a siege as long as the siege of old Troy, but seventy years of siege shall you be able to stand and at last to drive your enemies away in confusion and make yourselves rich upon their spoils. “I can do all things through Christ.”

Though I despair of explaining the measure of my text, so as to classify even the tenth part of “all,” let me make one further attempt. I have no doubt that the Apostle specially meant that he found himself able to serve God in every state. “I know how to be abased and I know how to abound— everywhere and in all things I am instructed to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.” Some Christians are called to sudden changes and I have marked many of them who have been ruined by their changes.

I have seen the poor man exceedingly spiritual-minded. I have seen him full of faith with regard to Divine Providence and living a happy life upon the bounty of his God, though he had but little. I have seen that man acquire wealth and I have marked that he was more stingy. That he was, in fact, more straitened than he was before. He had less trust in God, less liberality of soul. While he was a poor man he was a prince in a peasant’s garb. When he became rich, he was poor in a bad sense—mean in heart with means in hand.

But this need not be. Christ strengthening him, a Christian is ready for all places. If my Master were to call me this day from addressing this assembly to sweep a street-crossing, I know not that I should feel very contented with my lot for awhile. But I do not doubt that I could do it through Christ that strengthens me. And you, who may have to follow some very humble occupation, you have had grace enough to follow it and to be happy in it and to honor Christ in it.

I tell you, if you were called to be a king, you might seek the strength of Christ and say in this position, too, “I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me.” You ought to have no choice as to what you shall be. The day when you gave yourself up to Christ, you gave yourself up wholly to Him! To be His soldier, and soldiers must not be choosers. If

they are called to lie in the trenches, if they are bid to advance under a galling fire, they must do it. And so must you, feeling that whether He bid you do one thing or another in all states and in all circles, you can do what God will have you do, for through Him you can do all things.

To conclude upon this point, let me remind you that you can do all things with respect to all worlds. You are here in this world and can do all things in respect to this world. You can enlighten it. You can play the Jonah in the midst of this modern Nineveh. Your own single voice may be the means of creating a spiritual revival. You can do all things for your fellow men. You may be the means of uplifting the most degraded to the highest point of spiritual life. You can doubtless, by resisting temptation, by casting down high looks, by defying wrath, by enduring sufferings— walk through this world as a greater than Alexander, looking upon it all as being yours—for your Lord is the monarch of it. “You can do all things.”

Then may you look beyond this world into the world of spirits. You may see the dark gate of death. You may behold that iron gate and hear it creaking on its awful hinges. But you may say, “I can pass through that. Jesus can meet me. He can strengthen me and my soul shall stretch her wings in haste, fly fearless through death’s iron gate, nor fear the terror as she passes through. I can go into the world of spirits, Christ being with me and never fear. And then look beneath you. There is Hell, with all its demons, your sworn enemy. They have leagued and banded together for your destruction.

Walk through their ranks and as they bite their iron bonds in agony and despair, say to them as you look in their face, “I can do all things.” And if loosed for a moment, if Diabolus should meet you in the field and Apollyon should stride across the way and say, “I swear by my infernal den that you shall come no further, here will I spill your soul”—up at him! Strike him right and left, with this for your battle cry, “I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me,” and in a little while he will spread his dragon wings and fly away.

Then mount up to Heaven. From the lowest deeps of Hell ascend to Heaven. Bow your knee before the eternal Throne. You have a message. You have desires to express and wants to be fulfilled and as you bend your knee, say, “O God, in prayer I can prevail with You. Let me wonder to tell it, I can overcome Heaven itself by humble, faithful prayer.” So you see, in all worlds—this world of flesh and blood and the world of spirits in Heaven and earth and Hell—everywhere, the Believer can say, “I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me.”

**II.**Thus have I discussed the first part of our subject—the measure. I shall now talk for awhile upon THE MANNER.  
How is it that Christ does strengthen His people? None of us can explain the mysterious operations of the Holy Spirit. We can only explain one effect by another. I do not pretend to be able to show how Christ communicates strength to His people by the mysterious in-flowing of the Spirit’s energy. Let me rather show what the Spirit does and how these acts of the Spirit, which He works for Christ, tend to strengthen the soul for “all things.”  
There is no doubt whatever that Jesus Christ makes His people strong by strengthening their faith. It is remarkable that very many poor, timid, and doubting Christians during the time of Queen Mary’s persecution were afraid, when they were arrested, that they should never bear the fire. But a singular circumstance is that these generally behaved the most bravely and played the man in the midst of the fire with the most notable constancy. It seems that God gives faith equal to the emergency and weak faith can suddenly sprout and swell and grow, till it comes to be great faith under the pressure of a great trial.  
Oh, there is nothing that braces a man’s nerves like the cold winter’s blast. And so, doubtless, the very effect of persecution through the agency of the Spirit going with it, is to make the feeble strong. Together with this faith it often happens that the Holy Spirit also gives a singular firmness of mind—I might almost call it a celestial obstinacy of spirit.  
Let me remind you of some of the sayings of the martyrs, which I have jotted down in my readings. When John Ardley was brought before Bishop Bonner, Bonner taunted him, saying, “You will not be able to bear the fire. That will convert you. The fire wood will be sharp preachers to you.” Said Ardley, “I am not afraid to try it and I tell you, Bishop, if I had as many lives as I have hairs on my head, I would give them all up sooner than I would give up Christ.” That same wicked wretch held the hand of poor John Tomkins over a candle, finger by finger, saying to him, “I’ll give you a taste of the fire before you shall come there,” and as the finger cracked and spurted forth, Tomkins smiled and even laughed in his tormentor’s face, being ready to suffer as much in every member as his fingers then endured.  
Jerome tells the story of a poor Christian woman, who being on the rack, cried out to her tormentors as they straitened the rack and pulled her bones asunder, “Do your worst. For I would sooner die than lie.” It was bravely said. Short, pithy words. But what a glorious utterance! What a comment! What a thrilling argument to prove our text! Verily, Christians can do all things through Christ who strengthens them. And not only does he thus give a sort of sacred tenacity and obstinacy of spirit combined with faith, but often Christians anticipate the joys of Heaven, just when their pangs are greatest.  
Look at old Ignatius. He is brought into the Roman circus and after facing the taunts of the emperor and the jeers of the multitude, the lions are let loose upon him and he thrusts his arm into a lion’s mouth, poor aged man as he is and when the bones were cracking, he said, “Now I begin to be a Christian.” *Begin* to be a Christian—as if he had never come near to his Master till the time when he came to die.  
And there was Gordus, a, martyr of Christ, who said when they were putting him to death, “I pray you do not spare any torments, for it will be a loss to me hereafter if you do, therefore inflict as many as you can.” What but the singular joy of God poured down from Heaven—what but some singular vials of intense bliss could have made these men almost sport with their anguish?  
It was remarked by early Christians in England, that when persecution broke out in Luther’s days, John and Henry, two Augustine monks—the first who were put to death for Christ in Germany—died singing. And Mr. Rogers, the first put to death in England for Christ, died singing, too—as if the noble army of martyrs marched to battle with music in advance. Why, who would charge in battle with groans and cries? Do not they always sound the clarion as they rush to battle, “Sound the trumpet and beat the drums, now the conquering hero comes”?  
Indeed—comes face to face with death, face to face with pain and surely they who lead the van in the midst of such heroes should sing as they come to the fires. When good John Bradford, our London martyr, was told by his keeper, that he was to be burned on the morrow, he took off his cap and said, “I heartily thank my God.” And when John Noyes, another martyr, was just about to be burned, he took up a piece of fire wood and kissed it and said, “Blessed be God that He has thought me worthy of such high honor as this.”  
And it is said of Rowland Taylor, that when he came to the fire he actually, as I think Fox says in his Monument, “fetched a frisk,” by which he means, he began to dance when he came to the flames, at the prospect of the high honor of suffering for Christ!  
But in order to enable His people to do all things, Christ also quickens the mental faculties. It is astonishing what power the Holy Spirit can bestow upon the mind of men. You will have remarked, I do not doubt, in the controversies which the ancient confessors of the faith have had with heretics and persecuting kings and bishops, the singular way in which poor illiterate persons have been able to refute their opponents.  
Jane Bouchier, our glorious Baptist martyr, the maid of Kent, when she was brought before Cranmer and Ridley, was able to non plus them entirely. Of course we believe part of her power lay in the goodness of the subject, for if there is a possibility of proving infant Baptism by any text in the Bible, I am sure I am not aware of the existence of it. Popish tradition might confirm the innovation, but the Bible knows no more of it than the Baptism of bells and the consecration of horses. But, however, she answered them all with a singular power—far beyond what could have been expected of a countrywoman.  
It was a singular instance of God’s providential judgment that Cranmer and Ridley, two bishops of the Church who condemned this Baptist to die—that she said when they signed the death-warrant, that burning was an easy death and they had themselves to try it in after days. She said, “I am as true a servant of Christ as any of you and if you put your poor sister to death, take care, lest God should let loose the wolf of Rome on you and you have to suffer for God, too.”  
How the faculties were quickened to make each confessor seize every opportunity to avail himself of every mistake of his opponent and to lay hold of texts of Scripture which were as swords to cut in pieces those who dared to oppose them, is really a matter for admiration.  
Added to this, no doubt, also, much of the power to do all things lies in the fact that the Spirit of God enables the Christian to overcome *himself*. He can lose all things because he is already prepared to do it. He can suffer all things, because he does not value his body as the worldling does. He can be brave for Christ because he has learned to fear God and therefore has no reason to fear man. A healthy body can endure much more fatigue and can work much more powerfully than a sick body.  
Now, Christ puts the man into a healthy state and he is prepared for long injuries, for hard duties and for stern privations. Put a certain number of men in a shipwreck. The weak and feeble shall die—those who are strong and healthy—who have not by voluptuousness become delicate, shall brave the cold and rigors of the elements and shall live. So with the quickened, yet feeble, professor. He shall soon give way under trial. But the mature Christian, the strong temperate man, can endure fatigues, can perform wonders, can achieve prodigies—because his body is well-disciplined and he has not permitted its humors to overcome the powers of the soul.  
But observe that our text does not say, “I can do all things through Christ, which *has strengthened* me.” It is not past, but present strength that we want. Some think that because they were converted fifty years ago they can do without daily supplies of grace. Now the manna that was eaten by the Israelites when they came out of Egypt had to be renewed every day, or else they would starve. So it is not your old experiences, but your *daily* experiences, not your old drinking at the well of life, but your *daily* refreshing from the presence of God that can make you strong to do all things.  
**III.**But I come now to the third part of my discourse, which is THE MESSAGE OF THE TEXT. “I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me.”  
Three distinct forms of the message—first, a message of encouragement to those of you who are doing something for Christ, but who begin to feel painfully your own inability. Cease not from God’s work, because you are unable to perform it of yourself. Let it teach you to cease from yourself, but not from your work. “Cease you from man whose breath is in his nostrils,” but cease not to serve your God. Rather in Christ’s strength do it with greater vigor than before.  
Remember Zerubbabel. A difficulty is in his path, like a great mountain, but he cries, “Who are you, great mountain? Before Zerubbabel you shall become a plain.” If we did but believe ourselves great things, we should do great things. Our age is the age of littleness, because there is always a clamor to put down any gigantic idea. Everyone praises the man who has taken up the idea and carried it out successfully. But at the first he has none to stand by him. All the achievements in the world, both political and religious, at any time, have been begun by men who thought themselves called to perform them and believed it possible that they should be accomplished.  
A parliament of wiseacres would sit upon any new idea—sit upon it, indeed—yes, until they had destroyed it utterly. They would sit as a coroner’s inquest and if it were not dead they would at least put it to death while they were deliberating. The man who shall ever do anything is the man who says, “This is a right thing. I am called to do it. I will do it. Now, then, stand up all of you—my friends or my foes, whichever you will—it is all the same, I have God to help me and it must and shall be done.”  
Such are the men that write their records in the annals of posterity. Such the men justly called great and they are only great because they believed they could be great—believed that the exploits could be done. Applying this to spiritual things, only believe, young man, that God can make something of you, be resolved that you will do something for Christ, and you will do it. But do not go driveling through this world, saying, “I was born little.” Of course you were, but were you meant to be little and with the little feebleness of a child all your days do little or nothing? Think so and you will be little as long as you live and you will die little and never achieve anything great.  
Just send up a thought of aspiration, oh, you of little faith.! Think of your dignity in Christ—not of the dignity of your manhood—but the dignity of your regenerated manhood and say, “Can I do all things and yet am I to shrink first at this, then at that, and then at the other?” Be as David, who, when Saul said, “You are not able to fight with this Goliath,” replied, “Your servant slew both the lion and the bear and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them.” And he put his stone into the sling and ran cheerfully and joyously—so Goliath fell and he returned with the bloody dripping head.  
You know his brothers said at first, “Because of your pride and the naughtiness of your heart, you came to see the battle.” All our elder Brethren say that to us if we begin anything. They always say it is the naughtiness of our heart and our pride. Well, we don’t answer them. We bring them Goliath’s head and request them to say whether that is the effect of our pride and the naughtiness of our heart. We wish to know whether it would not be a blessed naughtiness that should have slain this naughty Philistine.  
So do you my, dear Brothers and Sisters. If you are called to any work, go straight at it, writing this upon your escutcheon, “I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me—and I will do what God has called me to do, whether I am blessed or whether I am left alone.”  
A second lesson is this—Take heed, however, that you get Christ’s strength. You can do nothing without that. Spiritually, in the things of Christ, you are not able to accomplish even the meanest thing without Him. Go not forth to your work, therefore, till you have first prayed. That effort which is begun without prayer will end without praise. That battle which commences without holy reliance upon God, shall certainly end in a terrible rout. Many men might be Christian victors, if they had known how to use  
the all-prevailing weapon of prayer. But forgetting this, they have gone to the fight and they have been defeated right easily.  
O be sure, Christian, that you get Christ’s strength! Vain is eloquence. Vain are gifts of genius. Vain is ability. Vain are wisdom and learning—all these things may be serviceable when consecrated by the power of God— but apart from the strength of Christ they shall all fail you. If you lean upon them, they shall all deceive you. If you lack the all-sufficient strength of Jesus Christ you shall be weak and contemptible, however rich or however great you may be in these things.  
Finally, the last message that I have is this—Paul says, in the name of all Christians, “I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me.” I say, not in Paul’s name only, but in the name of my Lord and Master Jesus Christ, How is it that some of you are doing nothing? If you could do nothing you might be excused for not attempting it, but if you put in the slightest pretense to my text you must allow my right to put this question to you.  
You say, “I can do all things”—in the name of reason I ask why are you doing nothing? Look what multitudes of Christians there are in the world. Do you believe if they were all what they profess to be and all to work for Christ, there would long be the degrading poverty, the ignorance, the heathenism, which is to be found in this city? What cannot one individual accomplish? What could be done, therefore, by the tens of thousands of our Churches?  
Ah, Professors! You will have much to answer for with regard to the souls of your fellow men. You are sent by God’s Providence to be as lights in this world. But you are rather dark lanterns than lights. How often are you in company and you never avail yourself of an opportunity of saying a word for Christ? How many times are you thrown in such a position that you have an excellent opportunity for rebuking sin, or for teaching holiness—and how seldom do you accomplish it?  
An old author named Stuckley, writing upon this subject, said, “There were some professed Christians who were not so good as Balaam’s ass. For Balaam’s ass once rebuked the mad prophet for his sin. But there were some Christians who never rebuked anyone all their lives long. They let sin go on under their very eyes and yet they did not point to it. They saw sinners dropping into Hell and they stretched not out their hands to pluck them as brands, from the burning. They walked in the midst of the blind, but they would not lead them. They stood in the midst of the deaf, but they would not hear for them. They were where misery was rife, but their mercy would not work upon the misery. They were sent to be saviors of men, but by their negligence they became men’s destroyers.”  
“Am I my brother’s keeper?” was the language of Cain. Cain has many children even at this day. You *are* your brother’s keeper. If you have grace in your heart, you are called to do good to others. Take care lest your garments be stained and sprinkled with the blood of your fellow men. Mind, Christians, mind, lest that village in which you have found a quiet retreat from the cares of business, should rise up in judgment against you, to condemn you, because, having means and opportunity, you use the village for rest, but never seek to do any good in it.  
Take care, masters and mistresses, lest your servant’s souls be required of you at the Last Great Day. “I worked for my master, he paid me my wages, but he had no respect to his greater Master and never spoke to me, though he heard me swear and saw me going on in my sins.” Mind, I speak, Sirs, to some of you. I would I could thrust a thorn into the seat where you are now sitting and make you spring for a moment to the dignity of a thought of your responsibilities.  
Why, Sirs, what has God made you for? What has He sent you here for? Did He make stars that should not shine and suns that should give no light and moons that should not cheer the darkness? Has He made rivers that shall not be filled with water and mountains that shall not stay the clouds? Has He made even the forests which shall not give a habitation to the birds? Or has He made the prairie which shall not feed the wild flocks? And has He made you for nothing?  
Why, Man, the nettle in the corner of the Churchyard has its uses and the spider on the wall serves her Maker. And you, a man in the image of God, a blood-bought man—a man who is in the path and track to Heaven, a man regenerated, twice created—are you made for nothing at all but to buy and to sell, to eat and to drink, to wake and to sleep, to laugh and to weep, to live to yourself? Small is that man who holds himself within his ribs. Little is that man’s soul who lives within himself. Yes, so little that he shall never be fit to be a compeer with the angels and never fit to stand before Jehovah’s Throne.  
I am glad to see so large a proportion of men here. As I always have a very great preponderance of men—therefore, I suppose I am warranted in appealing to you—are there not here those who might be speakers for God, who might be useful in His service? The Missionary Societies need you, young men. Will you deny yourselves for Christ? The ministry needs you—young men who have talents and ability. Christ needs you to preach His Word. Will you not give yourselves to Him? Tradesmen! Merchants! Christ needs you to alter the strain of business and reverse the maxims of the present day—to cast a healthier tone into our commerce.  
Will you hold yourselves back? The Sunday-School needs you. A thousand agencies require you. Oh, if there is a man here today that is going home to his house and when he gets there will say this afternoon— “Thank God I have nothing to do.” And if tomorrow when you come home from your business, you say, “Thank God I have no connection with any Church—I have nothing to do with the religious world, I leave that to other people. I never trouble myself about that”—you need not trouble yourself about going to Heaven.  
You need not trouble yourself about being where Christ is—at least until you can learn that more devoted lesson—“The love of Christ constrains me. I must do something for Him. Lord, show me what You would have me to do and I will begin this very day, for I feel that through You, Christ strengthening me, I can do all things.”  
God grant the sinner power to believe on Christ—power to repent— power to be saved. For, Christ strengthening him, even the poor lost sinner, “can do all things”—things impossible to fallen nature can he do— by the enabling of the Spirit and the power of Christ resting on him.

Adapted from*The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #1712 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

FILLING THE EMPTY VESSELS  
NO. 1712

**DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY EVENING, SEPTEMBER 17, 1882, *BY C, H. SPURGEON,*  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“But my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.”***Php 4:19***.***

VERY beautiful, to my mind, is the sight of “Paul the aged” confined in his prison at Rome, likely, by-and-by, to be put to death, but calm, quiet, peaceful and joyful. Just now he is so happy that a gleam of sunlight seems to light up his cell and his face shines like that of an angel! He is exceedingly delighted because he has been, in his deep poverty, kindly remembered by the little Church at Philippi, for they have sent him a contribution. See how cheerful the man is—I was about to say, how *contented*, but I drop the word because it falls far short of the mark! He is far more happy than Caesar overhead in the palace. He is charmed with the love which has sent him this relief. Probably the gift does not come to very much, if estimated in Roman coin, but he makes a great deal of it and sits down to write a letter of thanks abounding in rich expressions like these— “I have all things, and abound: I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you.”

His heart was evidently greatly touched, for he says, “I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now, at the last, your care of me has flourished again.” See how little a gift may make a good man glad! Is it not worth while to be free with our cups of cold water to the Prophets of the Lord? Instead of a little money, the Brothers and Sisters at Philippi receive a boundless blessing and are enriched by the fervent prayers of the Apostle! Hear how earnestly Paul invokes benedictions on the heads of his benefactors! Is it not a blessed state of mind which enables a heart so soon to be full to overflowing? Some would grumble over a roasted ox, but here is Paul— rejoicing over a dinner of herbs!

So great was the disinterestedness of Paul, that there was nothing of selfishness about his joy. He did not speak in respect of need, for he knew how to suffer need without complaint. But he looked upon the kindly contribution as a fruit of the Grace of God in the Philippians—a generous proof that they were lifted out of heathen selfishness into Christian love! There was little enough of kindness in the old Roman and Greek world into which Paul went preaching the Gospel. Those were times of great hardness of heart, even to cruel heartlessness. There was no sort of provision for the poor. If a man was poor, why, that was his own problem, and he might starve and die.

You know how hardened the people had become through the fights in the amphitheater, so that the sight of blood produced a fierce delight in their brutal bosoms and human suffering was, to them, rather a thing to be rejoiced in than to be prevented. There might be, here and there, a tender hand that gave coin to the poor, but, for the most part, charity was dead. The voluptuaries of that most degenerate age planned no hospitals and built no orphanages—they were too intent upon their gladiators and their mistresses. Self was lord paramount in Caesar’s court and all over Roman realms!

But here are people at Philippi thinking about one who had preached the Gospel to them and who is now suffering. They are moved by a new principle—love to God in Christ Jesus has created love to the man whose words had changed them. They will not abandon him—they will, out of their own slender means, cheer his sad condition. There were Churches that had no such hearts of mercy, alas, that so early in the Gospel-day holy charity should be so rare! There were people whom Paul had blessed greatly, who even quarreled about him and denied that he was an Apostle of Christ! But not so the beloved Church at Philippi. They had, again and again, ministered to his necessities and Paul, now, rejoices in them, again, because he delights to see another instance of the transforming power of the Grace of God upon character, so that those who were once selfish now rejoiced, unprompted and unasked, to send their offering to him.

Was Lydia at the bottom of that subscription? I should not wonder! We know that she was open-hearted. Did the jailer add his full share? I feel sure of it, for in the prison he courteously entertained the Apostle. These were a generous people and Paul is happy in thinking of them. I may here dare to say that I, also, have had the same joy over many of you when I have seen how freely you have given of your substance to the work of the Lord. It would be unfair if I withheld commendation for liberality from many now before me. You have rejoiced my heart by your gifts to the cause of God. You have given up to the measure of your means and some of you beyond what we could have asked of you. The Gospel has taught you this. To God be glory that it is so. Continue in the same spirit, that none may rob me of this joy.

The Apostle makes to them an assurance in the following verses that they shall be abundantly repaid for all that they have done. He says to them, “You have helped me; but my God shall supply you. You have helped me in one of my needs—my need of clothing and of food. I have other needs in which you could not help me, but my God shall supply all your need. You have helped me, some of you, out of your deep poverty, taking from your scanty store. But my God shall supply all your need out of His riches in Glory. You have sent Epaphroditus unto me with your offering. Well and good! He is a most worthy Brother, and a true yokefellow. And for all that, God shall send a better messenger to you, for He shall supply all your needs by Christ Jesus.”

He seems to me to make a parallel of his needs with theirs, and of his supplies from them with their supplies from the Lord. He would seem to say—Just as God has, through you, filled me up, so shall He, by Christ, fill you up. That is a translation of the Greek which most nearly touches the meaning—“My God shall fill up all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.” Will you allow me to make a break, here, for one instant? I read you, just now, the story of the Prophet’s widow whose children were about to be taken for a debt, and how the oil was multiplied in the vessels which she borrowed until there was enough to discharge the debt, and sufficient surplus for herself and children to live upon.

Now, kindly take that picture and join it on to this—and we have here, first, the empty vessels. Set them out in a row, “all your need.” Secondly, who will fill them up?—“My God shall fill up all your need.” Thirdly, after what fashion will He do it?—“According to His riches in glory.” Fourthly, by what means will He do it?—“By Christ Jesus.” Keep the widow and the vessels before you and let us see the miracle worked over, again, on a grand scale in our own houses and hearts. May the Holy Spirit make the sight refreshing to our faith.

**I.**So, then, we will begin our discourse this evening by asking you to SET OUT THE EMPTY VESSELS. “My God shall supply all your need.” Bring forth your vessels, even empty vessels! “All your need.” I do not suppose that you are under any great obligation to go out, tonight, and borrow other people’s needs, for you have enough of your own at home— needs many and varied. Very well, set them out. Hide none of them away, but put them down, one after another, in a long row, all of them. There are needs for your body, needs for your soul. There are needs for yourselves, needs for your families—needs for the present, needs for the future—needs for time, needs for eternity. There are needs for earth, needs for Heaven. Your needs are as many as your moments—as many as the hairs of your head.

I suppose it would be useless for me to attempt a catalog of them— however carefully we made the list, we should have to add a host of sundries altogether unmentionable until circumstances suggested them. I could hardly tell you all my own needs, but I know that they are enormous and increasing with my years. I have needs as a man, as a husband, as a father, as a citizen, as a Christian, as a pastor, as an author— in fact, every position I take up adds to my needs. If I went through my own personal bill of requests, I could fill a document like the roll mentioned in the Old Testament, written within and without—and hardly *then* could I enumerate all my own demands upon the Bank of Heaven. But if I attempted to take all the thousands that are gathered beneath this roof and to let each man state his particular needs, where would the computation end? The sands upon the seashore are not more innumerable!

Dear! Dear! We would need a *library* larger than the Bodleian to hold all the books which could be written of all the needs of the needy congregation now before me! Well, I am not sorry for it, for here is so much the more room for the Lord to work His miracles of bountiful Grace! Sometimes, when I have been in need for the work of the Orphanage and the College and such things—and these times have occurred—I do solemnly assure you that I have felt a wonderful joy in my spirit. I have watched the ebb of the funds till nearly everything has been gone and then I have joyfully said to myself, “Now for it! The vessels are empty! Now I shall see the miracle of filling them.” What wonders the Lord has worked for me, I cannot, now, tell you in detail, but many of you who have been my faithful helpers know how hundreds and even *thousands* of pounds have poured in from our great Lord in the moment of necessity. It will always be the same, for the Lord God is the same.

Until the funds run low we cannot expect to see them replenished— when they get low, then will God come and deal graciously with us! Money is, however, our smallest need—we need Grace, wisdom, light and comfort—and these we shall have. All our needs are occasions for blessing. The more needs you have the more blessing you will get. God has promised to fill up all your needs. That is, all your empty vessels will be filled and, therefore, the more the merrier! What? The more in need the *better*? Yes, I would have your faith believe that strange statement—your poverty shall thus be your riches, your weakness your strength, your abasement your exaltation! Your extremity shall be an opportunity that God will use to show the riches of His Grace! To your utter exhaustion He will draw near with all the fullness of His inexhaustible Grace and He will replenish you till your cup runs over!

He will fill up all your empty vessels. Be not slow to fetch them out from holes and corners and place them before the Lord, however many they may be. Weep not over the empty jars, but place them out in rows in full expectation of their being filled to the brim! These empty vessels of yours are, some of them, I have no doubt, very large, and they even grow larger. Most of our needs grow upon us. You still pray, “Give us this day our daily bread,” but the one loaf which was a large answer to the prayer when you were single, would not go far at your table, now—the loaves vanish like snow in the sun! You needed faith 50 years ago, but you need more, now, do you not? You have more infirmities and, perhaps, more trials than in your younger days. I know that, apart from my loving Lord, I am much more needy, now, than I ever was before. Whatever a man requires in the things of God, usually the older he grows and the more experience he has, the more he needs, and the more of it he needs.

He needs more love than he had when he was younger, more patience, more resignation, more humility, more charity, more wisdom, more holiness. He desires more faith and a brighter hope. He needs, especially in prospect of death, more courage and more bold, simple, child-like confidence in his Savior, Why, some of us have needs that could not be supplied if we could turn the stars to gold and coin them and pay them away—these could not *touch* the hunger of the heart and soul! The world, itself, would be but a mouthful for our spirits’ necessity—a drop in a bucket. I know some saints that have grown to be so deeply in debt to their Lord, to His Church and to the world, that they are hopelessly involved in boundless obligation.

How can we meet the demands upon us? Our responsibilities are overwhelming! All that some of us have made by our lifelong trading is a bigger stock of needs than we ever had before. The vacuum within our spirit expands and enlarges, and we cry out, “More knowledge of the Scriptures! More of Christ! More of Grace! More of God! More of the Holy Spirit! More power to serve God!” Our oil vessels would, each one, hold a sea—and even these are expanding! We need more and more, and the mercy is that the text before us keeps pace with the growth—“My God shall supply all your need.” This includes the big needs as well as the little ones! It comprehends all that can be as well as all that is! It guarantees us that our growing needs shall all be supplied. Let the vessels expand to their utmost, “Yet my God,” says Paul, “shall fill up all those needs of yours.”

Certain of our needs, again, are of this extraordinary kind, that if they were filled up, tonight, they would be empty tomorrow morning! Some of our necessities are fresh every morning. The crop is a daily one, it springs up every moment. The Grace I had five minutes ago will not serve me now. Yesterday I may have possessed great love, great faith, great courage, great humility, great joy—but I also need these *today*—and none can give them to me but my Lord. You had great patience under your last trial. Yes, but old patience is stale stuff. You must grow more of that sweet herb in your garden, for the trial that is now coming can only be sweetened by the herb content, newly gathered from the garden of your heart and mixed with the bitter water of your afflictions.

Our condition apart from our God may be compared to those fabled vessels that we read of in mythology that were so full of holes that, though the 50 daughters of Danaus labored hard to fill them up, they could never accomplish the task. You and I are such leaky vessels that none but God can ever fill us! And when we are filled, none but God can keep us full. Yet so the promise stands, “My God shall supply all your need”—all the vessels shall be filled and shall be kept full! We have certain needs, dear Friends, that are very pressing and, perhaps, most clamorous at this moment. Some needs are urgent—they must be supplied, and supplied speedily—or we shall perish with hunger, or die of sickness, or wither up in despair. Here let me add a caution—I dare not tell you that God will supply all the needs of*everybody*, for this promise is to the children of God—and in its most emphatic sense it is only to a certain class, even, among them.

Those persons who profess to be Christians and, when they were wellto-do, never helped anybody else—I think the Lord will let them pinch a bit, and know what a condition of poverty is like that they may become more sympathetic with the poor. I have known good stewards and the Lord has sent them more, for they have dealt well with what they had. They have given away their substance by shovelfuls and the Lord has sent it back by cartloads and entrusted them with more! Others who have been bad stewards and have not served their Master well, have lost what they had, and have come to poverty. Let us hope that their substance has gone to somebody that will use it better! But, meanwhile, they have to pinch, and deservedly so.

But, remember, the Apostle is speaking to people of a very different character from that. He is speaking to the Philippians and I think that there is a point in that pronoun, “My God shall supply all *your* need.” You have been generous in helping the Lord’s servant and the Lord will repay you. Up to the measure of your ability you have served His Church and helped to carry on His work in the world and, therefore, God will supply all your need. This is not spoken to hoarding Judas, but to the generous who had voluntarily yielded of their substance when a fit opportunity was given them. Will any of you bring your need to God and test Him by the same conduct? Remember that old promise of His, “Bring you all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in My house, and prove Me now herewith, says the Lord of Hosts, if I will not open you the windows of Heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.”

There is that that scatters and yet increases. Give, and it shall be given unto you. Oh yes, our gracious God will fill all the vessels at once, if time presses! If your needs urgently require to be filled, bring them to Him. I began by saying that few of us had any great call to borrow other people’s empty pots. Yet there are some of us whose main anxiety is about the vessels that we *have* borrowed. We need more oil than others for this very reason, that we care for others. Certain of us have been called to a life which intertwists itself with many lives. We have been led by Grace and Providence to take upon ourselves the needs of thousands. Every genuine warm-hearted Christian does this, more or less. We try to make other men’s needs our own needs by working for the poor, the ignorant, the sick, the helpless. You that care for our orphan children may well join with me in prayer that the Lord will fill up all those empty vessels which we have borrowed of poor widows.

Think of my hundreds of borrowed vessels in the Orphanage and of the number in the College. Blessed be the Lord my God, He will fill up all these! Those whom we try to help in different ways, especially those we try to lead to the Savior, are like the woman’s borrowed vessels—and they are not a few! You have made their spiritual needs your own. You have come before God to pray for them as for your own soul and you shall be heard. You have talked to your neighbors and laid yourself out for their good, as if your own eternal destiny were in their stead—rest fully assured that the Lord that filled the borrowed pots in Elisha’s day will also supply your borrowed needs! “My God will fill up all your needs.” It is a blessed word! Bring out your vessels and see if it is not true!

I should like to see every Christian here setting out all his vessels in rows at once, whatever they may be. Do not put your cares away in the back room and say, “I shall draw them out tomorrow and begin worrying over them.” Instead of that, while the oil is flowing, bring them here, before the Lord, that the oil may have free course and find suitable storage. Would you limit the miracle? Have you one forgotten need? Make haste with it! Still, the oil is multiplying! Come one! Come all! Arrange your vessels and the Lord will fill up your needs, by His Grace, and fill your mouths with a song!

**II.**Secondly, let us enquire, WHO IS TO FILL THESE VESSELS? Paul says, “My God will supply all your need.” “My *God*!” Oh, that is grand! It were foolish talking if any other name were mentioned! God can supply all the needs of His people, for He is All-Sufficient—but nobody else can. He can do it without any help, for nothing is too hard for the Lord. He is able to number the myriads of His creatures and attend to the commissariat of them all, so that not one of them shall lack—“He calls them all by their names, by the greatness of His power not one fails.” “They that wait upon the Lord shall not want any good thing.” As for you, dear Brothers and Sisters, “trust in the Lord and do good, so shall you dwell in the land, and verily you shall be fed.” He that promises to fill up all your empty vessels is one who can do it—there is no limit to the goodness and power of God!

Then, notice that sweet word which Paul has put before the glorious word, “God.” He writes—“*My* God.” As Paul looked at the money which the Philippians had sent him and, perhaps, at the warm garments that would cover him in the cold, damp jail, he cried, “See how my God has supplied me!” And then he says, “My God shall supply *you*.” This same God, Paul’s God—“shall fill up all your need.” Wonderfully had God protected Paul from the malice of those who sought for his life. Very wonderfully had he been carried by Divine power through unparalleled labors, so that he had been made to triumph in every place in the preaching of the Gospel! And thus Paul had learned from day to day to get a firmer grip of his God, and say, “*My* God!” with more and more emphasis.

Jehovah was not to Paul the unknown god, but, “My God.” With God he dwelt and in Him he reposed all his cares. This same God is our God! Think of that, poor friend, in your hour of need. Think of that, you afflicted widow woman—you have Paul’s God to go to! Think of that, dear child of God in trouble—you have the same God as Paul had and He is as much yours as He was Paul’s! His arm has not waxed short, neither has His heart grown hard towards any of His children! “My God,” says Paul, “who is also *your* God, will supply all your need.” Who is this God that will supply all our needs? Paul’s God, remember, was and is the God of Providence! And what a wonderful God He is.

We speak as if we were some very important part of the universe, but really, what are we? Our little island can scarcely be found upon the globe till you hunt long for it! What a tiny speck this congregation must be! But God supplies the needs of all the millions of mankind. “Mankind,” I said— but I ought to have included all the other creatures, too—the myriads of herring in the sea, the multitudes of birds that sometimes darken the sun in their migrations, the countless armies of worms and insects, strangely supplied, we know not how! And yet, “Your heavenly Father feeds them.”

Is that all the sphere of His Providence? No, far from it! I suppose that this round world of ours is but one apple in the orchard of creation, one grain of dust in the corner of God’s great palace. But all yon orbs, with all the living things that may be peopling every star, He supplies. And how? “He opens His hand and supplies the need of every living thing.” See how easy to Him is this universal provision—He does but open His hand and it is done! This is the God that will supply all your need! He calls the stars by name! He leads out Arcturus with his sons. He loosens the bands of Orion. He does great things without number—and shall He not feed and clothe *you*, O you of little faith? Yes, be you sure of this, the God of Providence shall supply all your needs for this life and its surroundings.

If that suffice you not, let me remind you that this God is the God of Grace, for Paul, above all men, counted Divine Grace to be his treasure— his God was the God of Grace. Chiefly He is the God who gave His Son to bleed and die for men. Oh, stand at Calvary and see God’s great Sacrifice—the gift of His only-begotten Son! And when you have marked the wounds of the Well-Beloved and seen Jesus die, answer me this—“He that spared not His own Son, but freely delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not, with Him, also freely give us all things?” What will He deny us who has given up the best jewel that He had, the glorious One that Heaven could not match? There was never the likes of Jesus, and yet He bowed His head to die on our behalf!

Oh, my dear, dear Friends, if you are anxious, tonight, and vexed with many cares, do think of that! It is the God and Father of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ who says that He will fill up all your need! Do you doubt Him? *Can* you? *Dare* you distrust Him? Now, take a flight above this present cloud-land and behold the God of Heaven! Think of what God is up yonder—

***“Beyond, beyond this lower sky,  
Up where eternal ages roll,  
Where solid pleasures never die,  
And fruits immortal feast the soul.”***

Behold the splendor of God! Gold in Heaven is of no account—the streets of that city are all of pure gold like unto transparent glass! The riches and the merchandise of nations are but as rags and rottenness compared with the most common utensils of God’s great House above! There they possess inexhaustible treasures and everything that is precious, for the walls of the New Jerusalem are described as made of 12 manner of precious stones, as if these stones were so common in Immanuel’s land that they built the walls with them! The gates are each one a pearl. What pearls are those! Is God rich? Inconceivably, incalculably rich, so that He clothes the very grass of the field more gloriously than Solomon clothed himself!

What am I doing to be of a doubtful mind? Is He my Father and will He let me suffer need? What? I, starving, and my Father owning Heaven? No, no!—

***“He that has made my Heaven secure,  
Will here, all good provide  
While Christ is rich, can I be poor?  
What can I need beside?”***

My precious text is one which, years ago, when we built the Orphanage, I caused to be cut on one of the pillars of the entrance. You will notice it inside the first columns on either side whenever you go there. “My God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.” This I took for the foundation of the Institution and set my seal to it as true. And it has been so! Time would fail me if I were to tell how often God has interposed, there, for His numerous family—those children that are cast upon the Divine Fatherhood. He has honored His own promise and our faith—and I believe He always will. There on the forefront of the Orphanage stands also the words—“The Lord will provide.” You shall see whether it is not so. As long as that place stands, my God shall supply our need and it shall be a standing encouragement to us all.

Think of the far more extensive orphanage of our Brother Mueller, of Bristol, with those 2,500 children living simply through prayer and faith, and yet as abundantly supplied as the Queen in her palace! Nothing is needed where God is the Provider. The Lord will supply without fail! Let us trust without fear. Go and plead this promise with the Lord your God and He will fulfill it to you as well as to the rest of His saints.

**III.**Now, thirdly, let us enquire IN WHAT STYLE WILL GOD SUPPLY HIS PEOPLE’S NEEDS? He will do it in such style as becomes His wealth—“according to His riches.” There are several ways of doing most things. There is more than one way of giving a penny to a beggar. You can throw it at him, if you like, or pitch it in the mud as if you threw a bone to a dog. Or you may hand it to him in a sort of huff as if you said, “Take it, and be off with you.” Or you may drag the coin out of your pocket as unwillingly as if you were losing your eye-tooth. There is yet another way— namely that which makes the copper turn to gold—by a way of doing it courteously and with kindness which expresses sympathy with the poor creature’s need. Always give good things in the best way, for your heavenly Father does so.

Now, how does God supply His children? Stingily, miserably, grudging them every penny’s worth? Certainly not! I hope that it was never your misery to dine with a grudging man who watched every mouthful that went down your throat as if there was so much the less for him! Why, when one does eat, at whatever table it may be, if it is the most common fare, one likes a welcome. It is the *welcome* which makes the Covenant invitation so sweet, when you hear the exhortation, “Eat, O Friends; drink, yes, drink abundantly, O beloved.” One enjoys the welcome of a heart which pleases all it can—like the Scot woman at a great communion meeting when there was nobody to take the people in—“Come in,” she said. “Come in! I have room for 10 of you in my house, and I have room for 10,000 of you in my heart. Come along with you. Nobody so welcome as you that have been sitting at my Master’s table with me.”

How, then, does God dispense His favors? How does He fill up the vessels? The way He does it is not according to our poverty, nor according to our merit, “but according to His riches.” He gives like a king! Brothers and Sisters, I must correct myself—He gives as *God*and as only God can give—according to His own God-like riches. No, that is not all. He will do it in a style consistent with His present Glory. It is “according to His riches in glory,” which means that, as rich as God is in glory, so rich is He in giving. He never demeans Himself in the mercies that He gives. He gives according to His rank and that is the highest conceivable. He gives so as to bring Him new Glory. I never heard of one of His children receiving a great blessing from Him and then saying that it did not glorify God to bestow it. No, no! The more He gives, the more glorious He is in the eyes of men!

And He delights to give, that His Glory may be seen, and that the riches of His manifested Glory may be increased. Withholding would not enrich the Lord of Heaven! Rather would it impoverish Him in Glory. But giving enriches Him with more revealed Glory and He, therefore, delights to scatter His bounty. The fact is, Brethren, God gives gloriously! The calculations of God—did you ever think of them? Well, let me say that He always calculates so as to leave something to spare, by which to illustrate the infinity of His goodness. I know that it is so. He does not give us just as much light as our eyes can take in, but He floods the world with splendor till we shade our eyes amidst the blaze of noon. After this fashion did His only-begotten Son feed the thousands when He multiplied bread and fish for them to eat. We read that “they did all eat”—no doubt they were hungry enough to do a great deal of that sort of labor! So far so good. But it is added, “and were filled.”

It takes a good deal to fill men who have come a long way into the country and have had nothing to eat for a whole day. But they were filled, fainting and famished though they had been. Yes, but do not stop there— “And they took up of the fragments 12 baskets full.” The Lord always has baskets full of leftovers remaining for the waiters. He will be sure to fill all your needs till you have no other need remaining and have provision on hand for needs not yet arrived. Will the day ever come when we shall say, “Bring yet another need for God to fill,” and the answer will be, “I have no more needs”? Then the oil of Grace will stop, but not till then! No, according to what I have said, it will not stop then, but it will go on flowing and flowing, and flowing and flowing, world without end, “according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.” The Lord will give enough, enough for all time, enough of all, enough for all, and more than enough!

There shall be no real need of any Believer but what the Lord will fill it full and exceed it. It is a wonderful expression “filled with all the fullness of God.” It pictures our being in God and God in us. One has illustrated it by taking a bottle, holding it in the sea and getting it right full—there is the sea in the bottle! Now, throw it right into the waves and let it sink— and you have the sea in the bottle and the bottle in the sea! So God enters into us and, as we cannot hold more, He makes us come into Himself! Into the very fullness of Christ are we plunged! What more can the amplest imagination conceive, or the hungriest heart desire? Thus God will supply our needs. Well may you fill others, who are yourselves so filled by God! Well may you serve His cause with boundless generosity when the infinite liberality of God is thus ensured to you!

**IV.**Lastly, let us notice BY WHAT MEANS THE LORD FILLS OUR NEEDS. It is “by Christ Jesus.” Does God supply all His people’s needs by Christ Jesus? Yes, first, by giving them Christ Jesus, for there is *everything* in Christ Jesus. Christ is all! The man who has Christ has all things, as says the Apostle, “All things are yours, for you are Christ’s, and Christ is God’s.” You will never have a spiritual need which is not supplied in Christ. If you need courage, He can create it. If you need patience, He can teach it. If you need love, He can inspire it! You need washing, and there is the Fountain. You require a garment, and there is the robe of Righteousness. You would have great needs if you went to Heaven without Christ, but you shall not go there without Him! And even there He shall supply you with everything! He it is that prepares your mansion, provides your wedding dress, leads you to His Throne and bids you sit there with Him forever. God will supply your eternal needs by giving you Christ.

Moreover, all things shall come to you by virtue of Christ’s merit. You deserve no good thing, but He deserves it and He says, “Set it to My poor servant’s account.” You may use Christ’s name at the Bank of Heaven freely, for though God might not give His favor to you, He will always give it to His dear, dying, risen, pleading Son! When Jesus’ name is quoted, all things are yielded by the Father. God will give you all things by Christ— therefore do not go to anybody else after those things. If you have begun in the Spirit, do not attempt to be perfected by the flesh. If your only hope is in what Christ has done, stick to that and add nothing to it! Be this your motto—

***“None but Jesus! None but Jesus!”***

Jesus is our All-in-All! We are complete in Him! We need no addenda to the volume of His love. Christ, and Christ, alone, shall supply all your need—all your fresh springs are in Him. “It pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell; and of His fullness we have all received, and Grace for Grace.”

Now, once more, I would to God that some poor soul here that has no faith—that has no good thing about him—would, nevertheless, look over his house and see whether he has not an empty vessel somewhere. All that Christ wants of you, poor Sinner, is that you should be empty and come and let Him fill you with His Grace! Come along with you, just as you are! Bring no good works, no prayers, no *anything*—but come with all your sins, follies and failures which you may look upon as so many empty pots! Come to Jesus for everything. “But I have scarcely a sense of need,” you say. Come to Him for that, too! You must be very needy to be in need of that. Come and get it from Him. I tell you, Soul, you do not need a halffarthing’s worth of your own—for what you *think* you have will only keep you from Jesus!

Come in all your poverty—a beggar, a king of beggars! Come and be made rich by Jesus! You that have not a rag to cover your sin with—you that are only fit to be put into the devil’s dust bin and thrown away as worthless—come along with you! My Lord Jesus is ready to receive those that Satan, himself, flings away! If you are such that you cannot find anything in yourself that is desirable and even your old companions, who once cheered you on, now think you too mean for them—yet come into my Master’s company—for, “this Man receives sinners.” Come with your beggary and bankruptcy—you cannot dig, but to beg be not ashamed, for, “My God will supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.”

As for you that have not trusted my Lord and boast that you can do very well without Him, I suppose I must leave you to fight your own way. You declare that you will carry on your own business and will not be dependent upon God, nor fall into any fanatical ideas, as you are pleased to call them. But we shall see. Already we see that the youths faint and are wearied and the young men utterly fall. We see that the young lions lack and suffer hunger and, also, that the best-laid plans of wisest men go oft awry. And they that have felt assured that they could fight their own way—even they have come to terrible failure. We shall see how you fare. They that mount up with wings as eagles and are proud and vainglorious—even these go down to destruction so that no flesh has reason to glory.

As for me, let me wait upon the Lord God and live by faith in Him. Is it not better to drink of life out of the deep, inexhaustible fullness of God than to go forever pumping and pumping at your own shallow cisterns which hold water? Self-reliance may be well enough, but God-reliance eclipses it as the sun outshines the stars! “Oh, rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him.” “Trust in the Lord, and do good; so shall you dwell in the land, and verily you shall be fed.” “He shall cover you with His feathers, and under His wings shall you trust: His truth shall be your shield and buckler.” There is a God and those who love Him and trust Him and serve Him know that He is a good Master. Job was slandered by the devil when he came and said, “Does Job serve God for nothing?” He insinuated that Job made a good thing out of his religion and was moved by selfish motives.

It was a great lie and yet, in a certain sense, it is true. If anybody says the same of you, admit that it is true. Acknowledge that you do make a fine thing out of your religion. God will not let you serve Him for nothing— you shall never have to ask the question—“What profit is there if we serve God?” You shall have His peace, His love, His joy, His supplies according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus! You shall know that in keeping His Commandments there is great reward! Believer, you shall have everything through Christ and nothing without Him! He that trusts not the Savior and prays not to Him, shall be like Gideon’s fleece—when all around it was wet the fleece was dry! But the man who trusts God and blesses His name shall be like Gideon’s fleece—when all around was dry it was full of moisture!

God will not hear a man’s prayers except through Christ Jesus! But if that name is mentioned, the gates of Heaven fly open! God withholds no real good from the man of God who is in Christ. But our plea must be Jesus, first, and Jesus last, and Jesus in between! We must present the bleeding Lamb before God each morning and each night. I pray you seek no mercy of God apart from Christ, but lay hold upon God in Christ—and you shall have enough for all your need! May God the Holy Spirit cause you to abide in Christ Jesus for His name’s sake. Amen.

***PORTIONS OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—*** 2Ki 4:1-7 ***and Philippians 4.* HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”— 84 (SONG II), 23 (FIRST VERSION), 708.**

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A NEW YEAR’S WISH  
NO. 3231

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, JANUARY 5, 1911. *DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

***“But my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in Glory by Christ Jesus.”***Php 4:19***.***

THE Philippians had several times sent presents to Paul to supply his necessities. Though they were not themselves rich, yet they made a contribution and sent Epaphroditus with it, “an odor of sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God.” Paul felt very grateful—he thanked God, but he did not forget to also thank the donors—he wished them every blessing and he did as good as say, “You have supplied my need, and my God shall supply yours. You have supplied my need of temporal food and raiment out of your poverty. My God shall supply *all* your need out of His riches in Glory.” “As,” he says, in the 18th verse, “I have all and abound: I am full.” “So,” he adds, “‘my God shall supply all your need.’ You have sent what you gave me by the hand of a beloved Brother, but God will send a better Messenger to you, for He will supply all your need ‘by Christ Jesus.’” Every single word sounds as if he had thought it over and the Spirit of God had guided him in his meditation so that he should, to the fullest extent, wish them back a blessing similar to that which they had sent to him—only of a richer and more enduring kind!

Now, on this New Year’s Day I would desire, somewhat in the spirit of Paul, to bless those of you who have supplied, according to your abilities, the needs of God’s work in my hands, and have given, even out of your poverty, to the cause of God according as there has been need. I count myself to be personally your debtor though your gifts have been for the students, the orphans, the book and track distributors and not for myself. In return for your kindness, after the manner of His gracious love, “my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in Glory by Christ Jesus.” This verse is particularly sweet to me, for when we were building the Orphanage, I foresaw that if we had no voting, and no collecting of annual subscriptions, but depended upon the goodness of God and the voluntary offerings of His people, we would have times of trial and, therefore, I ordered the masons to place upon the first columns of the Orphanage entrance, these words, “My God shall supply all your need according to His riches in Glory by Christ Jesus.” The text, therefore, is cut in stone upon the right hand and upon the left of the great archway! There stands this declaration of our confidence in God—and as long as God lives, we shall never need to remove it, for He will certainly supply the needs of His own work! While we serve Him, He will furnish our tables for us!

**I.**The text might suggest to us a field of gloomy thought if we wished to indulge the melancholy vein, for it speaks of “all your need.” So, first, behold A GREAT NECESSITY—“*all your need.*” What a gulf! What an abyss! “All your need.” I do not know how many Believers made up the church at Philippi, but the need of one saint is great enough—what must many need? It would not be possible to tell the number of God’s children on earth, but the text comprehends the need of the whole chosen family, “*all your need*.” We will not ask you to reckon up the wonderful draft upon the Divine bank account which must be made by all the needs of all the saints who are yet on earth—but just think of your own need— that will be more within the compass of your experience and the range of your meditation! May the Lord supply your need and *all*your need!

There is *our temporal need* and that is no little matter! If we have food and raiment, we should be content, but there are many of God’s people to whom the mere getting of food and raiment is a wearisome toil—and what with household cares, family trials, sickness of body, losses in business and sometimes the impossibility of obtaining suitable labor, many of God’s saints are as hard up as Elijah was when he sat by the brook Cherith. If God did not send them their bread and meat in a remarkable manner, they would surely starve—but their bread shall be given them and their water shall be sure. “My God shall supply all your need.” You have, perhaps, a large family and your needs are therefore greatly increased. The declaration of the text includes the whole of your needs—personal and relative!

After all, our temporal needs are very small compared with *our spiritual needs*. A man may, with the blessing of God, pretty readily provide for the needs of the body, but who shall provide for the requirements of the soul? There is need of perpetual pardon, for we are always sinning. And Jesus Christ’s blood is always pleading for us and cleansing us from sin! Every day there is need of fresh strength to battle against inward sin and, blessed be God, it is daily supplied so that our youth is renewed like the eagle’s! As good soldiers of Jesus Christ, we need armor from head to foot—and even then we do not know how to wear the armor, or how to wield the sword unless He who gave us these sacred implements shall be always with us. Warring saint, God will supply all your need by His Presence and Spirit. But we are not merely warriors, we are also workers. We are called, many of us, to important spheres of labor, (and, indeed, let no man think his sphere unimportant), but here, also, our hands shall be sufficient for us and we shall accomplish our life-work. You have need to be helped to do the right thing, at the right time, in the right spirit and in the right manner—your need, as a Sunday school teacher, as an open-air preacher and especially as a minister of the Gospel, will be very great, but the text meets all your requirements—“My God shall supply all your need.” Then comes our need in suffering, for many of us are called to take our turn in the Lord’s prison camp. Here we need patience under pain and hope under depression of spirit. Who is sufficient for furnacework? Our God will supply us with those choice Graces and consolations which shall strengthen us to glorify His name even in the fires! He will either make the burden lighter, or the back stronger—He will diminish the need, or increase the supply.

Beloved, it is impossible for me to mention all the forms of our spiritual need. We need to be daily converted from some sin or other, which, perhaps, we have scarcely known to be sin. We need to be instructed in the things of God, we need to be illuminated as to the mind of Christ, we need to be comforted by the promises, we need to be quickened by the precepts, we need to be strengthened by the Doctrines. We need, oh, what do we *not* need? We are just a bag of needs and a heap of infirmities! If any one of us were to keep a *need book*, as I have seen tradesmen do, what a huge folio it would need to be! And it might be written inside and out and crossed and re-crossed, for we are full of needs from the first of January to the end of December! But here is the mercy—“My God shall supply all your need.” Are you put in high places? Have you many comforts? Do you enjoy wealth? What need you have to be kept from loving the world, to be preserved from wantonness and pride and the follies and fashions of this present evil world! My God will supply your need in that respect. Are you very poor? Then the temptation is to envy, to bitterness of spirit, to rebellion against God. “My God shall supply all your need.” Are you alone in the world? Then you need the Lord Jesus to be your Companion and your Companion He will be! Have you many around you? Then you have need of Grace to set them a good example, to bring up your children and manage your household in the fear of God. “My God shall supply all your need.” You have need, in times of joy, to be kept sober and steady. You have need, in times of sorrow, to be strong and act like men. You have needs in living and you will have needs in dying—but your last need shall be supplied as surely as your first! “My God shall supply *all*your need.”

Come, then, Brothers and Sisters, and look down into this great gulf of need and exultingly say, “O Lord, we thank You that our needs are great, for there is then more room for Your love, Your tenderness, Your power, Your faithfulness to fill the chasm!”

That first thought, which I said might be a gloomy one, has all the dreariness taken out of it by four others equally true, but each of them full of good cheer! The text not only mentions *a great necessity*, but it also mentions *a great Helper—*“My God.” Next, *a great supply—* “My God shall supply all your need.” Thirdly, *an abundant store*out of which to draw the gift—“according to His riches in Glory.” And lastly, *a glorious Channel*through which the supply shall come—“by Christ Jesus.”

**II.**So, for our enormous needs here is A GREAT HELPER. “*My God* shall supply all your need.” Whose God is that? Why, Paul’s God! That is one of the matters in which the greatest saints are no better off than the very least, for though Paul called the Lord, “My God,” He is my God, too! My dear old Friend who sits yonder and has nothing but a few pence in all the world, can also say, “and He is my God, too! He is my God and He is as much my God if I am the meanest, most obscure and weakest of His people, as He would be my God if I were able, like Paul, to evangelize the nations!” It is to me delightful to think that *my God is Paul’s God*, because, you see, Paul intended this—he meant to say, “You see, dear Brothers and Sisters, my God has supplied all my needs and as He is your God, He will supply yours.” I have been in the Roman dungeon in which Paul is said to have been confined—and a comfortless prison, indeed, it is! First of all you descend into a vaulted chamber into which no light ever comes except through a little round hole in the roof. And then, in the middle of the floor of that den, there is another opening through which the prisoner was let down into a second and lower dungeon in which no fresh air or light could possibly come to him. Paul was probably confined there. The dungeon of the Praetorium in which he was certainly housed is not much better. Paul would have been left well-near to starve there, but for those good people at Philippi! I should not wonder but what Lydia was at the bottom of this kind movement, or else the jailer. They said, “We must not let the good Apostle starve.” And so they made up a contribution and sent him what he needed—and when Paul received it, he said, “My God has taken care of me. I cannot make tents here in this dark place so as to earn my own living, but my Master still supplies my need! And even so, when you are in straits, He will supply yours.”

“ *My*God.” It has often been sweet to me, when I have thought of my orphan children, and money has not come in, to remember Mr. Müller’s God and how He always supplied the children at Bristol. His God is my God—and I rest upon Him. When you turn over the pages of Scripture and read of men who were in serious trouble and were helped, you may say, “Here is Abraham, he was blessed in all this and Abraham’s God will supply all my need, for He is *my* God. I read of Elijah, that the ravens fed him. I have Elijah’s God and He can command the ravens to feed me if He pleases. The God of the Prophets, the God of the Apostles, the God of all the saints that have gone before us—“this God is our God forever and ever.” It seems to be thought by some that God will not work, now, as He used to. “Oh, if we had lived in miraculous times,” they say, “then we could have trusted Him! Then there was manifest evidence of God’s existence, for He pushed aside the laws of Nature and worked for the fulfillment of His promises to His people.” Yet that was a rather coarser mode of working than the present one, for now the Lord produces the same results without the violation of the laws of Nature! It is a great fact that without the disturbance of a single law of Nature,*prayer* becomes effectual with God! And God being enquired of by His people to do it for them, does fulfill His promise and supplies their needs. Using means of various kinds, He still gives His people all things necessary for this life and godliness! Without a miracle, He works great wonders of loving care—and He will continue to do so!

Beloved, *is the God of Paul your God?*Do you regard Him as such? It is not every man who worships Paul’s God. It is not every professing Christian who really knows the Lord at all, for some invent a deity such as they fancy God ought to be! The God of Paul is the God of the Old and New Testament—such a God as we find there. Do you trust such a God? Can you rest upon Him? “There are such severe judgments mentioned in Scripture.” Yes, do you quarrel with them? Then you cast Him off! But if, instead thereof, you feel, “I cannot understand You, O my God, nor do I think I ever shall, but it is not for me, a child, to measure the Infinite God, or to arraign You at my bar and say to You, ‘Thus should You have done, and thus ought You not to have done.’ You say, ‘Such am I,’ and I answer, ‘Such as You are, I love You and I cast myself upon You, the God of Abraham, of Isaac and of Jacob—the God of Your servant Paul. You are my God and I will rest upon You.’” Very well, then, He will “supply all your need, according to His riches in Glory by Christ Jesus.” Just think of that for a minute!

If *He*will supply you, you will be supplied, indeed, for God is Infinite in capacity! He is Infinitely wise as to the manner of His actions and Infinitely powerful as to the acts themselves! He never sleeps nor tires. He is never absent from any place, but is always ready to help. Your needs come, perhaps, at very unexpected times—they may occur in the midnight of despondency or in the noonday of delight—but God is always near to supply the surprising need! He is everywhere present and everywhere Omnipotent and He can supply all your need, in every place, at every time, to the fullest degree!—

***“Remember that Omnipotence has servants everywhere”—***and that whenever God wishes to send you aid, He can do it without pausing to ask, “How shall it be done?” He has but to will it and all the

powers of Heaven and earth are subservient to your necessity! With such a Helper, what cause have you to doubt?

**III.**The next point in the text is, A GREAT SUPPLY. “My God shall *supply*all your need.” Sometimes we lose a good deal of the meaning of Scripture through the translation. In fact, nothing ever gains by translation except a bishop. The present passage might be rendered thus, “My God will fill to the fullest all your need.” The illustration which will best explain the meaning is that of the woman whose children were to be sold by her creditor to pay the debts of her late husband. She had nothing to call her own except some empty jars—and the Prophet bade her set these in order and bring the little oil which still remained in the cruse. She did so and he then said to her, “Go among your neighbors and borrow empty vessels, not a few.” She went from one to another till she had filled her room full of these empty vessels—and then the Prophet said, “Pour out.” She began to pour out from her almost empty cruse and, to her surprise, it filled her largest jar! She went to another and filled that, and then another and another! She kept on filling all the jars till, at last she said to the Prophet, “there is not a vessel more.” Then the oil stopped, but not till then! So will it be with your needs. You were frightened at having so many needs just now, were you not? But now be pleased to think you have them, for they are just so many empty vessels to be filled! If the woman had borrowed only a few jars, she could not have received much oil—but the more empty vessels she had—the more oil she obtained! So the more wants and the more needs you have—if you bring them to God, so much the better—for He will fill them all to the brim and you may be thankful that there are so many to be filled! When you have no more needs, (but oh, when will that be), then the supply will stop, but not till then!

How gloriously God gives to His people! We needed pardon once—He washed us and He made us whiter than snow! We needed clothing, for we were naked. What did He do? Give us some rough dress or other? Oh, no! But He said, “Bring forth the best robe and put it on him.” It was a fortunate thing for the prodigal that his clothes were all in rags, for then he needed raiment and the best robe was brought forth! It is a grand thing to be sensible of spiritual needs, for they will all be supplied. A conscious need in the sight of God—what is it but a prevalent request for a new mercy? We have sometimes asked Him to comfort us, for we were very low. But when the Lord has comforted us, He has so filled us with delight that we have been inclined to cry with the old Scotch Divine, “Hold, Lord, hold! It is enough! I cannot bear more joy. Remember I am only an earthen vessel.” We, in relieving the poor, generally give no more than we can help, but our God does not stop to count His favors—He gives like a king! He pours water upon him that is thirsty and floods upon the dry ground!

**IV.**We must pass on to the next thought and consider for a minute or two THE GREAT RESOURCES out of which this supply is to come. “My God shall supply all your need,*according to His riches in Glory.”*The preacher may sit down, now, for He cannot compass this part of the text. God’s riches in Glory are beyond all thought!

Consider *the riches of God in Nature—*who shall count His treasures? Get away into the forests—travel on mile after mile among the trees which cast their ample shade for no man’s pleasure, but only for the Lord. Mark on lone mountainside and far-reaching plain the myriads of flowers whose perfume is for God alone. What wealth each spring and summer is created in the boundless estates of the great King! Observe the vast amount of animal and insect life which crowds the land with the riches of Divine Wisdom, for “the earth is the Lord’s, and the fullness thereof.” Look towards the sea—think of those shoals of fish, so countless that when only the fringe of them is touched by our fishermen, they find enough food to supply a nation! Mark, too, the sunken treasures of the ocean which no hand gathers but that of the Eternal. If you would see the wealth of the Creator, cast your eyes to the stars—count their numbers if you can! Astronomy has enlarged our vision and made us look upon this world as a mere speck compared with innumerable other worlds that God has made and it tells us that probably all the myriads of worlds that we can see with the telescope are a mere fraction of the countless orbs which are in infinite space! Vast are God’s riches in Nature. It needs a Milton to sing, as he sang in *Paradise Lost*, the riches of the creating God!

*The riches of God in Providence*are equally without bound. He says to this creature, “Go,” and he goes, and to another, “Do this,” and he does it, for all things do His bidding. Think of *the wealth of God in Grace*. There Nature and Providence stand eclipsed, for we have the Fountain of Eternal Love, the gift of an Infinite Sacrifice, the pouring out of the blood of His own dear Son and the Covenant of Grace in which the smallest blessing is infinite in value! The riches of His Grace! “God is rich in mercy”—rich in patience, love, power, kindness—rich beyond all conception!

Now your needs shall be supplied according to the riches of Nature, the riches of Providence and the riches of Grace! But this is not all—the Apostle chooses a higher style and writes “according to *His riches in Glory*.” Ah, we have never seen God in Glory! That were a sight our eyes could none at present behold! Christ in His Glory, when transfigured upon earth, was too resplendent a spectacle even for the tutored eyes of Peter, James, and John—

***“At the too-transporting light”—***  
darkness rushed upon them and they were as men that slept! What God is in His Glory do you know, you angels? Does He not veil His face even from you lest, in the excessive brightness of His Essence, even *you* should be consumed? Who among all His creatures can tell the riches of His Glory when even the heavens are not pure in His sight and He charges His angels with folly?

“His riches in Glory.” It means not only the riches of what He has done, but the riches of what He could do, for if He has made hosts of worlds, He could make as many myriads more—and then have but begun! The possibilities of Omnipotent God, who shall reckon? But the Lord shall supply all your need according to such glorious possibilities. When a great king gives according to his, riches, then he does not measure out stinted alms to beggars, but he gives *like a king*, as we say. And if it is some grand festival day, and the king is in his state array, his largesse is on a noble scale. Now, when God is in His Glory, think, if you can, what must be the largesse that He distributes—what the treasures that He brings forth for His own beloved! Now, “according to His riches in Glory,” He will supply all your needs. After that, dare you despond? O Soul, what insanity is unbelief? What flagrant blasphemy is doubt of the love of God! He must bless us; and, blessed by Him, we must be blest, indeed! If He is to supply our needs “according to His riches in Glory”— they will be supplied to the fullest!

**V.**Now let us close our meditation by considering THE GLORIOUS CHANNEL by which these needs are to be supplied—“According to His riches in Glory *by Christ Jesus.*” You shall have all your soul’s needs satisfied, but you must go to Christ for everything. “By Christ Jesus.” That is the Fountainhead where the Living Waters well up! You will not supply your needs by your own care and fretfulness. “Consider the lilies, how they grow.” You are to be enriched “by Christ Jesus.” You will not have your spiritual needs supplied by going to Moses and working and toiling as if you were your own savior, but by faith in Christ Jesus! Those who will not go to Christ Jesus must go without Divine Grace, for God will give them nothing in the way of Grace except through His Son! Those who go to Jesus the most, shall taste of His abundance more often, for through Him all blessings come! My advice to myself and to you is that we abide in Him for since that is the way by which the blessing comes, we had better abide in it! We read of Ishmael that he was sent into the wilderness with a bottle, but Isaac dwelt by the well Lahai-Roi. And it is wise for us to dwell by the Well, Christ Jesus, and never trust to the bottles of our own strength. If you wander from Christ Jesus, Brothers and Sisters, you depart from the center of bliss!

All this year I pray that you may abide by the well of this text. Draw from it. Are you very thirsty? Draw from it, for it is full! And when you plead this promise, the Lord will supply all your need! Do not cease receiving from God for a minute. Let not your unbelief hinder the Lord’s bounty, but cling to this promise, “My God shall supply all your need according to His riches in Glory by Christ Jesus.” I know not how to wish you a greater blessing. If you are enabled by the Holy Spirit to realize it, you will enjoy what I earnestly wish for you, namely— **A HAPPY NEW YEAR!**

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:**2Ki 4:1-7***; Philippians 4.***

2Ki 4:1**.***Now there cried a certain woman of the wives of the sons of the Prophets unto Elisha, saying, Your servant, my husband, is dead and you know that your servant did fear the LORD: and the creditor is come to take unto him my two sons to be bondmen.* It is sad for anyone to be in debt and yet there may be circumstances under which even a man who fears the Lord may die in debt and leave no provision for his wife and children except a large portion of sorrow. In the case of this poor widow, it was not long before she cried to Elisha, “The creditor is come.” He generally does come pretty quickly and he had come to her to take away her two sons whom she needed to support her—to make them bondmen—slaves, to serve him for a certain number of years till their father’s debt was worked out. And this hurt the poor woman’s heart, so she came to see what the Lord’s servant could do for her. She could not bear to see her sons taken away to serve as bondmen to a stranger through no fault of their own and, possibly, through no fault on their father’s part.

**2.***And Elisha said unto her, What shall I do for you?*Elisha was probably about as poor as she was, so what could he do for her?  
**2.***Tell me, what have you in the house?*“Whatever there is in the house must go towards this debt, so ‘tell me what have you in the house?’”  
**2.***And she said, Your handmaid has not anything in the house, save a pot of oil.*Her husband had been a God-fearing man, a true servant of Jehovah, yet he had died in such dire poverty that his widow had to say to Elisha, “Your handmaid has not anything in the house, save a pot of oil.” Those were indeed bad times for the sons of the Prophets for, in those days men cared more for false prophets and for the priests of Baal than for the servants of the Most High God!  
**3.***Then he said, Go, borrow vessels abroad of all your neighbors, even*

*empty vessels; borrow not a few.* [See Sermon #2063, Volume 35—THE FILLING OF EMPTY VESSELS—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at

http://www.spurgeongems.org.] “Get as many empty oil jars as you can, it does not matter how great nor how many they are, but they must be empty.” **4-6.***And when you are come in, you shall shut the door upon you and upon your sons, and shall pour out into all those vessels, and you shall set aside that which is full. So she went from him and shut the door upon her and upon her sons, who brought the vessels to her; and she poured out. And it came to pass, when the vessels were full, that she said unto her*

*son, Bring me yet a vessel. And he said unto her, There is not another ves  
sel. And the oil stopped.* [See Sermon #1467-A, Volume 25—THE OIL AND THE VESSELS— Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.] There was  
no reason why “the oil stopped” except that there was “not another vessel” to receive the flowing stream!

**7.***Then she came and told the man of God.* She must have understood that the oil was to be used for the payment of her debt, but she was a woman of delicate sensitiveness, with a tender conscience—as honest people usually are—so she wanted full permission from Elisha before she would dispose of the oil. She regarded it, in some sense, as *his* oil—as it was through using the means that he had directed that her little store of oil had been so miraculously multiplied. So “she came and told the man of God.”

**7.***And he said, Go, sell the oil, and pay your debt, and live, you and the children off the rest.*What a merciful deliverance that was for the poor widow and her sons! And there have been many other deliverances in the experiences of God’s people which, if they have not been quite as miraculous as this one, have, nevertheless, been very remarkable—although God has appeared to work them the common way in which He is constantly working. Yet they have been uncommon mercies all the while.

Now let us read Paul’s letter to the Christians at Philippi who had been the means of supplying his necessities, though not in the miraculous manner in which the Prophet Elisha had supplied the needs of that poor widow.

Php 4:1**.***Therefore, my brethren dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the lord, my dearly beloved.*[See Sermon  
#1959, Volume 33—THE WATCHWORD FOR TODAY—STAND FAST—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.] Paul had a very warm affection

for the Church at Philippi. You remember how that Church was established—first with the baptized household of Lydia and afterwards with the baptized household of the jailer. These saints at Philippi were, in a special sense, Paul’s spiritual children. They were very generous and kind to him, and his heart was very warm with love to them, so he called them, “my brethren dearly beloved,” and then again, “my dearly beloved.”

**2.***I beseech Euodias, and beseech Syntyche, that they be of the same mind in the Lord.* These two women had fallen out with one another. They evidently differed upon some question or other so that they were not “of the same mind in the Lord,” and Paul thought it so important that there should be perfect unity and love in the Church at Philippi, as well as everywhere else, that he beseeched these two women, of whom we know nothing else, that they would be “of the same mind in the Lord.” Notice that he beseeches each of them in exactly the same way—“I beseech Euodias, and beseech Syntyche.” He has a, “beseech,” for each of them! Perhaps, if he had written, “I beseech Euodias and Syntyche,” the latter lady might have fancied that he was not quite so earnest about her as he was about Euodias, so he puts it, “I beseech Euodias, and beseech Syntyche, that they be of the same mind in the Lord.” Have any of you fallen out, my dear Friends? I do not know of any of you who have done so, but if you have, I say to all of you, men or women, “I beseech you, that you be of the same mind in the Lord.” There is nothing like perfect unity in a Christian Church! If there is even a little division, it will grow to something much worse, by-and-by, so I beseech you, “be of the same mind in the Lord.”

**3.***And I entreat you, also, true yokefellow—*Their minister—  
**3.***Help those women which labored with me in the Gospel, with Clement, also, and with other of my fellow laborers, whose names are in the Book of Life.* They helped me, and they have helped you, so help them with encouraging words and in every other way that you can.  
**4.***Rejoice in the Lord always.* Not only now and then, on high days and holiday, have a time of joy, but, “rejoice in the Lord always.”

**4.***And again I say, Rejoice.* [See Sermon #2405, Volume 41—JOY, A DUTY— Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.] He had said

this before, as you will see in the first verse of the third Chapter, which begins, “Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord.” Now he writes it again and repeats it in the same verse—“Rejoice. Rejoice.” It is so important that Believers should be full of joy that Paul writes three times over in a short space, “Rejoice in the Lord.” “Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice.”

**5.***Let your moderation be known unto all men.*Be men who are Godgoverned, because God governs those who run to excess in nothing. Some go to excess in one way and some in another, but all excess is to be avoided! “Let your moderation be known unto all men.”

**5, 6.***The Lord is at hand. Be careful for nothing.* This is not a good translation of the original—it does not convey the sense of the Greek. It should to, “Be *anxious*for nothing.” Of course you ought to be careful about everything. You cannot be too careful, but you never ought to be *care*-full, you must care to be right with God, yet you must not be filled with care about anything. “Be anxious for nothing.” Do not fret, do not worry, do not make other people miserable by your fretting and fuming and fueling.

**6.***But in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God.*[See Sermon #2351, Volume 40—PRAYER,  
THE CURE FOR CARE—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at

http://www.spurgeongems.org.] Ah, this is the way to find the cure for all your anxieties! Take all your trouble to God with a prayer and with a song. Do not go without either the thanksgiving or the prayer, but bear your burden at once to God and ask Him to bear it for you.

**7, 8.***And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are honest, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report; if there is any virtue and if there is any praise, think on these things.* If anything is true, honest, just, pure, lovely, of good report—be on that side. A Christian is on the side of everything that makes for purity, chastity, honesty or that is for the good of men and the Glory of God! Whenever anyone is making out a list of those who will fight for everything that is right and good, every Christian should say to the man writing the list, “Set down my name, Sir.”

**9, 10.***Those things which you have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of Peace shall be with you. But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at the last your care of me has flourished again; wherein you were also careful, but you lacked opportunity.* You see that Paul did not really mean, “Be careful for nothing,” for he says here that these Philippians had cared for him and he praises them for being careful of him. They had lovingly thought of him who was their spiritual father—and when they knew that he was shut up as a prisoner in Rome, and suffering need, they took care to send something to relieve and cheer him.

**11.***Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned, in whatever state I am, therewith to be content.*[See Sermon #320, Volume 6—CONTENTMENT—  
Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.] “I have been  
initiated—for that is the word—“among those who are content with such things as they have.”

**12, 13.***I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: everywhere and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ which*

*strengthens me.*[See Sermons #345 and #346, Volume 6—SELF-SUFFICIENCY SLAIN and ALLSUFFICIENCY MAGNIFIED—Read/download both sermons, free of charge, at

http://www.spurgeongems.org.] “I can be poor, or I can have abundance, if you send it to me, but these things make no real difference to me. I have been made invulnerable either to suffering or to abundance.” Blessed is the man who has got as far as that! It is a wonderful work of Divine Grace when a man can truly say this!

**14, 15.***Nevertheless you have done well, that you shared with my affliction. Now you Philippians also know that in the beginning of the Gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no Church shared with me as concerning giving and receiving, but you only.*I should not wonder if it was Lydia who was at the bottom of that giving and receiving and, perhaps, the jailer. They were evidently thoughtful and grateful people. They remembered the Apostle’s sufferings and needs and did all they could to help and cheer him.

**16, 17.***For even in Thessalonica you sent once and again unto my necessity. Not because I desired a gift, but I desire fruit that may abound to your account.* He did not look at it as merely something that would ease him, but he looked at it as a token of gratitude for the spiritual blessings they had received through him! It showed that they loved the Gospel which he preached and that they also loved him for having been blessed by God to their souls—and this cheered and delighted him. But, to show that he was not asking for more, he says—

**18.***But I have all, and abound: I am full.* I do not suppose that it amounted to much, but it was all that the Apostle needed—and so he says to them, “I have all, and abound: I am full.”

**18, 19.***Having received of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you, an odor of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God. But my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in Glory by Christ Jesus.* I am sure that when they read this verse, they all felt glad that they had had a share in the subscription to relieve the Apostle’s needs.

**20, 21.***Now unto God and our Father be Glory forever and ever. Amen. Salute every saint in Christ Jesus.* “Give them all my love and tell them how grateful I am to them.”

**21, 22.***The brethren which are with me greet you. All the saints salute you, chiefly they that are of Caesar’s household.*Exposed to the greatest perils and yet brave to confess Christ! They may have been nothing but poor kitchen maids, or they may have been among the Praetorian guards who watched and guarded the palace and the prisoners, but they must have their title set down in the letter, “chiefly they that are of Caesar’s household.”

**23.***The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.*

÷Col 1.5

THE HOPE LAID UP IN HEAVEN  
NO. 1438

**DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, OCTOBER 13, 1878, *BY C.H. SPURGEON,*  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“For the hope which is laid up for you in Heaven, of which you heard before in the Word of the Truth of the Gospel.”***Col 1:5***.***

THREE Divine Graces should be always conspicuous in Christians— faith, love and hope. They are each mentioned by Paul in the opening verses of the Epistle from which our text is taken. These lovely Graces should be so conspicuous in every Believer as to be spoken of and, consequently, heard of even by those who have never seen us. These flowers should yield so sweet a perfume that their fragrance may be perceived by those who have never gazed upon them. So was it with the saints at Colosse. Paul says, “We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love which you have to all the saints, for the hope which is laid up for you in Heaven.”

May our characters be such as can be reported of without causing us to blush—but that can never be the case if these essential virtues are absent. If these things are in us and abound, we shall not be barren or unfruitful. But if they are lacking, we are as withered branches. We should, therefore, be rich in faith, which is the root of every Grace and, to this end, we should daily pray, “Lord, increase our faith.” We should strive to be full even to overflowing with love, which is of God and makes us like unto God. And we should also abound in hope, even that heavenly hope which causes a man to purify himself in readiness for the inheritance above. See to it that neither of these three Divine Sisters are strangers to your souls, but let Faith, Hope and Love take up their abode in your hearts!

Note, however, the special character of each of these Graces as it exists in the Christian. It is not every faith and love and hope that will serve our turn, for of all precious things there are counterfeits! There is a kind of faith in all men, but ours is faith in Christ Jesus, faith in Him whom the world rejects, whose Cross is a stumbling block and whose doctrine is an offense. We have faith in the Man of Nazareth who is also the Son of God. We have faith in Him who, having made atonement by His own blood once and for all, is now exalted at His Father’s right hand. Our confidence is not placed in ourselves, nor in any human priest nor in the traditions of our fathers, nor in the teachings of human wisdom, but ONLY in Christ Jesus. This is the faith of God’s elect.

The love of Christians, too, is also special, for while a Christian man is moved by universal benevolence and desires to do good unto *all* men, yet he has a special love unto all the saints and these the world loves not because it loves not their Lord. The true Believer loves the persecuted, the

misrepresented and despised people of God for Christ’s sake. He loves them all, even though he may think some of them to be mistaken in minor matters. He has love to the babies in Grace as well as to the grown saints—and love even to those saints whose infirmities are more manifest than their virtues! He loves them not for their station, or for their natural amiability, but because *Jesus* loves them and because they love Jesus. You see the *faith* is in Christ Jesus, but the *love* extends beyond Christ, Himself, to all those who are in union with Him.

Hope takes a still wider sweep and includes the eternal future in its circuit. Thus do our Graces increase in range as well as in number. Our hope, too, upon which we are to speak this morning, is special, because it is a hope which is laid up for us in Heaven. It is a hope, therefore, which the worldling cares not one whit about! *He* hopes that tomorrow may be as this day and yet more abundant, but he cares nothing for the land where time has ceased to flow. He hopes for riches or he hopes for fame— he hopes for long life and prosperity—he hopes for pleasure and domestic peace. The whole range of *his* hope is within the compass of his eyes!

But our hope has passed beyond the sphere of sight, according to the word of the Apostle, “What a man sees, why does he yet hope for? But if we hope for what we see not, then do we, with patience, wait for it.” Ours is a hope which demands nothing of time or earth, but seeks its all in the *world to come!* It is of *this* hope that we are about to speak. May the Holy Spirit lead us into a profitable meditation upon it. The connection of our text seems to be this—the Apostle so much rejoiced when he saw the saints at Colosse possessing faith, love and hope, that he thanked God and prayed about them. He saw these seals of God upon them—these three tokens that they were a really converted people—and his heart was glad!

All the faithful ministers of Christ rejoice to see their people adorned with the jewels of faith, love and hope, for these are their ornaments for the *present* and their *preparation* for the future. This I believe to be the connection, but yet from the form of the language it is clear that the Apostle intended to state that their love to the saints was very much produced in them by the hope which was laid up in Heaven. You notice the word, “for,” which stands there—“The love which you have to all the saints for,” or on account of, or because of, “the hope which is laid up for you in Heaven.” There can be no doubt that the hope of Heaven tends greatly to foster love to all the saints of God! We have a common hope—let us have a common affection! We are on our way to God—let us march in loving company! We are to be one in Heaven—let us be one on earth! One is our Master, one is our service, one is our way and one is our end—let us be knit together as one man!

We all expect to see our Well-Beloved face to face and to be like He. Why should we not, even now, love all those in whom there is anything of Christ? Brethren, we are to live together forever in Heaven—it is a pity we should quarrel! We are forever to be with Jesus Christ, partakers of the same joy, of the same glory and of the same love—why should we be scant in our love to each other? On the way to Canaan we have to fight the same enemy, to publish the same testimony, to bear the same trials, and to fly to the same Helper—therefore let us love one another! It were not difficult to show that the hope which is laid up in Heaven should be productive of love among the saints on earth.

This connection of my text with the clause immediately before it does not at all prevent its being regarded in the sense which I first mentioned, namely, that it was a subject for joy with the Apostle that the Colossians had faith, love and hope, for he would rejoice, none the less, because their faith was fostered by their hope. It commends these sweet Graces, that they are so wonderfully intertwisted with each other and dependent upon one another. There would be no love to the saints if there were not faith in Christ Jesus! And if there were not faith in Christ Jesus there would be no hope laid up in Heaven! If we had no love, it would be certain that we had no true faith. And if we had no hope, faith would be assuredly absent.

If we entertain one of the Graces we must receive her sisters, for they cannot be separated. Here are three brilliants set in the same golden setting and none must break the precious jewel. “Now abides faith, hope and love, these three,” and blessed is he who has them abiding in his own heart! Now we will let faith and love stand by for a little while and we will talk about *hope*, the hope mentioned in our text; the hope which is laid up for you in Heaven. First, it is a very marvelous hope. Secondly, it is a very secure hope. And thirdly, it is a very powerfully influential hope. May the Holy Spirit bless these three thoughts to us all.

**I.**First, then, we speak of our hope which is laid up for us in Heaven as A VERY MARVELOUS HOPE and it is so if we only consider that it is a great act of Grace that sinners should have a hope at all! That when man had broken his Maker’s Law there should remain a hope for him is a thought which should make our hearts leap with gratitude! Do you not recollect when you felt it to be so? When sin lay heavily upon your conscience, Satan came and wrote over the lintel of your door, “NO HOPE,” and the grim sentence would have stood there to this day had not a loving hand taken the hyssop and, by a sprinkling of precious blood, removed the black inscription. “Remember that at that time you were without Christ, having no hope and without God in the world.”

That was our condition once and it is a marvelous thing that it should be thoroughly changed and that assurance should have taken the place of despair! In our carnal estate many false hopes, like will-o’-the-wisps, danced before us, deceived us and led us into bogs of presumption and error—we had no hope. This is a dreadful condition for a man to be in! It is, indeed, the very worst of all. Never is the storm so terrible as when in the howling of the winds the man distinctly hears the words, “No hope.” Yet into the thick darkness of NO HOPE we once steered our course and each time we tried to rely upon good works, outward ceremonies and good resolutions, we were disappointed anew and the words rung into our souls with dread monotony, “No hope, no hope,” until we wished we could lie down and die!

Now, though we are sinners, we have a hope! Ever since by faith we looked to Jesus on the Cross, a hope full of glory has taken possession of our hearts! Is not this a marvelous thing? More marvelous still, is it that our hope should venture to be associated with Heaven! Can there be Heaven for such as we are? It seems almost presumptuous for a sinner who so richly deserves Hell even to lift up his eyes towards Heaven. He might have some hope of “purgatory” if there were such a region, but a hope of *Heaven—*is not that too much? Yet, Brothers and Sisters, we have no fear of Hell or of “purgatory” now—we expect to taste the joys laid up in Heaven! There is no “purgatory” for *anyone* and there is no Hell for saints—Heaven awaits all believers in Jesus. Our hope is full of glory, for it has to do with the Glory of Christ, whom we hope to behold. Do you expect then, you who were black with lust, that you shall sit among the *angels*? “Yes, that we do,” says the Believer, “and *nearer* to the Throne than they!”

And you who have plunged into every form of uncleanness, do you expect to see God, for none but the pure in heart can behold Him? “Yes, that we do,” say they, “and not only to *see* Him, but to be like His Son, when we see Him as He is.” What a Divine hope is this! Not that we shall sit down on Heaven’s doorsteps and hear stray notes of the songs within, but that we shall *sing* with the happy choir! Not that we shall have an occasional glance within the gates of pearl and feel our hearts hankering after the unutterable joys within the sacred enclosure, but we shall actually and personally enter into the halls of the palace and see the King in His beauty in the land which is very far off! This is a brave hope, is it not? Why, she aspires to all that the best of saints have received! She looks for the same vision of Glory, the same ecstasy of delight—she even aspires to sit upon the Throne of Christ, according to the promise, “To him that overcomes will I grant to sit with Me on my Throne, even as I also overcame and am set down with my Father on His Throne.”

Hope reckons to be among the overcomers and to partake in their enthronement! This is marvelous hope for a struggling Believer to entertain! Yet it is *not* presumption, but confidence warranted by the Word of God! Is it not a miracle of love that such poor creatures as ourselves should be enabled thus to hope in God? This hope is the more marvelous because it is so substantial. In our text the Apostle scarcely seems to be speaking of the Grace of hope, since that can hardly be said to be laid up in Heaven, but dwells in our bosoms. He rather speaks of the objective of hope and yet it is clear that in his mind the Grace of hope as well as the objective must have been intended, because that which is laid up in Heaven is not a hope except to those who hope for it! It is clear that no man has a hope laid up in Heaven unless he has hope within himself.

The truth is that the two things—the Grace of hope and its objective— are here mentioned under one term, which may be intended to teach us that when hope is worked in the heart by the Holy Spirit, it is the thing hoped for, even as faith is the thing believed, because it realizes and secures it. Just as faith is the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen, so is hope the substance of the thing it expects and the evidence of the thing it cannot see. Paul, in this case, as in many others, uses language rather according to the theological sense which he would convey than according to the classical usage of the Greek tongue. The words of a heathen people must be somewhat strained from their former use if they are to express Divine Truth and Paul does thus stretch them to their utmost length in this case.

The hope of the true Believer is so substantial that Paul even speaks of it as though it were the thing itself and were laid up in Heaven! Many a man has a hope of wealth, but that hope is a different thing from being wealthy. There is many a slip ‘twixt the cup and the lip, says the old proverb, and how true it is! A man may have a hope of old age, yet he may never reach even middle life, and thus it is clear that the hope of long life is not, in itself, longevity. But he that has the Divine hope which grows out of faith and love has a hope which shall never be disappointed, so that the Apostle speaks of it as being identical with the thing hoped for and describes it as laid up in Heaven! What a marvelous hope is this which long before its realization is treated as a matter of actual attainment and spoken of as a treasure reserved in the coffers of Heaven!

One marvelous point about our hope is this—it is the subject of Divine Revelation. No one could ever have invented this hope—it is so glorious as to baffle imagination! The prince of dreamers could never have dreamed it, nor the master of the art of logic have inferred it by reason. Imagination and understanding are both left on the ground, while the Bible idea of Heaven soars upward like a strong-winged angel. The eternal hope had to be *revealed* to us—we should never have known it, otherwise, for the Apostle says, “Of which you heard before in the Word of the Truth of the Gospel.” That a sinful man should have a hope of enjoying the perfect bliss of Paradise is a thing not to be thought of, were it not that the Lord has promised it!

I say again, imagination’s utmost stretch could never had reached to this and neither could we have had the presumption to suppose that such a bliss could be in store for men so unworthy and undeserving had we not been assured thereof by the Word of God! But now the Word of God has opened a window in Heaven and bid us look therein and hope for the time when we shall drink of its living fountains of waters and go no more out forever. This is marvelous and it is even more marvelous to think that this hope came to us simply by *hearing*. “Of which you heard before in the Word of the truth of the Gospel.” “Faith comes by hearing” and hope comes by faith—and so the Divine hope of being in Heaven came to us by hearing—not by working, not by deserving, not by penance and sacrifice, but simply by listening diligently unto the Divine Word and believing unto life!

We heard that the pierced hands of Jesus had opened the kingdom of Heaven to all Believers and we believed and saw a way of entrance into the holiest by His blood! We heard that God had prepared, for them that love Him, joys indescribable and we believed the message, trusting in His Son. Our confidence is in the Word which we have heard, for it is written, “Hear and your soul shall live.” And we find that by hearing, our confidence is strengthened and our heart filled with inward assurance and joyful expectation—therefore do we love the Word of God more and more! Will we not prize to the uttermost that sacred Word which has brought us such a hope? Yes, that we will—till we exchange hearing for seeing—and the message of Jesus for Jesus, Himself! We will always lend a willing ear to the testimony of Jesus!

This hope is marvelous, once more, because the substance of it is most extraordinary. Brothers and Sisters, what is the hope which is laid up for us in Heaven? It would need many a sermon to bring out all the phases of delight which belong to that hope! It is the hope of victory, for we shall overcome every foe and Satan shall be trod under our feet. A palm of victory is prepared for our hands and a crown for our heads. Our life struggle shall not end in defeat, but in complete and eternal triumph, for we shall overcome through the blood of the Lamb! Nor do we hope for only victory—but in our own persons we shall possess *perfection*. We shall one day cast off the slough of sin and shall be seen in the beauty of our newborn life. Truly, “it does not yet appear what we shall be,” but when we think of the matchless Character of our Lord Jesus, we are overjoyed by the assurance that “we shall be like He.”

What an honor and a bliss for the younger Brethren to be like the Firstborn! To what higher honor could God Himself exalt us? I know not of anything which could surpass this! Oh, matchless joy to be as holy, harmless and undefiled as our own beloved Lord! How delightful to have no propensity to sin remaining in us nor trace of its ever having been there! How blissful to perceive that our holy desires and aspirations have no weakness or defect remaining in them! Our nature will be perfect and fully developed in all its sinless excellence! We shall love God as we do now, but oh how much more intensely! We shall rejoice in God as we do now, but oh what depth there will be in that joy! We shall delight to serve Him as we do now, but there will, then, be no coldness of heart, no languor of spirit, no temptation to turn aside.

Our service will be as perfect as that of angels! Then shall we say to ourselves without fear of any inward failure, “Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless His holy name.” There will be no recreant affection then! No erring judgment, no straying passion, no rebellious lust! There will remain nothing which can defile, or weaken, or distract! We shall be perfect, altogether perfect. This is our hope—victory over evil and perfection in all that is good! If this were *all* our hope it would be marvelous, but there is more to be unfolded. We expect to enjoy security, also, from every danger. As there will be no evil in us, so there will be none around us or about us to cause us alarm. No temporal evil such as pain, bereavement, sorrow, labor, or reproach shall come near us!

All will be security, peace, rest, and enjoyment. No mental evil will intrude upon us in Heaven. No doubts, no staggering difficulties, no fears, no bewilderments will cause us distress. Here we see through a glass darkly and we know in part—but there we shall see face to face and know even as we are known! Oh, to be free from mental trouble! What a relief will this be to many a doubting Thomas! This is a marvelous hope! And then no spiritual enemy will assail us. No world, no flesh, no devil will mar our rest above. What will you make out of it, you tried ones? Your Sabbaths are very sweet now on earth, but when they are over, you have to return to yon cold world again. But there your Sabbath shall never end and your separation from the wicked will be complete!

It will be a strange sensation for you to find no Monday morning, no care to be renewed, no toil to be encountered, no harness to be buckled on afresh! But above all, no *sin* to be dreaded, no temptation to be escaped! Heaven is so peaceful that the storms of earth are unknown there. The stirrings of the flesh are never felt and the howls of the dogs of Hell are never heard. All is peace and purity there—perfection and security forever! With this security will come perfect rest—“Yes, says the Spirit, for they rest from their labors.” Heavenly rest is quite consistent with continual service, for, like the angels, we shall rest on the wing and find it rest to serve God day and night. But there you shall not toil till the sweat dampens your face, neither shall the sun burn you, nor any heat! No weary limb nor fevered brain shall follow upon the blessed service of Heaven.

Heaven is a paradise of pleasure and a palace of glory! It is a garden of supreme delights and a mansion of abiding love! It is an everlasting Sabbatismos, a rest which never can be broken, which evermore remains for the people of God! It is a kingdom where all are kings, an inheritance where all are heirs! My soul pants for it! Is not this a charming hope? Did I not say well when I declared it to be marvelous? Nor is this all, Brothers and Sisters, for we expect to enjoy in Heaven a happiness beyond compare! Eye has not seen it, nor ear heard it, nor has the heart conceived it—it surpasses all carnal joy! We know a little of it, for the Lord has revealed it unto us by the Spirit, who searches all things, even the deep things of God. Yet what we know is but a mere taste of the marriage feast—enough to make us long for more, but by no means sufficient to give us a complete idea of the whole banquet!

If it is so sweet to preach about Christ, what must it be to see Him and be with Him? If it is so delightful to be ravished by the music of His name, what must it be to lie in His bosom? Why, if these few clusters of Eshcol which are, now and then, brought to us are so sweet, what will it be to abide in the vineyard where *all* the clusters grow? If that one bucketful from the well of Bethlehem tasted so sweetly that we scarcely dared to drink it, but poured it out before the Lord as a thank-offering, what a joy will it be to drink at the wellhead without stint forever! O to be eternally at the right hand of God where there are pleasures forevermore! This is our hope and yet there is more, for we have the hope of everlasting fellowship with Christ! I would give 10,000 worlds, if I had them, to have *one* glimpse of that dear face which was marred with sorrow for my sake!

But to sit at my Lord’s feet and look up into His countenance and hear His voice, and never, never grieve Him, but to participate in all His triumphs and glories forever and forever—what a Heaven will this be! Then shall we have fellowship with all His saints in whom He is glorified and by whom His image is reflected. And thus shall we behold fresh displays of

His power and beams of His love. Is not this surpassing bliss? Said I not well when I declared that ours is a marvelous hope? Had I eloquence and could pile on good words—and could a poet assist me with his sweetest song—to tell of the bliss and joy of the eternal world, yet must preacher and poet both confess their inability to describe the Glory to be revealed in us! The noblest intellect and the sweetest speech could not convey to you so much as a thousandth part of the bliss of Heaven!

There I leave the first head. It is a very marvelous hope!  
**II.**Secondly, let us remark that IT IS A MOST SECURE HOPE. It is so according to the text, because it is laid up or secured. The recent calamities which have occurred in connection with the Glasgow City Bank will make businessmen very careful where they lay up their treasures, but no one can entertain any fear of the safety of that which God Himself takes under His charge! If your hope is laid up with Him it becomes sinful to doubt its security. It is “laid up,” the text says, and this means that it is hidden in a safe place like a treasure which is well secured.  
We find it hard to lay up our valuables safely in this world because thieves break through and steal. The iron safe, the strong room and all sorts of inventions are employed to preserve them from felonious grips, but when God becomes the Guardian of our treasure, He lays it up where none can touch it and neither man nor devil can steal it. Our hope is laid up just as crowns and wreaths were laid up at the Grecian games for those who won them—no one could snatch them away from their rightful owners. The rewards were safely retained for the winners, to be distributed when the contest was over. You see not as yet your hope, Beloved, but it is laid up—it is hidden with Christ in God and made as safe as the Throne of God Himself.  
Notice the next word, it is laid up, “for you.” It is something to have your hope laid up, but it is much better to have it laid up for yourself. “Laid up for you.” That is, for you whose faith is in Christ Jesus and who have love to all the saints. There is a crown in Heaven which will never be worn by any head but yours! There is a harp in Glory that will never be touched by any fingers but yours. Make no mistake about it, it is laid up for you in Heaven! It is “reserved in Heaven for you who are kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation.” “For *you*”— “Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.” Lay the stress there and get honey out of it. “Laid up for *you*.”  
Where is it laid up? The next word tells us. “Laid up for you in Heaven,” “where,” says the Savior as though He were expounding the text, “neither moth nor rust does corrupt.” This means that no process of decay will cause your treasure to become stale and worn out! No secret moth will eat the garments of Heaven’s courtiers and no rust will tarnish the brightness of their crowns. Our Lord adds, “Nor do thieves break through nor steal.” We cannot imagine a burglar’s breaking through the walls of Heaven! We could not imagine Satan himself undermining the bastions of the New Jerusalem, or leaping over the bulwarks which guard the city of the Great King! If your hope is laid up in Heaven it must be perfectly safe.  
If your hope lies in the bank, it may break—if it lies in an empire, it may melt away. If it lies in an estate, the title-deeds may be questioned; if it lies in any human creature, death may bereave you. If it lies in yourself, it is altogether deceitful! But if your hope is laid up in Heaven, how secure it is! Be glad and bless the Lord. To show how secure is our hope, the Apostle tells us that we have an indisputable certificate and guarantee for it. He says, “We heard of it in the Word of the Truth of the Gospel.” Notice these three emphatic words—“In the Word of the Truth of the Gospel.” First, “In the Word.” What word is that? Man’s word? Man’s words are so much wind! But this is *God’s Word*, the same Word that made Heaven and earth! A Word of power which cannot fail and of Truth which cannot lie.  
You first hear of this blessed hope through the Word of God and that Word is the best of evidence. You know how a person will say, “My word for it”?—Here you have God’s Word for it! We take a good man’s word freely and will we not take God’s Word much more readily? You have the Word of God for the sure hope that believers in Christ Jesus shall be blessed forever—is not this security enough? Our text goes on to say, “the Word of the Truth.” So, then, it is not a word of guess, conjecture, or of probable inference, but of Infallible Truth! My Brothers of the modern school, my wise Brothers, have a word of excogitation, outcome and development—but the word the Apostle preached was “the Word of the Truth”—something positive, dogmatic and certain!  
Ugly as the word may sound, the Lord grant that we may never be ashamed of the thing called *dogmatism,* nowadays, which is none other than faith in God’s Truth! We believe the Word of God not only to be true, but to be “the Word of the Truth.” “Let God be true and every man a liar.” There may be other true things in the world, but God’s Word is the *essence* of Truth, the Truth beyond all things else that may be true, for He has said, “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My Word shall never pass away.” The Apostle says in another place, “All flesh is as grass and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower thereof falls away; but the Word of the Lord endures forever. And this is the Word which by the Gospel is preached unto you.”  
Note the next word, “The Word of the Truth of the Gospel,” or of the Good News. That is to say, the sum and substance of the Good News is to be found in this glorious hope! If you extract the essence of the Gospel and get the Truth of God, which is the central germ of the glad tidings, you come at that blessed hope most sure and steadfast which enters into that within the veil. Now, then, before your God-created hope can fail, the Word of God will have to be broken! But the Word of God cannot be broken! The Truth of God will have to fail, but the Truth of God abides forever and is by force of its own Nature eternal! And the Gospel will have to be disproved, but that cannot be, since the Glory of God is made to hang upon it!  
You have heard it, then, “in the Word of the Truth of the Gospel.” What better assurance do you need? Hold to it and rejoice in it and you shall never be ashamed of your hope!  
**III.**I close by saying that IT IS A MOST POWERFULLY INFLUENTIAL HOPE. Brothers and Sisters, I have already said to you that this hope is the parent and nurse of love because the text says, “The love which you have to all the saints for the hope which is laid up for you in Heaven.” Now, that is no trifling fountain of action which leads believing hearts to love, since love is always a working Grace! Oh, for more love in this distracted world! Whatever in this world promotes Christian love is to be admired and, since the hope that we shall be forever together before the Throne of God lifts us above the little disagreements of society and makes us affectionate to each other, it is a thing to cultivate with care.  
Love is one part of the powerful operation of hope upon ourselves, but hopefulness affects others, also. Where the hopefulness of saints is conspicuous, it leads ministers and gracious people to give thanks to God. Paul says, “We give thanks to God and the Father, praying always for you since we heard of your hope.” I do not know a greater delight that a minister can have than the thought of all his people entering the bliss of Heaven and of his meeting them all there! We hardly have time to know each other here below. We have loved each other in the Lord and we have strived together in the service of God—and some of us are old fellowsoldiers. Now, after many years of Christian warfare, how pleasant it will be to dwell together above the world without end!  
Some have gone home whom we dearly loved and would almost have detained if we could. And there are others among us who in the order of Nature will soon be translated—happy are we because we cannot long be separated! The age of some among us prophesies their speedy departure and foreshadows that they will soon go over to the majority—but it is a most blessed reflection that all of us who are in Christ shall meet together above. We shall have ample room and space enough for fellowship when we have reached eternity—and what will our joy be then! Perhaps some of you will say to me when we converse in heavenly language— “You remember talking to us concerning the blessed hope on that fine Lord’s-Day morning, but you did not know much about it! We said then, ‘The half has not been told us,’ but now we perceive you did not tell us the onehundredth part! Still we were glad to share in the joy of what little we did know and in the blessed hope of knowing so much more.” Oh yes, dear Friends, because the hope of Heaven in us helps to make other people thank God on our account, it is a sweet Grace and mightily influential— and the more we have of it the better!  
Moreover, hearing of their hope led the Apostle to pray and, if you will follow me in reading the words which succeed the text, you will see what he desired for his friends at Colosse. In the ninth verse you will see what he prayed for. He says, “For this cause we, also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you and to desire that you might be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding.” Having believed in Jesus and loving His people, you are going to Heaven and so Paul says, “I desire that you be filled with the knowledge of His will,” and well may he so desire, since to do that will is the joy and business of Heaven! Is not our prayer, “Your will be done on earth as it is in Heaven”? Brethren, let us learn the will of the Lord *now* and so be educated for the skies!  
Here we are to go through our apprenticeship that we may be able to take up our freedom as citizens of the New Jerusalem. Here we are at school, preparing to take our degree above, among the instructed saints of God! Are we to enter Heaven ignorant of what the will of the Lord is? Surely we ought to know something of the ways of the place and something of the rules of the court! This part of our life below is intended to be a prelude to our life above—a preparation for perfection! Here below we undergo the tuning of the instruments. It is not meet that there should be discordant scrapings and screwing of strings in Heaven! No, let us do all that here! Let us have our harps tuned below so that when we reach the orchestra of the skies we may take our right place and drop into the right note directly. A good hope should make you eager to know the will of the Lord! It should purify you even as Christ is pure and make you anxious to begin the perfect service of Heaven while yet you linger below!  
Then the Apostle prays, “that you might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing.” Is it not fit that you who are to rise to Enoch’s Heaven should walk as he did and have this testimony that you please God? You are going to dwell at God’s right hand where there are pleasures forevermore—would you not wish to do all you can to please your Lord before you see Him? You are a son or daughter of a King! You have not put on your glittering array as yet—your crown is not yet on your head—but surely you wish to behave yourself as becomes one who is foreordained for so much honor and glory! If a son is in a distant country and is coming home, he begins to think, “What can I take home? What can I do to please the beloved father whom I am soon to see?” Begin, Beloved, to see what you can do to please God because you are so soon to enter into His pleasure and dwell with those that wear white robes, “for they are worthy”!  
Next he says, “Being fruitful in every good work.” Why, if there is to be such a rich reward of Grace, let us bear all the gracious fruit we can! And if the time of working is so soon to be over, let us be instant in every holy labor while yet the season is with us! Who wants to go into Heaven emptyhanded? Who wishes to spend the time of his sojourning here in idleness? Oh no! Let us seek to be fruitful to the Glory of God that so we may have an abundant entrance into the kingdom! The Apostle further adds, “Increasing in the knowledge of God.” If I am going to dwell with God, let me know something of Him. Let me search His Word and see how He has revealed Himself. Let me endeavor to have fellowship with Him and His Son, Jesus, that I may know Him. How can I enter Heaven as a total stranger to Him who is the King of it? Is not the knowledge of God as necessary as it is desirable?  
Those who have a good hope of Heaven will not rest without knowing the Lord, from the least even to the greatest of them. If anyone were to make you a present of a great estate, no matter in what country it might be situated, you would feel an interest in the land and its neighborhood— and before nightfall you would be found enquiring about the place! No matter how rustic the neighborhood or remote the locality, you would set your thoughts towards it if you knew the estate to be yours. As a usual thing, one of the driest documents in all the world is a rich man’s will. If you have ever heard one read you will know how it proses on and on in that rigmarole fashion dear to lawyers! But if you are present when it is read to the family, please notice how, “my son John’s” eyes clear up when it comes to the clause which concerns himself and how even the aged countenance of “my faithful servant Jane” brightens when her small legacy is mentioned! Everyone is on the alert when his own interests are affected. Even so, he that has a hope in Heaven and an interest in Christ’s great Testament will, at once, take an interest in Divine things and will desire to increase in the knowledge of God.  
Once again, the Apostle says, “strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness.” A hope of Heaven is a mighty strengthener for bearing the ills of life and the persecutions of the adversary. “It will soon be over,” says a man who looks for Heaven and, therefore, he is not over-weighted with grief. “It is an ill lodging,” said the traveler, “but I shall be away in the morning.” Well may we be strengthened with all might by the hope of Heaven! It is but reason that the exceeding weight of Heaven should cast into the shade this light affliction which is but for a moment! You will say, “But have you not worked this part of the chapter into your subject without any guarantee?”  
No. Here is my guarantee in the next verse—“Giving thanks unto the Father which has made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.” I have been following the evident track of the Apostle’s thoughts. The Lord gives us a hope of glory and then He gives us a meetness for it and that meetness is largely worked in us by the Holy Spirit through the instrumentality of our hope. Cultivate, then, your hope, dear Brothers and Sisters! Make it to shine so plainly in you that your minister may hear of your hopefulness and joy! Cause observers to take note of it because you speak of Heaven and act as though you really expected to go there! Make the *world* know that you have a hope of Heaven! Make worldlings feel that you are a believer in eternal Glory and that you hope to be where Jesus is!  
Often surprise them as they see what they call your simplicity, but what is, in truth, only your *sincerity* while you treat as matter of fact the hope laid up for you in Heaven! The Lord grant it for Jesus Christ’s sake. Amen.

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÷Col 1.9

SPIRITUAL KNOWLEDGE AND ITS PRACTICAL RESULTS  
NO. 1742

DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, SEPTEMBER 30 1883, ***BY C. H. SPURGEON,***  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

*“For this cau se we, also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that you might be filled with the knowledge of His will inall wisdom and spiritual understanding; that you might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing inthe knowledge of God.”*Col 1:9-10*.*

FOR the Church that was at Colosse, Paul gave hearty thanks to God for many most important blessings, especially for their faith, their love and their hope. It would be a very useful exercise to our hearts if we would often give thanks to God for the gifts and Graces which we discover in our Christian Brothers and Sisters. I am afraid we are more inclined to spy out their *faults*and to suppose that we deplore them, than we are to discern the work of the Holy Spirit in them and, from the bottom of our hearts, give thanks to God for them. Paul felt encouraged by what he saw in the Colossian Believers to pray to God to enrich them yet farther. It should be our desire that our best Brethren should be better and that those who are most like Jesus should be still more completely conformed to His image.

We cannot more wisely show our love to our friends than by, first, acknowledging the Grace which is in them—and then by praying that God may give them more! Paul, as with an eagle eye, surveyed the Church at Colosse, which he loved so well, and he noted that it was somewhat lacking in knowledge. The Colossian brotherhood differed considerably from the Church at Corinth which abounded in talent and was enriched with all knowledge. The Colossians had fewer gifted Brethren among them who could act as teachers and, though this was no fault of theirs, it impoverished them in the matter of knowledge—and as Paul would not have them be behind in any desirable attainment—he, therefore, prayed for them that they might be filled with knowledge in all wisdom and spiritual understanding.

If you read this Epistle through, you will observe that Paul frequently alludes to knowledge and wisdom. To the point in which he judged the Church to be deficient, he turned his prayerful attention. He would not have them ignorant. He knew that spiritual ignorance is the constant source of error, instability and sorrow—and, therefore, he desired that they might be soundly taught in the things of God. Not that they were destitute of *saving*knowledge, for he says in the 6th verse that they “knew the Grace of God in truth,” and that they had brought forth fruits meet for salvation. But saving knowledge, though it is the most essential attainment, is not the *only*knowledge which a Christian should seek after. He should long to be *useful*as well as to be safe.

Being himself delivered out of darkness, Paul strives to bring others into the marvelous light of Grace. Paul would have his Brethren thoroughly furnished for sacred service, knowing the will of the Lord, themselves, and able to teach others. He desired for them that they might possess *comforting* knowledge, *strengthening*knowledge, *edifying*knowledge, *sanctifying*knowledge, *directing*knowledge—so that they might be ready for all the trials, duties and labors of life. Upon this subject I am led to make four observations and to enlarge upon each of them. May the Holy Spirit, by this discourse, build us up in the knowledge of God.

I. My first subject is THE GREAT VALUE OF INTERCESSORY PRAYER, for as soon as Paul felt his heart burning with love to the saints at Colosse and had heard of the work of the Spirit among them, he began to show His love by lifting up His heart in prayer for them. He did that for them which He knew would bless them. Notice that intercessory prayer is a very important part of the work of Christians for one another. We are not sent into the world to live unto ourselves, but we are members of one body—and each member is expected to contribute to the health and the comfort of the whole. It is true we cannot all preach, but we can all pray! We cannot all distribute alms from our substance, but we can all offer prayer from our hearts!

In temporal things we may not be able to enrich the Church for lack of substance, but if we fail to bless the Church by our prayers, it will be for lack of Divine Grace. Whatever you fail in, dearly Beloved—and I pray that you may in nothing fall behind—yet do not fail in prayer for all the saints, that every blessing may abound towards them! Intercessory prayer is to be esteemed as an invaluable proof of love and as the creator of more love. The man who will truly pray for me will certainly readily forgive me if I offend him. He will relieve me if I am in need and He will be prepared to assist me if I am engaged in a service too hard for me. Give us your earnest prayers and we know that we live in your hearts! How sweet it is to be permitted thus to manifest our love to one another!

When our hands are palsied, we can still pray! When our eyes grow dim, we can still see to pray! When, by sickness, we are altogether laid aside, we can still pray! And when we meet with cases in which we are unable to help, and yet are moved with sympathy for a Brother or Sister, our sympathy can always find one open channel, for we can pray—and by prayer call in the aid of One whose help is effectual. Therefore, by your love to your Lord and to all those who are in Him, I beseech you abound in intercessory prayer as the Apostle did.

Intercessory prayer, again, is most valuable because it is an infallible means of obtaining the blessings which we desire for our friends. It is not in vain that we ask, for it is written, “Everyone that asks receives.” It is not in vain that we intercede for others, for the Lord delights to answer such petitions. The unselfish devotion which pleads as eagerly for others as for itself is so pleasing to the Lord that He puts great honor upon it. If we desire any blessing for our friends, our best course is to pray—even if we would have them to be filled with knowledge in all wisdom, our safest course is to pray that it may be so.

Of course, we must not forget to instruct them and to aid them in their studies as far as lies in our power, for every honest prayer supposes the use of all proper means. But the instruction which we offer will be of no service unless we first bring down the blessing of God upon it, that thereby our friends may be made willing to learn and may receive the Truth of God not as the word of man, but as from the Lord, Himself. None but *spiritual*teaching will nourish spiritual life. The Holy Spirit must teach Divine Truth to the heart, or it will never be truly known. Whatever you wisely desire for your friend, strive to get it for him, but hasten, first, to the Throne of Grace. If you would have your friend converted; if you would have him strengthened; if you would have him taught of God; if you would have him quickened to a nobler life and elevated to a higher consecration, do him this great service—take his case before the Lord in prayer—and in so doing you have gone the wisest way to work to enrich him.

Note, Brothers and Sisters, for I am keeping to my text closely, that such intercessory prayer will be all the more valuable if it is our immediate resort. The Apostle says, “Since the day we heard it, we do not cease to pray for you.” He began to pray at once! Whenever you perceive the work of the Spirit in any heart, pray at once that the holy change may proceed with power. Whenever you discover any need in a Brother, begin on the day you hear of it to pray that his need may be supplied. There should be no delaying of prayer! “He gives twice who gives quickly” is a human proverb, but I believe that when we

*pray* speedily we shall often find that God, in answering quickly, gives us a double blessing. Usually he who is the most diligent in the pursuit of them shall win worldly riches—and assuredly he shall be richest towards God who is most diligent in supplication. Linger not a minute! Speed on to the Mercy Seat. Now is the accepted time; the Lord waits to be gracious to you! The Lord indicates to you what your prayer shall be by the news, which you have just heard of your friend. Therefore, bring his case at once before the Throne of Grace. Divine Providence has brought the necessary subject for prayer under your notice; therefore begin to pray about it at once!

Our prayers will be all the more valuable if they are incessant as well as immediate. “We cease not,” said Paul, “to pray for you since the day we heard it.” “Oh,” says one, “was Paul *always*praying for the Colossians from the day he heard of their welfare? It may have been months and years! Did he never cease to pray?” I answer, he was always praying for them in the sense which he explains—he adds, “and to desire.” Now, desire is the essence of prayer. In fact, desire is the *kernel*of prayer. The vocal expressions which we call by the name of prayer are often but its shell—inward desire is the life, the heart, the reality of prayer! Though you cannot always be *speaking*in prayer, you can always be desiring in prayer. The miser is always desiring riches, though he is not always talking about his gold and silver. And the man who loves his fellow men and desires their profit is really always praying for their benefit, though he is not always lifting up his voice in supplication. “Since the day we heard it,” says Paul, “we do not cease to pray for you.”

The act of prayer is blessed, but the *habit*of prayer is more blessed—and the *spirit of prayer*is the most blessed of all—and it is *this*that we can continue for months and years. The act of prayer must, from force of circumstances, be sometimes stopped, but the habit of prayer should be fixed and unvarying. And the spirit of prayer, which is fervent desire, should be perpetual and abiding. We can hardly realize the value to the Church and to the world of that intercessory prayer which ceases not, day or night, but without fail ascends before the Lord from the whole company of the faithful, as the incense ascended from the altar!

Dear Friends, our intercessory prayer will be all the more precious if it is an intense expression unto God. I suppose that by the use of the word, “desire,” here, the Apostle not only explains how he continued to pray, but in what manner he prayed—with “desire.” Remember how our Lord puts it—“with desire have I desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer.” I wish we could always say, “with desire have I desired in prayer. I did not repeat a merely complimentary benediction upon my friends, but I pleaded for them as for my life. I importuned with God; I offered an effectual in-wrought prayer which rose from the depths of my heart to the heights of Heaven and obtained an audience with God.” Fervency is a great essential for victorious prayer. God grant us to be importunate, for then we shall be invincible!

One more observation and I have done with this point. Intercessory prayer is increased in value when it is not from one person, alone, but is offered in intimate union with other saints. Paul says, “We, also,” not, “I, only,” but, “*we,*also, since the day we heard it, cease not.” If two of you agree as touching anything concerning the Kingdom of God, you have the blessing secured to you by a special promise of God. Remember how Abraham prayed for the cities of the plain, but succeeded not until Lot also added his supplication for Zoar? Then the little city was spared. I compare Abraham’s intercession to a ton weight of prayer, and poor Lot’s I can hardly reckon to have been more than half an ounce, but still that half-ounce turned the scale!

So here is Paul—and with him is youthful Timothy, who, compared with Paul, is meaningless! Yet Paul’s prayer is all the more effectual because Timothy’s prayer is joined with it. Our Lord sent out His servants by two and two, and it is well when they come back to Him in prayer two and two. I commend to you, Brothers and Sisters, the habit of frequent prayer together. When a Christian friend drops in, his visit will, perhaps, end in mere talk unless you secure its spiritual profit by at least a few minutes spent in united prayer. I frequently, during the day, when a friend comes in upon the Master’s business, say, “Let us pray before you go,” and I always find the request is welcomed. Such prayers do not occupy much time, but if they did, it might be well spent—such united supplications oil the wheels of life’s heavy wagon and cause it to move with less of that creaking which we too often hear. “I, alone” is certainly a good word in prayer, but, “we, also” is a better one! Let us link hands and intercede for our Brethren and the whole Church of God.

Thus have I expatiated upon the excellencies which increase the value of intercessory prayer. Use much this heavenly art. It is effectual for 10,000 ends. It turns every way to bless the Church. Brothers and Sisters, pray for us, pray for all saints, pray for all sinners and, by doing so you will be the benefactors of your age.

II. Our second observation from the text is this—we learn, here, THE PRECIOUSNESS OF SPIRITUAL KNOWLEDGE—for all this earnest, ceaseless prayer is offered for this end, “That you might be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding.” Here let us speak of the usefulness and blessedness of that spiritual knowledge for which the Apostle and his friend cried incessantly unto the Lord. First, consider the men for whom this knowledge is desired. They are saints and faithful Brethren, of whom we read that they “knew the Grace of God in truth,” and were, “bringing forth fruit” unto God. For those who already know the Lord we must not cease to pray. They are not beyond the need of our prayers while they are in this life.

We may pray for those who know nothing of the Lord, that He would open their blind eyes—but even those who have already been taught of God are in need of our supplications that they may learn yet more. We have great encouragement to pray that they may be filled with all knowledge, since the Lord has already done so much for them. We dare not say in this case that a little knowledge is a dangerous thing, for a little knowledge of the things of God may suffice to save the soul, but more knowledge is a most desirable thing for those who have that little knowledge! Pray, therefore, for them. Let not your prayers plead only and altogether for the unconverted, but entreat for our young converts, that they may be further edified. It will be an ill day when we are so engaged in seeking lost sheep that we forget the lambs! It would be very mischievous for us to neglect our work at home in order to carry on warfare with the adversary abroad.

No, let us daily cry to God in prayer that the stones lately quarried may be built up upon the one Foundation and embedded in the walls of the Church of God unto eternal glory! We desire life for the dead, health for the living and maturity for the healthy. For the deeper instruction of our younger Brothers and Sisters let us pray. Of this desirable knowledge, what is the measure? We desire for them, “that they may be *filled*with the knowledge of His will.” Filled—this is grand scholarship, to have the mind, heart and the whole of our manhood filled with knowledge! Paul would not have a Believer ignorant upon *any*point—he would have him *filled*with knowledge, for when a measure is full of wheat there is no room for chaff. True knowledge excludes error.

The men that go after false doctrine are usually those who know little of the Word of God. Being untaught, they are unstable, ready to be blown about with every wind of doctrine. It you leave empty spots in your minds unsaturated with holy teaching, they will be an invitation to the devil to enter in and dwell there. Fill up the soul and so shut out the enemy! Paul desired the Colossian saints to be filled—filled up to the brim with the knowledge of God’s will! Brethren, we would have you know all that you can know of God’s Truth! Rome flourishes by man’s ignorance, but the New Jerusalem rejoices in the Light of God! No knowledge of the revealed will of God can ever do you any harm if it is *sanctified*. Do not be afraid of what they call, “high doctrines,” or the, “deep things of God.” They tell us

that those things are secrets and, therefore, we ought not to pry into them.

If they are secrets, there is no fear that anybody can pry into them! But the Truths of God revealed in the Word of God are no longer secrets, seeing that they are revealed to us by the Spirit of God—and as far as they are revealed, it should be our desire to understand them—so as to be filled with the knowledge of them. Let us try to know the Divine Truths of God more and more intimately. You know a man, for you pass him in the streets with a nod. You know another man far better, for you lodge in the same house with him. You know him best of all when you have shared his trouble, partaken in his joy and have, in fact, had fellowship with him by blending your two lives in one common stream of friendship. When you learn a spiritual Truth, endeavor to know it inside out—to know its foundation and building—to know it by the application of the Spirit to your own soul so that you are filled with it.

You may have knowledge in the brain, but it may not run into your spirit, so as to penetrate, permeate and saturate your spirit, till you are filled with it. Oh, to get the Gospel into one’s entire nature and to be like the water pots of Cana, filled up to the brim! Lord, fill Your poor children with the knowledge of Your will! This makes me notice what the matter of this knowledge is—“filled with the knowledge of His will.” What is that? It means the revealed will of God! Paul would have the Colossians know what the Lord has revealed, as far as human mind could grasp it, whether it were doctrine, precept, experience, or prophecy. How well it is to know the perceptive will of God! Our prayer should daily be, “Lord, what will You have me do?” Lord, teach me what is sin and what is righteousness, that I may discern things which are excellent. Whereas there are questions in the Church of God, itself, upon what the will of the Lord is, Lord help me not to care to know what is the will of this learned doctor, or what is the will of a certain assembly, but what is YOUR will!

“To the law and to the testimony”—this is our touchstone. Our desire is to be filled with the knowledge of the Lord’s will so as to do it without fail. Especially would we know the will of God as it constitutes the Gospel, for Jesus says, “This is the will of Him that sent me, that everyone which sees the Son, and believes on Him, may have everlasting life.” Oh, to know His will in that respect most clearly, so as to go and tell it out on all sides, that men may know the way of life and may be led into it by our word! Once more we read in 1Th 4:3—“This is the will of God, even your sanctification.” Oh, to be filled with the knowledge of the Lord’s will till you know what sanctification *means*and exhibit it in your daily life! It is yours to teach men what God means by holiness! Your mission is not fulfilled and the will of God is not accomplished unless you are sanctified! This it is with which we need to be filled! Know anything, know everything that is worth knowing! “That the soul is without knowledge is not good.”

Never attempt to run side by side with the agnostic whose glory it is that he knows nothing. But let it be your delight to know all that can be learned out of the Book of the Lord, by the teaching of the Holy Spirit. Concentrate your faculties upon the will of God. Here dive into the deeps and climb up to the heights and be afraid of nothing! Ask the Holy Spirit to saturate you with His Truth, as Gideon’s fleece was wet with the dew of Heaven, as the golden pot was filled with manna, or as Jordan is filled in the time of harvest when it overflows all its banks!

Still we have not done, for we must now notice the *manner*as well as the matter of this knowledge—“in all wisdom and spiritual understanding.” Wisdom is better than knowledge, for wisdom is knowledge rightly used. Knowledge may find room for folly, but wisdom casts it out. Knowledge may be the horse, but wisdom is the driver. When a man has knowledge, it is like the corn which is laid in the barn. But wisdom is the fine flour prepared for food. We need Christian people not only to know, but to *use*what they know! Happy is he who knows what to do at the right time! Many people are very knowing half an hour after it is too late—but to be filled with wisdom is to be able, at once, to apply knowledge rightly in difficult cases. Wisdom enables you to bring your knowledge practically to bear upon life, to separate between the precious and the vile, to deal with your fellow Christians in their different conditions—and to deal with sinners and those that are in need.

You need wisdom so to conduct your affairs that nothing therein shall scandalize the weak, or bring dishonor upon the name of Christ—mere knowledge will not suffice for this. Knowledge is the blade, wisdom is the full corn in the ear. Knowledge is the cloth, but wisdom is the garment. Knowledge is the timber, but wisdom has built her house. May all our knowledge be sanctified by Grace and attended with the guidance of the Spirit that we may become wise to know what the will of the Lord is. “All wisdom,” says the Apostle—many-handed wisdom, wisdom of all sorts, wisdom that will serve you in the shop, wisdom that will be useful in the counting-house, wisdom that will aid the Church of God and wisdom that will guide you if you are cast among the vilest of mankind. May you “be filled with knowledge in all wisdom.”

But that wisdom which operates on the outside must be attended by a spiritual understanding which is powerful within. I hardly know how to explain this—it is an inward knowledge of truth—the knowledge of the inward parts of things. It is a spiritual discernment, taste, experience and reception of the Truths of God, whereby the soul feeds upon them and takes them into herself. We know many men who know much but understand nothing. They accept implicitly what they are taught, but they have never considered it, weighed it, estimated it, found out the roots of it, or seen the heart of it. Oh, to have in the Church men full of spiritual understanding! These can say that they have tasted and handled the good Word of Life and have proved and tested the Truth as it is in Jesus! You know how it was with the sacrifices of old—a man who was poor brought turtle-doves or pigeons—and of these we read of each bird, “The priest shall cleave it with the wings thereof, but shall not divide it asunder.”

But a man who was rich in Israel brought a bullock or a sheep—and this offering was not only cleft down the middle, but further divided—the fat and the “inwards” are mentioned in detail. The poorer sacrifice represents the offering of the uninstructed—they have never rightly divided the Word of God and know not its fullness of meaning. But the man who is rich in Grace is comparable to him who brought his bullock, for he can enter into detail and see the secret meanings of the Word. There is a deep, which lies under, and he that is taught of the Lord shall find it. “The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him; and He will show them His Covenant.” And blessed are they that are taught of the Lord so as to read the mystery of His Grace! Here, then, is a grand petition for us.

To go back to our first head, let our intercessory prayers go up for all our Brothers and Sisters. Lord, teach them Your Word! Let them know Your Book from cover to cover, and let Your Truths revealed therein enter into them until they are filled to the brim! Then Lord, grant them the skill to use in daily life the knowledge which Your Spirit has imparted and may they more and more, in their inmost souls, be guided into all Your Truth, that they may comprehend with all saints what are the heights, and depths, and know the love of Christ which passes knowledge.

III. Now, thirdly, let us see in the text a lesson concerning THE PRACTICAL RESULT OF SPIRITUAL KNOWLEDGE. Paul prays for his friends “that you might be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that you might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing.” See, see the drift of his prayer?—“That you may *walk*.” Not that you might *talk*; not that you might sit down and meditate and enjoy yourselves, but, “that you might walk.” He aims at practical results! He desires that the saints may be instructed so that they may walk according to the best model. By walking worthy of the Lord Jesus, we do not understand in any sense that he expected them to possess such worthiness as to deserve to walk *with*the Lord—but he would have them live in a manner that should be in accordance with their communion with Christ.

You would not have a man walk with Christ through the streets, today, clothed in motley garments, or loathsome with filth—would you? No, if a man is a leper, Christ will heal him before He will walk with him! Let not a disciple walk so as to bring disgrace upon his Lord! When you walk with a king, you should be, yourself, royal in gait. When you commune with a prince, you should not act the clown. Dear Friends, may you know so much of Jesus that your lives shall become Christ-like, fit to be put side by side with the Character of Jesus, worthy of your perfect Lord! This is a high standard, is it not? It is always better to have a high standard than a low one, for you will never go beyond that which you set up as your model. If you set a low standard, you will fall below even that! It is an old proverb, “He that aims at the moon will shoot higher than he that aims at a bush.” It is well to have no lower standard than the desire to live, over again, the life of the Lord Jesus—a life of tenderness, a life of self-sacrifice, a life of generosity, a life of love, a life of honesty, a life of holy service—a life of close communion with God. Mix all virtues in due proportion and that is the life of Jesus towards which you must press forward with all your heart.

Next, the Apostle would have us get knowledge in order that we may so live as to be pleasing to our best Friend—“worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing.” Is not that beautiful? To live so as to please God in all respects! Some live to please themselves, while others to please their neighbors. Some live to please their wives; some to please their children, and some live as if they wished to please the devil! But *our* business is to please Him in all things whose servants we are. Without faith it is impossible to please Him—so away with unbelief! Without holiness no man shall see Him, much less please Him—therefore let us follow after holiness and may the Lord work it in us! “Unto all pleasing”—so that we may please God from the moment we rise in the morning to the time when we lie down! Yes, and please Him even when we are asleep! That we may eat and drink so as to please Him; that we may speak and think so as to please Him; that we may go or stay so as to please Him; that we may rejoice or suffer so as to please Him—“walking worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing.”

Oh, blessed is the man whose life is pleasing to God in all respects! The Apostle Paul desires that we may be filled with knowledge to this very end. If I do not *know*the will of God, how can I *do*the will of God? At least, how can there be anything pleasing to God which is ignorantly done without an intent to do His will? I fear that many children of God grieve their heavenly Father through sins of ignorance—an ignorance in which they ought not to remain a single day! Be it clearly understood that sins of ignorance are truly sins. They have not about them the venom and the aggravation which are found in sins against the Light and knowledge of God, but they are still sins, for the measure of our duty is not *our*light, but the Law of God itself. If a man pleads that he follows his conscience, yet this will not excuse his wrongdoing if his conscience is an unenlightened conscience and he is content to keep it in the dark. You are to obey the will of the Lord—that will is the standard of the sanctuary.

Our conscience is often like a deficient weight and deceives us. It is ours to gather a clear knowledge of the Word of God, that we may prove what is that perfect and acceptable will of God. The law makes no allowance for errors committed through false weights. When a man says, “I thought my weights and measures were all right,” he is not, therefore, excused. The law deals with *facts*, not with men’s imaginations! The weights must actually be correct, or the penalty is exacted. So is it with conscience—it ought to be instructed in the knowledge of the Divine will—and if it is not, its faultiness affords no justification for evil. Hence the absolute necessity of knowledge in order to true holiness. God grant us Grace to know His will and then to *obey*it “unto all pleasing.”

Look at the text again—“That you might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful.” Paul would have us producing the best fruit. Without knowledge, we cannot be fruitful—at least in the points where we are ignorant we must fail to bring forth fruit. Therefore he would have us to be taught well, that we may abundantly produce fruit unto God’s Glory. He says, “fruitful in every good work,” and this means much. He desires us to be as full of good works as we can be. Some are hindered in this because they do not know how to set about holy service. How can a man be fruitful as a preacher if he does not know what to preach? True, he may preach the elementary doctrine of the Cross, but even that he will be apt to set forth in a blundering manner. For certain, a man cannot teach what he does not know. The zealous, but untaught man, would be much more fruitful if he had a clearer understanding of Divine things.

In daily life, if in knowledge you are ignorant as to the things of God, you will be ready to become the prey of any false teacher who may chance to pick you up. In hundreds of ways, ignorance will make you run risks, lose opportunities of usefulness and fall into dangerous mistakes. Knowledge is food to the true heart and strengthens it for the Lord’s work. Oh, to have knowledge placed like good soil around the roots of the soul, to fertilize the mind that thus the clusters of usefulness may be as large as those of Eschol—beautiful, plentiful, sweet and full. May our Lord, the King of Israel, to whom the vineyard belongs, receive an abundant reward for all His labor for the vines which He has planted!

There is another note in this verse, which I beg you to notice. Paul would have them cultivate a comprehensive variety of the best things. He says—“Fruitful in every good work.” Here is room and range enough—“in every good work.” Have you the ability to preach the Gospel? Preach it! Does a little child need comforting? Comfort it! Can you stand up and vindicate a glorious Truth of God before thousands? Do it! Does a poor saint need a bit of dinner from your table? Send it to her! Let works of obedience, testimony, zeal, charity, piety and philanthropy all be found in your life. Do not select only big things as your specialty, but also glorify the Lord in the littles—“fruitful in *every*good work.” You never saw in nature a tree which yielded all sorts of fruit and you never will.

I have seen a tree so grafted that it produced four kinds of fruit at one time, but I remarked that it was a poor business in reference to two of the varieties, for one of the grafts, more natural than the others to the parent stem, drew off most of the sap and flourished well, but robbed the other branches! The second sort of fruit managed to live pretty fairly, but not so well as it would have done on its own stem. As for the third and fourth, they were mere *attempts*at fruit of the smallest size. This tree was shown to me as a great curiosity—it is not likely that practical gardeners will be encouraged by the experiment! But what would you think of a tree upon which you saw grapes, figs, olives, apples and all other good fruits growing at one time? This is the type of what instructed Believers will become—they will produce all sorts of goodness and graciousness to the honor of their heavenly Father!

I have no doubt that you will naturally abound most in certain good works for which you have the largest capacity, but still, nothing ought to come amiss to you. In the great house of the Church we need servants who will not be simply cooks or housemaids, but general servants, maids of all work, prepared to do anything and everything! I have known persons in household employment in England who would not do a turn beyond their special work to save their masters’ lives! These are a sort of servants of whom the fewer the better! In India this is carried out to a ridiculous extreme. The Hindu water-bearer will not sweep the house, nor light a fire, nor brush your clothes—he will fetch water and nothing else! You must, therefore, have a servant for each separate thing, and then each man will do his own little bit—he will not go an inch beyond!

When we enter into Christ’s Church, we should come prepared to wash the saints’ feet, or bear their burdens, or bind up their wounds, or fight their foes, or act as steward, or shepherd, or nurse. It has been well said that if two angels in Heaven were summoned to serve the Lord and there were two works to be done, an empire to be ruled, or a crossing to be swept, neither angel would have a choice as to which should be appointed to him, but would gladly abide the will of the Lord. Let us be equally prepared for anything, for everything by which fruit can be produced for the Well-Beloved. Why is it that some are not fruitful in this comprehensive way? Because they are not filled with knowledge in all wisdom! When a man says, “You asked me to do the lowest work! Don’t you know that I am a man of remarkable ability who should have higher work to do?” I venture to assert that he is an ignorant man! Self-assertion is ignorance on horseback!

You have probably read of a certain renowned corporal in the American service a century ago. A general, as he rode along, saw a body of men endeavoring to lift timber. They were shorthanded and the work lagged, but their famous corporal stood by ordering them about at a magnificent rate. The general passed and said, “Why don’t you lend them help and put your shoulder to it? “Why, Sir,” said the great little officer, “how can you think of such a thing? Do you know who I am? I am a corporal!” The general got off his horse, took off his coat, and helped move the timber—and by his judicious help the soldiers achieved their task. Then he turned to the high and mighty gentleman and said, “Mr. Corporal, next time you need a man to do such work as this, you can send for me—I am General Washington.”

Just so the Lord Jesus Christ, if He were here, would gladly do a thousand things which His poor little servants are too great to touch! I know you, dear Brother—you are too experienced, too old, too learned to help in the Sunday school! I know you are too respectable to give away a tract! Pray get out of such ignorant ways of thinking and ask to be useful in all possible ways! If you have done a little, do much! If you have done much, do more! And when you have done more, ask for Grace to proceed to the highest possible degree of usefulness for your Lord.

IV. And now, fourthly, notice THE REFLEX ACTION OF HOLINESS UPON KNOWLEDGE. We have only a few moments left—let my few words sink into your hearts. “Fruitful in every good work”—what then? “Increasing in the knowledge of God.” Look at that! It seems, then, that *holiness* is the road to knowledge! God has made it so. If any man will do His will, he shall know of His doctrine. If you read and study, and cannot make out the meaning of Scripture, get up and do something— and it may be, in the doing of it, you shall discover the secret. Holiness of heart shall increase the illumination of your mind!

Will you kindly observe that this knowledge rises in tone? Paul first prayed that they “might be filled with the knowledge of God’s will.” But *now*he implores for them an increase in the knowledge of God, Himself! Oh, blessed growth! First to know the *Law*and then to know the *Lawgiver*! First to know the precept, and then to know the mouth from which it comes! This is the height of knowledge— to see Christ and know the Father, and learn how to say from the heart—“Truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ.” I would call your willing attention to another thought. The Apostle, if he is to be judged according to his outward language, often utters impossible things, and yet his every sentence is not only full of deep meaning, but is strictly correct!

Notice his language here—in the 9th verse he says, “that you might be filled with the knowledge of His will.” Can anything go beyond this? The vessel is filled right up to the brim! What more can it have? Yet the Apostle says, “*increasing*in the knowledge of God.” What can that mean? If the mind is full to the brim, how can it receive more? If the man is full of knowledge, how can his knowledge increase? Can there be any increase after that? I propose to you the riddle. Here is the answer—make the vessel *larger—*and then there can be an increase. This solution of the difficulty requires no great wit to discover. So Paul plainly teaches us here, that if we have so increased in knowledge as to be full, he would have us increased in capacity to know yet more!

He would have our manhood enlarged and our powers of reception increased so that we might grow from being children to be young men—and from young men to be fathers, and so may be filled—filled always! Filled with all the fullness of God! The Lord grant unto us to perceive with humility that if we are already full of knowledge, we can still advance, for we “have not yet attained.” Let no man think that he can go no further! “There is,” says Augustine, “a certain perfection according to the measure of this life. And it belongs to that perfection that such a perfect man should know that he is not yet perfect.” To that I heartily subscribe! There is a certain fullness to be found in this life according to the measure of a man. And it belongs to that fullness that the man should know that he can yet increase in knowledge!

Holy Bernard says, “He is not good at all who does not desire to be better.” I also subscribe to that saying! Some might become good if they were not puffed up with the fancy of their own perfection. Others are somewhat commendable, but will never grow because they judge themselves to be already full-grown. I would have you filled and yet have room for more—filled with all knowledge, filled with all holiness, filled with the indwelling Spirit, filled with God—and yet increasing in knowledge, in holiness, in likeness to God and in all good things forevermore to His Glory! The Lord add His blessing for Jesus’ sake. Amen.

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**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.** Sermon #2751 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

÷Col 1.12

“A PREPARED PLACE FOR A PREPARED PEOPLE”  
NO. 2751

A SERMON  
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S-DAY, NOVEMBER 3, 1901.

***DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORD’S-DAY EVENING, MAY 25, 1879.**

***“I go to prepare a place for you.”***Joh 14:2***.***

***“Giving thanks unto the Father, who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light.”*** Col 1:12***.***

MY real text is not in the Bible—it is one of those Christian proverbs which are not Inspired in words, but the spirit of which is Inspired, “Heaven is a prepared place for a prepared people.” You have often heard that sentence. It is familiar in your mouths as household words, and well it may be.

Yet I shall have two texts from the Scriptures. The first will be our Savior’s words to His disciples, “I go to prepare a place for you,” from which we learn that “Heaven is a prepared place.” And the second will be Paul’s words to the Colossians, “Giving thanks unto the Father, who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light,” from which we learn that there is a prepared people, a people made qualified to be partakers of the inheritance which Christ has gone to prepare for them!

**I.**I am not going to have any further preface, but I will begin at once to speak upon THE PREPARATION OF HEAVEN. “I go to prepare a place for you.”

It is many months since I began to turn this sentence over. I think I might truly say that for several *years* I have thought of it, and thought of it again, and thought of it yet again—that our Lord Jesus Christ, before returning to Heaven, should say to His disciples, “I go to prepare a place for you.” Is there any difficulty about this passage? Yes, it is very difficult to explain. Indeed, I do not think that we really can know all that Christ meant when He uttered these words. A father said to his children, when the summer sun had waxed hot, “I shall go to the seaside today to prepare a place for you.” His little child asked, “What does father mean when he says that he will prepare a place for us?” And his mother answered, “My child, I cannot tell you all that your father means, but you will see when you get there. But now it must be enough for you that although you do not know what Father will have to do at the seaside in preparing a place for you, he knows what he is going to do.”

And, dear Friends, there is this consolation for us that even if we can hardly guess what it is that Christ can find to do to prepare Heaven for us, He knows what is needed, and He knows how to do it! And that is infinitely better than our knowing, because even if we knew what was needed, we could not do it. But with Christ to know and to do are two things that run parallel. He knows that there are certain preparations to be made. He knows what those preparations must be and He is equal to the task of making them! He has not gone upon an errand which He cannot fulfill. And when we get to Heaven, we shall know—perhaps it may take us a long while to find it all out—but we shall know and discover throughout eternity what He meant when He said, “I go to prepare a place for you.”

I do not profess to be able to explain our Lord’s words, but I am going simply to make a few remarks upon them. And first, I ask you to notice that *Heaven is already prepared for Christ’s people.*Christ has told us that when He comes in His Glory, He will say to those on His right hand, “Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.” So, there is an inheritance which the Father has already prepared for the people whom He gave to His Son— and this inheritance is reserved for them. But if it was prepared from the foundation of the world, how can it be said to be prepared by Christ? The explanation probably is that it was prepared in the eternal purpose of the Father—prepared by wise forethought—arranged for—predestinated— prepared in that sense—it was provided in the eternal arrangements of Jehovah, that there should be a suitable place for His people to dwell in forever. He made the pavilion of the sun and He gave the stars their appointed positions—would He forget to prepare a place for His people? He gave to angels their places and even to fallen spirits He has appointed a prison—so He would not forget, when He was arranging the entire universe, that a place would be needed for the twice-born, the heirs of Grace, the members of the mystical body of Christ Jesus, His brethren who were to be made like unto Him. Therefore, in purpose, plan and decree, long before God had laid the foundations of this poor world and the morning stars had sung together over creation’s six days’ work accomplished, He had prepared a place for His people! It was not actually prepared, but it was in the purpose and plan of the eternal mind and, therefore, might be regarded as already done.

Our Lord Jesus Christ has gone to Heaven, He says, that He may prepare a place for His servants, and we may be helped to form some idea of what He means by this expression if we just think a little about it. And, first, I am sure *that must be a very great and glorious place which needs Christ to prepare.*If we do not know all that He means, we can get at least this much out of His declaration. He spoke this world into being. It was not, but He said, “Be,” and it was at once made. Then He spoke it into order, into light, into life, into beauty. He had but to speak and what He willed was done. But now that He is *preparing* a place for His people. He has gone to Heaven on purpose to do it. He used to stand still here on earth and work miracles, but this was a miracle that He could not perform while He was here. He had to go back to His home above in order to prepare a place for His people. What sort of place, then, must it be that needs Christ Himself to prepare it? He might have said, “Angels, garnish a mansion for My Beloved.” He might have spoken to the firstborn sons of light and said, “Pile a temple of jewels for My chosen.” But, no, He leaves not the work to them, but He says, “I go to prepare a place for you.”

Brothers and Sisters, He *will do it well, for He knows all about us.*He knows what will give us the most happiness—and what will best develop all our spiritual faculties forever. He loves us, too, so well that as the preparing is left to Him, I know that He will prepare us nothing secondrate, nothing that could possibly be excelled. We shall have the best of the best, and much of it! We shall have all that even His great heart can give us! Nothing will be stinted for, as He is preparing it, it will be a right royal and Divine preparation. If, when the prodigal came back to his father, there was the preparation of the fatted calf, the music and dancing and the gold ring and the best robe, what will be the preparation when we do not come home as prodigals, but as the bride prepared for her husband, or as the Beloved children, without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, coming home to the Father who shall see His own image in us and rejoice over us with singing? It is a grand place that Christ prepares, I know, for never was there another such a lordly host as He is! It is a mansion of delights, I know, that He prepares, for never was there another architect with thought so magnificent as His, and never were other hands so skilled at quarrying living stones and putting them, one upon another, as His hands have ever been! This thought ought to cheer us much—it must be something very wonderful that Christ prepares as a fit place for His people.

And I think I may add to this, that *it must be something very sweet when it is prepared.*If you go to a friend’s house and just fal1 in with the ordinary proceedings of the family, you are very comfortable and you are glad not to disarrange anything. But if, when you arrive, you see that everything has been done on an extra scale to prepare for your coming, you feel still more grateful. It has often happened to an honored guest that he could not help observing that he was not being treated as his friends lived every day of the week and all the year round. That guest chamber had evidently been newly furnished and everything that was possible had been thought of to do him honor. If you were treated thus as a guest, there was pleasure for you in the fact that so much had been prepared for you. Did your husband ever take you to a new house and point out to you how he had purchased everything that he thought would please you? Had that little room been furnished especially for you and did he anticipate your tastes, providing this little thing and that that he knew you would like? Well, it was not merely that you enjoyed the things, themselves, but they all seemed to you so much sweeter because they had been prepared for you by your beloved husband. And when you get to Heaven, you will be astonished to see this and that and the other joy that was prepared for you because Christ thought of you, and provided just what you would most appreciate. You will be no stranger there, Beloved! You will say, “There has been here a hand that helped me when I was in distress. There has been here, I know, an eye that saw me when I was wandering far from God. There has been in this place a heart that cared for me—that same heart that loved me and that bled for me down below upon the Cross. It is my Savior who has prepared this place for me!”

I do not know whether I can convey to you all my thoughts upon this theme, but it does seem to me so pleasant to think that we are going to a place where we shall not be the first travelers through the country but where *a Pioneer has gone before us*—the best of pioneers who went before us with this one objective in His mind, that He might get all ready and prepare the place for us. I think, Brothers and Sisters, that those who will be there before us will say, when we arrive there, “We are glad you have come, for everything has been prepared for you.” It would be an eternal sorrow in Heaven if the saints should miss their way and perish, as some falsely tell us, for then, what about the preparations for their reception? They would all have been made in vain—harps prepared which no fingers would ever play—and crowns which no heads would ever wear! I do not believe it! I have never dreamed that such a thing could happen. I feel certain that He who prepared the place for the people, will prepare the people for the place and that if He gets all ready for them, He means to bring them Home that they may enjoy the things which He has laid up for them that love Him.

I know that I am not explaining the preparation of Heaven, yet I hope I am draining some comfortable thoughts out of the subject. If Christ is preparing Heaven, then it will be what our Scotch friends call, “a bonny place.” And if it is prepared for us, when we get there, it will exactly fit us. It will be the very Heaven we wanted—a better Heaven than we ever dreamed of—a better Heaven than we ever pictured even when our imagination took its loftiest heights! The Heaven of God and yet a Heaven exactly suited to such happy creatures as we then shall be!

Now, however, let us try to come a little closer to the subject and attempt to explain our Lord’s words. Jesus Christ has gone to prepare a place for His people. Does not this refer, if we keep it to its strict meaning, to *the ultimate place of God’s people?*You see, Christ mentions a *place*, not a state. And He speaks of going to it, and coming back from it—“I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself.” Christ is speaking of Himself in His full Manhood, without any figurative meaning to His words. He meant that He was going with all His Human Nature, away from this world. And that He was going to prepare a place for us, intending to come again, with all that glorified Human Nature about Him, to receive us unto Himself! This does not mean His spiritual coming in death, nor any kind of spiritual coming, as to its first meaning, at any rate. I am persuaded that the clear run of the words involves our Lord’s coming, in His Second Advent, when He will come to receive, not you or me as individuals who, one by one, will enter into rest, but to receive His whole Church into the place which He shall then have prepared for her. After the Resurrection, you must remember, we shall need a place to live—a literal, material place of abode, for this body of ours will be alive as well as our spirit and it will need a world to live in—a new Heaven and a new earth.

I am not going to enter into any speculations about the matter, but it seems clear enough to me, in this text, that Christ is preparing a place somewhere not for *disembodied* spirits, for they are already before the Throne of God perfectly blessed—but for the entire manhood of His people, when spirit, soul and body shall be again united and the complete man shall receive the adoption, to wit, the redemption of the body, and the whole manhood of every Believer shall be perfected in the Glory of Christ. I do not know what better world, in many respects, there could be than this, so far as material nature is concerned. It is so full of the beauty and loveliness that God pours upon it on every side! It is a wonderful world—

***“Where every prospect pleases,***

***And only man is vile”—***  
but I could not reconcile myself to the idea that this world would be Heaven. No. My thoughts rise far above the loftiest hills, the most flowery meadows, the rolling ocean and the flowing rivers. Earth has not space enough to be our Heaven! She has too narrow a boundary and she is too coarse a thing, bright gem though she is, for perfected manhood to possess throughout eternity! It will do well enough for the thousand years of Glory—if it shall *literally* be that—we shall reign with Christ upon it during the millennial age. But it is a drossy thing and if it ever is to be the scene of the new heavens and the new earth, it must first pass through the fire. The very smell of sin is upon it—and God will not use this globe as a vessel unto honor until He has purified it with fire as once He did with water. And then, perhaps, it may serve for this higher purpose, but I scarcely think it will. Even now Jesus is preparing and has gone away on purpose to prepare a place for us—and He will come again, “with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God”—and He will catch His people away and will bear them to the eternal home where their happiness shall know no end. That is what I suppose to be the meaning of our Lord’s words.

“But,” perhaps you say to me, “what do you mean by what you have been saying?” I reply—I do not know to the fullest. I can but dimly guess at the meaning of what my Lord has said—that He is doing something so glorious for ALL His people that, perhaps, if I did know it, I might not be allowed to tell you, for there are some things which, when a man knows them, it is not lawful for him to utter. Did not Paul see a great deal when he was caught up into paradise? Yet he has told us very little about it, for there was a finger laid upon his lips that bade him know it for himself, but not to tell it to others. “Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for them that love Him.” And though He has “revealed them unto us by His Spirit,” even the Spirit who searches the deep things of God, yet is it not possible for us to tell all that has been revealed to us!

It strikes me that there is some little light to be obtained concerning this preparation of Heaven by Christ if I leave the direct and literal meaning of the words and think of the future state as a whole rather than in detail. Do you not think, dear Friends, that *our Lord Jesus Christ prepares Heaven for His people by going there?*I mean this. Supposing you were to be lifted up to a state which was looked upon as heavenly, but that Jesus was not there—it would be no Heaven to you. But wherever I may go, when I do go, if Jesus is already there, I do not care where it is! Wherever He is shall be my Heaven, for, as I said in the reading, [the exposition at the e and of the sermon] that is our very first and last thought about Heaven—to be with Christ where He is! To be with Christ is far better than to be anywhere else! Well, then, the first thing that Christ had to do, in order to prepare Heaven for His people, was to go to Heaven, for that made it Heaven! Then were Heaven’s lamps kindled. Then did Heaven’s heralds ring out their supernal melodies. Then did the whole of the New Jerusalem seem to be ablaze with a glory brighter than the sun, for, “the Lamb is the light thereof.” When He comes there, then all is bliss! Do you not see, Beloved, that He has prepared Heaven by going there? His being there will make it Heaven for you, so you need not begin asking what else there will be in Heaven! There will be all manner of rare delights to spiritual men, but the chief of them all will be that Jesus is there! As Rowland Hill used to sing, so may you and I comfort ourselves with this thought—

***“And this I do find—we two are so joined— He’ll not be in Glory and leave me behind.”***

*“And this I do find—we two are so joined—   
He’ll not be in Glory and leave me behind.”*If I may but be where He is, that shall be Heaven to me!   
But another reflection is this—that *our Lord Jesses Christ has prepared Heaven for His people by the merit of His Atonement.* Thus has He opened the Kingdom of Heaven to all Believers. He tore the veil and made a way into the Holiest of All for all who trust Him. But, in addition to that, He perfumed Heaven with the fragrance of His Sacrifice. If Heaven is the place of the Godhead, as we know it is, we could not have stood there without the Mediator! If Heaven is the Throne of the great King, we could not have stood there without the cloud of perfumed incense from Christ’s meritorious death and righteousness ever rising up before that Throne of God! But now, Heaven is a safe place for the saints to enter. Now may they tread that sea of glass like as of fire and know that it is glass, and that no fire from it will consume them. Now will they be able to come up near to God and not be afraid. I quote again a passage that often leaps to my lips—a text of Scripture which is often shamefully misused—“Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? Who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?” Why, none of us could unless Christ had changed us by His Grace—but now we may do so!   
What is the Scriptural answer to those questions, “Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? Who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?” What do the Scriptures say? Listen! “He that walks righteously and speaks uprightly. He that despises the gain of oppressions, that shakes his hands from holding bribes, that stops his ears from hearing of blood and shuts his eyes from seeing evils. He shall dwell on high: his place of defense shall be the munitions of rocks: bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure. Your eyes shall see the King in His beauty: they shall behold the land that is very far off.”   
This is the man who shall dwell there! With God, who is a consuming fire, we, like the holy children in the burning fiery furnace, shall find it safe to dwell and find it bliss to dwell because Christ is there! But there would have been no Heaven in the Presence of God for any man that lives, after sin had once come into the world, if Jesus had not gone there as the High Priest of old went up to the blazing throne whereon the Shekinah shone and sprinkled it with blood out of the basin, and then waved the censer to and fro till the thick smoke hid the cherubim and, for a while resting, spoke with God. Even so has Christ gone within the veil and sprinkled His own atoning blood upon His Father’s Throne and then waved aloft the censer full of the incense of His mercy! And now it is safe for us to have access with boldness to the Throne of Glory as well as to the Throne of Grace. Thus has He prepared a place for us!   
Another meaning, I think, is allowable, namely, that *Christ has prepared Heaven for usby appearing there in His Glory.* I said that His very Presence made Heaven, but now I add that His Glory there makes Heaven yet more glorious. How does Christ describe the heavenly state? “Father, I will that they, also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am; that they may behold My Glory.” It will be their bliss, then, to see His Glory, but there would have been no Glory for them to see if He had not gone there in His Glory! But now with His Presence there, in all His majesty and splendor, Heaven is still more glorious! Oh, how I long to see Him in His Glory! Long to see Him, did I say? I would part with all the joys of time and sense to gaze upon Him seated upon His Throne. Oh, what will it be to see Him? You have seen how painters have failed when they have tried to depict Him. The bravest artist may well tremble and the brightest colors fade when anyone tries to paint Him even in His humiliation! There is no other face so marred as His face was, but what will it be in Heaven when it is marred no more? No tear in His eyes! No spit running down His cheeks! No giving of His face to them that pluck out the hair, but, oh, the Glory of Manhood perfected and allied with Deity! “The King in His beauty!” Why, I think to see Him but for a minute, if we never saw Him again, might furnish us with an eternity of bliss! But we shall gaze upon Him, in His glory, day without night, never fainting, or flagging, or tiring, but delighting forever to behold Him smile, forevermore to call Him ours and to see Him still before us! He has gone to Heaven, then, in His Glory and, surely, that is preparing a place for us!  
Besides that, we cannot tell what arrangements had to be made in order to prepare a place of eternal blessedness for the Lord’s redeemed. Certain it is that in the economy of the universe, everything has its place. Men have discovered, as you know, what they call evolution. They think that one thing grows out of another because long before they were born everybody with half an eye could see that one thing fitted into another and, as one step rises above another step by a beautiful gradation, so do the created things of God. Not that they grow out of each other any more than the stones of a staircase grow out of one another—they rise above each other, but they were so made from the first by the skill and wisdom of God. That a dewdrop should be precisely of the size and shape that it is, is necessary to the perfection of the universe. That there should be insects born in such a month to fertilize the flowers that bloom in that month, and others to suck the sweetness of those flowers is all necessary. God has arranged everything, from the little to the great, with perfect skill. There is a place for everything with God and everything in its place.   
It was a question where to put man. He once had a place. When God created this world, He made a pyramid and set man upon the very top of it, giving him dominion over all the works of His hands. But then man fell. Now it is more difficult to restore than it was, at first, to place. Often and often you must have found that when a thing has gone awry, it has cost you more trouble to set it right than if it had to be made *de novo.* Where, then, was the place for man to be? O matchless Love, O sacred Wisdom that provided that man’s place should be where Christ’s place was and is! Lo, He who came down from Heaven and who was also in Heaven, has gone back to Heaven! He carried manhood with Him and, in so doing, one with Him, His Church, has found her place. His union to the Godhead has found a place for His Church at the right hand of God, even the Father, where Christ sits—and all is as it should be!   
As I have already told you, I do not know much about this matter, but I should not wonder if there has been going on, ever since Christ went up to Heaven, a putting things straight—getting this race of creatures into its proper place and that other race, and the other race, so that, when we get to Heaven, nobody will say, “You have got my place.” Not even Gabriel will say to me, “Why, what business have you here? You have got my place.” No, no—you shall have a place of your own, Beloved—and all the members of Christ’s Church shall find a place prepared which no one else shall be able to claim, for nobody shall be dispossessed or put out of his rightful position.   
It struck me, as I turned this subject over in my mind, that *our Lord Jesus Christ knew thatthere was a place tobe prepared for each one ofHis people.* It may be—I cannot tell—that in some part of the society of Heaven, one spirit will be happier than it might have been in another part. You know that even though you love all the Brethren, you cannot help feeling most at home with some of them. Our blessed Lord and Master had no sinful favoritism, yet He did love 12 men better than all the rest of His disciples. And out of the 12 He loved three whom He introduced into mysteries from which He excluded the other nine. And even out of the three, there was one, you know, who was “that disciple whom Jesus loved.” Now, everybody here has his favorites. I do not know if we shall carry anything of that spirit to Heaven. If we do, Christ has so prepared a place for us that you shall be nearest, in your position and occupation, to those who would contribute most to your happiness. You shall be where you can most honor God and most enjoy God. You would be glad enough to be anywhere—would you not?—with the very least of the saints in Heaven if there ‘be any degrees of glory’ among their thrones, or at His feet, as long as you might see Christ’s face. But, depend upon it, if there is any association—any more intimate connection—between some saints than among others, Jesus Christ will so beautifully arrange it that we shall all be in the happiest places.   
If you were to give a dinner party and you had a number of friends there, you would like to pick the seats for them. You would say, “Now, there is So-and-So. I know that he would like to sit next to So-and-So.” And you would try to arrange it so. Well, in that grand wedding feast above, our Savior has so prepared a place for us that He will find us each the right position. I was talking, this afternoon, with one whom I very dearly love and she said to me, “I hope my place in Heaven will not be far from yours.” And I replied, “Well, I trust so, too, but we are not married or given in marriage there.” Such ties and such relationships must end, as far as they are after the flesh, but we know that there have been bonds of spirit that may still continue. I sometimes think that if I could have any choice as to those I should live near in Heaven, I should like to live in the region of such strange folk as Rowland Hill and John Berridge. I think I should get on best with them, for we could talk together of the way wherein God led us and of how He brought souls to Christ by us. Though some said that we were a deal too merry when we were down below and that the people laughed when they listened to us, and some spoke as if that were a great sin, we will make them laugh up yonder, I guarantee you, as we tell again the wonders of redeeming love and of the Grace of God—their mouths shall be filled with laughter and their tongues with singing! And then—   
*“Loudest of the crowd I’ll sing,   
While Heaven’s resounding mansionsring   
With shouts of Sovereign Grace”*and I expect each of you who love the Lord will do the same!   
I have no time for the other part of the sermon. You must come again to hear about THE PREPARED PEOPLE. But let me just say this to you—The place is prepared, are you prepared for it? Do you believe on the Lord Jesus Christ? If so, your preparation has begun. Do you love the Lord and love His people? If so, your preparation is going on. Do you hate sin and do you pant after holiness? If so, your preparation is progressing. Are you nothing at all and is Jesus Christ your All-in-All? Then you are almost ready and may the Lord keep you in that condition and, before long, swing up the gates of pearl and let you into the prepared place!   
May the Lord bring us all safely there, for Jesus’ sake! Amen.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:**Joh 14:1-12***;*** Col 1:1-19***.***

Joh 14:1**.***Let not your heart be troubled.* This is one of those verses that you may read as slowly as you like and spell out every letter and find honey in it all.

**1.***You believe in God, believe also in Me.*As Jews, they had already known and seen the power of God. They were now to rise to the faith of Christians and to believe in Jesus their Savior. Even though they should see Him die, they were not to doubt Him. “You believe in God, believe also in Me.”

**2.***In My Father’s house are many mansions.* So there is room for many. There are homes for many. There is wealth for many. “In My Father’s house are many mansions.”

**2.***It were not so, I would have told you.* The Savior seems to say to His disciples, “I keep nothing back from you. Had there been some sorrowful fact to be revealed to you, I would at length have told you of it.”

**2.***I go to prepare a place for you.* “There must be a Heaven, for I am going there, Myself, and I am going on purpose to make it ready for you.”  
**3.***And If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.*That is the first and simplest idea of Heaven—to be with Christ—and I think it is the last and most sublime idea of Heaven, too! To be with Christ—“that where I am, there you may be also.”  
**4, 5.***And where I go you know, and the way you know. Thomas said unto Him, Lord, we know not where You go; and how can we know the way?* The Apostles blundered and lost themselves in the words of their Master, instead of entering into the spirit of what He said. So we must not wonder if we often do the same. Unless we wait upon God to be instructed by His Spirit, even the most plain passages of Scripture may be obscure to us.  
**6, 7.***Jesus said unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father, but by Me. If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also. And from henceforth you know Him, and have seen Him.* Jesus had been talking about the many mansions and now He talks about the Father. Is the Father, then, the same as Heaven? Yes, indeed— to come to the Father is to come to perfect blessedness, to know the fullness of His eternal love and to enjoy it in face-to-face communion—this is Heaven! What higher bliss can we desire?  
**8, 9.***Philip said unto Him, Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us. Jesus said unto him, Have I been so long with you, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He that has seen Me has seen the Father, so how can you say, Show us the Father?*Do we, then, see the Father when we see Christ? And is the Father’s Presence Heaven? Then Christ is Heaven and to be with Him is Heaven! It is even so. He is the way to Heaven, the truth of Heaven, the life of Heaven. He is Heaven’s everything— ***“His track I see, and I’ll pursue  
The narrow way, till Him I view”—***  
and when I view Him, shall I not have seen the Father and have entered into the Father’s rest?  
**10-12.***Do you not believe I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I speak unto you, I speak not of Myself: but the Father that dwells in Me. He does the works. Believe Me that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me: or else believe Me for the very works’ sake. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believes on Me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do because I go unto My Father.* In consequence of Christ’s going to the Father and the Spirit of God descending upon Christ’s disciples, they are enabled to outdo their Master in some forms of holy service! For instance, some of them brought more to the faith than Christ Himself had done during His lifetime—and so realized the fulfillment of this promise—“The works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do because I go unto My Father.”  
Col 1:1-14**.***Paul an Apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, to the saints and faithful brethren in Christ who are at Colosse: Grace be unto you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which you have to all the saints, for the hope which is laid up for you in Heaven, whereof you heard before in the word of the truth of the Gospel; which is come unto you, as it is in all the world; and brings forth fruit, as it does also in you, since the day you heard of it, and knew the Grace of God in truth: as you also learned of Epaphras our dear fellow servant, who is for you a faithful minister of Christ; who also declared unto us your love in the Spirit. For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that you might be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that you might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness; giving thanks unto the Father, who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light: who has delivered us from the power of darkness, and has translated us into the Kingdom of His dear Son: in whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins.*As we read these words, we cannot help noticing how positively the Apostle speaks. There are no, “hope so,” “trust so,” “ifs” and, “buts.” It is all, “it is so” and, “it is so.” And, beloved Brothers and Sisters, concerning eternal matters, nothing but certainties will suffice for us. Allow uncertainties about your estates if you will, but we must have positive assurance concerning eternal things! And nothing short of this ought to content our spirits. Can we all say, as we listen to these words, “God has delivered us from the power of darkness; He has translated us into the Kingdom of His dear Son, in whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins”?  
**15.***Who is the image of the invisible God.* Admire this delightful passage in which the Apostle seems to burn and glow while he describes his Lord and Master, “who is the image of the invisible God.”  
**15-19.***The first-born of every creature: for by Him were all things created, that are in Heaven, and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether they are thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him and for Him: and He is before all things, and by Him all things consist. And He is the Head of the body, the Church: who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead; that in all things He might have the preeminence. For it pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell.* Blessed be His glorious name! Amen.

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SPECIAL THANKSGIVING TO THE FATHER  
NO. 319

**DELIVERED ON SABBATH EVENING, JANUARY 15, 1860, *BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.**

***“Giving thanks unto the Father, which has made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: who has delivered us from the power of darkness,***

***and has translated us into the kingdom  
of His dear Son.”***Col 1:12-13***.***

THIS passage is a mine of riches. I can anticipate the difficulty in preaching and the regret in concluding we shall experience this evening because we are not able to dig out all the gold which lies in this precious vein. We lack the power to grasp and the time to expatiate upon that volume of truths which is here condensed into a few short sentences.

We are exhorted to “give thanks unto the Father.” This counsel is at once needful and salutary. I think, my Brethren, we scarcely need to be told to give thanks unto the Son. The remembrance of that bleeding body hanging upon the Cross is ever present to our faith. The nails and the spear, His griefs, the anguish of His soul and His sweat of agony make much tender touching appeals to our gratitude—these will prevent us always from ceasing our songs and sometimes fire our hearts with rekindling rapture in praise of the Man, Christ Jesus. Yes, we will bless You, dearest Lord. Our souls are all on fire. As we survey the wondrous Cross, we cannot but shout—

***“O for this love let rocks and hills   
Their lasting silence break,   
And all harmonious human tongues   
The Savior’s praises speak.”***

It is in a degree very much the same with the Holy Spirit. I think we are compelled to feel every day our dependence upon His constant influence. He abides with us as a present and personal Comforter and Counselor. We, therefore, do praise the Spirit of Grace, who has made our heart His temple and who works in us all that is gracious, virtuous and well-pleasing in the sight of God. If there is any one Person in the Trinity whom we are more apt to forget than another in our praises, it is God the Father.

In fact there are some who even get a wrong idea of Him, a slanderous idea of that God whose name is LOVE. They imagine that love dwelt in Christ, rather than in the Father and that our salvation is rather due to the Son and the Holy Spirit, than to our Father God. Let us not be of the number of the ignorant, but let us receive this Truth of God. We are as much indebted to the Father as to any other Person of the Sacred Three. He as much and as truly loves us as any of the adorable Three Persons. He is as truly worthy of our highest praise as either the Son or the Holy Spirit.

A remarkable fact, which we should always bear in mind, is this—in the Holy Scriptures most of the operations which are set down as being the works of the Spirit, are in other Scriptures ascribed to God the Father. Do we say it is God the Spirit that quickens the sinner who is dead in sin? It is true. But you will find in another passage it is said, “The Father quickens whom He will.” Do we say that the Spirit is the sanctifier and that the sanctification of the soul is worked by the Holy Spirit? You will find a passage in the opening of the Epistle of St. Jude, in which it is said, “Sanctified by God the Father.”

Now, how are we to account for this? I think it may be explained thus. God the Spirit comes from God the Father, and therefore whatever acts are performed by the Spirit are truly done by the Father, because He sends forth the Spirit. And again, the Spirit is often the instrument—though I say this not in any way to derogate from His glory—He is often the instrument with which the Father works. It is the Father who says to the dry bones, live. It is the Spirit who, going forth with the Divine Word, makes them live. The quickening is due as much to the Word as to the influence that went with the Word. And as the Word came with all the bounty of Free Grace and goodwill from the Father, the quickening is due to Him.

It is true that the seal on our hearts is the Holy Spirit. He is the seal, but it is the Eternal Father’s hand that stamps the seal. The Father communicates the Spirit to seal our adoption. The works of the Spirit are, many of them, I repeat it again, attributed to the Father, because He works in, through, and by the Spirit. The works of the Son of God, I ought to observe, are every one of them in intimate connection with the Father. If the Son comes into the world, it is because the Father sends Him. If the Son calls His people, it is because His Father gave this people into His hands. If the Son redeems the chosen race, is not the Son Himself, the Father’s gift? And does not God send His Son into the world that we may live through Him? So that the Father, the great Ancient of Days, is ever to be extolled. And we must never omit the full homage of our hearts to Him when we sing that sacred doxology—

***“Praise Father, Son and Holy Spirit.”***

In order to excite your gratitude to God the Father tonight, I propose to dilate a little upon this passage, as God the Holy Spirit shall enable me. If you will look at the text, you will see two blessings in it. The first has regard to the future. It is a meetness for the inheritance of the saints in light. The second blessing, which must go with the first, for indeed it is the cause of the first, the effective cause, has relation to the past. Here we read of our deliverance from the power of darkness. Let us meditate a little upon each of these blessings and then, in the third place, I will endeavor to show the relation which exists between the two.

**I.** The first blessing introduced to our notice is this—“God the Father has made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.” It is a PRESENT BLESSING. Not a mercy laid up for us in the Covenant, which we have not yet received—it is a blessing which every true Believer already has in his hand. Those mercies in the Covenant of which we have the earnest now while we wait for the full possession, are just as rich and just as certain as those which have been already with abundant loving kindness bestowed on us—but still they are not so precious in our enjoyment. The mercy we have in store and in hand is, after all, the main source of our present comfort.

And oh, what a blessing this! “Made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light.” The true Believer is fit for Heaven. He is meet to be a partaker of the inheritance—and that now, at this very moment. What does this mean? Does it mean that the Believer is perfect? That he is free from sin? No, my Brethren, where shall you ever find such perfection in this world? If no man can be a Believer but the perfect man, then what has the perfect man to believe? Could he not walk by sight? When he is perfect, he may cease to be a Believer. No, Brethren, it is not such perfection that is meant although perfection is *implied* and assuredly will be given as the result.

Far less does this mean that we have a right to eternal life from any doings of our own. We have a fitness for eternal life, a meetness for it, but we have no desert of it. We deserve nothing of God even now, in ourselves, but His eternal wrath and His infinite displeasure. What, then, does it mean? Why, it means just this—we are so far meet that we are accepted in the Beloved, adopted into the family and fitted by Divine approbation to dwell with the saints in light.

There is a woman chosen to be a bride. She is fitted to be married, fitted to enter into the honorable state and condition of matrimony. But at present she has not on the bridal garment, she is not like the bride adorned for her husband. You do not see her yet robed in her elegant attire, with her ornaments upon her—but you know she is fitted to be a bride, she is received and welcomed as such in the family of her destination.

So Christ has chosen His Church to be married to Him. She has not yet put on her bridal garment, beautiful array in which she shall stand before the Father’s Throne—but notwithstanding, there is such a fitness in her to be the bride of Christ. When she shall have bathed herself for a little while and lain for a little while in the bed of spices—there is such a fitness in her character, such a grace given adaptation in her to become the royal bride of her glorious Lord and to become a partaker of the enjoyments of bliss—that it may be said of the Church as a whole and of every member of it, that they are “meet for the inheritance of the saints in light.”

The Greek word, moreover, bears some such meaning as this though I cannot give the exact idiom. It is always difficult when a word is not used often. This word is only used twice that I am aware of, in the New Testament. The word may be employed for “suitable,” or, I think, “sufficient.” “He has made us meet”—sufficient—“to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.” But I cannot give my idea without borrowing another figure. When a child is born, it is at once endowed with all the faculties of humanity. If those powers are wanting at first, they will not come afterwards. It has eyes, it has hands, it has feet and all its physical organs. These, of course, are as it were in embryo. The senses, though perfect at first, must be gradually developed and the understanding gradually matured. It can see but little, it cannot discern distances. It can hear, but it cannot hear distinctly enough at first to know from what direction the sound comes.

But you never find a new leg, a new arm, a new eye, or a new ear growing on that child. Each of these powers will expand and enlarge, but still there is the whole man there at first and the child is sufficient for a man. Let but God in His infinite providence cause it to feed and give it strength and increase, it has sufficient for manhood. It does not want either arm or leg, nose or ear. You cannot make it grow a new member. Nor does it require a near member, either. All are there.

In like manner, the moment a man is regenerated, there is every faculty in his new creation that there shall be, even when he gets to Heaven. It only needs to be developed and brought out—he will not have a new power. He will not have a new grace. He will have those which he had before, developed and brought out. Just as we are told by the careful observer, that in the acorn there is in embryo every root and every bough and every leaf of the future tree which only requires to be developed and brought out in their fullness.

So, in the true Believer, there is a sufficiency or meetness for the inheritance of the saints in light. All that he requires is. Not that a new thing should be implanted, but that that which God has put there in the moment of regeneration shall be cherished and nurtured—and made to grow and increase, till it comes unto perfection and he enters into “the inheritance of the saints in light.” This is, as near as I can give it to you, the exact meaning and literal interpretation of the text as I understand it.

But you may say to me, “In what sense is this meetness or fitness for eternal life the work of God the Father? Are we already made meet for Heaven? How is this the Father’s work?” Look at the text a moment and I will answer you in three ways.

What is Heaven? We read it is an inheritance. Who are fit for an inheritance? Sons. Who makes us sons? “Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God.” A son is fitted for an inheritance. The moment the son is born he is fitted to be an heir. All that is wanted is that he shall grow up and be capable of possession. But he is fit for an inheritance at first. If he were not a son he could not inherit as an heir.

Now as soon as ever we become sons we are meet to inherit. There is in us an adaptation, a power and possibility for us to have an inheritance. This is the prerogative of the Father, to adopt us into his family and to “beget us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.” And do you not see that as adoption is really the meetness for inheritance, it is the Father who has made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light?”

Again—Heaven is an inheritance. But whose inheritance is it? It is an inheritance of the saints. It is not an inheritance of sinners, but of saints—that is, of the holy ones—of those who have been made saints by being sanctified. Turn then, to the Epistle of Jude and you will see at once who it is that is the Sanctified. You will observe the moment you fix your eye upon the passage that it is God the Father. In the first verse you read, “Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ and brother of James, to them that are sanctified by God the Father.” It is an inheritance for saints—and who are saints? The moment a man believes in Christ, he may know himself to have bean truly set apart in the Covenant decree. And he finds consecration, if I may so speak, verified in his own experience, for he has now become “a new creature in Christ Jesus,” separated from the rest of the world. And then it is manifest and made known that God has taken him to be His son forever.

The meetness which I must have, in order to enjoy the inheritance of the saints in light, is my becoming a son. God has made me and all Believers sons, therefore we are meet for the inheritance. So then that meetness has come from the Father. How meet, therefore, does the Father claim our gratitude, our adoration and our love!

You will, however, observe it is not merely said that Heaven is the inheritance of the saints, but that it is “the inheritance of the saints in light.” So the saints dwell in light—the light of knowledge, the light of purity, the light of joy, the light of love—pure ineffable love, the light of everything that is glorious and ennobling. There they dwell and if I am to appear meet for that inheritance, what evidence must I have? I must have light shining into my soul. But where can I get it? Do I not read that “every good   
gift and every perfect gift is from above and comes down”—yes verily, but from whom? From the Spirit? No—“from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.”

The preparation to enter into the inheritance in light is light. And light comes from the Father of lights. Therefore, my meetness, if I have light in myself, is the work of the Father and I must give Him praise. Do you see then, that as there are three words used here—“the inheritance of the saints in light,” so we have a threefold meetness? We are adopted and made sons. God has sanctified us and set us apart. And then, again, He has put light into our hearts. All this, I say, is the work of the Father and in this sense, we are “meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.”

A few general observations here. Brethren, I am persuaded that if an angel from Heaven were to come tonight and single out any one Believer from the crowd here assembled, there is not one Believer that is unfit to be taken to Heaven. You may not be ready to be taken to Heaven now. That is to say, if I foresaw that you were going to live, I would tell you, you were unfit to die, in a certain sense. But were you to die now in your pew, if you believe in Christ, you are fit for Heaven. You have a meetness even now which would take you there at once, without being committed to purgatory for a season. You are even now fit to be “partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.”

You have but to gasp out your last breath and you shall be in Heaven and there shall not be one spirit in Heaven more fit for Heaven than you, nor one soul more adapted for the place than you are. You shall be just as fitted for its element as those who are nearest to the eternal Throne.

Ah, this makes the heirs of glory think much of God the Father. When we reflect, my Brethren, upon our state by nature and how fit we are to be fire-brands in the flames of Hell—yet to think that we are this night, at this very moment, if Jehovah willed it, fit to sweep the golden harps with joyful fingers! That this head is fit this very night to wear the everlasting crown, that these loins are fit to be girded with that fair white robe throughout eternity, I say, this makes us think gratefully of God the Father. This makes us clap our hands with joy and say, “thanks be unto God the Father, who has made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.”

Do you not remember the penitent thief? It was but a few minutes before that he had been cursing Christ. I doubt not that he had joined with the other, for it is said, “They that were crucified with him reviled him.” Not one, but both. They did it. And then a gleam of supernatural glory lit up the face of Christ and the thief saw and believed. And Jesus said unto him, “Verily I say unto you, this day,” though the sun is setting, “this day shall you be with me in Paradise.” No long preparation required, no sweltering in purifying fires. And so shall it be with us.

We may have been in Christ Jesus to our own knowledge but three weeks, or we may have been in him for ten years, or threescore years and ten—the date of our conversion makes no difference in our meetness for Heaven, in a certain sense. True, indeed, the older we grow the more grace we have tasted, the riper we are becoming and the fitter to be housed in Heaven. But that is in another sense of the word—the Spirit’s meetness which He gives. But with regard to that meetness which the Father gives, I repeat, the blade of corn, the blade of gracious wheat that has just appeared above the surface of conviction, is as fit to be carried up to Heaven as the full-grown corn in the ear.

The sanctification wherewith we are sanctified by God the Father is not progressive—it is complete at once—we are *now* adapted for Heaven, *now* fitted for it and we shall enter into the joy of our Lord. Into this subject I might have entered more fully. But I have not time. I am sure I have left some knots untied and you must untie them, if you can, yourselves. And let me recommend you to untie them on your knees—the mysteries of the kingdom of God are studied much the best when you are in prayer.

**II.** The second mercy is A MERCY THAT LOOKS BACK. We sometimes prefer the mercies that look forward, because they unfold such a bright prospect—

***“Sweet fields beyond the swelling flood.”***But here is a mercy that looks backward—turns its back, as it were, on the Heaven of our anticipation and looks back on the gloomy past and the dangers from which we have escaped.

Let us read the account of it—“Who has delivered us from the power of darkness and has translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son.” This verse is an explanation of the preceding, as we shall have to show in a few minutes. But just now let us survey this mercy by itself. Ah, my Brothers and Sisters, what a description have we here of what matter of men we used to be. We were under “the power of darkness.” Since I have been musing on this text, I have turned these words over and over in my mind—“the power of darkness”! It seems to me one of the most awful expressions that man ever attempted to expound. I think I could deliver a discourse from it, if God the Spirit helped me, which might make every bone in your body shake. “The power of darkness”!

We all know that there is a moral darkness which exercises its awful spell over the mind of the sinner. Where God is unacknowledged the mind is void of judgment. Where God is not worshipped the heart of man becomes a ruin. The chambers of that dilapidated heart are haunted by ghostly fears and degraded superstitions. The dark places of that reprobate mind are tenanted by vile lusts and noxious passions—like vermin and reptiles—from which in open daylight we turn with disgust. And even natural darkness is tremendous. In the solitary confinement which is practiced in some of our penitentiaries the very worst results would be produced if the treatment were prolonged.

If one of you were to be taken tonight and led into some dark cavern and left there, I can imagine that for a moment, not knowing your fate, you might feel a child-like kind of interest about it—there might be, perhaps, a laugh as you found yourselves in the dark. There might for the moment, from the novelty of the position, be some kind of curiosity excited. There might, perhaps, be a flush of silly joy. In a little time you might endeavor to compose yourself to sleep— possibly you might sleep. But if you should awake and still find yourself down deep in the bowels of earth, where never a ray of sun or candle light could reach you—do you know the next feeling that would come over you?

It would be a kind of idiotic thoughtlessness. You would find it impossible to control your desperate imagination. You heart would say, “O God I am alone, alone, alone, in this dark place.” How would you cast your eyeballs all around and never catching a gleam of light, your mind would begin to fail. Your next stage would be one of increasing terror. You would fancy that you saw something and then you would cry, “Ah, I would I could see something, were it foe or friend!”

You would feel the dark sides of your dungeon. You would begin to “scribble on the walls,” like David before king Achish. Agitation would cease hold upon you and if you were kept there much longer, delirium and death would be the consequence. We have heard of many who have been taken from the penitentiary to the lunatic asylum. And the lunacy is produced partly by the solitary confinement and partly by the darkness in which they are placed.

In a report lately written by the Chaplain of Newgate, there are some striking reflections upon the influence of darkness in a way of discipline. Its first effect is to shut the culprit up to his own reflections and make him realize his true position in the iron grasp of the outraged law. Methinks the man that has defied his keepers and come in there cursing and swearing, when he has found himself alone in darkness, where he cannot even hear the rattling of carriages along the streets and can see no light whatever, is presently cowed. He gives in, he grows tame. “The power of darkness” literally is something awful.

If I had time, I would enlarge upon this subject. We cannot properly describe what “the power of darkness” is, even in this world. The sinner is plunged into the darkness of his sins and he sees nothing, he knows nothing. Let him remain there a little longer and that joy of curiosity, that hectic joy which he now has in the path of sin, will die away and there will come over him a spirit of slumber. Sin will make him drowsy, so that he will not hear the voice of the ministry crying to him to escape for his life. Let him continue in it and it will by-and-by make him spiritually an idiot. He will become so in sin that common reason will be lost on him.

All the arguments that a sensible man will receive, will be only wasted on him. Let him go on and he will proceed from bad to worse, till he acquires the raving mania of a desperado in sin. And let death step in and the darkness will have produced its full effect—he will come into the delirious madness of Hell. Ah, it needs but the power of sin to make a man more truly hideous than human thought can realize, or language paint. Oh “the power of darkness”!

Now, my Brethren, all of us were under this power once. It is but a few months—a few weeks with some of you— since you were under the power of darkness and of sin. Some of you had only got as far as the curiosity of it—others had got as far as the sleepiness of it. A good many of you had got as far as the apathy of it. And I do not know but some of you had got almost to the terror of it. You had so cursed and swore—so yelled out your blasphemies—that you seemed to be ripening for Hell. But, praised and blessed be the name of the Father, He has “translated you from the power of darkness, into the kingdom of His dear Son.”

Having thus explained this term, “the power of darkness,” to show you what you were, let us take the next word, “and has translated us.” What an angular word this—“translated”—is. I dare say you think it means the process by which a word is interpreted, when the sense is retained, while the expression is rendered in another language. That is one meaning of the word “translation,” but it is not the meaning here. The word is used by Josephus in this sense—the taking away of a people who have been dwelling in a certain country and planting them in another place. This is called a translation.

We sometimes hear of a bishop being translated or removed from one see to another. Now, if you want to have the idea explained, give me your attention while I bring out an amazing instance of a great translation. The children of Israel were in Egypt under taskmasters that oppressed them very sorely and brought them into iron bondage. What did God do for these people? There were two millions of them. He did not temper the tyranny of the tyrant. He did not influence his mind, to give them a little more liberty. But He *translated* His people. He took the whole two millions bodily, with a high hand and outstretched arm and led them through the wilderness and translated them into the kingdom of Canaan. And there they were settled.

What an achievement was that, when, with their flocks and their herds and their little ones, the whole host of Israel went out of Egypt, crossed the Jordan and came into Canaan! My dear Brethren, the whole of it was not equal to the achievement of God’s powerful grace, when He brings *one poor sinner* out of the region of sin into the kingdom of holiness and peace. It was easier for God to bring Israel out of Egypt, to split the Red Sea, to make a highway through the pathless wilderness, to drop manna from Heaven, to send the whirlwind to drive out the kings—it was easier for Omnipotence to do all this—than to translate a man from the power of darkness into the kingdom of His dear Son. This is the grandest achievement of Omnipotence.

The sustenance of the whole universe, I do believe, is even less than this—the changing of a bad heart, the subduing of an iron will. But thanks be unto the Father, He has done all that for you and for me. He has brought us out of darkness, He has translated us, taken up the old tree that has struck its roots ever so deep—taken it up, blessed be God, roots and all, and planted it in a goodly soil. He had to cut the top off, it is true—the high branches of our pride. But the tree has grown better in the near soil than it ever did before. Who ever heard of moving so huge a plant as a man who has grown fifty years old in sin? Oh, what wonders has our Father done for us!

He has taken the wild leopard of the wood, tamed it into a lamb and purged away its spots. He has regenerated the poor Ethiopian—oh, how black we were by nature—our blackness was more than skin deep. It went to the center of our hearts. But, blessed be His name, He has washed us white and is still carrying on the Divine operation and He will yet completely deliver us from every taint of sin and will finally bring us into the kingdom of His dear Son. Here, then, in the second mercy, we discern from what we were delivered and how we were delivered—God the Father has “translated” us.

But where are we now? Into what place is the Believer brought, when he is brought out of the power of darkness? He is brought into the kingdom of God’s dear Son. Into what other kingdom would the Christian desire to be brought? Brethren, a republic may sound very well in theory, but in spiritual matters, the last thing we want is a republic. We want a *kingdom*. I love to have Christ an absolute monarch in the heart. I do not want to have a doubt about it. I want to give up all my liberty to Him, for I feel that I never shall be free till my self-control is all gone. That I shall never have my will truly free till it is bound in the golden fetters of His sweet love.

We are brought into a kingdom—He is Lord and Sovereign and He has made us “kings and priests unto our God,” and we shall reign with Him. The proof that we are in this kingdom must consist in our obedience to our King. Here, perhaps, we may raise many causes and questions, but surely we can say after all, though we have offended our King many times, yet our heart is loyal to Him. “Oh, You precious Jesus! We would obey You and yield submission to every one of Your laws. Our sins are not willful and beloved sins and though we fall, we can truly say that we would be holy as You are holy. Our heart is true towards Your statutes. Lord, help us to run in the way of Your commandments.”

So, you see, this mercy which God the Father has given to us, this second of these present mercies, is, that he has “translated us out of the power of darkness into the kingdom of His dear Son.” This is the Father’s work. Shall we not love God the Father from this day forth? Will we not give Him thanks and sing our hymns to Him and exalt and triumph in His great name?

III. Upon the third point, I shall be as brief as possible. It is to SHOW THE CONNECTION BETWEEN THE TWO VERSES.   
When I get a passage of Scripture to meditate upon, I like, if I can, to see its drift, then I like to examine its various parts and see if I can understand each separate clause. And then I want to go back again and see what one clause has to do with another. I looked and looked again at this text and wondered what connection there could be between the two verses. “Giving thanks unto God the Father, who has made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.” Well, that is right enough. We can see how this is the work of God the Father, to make us meet to go to Heaven.   
But has the next verse, the 13th, anything to do with our meetness?—“Who has delivered us from the power of darkness and has translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son.” Well, I looked it over and I said I will read it in this way. I see the 12th verse tells me that the inheritance of Heaven is the inheritance of light. Is Heaven light? Then I can see my meetness, for it as described in the 13th verse—He has delivered me from the power of darkness. Is not that the same thing? If I am delivered from the power of darkness, is not that being made meet to dwell in light? If I am now brought out of darkness into light and am walking in the light, is not that the very meetness which is spoken of in the verse before?   
Then I read again. It says they are saints. Well, the saints are a people that obey the Son. Here is my meetness, then, in the 13th verse, where it says “He has translated me from the power of darkness into the kingdom of His dear Son.” So that I not only have the light, but the sonship, too, for I am in “the kingdom of His dear Son.” But how about the inheritance? Is there anything about that in the 13th verse? It is an inheritance. Shall I find anything about a meetness for it there? Yes, I find that I am in the kingdom of His dear Son. How came Christ to have a kingdom? Why, by inheritance. Then it seems I am in His inheritance. And if I am in His inheritance here, then I am meet to be in it above, for I am in it already. I am even now part of it and partner of it, since I am in the kingdom which He inherits from His Father and therefore there is the meetness.   
I do not know whether I have put this plainly enough before you. If you will be kind enough to look at your Bible, I will just recapitulate. You see, Heaven is a place of light. When we are brought out of darkness, that, of course, is the meetness for light. It is a place for sons. When we are brought into the kingdom of God’s dear Son, we are, of course, made sons, so that there is the meetness for it. It is an inheritance. And when we are brought into the inherited kingdom of God’s dear Son, we enjoy the inheritance now and consequently are fitted to enjoy it forever.   
Having thus shown the connection between these verses, I propose now to close with a few general observations. I like so to expound the Scripture that we can draw some practical inferences from it. Of course the first inference is this— let us from this night forward never omit God the Father in our praises. I think I have said this already six times over in the sermon. Why I am repeating it so often is so that we may never forget it. Martin Luther said he preached upon justification by faith every day in the week and then the people would not understand.   
There are some Truths of God, I believe, that need to be said over and over again, either because our silly hearts will not receive, or our treacherous memories will not hold them. Sing, I beseech you, habitually, the praises of the Father in Heaven, as you do the praises of the Son hanging upon the Cross. Love as truly God, the ever-living God, as you love Jesus the God-man, the Savior who once died for you. That is the great inference.   
Yet another inference arises. Brothers and Sisters, are you conscious tonight that you are not now what you once were? Are you sure that the power of darkness does not now rest upon you, that you love Divine knowledge, that you are panting after heavenly joys? Are you sure that you have been “translated into the kingdom of God’s dear Son”? Then never be troubled about thoughts of death, because, come death whenever it may, you are meet to be a “partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light.” Let no thought distress you about death’s coming to you at an unseasonable hour. Should it come tomorrow should it come now—if your faith is fixed on nothing less than Jesus’ blood and righteousness—you shall see the face of God with acceptance.   
I have that consciousness in my soul, by the witness of the Holy Spirit, of my adoption into the family of God. I feel that though I should never preach again, but should lay down my body and my charge together, before I should reach my home and rest in my bed, “I know that my Redeemer lives.” And more, that I should be a “partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light.” It is not always that one feels that, but I would have you never rest satisfied till you do—till you know your meetness, till you are conscious of it—until, moreover, you are panting to be gone, because you feel that you have powers which never can be satisfied short of Heaven—powers which Heaven only can employ.  
One more reflection lingers behind. There are some of you here that cannot be thought by the utmost charity of judgment, to be “meet for the inheritance of the saints in light.” Ah, if a wicked man should go to Heaven without being converted, Heaven would be no Heaven to him. Heaven is not adapted for sinners. It is not a place for them. If you were to take a Hottentot who has long dwelt at the equator up to where the Eskimos are dwelling and tell him that you would show him the aurora and all the glories of the North Pole, the poor wretch could not appreciate them. He would say, “It is not the element for me. It is not the place where I could rest happy!”   
And if you were to take, on the other hand, some dwarfish dweller in the north, down to the region where trees grow to a stupendous height and where the spices give their balmy odors to the gale and bid him live there under the torrid zone, he could enjoy nothing. He would say, “This is not the place for me, because it is not adapted to my nature.” Or if you were to take the vulture, that has never fed on anything but carrion and put it into the noblest dwelling you could make for it and feed it with the daintiest meals, it would not be happy because it is not the food that is adapted for it.   
And you, Sinner, you are nothing but a carrion vulture. Nothing makes you happy but sin. You do not want too much Psalm singing, do you? Sunday is a dull day to you. You like to get it over with. You do not care about your Bible. You would as soon there should be no Bible at all. You find that going to a meeting house or a Church is very dull work, indeed. Oh, then you will not be troubled with that in eternity—do not agitate yourself. If you love not God and die as you are, you shall go to your own company. You shall go to your jolly mates, you shall go to your good fellows. Those who have been your mates on earth shall be your mates forever. And you shall go to the Prince of those good fellows, unless you repent and be converted.   
Where God is you cannot come. It is not an element suited to you. As well place a bird at the bottom of the sea, or a fish in the air, as place an ungodly sinner in Heaven. What is to be done, then? You must have a new nature. I pray God to give it to you. Remember, if now you feel your need of a Savior, that is the beginning of the new nature. “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.” Cast yourselves simply on Him, trust in nothing but His blood and then the new nature shall be expanded and you shall be made meet by the Holy Spirit’s operations to be a “partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light.”   
There is many a man who has come into this House of Prayer, many a man is now present, who has come in here a rollicking fellow, fearing neither God nor devil. Many a man has come from the ale house up to this place. If he had died then, where would his soul have been? But the Lord that very night met him. There are trophies of that grace present here tonight. You can say, “Thanks be to the Father, who has brought us out of the power of darkness and translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son.”   
And if God has done that for some, why can He not do it for others? Why need you despair, O poor Sinner? If you are here tonight, the worst sinner out of Hell, remember, the gate of mercy stands wide open and Jesus bids you come. Conscious of your guilt, flee, flee to Him. Look to His Cross and you shall find pardon in His veins and life in His death.

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÷Col 1.13

DELIVERANCE FROM THE POWER OF DARKNESS  
NO. 3366

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, AUGUST 7, 1913.

***DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON THURSDAY EVENING, NOVEMBER 29, 1866.**

***“He has delivered us from the power of darkness.”*** Col 1:13***.***

DARKNESS is used in Scripture to express a great many things. Sometimes it represents *sorrow.* “A night of weeping” is a common expression among us. We speak, too, of, “walking in darkness and seeing no light.” We commonly say to one another that our minds are in a dark and gloomy state when we are surrounded by the fogs and mists of sorrow. Taking it in this sense, how often might we say of our heavenly Father, that, “He has delivered us from the power of darkness”? He has helped us in our temporal difficulties and circumstances, or He has whispered, “As your days so shall your strength be,” and He has turned our night of weeping into a morning of gladness, put away the sackcloth and ashes, and given us the oil of joy! Blessed be His name for all this! Let us not be ungrateful, nor forget the many times when He has turned our mourning into dancing and our sackcloth into scarlet and fine linen.

But darkness frequently signifies, too, in Scripture, *ignorance.* We were once so in darkness that we were blinded. “The God of this world” has blinded our eyes, lest the light of the glorious Gospel should shine in upon us! “We who were sometimes darkness, are now light in the Lord.” Christ’s mission had for one of its many gracious purposes and ends the taking away of the darkness of human ignorance and the pouring of light upon the intellect of man. I thank God that many of us, though we know comparatively little, do know that whereas we were once blind, now we see! We do know something of ourselves so as to be humbled—and we know, too—something of the gracious God, so as to rejoice that we are saved by Him! God has, therefore, delivered us, in that sense, from the power of darkness. Let us be thankful for that. Pant for more knowledge, but oh, Believer, be grateful for what you have! Remember that the little you already know of saving Truth is inestimably precious, for to know Jesus Christ is eternal life! And if, on this side of the grave, you never learn any more, yet you know that which should set your tongue eternally in holy motion with a rapturous song of thankfulness to Him who has taught you such priceless Truth! Yes, “He has delivered us from the power of darkness.”

Darkness, too, frequently represents *Satan and the mysterious spiritual influence which he exerts upon the human mind.*He is called “the Prince of Darkness.” Darkness seems to be his element. God is the “Father of Lights,” but Satan seems to be the father of the gloom and the dark!

Two elements are now at war in this lower world—Christ, the Light, the true Light, and Satan—sin—thick darkness, a darkness which may be felt—the Egyptian darkness in which we are naturally born and out of which we are not delivered except by the supernatural power of God exhibited through the plan of salvation by His Grace! Beloved, we still are tempted by Satan, but we are not under his power! We have to fight with him, but we are not his slaves! He is not our king. He has no rights over us. We do not obey him—we will not listen to his temptations. By the Grace of God, we mean, notwithstanding all his opposition, to fight in his very teeth and to win our way to Heaven! He “has delivered us from the power of darkness.” Oh, what a mercy this is—that man, such a poor creature as he is, should be able to escape from the power of that master spirit Diabolus, Satan, the destroyer! That was a wonderful moment when, according to Bunyan’s description, Hopeful and Christian found that the key was turned in the lock and that they could get out of Giant Despair’s castle. That was a wonderful moment, I say, when, according to Master Bunyan, the key turned in the great lock which locked the iron gate. To use John Bunyan’s own words, he says, “That lock went damnable hard.” In all the new editions of “Pilgrim’s Progress,” it is put, “That lock went desperately hard.” That is the more refined way of putting it, but John Bunyan meant just what he said and implied that there was a sense of the wrath of God upon the soul of man on account of sin, so that he felt as if he were even near to Hell itself! And yet, at such a time, the key did turn in the lock and the iron gate was opened. You recollect that just at the moment, old Giant Despair woke up, and was going to pursue the pilgrims and lay hold upon them when he was seized with one of his fainting fits. Oh, what an escape from Giant Despair! And yet this is little compared with escaping from Satan! Satan is the prince of the power of the air—and human despair is but one of his servants, one of the black officers in his infernal regiment! To escape from Satan, himself! Oh, let it be sung in Heaven! Let angels who have never fallen help us to sing in triumph over those fallen spirits from whom we have been rescued by Divine Grace! “He has delivered us from the power of darkness, and translated us into the kingdom of God’s dear Son.”

I prefer tonight, however, as we cannot talk about all these things, and the field is so very wide, to consider the word, “darkness,” here, in the restricted meaning of *sin*. Sin is a tremendous moral and spiritual darkness which has spread over the human mind. But we are told in the text and we have felt it in our personal experience, that “He has delivered us from the power of darkness.”

Let us speak, first, of *the power of darkness from which we are delivered.*Secondly, upon *the statement here made concerning it.*And thirdly, of *the inferences which inevitably flow from the statement.*

First, then, let us speak a little upon—  
**I.**THE POWER OF SIN FROM WHICH WE HAVE BEEN DELIVERED— as it is here set forth—under the suggestive image of “the power of darkness.”  
What is *“the power”* of darkness? I suppose everyone will admit that it is *a power which tends towards slumber.* It is a composing power. God has given us the night in which to sleep. Whether or not there is any absolute power in darkness to engender sleep, I do not know. But I do know this, that it is much easier, when reclining on your bed, to sleep in the dark than it is to sleep in the full glare of the sun. There seems to be some sedative influence about darkness, something which assists a man to fall into a state of inaction which we call, “sleep.” Now, Beloved, look upon the race of men. They are under the power of darkness and, in consequence, they sleep. Does not the Apostle say to us who are delivered from that power, “Let us not sleep as do others”? “They that sleep,” he says, “sleep in the night,” that being the proper time for sleep—the night with its raven wing seeming to engender sleep—“but let us that are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of love.” If you look abroad in the world, I say, you will see men under the soporific influence of sin given to slumber. Do you believe that men would go on to sin as they do if it were not that sin stupefies them, prevents their using their reason, drowns their conscience and will not permit them to judge accurately concerning things that differ? Why, can you imagine that a man would run the risk of everlasting misery for the sake of a few days of carnal delight if he were not, by some means or other, besotted and made a fool of by sin? Can you conceive that a man would hear the tidings of pardoning mercy through Jesus Christ and be solemnly assured that if he turned from the error of his ways, God would accept and receive him—and that then he would treat that message with levity and go his way, even to ridicule it, if it were not that sin has made him so unreasonable, even in these matters, and made him, if not an idiot, a madman, so that he will not think? He willfully chooses his own mischief, ruins himself and that with a sort of Satanic malice against himself as well as against God— choosing rather to inherit eternal misery than to give up the poor delights of time—choosing rather to feast upon the empty husks of this world than to come and sit down at the table of mercy and eat and drink of the Grace which God has provided! So, then, it is very clear— observation shows it to us and we also have felt it in ourselves—that sin has a soporific, a drowsing, a sleep-giving power! It makes men careless and indifferent. Makes them say, “I’ll chance it! I do not care what the future may bring!” It makes a man go right to the very edge of Hell with his eyes blindfolded and his heart like Nabal’s heart—which was turned to stone—careless even of the “terrors of the Lord” and of “the wrath to come”!  
But blessed be His holy name! “He has delivered us from the power of darkness.” I hope we do not sleep. “Oh, Christian! If you are careless, if you are asleep, if tonight your heart is heavy and dull, I should like to come and whisper this right into your soul, “He has delivered us from the power of darkness.” We are now to be active, earnest, zealous and full of devoted life! If they sleep who are unconverted, they only act according to nature. They are in the dark. They, therefore, sleep. What can they do otherwise? But you are in the Light of God, you know that you are saved, you rejoice in Jesus Christ! Oh, sleep not, my Brothers and Sisters, but seeing that there are but a few hours in your day, work while the day lasts and make it your pleasure and your delight to spend and to be spent in the service of Him! “He has delivered us from the power of darkness.”  
A second power of darkness lies in *concealment.*It is the power of darkness to hide things. What a darkness we had last night! Trying to get home from ministering abroad, I thought I wou1d never be able to find my way. One could hardly see one’s hand in that dense fog which encompassed one. Houses and trees that one would have known in a moment and that would have told one where one was, were all concealed. One could see nothing! It would be a very small world, indeed, if it were no larger than what could then be seen. Darkness hides things. No matter how glorious yonder landscape may be as you stand upon the mountain’s brow—if the sun has gone down and if night has spread its wings over the whole, you can see nothing! It may be very well for the guide to tell you that yonder is a silver lake, and there the Black Forest, and that far away are the brows of mountains covered with their eternal snows, but you can see nothing—night has effectually blotted it all out! Now, the power of sin is just like that. It hides from the human mind what that mind ought to see. The man is lost, but he does not know it—he cannot see the rocks that are just ahead. The man has soon to stand before the bar of God and receive his sentence, but he does not know it. I mean his heart does not know it. He trifles on, caring for none of these things. As for the plague that is in him, in his ruined state, he does not believe it. He hears the Truth of God that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, but he is indifferent to it and as to the dear and precious things of the Covenant of Grace, he does not care for them. No matter how rich may be the mercy, nor how pure the consolation, he knows nothing at all about them, for he is in the dark! It is all dark, dark, dark with him amid the blaze of noon!  
I think I may honestly and humbly say that I do try to speak as plainly as any man can speak—and care nothing about mighty fine words—and yet I do not doubt but that scores come into this house and go out of it, saying, “Well, I do not understand it!” How could they? They are under the power of sin which makes the plainest truth perplexing and hides from their eyes that which the merest babe in Grace can plainly see!  
But, Beloved, “He has delivered us from the power of darkness.” Now we can see, blessed be His name! The first sight we had so alarmed us that we almost wished we could not see! It was a sight so terrible, but when, afterwards, we looked to Jesus upon the Cross and found there was life for that look at the Crucified One—and when since then we have learned to look continually to Him and to find in His wounds our healing, and in His death our life—oh, I hope we are thanking God every moment of our existence that “He has delivered us from the power of darkness.” Now we can see in Him our Father, who was once to us, “the unknown God.”  
Now we can see in Jesus, to whom we were once strangers, our own dear Elder Brother. Now we can look at the river of death without being alarmed at it, for beyond it we can see the turrets and pinnacles of the new Jerusalem glittering with jasper and with carbuncle—and we are anticipating the happy day when we shall sing with the saints above! Sweet thought is it that with these eyes of ours, we shall see our Savior! Yes, He has delivered us from the concealing power of darkness!  
In the third place, darkness has a *depressing and an afflicting power.* Are you not all conscious, if you are shut up in a dark room, that your mind seems to sink in the dark? Why, our little children, who are the simplest specimens of humanity—and let us know the truth at once—can hardly be punished more severely (though I hope we never do so punish them, for it would be very wicked to do so) than by being shut up in the dark! They cannot bear it, cannot endure it and, at first, when the little one even goes to bed in the chamber alone in the dark, it feels afraid. What must not those persons have suffered who were shut up in the dungeons at Venice—dungeons below the watermark of the canal, where not a ray of light, perhaps, did ever come, except by the jailer’s candle— shut in there, hour after hour, unable to know the day from the night, but finding it one long and dreary night! The cruel oppressor would not have thought of it unless he had known that the darkness was so uncongenial to us that it depresses our spirits. Now, when some men have eyes given to them and can really see, sin is like darkness to them. Of course, it is not to some of you. A blind man sees as well in the dark as he does in the light, but as soon as ever you get eyes, God begins to deal with you till you feel that sin is a darkness to you! Oh, what a darkness is this! Well do some of us remember when we walked in the darkness of our sin. We tried to kindle a fire and to light ourselves with the sparks of our own good works, but we failed in every attempt and we would have been in the thick Egyptian night even now if it had not been that He delivered us from the power of darkness! Now, we know that we still, alas, sin, but it does not fill us with despair because there is an Advocate with the Father, even Jesus Christ the Righteous!  
Now, we come to our Father every night and, bowing low in reverence before Him, we mourn that we have sinned during another day, but we do not mourn with a hopeless sorrow, for we remember that— ***“There is a fountain filled with blood  
Drawn from Emmanuel’s veins,  
And sinners plunged beneath that flood, Lose all their guilty stains.”***  
We know that when we were plunged into that fountain, our foulest stains were cleansed right away and now we give thanks unto the Father who has delivered us from the depressing power of sin! Oh, Christian, if you are downcast tonight about this, if you cannot say the text in this sense, go to your heavenly Father, pray to Him and ask Him to enable you to look to Christ just as you did at first! Perhaps you have too many good works of which to boast—and that is why you are so depressed. Throw them all away and come, now, as a poor, empty-handed sinner, having nothing to which to trust but the finished work of Christ! You may depend upon it, that doing this, your peace will yet be like a river because your righteousness, being Christ’s imparted to you, will be like the waves of the sea. Then shall you sing, “Thanks be to Him who has delivered us from the depressing power of darkness.”  
I cannot dwell upon these points, though they are all interesting, but must now notice, fourthly, that there is what I may call*the fascinating power of darkness.*It is strange, but it is true, that there are many who love darkness. I said just now that this was contrary to nature, and so it is in one sense. Unfallen nature could not bear darkness, but fallen nature loves it! Hear what God says about it, “Men love darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil.” Night is the time of the world’s merriment. Then the thief steals out to do his deeds of evil. “They that are drunk, are drunk in the night,” and then is the time for “wantonness and chambering.” As the Apostle says, it is the hour of evil! Darkness seems to be attractive to some men. Strange is it, but it is so. The fascinating power of sin is just like the fascinating power of darkness. I have sometimes thought that sin might well be compared to those serpents which fascinate their prey. It may be some poor little animal—the snake looks and looks, and the little creature, instead of running away, looks at those bright, sparkling eyes till the poor hare, or rabbit, or whatever it may be, instead of escaping, stands as though it were a statue, perfectly tranquil and fascinated with the glare of the serpent’s eyes! And then in a moment the snake darts at it and devours its prey! So is it with sin and there are some here, perhaps, who are under its fascinating power tonight. They know, for they have often been told, that sin is their deadly enemy—and yet it is so pleasant, it is so enchanting, so enticing! As they picture the wizard as being able to strike men into stone, or able to make them do his will, so does sin seem to do and then, at last, it destroys the man who once found pleasure in it! It is a cupbearer to you and comes with smiling face, holds out the sparkling goblet and says, “Drink, my Lord! See the beaded bubbles sparkling on the rim! Drink! For it moves itself aright and sparkles. Drink! And it shall put a flush into your veins and make your blood tingle and leap and let you know a thrill and a joy you have never known before!” And when you get the cup to your lips, you may not be able to take it away again, though, as you drink, it will scald the lips and throat and burn the very vitals! And as you drink on, especially if you drink of the cup of lust, you shall feel another thrill that shall make the very bones rot, and the very marrow to decay till you wish you had never been born and curse bitterly the day in which you came into this world to be partaker of a poison so terrible, so loathsome, so like an ante-past of Hell! Oh my God! Grant that if there are any young men or women here who have already drunk of that cup, that by Your help they may dash it down once and forever! But it is fascinating, fearfully fascinating—and when once a person begins to drink of it, it is seldom that he stops until he drains the very dregs of eternal ruin! But thanks be unto God, for “He has delivered us from the power of darkness.”  
It cannot fascinate us now. I know you, you fair witch! I know you, you painted harlot! Though you might have deceived me once, I know you now! My Savior has shown me superior charms. He has taught me the mischief that comes from loving the world and the things thereof— and now you tempt me in vain! I hope there are many here who can say, “He has delivered us from the fascinating power of sin, from the power of darkness.”  
I cannot stop on this point, however, but must notice

the fifth thing. There is about darkness *an emboldening power*to some men. Darkness makes the child afraid, but it makes the evil man bold! It is in the dark that the lion comes out after his prey and all the beasts of the field go forth to get their food. The sun would frighten them, but boldness comes to them with the darkness. And oh, there is a wonderfully emboldening power to some men in sin! Perhaps, my dear Friend, you have come in here tonight, but you have said this afternoon that which you would not have said 10 years ago! Ah, young woman, you have already done that which you would have shuddered to have done only 12 months ago! Ah, merchant, you have already entered into a doubtful transaction which you would have scorned some months back! You see, you did wrong by little, and as you did one wrong, you got courage to do another, and another, and another! There is the darkness of sin over your minds—you have grown more bold in sin, but that is a poor courage which depends upon the darkness—it is, in fact, the darkness of Satan! It is because of his supreme darkness of mind and spirit that Satan is the boldest of all spirits in contending with the God of Heaven and earth. Beware of the brow of brass! It is a grand thing for a Christian to be like a pillar of iron against evil, but it is a mark of reprobation to become like an iron pillar against God and against His Truth—and some men do become such. They sin until their sin engenders a second nature!  
At first, when sin catches us in its net, it is with the tiniest spider’s cobwebs that can scarcely be seen. And they seem as though you could break from them in a moment. Then they become silken bonds—then firmer, still, until a man seems to be enveloped in a tangle of cables—and every cable hardens and becomes as iron or triple steel until at last there is no escaping, for sin gathers daily force until it gets a monstrous power over men! Men will now say and laugh at a thing which once made them shudder! And do an action and then wipe their mouths and say, “Aha! Aha!” An action which once he would no more have thought of doing than trying to mount without wings above the skies! Hazael said, “Is your servant a dog that he should do this thing?” And yet, dog or not, he did the very thing he thought it impossible for him to do! Now, I trust if we have been delivered from the power of sin in this respect, that we are no longer to be found doing wrong—and that if we *have* done wrong, we are humbled on account of it. Then should we be contrite and broken in spirit—and instead of boasting, snapping our fingers, and saying, “It is nothing”—we should go to our beds ashamed, or go to our Father’s face blushing, mourning, weeping and saying, “God be merciful to me a sinner!” What a blessed thing it is to have a broken heart! Thank God for a tender conscience, and if you have one, never tamper with it. Oh, young man, never tamper with a tender conscience! It is such a blessing to have it. Oh, cultivate it, and pray the Lord to make your heart more and more tender concerning sin that you may hate it with a perfect hatred! He has delivered us from the power of sin.  
Once more, and I shall leave this point. Darkness seems to have about it a kind of *prophetic* power. If we were not warned by our astronomers when an eclipse was coming, I have no doubt that half the world would be dreadfully frightened as soon as the sun became darkened. People would say to one another, “The Judgment is coming.” That is their general thought. If the day gets unusually dark, they think something horrible is going to happen and they want to know whether this is not the time when the Judgment may be expected, and so on. Darkness seems to be a prognostication of evil. Such is sin. My dear Hearer, if you hear the voice of sin, it tells you in your sober moments—it cannot help telling you—that there is a judgment to come. “Be sure your sin will find you out.” “God will bring every work into judgment.” For every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give an account at the Last Day. But the Christian knows that to him the darkness of sin prognosticates nothing of the kind! He stands beneath the Cross of Christ and he knows that sin spent itself upon Jesus upon that Cross so that it might not touch, for a single moment, the soul that believes in Jesus! Now, notwithstanding everything, the Christian can say, “I am forgiven. I am a monument of Grace. I am a sinner saved by blood! I rejoice that for me sin has been put away and I am, therefore, saved.” Thus, “He has delivered us from the power of darkness.”  
Now, I shall need your attention for a little upon the second Truth of God found here, which is—  
**II.**THE STATEMENT HERE MADE CONCERNING THE POWER OF DARKNESS.  
Observe that, in the first place, it is *a statement full of assurance.*“He has delivered us.” Paul does not say he hopes so, but definitely asserts, “He *has* delivered us.” Brothers and Sisters, can we speak in the same positive manner? Let us not be content unless we can, for if we have believed in Him, “He has delivered us.” If, indeed, our trust is in His finished work and perfect righteousness, then He has delivered us! It is not a matter of argument, or a thing about which to raise a debate—it is so—it must be so, for every soul that is in Christ, He has delivered from the power of darkness and translated into His own Kingdom!  
Observe, again, it is a statement *full of intelligence.* The person who uttered it knew what he was saying. He was a sound Divine, for he says, *“He*has delivered us.” He does not say, “We have got out of it somehow,” but, *“He has* delivered us.” I wish some persons could have much clearer notions than they have about who it is that saves. If salvation comes of man—well, say so! And if sinners save themselves by all manner of means, give them the credit, the glory, the praise of it! But if it is God who saves, then let Him have the sole and perfect honor for it! “Salvation is of the Lord.” Sinner, you should not try to save yourself! You cannot do it! If you could, why did Christ come to save you? Your salvation does not rest in your hands. “It is not of him that wills, nor of him that runs, but of God that shows mercy.” All the matter of salvation rests with the Eternal Father, through Jesus Christ. He is the Alpha and the Omega of our salvation. The person who wrote this verse, then, it seems, was a sound Divine, for he ascribes the glory where it ought to be ascribed. “He has delivered us.”  
Then, next, it *is a statement full of gratitude.*If you look at the connection, you find it says, “Giving thanks unto the Father.” What a delightful Grace gratitude is! It is such a heavenly thing to be thankful. I wish we spent a little more time about it, being dissolved by God’s goodness, looking at all that He has done for us and at all our demerit, which renders that love the more wonderful! What joy is there in gratitude—to fall speechless at the foot of the Cross and feel the thanks we cannot speak, or to stand up and sing, “Blessed be His name,” or to tell others the loving kindness of the Lord and to say, “He has dealt graciously with me and He will deal graciously with me.” Brothers and Sisters, be much in the sacred and holy palace of gratitude! You cannot have anything that will more strengthen you for service than holy thankfulness to God for His favors. We might have said a good deal more upon that last point, but we leave you to say it to yourselves! And so we will close with the third Truth of God that shines here, namely—  
**III.**THE INFERENCES THAT MAY BE DRAWN FROM THIS STATEMENT.  
The first inference is a doctrinal one, but as I have already touched on this, I only briefly hint and then leave it. Here it is. Deliverance from the power of sin is as much the work of God as deliverance from the guilt of sin! Where we look for justification, there must we also look for sanctification, for as we are justified through Jesus Christ, we must also expect to receive sanctification from a heavenly source. We cannot receive the one blessing through the spirit and the other through the flesh. We would infer from the text, speaking doctrinally, that in order to our sanctification and our deliverance from the power of sin, we must look to our heavenly Father, altogether and alone.  
The next evidence is *experimental.*“He has delivered us.” Now, then, I ought to feel in my soul that I am so delivered—and if I do not so feel—I ought to be wretched until I do feel it because this has been the experience of every true Christian sooner or later. He has delivered us from the power! We may be in darkness sometimes, but it shall not have power over and enslave us. Sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under the Law, but under Grace. Let the experimental inference then be, “I am resolved to be happy, yet I will—I will rejoice in God, for He has delivered.”  
The next inference is *practical.* If we are delivered from the power of darkness, do not let us put ourselves under its power again, and do not let us temporize with it. You would fancy, from the actions of some professors, that they were not delivered from the power of darkness at all, but were only helped to keep away from some conspicuous sin. When I hear some people talk about fox-hunting Christians, card-playing Christians, Christians who are never at Prayer Meeting, Christians who have no zeal for souls, it seems to me that they might just as well talk about angels who are not in Heaven, or angels who never obey the voice of God! Why, these are sham Christians! They are not genuine Christians—they are of the world and do the things of the world! We may conclude that their hearts and natures are worldly, for if they were spiritual, they would love spiritual things, and their hearts would be engaged in spiritual exercises. Brothers and Sisters, the Grace of God has not come into us merely to keep us away from some few notable vices, but to deliver us altogether from the power of darkness! And if I can sometimes go into sin—just occasionally by way of pleasure—it proves that I am a stranger to the deliverance which Jesus Christ gives to His really called and regenerated people!  
And now the last inference is *a hopeful* inference. If He has delivered us from the powers of darkness, He will deliver us all the way through! If He has done this great thing for us, what will He not do for us? If He has delivered us from the tremendous power of sin, He will certainly deliver us from the power of death! If sin is taken away, why need we fear? Has He delivered us from the power of darkness? Then He will certainly help us in our daily troubles. Did He give His own dear Son to put away our sin—and will He not give us bread and water? If He has covered our souls with the beautiful robe of righteousness that Christ has woven, will He let us lack for ordinary raiment? Oh, let us be of good cheer! The good God of Grace cannot be a bad God of Providence! He who feeds us so well on heavenly bread cannot starve us for lack of bodily bread! He has delivered us! We have already received the greatest mercy—and you may be quite sure of the smaller ones! When Sir Francis Drake was overtaken by a storm in the Thames off Greenwich, “What?” he said, “afraid of a storm? Been round the world three times and afraid, now, of being drowned in a ditch? No!” And surely we who have circumnavigated a whole world of discipline and trouble over whose heads the waves and billows have rolled, we do not mean to be drowned in this present trouble! Do you, my dear Friend? You shall not perish in this ditch! You shall get safely Home! He who has delivered you from the power of darkness will never withdraw His hand and help until He brings you within the pearly gates, puts the crown on your head, the palm branch in your hand, the snow-white robe on your shoulders and the new song of everlasting joy in your mouth, even praise forevermore! Be of good courage, then!  
And then there is this inference for some of you who are not converted. *If God has delivered us, why should He not deliver you?*Why, some of us who have been delivered seemed very unlikely to ever be delivered! We did not want to be! We loved darkness rather than light and yet He delivered us from it. We were, some of us, very hardhearted. Some of us had plunged very deep into sin. There are some here who are wonders of Divine Grace! They were once wonders of sin and yet the love of God looked them up and brought them out—fetched them from the bar of the gin palace, fetched them out of the theater, brought them even from the brothel, some of them, and washed and cleansed them and made them sit among God’s people, love His ways and rejoice in His dear name! And why should not God do the same with you? I know 20 reasons why He should not, but I will tell you one thing He has said, “Him that comes unto Me I will in no wise cast out.” So if you come to Him, He will not cast out even you!  
The way to come to Him is to trust Him. That is, trust Christ to save you and it is all done, and you are saved! That is the great work. When a soul, sensible of sin, sees that Christ, by His blood, made atonement and comes and throws himself upon that Sacrifice of the Cross, then sin is pardoned! Then because the sin is pardoned, the forgiven sinner is grateful and he says, “I will not go on in this sin.” So he puts it away and he is led into a life of holiness by the mercy of God. Oh, that we could all say in the words of the text—and if we cannot all say it tonight, I hope we shall soon be able to do so—“Giving thanks unto the Father, who has made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light, and has delivered us from the Power of darkness, and translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son.”

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**÷Col 1.16**

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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORD’S-DAY EVENING, SEPTEMBER 7, 1873.**

***“All things were created by Him and for Him.”***Col 1:16***.***

THERE can be no mistake as to the Person concerning whom Paul is writing under the Inspiration of the Holy Spirit—it is Jesus of Nazareth, the Incarnate Son of God who was crucified on Calvary for, writing concerning the same Person in the 14th verse, the Apostle says, “In whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins.” It is, therefore, that Savior whose blood was shed for His people’s redemption who is here declared to be the Creator of all things and by whom all things consist!

The first verse of the Book of Genesis tells us that, “in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth,” so someone may ask, “How do you reconcile that statement with Paul’s declaration that all things were created by Christ and for Him?” No reconciliation is needed, for the two statements are identical,*as Jesus is God*, and “in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.” Jesus said, “I and My Father are One,” and so they are! We know not how it is, but the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are distinct Personalities, yet there are *not* three Gods, but only one, as the Apostle John writes, “There are three that bear record in Heaven, the Father, the Word and the Holy Spirit; and these Three are One.” The one God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob is the Father, Son and Spirit—Three in One and One in Three!

The subject I have to speak about is the honor and glory of the Second Person of the blessed Trinity, even our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! But it is so vast a theme that the preacher, at the outset, confesses that the task is too great for him to accomplish! He staggers beneath the weight of his theme which seems to him too great for the human mind to compass or for human lips adequately to express! All I can hope to do is to be lost in my subject that Jesus Christ may be All-in-All.

The text tells us that all things were created by Christ and for Him, so we will, first, consider *Paul’s statement*. And, secondly, we will *review the rejections arising from it*.

**I.**First, then, let us CONSIDER PAUL’S STATEMENT—“All things were created by Him and for Him.”  
So, first of all, *Heaven, itself, was created by and for Christ Jesus*. Then there is such a place, as well as such a state, and of that place Jesus is the center! There is such a place, for Enoch is there. “Enoch walked with God: and he was not, for God took him.” God took him bodily to some place—and that place is Heaven. Elijah is also there—the horses of fire and the chariots of fire took not merely his spirit, but the entire Elijah—and he is in Heaven. Our Lord Jesus Christ, who has gone back to Heaven, went there in His own body. When He passed into the skies, He went up into the heavenly places, as well as into the heavenly state—and there He lives at the right hand of God, even the Father, enthroned in the New Jerusalem, the Holy City of God—  
***“See how the Conqueror mounts aloft,  
And to His Father flies!  
With scars of honor in His flesh,  
And triumph in His eyes!  
There our exalted Savior reigns,  
And scatters blessings down—  
His Father well rewards His pains,  
And bids Him wear the crown.”***  
God, absolutely considered as a pure Spirit, needed no such place as Heaven. God is everywhere! Long ago He asked, “Do not I fill Heaven and earth?” The idea of there being needed any celestial court or place of abode falls short of the true idea of the Omnipresent Jehovah. Neither do I suppose that it would have been necessary to have a place for angels, for the holy spirits would have been able to behold the face of God everywhere—wherever they might be, there they would see God and, consequently, no special place would have been needed to be set apart for them! But it was ordained, in the eternal purpose of God, that there should be created a race of beings who should not be pure spirits, but who should have bodies made of material substances. And it was resolved by Jesus Christ that He would become one of these beings—that He would take upon Himself their nature and would become, in fact, a Man! Now, when a spirit becomes linked with a material substance, it must have a place in which to dwell and, therefore, Heaven was created both for Christ and for His people. When the Son of Man shall come in His Glory, He will say to those on His right hand, “Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.” Prepared, that is, with this view—that there might be a special central place for the display of Christ’s Glory—and that all His people might be there with Him. These are His own words—“Father, I will that they, also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am, that they may behold My Glory.” They are not merely to be as He is, but to be *with Him where He is* and, therefore, Heaven was created by Him and for Him—and for His people who are vitally united with Him!  
O Beloved, when we get to Heaven, we shall see that everything there glows with the Glory of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! The print of His pierced hands will be upon everything. The city of pure gold was created by Him and created for Him. The foundations of the walls of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones by Him and for Him. The jasper, sapphire, emerald, beryl and all the rest—and the gates of pearl are all for Him—all shall be to His glory! For Him each harp of gold, each palm of victory, each shout of victory, each song of adoration—all Heaven shall ring with the praises of Jesus! Heaven shall be, as it were, set with mirrors and every one of which you will be able to see a reflection of the glorious Person of Jesus Christ, even as in every dewdrop you may see the image of the sun. Everyone in Heaven will feel it to be his bliss to praise Jesus! Towards the august Throne of the Most High this anthem will triumphantly ascend, “Worthy is the Lamb who was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory and blessing!” And with the variation of which John tells us in the Revelation, “Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power be unto Him that sits upon the Throne, and unto the Lamb, forever and ever.”  
There will be nothing in Heaven that will be derogatory to Jesus, but everyone and everything there will be to His praise and glory! I cannot believe that any of His chosen people will be missing on the Last Great gathering Day. No David’s seat will be empty there! No Thomas will be absent then! I cannot conceive of one whom He has purchased with His precious blood being lost! Not one sheep or lamb will be missing from the great Shepherd’s flock in the day when they pass under the hand of Him that counts them—they shall all be there! The army of the Great Captain of our salvation shall be complete there! When the muster-roll is read, they shall all answer to their names—and all who are gathered there will owe their salvation to the Lamb who was slain! There will not be one Pharisee there to boast, “God, I thank You that I am not as other men are.” There will not be one atheist there blasphemously shouting, “There is no God!” Nor one Unitarian seeking to drag Christ from the Throne that is rightly His—but all will be adoring and magnifying, and delighting to adore and magnify Him by whom and for whom Heaven itself was created—  
***“All the chosen of the Father,  
All for whom the Lamb was slain,  
All the Church appear together,  
Washed from every sinful stain!”***  
Next, *all angels were created by Jesus and for Him*. However great and strong, and swift they are, there is not one angel that ever flies from Jehovah’s Throne that was not created by Christ! Read the whole verse from which our text is taken—“For by Him were all things created that are in Heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they are thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him and for Him.” If there are rank upon rank of blessed spirits, “that do His commandments, hearkening unto the voice of His word,” all were created by Him and for Him! Gabriel was sent to foretell Christ’s coming to earth. Angels announced His birth at Bethlehem. Others of them ministered to Him in the wilderness and in Gethsemane. They watched over His empty sepulcher and joyfully attended Him as He returned to Heaven as the victorious King of Glory! It is written that He was “seen of angels,” and it must have been with awe and wonder that they gazed upon Him from the manger to the tomb! We read, also, “which things the angels desire to look into”—and there must have been many mysteries which even their lofty intelligence could not comprehend until He explained it to them! They delight to praise and worship Him! And they help to swell the mighty chorus of adoring homage that is always ascending to Him—  
***“Bright angels, strike your loudest strings, Your sweetest voices raise!  
Let Heaven and all created things  
Sound our Immanuel’s praise!”***  
Angels were created by Christ and for Him—not merely to admire and adore Him, but actually to serve Him. Truly did the Psalmist write, “who makes His angels spirits; His ministers a flaming fire.” And Paul reveals a most important part of their service when he asks, “Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?” We will not enter into any speculations about their battles with evil spirits on our behalf, though we believe that this is one of the many ways in which they minister for us. We cannot describe all the service that these heavenly messengers render to the Lord’s own people. I remind you of how one of them killed 185,000 of Sennacherib’s army in a single night! And of how the Prophet Elisha, besieged by the Syrians in Dothan, saw the mountain full of horses and chariots of fire for his protection. You will recall many other instances of angelic interposition and you know, too, how it is written, “He shall give His angels charge over You, to keep You in all Your ways. They shall bear You up in their hands, lest You dash Your foot against a stone.”  
As for the fallen angels who rebelled against God and who have sunk forever into hopeless alienation from Him—even these were created by Christ and for Him! And though they hate Him, they shall be compelled to obey Him and to acknowledge that He is Lord over all! Even their malice against the people of God shall only draw out His love toward them and manifest His vigilance, wisdom and power on their behalf. In the wilderness the Son of Man met “the prince of the power of the air” in mortal conflict. Evil stood there endowed with all the attributes it could desire to have upon its side—evil ancient with long and varied experience, evil backed up by a powerful angelic intellect, evil with ferocious malice glaring in its eyes—evil with diabolic cunning tempting the Son of God to sin! There, too, stood the Prince of Life—alone, yet undaunted—the Incarnation of holiness and love! Three times they wrestled, foot to foot, but the tempter had to retire beaten. And when he came again, hoping to take the Son of God and Son of Man at a disadvantage in Gethsemane—when He was full of anguish and was shortly to die in still greater agony on the Cross—it was again a desperate struggle, but the Master flung him to the ground! Our Samson tore the old roaring lion as if he had been a kid, and left him prostrate and defeated, while He passed on to complete the great work of His people’s redemption and to conquer all the powers of darkness before He gave up the ghost! Glory be to Jesus! He has gotten Glory to Himself out of the devil and all his angels!  
And even Hell, itself, terrible as it is, was created by Christ as a necessary part of the moral government of the universe so that sin might not go unpunished. Even there Christ reigns! His Sovereignty is supreme down to its lowest depths. He has the keys of Hell and of death—and when the appointed time comes, He will send an angel with the key of the bottomless pit and bid him lay hold on “the dragon, that old serpent, which is the devil and Satan,” and bind him for a thousand years and cast him into the bottomless pit. And then, after the Millennium, and Satan has been again loosed for a little season, he shall be “cast into the Lake of Fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophets are— and shall be tormented day and night forever and ever.” Christ is King even over that dark sad part of His domains! And amidst all the confusion and tumult of the Pit, His enemies shall “confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the Glory of God the Father.”  
The verse from which our text is taken also reminds us that *this world was created by Christ and for Christ*. “By Him were all things created, that are in Heaven, and that are in earth.” John tells us, “in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him: and without Him was not anything made that was made.” The eternal *Logos* was the Creator of this lower world as well as of the realms on high! There is neither hill nor valley, sparkling fountain nor foaming sea which He has not made. “The sea is His and He made it: and His hands formed the dry land.” Truly is He the Creator of this earth! It was formed for Him as well as by Him!  
It was especially made to be the place of residence for His people, the place on which they would fall through sin and the place on which they would be restored through the redemption accomplished there by Christ Jesus on the Cross of Calvary. This world was created by Christ as the place where He, Himself, would live and labor—and suffer and die. He would be laid as a Baby in an earthly manger. As a Boy and a Man He would walk through the streets and lanes of this world! He would fare as human beings fared and suffer as the dwellers upon the earth suffered, though never through any sin of His own. I might truly say that the whole world was created for Calvary. “Why leap you, you high hills?” That little mound outside Jerusalem’s gate explains your very existence! The world itself was created that Christ might die on Calvary! This earth was to be a sort of stage upon which Christ was to take the principal part in the greatest drama that the whole universe has ever witnessed! The world was made by Him and for Him—and it will remain until His great purpose of love and mercy is fully accomplished!  
We must not forget that even the lower orders of Creation were made by Christ and for Him. They were needed by man—and man was necessary to the completeness of Christ’s plan of Salvation—so the lower forms of creatures are links in the chain that could not be spared. There is a wonderful sympathy between the various portions of Creation, as the Apostle Paul tells us, “for we know that the whole creation groans and travails in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves, also, which have the first fruits of the

Spirit, even we groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.” Treat all creatures kindly, then, as far as you can, for the great Creator’s sake. I would not have a sparrow needlessly killed, nor even a worm trod on that might be spared. My Lord and Master made them all—and when I look at them, I see traces of His wonderful wisdom and power! And when I see how bountifully He provides for them, I note the tokens of His goodness and care. He opens His hands and satisfies the desire of every living thing! There is not a little bird that picks up a seed by the roadside that was not created by Christ and for Him! And, perhaps, answers its end better than some of you who lift your brows to yonder Heaven only to defy your Maker! There is not an animal upon the common, nor a lion in the forest, nor a fish in the sea, nor a fowl in the air that was not made by Him—and that does not in some way promote His Glory!  
And to come to ourselves, *men were created by Christ and for Him*. Perhaps the Creator resolved to manifest His power and skill in a new order of created beings. He had made pure spirits and He had made material substances. He had created various forms of life rising from the vegetable to the animal. But He resolved that there should be a spirit created that would be affiliated with materialism and that this spirit should, in the end, when it had passed through all its graduations, become the most wonderful creature in the whole universe—a creature that should know evil, not merely by report, but by actual personal experience—a creature that would, after that, be delivered from the power of evil and so should be bound to God by ties of gratitude so strong that it would never revolt from Him again! This creature, knowing evil and knowing good, strengthened by Divine Grace, would, of its own free will, cling to the good and eschew the evil—and would forever be God’s best ally against all revolt in His dominions—for this creature, though it had known evil, was to become a child of God and to be a partaker of the Divine Nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. These creatures, partly spiritual and partly material, were to have at their head, Christ Jesus, who was to be the model of them all! And they were to be like He and to be His companions forever! But they were to be to Him more than companions—to be His friends with whom He might hold familiar conversation and to be to Him even more than friends—to be united to Him in personal relationship—to be so completely one with Him that they should be “members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones,” that His life should be their life and that their life should be derived from Him!  
What a wonderful creature a man will be when He gets to Heaven with His body, soul and spirit all complete! No other creature will be so near to God as man will be through his union to the God-Man, Christ Jesus the Lord! Yet this glorified man will never presume upon his position, but will always keep his proper place. He will have been so trained and educated by his falls, his regeneration and his redemption that he will be always humble, and yet will rejoice that he is a son of the Most High who may say to Him, “Abba, Father.” I do not know how such a creature as a perfect man could have been made by God except through the fall in Eden, the birth of Christ at Bethlehem and His death on Calvary. In making man, God had produced a new type of being, that in him, Jesus Christ might find an opportunity of displaying His wondrous condescension in taking upon Himself man’s nature—and His wondrous Grace in taking upon Himself man’s sin and dying in his place! Through glorified men becoming Christ’s companions, friends and faithful servants by reason of His mysterious union with them, a new race of beings has been created who can have greater sympathy with God than any others of His creatures can have. Devils can have no sympathy with God, for they are only evil. The holy angels cannot have as much sympathy with God as man who has fallen by sin and then been saved by Divine Grace! It is of those who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb, that it is written, “Therefore are they before the Throne of God and serve Him day and night in His temple: and He who sits upon the Throne shall dwell among them.” He will be our God and we shall be His people! He will be our Father and we shall be His children forever and ever!  
But oh, if you reject the Savior! If you turn the wondrous opportunity of immortal glory which God presents to you in the Gospel, into the dread alternative of eternal wrath—if you are resolved that you will not be among those privileged beings who will be next to God, Himself. If you spurn the dignity that is held before you. Then, notwithstanding all that, you will have to glorify Christ! Even in this life and against your own will—you shall scarcely know how—you shall be made to subserve Christ’s purpose! And at the last He will make you realize how terrible He is as He breaks you in pieces as a potter’s vessel! If you will not touch His silver scepter of Mercy, you shall feel the weight of the iron rod of His inflexible Justice! If you will not lie at His feet as a penitent, you shall be driven from His Presence into the outer darkness where there will be weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth forever! God grant that none of you may ever know experimentally what this means!—  
***“You sinners, seek His Grace,  
Whose wrath you cannot bear!  
Fly to the shelter of His Cross  
And find salvation there!”*  
II.**Now I must pass on briefly to REVIEW THE REFLECTIONS ARISING FROM THIS STATEMENT—“All things were created by Him and for Him.”  
And the first clear reflection from this declaration is, then*, Jesus is God*. If all things were made by Him and for Him, how is it possible for us to get away from the conviction that He is, indeed, God? I will not attempt to argue about the matter, but whatever others may say or do, as for me, Jesus of Nazareth is my Lord and my God—and I will love and adore, and worship Him forever and ever!  
The second reflection is that *Jesus is the key of the universe—*its center and its explanation. Creation and history are enigmas which can only be understood in the light of the Cross. When we look at the planets, their motions seem irregular from our standpoint. But if we could stand in the sun, we would see the planets revolving in their orbits in an orderly manner around it. Calvary is the sun of the universe! Stand there, believe in God making Propitiation for sin by the death of His Son, and you can understand everything in the light that streams from Calvary! Get away from that great center and you understand nothing. The great question to ask concerning everything is—Will it glorify Christ? How will it affect His infinitely wise designs?  
Try, beloved Friends, wherever you are, to see all things in the light of Christ. I think this will teach you not to look with scorn upon any of the things that are around you. See how the Lord Jesus has purged all things for His people so that they shall no longer be common or unclean. That lovely river, those fertile valleys, that dense forest, yonder snow-clad Alps and everything else that Christ has created, you need not say, as some have done, “I will not gaze upon the beauties of Nature, lest they should take my thoughts away from my Master.” Scorn not His works, lest you should also scorn the great Maker of them! His are the mountains. And the valleys are His—sun, moon and stars all shine to His praise and glory! Go up and down, then, in the world and be not troubled by many things that now disquiet you. Say, “I do not know how this will glorify Christ, but I am persuaded that in some mysterious way which I cannot yet fully comprehend, His eternal purposes are being accomplished.” See Christ in everything and see everything in the light of Christ!  
And, Beloved, another clear inference from Paul’s declaration is that *to live to Christ is to live as we ought to live.*If He made us for Himself, then we who live unto Him have found out the true purpose of our existence! Put a thing to a wrong purpose and it is a failure. But use it for the purpose for which it was made and it will answer that end. Christian, Christ made you for Himself! Yes, He has *twice* made you for Himself! Therefore lay yourself out for Him—body, soul and spirit—spend all your time, and all your strength, and all your means for Him and Him alone! So you will be in accord with the great purpose of your creation.  
If we do not live unto Christ, we have to make the sorrowful reflection that we are out of gear with all things that He has made. Although by the mysterious working of His Divine Power, He will get glory out of us, yet we are not consciously in harmony with Jesus and all discords must have an end. All opposition to Omnipotence must be futile and must also be transient. However long He may allow evil to continue, there is an end even to His long-suffering patience! And then, woe be to those who are still at enmity against the Almighty!  
Another reflection from the text is that *we can only live for Christ as we live by Christ*. We cannot glorify Him except as He gives us the Grace to do so—if we attempt to do it by our own power, we shall most certainly fail. Wait at His Cross, Beloved! Cry to Him to give you the aid of His almighty Spirit and then, through the effectual working of the Holy Spirit, you shall be able to live for Jesus, alone, by whom and for whom you were made both at your first creation and also when you were created anew in Christ Jesus!  
And, lastly, it is clear from all this that *Christ must triumph*. Some of us have been almost breaking our hearts as we look around at the follies of the generation in which we live. They are going on pilgrimages to the shrines of their idols—the gods that are not gods! They are bowing down to their priests and confessing in their ears the sad stories that should be told only to God! They are setting up the calves and images that their fathers worshipped and turning away from the only living and true God! All this we mourn and grieve over, but let us not imagine that Christ’s true Kingdom is suffering loss! Beneath the dark clouds that hide the sun, we mourn the absence of the great orb of day, but think how brightly the sun is shining above those clouds! Borrow an eagle’s wings and soar above the clouds, and then you shall see the sun shining in his strength. So is it with Christ, the Sun of Righteousness! Get away, by faith, from this poor earth, and you shall see Him shining in His Glory, whether it is day or night, summer or winter! Christ *must* reign. “The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord, and against His Anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder and cast away their cords from us.” But it is still true, “Yet have I set My King upon My holy hill of Zion.” And He shall reign forever and ever, and let all His people say, “Hallelujah!” And again and again cry, “Hallelujah!”  
He *must* reign. What power is there that can stand against Him who created all things? What arm can dare to be lifted up against His almighty arm? Be of good courage, you soldiers of the Cross! Dream not of defeat, nor think for a moment of fleeing from the foe in terror. Victory must come to the Lamb that was slain! He shall come from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah. His apparel shall be red, like the garments of him that treads in the wine vat, for all His enemies shall be trodden down in His wrath! And Rome, the harlot church, the chief of all His foes, shall be hurled down like a millstone into the flood and sink to rise no more—  
***“He shall reign from pole to pole  
With illimitable sway!  
He shall reign when, like a scroll,  
Yonder heavens have passed away!  
Then the end—beneath His rod,  
Man’s last enemy shall fall!  
Hallelujah! Christ in God,  
God in Christ is All-in-All.”***  
Happy is he who is the lowliest page in the retinue of such a King! Happy is he who shall be privileged to sprinkle a few drops of water to lay the dust in the road over which our conquering King shall ride! Blessed is he who shall spread his garments in the way, or wave a palm branch in honor of the royal Victor in His triumphal procession! Happy shall he be, then, who has been laughed to scorn for Christ’s sake! Or who has been lying in a dungeon till the moss has grown on his eyelids! Or who has been burned at the stake and his ashes cast to the four winds of Heaven because he would not deny his Lord! Oh to be wholly on His side, now, that we may be among His faithful followers on that Day! Here we are, O glorious Son of David! Take us and all that we have, and make us more than ever Yours from this time forward, and unto You shall be the glory forever and ever! Amen.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: *Colossians 1.***

**Verses 1, 2.***Paul, an Apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy, our brother, to the saints and faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colosse: Grace be unto you, and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.* Kindness is the very breath of Christianity, so the Apostle will not begin the subject matter of his letter until first of all he has breathed out a benediction upon those to whom he writes.

**3.***We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you.* Paul very graciously blends his giving of thanks and his constant prayer for these Christians at Colosse and, therein, sets us an example that we may well imitate.

**4-6.***Since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which you have to all the saints, for the hope which is laid up for you in Heaven, of which you heard before in the word of the truth of the Gospel, which has come unto you, as it has, also, in all the world and is bringing forth fruit, as it has also among you, since the day you heard of it, and knew the Grace of God in truth.*If there is a way of knowing the Grace of God which is of no value, it is when it is not known in truth, that is to say, when it is only head-knowledge, not heart-knowledge. But, oh, when in truth the Grace of God sinks into the soul and changes the whole nature, then it is an experience for which we may well give thanks to God!

**7, 8.***As you also learned of Epaphras our dear fellow servant, who is for you a faithful minister of Christ; who also declared unto us your love in the Spirit.* Epaphras told them of Paul’s prayers for them and when he came back from Colosse, he told Paul of their great love in the Spirit.

**9.***For this cause we, also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you and to desire that you might be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding.* [See Sermon #1742, Volume

29—SPIRITUAL KNOWLEDGE AND ITS PRACTICAL RESULTS—Read/download the entire sermon,

free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.] See, the Apostle asks even more for them than faith, hope and love—that they “might be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding.” This shows what a valuable thing it is to know and understand the will of God!

**10, 11.***That you might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness.* If we have faith, hope, and love, it is desirable that we add to these a fullness of knowledge—and to this holiness of life and fruitfulness of service—that we may have patience to endure the afflictions of this life and long-suffering with which to put up with the provocations of the ungodly.

**12-14.***Giving thanks unto the Father who has made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: who has delivered us from the power of darkness and has translated us into the Kingdom of His dear Son: in whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins.* And now Paul, having mentioned his Master’s great work— redemption by blood and the forgiveness of sins—goes on a tangent, as it were. He is so enthusiastic with regard to Christ and His great atoning Sacrifice that the very thought of Christ’s blood stirs his own blood and he seems like a man all on fire with holy fervor as he writes—

**15-17.***Who is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature: for by Him were all things created that are in Heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they are thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him and for Him: and He is before all things, and by Him all things consist*. How can anyone ever read this passage and yet say that Christ Jesus is only a Man? By what twisting of words can such language as this be applied to the most eminent Prophet or Apostle who ever lived? Surely He must be God by whom all things were created, and by whom all things consist! But Paul’s next sentence is, to us, the sweetest of all—

**18.***And He is the head of the body, the Church.*[See Sermon #839, Volume 14—  
THE HEAD OF THE CHURCH—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at  
http://www.spurgeongems.org.] He is joined by an indissoluble union to His people and is the Head of their glory, their wisdom and their strength!

**18.***Who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead; that in all things He might have the preeminence*. Are we giving Him the preeminence in all things? That theology must be false which puts Jesus in the second place, or even lower than that! And that experience is a wrong one which does not put Christ always in the front. He must in all things always stand first!

**19.***For it pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell.* [See  
Sermons #978, Volume 17—ALL FULLNESS IN CHRIST and #1169, Volume 20—THE FULLNESS OF CHRIST THE TREASURY OF THE SAINTS—Read/download both sermons, free of charge, at

http://www.spurgeongems.org.] That we might have to go to Him for it, it pleased the Father to make errands for us so as to take us to Christ and to thus make our very emptiness to minister to the Glory of Christ!

**20-23.***And having made peace through the blood of His Cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself; by Him, I say, whether they are things in earth, or things in Heaven. And you that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now has He reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy and blameless and above reproach in His sight—if, indeed, you continue in the faith grounded and steadfast.* This is a text that ought to be read and pondered every day by the many unstable professors who are in the Church at this present time— “if, indeed, you continue in the faith grounded and steadfast,” like a building that will have no further settling, no more splitting of the stones, no more cracking of the walls—because your foundation is secure and you are firmly built upon it!

**23, 24.***And are not moved away from the hope of the Gospel which you have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under Heaven, of which I, Paul, became a minister; who now rejoices in my sufferings for you.* Oh how blessed it is when a man has so mastered himself that his sufferings for his fellow Christians become a matter of rejoicing for himself! He not only accepts them and bears them with patience, but he says—

**24.***And fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for His body’s sake, which is the Church.*There is nothing “behind” as to the atoning efficacy of the sufferings of Christ, but there is much yet to be endured in order that all the elect may be brought to Christ. Some must suffer through their extraordinary labors in preaching the Gospel, others through bearing reproach for the Truth of God’s sake— and Paul was glad to take in his mortal body, his share of the sufferings to be endured for the sake of Christ’s Church—which is His mystical body.

**25-27.***Of which I became a minister according to the stewardship from God which was given to me for you, to fulfill the Word of God, the mystery which has been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to His saints: to whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the*

*hope of glory.* [See Sermon #1720, Volume 29—CHRIST IN YOU—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.] This is the most blessed of all  
mysteries! I trust that many of us understand it—may the Holy Spirit reveal it to any who know it not!

**28.***Whom we preach.*That is, Christ. It is not so much *what* we preach as *whom* we preach. We preach the Person of Christ—“whom we preach”—

**28, 29.***Warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus: whereunto I also labor, striving according to His working, which works in me mightily.*[See

Sermon #914, Volume 16—WORK IN US AND WORK BY US—Read/download the entire sermon, free

of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.] There will never be any mighty work come *from* us unless there is first a mighty work *in* us—no man truly labors for souls unless the Holy Spirit has first worked mightily in him.

—Adapted from *The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307  
**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.**Sermon #839 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

**÷Col 1.18**

THE HEAD OF THE CHURCH  
NO. 839

**DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, NOVEMBER 1, 1868, *BY C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“He is the head of the body, the church.”***Col 1:18***.***

As if to show us that this title of “Head of the Church” is to be held in highest esteem, it is here placed in connection with the loftiest honors of our Lord Jesus. In the same breath the Son of God is styled “the image of the invisible God,” “the first-born of every creature,” the Creator of all existence, and then, “the head of the body, the church.” We dare not, therefore, think slightly of this title, nor do we hesitate to assert that any levity with regard to it would be as disgraceful as the profane use of any other name of our Divine Lord. For any *mortal* to assume it to himself, we conceive would be equal in blasphemy to the assumption of the mediatorial office—and we should be no more shocked to hear a man claim to be “the Creator of all things,” than we are now when a *mortal* is designated, “Head of the Church.”

What is the Church? The word signifies an assembly. The Church of Jesus Christ is an assembly of faithful men, the whole company of God’s chosen, His called out ones, the entire community of true followers of the Lord Jesus Christ. Wherever true Believers are, there is a part of the Church. Wherever such men are not, whatever organization may be in existence, there is no Church of Jesus Christ. The Church is no corporation of priests, or confederacy of unconverted men—it is the assembly of those whose names are written in Heaven. Any assembly of faithful men is a Church.

The aggregate of all these assemblies of faithful men make up the one Church which Jesus Christ has redeemed with His most precious blood, and of which HE is the sole and *only* Head. Part of that Church is in Heaven, triumphant! Part on earth, militant—but these differences of place make no division as to real *unity*. There is but one Church above, beneath. Time creates no separation—the Church is always one—one Church of the Apostles, one Church of the Reformers, one Church of the first century, one church of the latter days, and of this one, only Church, and *Jesus Christ* is the one only Head.

**I.**WHAT IS MEANT BY OUR LORD’S HEADSHIP OF THE CHURCH? That shall be very briefly our first subject of thought. We understand this headship to be the representation of the Church as a body. We speak of counting heads, meaning thereby *persons*—the head represents the whole body. God has been pleased to deal with mankind as a community and His great Covenant transactions have been with men in a body—not with separate individuals. That is to say, at the first creation God did not so much deal with each particular person of the human race as with the whole race represented in one man, namely, the first Adam.

It was so ordained that the race should be bound up in his loins, to stand if he stood, to fall if he fell. Therefore, my Brethren, the Fall, hence original sin, hence the sorrows of this life. In order to salvation, which, perhaps, was only possible because we did not fall*singly* (for the devils falling singly and separately are reserved without hope of mercy unto everlasting fire), God instituted a *second* federation, of which Jesus Christ is the Head. The Apostle calls Him the second Adam. He is the Head of that company of mankind who are His chosen—His redeemed who are known in this world by being led to believe in Him, and are ultimately gathered into His rest.

Now, Jesus Christ stands to His Church in the same position as Adam stood to his posterity. They are chosen in Him, accepted in Him and preserved in Him—“Saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation.” As His own words declare it, “Because I live, you shall live also.” In the following chapters of the Epistle before us, the Apostle shows that the saints are buried with Jesus, risen with Him and quickened with Him. Even more explicit is he in the fifth of Romans, where the headship of Adam and of Jesus are compared and contrasted.

Our Lord is Head in a mystical sense, explained in Col 2:19 : “The Head, from which all the body by joints and hands having nourishment ministered, and knit together increases with the increase of God.” The head is to the body indispensable to life—it is the seat of mental life, the temple of the soul. Even so Jesus Christ is the vitalizing Head of all His people. “He is our life.” “In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.” The life of every member of the mystical body depends upon the life of the mystical Head. Through Jesus Christ every living child of God derives his spiritual life. Not one true member of the Church lives by a life of his own. “For you are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.” Separation from Christ is spiritual death, “If a man abide not in Me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered.”

The head mystically is not merely the *source* of life and the seat of sensation, but it is the throne of supreme government. It is from the brain that the mandate is issued which uplifts the hand or bids it fall by the side. Man walks or speaks, or sleeps, or rises from his couch according to the dictate of that mysterious royal something which finds a place for itself within the head. Thus in the true Church of God, Jesus Christ is the great directing Head. From Him the only binding commands go forth. *To* Him all the really spiritual yield a cheerful homage. His members delight to do the will of their Head.

The whole fabric of the Church, actuated by His life and being filled with His Spirit, most readily concedes to Him that in all things He shall have the preeminence. In proportion as Christians are truly united to Jesus they are perfectly governed by Him, and it is only because of the old nature which abides in separation from Christ that Believers offend and transgress. In so far as they are *spiritual* men, so far does Jesus rule them as the Head governs all the members of the body. The Head is also the glory of the body. There the chief beauty of manhood dwells. The Divine image is best seen in the countenance—the face is the distinguishing glory of man.

Man holds his head erect—his countenance is not turned towards the earth like the beast—it glows with intelligence. It is the index of an immortal mind. Beauty chooses as her favored seat the features of the countenance. Majesty and tenderness, wisdom and love, courage and compassion here hang out their ensigns—all the Graces choose the head as their favored dwelling place. In this sense, right well is our Lord saluted as the “Head.” He is fairer than the children of men—Divine Grace is poured into His lips. In Jesus Christ all the beauty of the Church is summed up. What were His Church without Him? A carcass—a ghastly corpse bereft of all its glory—because divided from its Head.

What were all the good, and great, and excellent men who have ever lived without Christ? So many ciphers upon a writing table—they count for nothing until their Lord, as the great Unit—is put before them to give them power and value! Then, indeed, they swell to a mighty sum—but without Him they are less than nothing and vanity! An uncomely thing would be the Church of God if she were not comely with the comeliness which Jesus imparts to her! His head is as the most fine gold! His Countenance is as Lebanon, excellent as the cedars! He is the chief among 10,000, and the altogether lovely—glorious is that body of which He is the crown and excellence! Well may the Church be called the fairest among women when her Head thus excels all the beauties of earth and Heaven!

Another figure which is used to describe the Headship of Christ to the Church is the conjugal. As the Lord made Eve out of the flesh of Adam, so has He taken the Church out of the side of Christ Jesus, and she is of Him as Eve was of Adam—she is of His flesh and of His bones. A mysterious union has been established between Christ and His Church which is constantly compared to that of marriage: “For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the Head of the Church: and He is the Savior of the body.” Jesus is the Bridegroom—His Church is His Bride. They are espoused, one to another. In bonds of love they are bound forever to each other and they are alike with sacred expectation waiting for the marriage day when shall be accomplished the eternal purpose of God and the desire of the Redeemer.

As the husband exercises a headship in the house—not at all (when the relationship is rightly carried out) tyrannical or magisterial, but a government founded upon the rule of nature and endorsed by the consent of *love*—even so Jesus Christ rules in His Church. Not as a despotic lord, compelling and constraining His subject bride against her will, but as a husband well-beloved, obtaining obedience voluntarily from the heart of the beloved one, being in all things so admired and had in esteem as to win an undisputed preeminence! Such conjugal headship is illustrated by the Word of God in the old prophecy, “You shall call Me Ishi, and shall call Me no more Baali.” Baali and Ishi both mean *lord*, but the sense differs. The one is a mere ruler, the other a beloved husband.

Jesus Christ’s kingdom is no tyranny! His scepter is not made of iron. He rules not with blows and curses and threats, but His scepter is of silver and His rule is love. The only chains He uses are the chains of His constraining Grace. His dominion is *spiritual* and extends over willing hearts who delight to bow before Him and to give Him the honor due unto His name. These, I think, are the senses in which this word, “headship,” is used. But there remains one other, these former all qualifying this last, upon which I intend to dwell at some length this morning. Christ is the Head of His Church as King in Zion. In the midst of the Church of God the supreme government is vested in the Person of Christ. “One is your Master, even Christ, and all you are brethren.”

The Church is the kingdom of God among men. It is purely spiritual— comprehending only spiritual men—and existing only for spiritual objects. And who is its King? None but Jesus! We can truly say, as they did of old who proclaimed the Kingship of the Crucified, “We have another King, one Jesus.” To Him the assemblies of the saints pay all regal honor and at His Throne the entire Church bows itself, saluting Him as Master and Lord. To no other do we render spiritual obeisance. Christ only and solely is King upon Zion’s hill, set there by eternal decree, maintained in that position by infinite power and appointed to remain upon the Throne till every enemy shall be made His footstool.

I wish I had eloquence, this morning, that I might bear worthy witness to the crown-rights of King Jesus in His Church! I know no subject which is more necessary to insist upon in these eventful times. Let Jesus be acknowledged as the *only* Head of the Church and the way out of the present political debate which agitates our nation is clear enough. Ignorance of this Truth of God blinds many! It makes them labor with all their heart for a bad cause, under the notion that they are doing God service. To know this Truth is to hold a most weighty trust with which we must not trifle.

Martyrs have bled for this Truth! Scotland’s heather has been stained in 10,000 places, and her waters have been dyed crimson for the defense of this weighty doctrine. Let us not be slow with unshaken courage to declare, yet again, that kings and princes and parliaments have no lawful jurisdiction over the Church of Jesus Christ! That it beseems not the best of monarchs to claim those royal prerogatives which God has given to His only begotten Son. Jesus alone is the Head of His spiritual kingdom, the Church!

And all others who come within her pale to exercise power are but usurpers and Antichrist—and not for one moment to be respected in their usurped authority by the true Church of the living God! Some Churches have not learned this lesson, but are held in leash like dogs by their masters. They crouch down at the feet of the State to eat the crumbs which fall from Mammon’s table! And if they are cuffed and beaten by the powers that be, well do they deserve it—and I would almost pray that the whip may fall upon them yet more heavily till they learn to appreciate liberty and are willing to take off the dog collar of the State and be free from human domination!

If they lose a little wealth they will win the solid gold of God’s own favor, and the abiding power of His Spirit, which they cannot expect to have while they are traitors to King Jesus and own not the sole and only Headship of Immanuel in the Church.

**II.**We shall now, therefore, in the second place, come to look a little into this Headship of Jesus Christ in a *regal* sense, as to WHAT IT IMPLIES. Since Christ is the Head of His body, the Church, He alone can determine doctrines for her. Nothing is to be received as Divinely warranted except it comes with His stamp upon it. It is nothing, my Brethren, to the faithful servant of Jesus Christ that a certain dogma comes down to him with the gray antiquity of the ages to make it venerable. Like a sensible man, the Christian respects antiquity, but like a loyal subject of his King, he does not so *bow* before antiquity as to let it become ruler in Zion instead of the living Christ!

A multitude of good men may meet together, and they may, in their judgment, propound a dogma and assert it to be *essential* and undoubted. And they may even threaten perils most abundant to those who receive not their verdict! But if the dogma was not authorized long before they decided it—if it were not written in the *Bible*—the decision of the learned council amounts to nothing! All the fathers, and doctors, and divines, and confessors put together cannot add a word to the faith once delivered unto the saints! Yes, I venture to say that the unanimous assent of all the saints in Heaven and earth would not suffice to make a *single* doctrine binding upon conscience unless Jesus had so determined!

In vain do men say, “So did the early Church”—the early Church has no supremacy over us! It is to no purpose to quote Origen or Augustine! Quote the Inspired Apostles and the doctrine is established, but not otherwise! In the Church of God it is never sufficient to say, “So thinks Martin Luther.” Who was Martin Luther? A servant of Jesus Christ and nothing more! It is not sufficient to say, “So teaches John Calvin,” for who is John Calvin? Has he shed his blood for you, or is he your master? His opinion is to be *respected* as the opinion of your fellow servant, but in no respect as a doctor or authoritative teacher in the Church—for Christ *alone* is Rabbi, and we are to call no man Master upon earth!

Suppose I have received a Truth of God from the very man who was the means of my conversion? I am bound, in candor and affection, to give all respect to him because of the relationship which exists between us. But I must take heed lest this declines into *idolatry*, and I, myself, become nothing more than a receiver of the Truth of God as the word of *man*, instead of accepting it as the Word of *God*. I am, therefore, in the most candid manner, but none the less solicitously, to bring to the test every Truth of God which I have received—whether from my father or mother, or my minister, or from some great man of olden times whose name I have learned to respect—seeking all the while light from above to direct me aright.

*Nothing* is doctrine to the Church of God—nothing which has not been taught in the *Scriptures*. To Christians it is nothing to say that certain doctrines are taught in books of common prayer, or of conference discipline, or of systematic theology. To us it is of small account that either Presbytery, or the Episcopacy, or Independency have put their stamp upon a certain form of teaching. Authority is no more to us than the snap of a man’s finger unless the Truth thus commended derives *certainty* from the testimony of Jesus Christ Himself, who is the Head of His body the Church!

So next, since He is the Head, He only can legislate as to the Church. In a State, if any knot of persons should profess to make laws for the kingdom, they would be laughed at! And if they should for a moment attempt to enforce their own rules and regulations in defiance of the laws of the country, they would be amenable to punishment. Now the Church of God has no power whatever to make laws for *herself*, since she is not her own Head—and no one has any right to make laws for her, for no one is her Head but Christ. Christ alone is the Law-maker of the Church and no rule or regulation in the Christian Church stands for anything unless in its spirit, at least, it has the mind of Christ to support and back it up.

Such-and-such a thing has been thought to be right in the Church, and therefore it has been laid down and made prescriptive—the *tradition* of the fathers has established a certain custom. What then? Why this— that if we can distinctly see that the custom and prescription are not according to the tenor of Holy Scripture and the Spirit of Christ, neither of them are anything to us! But what if the custom is supported by all the good men of every age? I say that matters *nothing* if the Lord has not taught it! Our conscience is not to be bound! If a law were backed up by 50,000 times as many as all the saints it would have no authority upon the conscience even of the weakest Christian if not laid down by our King Himself! And the violation of such a commandment of men would be no sin but might, indeed, become a Christian *duty* in order to let men see that we are not the servants of men, but the servants of Jesus Christ the Lord!

In spiritual things it is of the utmost importance to keep this fact clear—that nonconformity is only *sinful* when it refuses to conform to the *will of Christ*—and conformity itself is a great sin when it obeys a rule which is not of the Lord’s ordaining! When we meet together in Church Meetings we cannot make laws for the Lord’s kingdom! We dare not attempt it! Such necessary regulations as may be made for carrying out our Lord’s commands—to meet for worship and to proclaim the Gospel—are commendable because they are acts necessary to obedience to His highest laws. But even these minor details are not tolerable if they clearly violate the spirit and mind of Jesus Christ.

He has given us *spiritual* guides rather than legal rubrics and fettering liturgies! And He has left us at liberty to follow the directions of His own free Spirit. But if we make a regulation, thinking it to be very wise—if it is contrary to the Spirit of our Lord—the rule is itself evil and is not to be borne with! In such a case the Church has trenched upon the rights of her Head, and has done what she ought not to have done. She has, in effect, snatched from His hand the scepter and set up a schism. Lawmaking in the Church was finished in that day when the curse was pronounced on him who should take from or add to the Word of God! Christ alone is the legislator of His Church—none but He!

But I go further and venture to say that Christ is not only the Legislator of the Church, and has left to us His Statute-book, sufficient to guide us in every dilemma, but He is also the living Administrator in the Church. He is not here, it is true, but as monarchs often administrate through lieutenants, so the Lord Jesus administers through His everliving Spirit who dwells in the hearts of His people. You are not to think of Christ as of One who is dead and buried. If He were here on earth I suppose nobody would claim to be the Head of the Church but Himself. His Presence would at once overawe every pretender—and now, though He is not here in Person—yet He is not dead!

He lives! He sits on the Throne prepared for Him at the right hand of the Father! In Spirit He is here. “Lo! I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.” And what must the true Head of the Church think when He sees another put up into His Throne and impiously called by His title? What must the living Head moving in the midst of the Church feel in regard to such a blasphemous intrusion as that? He, the Holy Spirit, is the Vicegerent of Christ, the Representative of the absent Son of Man!

And how does this Spirit administer the Laws of God? I answer, through His people, for the Holy Spirit dwells in true Believers! And when they meet together as the Lord’s servants and humbly ask His guidance, they may expect to have it—and opening the Statute-Book and seeing plain directions as to their course of action, they may be quite sure that what they do has their Master’s sanction! If they look, first of all, for the direction in their Lord’s Law-Book and next seek to be instructed as to its meaning by the Holy Spirit—though they are many minds—they shall be led as one man to choose that course of action which shall be after the mind of Christ.

Acting humbly and obediently—not on their own authority but in the authority of Jesus Christ, who, by His Spirit still rules in His Church— Believers practically show Christ, still, to be the only Head of His Church as to actual administration as well as to legislation. The sole authority of Jesus Christ in all respects must be maintained rigorously, but Churches are very apt to be guided by something else. Some would have us guided by *results*. We have heard a discussion upon the question whether or not we should continue missionary operations, since there are so few converted! How can the question ever be raised while the Master’s orders run thus—“Go you into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature”?

Spoken by the mouth of Jesus, our Ruler, that command stands good, and the *results* of missions can have no effect upon loyal minds either one way or the other as to their prosecution! If from this day for the next 10,000 years not a single soul should be converted to God by foreign missions—if there still remained a Church of Christ, it would be her duty with increasing vigor to thrust her sons forward into the mission field because her duty is *not* measured by the*result*, but by the imperial *authority* of Christ!

Equally so the Church is not to be regulated by the *times*. We are told by some that this age requires a different kind of preaching from that of a hundred years ago—and that 200 years ago, in Puritan times, doctrines were suitable which are exploded now. We are told the minister must keep abreast of the age—this is a thoughtful and philosophic period and the preacher must therefore *philosophize* and bring forth his own thinking rather than “mere declamation”—which is the learned name for a plain declaration of the Gospel of Jesus Christ! But, Sirs, it is not so! Our King is the same and the doctrines He has given us have not been changed by His authority, nor the rules He has laid down reversed by His proclamation!

He is the same yesterday, today, and forever! Let the times be polished or uncouth. Let them become philosophical or sink into barbarism—our duty is still the same, in solemn loyalty to Jesus Christ, to know nothing among men save Jesus Christ and Him Crucified! But the discoveries of science, we are told, have materially affected belief and therefore we should change our ways accordingly as philosophy changes. No, it must not be so! This is a stumbling stone and a rock of offense against which he who stumbles shall be broken. We still have the same King, still the same laws, still the same teaching of the Word—and we are to deliver this teaching after the same sort and in the same spirit!

*Semper idem* must be our motto—always the same, always keeping close to Jesus Christ and glorifying Him—for *He* and not the *times*, not the *philosophy* and not the *wit* of man must rule and govern the Church of God! If we shall do this, if any Church shall do this—namely, take its Truth from Jesus’ lips, live according to Jesus’ Word, and go forward in His name—such a Church cannot, by any possibility, fail, for the failure of such a Church would be the failure of the Master’s own authority! Brothers and Sisters, He has told us if we keep His commandments we shall abide in His love!

He will be with us always, even to the end of the world! And He has given to His Church His Holy Spirit according to the fullness of those words which He uttered when He breathed on His Apostles, “Whoever sins you remit, they are remitted unto them; and whoever sins you retain, they are retained.” So then, a Church acting for Christ, with His authority denouncing the judgments of God upon sin, shall find those judgments follow. And opening the treasure house of God’s mercy to those who seek Jesus Christ by faith, those treasures shall be freely given according to the Church’s declaration, which she made in her Master’s name.

Go in her *own* name, and she fails! Go in her *Lord’s* name, and she succeeds! Take with her His sign manual. Walk in obedience to His Statute-Book, and deliver herself from the lordship of men—and the Church’s history shall be written in some such lines as these, “Fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners.” I have in these words, I am afraid, rather confusedly stated what I believe Scripture teaches with regard to the Headship of Christ, namely, that He is the *only* teacher of doctrine, the only maker of spiritual laws. That He is the living Administrator of the laws of His own spiritual kingdom and therefore no authority is to be yielded unto the Church but that of Christ—and when we have that authority, and are obedient to it—we need entertain no fear as to the result.

**III.**Thirdly, ON WHAT DOES THIS HEADSHIP REST? Very briefly, it rests on the natural supremacy of Christ’s Nature. Who could be Head but Jesus? He is a *perfect* Man, which we are not. He is the first-born among many Brethren, and we are but the younger and weaker. He is God over all, blessed forever and ever. Surely, none but He should be King in Zion since there is no part of the Church which is Divine except its glorious Head!

The headship of Christ is the inevitable and necessary result of His work. Hear how His members sing—  
***“You have redeemed our souls with blood, Have set the prisoners free.  
Have made us kings and priests to God,  
And we shall reign with You.”***

Who could be head but He to whom such praise can be awarded? He has washed us in His blood—He must be Head! He has loved us from before the foundation of the world—He must be Chief. His right hand and His holy arm have gotten Him the victory—let Him be crowned King of kings and Lord of lords! That winepress in which He trod His enemies, till His garments were dyed with blood, was the guarantee to Him that He should sit on His Father’s Throne and reign forever and ever!

Moreover, the decree of God has decided this beyond dispute. Read the second Psalm and learn that when the kings of the earth stood up and the rulers took counsel together against the Lord and against His Anointed, the Lord sitting in the heavens *laughed* at their conspiracy and scorned the gathering of His foes! “Yet,” says He, “have I set My King upon My holy hill of Zion.” I will declare the decree—“The Lord has said unto Me, You are My Son; this day have I begotten You.” How gloriously the promise reads: “Ask of Me, and I shall give You the heathen for Your inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for Your possession. You shall break them with a rod of iron. You shall dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel.” It is part of the eternal purpose which constituted the Church that Christ should be made its Head. And if there is a Church of the living God, it is also inevitable that of that Church Christ should be the sole Head.

Moreover, Brethren, and but once more—is not our Lord the Head of the Church by universal acclamation and consent of all the members of that Church? We have *never* set up a rival candidate! No heart renewed by His Grace can desire any other king!—

***“Let Him be crowned with majesty  
Who bowed His head to death!  
And be His honors sounded high  
By all things that have breath.”***

Rivals in His blood-bought dominion? Rivals against the Son of David?! Let them be swept away as the smoke! Let them be as driven stubble to His bow!

King Jesus! All hail! Long live the King! Bring forth the royal diadem! See you not how the angels crown Him? Hark you not to the songs of cherubim and seraphim, “For You are worthy, You are worthy to take the book, and loose the seven seals thereof”? Hear you not the everlasting chant of those who have overcome through His blood, “You are worthy, You are worthy, for You were slain and have redeemed us unto God by Your blood”? While the Church on earth joins in the same solemn canticle, “Crown Him, crown Him, crown Him Lord of all, for worthy is the Lamb that was slain.”

By the supremacy of His Nature. By the necessity of His accomplished work. By the decree of the Father. By the universal assent of all the bloodwashed, He is the *only* Head of His own Church!

**IV.**What then, Brethren, WHAT THEN, DOES THIS CONDEMN? What does it condemn? It condemns the villainous pretense of a Papal headship! A priest at Rome is the head of the Church of Jesus Christ, indeed! Well, if the Pope is head of the Church—if he is so—then see what, according to Scripture, he is. This Pio Nono is this—he is the head of the body, the Church “who is the *beginning*.” There was nothing, then, before this aforesaid Pius IX?

“The first-born from the dead”? Does he claim to have risen from the dead? “That in all things He might have the preeminence”—is this also the old Italian’s right? “For it pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell”—blasphemy dares not apply this to the tottering prince whose treasury needs replenishing with Peter’s pence. Yet this is the description of the Person who is the Head of the Church, and, if Pius IX is not all that, he is no head of the Church! But perhaps he is the *second* head? ThenChrist’s Church is a monstrous being with two heads!

They may make it out to be three one day, perhaps, and then we will call the thing Cerberus, and Hell Dog, and we shall not be far off from the true idea of Popery. No, but he is the *delegated* head. What for? Why should Christ delegate authority which He can wield Himself? But we *need* a delegation, for Christ is absent. But the Holy Spirit is that delegation, and is *here*. Of all the dreams that ever deluded men, and probably of all blasphemies that ever were uttered, there has never been one which is more absurd and which is more fruitful in all manner of mischief than the idea that the Bishop of Rome can be the head of the Church of Jesus Christ!

No, these popes die, and are not! And how could the Church live if its head were dead? The true Head ever lives and the Church ever lives in Him! But it is affirmed that there must needs be a *visible* headship, and just now we are told every day that we must choose in church matters between the headship of the monarch of England and the headship of the pope at Rome. I beg the gentlemen’s pardon—we have no such choice, for when we are asked which we will have to rule us in *spiritual* things, we say, “Neither—neither for a single moment!” We make no bones about the matter, kings and queens are no heads of the Church to us.

We will no more brook spiritual domination from an English premier than from a Romish pope! We are equally opposed to both—all human headship must go down! To our well-beloved queen all honor and reverence as to one of the best of rulers in *civil* affairs. But in *spiritual* affairs in the Church of Christ she has no ruling power—what she may have in the Church of England is another question. To us it makes no matter whether it is man or woman—whether it is prince or priest—we will have neither czar, emperor, queen, pope, seraph or angel to reign in the Church of Jesus Christ!

The Church has no lawful governor or supreme Lord but Jesus Christ Himself. Our Lord, as it seems to me, puts this so plainly in the Word of God that I marvel men who believe in the Bible should think the State could be at the head of the Church! The State-Church party has placed a Bible with a crown and a scepter upon their posters! It is suggestive that the Bible is closed—for if Englishmen were once to read it, it would be fatal to the cause which now claims it—since one of the Truths of God they would read would be this—“My kingdom is not of this world.” And they would hear Christ say, “Render unto Caesar the things which are Caesar’s”—that is, yield all civil obedience to the civil authority, “but unto God the things that are God’s.”

Leave the Lord to rule in the kingdom of mind and spirit, and let Caesar keep his kingdom of civil government! Let the State do its work and never interfere with the Church! And let the Church do her work and never interfere with, or be interfered with, by the State! The two kingdoms are separate and distinct. Broad lines of demarcation are always drawn, throughout the whole of the New Testament, between the spiritual and the temporal power—and the mischief is when men cannot see this.

Christ is the Head of the Church, not anyone who represents the State. Brethren, just think for a minute what mischief this doctrine of the headship of the State has done. Time was when men could hardly be parish ushers without coming to take the Sacrament at the established Church. Oh, the multiplied hypocrisies which were perpetrated every day by graceless men who came to qualify themselves for office by taking the emblems of our holy faith when they knew not Christ! Such things are more or less inevitable to the system. Think, again, what persecutions have risen out of this error. You cannot put any sect into a position of ascendancy but it falls into persecution—all sects have persecuted, in turn, when so tempted.

There is not a pin to choose between one and the other, except, as I sometimes say, the Baptists have never persecuted because they have never had an opportunity. But I will not insist even upon that. It is in human nature to do ill when the civil arm is ready to crush conscience, and therefore Christ has taken the temptation out of the way and put it out of the possibility of His people, if they keep close to His rule, so much as to touch the carnal weapon. The weapons of their warfare, He tells them, are not carnal but *spiritual* and therefore mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds. What a degradation to the Church of Christ to think of having any other Head but Christ!

Ah, Brothers and Sisters, if the monarch were the most holy and godly person that ever lived, I should tremble for him exceedingly that such a person should in any sense be styled the Head of the Church! How could such a person *pray*? How could a poor sinner—and such the best man still is—come before Christ and pray to Him and say, “Lord, You know I am the head of Your Church”? It seems to me to be such an atrocious claim, such a horrible profanity! I would not, for twice 10,000 worlds, touch that title with so much as the tip of my finger if I hoped to be saved! I dare not expose my friend, or even my enemy, to the awful risk he must make assuming such a title!

I judge no one, God forbid I should! But if I saw in this world a man absolutely perfect, full of Divine knowledge and light, and I were asked by him, “Shall I assume that title?” I should go down on my knees and say, “For God’s sake, and for your own soul’s sake, touch it not, for how can you, with your light, and knowledge and love to Christ, take from Him one of His grandest names?” But what shall I say when the monarch is the opposite? And such cases have occurred. I need not take you far back in history. The name of George IV has no remarkable odor of sanctity about it—and the same may be said of Charles II—I never heard historians say that he was eminent in godliness.

But yet these men were heads of the Church! I shudder at being compelled to remember such an infamous fact. Men, whose character is not to be thought of without a blush on the cheek of modesty, were heads of the Church of Jesus Christ! God have mercy on this land for having fallen so low as this, for I know not that heathen countries have ever blasphemed God more than we have done in allowing heartless debauchers to take upon themselves the name of “Head of the Church of Christ”! No, my Brethren, this cannot be endured by us in any Church with which we commune! We repudiate it! We shake off the abomination as Paul shook off the viper from his hand into the fire!

The same rebuke is due to that which has been tolerated in many Churches, namely, the headship of great religious teachers. Sometimes great teachers, while yet alive, have been practically regarded as the supreme arbiters of the Church. Their will was law, apart from the Book. Their decree stood fast, apart from the Scripture. All this was evil! There are certain Churches at this day which reverence extremely the names of dead men. “The Fathers”—are they not by some thought to be as great as the Apostles? The names of John Wesley, and John Calvin and others, I fear, very often occupy the place which belongs to Jesus Christ. Let every Church of Jesus Christ now declare that she follows not *men* but obeys her Master alone.

Mark you, Brothers and Sisters, the truth which I have brought out somewhat strongly equally applies to the Church itself, for the Church is not her own head—she has no right to act upon her own judgment apart from the statutes of her King! She must come to the Bible—everything is there for her. She has no right to use her own judgment apart from the Master. She must go to the Master. She is a *servant* and the Master is supreme. The Church’s power is twofold. It is a power to *testify* to the world what Christ has revealed. She is set as a witness and she must act as such. She has, next, a *ministerial* power by which she carries out the will of Christ, and does His bidding as Christ’s servant and minister.

A certain number of servants meet in the servants’ hall—they have an order given to do such work—and they have also orders given them how to do it. They then consult with each other as to the minor details—how they can best observe the Master’s rule and do His bidding. They are perfectly right in so doing. But suppose they began to consult about whether the objects proposed by the Master were good, or whether the rules which He had laid down might not be altered! They would at once become rebellious and be in danger of discharge. So a Church met together to consult how to carry out the Master’s will and how to enforce His laws does rightly.

But a Church meeting to make *new* laws, or a Church meeting to rule according to its own judgment and opinion—imagining that its decision will have weight—has made a mistake and placed itself in a false position. The one doctrine which I have sought to bring forward is this—that He, alone, who *bought* the Church, and *saved* the Church is to *rule* the Church.

**V.**But if so, WHAT IS THE LESSON WHICH IT TEACHES TO EACH ONE HERE? Does not it make each of you enquire, “If the entire Church is thus to yield obedience to Christ, and to no one else, am *I*yielding such obedience? I claim to be Christian, but am I a Christian of that prejudiced sort who follows that which they are brought up to, and so acknowledge the rules of *mothers and fathers* instead of the rule of *Christ*? Have I brought what I avow to be the Truth of God to the touchstone of Scripture? Did I ever spend a quarter of an hour in weighing my cherished opinions?” I am afraid the great mass of Christians have never done this— but have sucked in their religion with their mother’s milk and nothing further.

Again, if I am a Christian, am I in the habit of judging what I ought to do by my own whims and wishes, or do I judge by the Statute-Book of the King? Many say they do not like this and do not like that—as if that had anything to do with it! What are your likes and dislikes? You are a *servant* and bound to give up your will to the Master! If Christ gives a command which you imagine to be hard because it does not chime in with your love of ease—my Brothers and Sisters, will you not, as servants of the Master, put your whims aside and endeavor to follow Him? Oh, it is a blessed life to live—to be no longer the servant of *men* and of *self—*but to go to Christ daily in prayer, and say, “What I know not, teach me, Lord.”

Then you may laugh at Satan’s rage and face a frowning world, for the Master will never leave those who cleave to Him! If a man loves the testimonies and commandments of the Most High, God shall be his buckler, his shield, and his high tower. But if he turns aside to his own imaginings, his fall shall be certain! May the Lord keep the Church in this matter, and her day of victory shall soon come. May Christ be her only Head and her triumph draws near! I can see the morning breaking—yonder are the first streaks of light upon the sky—the Master is coming because the Church begins to acknowledge Him—and then shall her happy days begin and the days of her mourning shall be ended forever and ever.

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Sermon #1169 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

**÷Col 1.19**

THE FULLNESS OF CHRIST THE TREASURY OF THE SAINTS  
NO. 1169

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, APRIL 19, 1874, *BY C. H. SPURGEON*  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“For it pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell.”*** Col 1:19***.  
“And of His fullness we have all received, and Grace for Grace.”*** Joh 1:16***.***

THESE two texts make up a very beautiful sketch of the plan of salvation. Put before your mind’s eye the sinner, empty of all holiness, of all hope, despairing and ready to die. Put, also, before your mind, God, full of mercy, willing to come and fill the sinner’s emptiness, to bring all His communicable attributes, dwell in that sinner and give him, first, the mercy which can blot out his sin, and then the holiness which can lift him up from his ruined condition. Next note the difficulty in the way—God cannot come as *half* a God—all His attributes must come together. And should the just God come into this guilty sinner to fill his emptiness, the flame of Justice would destroy him. It is not possible for God, even our God, who is “a consuming fire,” to come into contact with that which is sinful without destroying it. What then? Shall the sinner remain empty and shall God’s fullness remain uncommunicated?

Behold the plan which infinite Wisdom has devised! The Eternal Son of God becomes Man! The Divine Nature comes in all its fullness and dwells in the Mediator Christ Jesus! Coming into Him, *He* was made to feel the mighty burning of Justice, which caused Him agony but could not consume Him, for in Him there was no sin. Justice burned and blazed within Him and cast Him into a bloody sweat—yes, brought Him to the Cross and to death because He stood in the sinner’s place. But this golden Vessel, though heated, was not melted! It could contain the Divine fire and yet not be destroyed—and now in Christ Jesus dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily and, moreover, the Divine Nature is in Him in such a way as to be capable of communication to the sons of men. Of course the *essence* of Deity is not communicated, for that would be to make men into Gods—but we are “made partakers of the Divine Nature” in the sense of receiving the same character—and becoming the *children* of God. That which God could not bring to us directly by reason of our inability to receive it, He has now brought to us through a Mediator, by placing it in the Man, Christ Jesus, that we, coming to Him, might freely receive of it.

The next step in the plan of salvation is this—that after the fullness of God has come to man in the Person of His Son, everyone that comes to Him by faith receives His Divine Grace. Salvation is not by what you *bring* to Christ, but by what you *take* from Him. You are to be receivers first, and then, by-and-by, through the power of Grace, you shall give forth

from yourselves rivers of living water to others. In your first coming you come empty, having nothing but your sin and misery—as empty, undeserving sinners you receive of His fullness—and all your life continue to do the same. The Grace already given is not the climax or the conclusion— you go on receiving more and more! Grace increases your capacity for Grace and that enlarged capacity becomes filled! And so the fullness of God comes into you till you are filled with it and you rise from Grace to Glory, being made like unto God and fitted to dwell where He is forever and ever.

Now, unconverted ones, take note that this is the plan of salvation, and the *only* plan. You must obtain God’s love and mercy and holiness by receiving it through the Mediator, Jesus Christ! You have not yet received it—I ask you, How long will you tarry without it? You are, in some degree, aware of your need, for you are not ignorant of the Gospel. Oftentimes you have heard the voice of its invitation and have been almost persuaded to receive the fullness revealed in Christ Jesus. How long will you waver between two opinions? How long will you hesitate? This is the way, the safe way, the suitable way, the *only* way which is open to you—and it is open to you at this very moment—will your feet never tread it? Will your disobedient steps forever wander, till, at last, you sink in despair and die eternally? God have mercy upon you and bring you to receive of the fullness which the Father has stored up in His Son, Jesus Christ!

Needy Sinners, I warn you, do not insult the fullness of Christ by thinking that you are full enough yourselves! Never think of putting your own righteousness side by side with the Divine, nor think of mixing your tears with Jesus’ blood, nor of bringing your prayers or your faith to increase the all-sufficiency of Christ’s atoning Sacrifice! He needs nothing from you! Come and take everything from Him, for all fullness dwells in Him. As you may not insult His fullness, so I pray you, do not *neglect* it. Do not stand by this Fountain and refuse to drink. Do not pass by the riches of His Grace as though they were nothing to you, lest haply, when you come to die, your heart should be wrung with terrible remorse because you have despised the Savior’s love. “How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?” Put not off these matters from month to month, but, “today, if you will hear His voice, harden not your hearts.” Hasten now unto the place where God Himself has come to meet you—namely, in the Person of His Son.

Moreover, as I charge you not to neglect the Grace of our Lord Jesus, so would I encourage you not to distrust it. All fullness dwells in Jesus—a fullness which is meant to be given out to all who receive it as the gift of Divine Grace! Believe in this fullness and, empty as you are, do not despair any longer when you remember that Jesus has a supply for every possible need. Come, though your head is bowed with grief, for Jesus never did reject a sinner and he never can. It is His office and calling to cleanse the guilty and to receive the lost. Come to Him, now, and may we, before this service is done, be able, all of us, to sing, “It pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell,” and, “of His fullness have all we received, and Grace for Grace.”

Let not these words be forgotten by those for whom they are meant. But still, I have not taken my text, this morning, with the view of so preaching from it. I have another aim altogether. Moreover, it will be right for me to say that I do not intend to go into an exposition of these texts, having explained them several times before. I have only taken them with one object, namely, to address myself vehemently to the *servants of God*— that they may be exhorted to lay hold of the fullness of the power and holiness which dwell in their Covenant Head.

During this last week I have given to my Brothers in the Conference, a motto which lay on my own heart. It is, “Forward! Upward!” These are the watchwords of this morning—Forward! Upward! I want you, dear Brothers and Sisters, to see that every preparation is made for greater growth and greater success. I want you to be encouraged to seize upon that which lies before you, but which is too often treated as if it did not exist, and to rise, by the power of the Eternal Spirit, to something higher than you have, up to now, accomplished or even attempted.

**I.**My first point this morning is this—THERE IS A GLORIOUS FULLNESS IN JESUS. Brothers and Sisters, if it is so, why are we so weak, unfurnished and unhappy? There is an infinite fullness in Jesus! A fullness of all that any saint can ever need *to enable him to rise to the highest degree of Divine Grace*. If there is anything lacking for the attainment of the Divine image in us, it is not a deficiency Christward—it is occasioned by shortcomings in *ourselves*. If sin is to be overcome, the conquering power dwells in Him in its fullness. If virtue is to be attained, sanctifying energy resides in Christ to perfection. If I see before me an eminent child of God, whose conversation is in Heaven, I may not dare to say that I am not capable of being as sanctified as he is—for the same Lord is mine as well as his.

I have in my flesh no power whatever, for I am emptiness itself. In me the Truth of God is realized, “Without Me you can do nothing.” But, on the other hand, the power to do all things lies in Christ and the power to become fully consecrated streams forth from Him. “With God all things are possible.” “In Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily,” and they who dwell in Him shall find things impossible with man become simple everyday facts with themselves if they will but have faith in the mediatorial fullness.

Beloved, I am going to say nothing but what you all know. And I do not mean to garnish it with finery of words. The truth is that there are many who are barely Christians and have scarcely enough Grace to float them into Heaven. The keel of their vessel is grating on the gravel all the way. My prayer is that we may reach deep waters and have so much Grace that we may sail like a gallant ship on the broad ocean with a glorious cargo on board and all colors flying—and so there may be administered unto us an abundant entrance into the kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! Everything is provided for this. Christ has not merely placed enough bread on the table to keep us from starving, His oxen and fatlings are killed—He has spread a royal feast.

He has not provided a scanty garment which may barely hide your nakedness, but He has brought forth the best robe and has procured earrings for your ears, jewels for your necks and a royal crown for your

heads—for it pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell for all His saints. If you have not these riches, the fault lies with yourself. It is there—you might have it if you had but faith to take it. Too often we sit down like beggars on the dunghill and groan and cry because of the poverty of our nature when we ought to be rejoicing in the Lord. I thank God that we can groan, for that is something! But there is a more excellent way—a better gift to be earnestly coveted. In Christ you are rich to the fullness of riches! Get up, I pray you, to the high places and realize for yourselves the fullness of God in Christ Jesus!

The fullness which dwells in our Lord we may rest assured is *sufficient for the conquest of the world*. It is not enough for you or me that we should be wholly consecrated to Christ—our desire is that the whole *world* should be filled with the knowledge of the Lord! We can never be satisfied while there remains one sinner unsaved, one idol upon its pedestal, or one single error to darken the minds of men. For Christ we do not desire England, only, and the civilized nations, but we claim for Him the darkest dens of cannibalism and the vilest haunts of piracy. The banner of the Cross shall wave where now black flags poison the breeze! It shall be lifted high where today Kalee and Juggernaut set up their ensigns, for the Lord God Omnipotent*shall* reign from shore to shore!

We have in Christ Jesus all the might which is needed for subduing the nations, for all power is given unto Him in Heaven and in earth. We have, dear Brothers and Sisters, I fear, too often been considering the amount of *money* and the number of men which would be needed. Indeed, I remember a remarkable paper being read explaining to us how much money it would require to evangelize the world—a calculation which I regarded as vanity of vanities and nothing more—for if *mountains* of money were put before us it might just as well be shoveled into the infernal deep for all the good it could do—if regarded as at all essential! Our checkbook needs more golden treasure and, thank God, we have it!

Depend upon it, when the Church is fit to be trusted with money, she will have it. Pecuniary straitness is only an index of lack of Divine Grace and is so far a *good* thing, because it brings before us in palpable form our real poverty before the Most High. But Brothers and Sisters, for the conquest of the world, the strength lies in the man Christ Jesus, since in Him all fullness dwells! And in Him we have all the necessary power at our disposal. We are never to say, “Those thieves and criminals are too depraved to be converted,” for in our Lord there is fullness of power to convert the most abandoned! We are not to say, “That alley in the darkest part of the city will never be cleansed from its abominations.” Jesus could cleanse Sodom, itself! We are never to leave a tribe of savages unevangelized because they are too degraded, nor are we to quail before an uneducated and subtle nation because it is too skeptical—all power for all cases is in Jesus—He is the armory of the house of David! In Him we shall find a thousand bucklers, all shields of mighty men! Let us go to the armory and we shall receive the invincible weapons of our Holy War, yes, and the strength with which to wield them—the might which ensures victory!

Beloved, the text puts away from us, as far as the east is from the west, every conceivable objection that may be raised as to what a saint can do, for surely the very thought of difficulty is rendered absurd by the fact of all fullness residing in our Lord on our behalf! It is not a fullness for merely *teaching*, but a fullness for convincing! It is not a fullness for simply convincing of sin, but for *converting* and bringing to full salvation! It is not a fullness for justifying the Believer, alone, but a fullness for *sanctifying* him—and not a fullness for sanctifying him merely for a little while—but a fullness to keep him to the end! It is a fullness which can fill him with all the fullness of God! Come to whatever place you may, you shall not say, “Here I am at a nonplus,” but there will you find a new illustration of the might of the eternal God which dwells in Christ Jesus!

The fact is, Beloved, we have a superabundant force in Christ and if we did but know it, instead of talking about the struggles of the Church and the strain that is put upon us to hold our own, the joy of the Lord would give such strength to us that we should not remember our own efforts, but like the flood which rushes down the mountain after the rain, the flush of life from Jesus would speed on with a tremendous force, leaping over every obstacle and filling our souls to the brim! God grant us to feel that we do not serve a little Christ nor a stingy Lord. Our God is the God of the hills as well as the valleys! And in the strength of the Lord Omnipotent we triumph in every place! Only let us serve God in real faith and we know not what we may live to see!

God grant us to know this first Truth of God that there is a fullness in Christ—and in the strength of that fullness we may cry—“Forward and upward!”

**II.**The next encouraging fact is that THE FULLNESS IS IN JESUS NOW. “It pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness *dwell*.” The glory of *the past* exercises a depressing influence upon many Christians. “We have heard with our ears and our fathers have told us the wondrous things which You did in their day and in the old time before them.” But we dolefully complain that the golden age of Christianity is over—its heroic times are matter of history. Indeed, this feeling is transformed to fact, for scarcely any Church now existing realizes that it can do what its first promoters did! All appear to be quite sure that these are bad times and but little is to be done in them. We do not expect, nowadays, to find a Methodist so full of fire as the first field preachers. The Quakers are never as fanatical and even the Primitives are not Ranters now! The old reproach has ceased because the old ardor which provoked it has cooled down. So far so *bad*.

I see grave cause for sorrow in all this. A people are in an evil case when all their heroism is historical. We read the biographies of former worthies with great wonder and respect. But we do not attempt to follow in their steps with equal stride. Why not? It has pleased the Father that in Jesus all fullness should *dwell*, a fullness for Paul, a fullness for Luther, a fullness for Whitfield, and blessed be God, a fullness for me and a fullness for you! All that Jesus has given forth has not exhausted Him! Christianity has not lost its pristine strength—we have lost our *faith*—there’s the calamity! Oh, ignoble sons of glorious sires, *you* have degenerated, but not your Master! And if, even in your degeneracy, you would cast yourselves

upon your unchanging God, you would rise to more than the strength of your sires and do yet greater things than they!

The fullness of Jesus is not changed. Then why are our works so feebly done? Pentecost, is that to be a tradition? The reforming days, are these to be only memories? I see no reason why we should not have a greater Pentecost than Peter saw and a Reformation deeper in its foundations, and truer in its building up than all the reforms which Luther or Calvin achieved! We have the same Christ, remember that! The times are altered, but Jesus is the Eternal and time touches Him not. “But we are not such men as they.” What? Cannot God make us such? Are we weaker than they? The fitter to be instruments for the mighty God! Away with the cowardice which thinks the past is never to be outdone! Is not the Lord of Hosts with us? Is anything too hard for Him? We must labor to eclipse the past as the sunlight eclipses the brightness of the stars!

The mass of professors have their eyes only on *the future.* The good times are coming, by-and-by, but they are not here yet. We look forward with much hope to the golden age that is to be, when we shall see the fullness of Jesus and nations will be born in a day! Brothers and Sisters, does my text say, “It pleased the Father that in Him all fullness shall *one day* dwell”? No, but, “in Him should all fullness dwell.” Whatever has been done can be done now—and whatever shall yet be done, can be done today, by His Grace. Our laziness puts off the work of conquest. Our selfindulgence procrastinates. Our cowardice and lack of faith make us dote upon the millennium instead of hearing the Spirit’s voice today! Happy days would begin from this hour if the Church would but awake and put on her Strength, for in her Lord all fatness dwells.

When the Son of Man comes, shall He find faith on the earth? Some doubting ones say, “We do not wonder that there is success in such a place,” but we cannot have it. We hear of earnest ministers and we conclude that where *they* labor God will send the blessing, but not to *our* ministry. We conclude that when yonder woman gathers the young people around her, it is no wonder that blessing comes. Does Christ depend on ministers or on holy women? Have you said, “Alas, I cannot have the blessing.” Why not? How dare you limit the Holy One of Israel? You who dwell in towns where all is cold around you, do you despair? Is it in your minds that Christ is dependent upon the *circumstances* in which He has placed His servants? “It pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell.” What if the servants are empty—their Master is not! If the *means* of Grace lack power, Grace from above is still Omnipotent. Only fly to the Fountain and the dried up streams need not distress you.

Furthermore, our Churches believe that there is a great fullness in Christ and that *sometimes*they ought to enjoy it. The progress of Christianity is to be by tides which ebb and flow. There are to be revivals like the spring and these must alternate with long lethargies like the winter. O accursed Unbelief, will you always pervert the Truth of God? Will you never understand this Word of God—“It pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness *dwell*”? It is *not* the Lord’s purpose that a fullness should reside in Jesus during revivals and then withdraw. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever! The highest state of revival should be the normal condition of the Church. When her martyrs are most selfsacrificing, her missionaries most daring, her ministers most bold, her members most consecrated, she is, even then, below her standard—she has not fully reached her high calling—to come down from her position would be sin!

God grant us Grace to feel that we have not to drink of an intermittent spring, nor to work for Christ with an occasional industry—but as all fullness *dwells* in Him—it is ours to believe that *today* we can have all the blessing of a true revival! That *today* we can go forward in the power of God! That at this very hour we lack for nothing which can lift the Church into her highest condition of spirituality and power! God grant us to receive Grace for Grace today!

**III.**Thirdly, THE POSITION OF THIS FULLNESS IS RICHLY ENCOURAGING TO US IN THE MATTER OF OBTAINING IT. “It pleased the Father that in *Him* should all fullness dwell.” Brothers and Sisters, you have heard what we have said about the fullness—our words are very poor and poverty-stricken compared with the fact—but listen! The fullness is placed where you can receive it—where you can receive it now, for it is placed in Him who is your Brother—bone of your bone and flesh of your flesh! It dwells in Him who loves to give it, because, as our Head, He delights to communicate with His members!

The plenitude of Divine Grace dwells in Him who is, Himself, yours! Since He is yours, all that is in Christ is yours! You need not pray as if you had no inheritance in the blessing which you seek. Christ is the Trustee of the fullness of God and the property of it is vested in His people— you have only to ask of Him and He will give you that which is yours, already! Why do you hesitate? How can you linger? The Father has placed His Grace in Christ because it gratifies His love to His Son. It pleases the heart of the great God to see Jesus adorned with the fullness of Deity and every time Jesus gives to Believers, the great heart of God is gladdened! How can you hesitate about receiving it if it pleases God for you to partake in it? You may go with great spirit and comfort, since Jesus Himself is honored by your going to Him. He obtains Glory by distributing of His fullness to empty sinners, who, when they receive Grace, are sure to love Him—how can you think Him reluctant to bestow the gift which will increase His Glory?

Do you not know, too, that when you go to Christ, you gain even by the act of going? I am so thankful that Christ has not put my fullness in *myself*, for then I should not require to go to Him so often, or if I did go to Him I should not have an errand to go upon of such importance as to justify my seeking an audience. But now, every time I get to Christ’s door I can plead *necessity*. We go to Him because we *must* go. When is there an hour when a Believer does not need to receive from Jesus? Go, then, Beloved, since it blesses the Church, it honors Christ, it pleases God and it is the way of soul enrichment for yourselves! What place of resort could be so attractive as the Person of the Well-Beloved? If God had put His fullness into an angel, we should not feel greatly drawn to *him—*but since He has caused it to dwell in *Jesus*, He has put it where we love to have it— where we feel at home, where we are glad to go often! Yes, where we

would love to abide and never to go away, but to be forever receiving of Him.

I delight to think that this fullness is placed in Christ because He is the Man who receives sinners and, therefore, you saints who have lost your evidences, you Believers who have acted inconsistently and have not lived up to your privileges, you may say, “we cannot go for this fullness to God, Himself, but we will joyfully go to the Savior of sinners.” If you have been, till now, self-deceived, and your experience has all been a mistake, you can still come to the sinner’s Savior, to whom the thief looked up in his expiring *hour—*and from whom *your* first mercy came! Come, Brothers and Sisters, why do you hesitate? Why do you linger? You who know what Christ is, come, I pray you, with swift feet to the place where all you need is stored—and take all your heart requires! Yes, come for the highest degrees of Grace and for the largest measures of success—and you shall have them, for Christ delights to give exceeding abundantly above what we ask or even think!

**IV.**And now I have to pass on to another argument. I want to use each head as a hammer—and may God’s own Spirit wield it. The next is this, that FROM THIS FULLNESS WE HAVE, MANY OF US, ALREADY RECEIVED. Is not that an argument for still further exercising faith in Jesus? I know of no argument equal to that of practical experience. They must come who have come before! The sweetness of this honey remains upon the tongue and we long for more and cannot be satisfied till we have taken up the dripping honeycomb once again.

Now, see, Beloved, the text says, “Of His fullness we have all received.” That is, all the saints in former days have received of this fullness. There was not in John any good thing but what he received from his Master. There was not in the noble martyr Stephen one grain of courage but what he received from Christ. Paul, Apollos, or Cephas—these had *nothing* but what they took from Him If *they* received everything, why should *we* hesitate to do the same? Of ourselves it is also true that all our Graces came from Jesus. This is true of the greatest saint and true of the least. Do you remember when you first received Divine Grace? It brings to my mind right joyful memories of the hour when first these eyes looked to Him and were lightened—when I received pardon from His dying love and knew myself forgiven!

Since your conversion, dear Brothers and Sisters, *everything* good you have ever had, you have received from our Lord. What? Have you drunk out of your own cistern? What treasure have you found in your own fields? Nakedness, poverty, misery, death—these are the only possessions of Nature. But life, riches, fullness, joy—these are gifts of Divine Grace through Jesus Christ! Are you accepted before God? He justified you! Have you been kept? He has preserved you! Are you sanctified? He has cleansed you by His blood! Do you know, by full assurance, your interest in the Father’s love? He gave you that assurance! All you have and all you ever *will* have—all that every saint that shall ever be born shall have that is worth having comes out of the fullness of Christ!  
The crowded ranks of the white-robed above, without exception, confess, “Of His fullness we have all received.” I hear them sing, this morning, as they keep a glorious Sabbath Day above—and this is one sweet stanza of their song, “Of His fullness we have all received, and Grace for Grace.” Come then, Brothers and Sisters, what prevents us from receiving? “Ah,” you say, “I cannot imagine that I can be a Christian of the highest type.” Why not? Have you not received life? Why should you not receive life more abundantly? Have you not already been pardoned? Why should you not have the full assurance of that pardon? Have you not already been taken up from the horrible pit and out of the miry clay? What hinders but that Christ should set you upon a rock and put a new song into your mouth and establish your goings?

“But I cannot hope to be so useful as some are.” Why not? According to your faith so shall it be to you! God has given you one convert, why cannot He give you a hundred? You have been blessed to a dear child in Sunday school and you have rejoiced over that one jewel as a precious Godsend! Why should you not dive, again, and bring up other pearls for your Immanuel’s crown? I would stir in you a sacred ambition! I would provoke you to the highest style of Christian manhood and the most heroic form of Christian service! What you have received is the pledge of what you may receive, but, indeed, you have already obtained a good deal more than yet remains to be received!

Christ is yours and by that fact all things are yours! What you now need is included in what you already have! You only need to realize it—by faith call it your own—and practically to live upon it. May God enable you to do so! Of His fullness have we all received—why should we not receive more?

**IV.**The last blow of the hammer shall be this—THE GIFTS WE HAVE ALREADY HAD ARE NOT TRIFLES, for John says we have received “Grace for Grace,” which is a mode in the Greek language of expressing the superlative. We have received the highest Grace, *superlative* Grace. The gift of Jesus Christ is the highest Grace that even God, Himself, can bestow— nothing can go beyond that! Listen to this, then—“He that spared not His own Son, but freely delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?” I charge you, let that text enter into your hearts—and when you feel straitened in prayer and tempted to say, “No, not here, I cannot rise so high, I am not qualified for that attainment”— do, I pray you, remember the gifts already received by which Jesus opens your mouth and bids you ask great things.

The Father has given you His Son! How can He deny you anything? The expression, “Grace for Grace,” may mean Grace answering to Grace— Grace which was in accordance with Grace already given—Grace preparatory to what is yet to come. Has not the Father given you such Divine Grace as you had capacity to receive? If there had been more room you would have had more. If you had exercised more faith, He would have given you more joy. If you had possessed more hope, you would have had more realization. He has always come up to, and even gone beyond, the measure of our expectation. Is there, in your soul, this morning, an enlargement? I feel it in my own heart! I feel a dissatisfaction with my present attainments! I pant to know my Lord better! I am discontented with

what I have done for Him up to now! I long to do 10 times more for His Glory!

Do you feel the same? Oh, then He will keep in touch with you! Yes, He will do exceeding abundantly above all you ask, or even think! That text does not say, “Above what you *can* ask or think,” as people will persist in saying. That is not true because we *can* ask and *can* think as great things as God Himself will give, and He means us to ask *before* He gives. Our capacity for asking is, as a general rule, the measure of His giving, but the Scriptures say He will do exceeding abundantly *above* what you ask or think. Now, are you thinking great things and asking great things? Do not be afraid! The Lord will not let you outstrip Him! Be enlarged—and as large as your faith—so large shall the blessing be.

Then, dear Friends, Grace for Grace may mean Grace *upon* Grace, like Pelion upon Ossa—one mountain piled upon another—each Grace eclipsing the light of that which went before. This we have already known. When we first believed in Christ, pardon for sin seemed everything. But when we came to know that we were justified in Christ Jesus, that appeared to be a much greater blessing. And when we understood that we were adopted and were the sons of God, that new delight surpassed the former joy! The Lord has led you into Divine Grace which has surprised you and lifted you up from one point to another. I speak to many Brothers and Sisters here who must confess that their present state is very different from their Christian infancy—they now know what they never thought they could know. Why, there are doctrines that some of you can enjoy this morning which you used to think frightfully high doctrines! You once could not appreciate them, yet they are simplicities to you now! And there are conquests over sin which you could not have achieved in your boyhood. But now in your Christian manhood you can take up dragons and destroy them.

Now, dear Brethren, as you have been surprised with mercy, you are to be surprised with*more* mercy, and the Lord says to you, “Son of man, I will show you greater favors than these.” Greater joys are yet to be known! You have entered the room of silver—that inner door will lead you to a chamber of gold! And beyond that there is a door in the wall which he that is taught of God shall open—a door which will admit you into a chamber of diamonds! And when you shall come there and have seen the Glory and the exceeding riches of the Grace of God, there is still an inner chamber where that which eye has not seen nor ear heard shall be revealed to you—a joy unspeakable, unthinkable, indeed! May we comprehend with all the saints what are the heights and depths—and *know* the love of Christ which passes knowledge.

Now of the things which we have spoken, this is the sum. We have a fullness in Christ as Believers which we ought to use in the following manner —First, believe in great things! Do not sit down, as some do, in the little Meeting House where about 50 Brethren meet and expect the Lord to send a convert once every 12 months. And when He does send him, they worry him by the month together for fear he should not be one of the right sort! And when he finally comes in, they rejoice over him as one that finds great spoil in having picked up one solitary soul after 12 months’ ministry!

Oh, Brothers and Sisters, we have a greater God than this would imply! The little narrow thoughts which Christians have had as to the success of the Gospel cannot have come from a great God, can they? The day was when the very idea of sending the Gospel to the heathen was regarded by our orthodox Brethren as a piece of Don Quixotism, not to be attempted, and even now, if you say, “All the world for Jesus,” they open their eyes and say, “Ah, we are afraid you are tainted with universal redemption, or are going off to the Arminian camp.” God grant these dear Brethren new hearts and right spirits—at present their hearts are too small to bring Him much glory! May they get larger hearts, hearts something like their Lord’s—and may they have Grace given them to estimate the precious blood at a higher rate—for our Lord did not die to buy a few hundred souls, or to redeem to Himself a handful of people! He shed His blood for a number which no man can number—and His elect shall excel in multitude the sands which belt the sea!

Let us have great faith in what God intends to do. Believing these great things, let us *expect* them. Be on the *qui vive*for spiritual miracles. Expect to see hundreds converted! Wonder, when you hear a Gospel sermon, that the Holy Spirit does not save 3,000 by it! “Ah,” says one, “I should be very much astonished if He did.” I know you would, and that is why we do *not* see it! But we ought to wonder that there are not, and when we are as we should be, we shall see greater things than these! There is no weakness with God! That limping sinew is in Jacob’s thigh, it is not in the Angel’s. That palsied arm is man’s, not God's—no sinew of His arm can decay.

Sirs, do you think that He who smote the fields of Zoan with plagues is not Lord of idols and King of heathens? Do you think that He who divided the Red Sea cannot lead His people like a flock through the wilderness and bring them into the promised possession? Do you think that He cannot bring up His Church out of her bondage and set her feet in a large room? The Lord of Hosts is with us! Therefore let us *expect* things! Expecting great things, let us *attempt* great things! Let us each set about doing something for Christ, in the power of the Holy Spirit! Let us try what can be done! Let us not, if we are Sunday school teachers, be satisfied with going through the day’s lesson and feeling, “There, that will do.” Aim at the immediate conversion of every child in the class!

Do not let us say, as we go round with the tracts this afternoon, “We will leave them and not say a word.” Aim at getting a word about Jesus Christ with every person you meet with! As for myself, the preacher, let me come here to preach to you, not with the hope that perhaps, here and there, one will find a Savior, but with an earnest cry to Heaven that the Holy Spirit will comprehend, in the lines of His electing and redeeming love, the whole mass of you, and make this Tabernacle into a golden casket in which all of us shall be the jewels, and take it right up and keep it in His bosom forever!

Last of all, let us not *talk* about this, but let us set about *doing*it! Shall we never have, in our midst, men who will go among the heathen to preach Jesus Christ? We had two lately, are there not two more? Young men and young women, will you not consecrate yourselves to the Lord

and go into exile for His sake? Have we none such? We have here, this morning, good women and good men, too, who are at work among the heathens of the east end of London and the worst parts of our city. Are there no others to do the same? There is room for scores of you to be as devoted to God as our dear Brother, Dr. Barnardo, or our Sister, Miss MacPherson—and why not *you*? Why should not the same anointing come upon you and qualify you for useful work?

Will you not, this very day, preach Christ in the streets? Will you not consecrate yourselves to be whole burnt offerings unto Christ, for Him to live, for Him to die? O soldiers of the Cross, will you loiter in the march? The enemy still holds citadels which belong to Christ and you, by a desperate push, may seize them! Swift as eagles and strong as lions, press onward and win the victory! Why do you hesitate? The powers of evil linger not! The hosts of Hell are raging—they call up all their strength against the Lord of Hosts—and will you stand back? Have you no courage? Is your blood turned to water? Has the Spirit of God departed from you?

Oh, let it not be so, but may God launch us upon the enemy like thunderbolts from His own Omnipotent hand! And yet may it be seen throughout the world that there are men who have received of the fullness of the Crucified One and who, therefore, can give it forth to others and point them to Him in whom the Father is well-pleased that all fullness shall dwell. The Lord be with you all. Amen.

***PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—***Joh 1:1-34***.*HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—436, 415, 249.**  
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Sermon #978 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

ALL FULLNESS IN CHRIST  
NO. 978

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, FEBRUARY 26, 1871,  
*BY C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“For it pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell.”*** Col 1:19***.***

THE preacher is under no difficulties this morning as to the practical object to be aimed at in his discourse. Every subject should be considered with an object. Every discourse should have a definite spiritual aim, otherwise we do not so much preach as play at preaching. The connection plainly indicates what our drift should be. Read the words immediately preceding the text, and you find it declared that our Lord Jesus is in all things to have the pre-eminence. We would seem, by this text, to yield honor and glory to the ever-blessed Redeemer, and enthrone Him in the highest seat in our hearts.

O that we may all be in an adoring frame of mind, and may give Him the pre-eminence in our thoughts, beyond all things or persons in Heaven or earth. Blessed is he who can do or think the most to honor such a Lord as our Immanuel! The verse which succeeds the text shows us how we may best promote the glory of Christ, for since He came into this world that He might reconcile the things in Heaven and the things in earth to Himself, we shall best glorify Him by falling in with His great design of mercy. By seeking to bring sinners into a state of reconciliation with God, we are giving to the great Reconciler the pre-eminence.

Our Gospel shall be the Gospel of reconciliation on this occasion. May the reconciling word come home by the power of Christ’s Spirit to many, so that hundreds of souls may from this day forth glorify the great Ambassador who has made peace by the blood of His Cross. The text is a great deep, we cannot explore it, but we will voyage over its surface joyously, the Holy Spirit giving us a favorable wind. Here are plenteous provisions far exceeding those of Solomon, though at the sight of that royal profusion Sheba’s queen felt that there was no more spirit in her, and declared that the half had not been told to her.

It may give some sort of order to our thoughts if they fall under four heads. *What* is here spoken of—“all fullness.” *Where*is it placed—“*in Him*,” that is, in the Redeemer. We are told *why*, because, “it pleased the Father.” And we have also a note of time, or when, in the word, “dwell.” “It pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell.” Those catch words, *what, where, why*, and *when*, may help you to remember the run of the sermon.

**I.** First, then, let us consider the subject before us, or WHAT—“It pleased the Father that in Him should all *fullness* dwell.” Two mighty words—“*fullness,*” a substantial, comprehensive, expressive word in itself—and “all,” a great little word including everything. When combined in the expression, “*all fullnes*s,” we have before us a superlative wealth of meaning. Blessed be God for those two words! Our hearts rejoice to think

that there is such a thing in the universe as “all fullness,” for in the most of mortal pursuits utter barrenness is found.

“Vanity of vanity, all is vanity.” Blessed be the Lord forever that He has provided a fullness for us, for in us, by nature, there is all emptiness and utter vanity. “In me, that is, in my flesh, there dwells no good thing.” In us there is a lack of all merit, an absence of all power to procure any, and even an absence of will to procure it if we could. In these respects human nature is a desert—empty, and void, and filled with waste—inhabited only by the dragon of sin, and bitter sorrow.

Sinner, Saint, to you both alike these words, “all fullness,” sound like a holy hymn. The accents are sweet as those of the angel-messenger when he sang, “Behold, I bring you glad tidings of great joy.” Are they not stray notes from celestial sonnets? “All fullness.” You, Sinner, are all emptiness and death. You, Saint, would be so if it were not for the “all fullness” of Christ of which you have received. Therefore, both to saint and sinner the words are full of hope. There is joy in these words to every soul conscious of its sad estate, and humbled before God. I will ring the silver bell again, “all fullness,” and another note charms us—it tells us that Christ is substance, and not shadow—fullness, and not foretaste.

This is good news for us, for nothing but realities will meet our case. Types may instruct, but they cannot actually save. The patterns of the things in the heavens are too weak to serve our turn. We need the heavenly things themselves. No bleeding bird nor slaughtered bullock, nor running stream, nor scarlet wool and hyssop, can take away our sins—

***“No outward forms can make me clean,  
The leprosy lies deep within.”***

Ceremonies under the old dispensation were precious because they set forth the realities yet to be revealed. But in Christ Jesus we deal with the realities *themselves*, and this is a happy circumstance for us. For both our sins and our sorrows are real, and only substantial mercies can counteract them. In Jesus we have the substance of all that the symbols set forth. He is our Sacrifice, our Altar, our Priest, our Incense, our Tabernacle, our All in All. The Law had “the shadow of good things to come,” but in Christ we have “the very image of the things” (Heb 10:1). What transport is this to those who so much feel their emptiness that they could not be comforted by the mere representation of a Truth, or the pattern of a Truth, or the symbol of a Truth, but must have the very substance itself!

“The Law was given by Moses, but Grace and Truth came by Jesus Christ” (Joh 1:17). I must return to the words of the text again, for I perceive more honey dropping from the honeycomb. “All fullness” is a wide, far-reaching, all-comprehending term, and in its abundant store it offers another source of delight. What joy these words give to us when we remember that our vast necessities demand a fullness, yes, “*all* fullness,” before they can be supplied! A little help will be of no use to us, for we are altogether without strength. A limited measure of mercy will only mock our misery.

A low degree of Divine Grace will never be enough to bring us to Heaven, defiled as we are with sin, beset with dangers, encompassed with infirmities, assailed by temptations, molested with afflictions, and all the while bearing about with us “the body of this death.” But “all fullness,” yes, *that* will suit us! Here is exactly what our desperate estate demands for its recovery. Had the Savior only put out His finger to help our exertions, or had He only stretched out His hand to perform a measure of salvation’s work—while He left us to complete it—our soul had forever dwelt in darkness.

In these words, “all fullness,” we hear the echo of His death-cry, “It is finished.” We are to bring *nothing*, but to find all in Him. Yes, the fullness of all in Him—we are simply to receive out of His fullness Grace for Grace. We are not asked to contribute, nor required to make up deficiencies, for there are none to make up—all, ALL is laid up in Christ! All that we shall want between this place and Heaven, all we could need between the gates of Hell—where we lay in our blood—to the gates of Heaven, where we shall find welcome admission, is treasured up for us in the Lord Christ Jesus—

***“Great God, the treasures of Your love  
Are everlasting mines,  
Deep as our helpless miseries are,  
And boundless as our sins.”***

Did I not say well that the two words before us are a noble hymn? Let them, I pray you, lodge in your souls for many days. They will be blessed guests. Let these two wafers, made with honey, lie under your tongue. Let them satisfy your souls, for they are heavenly bread. The more you bemoan your emptiness the sweeter these words will be. The more you feel that you must draw largely upon the bank of Heaven, the more will you rejoice that your drafts will never diminish the boundless store—for still will it retain the name and the quality of “*all fullness*.”

The expression used here denotes that there is in Jesus Christ the fullness of the Godhead. As it is written, “In Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.” When John saw the Son of Man in Patmos, the marks of Deity were on Him. “His head and His hair were white like wool, as white as snow”—here was His eternity! “His eyes were as a flame of fire”—here was His Omniscience! “Out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword”—here was the Omnipotence of His Word! “And His countenance was as the sun shines in his strength”—here was His unapproachable and infinite Glory!

He is the Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last. Nothing is too hard for Him. Power, wisdom, truth, immutability, and all the attributes of God are in Him and constitute a fullness inconceivable and inexhaustible. The most enlarged intellect must necessarily fail to compass the personal fullness of Christ as God— therefore we do no more than quote again that noble text—“In Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. And you are complete in Him.”

Fullness, moreover, dwells in our Lord not only intrinsically from His nature, but as the result of His mediatorial world. He achieved, by suffering, as well as possessed by nature, a wondrous fullness. He carried on His shoulders the load of our sin. He expiated, by His death, our guilt, and now He has merit with the Father—infinite, inconceivable, a fullness of desert. The Father has stored up in Christ Jesus, as in a reservoir for the use of all His people, His eternal love and His unbounded Grace, that it may come to us through Christ Jesus, and that we may glorify Him. All power is put into His hands—and life, and light, and Grace, are to the full at His disposal.

“He shuts and no man opens, He opens and no man shuts.” He has received gifts for men, yes, for the righteous also. Not only as the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father is He the possessor of Heaven and earth, and therefore filled with all fullness, but seeing that as the Mediator He has finished our redemption, “He is made of God unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.” Glory be to His name for this double fullness!

Turn the thought around again, and remember that all fullness dwells in Christ *towards God and towards men*. All fullness towards *God* and—I mean all that God requires of man. All that contents and delights the eternal mind so that once again, with complacency, He may look down on His creature and pronounce him, “very good.” The Lord looked for grapes in His vineyard, and it brought forth wild grapes. But now, in Christ Jesus, the great Farmer beholds the true vine which brings forth much fruit.

The Creator required obedience, and He beholds in Christ Jesus the Servant who has never failed to do the Master’s will. Justice demanded that the Law should be kept, and, lo, Christ is the end of the Law for righteousness to everyone that believes. Seeing that we had broken the Law, justice required the endurance of the righteous penalty, and Jesus has borne it to the full, for He bowed His head to death—even the death of the Cross. When God made man a little lower than the angels, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life—and so made him immortal—He had a right to expect singular service from so favored a being—a service perfect, joyful, continuous. And our Savior has rendered unto the Father that which perfectly contents Him.

For He cries, “This is My Beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.” God is more glorified in the Person of His Son than He would have been by an unfallen world. There shines out through the entire universe a display of infinite mercy, justice, and wisdom such as neither the majesty of Nature nor the excellence of Providence could have revealed. His work, in God’s esteem, is honorable and precious. For His righteousness sake, God is well pleased. The Eternal mind is satisfied with the Redeemer’s Person, work, and sacrifice. For “unto the Son, He says, Your throne, O God, is forever and ever, a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your kingdom. You have loved righteousness, and hated iniquity. Therefore God, even Your God, has anointed You with the oil of gladness above Your fellows” ([Heb 1:8-9](tw://bible.*?id=58.1.8|_AUTODETECT_|)).

What unspeakable consolations arise from this Truth, for, dear Brethren, if we had to render to God something by which we should be accepted, we should be always in jeopardy. But now, since we are “accepted in the Beloved,” we are safe beyond all hazard. And were we to find we should appear before the Most High God, we might still be asking, “Shall I come before Him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil?”

But now hear the voice which says, “Sacrifice and offering, burnt offerings and offering for sin You would not, nor had pleasure in them.” We hear the same Divine voice add, “Lo, I come to do Your will,” and we rejoice as we receive the witness of the Spirit, saying, “By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once and for all,” for from now on is it said, “Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more forever.” The all-fullness of Christ is also *man-ward*, and that in respect of both the sinner and the saint. There is a fullness in Christ Jesus which the seeking sinner should behold with joyfulness.

What do you want, Sinner? You want all things, and Christ is All. You want power to believe in Him—He gives power to the faint. You want repentance—He was exalted on high to give repentance as well as remission of sin. You want a new heart—the Covenant runs thus, “A new heart, also, will I give them, and a right spirit will I put within them.” You want pardon—behold His streaming wounds wash you and you are clean. You want healing—He is “the Lord that heals you.” You want clothing—His righteousness shall become your clothes.

You want preservation—you shall be preserved in Him. You want life, and He has said, “Awake, you that sleep, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give you life.” He is come that we might have life. You want—but indeed, the catalog is much too long for us to read it through at this present time. But be assured though you pile up your necessities till they rise like Alps before you, yet the All-Sufficient Savior can remove all your needs. You may confidently sing—

***“You, O Christ, are all I want,  
More than all in You I find.”***

This is true, also, of the saint as well as the sinner. O Child of God, you are now saved, but your wants are not, therefore, removed. Are they not as continuous as your heartbeats? When are we not in want, my Brethren? The more alive we are to God, the more are we aware of our spiritual necessities. He who is, “blind and naked,” thinks himself to be “rich and increased in goods”—but let the mind be truly enlightened, by God’s Grace—and we feel that we are completely dependent upon the charity of God. Let us be glad, then, as we learn that there is no necessity in our spirit but what is abundantly provided for in the all-fullness of Jesus Christ.

You seek for a higher platform of spiritual attainments. You aim to conquer sin. You desire to be plentiful in praises unto His Glory. You are longing to be useful, you are anxious to subdue the hearts of others unto Christ. Behold the necessary Grace for all this. In the sacred armory of the Son of David behold your battle-ax and your weapons of war. In the stores of Him who is greater than Aaron see the robes in which to fulfill your priesthood. In the wounds of Jesus behold the power with which you may become a living sacrifice. If you would glow like a seraph, and serve like an Apostle, behold the Grace awaiting you in Jesus!

If you would go from strength to strength, climbing the loftiest summits of holiness, behold Grace upon Grace prepared for you! If you are perplexed, it will not be in Christ. If there is any boundary to your holy attainments it is set by yourself. The infinite God Himself gives Himself to you in the Person of His dear Son, and He says to you, “All things are yours.” “The Lord is the portion of your inheritance and of your cup.” Infinity is ours. He who gave us His own Son has in that very deed given us all things. Has He not said, “I am the Lord your God, which brought you out of the land of Egypt; open your mouth wide, and I will fill it”?

Let me remark that this is not only true of saints on earth, but it is true, also, of saints in Heaven, for all the fullness of the Church triumphant is in Christ as well as that of the Church militant. They are nothing even in Heaven without Him. The pure river of the Water of Life of which they drink proceeds out of the Throne of God and of the Lamb. He has made them priests and kings, and in His power they reign. Those snowy robes were washed and made white in His blood. The Lamb is the temple of Heaven, the light of Heaven. His marriage is the joy of Heaven. And the Song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, is the song of Heaven.

Not all the harps above could make a heavenly place if Christ were gone—for He is the Heaven of Heaven, and fills all in all. It pleased the Father that for all saints and sinners all fullness should be treasured up in Christ Jesus. I feel that my text overwhelms me. Men may sail round the world, but who can circumnavigate so vast a subject as this? As far as the east is from the west so wide is its reach of blessings—

***“Philosophers have measured mountains,   
Fathomed the depths of seas, of states, and kings,   
Walked with a staff to Heaven, and traced fountains—   
But there are two vast spacious things,   
The which to measure it does more behoove—   
Yet few there are that sound them—   
Grace and Love.”***

Who is he that shall be able to express all that is meant by our text? For here we have “all” and “fullness”—and in fullness and a fullness in all. The words are both exclusive and inclusive. They deny that there is any fullness elsewhere, for they claim all for Christ. They shut out all others. “It pleased the Father that *in Him* should *all* fullness dwell.” Not in you, you pretended successors of the Apostles, can anything dwell that I need. I can do well enough without you! No, I would not insult my Savior by trading with you, for since “all fullness” is in Him, what can there be in you that I can require?

Go to your dupes who know not Christ—those who possess the exceeding riches of Christ’s Grace will not bow to you. We are “complete in Christ” without you, O hierarchy of bishops! Without you, you conclave of cardinals! And without you, O fallible infallible, unholy Holiness of Rome! He who has all in Christ would be insane, indeed, if he looked for more—or having fullness craved for emptiness. This text drives us from all confidence in men, yes, or even in angels, by making us see that everything is treasured up in Jesus Christ.

Brethren, if there is any good in what is called Catholicism, or in ritualism, or in the modern philosophical novelties, let religionists have what they find there. We shall not envy them, for they can find nothing worth having in their forms of worship or belief but what we must have already in the Person of the all-sufficient Savior. What if their candles burn brightly—the sun itself is ours! What if they are successors of the Apostles—we follow the Lamb Himself wherever He goes! What if they are exceedingly wise—we dwell with the Incarnate Wisdom Himself! Let them go to their cisterns— we will abide by the fountain of Living Water.

But, indeed, there is no light in their luminaries—they do but increase the darkness. They are blind leaders of the blind. They put their sounding emptiness into competition with the all-fullness of Jesus Christ. They preach another Gospel which is not another. The imprecation of the Apostle be upon them! They add unto the words of God, and He shall add to them its plagues!

While the text is exclusive it is also inclusive. It shuts in everything that is required for time and for eternity for all the blood-bought. It is an ark containing all good things conceivable, yes, and many that are as yet inconceivable. For by reason of our weakness we have not yet conceived the fullness of Christ. Things which you yet have not asked nor even *thought*, He is able to give you abundantly. If you should arrive at the consecration of martyrs, the piety of Apostles, the purity of angels, yet should you never have seen or be able to think of anything pure, lovely, and of good report, that was not already treasured up in Christ Jesus.

All the rivers flow into this sea, for from this sea they came. As the atmosphere surrounds all the earth, and all things live in that sea of air, so all good things are contained in the blessed Person of our dear Redeemer. Let us join to praise Him. Let us extol Him with heart and voice, and let sinners be reconciled unto God by Him. If all the good things are in Him which a sinner can require to make him accountable with God, then let the sinner come at once through such a Mediator!

Let doubts and fears vanish at the sight of the mediatorial fullness. Jesus must be able to save to the uttermost, since all fullness dwells in Him. Come, Sinner—come and receive Him! Believe in Him and you shall find yourself made perfect in Christ Jesus.

***“The moment a sinner believes ,  
And trusts in His crucified God,   
His pardon at once he receives,   
Redemption in full through His blood.”***

**II.** Having thus spoken of what, we now turn to consider WHERE. “It pleased the Father that in *Him* should all fullness dwell.” Where else could all fullness have been placed? There was wanted a vast *capacity to contain* “all fullness.” Where dwells there a being with nature capacious enough to compass within himself all fullness? As well might we ask, “Who has measured the waters in the hollow of His hand, and meted out Heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance?” To Him only could it belong to contain “all fullness,” for He must be equal with God, the Infinite.

How suitable was the Son of the Highest, who “was by Him, as one brought up with Him,” to become the grand storehouse of all the treasures of wisdom, knowledge, Divine Grace, and salvation. Moreover, there was wanted not only capacity to contain, but *immutability to retain* the fullness, for the text says, “It pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness *dwell*,” that is, abide, and remain forever. Now if any kind of fullness could be put into us mutable creatures, yet by reason of our frailty we should prove but broken cisterns that can hold no water. The Redeemer is Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today, and forever—therefore was it meet that all fullness should be placed in Him.

“The Son abides ever.” “He is a priest forever after the order of Melchisedek.” “Being made perfect He became the Author of eternal salvation unto all they that obey Him.” “His name shall endure forever: His name shall be continued as long as the sun: and men shall be blessed in Him: all nations shall call Him blessed.” Perhaps the sweetest thought is that the “all fullness” is fitly placed in Christ Jesus because in Him there is a *suitability to distribute it*, so that we may *obtain* it from Him. How could we come to God Himself for Grace, for “even our God is a consuming fire”? But Jesus Christ, while God, is also Man like ourselves, truly Man, of a meek lowly spirit, and therefore easily approachable.

They who know Him delight in nearness to Him. Is it not sweet that all fullness should be treasured up in Him who was the friend of publicans and sinners? And who came into the world to seek and to save that which was lost? The Man who took the child up on His knee and said, “Suffer the little children to come unto Me”? The Man who was tempted in all points like as we are? The Man who touched the sick, no, who “bore their sicknesses”? The Man who gave His hands to the nails, and His heart to the spear?

That blessed Man, into the print of whose nails His disciple, Thomas, put his finger, and into whose side he thrust his hand. It is He, the incarnate God, in whom all fullness dwells! Come, then, and receive of Him, you who are the weakest, the most mean, and most sinful of men. Come at once, O Sinner, and fear not!—

***“Why ar e you afraid to come,   
And tell Him all your case?   
He will not pronounce your doom,   
Nor frown you from His face.  
Will you fear Immanuel?   
Or dread the Lamb of God,   
Who, to save your soul from Hell,   
Has shed His precious blood?”***

Let it be noted here, however, very carefully, that while fullness is treasured up in Christ, it is not said to be treasured up in the *doctrines* of Christ—though they are full and complete—and we need no other teachings when the Spirit reveals the Son in us. Nor is it said to be treasured up in the *commands* of Christ, although they are amply sufficient for our guidance. But it is said, “It pleased the Father that *in Him*,” in His Person, “should all fullness dwell.” In Him, as God Incarnate dwells in all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.” Not as a myth, a dream, a thought, a fiction, but as a *living*, *real* Personality. We must lay hold of this.

I know that the fullness dwells in Him officially as Prophet, Priest, and King—but the fullness lies not in the Prophetic mantle, nor in the priestly ephod, nor in the royal vesture—but in the Person that wears all these. “It pleased the Father that *in Him* should all fullness dwell.” You must get to the very Christ in your faith and rest alone in Him, or else you have not reached the treasury wherein all fullness is stored up. All fullness is in Him radically. If there is fullness in His work, or His gifts, or His promises, all is derived from His Person, which gives weight and value to all.

All the promises are yes and amen in *Christ Jesus*. The merit of His death lies mainly in His Person, because He was God who gave Himself for us, and His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree. The excellence of His Person gave fullness to His sacrifice ([Heb 1:3](tw://bible.*?id=58.1.3|_AUTODETECT_|)). His power to save at this very day lies in His Person, for “He is able to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by Him, seeing *He ever lives to make intercession for them*.” I desire you to see this, and feel it. For when your soul clasps the pierced feet of Jesus, and looks up into the face more marred than that of any man—even if you cannot understand all His works and offices—yet if you believe in Him you have reached the place wherein all fullness dwells—and of His fullness you shall receive.

Beloved, remember our practical aim. Praise His Person, you Saints! Be you reconciled to God through His Person, you Sinners! You angels, lead us in the song! You spirits redeemed by blood, sing, “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain,” and our hearts shall keep tune with yours, for we owe the same debt to Him. Glory be unto the Person of the Blessed Lamb. “Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power, and might, be unto our God forever and ever.”

Would God we could see Him face to face, and adore Him as we would! O Sinners, will you not be reconciled to God through Him, since all fullness is in Him, and He stoops to your weakness, and holds forth His pierced hands to greet you? See Him stretching out both His hands to receive you while He sweetly woos you to come to God through Him! Come unto Him! O come with hasty steps, you Penitents! Come at once, you guilty ones! Who would not be reconciled unto God by such a One as this, in whom all fullness of Grace is made to dwell?

**III.** The third question is, WHY? *“It pleased the Father*.” That is answer enough. He is Sovereign, let Him do as He wills. Ask the reason for election, you shall receive no other than this, “Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Your sight.” That one answer may reply to ten thousand questions, “It is the Lord, let Him do what seems Him good.” Once “it pleased the Father to bruise Him,” and now, “it pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell.”

Sovereignty may answer the question sufficiently, but listen! I hear Justice speak. Justice says there was no Person in Heaven or under Heaven so qualified to contain the fullness of Grace as Jesus. None so qualified to be glorified as the Savior, who “made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Himself the form of a servant, and being found in fashion as a Man, humbled Himself, and became obedient to death, even the death of the Cross.”

It is but justice that the Grace which He has brought to us should be treasured up in Him. And while Justice speaks, Wisdom will not withhold her voice. Wise are You, O Jehovah, to treasure up Grace in Christ, for to Him men can come. And coming to Him, as unto a living Stone, chosen of God and precious, men find Him precious, also, to their souls. The Lord has laid our sin in the right place, for He has laid it upon one that is mighty, and who is as loving as He is mighty, as ready as He is able to save.

Moreover, in the fitness of things the Father’s pleasure is the first point to be considered, for all things ought to be to the good pleasure of God. It is a great underlying rule of the universe that all things were created for God’s pleasure. God is the Source and Fountain of eternal love, and it is but meet that He should convey it to us by what channel He may elect. Bowing, therefore, in lowly worship at His Throne, we are glad that in this matter the fullness dwells where it perpetually satisfies the decree of Heaven. It is well that, “it pleased the Father.”

Now, Brethren, if it pleased the Father to place all Grace in Christ, let us praise the elect Savior. What pleases God pleases us. Where would you desire to have Grace placed, my Brethren, but in the Well-Beloved? The whole Church of God is unanimous about this. If I could save myself I would not. I would think salvation to be no salvation if it did not glorify Jesus. This is the very crown and glory of being saved—that our being saved will bring honor to Christ! It is delightful to think that Christ will have the glory of all God’s Grace.

It were shocking if it were not so. Who could bear to see Jesus robbed of His reward? We are indignant that any should usurp His place, and ashamed of ourselves that we do not glorify Him more. No joy ever visits my soul like that of knowing that Jesus is highly exalted, and that to Him “every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

A sister in Christ, in her kindness and gratitude, used language to me the other day which brought a blush to my cheek, for I felt ashamed to be so undeserving of the praise. She said, “Your ministry profits me because you glorify Christ so much.” Ah, I thought, if you knew how I *would* glorify Him if I could, and how far I fall below what I gladly would do for Him, you would not commend me. I could weep over the best sermons I have ever preached because I cannot extol my Lord enough, and my conceptions are so low, and my words so poor. Oh, if one could but attain really to honor Him, and put another crown upon His head, it were Heaven, indeed!

We are in this agreed with the Father, for if it pleases Him to glorify His Son and we sincerely feel that it pleases us. Ought not those who are yet unrenewed to hasten to be reconciled to God by such a Redeemer? If it pleases the Father to put all Grace in Christ, O Sinner, does it not please you to come and receive it through Christ? Christ is the meeting place for a sinner and his God. God is in Christ, and when you come to Christ, God meets you, and a treaty of peace is made between you and the Most High.

Are you not agreed with God in this—that Christ shall be glorified? Do you not say, “I would glorify Him by accepting, this morning, all His Grace, love, and mercy”? Well, if you are willing to receive Jesus, God has made you willing, and that *proves* His willingness to save you. He is pleased with Christ. Are you pleased with Christ? If so, there is *already* peace between you and God, for Jesus “is our peace.”

**IV.** We must close by dwelling upon the WHEN. When is all fullness in Jesus? It is there in all time—past, present, and to come. “It pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness *dwell*.” Fullness, then, was in Christ of old, is in Christ today, will be in Christ forever. Perpetuity is here indicated. All fullness was, is, shall be in the Person of Jesus Christ. Every saint saved under the old dispensation found the fullness of his salvation in the coming Redeemer. Every saint saved since the Advent is saved through the selfsame fullness. From the streaming fountain of the wounds of Christ on Calvary redemption flows evermore.

And as long as there is a sinner to be saved, or one elect soul to be ingathered, Christ’s blood shall never lose its power— the fullness of merit and Grace shall abide the same. While the expression “*dwell*” indicates perpetuity, does not it indicate *constancy and accessibility*? A man who dwells in a house is always to be found there—it is his home. The text seems to me to say that this fullness of Grace is always to be found in Christ, ever abiding in Him. Knock at this door by prayer, and you shall find it at home.

If a sinner anywhere is saying, “God be merciful to me!” mercy has not gone out on loan—it dwells in Christ both night and day. It is there now at this moment. There is life in a *look* at the Crucified One, not at certain canonical hours, but at *any* hour, in *any* place, by *any* man who looks. “From the end of the earth will I cry unto You, when my heart is overwhelmed,” and my prayer shall not be rejected. There is fullness of mercy in Christ to be had at any time, at any season, from any place.

It pleased the Father that all fullness should permanently abide in Him as in a house whose door is never shut. Above all, we see here *immutability*. All fullness dwells in Christ—that is to say it is never exhausted nor diminished. On the last day that this world shall stand before it is given up to be devoured with fervent heat, there shall be found as much fullness in Christ as in the hour when the first sinner looked unto Him and was lightened. O Sinner, the bath that cleanses is as efficacious to take out spots today as it was when the dying thief washed in them! O you despairing Sinner, there is as much consolation in Christ today as when He said to the woman, “Your sins are forgiven you, go in peace.”

His Grace has not diminished! He is today as great a Savior as when Magdalene was delivered from seven devils. Till time shall be no more He will exercise the same infinite power to forgive, to renew, to deliver, to sanctify, to perfectly save souls. Shall not all this make us praise Christ, since all fullness is permanent in Him? Let our praises abide where the fullness abides. “All Your works praise You, O God, but Your saints shall bless You.” Yes, they shall never cease their worship, because You shall never abate Your fullness.

This is a topic upon which we who love Christ, are all agreed. We can dispute about doctrines, and we have different views upon ordinances. But we have all one view concerning our Lord Jesus. Let Him sit on a glorious high throne! When shall the day dawn that He shall ride through our streets in triumph? When shall England and Scotland, and all the nations become truly the dominions of the great King? Our prayer is that He may hasten the spread of the Gospel, and His own coming as seems good in His sight.

O that He were glorious in the eyes of men! And surely if all fullness abides perpetually in Christ, there is good reason why the unreconciled should, this morning, avail themselves of it. May the blessed Spirit show you, O Sinner, that there is enough in Jesus Christ to meet your wants. That your weakness need not keep you back, nor even the hardness of your heart, nor the inveteracy of your will. For Christ is able even to subdue all things to Himself. If you seek Him He will be found of you.

Seek Him while He may be found. Leave not your seat until your soul is bowed at His feet. I think I see Him—cannot your hearts picture Him—glorious today, but yet the same Savior who was nailed like a felon to the Cross for guilty ones? Reach forth your hand and touch the silver scepter of mercy which He holds out to you, for those who touch it live. Look into that dear face where tears once made their furrows, and grief its lines. Look, I say, and live! Look at that brow radiant with many a glittering gem—it once wore a crown of thorns.

Let His love melt you to repentance. Throw yourself into His arms now feeling, “If I perish I will perish here. He shall be my only hope.” As the Lord lives, before whom I stand, there shall never be a soul of you lost who will come and trust in Jesus! Heaven and earth shall pass away but this Word of God shall never pass away. “He that believes and is baptized shall be saved.” God has said it—will He not do it? He has declared it, it must stand fast. “Whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have everlasting life.”

O trust Him! I implore you by the mercy of God, and by the fullness of Jesus, trust Him NOW! This day! God grant you may, for Christ’s sake. Amen.   
PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—[Colossians 1](tw://bible.*?id=51.1.0|_AUTODETECT_|).

The attention of all our friends is earnestly directed to the SERIES of SPECIAL SERVICES AT THE TABERNACLE. In order that London friends may unite with us we publish the meetings week by week, and at the same time our country friends will join with us in spirit—*Lord’s-Day, March 5*.—A deputation will address Mrs. Bartlett’s class and the senior classes of the Sunday school. As also Mrs. Bartlett’s children’s meeting at the Almshouses. *Monday, March 6*—Prayer Meeting for females only, at six. For young people at the same time. Special Prayer Meetings at seven for the various agencies of the Church. Meetings for enquirers at half-past eight. *Tuesday, March 7*—The Pastor and others will meet the parents of the Sunday school to tea, and speak with them upon heavenly things. *Wednesday, March 8*—Annual Meeting of Mrs. Bartlett’s class. *Thursday, March 9*—Closing gathering. May our hearts be filled with adoring praise. We shall meet to commemorate our Lord’s death. Members will please show their tickets. Spectators will find room in the gallery.

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÷Col 1.23

STAND FAST  
NO. 1688

**DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY EVENING, AUGUST 27, 1882, *BY C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“Be not moved away from the hope of the Gospel.”*** Col 1:23***.***

I THINK this morning we showed pretty plainly that many a soul has a great struggle to attain to the hope of the Gospel. [See*“Despair Denounced and Grace Glorified,” No. 1676.*] Not without hand-to-hand fighting do many hearts lay hold on Christ and eternal life. Conscience often sets up a chevaux de frise around the hill of Calvary and thus cuts off the convicted sinner from approaching his Savior. Doubts and fears, the Black Watch of evil, drive back the coming ones and worry those who would gladly hide in the Rock of Ages. Satan summons all his hosts to push men back from the Cross that they may not come to Christ and live.

But, Brothers and Sisters, the battle does *not* end when, by a desperate rush, a man has come to Christ. In many it assumes a new form—the enemy now attempts to drag the trembler from his refuge and eject him from his stronghold! It is difficult to get at the hope of the Gospel, but quite as difficult to *keep* it so as not to be moved away from it. If Satan spends great power in keeping us *from* the hope, he uses equal force in endeavoring to drag us *away* from it—and equal cunning in endeavoring to allure us from it. Hence the Apostle tells us not to be moved away from the hope of the Gospel. The exhortation is necessary in presence of an imminent danger. Do not think that in the moment when you believe in Christ the conflict is over, or you will be bitterly disappointed! It is *then* that the battle renews itself and every inch of the road swarms with enemies.

Between here and Heaven you will always have to fight, more or less, and frequently the severest struggle will be at a time when you are least prepared for it. There may be smooth passages in your career and you may, for a while, be like your Savior in the wilderness, of whom it is said, “Then the devil departed from Him, and angels came and ministered unto Him.” But you may not, therefore, cry, “My mountain stands firm, I shall never be moved,” for fair weather may not outlast a single day! Do not grow secure, or carnally presumptuous. There is but a short space between one battle and another in this world. It is a series of skirmishes even when it does not assume the form of a pitched battle. He that would win Heaven must fight for it! He that would take the new Jerusalem must scale it and if he has the wits to take Jacob’s ladder and set it against the wall and climb up that way, he will win the City. “The Kingdom of Heaven suffers violence and the violent take it by force.”

At this time our subject is not the winning, but the *wearing*—not the taking but the *holding* of the fort. “Be not moved away,” you that have come to it. “Be not moved away from the hope of the Gospel.”

**I.**First, BE NOT MOVED AWAY FROM THE SUBJECT OF THAT HOPE so as to give up any part of the hope which is revealed to you by the Gospel. What is your hope? First, it is the hope of full salvation—the hope that, inasmuch as you have believed in Jesus Christ, you are free from all condemnation at the present moment and shall be free from all condemnation in the future as to all your sins. And that, in addition to this, He that takes away the condemnation of sin will also destroy the power of it over you. You have this hope—that being made to love righteousness you shall be enabled to walk in obedience and “to perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord.”

Your hope is that one day you shall be presented holy, without blame and unreprovable in the sight of the great Father. You shall, one day, be presented “without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing,” cleansed from all guilt and cleansed from all tendency to sin and to corruption—and made like unto the perfect creature of God when first it comes from His hands. Oh, this is a blessed hope! “He that has this hope in him purifies himself even as Christ is pure.” We hope that we shall be like unto Christ, Himself, and that the Glory of His holiness shall be our glory—and we shall see His face and His name shall be on our foreheads—and we shall be without fault before the Throne of God. Now, never give that up! Never allow a particle of it to be diminished. God means all that He has said, and more, rather than less. Let no man debase the currency of Heaven or clip the coin of the realm of the Great King.

The first part of it—hold to it, that the Lord Jesus Christ has cleansed you from all the guilt and penalty of sin, so that not a speck remains to accuse or condemn you. Hold to it, moreover, that if He has once washed you, you shall not need to wash, again, in that fountain filled with blood, for, “He that is washed needs not except to wash his feet.” And that washing shall be given to him by the condescending hands of Christ. The water shall be a second cure of that which the blood has already cleansed and removed. The blood-washing has removed all guilt and prevented all possibility that sin shall have dominion over you. Complete forgiveness and full justification are proofs that through your Lord’s endurance of the death penalty, you are no more under the Law, but under Grace.

My soul rejoices, tonight, in perfect pardon! I will not take off a corner of it so as to allow that the smallest charge can lie against us! We are complete in Christ! He that believes in Him is justified from all things—

***“Here’s pardon for transgressions past,  
It matters not how black their cast!  
And, oh, my Soul, with wonder view—  
For sins to come, here’s pardon too!”***

All pardon is provided in the one great Sacrifice offered by our bleeding Lord who has now gone into the heavens to plead the merit of His blood. Never take off a fraction from that other part of full salvation, namely, the possibility and the absolute certainty that every sinful tendency now in your nature shall be utterly destroyed. There shall remain in you no root of bitterness, no scar of evil, no footprint of iniquity! There shall be no tinder in your soul upon which the sparks of temptation can fall so as to live and make a flame! And when the Prince of this world comes he shall find nothing in you. Then you shall enter into your eternal rest, for God keeps not His ripe wheat in the field, but takes it Home when it is once fit to be gathered into the garner. This is your hope through the Gospel—be not moved away from it.

In connection with this, there is the hope of final perseverance. I confess that to me it is one of the most attractive doctrines of God’s Word, that, “the righteous shall hold on his way, and he that has clean hands shall be stronger and stronger.” For I am “confident of this very thing, that He which has begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.” “I give unto My sheep eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall any pluck them out of My hands.” “He that believes in Him is not condemned.” “He that lives and believes in Me shall never die.” There are many assurances to this effect and if anything definite is taught in Scripture, I am confident that this is among the plainest of such teachings!

I beseech you, do not shun this doctrine as though it would lead you into the least presumption. If properly understood, its legitimate effect is the very *reverse* of carelessness! If it is true that once enlisted in this army of the Lord, you must and shall fight until you are a conqueror, then there is no temptation to lay down the sword, for a while, in the hope of taking it up, again, at a more convenient season. If, as some say, you may be Christ’s soldier today and desert tomorrow and then be enlisted again—if it is indeed true that a man may be regenerated and then lose the Divine life and, upon repentance, be re-regenerated and re-re-re-re-reregenerated—I know not how many times—I am not aware that this novelty is *hinted* at in my unrevised New Testament! There I read of being “born again,” but not of being born again and again and again and again and again and again—I say I cannot find a trace of this in the Bible!

On the other hand, I find that if the one regeneration fails, which is impossible, there would remain nothing else to be done! God’s best work is broken down and He will never try it again. He has said, “It is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the good Word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put Him to an open shame. For the earth which drinks in the rain that comes oft upon it, and bring forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receives blessings from God; but that which bears thorns and briers is rejected, and is near unto cursing; whose end is to be burned.” You cannot re-salt the salt if it has once lost its savor. If, then, Grace does utterly depart, which I believe to be impossible, there remains no hope for such a one. God’s supreme effort, according to that theory, has been made and failed!

Now, there is nothing for it but that the land which has received the dew of Heaven and brought forth no fruit, is near unto cursing, whose end is to be burned. “But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak.” We have but made the supposition to show you the danger, upon whose brink you stand, and over whose verge you would slide if Grace did not prevent. If you, indeed, believe in Christ Jesus, set this to your seal, that He will keep you to the end! Whatever happens, “I am persuaded that neither things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” For dear life hold on to the hope of final preservation, for there is a purifying, encouraging, stimulating power about that precious Truth of God! “He keeps the feet of His saints.” “Be not moved away from the hope of the Gospel.”

We have a hope beyond this, for we believe that we shall experience the Resurrection. Though they fall down and men call them corpses, they are precious in the sight of the Lord. The grave shall be a refining pot out of which the pure metal of our purified body shall come forth. At the word of the Lord, the dry bones shall live—they shall be clothed with flesh—and skin shall come upon them, if, after that fashion, the body is to be raised. But if not—if the body is to assume another form and we are to be made like unto a Glory which as yet we cannot comprehend, then we may be sure of this—that we shall so rise that mortality shall put on immortality and corruption shall give place to incorruption! In any case, our bodies shall rise again. The Grace of God secures the bodies as well as the souls of the saints. Christ bought not the half of a man, but the whole trinity of our manhood is His redeemed inheritance—spirit, soul and body shall dwell forever with Him—for He has redeemed our undivided manhood!

Never give up that hope, either, concerning yourselves or your friends. Let nothing shake your confidence in the Resurrection! Let no philosophical explanation fritter it away. No other historical fact is so well attested as the Resurrection of Christ, which is the very cornerstone of our confidence. “For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised. And if Christ is not raised, your faith is vain; you are yet in your sins. Then they, also, which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. If only in this life we have hope in Christ, we are, of all men, most miserable. But now is Christ risen from the dead and become the first fruits of them that slept.”

Often and often, when I am sorely beset with devilish temptations and insinuations as to the eternal hope of my soul and body, I fly to this— Jesus Christ *did* rise from the dead and, inasmuch as He rose from the dead, He has come back to tell us that there is another world and that not only our*souls*, but our *bodies* shall inherit a far more blessed condition than this present one! Hold on to this hope of the Gospel, and never let it go—

***“The Lord is risen! He lives!  
The First-born from the dead, To Him the Father gives  
To be creation’s Head.  
O’er all forever reigning,  
Of death He holds the keys;  
And Hell—His might constraining— Obeys His high decrees.  
Flies now the gloom that shaded The vale of death to me;  
The terrors that invaded  
Are lost, O Christ, in Thee!  
The grave, no more appalling,***

***Invites me to repose;  
Asleep in Jesus falling,  
To rise as Jesus rose.”***

Then remember, you have the hope of the Second Advent. If Jesus comes before you die, you will meet Him—gladly meet and welcome the Son of God upon this earth! You shall be changed so that you shall be fit to inherit the incorruptible glories of the skies. You shall see your Redeemer when He stands in the latter day upon the earth. As Job said, “In my flesh shall I see God, whom my eyes shall see for myself, and not another.” Have joy, then, at every thought of your Master’s coming! Do not put it among dark prophecies or doubtful dreams. It is a clearly revealed Truth of God that Jesus will come again and take His people up to their eternal Home—“Therefore comfort one another with these words,” and be not moved away from that hope of the Gospel which lies so sweetly in the Second Advent of our Lord Jesus Christ!

And, once more, we have this hope—that when we have passed through all that concerns time and are in eternity, that shoreless, bottomless sea— there remains for us no fear or dread, but we shall be “forever with the Lord.” I notice that certain of those who deny the eternity of future punishment are ready, for the sake of their notion, to pull down the battlements of Heaven, itself, and to make the joy of saints to be as short as the misery of sinners. I, for one, will not pawn Heaven in that fashion, to make sin cheap for the willfully impenitent! Once landed on that eternal shore, there are no storms to dread or hurricanes to fear for these frail boats of ours! There shall not a wave of trouble roll across our peaceful spirits when once we cast anchor in the “Fair Havens,” in the Port of Peace forever!

Be not dismayed as though there would be an after-probation, or a “purgatory,” or a lim bus patrum, or any of those pretty places that have filled priests’ pockets so long—and are now being newly vamped and produced by our proud thinkers as an aid to their pretty speculations! We will have no “purgatory” under any form—it is the larder of priests and the refuge of heresy-mongers—and there is not a word of it in God’s Bible! We stand to the text—“So shall we be forever *with the Lord*.” “The righteous shall go away into *life eternal*.” There is “an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that *fades not away*, reserved in Heaven for you.” “Him that overcomes will I make a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, which is New Jerusalem, which comes down out of Heaven from My God: and I will write upon him My new name.”

“They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.” “Be not moved away from the hope of the Gospel,” as to the objects of that hope!

**II.**But now, secondly, I charge you, Beloved, before God, that you BE NOT MOVED AWAY FROM THE HOPE OF THE GOSPEL AS TO THE GROUND OF THAT HOPE. And what is the ground of that hope? The ground of that hope is, first, the rich, free, Sovereign Grace of God because He has said, “I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.” The Lord claims for Himself the prerogative of mercy and, as He can exercise it without the violation of His justice through the atoning Sacrifice of Christ, we joy and rejoice in the fact that men are not saved because of any *natural* goodness of disposition, or because of anything that they have *done*, or ever shall do!

The children being not yet born, neither having done good nor evil, the Divine decree stood fast fixed in the Sovereign will and immutable counsels of Jehovah! And this is a good ground of hope for the very chief of sinners. If He has saved the dying thief—if He has saved the adulterer—if He has saved even the murderer, why should He not save me? He can if He will and He is exceedingly gracious, infinite in compassion and willing not the deaths of any, but that all should come to repentance! It is in the mercy of our God that all our hopes begin and the cause of that mercy is itself! The reason of Divine love is Divine love! Because God is gracious, therefore He bestows His Grace upon the undeserving and the lost. Be not moved away from this.

The ground of our salvation is, next, the merit of Christ—what Christ is; what Christ has done—what Christ has suffered. This is the ground upon which God saves the sons of men. Even Cardinal Bellarmine, the mighty opponent of Luther—perhaps the best opponent that he had, whose eyes saw much of Gospel Light—once said this, “That albeit good works are necessary unto salvation, yet, inasmuch as no man can be sure that he has performed as many good works as will save him, it is, upon the whole, safest to trust, alone, in the merits and sufferings of Christ.” Cardinal, the safest way suits me! If that is the best and safest, what better do any of us need? Where is the rest for our soul if the ground of our hope is to be what*we* are, or what *we* do, or what *we* feel? But when we fall back upon the *finished work* of Jesus Christ and believe in Him, whom God has set forth to be a Propitiation for sin, and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world—I say, when we fall back on *Him—*then we have something solid to rest upon!

Our eyes cannot bear to look into eternity so long as we cling, in the least degree, to human merit! But when it is all put aside and we look to Him bleeding yonder on the Cross, then is there a “peace that passes all understanding,” filling our hearts by Christ Jesus! Brothers and Sisters, if a man were to live in good works without a single sin for 10,000 years, he would be well recompensed for that by half-an-hour of Heaven! How, then, can we expect to merit eternal bliss by any works of ours? Ah, no! The hope were vanity! Heaven is too precious a thing to be purchased by anything that *we* can, by any possibility, do—but it is *not* too great to be purchased by the blood of Christ! And when we come to His Atonement, our anchor holds abidingly. “Be not moved away from the hope of the Gospel.”

Another ground of our hope is this—that God has solemnly pledged that “whoever believes in Christ shall not perish, but shall have everlasting life.” If, then, we really, and in very deed, believe in Jesus Christ and rest on Him, we cannot perish, for God cannot contradict Himself! Thus it is written—hear it and accept it—“He that believes and is baptized shall be saved.” Those of us, then, who trust the Savior, and Him *only*—and have made confession of that trust in His own appointed way—know for sure that God’s eternal veracity is staked upon our salvation! It is not possible that the Lord should cast away a Believer! Is it not written, “The just shall live by faith”? We live because we believe in the Ever-Living One! “He that believes in Him has everlasting life,” Be not moved away from this Gospel hope which God, who cannot lie, has set before us—

“ ***The Covenant of the King of Kings  
Shall stand forever sure!  
Beneath the shadow of His wings  
His saints repose secure.”***

Another ground of our hope is the Immutability of God. God changes not and, therefore, the sons of Jacob are not consumed. The Immutability of Christ also confirms our hope, for He is, “the same yesterday, and today, and forever.” The unchanging power of His blood is a tower of strength to our faith—

***“Dear dying Lamb, Your precious blood  
Shall never lose its power  
Till all the ransomed Church of God  
Is saved to sin no more.”***

If God is Immutable, then those that believe in Him have an immutable hope—be sure that you never cast it away! But, once again, our hope of the Gospel is grounded in the Infallibility of Scripture. The Papist has an infallible pope, but we have an Infallible Bible. If that which is spoken in this Book is not true, neither is our hope sure! If these things are questionable, our confidence is questionable! But if this Word of God abides fast, forever and ever, though Heaven and earth should pass away, then he that believes and builds on this Infallible Truth may rejoice and stand fast! I beseech you, “be not moved away from the hope of the Gospel.”

**III.**So far have I come with all my heart and soul and I believe that you, dear Friends, the members of this Church, at any rate, have accompanied me. Now let us consider HOW WE MAY BE MOVED AWAY FROM THE HOPE OF THE GOSPEL unless Grace is given to prevent us. We may be moved from the hope of the Gospel in the following ways. Sometimes by a conceit of ourselves. You may get off the ground of confidence in Free Grace to think, “Now I am somebody. Have not I prayed at the Prayer Meeting? Did not friends say that they were edified by it? Have not I preached a wonderful sermon? Am I not generous? Have not I given large sums to the Church and to the poor? Am I not somebody?”

Ah, you and the devil, together, can make a commotion about that and I have no doubt that all he tells you, you will very greedily suck in, for we like to be praised and, though the praise comes from Satan, himself, it is welcome to our proud flesh! Well, whenever we get to think we are somebody, we are moved away from the hope of the Gospel. Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners. Somebody says, “But I am not a sinner.” Ah, then He did not come to save you! Do you say, “I was *once* a sinner, but I have grown so perfect that I no longer sin”? Do you? Then you are removed from that hope which belongs to those who confess and lament their sins! You unChristianize yourself as soon as you strike your name out of the list of SINNERS who are saved by the Savior’s Grace! You *are* a sinner and Christ died to save you, but do not be moved away from the hope of the Gospel by a vain notion that you are no longer sinful! Christ came not to heal the whole, but those who are sick.

Do not be moved away, on the other hand, by despondency. Satan does not mind which way you get off the Rock—whether it is by jumping up or by jumping down—it is all the same to him, so long as you leave the Rock of your salvation. Many there are that go up in a balloon of conceit, while others are ready to roll down the steeps of despondency and despair. But be not moved away from the hope of the Gospel either one way or the other! The least sin ought to make you humble, but the greatest sin ought not to make you despair. If you are, even now, as big a sinner as any 50 men rolled into one, Christ can save you readily—no, *has* saved you if you put your trust in Him! But, on the other hand, if you presume that you are *not* guilty, or despairingly say, “I am guilty, but I dare not believe that He can forgive *me*,” you are, in either case, moved away from the hope of the Gospel! May eternal mercy keep you hourly penitent and believing, for repentance and faith walk on either side of a Christian till he enters the pearly gates.

You may be moved away from the hope of the Gospel, also, by false teaching. If, for instance, you do not believe Christ to be, “Light of light, very God of very God,” you have moved away from our hope which depends upon His Godhead. If you think that the *priest* can save you, you are moved away from the one only Priest before whom all other priests must let their censers die out into blackness! ONLY JESUS CHRIST can save you! If you listen to any teaching which puts your *working* or your *doing* into the place of Christ, you are drinking in error and you will be removed from the hope of your calling, which is Free Grace, received by *faith*, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

You can be removed from the hope of your calling by hoping to live by feelings. Ah, there are many Christians who get tempted that way! They feel so happy and that is the reason why they believe that they are saved. That is not the reason why I believe I am saved. I am saved because I trust Christ—and if I were as miserable as misery, itself, I should be just as truly saved as if I were as happy as Heaven itself! It is *faith* that does it, not feeling! Faith is precious, feeling is fickle. Believing, we stand firm, but by feeling we are tossed about. True feeling follows faith and, as such, is valuable—but faith is the root—and the life of the tree lies there, not in the branches and leaves, which may be taken away, and yet the tree will survive.

Some have very joyous feelings. They swim in trances and deliriums and yet they are all wrong. Rest on Christ, whether it is bright day or dark night with you—though He slay you, trust in Him—as much trust in Him as if He pressed you to His bosom! Faith must abide though joy departs! If your feelings are down in the dust—if you feel as though you could not hold up your head or look towards Heaven—never mind that, but cling to the promise, feel what you may. Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, who came into the world to save sinners, and good feelings will follow, by-andby, but, just now, your first business is this—“He that believes in Him is not condemned.” “He that believes in Him has everlasting life,” Stand to that hope of the Gospel!

Many are moved away from the hope of their calling by a dazzle of intellect. They are content simply to believe in Jesus till they meet some fine *man*, a thinker with a big forehead and a large box which ought to be full of brains. We have not been inside to see what is there, but the preacher talks much of his thought and culture. He tells you that you are behind the age—that a faith which believes God might have done very well for the times of Cromwell and the roundhead Puritans, but that, nowadays, we are far in advance of all that kind of thing. Whenever a so-called “brother” dazzles you like that, let him dazzle! Let him shine as much as he likes! But, as for you, tell him that he who has once looked the sun in the face is not to be dazzled by a glowworm! Go back to your wax and dazzle your brother worms, but you cannot dazzle me!

A man who once has come to know Christ *experimentally* and lives by faith upon the Son of God, may, if he likes, read all your essays and reviews, and all the articles in your Quarterlies which ridicule the power of faith, whether in living or in dying, and he will say, when he has read them all through, “This is all they know about it.” I daresay that if a horse were to write a book, he would tell us that roast beef is exceedingly bad food to eat. “Well,” we should say, “that is a very natural opinion for a horse! Let him keep to his oats and his hay.” And when a man says that there is no power in prayer, he shows that he does not know anything about praying! Let him keep to what he knows and hold his tongue about what he does not know! He says that it cannot be, so we say, “But it is so”—and when we have tasted and handled it and *known* it—there is no dazzling us out of it by a sense of the great man’s superiority of mind!

I have often thought that those who cry up their own learning must have wonderfully little of it, for I have jotted down in my pocketbook that I never saw the Bank of England send its bullion anywhere with a number of bells upon the cart to say, “Here is bullion coming along!” But I have noticed that every *dustman* does that! When I hear the bells ringing so much about “culture,” I say to myself, “Dust on!” If they had real diamonds on board, they would hold their tongues about them! At any rate, dust or diamonds, the load in these men’s carts is nothing to us—we have a more sure word of testimony to which our experience has set its seal. We have believed in Christ Jesus and found salvation and, by God’s Grace, we will not be moved away from the hope of our calling!

Lastly, be not moved away by persecution, or by sneers, or by ridicule. The persecution of this present day is a small thing compared with what our forefathers suffered. Look at that picture of the amphitheatre, by Dore. All is over! Every seat is empty! The stars, like the eyes of God, are looking down upon the arena. There lie the bodies of the saints and there are the tigers and the lions prowling over the sanded floor, tearing the carcasses which they have slain. But the painter pictures a vision of angels descending from over the uttermost parapet of the amphitheatre— they are tenderly watching over those precious bodies, for they have triumphed! And from the mouths of the beasts they have gone to the thrones of the angels!  
Only hold fast where the saints held fast at the first, “in nothing, terrified by your adversaries.” No more mind the advance of learning than they dreaded the universality of ignorance! We have to fight with both the ignorance of this world and the wisdom of it, too—“But the foolishness of God is wiser than man, and the weakness of God is stronger than man.” How readily shall the Divine wisdom and power make an end of learned babblings! Be not moved away from the hope of your calling. “Cast not away your confidence” which has great recompense of reward. Be like the Grecian youth who took his shield to battle—let it be your glory and your defense. We would say to you what the Spartan mother said to her son— “Come back with your shield, or on it.” Come back with the Gospel well strapped upon your arm like a golden shield, or, if you die, may it become your bier and may you be borne Home upon it as a steadfast Believer in Christ! But never be moved away from the hope of your calling, for so would your shield be vilely cast away.

**III.**Lastly, WHY IS IT THAT WE CANNOT BE MOVED AWAY FROM THE HOPE OF THE GOSPEL? What would follow if we were? Well, first, we will not be moved away from the hope of our calling, for there is nothing better to take its place! A man would not think of going to Australia if he heard that the wages were less there than here, the expense of living greater and the people were poorer. “No,” he would say, “I shall not jump out of the frying pan into the fire. I shall certainly stay where I am, rather than go farther and fare worse.”

Well, we are just of that mind. We do not see how we could improve ourselves. Jonathan Edwards, in one of his treatises, speaks somewhat to this effect—“If any man can prove this form of the Gospel to be untrue and a mere dream, the very best thing that he can do is to sit down and weep forever to think that he has disproved the brightest hope that ever shone upon the eyes of men.” And that is so. To have the glorious hope that, believing in Christ, we are saved, is such a blessing and such a joy that nothing can compare with it!

Where are the fields that can tempt away the sheep of Christ? Where is the shepherd that can vie with Him? Where is the light that is brighter than this eternal sun? Oh, you tempt us with your rattles like children, but, having become men, we despise them! What have you to offer of truth, of hope, of comfort, of joy equal to what we possess? Let us, each one, sing our answer to the tempter—

***“You only, Sovereign of my heart,  
My refuge, my almighty Friend,  
And can my soul from You depart,  
On whom, alone, my hopes depend?  
Let earth’s alluring joys combine,  
While You are near, in vain they call!  
One smile, one blissful smile of Yours,***

***My dearest Lord, outweighs them all!  
Your name, my inmost powers adore,  
You are my life, my joy, my care.  
Depart from You? ‘Tis death—‘tis more,  
‘Tis endless ruin, deep despair!”***

Remember, too, that if we are moved away from the hope of our calling, we shall soon be in bondage. A man may be as merry as a lark if he believes in Christ for salvation. But let him leave that and, before long, he will be as dull as an owl! What is there that can give us joy apart from Christ? Are we not bound in chains of doubt when once we leave the way of Sovereign Grace through believing in Christ? If we are moved away from the hope of our calling, we cannot grow. A tree that is frequently moved usually dies—growth there cannot be! And a man who begins in the spirit and hopes to be made perfect by the flesh. A man who begins in Free Grace and then gets to relying on his own works. A man who begins by trusting in Christ and then makes confession to a priest. A man who rests in the precious blood and then dabbles in sacraments and hopes to find salvation there—he can never grow in Grace!

He is whirled about with every oar. Every tide of doctrine puts him up stream or down stream. He can make no progress. And what good can such a man do? He cannot influence others beneficially, for he teaches one thing, today, and another, tomorrow. He says that God has saved him and the next day he doubts it. He says that the Atonement is full and free, but tomorrow he says that penance is to be performed. He cannot bless others—he does not know the way to blessing. Besides, if we were moved away from the hope of our calling, what mean, miserable wretches we would be, for we should have deserted our Savior! I wonder where I could hide my dishonorable head if I once came here to preach salvation by the works of the flesh and not by the Grace of God! I hope that you would hiss me from the platform! And I hope that you will so treat anybody that shall succeed me, when I am gone, who shall preach to you any other Gospel than that which you have received!

Hold fast, with all your might, right solemnly to the grand old faith, for if you do not, in rejecting that way of salvation, you reject yourselves! What did Christ die for, if we can be saved in some other way? Why did He pour out His blood if there is a cheaper method to win the skies? Why did He go down into the depths of death-shade, if you can force your way to Heaven by your own endeavors without Him? No, no—we will stand fast where we are, resting only and alone upon Jesus Christ our Savior! For us to leave the plan of salvation—and with this I close—is something like a soldier entrenched in an impregnable fortress accepting an invitation to come out of it! You remember how the black monarch, who has been so much run after in England, said that our soldiers ought to come out of the entrenchments?

They were rats, he said, to hide behind earthworks. If they would only come out, he would destroy them! But our soldiers were wise enough not to venture into the open until the proper time. So the world, the flesh, the devil and error say, “Come out! Come out! You talk about an Infallible Scripture and an Almighty Savior and a simple faith in Him. Come out and fight us fairly on the level.” Yes, but we do not see it and we shall never attempt it! We are like the little coney, of whom Solomon speaks. He hid himself among the rocks and, the sportsman, I have no doubt, said, “Why don’t you come out, little coney? Come, and let me be your friend.” But the coney, though he was feeble, was wise, and he hid himself in the rock all the more, because a stranger invited him out. Do the same when Satan cries, “Come away and be free. Be a man! Do not be always trusting in authority.” “No,” you say, “I shall stay where I am.”

As I was riding along in the south of France one day, I saw pair of fine birds overhead. The driver called out in the French tongue, “Eagles!” Yes, and there was a man below, with a gun, who was wishful to get a nearer acquaintance with the eagles, but they did not come down to oblige him! He pointed his rifle at them, but his shots did not reach half way, for the royal birds kept above. The higher air is the fit dominion for eagles! Up there is the eagle’s playground, where he plays with the callow lightning! Up above the smoke and clouds he dwells. Stay there, eagles! Stay there! If men can get you within range, they mean no good to you. Keep up, Christians! Keep up in the higher element, resting in Jesus Christ, and do not come down to find a perch for yourself among the trees of philosophy! Whatever we do, let us never leave the way of the Truth of God, of peace, of safety!

We are going along the King’s Highway and the thieves on the side of the road say, “Come off the highway! It is so dull and monotonous. Come into the woods! We will show you fair flowers, ferny dells and quiet caves. Come, listen to the birds that sing all day and all night, too. Come with us.” We heed you not—he that travels along the King’s Highway is under the King’s protection—but he that wanders into the dark mountains and lonesome woods may take care of himself. We shall do as we have done— follow the way that leads from the banishment—the way of trusting in the Savior and in Him, alone!

As you hold to the faith, so may God bless and enrich you. As with simple heart you plod along the road that leads to Heaven by the righteousness of the Son of God, may the Lord be with you and comfort you. But if you turn back, woe unto you! A curse will fall upon you in that day of shame and crime! The Lord keep you, that you may keep the faith. Amen.

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÷Col 1.27

CHRIST IN YOU  
NO. 1720

**DELIVERED ON LORDS-DAY MORNING, MAY 13, 1883, *BY C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“Christ in you, the hope of glory.”***Col 1:27***.***

THE Gospel is the grand secret—the mystery of mysteries! It was hidden from ages and from generations, but is now made manifest to the saints. To the mass of mankind it was utterly unknown and the chosen people, who saw something of it, only perceived it dimly through the smoke of sacrifices and the veil of types. It remained a mystery which wit could not guess nor invention unravel—and it would have forever have continued a secret had not God, in His infinite mercy, been pleased to reveal it by the Holy Spirit. In a still deeper sense it is even yet a hidden thing unless the Spirit of God has revealed it to us *individually*, for the revelation of the Gospel in the Word of God does not, of itself, instruct men unto eternal life. The light is clear enough, but it avails nothing till the eyes are opened. Each separate individual must have Christ revealed to him and in him by the work of the Holy Spirit, or else he will remain in darkness even in the midst of the Gospel day.

Blessed and happy are they to whom the Lord has laid open the Divine secret which Prophets and kings could not discover—which even angels desired to look into! Brethren, we live in a time when the Gospel is clearly revealed in the Word of God and when that Word has its faithful preachers lovingly to press home its teachings. Let us take care that we do not despise the mystery which has now become a household word. Let not the commonness of the blessing cause us to undervalue it. You remember how, in the wilderness, the Israelites fed upon angels’ food until they had enjoyed it so long, so constantly and so abundantly that in their wicked discontent they called it, “light bread”? I fear that many in these times are gorged with the Gospel like those who eat too much honey. They even venture to call the heavenly Word of God, “common-place,” and talk us if it were not only, “the old, old story,” but a stale story, too.

Are not many hungering after novelties, longing for things original and startling, thirsting after the spiritual dram-drinking of sensational preaching, dissatisfied with Christ Crucified, though He is the Bread which came down from Heaven? For us, let us keep clear of this folly! Let us rest content with the old food, praying from day to day, “Lord, evermore give us this bread.” May it never happen to us as unto the Jews of the Apostolic times who utterly refused the Word of Life, so that the Truth of God became to them a stumbling-block and those who preached it were compelled to turn to the Gentiles! If we despise the heavenly message, we cannot expect to fare better than they did! Let us not incur the danger of refusing Him that speaks from Heaven! If there is life, rejoice in it! If there is light, walk in it! If there is love, rest in it. If the Lord God Almighty has, at last, set open the treasures of His Grace and put eternal bliss within your reach, stretch out the hand of faith and be enriched! Turn not your backs upon your God, your Savior, for in so doing you will turn your backs on eternal life and Heaven! God grant that none of you may do this.

In our text we have, in a few words, that great mystery with which Heaven did labor us in travail; that mystery which is to transform this poor world into new heavens and a new earth. We have it, I say, all in a nutshell in the seven words of our text—the riches of the glory of this mystery may, here, be seen set out to open view—“Christ in you, the hope of glory.” By the assistance of the Divine Spirit, I shall speak upon this mystery in three ways—The *essence* of it is “Christ.” The *sweetness* of it is “Christ in you.” And the outlook of it is “the hope of glory.” The words read like a whole body of divinity condensed into a line,—“Christ in you, the hope of glory.”

**I.**The eternal mystery of the Gospel—THE ESSENCE OF IT IS CHRIST. I hardly know what is the antecedent to the word, “which,” here—whether it is, “mystery,” or, “riches,” or, “glory.” And I do not greatly care to examine which it may be. Any one of the three words will be suitable and all three will fit best of all. If it is “the mystery,” Christ is that mystery— “Without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh.” If it is the word, “glory,” beyond all question our Lord Jesus wears a “glory as of the Only-Begotten of the Father, full of Grace and truth.” Is He not “the brightness of the Father’s glory”? If we take the word, “riches,” you have often heard of “the unsearchable riches of Christ,” for in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.

Oh, the riches of the Grace of God which it has pleased the Father to impart unto us in Christ Jesus! Christ is the “mystery,” the “riches” *and* the “glory.” He is all this and, blessed be His name, He is all this among us poor Gentiles who at first were like dogs, scarcely accounted worthy to eat the crumbs from under the children’s table! And yet we are now admitted into the children’s place and made heirs of God, joint-heirs with Christ Jesus! Riches of glory among the Gentiles would have sounded like a mockery in the first ages and yet the language is most proper at this day, for all things are ours in Christ Jesus the Lord!

The essence of this mystery is Christ, Himself. In these days certain would-be wise men are laboriously attempting to constitute a church without Christ and to set forth a salvation without a Savior. But their Babel building is as a bowing wall and a tottering fence. The center of the blessed mystery of the Gospel is Christ, Himself, in His Person. What a wonderful conception it was that the infinite God should take upon Himself the nature of man! It never would have occurred to men that such a condescension would be thought of! Even now that it has been done, it is a great mystery of our faith. God and man in one Person is the wonder of Heaven, earth and Hell! Well might David exclaim, “What is man, that You are mindful of him? And the son of man, that You visit him?”

The first thought of the Incarnation was born in the unsearchably wise mind of God. It needed Omnipotent Omniscience to suggest the idea of, “Immanuel, God With Us.” Think of it! The Infinite an infant; the Ancient of days a child; the Ever-Blessed a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief! The idea is original, astounding, Divine! Oh, that this blending of the two natures should ever have taken place! Brothers and Sisters, the heart of the Gospel throbs in the Truth of God! The Son of the Highest was born at Bethlehem and at His birth, before He had worked a deed of righteousness or shed a drop of blood, the angels sang, “Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, good will toward men,” for they knew that the Incarnation had, within itself, a wealth of good things for men!

When the Lord, Himself, took our manhood, it meant inconceivable benediction to the human race! “Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given,” and in that Child and Son we find our salvation! God in our nature can mean for us nothing but joy. How favored is our race in this respect! What other creature did the Lord thus espouse? We know that He took not up angels, but He took up the seed of Abraham. He took upon Him human nature, and now the next being in the universe to God is man, he who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death is this day crowned with glory and honor, and made to have dominion over all the works of Jehovah’s hands.

This is, indeed, the Gospel! Do not sinners begin to hope? Is there one in your nature who is “Light of lights, very God of very God,” and do you not perceive that this must mean good for you? Does not the “Word made flesh” dwelling among men awaken hope in your bosoms and lead you to believe that you may yet be saved? Certainly the fact of there being such an union between God and man is the delight of every regenerated mind! Our Lord’s Person is, at this day, constituted in the same manner. He is *still* God and Man! He can still sympathize with our manhood to the fullest, for He is bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh! And yet He can help us without limit, seeing He is equal with the Father. Though manifestly Divine, yet Jesus is none the less Human! Though truly Man, He is none the less Divine—and this is a door of hope to us, a fountain of consolation which never ceases to flow!

When we think of our Lord, we remember with His Person the glorious work which He undertook and finished on our behalf. Being found in fashion as Man, He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross. He took upon Himself the form of a Servant and was made in the likeness of sinful flesh, because we had failed in our service and could not be saved unless Another did suit and service on our behalf. The Heir of all things girded Himself to be among as One that serves! What service His was! How arduous! How humble! How heavy! How all-consuming! His was a life of grief and humiliation, followed by a death of agony and scorn. Up to the Cross He carried all our load. And on the Cross He bore, that we might bear, His Father’s righteous wrath!

Oh, what has Christ *not* done for us? He cast our sins into the depths of the sea. He has taken the cup which we ought to have drunk forever and He has drained it dry and left not a dreg behind! He has redeemed us from the curse of the Law, being made a Curse for us. And now He has finished transgression, made an end of sin, brought in everlasting righteousness and gone up to His Father’s Throne within the veil, bearing His Divine oblation and making everything right and safe for us, that, by-andby, we may follow Him and be with Him where He is! Oh yes, Brothers and Sisters, Christ’s Person and finished work are the pillars of our hope! I cannot think of what He is, what He has done, what He is doing and what He will yet do, without saying, “He is all my salvation and all my desire.”

My Brethren, every one of our Lord’s offices is a well-spring of comfort. Is He Prophet, Priest and King? Is He Friend? Is He Brother? Is He Husband? Is He Head? Every way and everywhere we lean the weight of our soul’s great business upon Him and He is our All in All! Besides, there is this sweet thought, that He is our Representative. Know you not that of old He was our Covenant Head and stood for us in the great transactions of eternity? Like as the first Adam headed up the race and stood for us— alas, I must correct myself—*fell* for us, and we fell in him, so now has the second Adam taken up within Himself all His people and stood for them and kept for them the covenant. So that now it is ordered in all things and sure, and every blessing of it is infallibly secured to all the seed. Believers must and shall possess the covenanted inheritance because Jesus represents them and, on their behalf, has taken possession of the estate of God!

Whatever Christ is, His people are in Him. They were crucified in Him; they were dead in Him; they were buried in Him; they are risen in Him! In Him they live eternally, in Him they sit gloriously at the right hand of God, “who has raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus.” In Him we are “accepted in the Beloved,” both now and forever! And this, I say, is the essence of the whole Gospel. He that preaches Christ preaches the Gospel! He who does not preach Christ, preaches not the Gospel. It is no more possible for there to be a Gospel without Christ than a day without the sun, or a river without water, or a living man without a head, or a quickened human body without a soul! No, Christ Himself is the life, soul, substance and *essence* of the mystery of the Gospel of God. Christ, Himself, I say again, and no other!

I have been trying to think what we would do if our Lord were gone. Suppose that a man has heard of a great physician who understands his complaint? He has traveled a great many miles to see this celebrated doctor. But when he gets to the door they tell him that he is out. “Well,” he says, “then I must wait till he is in.” “You need not wait,” they reply, “his assistant is at home.” The suffering man, who has been often disappointed, answers, “I do not care about his assistant. I want to see the man, himself—mine is a desperate case, but I have heard that this physician has cured the like. I must, therefore, see *him*. No assistants for me.” “Well,” they say, “he is out, but there are his books. You can see his books.” “Thank you,” he says, “I cannot be content with his books. I need the living man and nothing less. It is to him that I must speak and from him I will receive instructions.”

“Do you see that cabinet?” “Yes.” “It is full of his medicines.” The sick man answers, “I dare say they are very good, but they are of no use to me without the doctor. I want their owner to prescribe for me, or I shall die of my disease.” “But see,” cries one, “here is a person who has been cured by him, a man of great experience, who has been present at many remarkable operations. Go into the inquiry room with him and he will tell you all about the mode of cure.” The afflicted man answers, “I am much obliged to you, but all your talk only makes me long the more to see the doctor. I came to see *him*, and I am not going to be put off with anything else. I must see the man, himself, for myself. He has made my disease a specialty. He knows how to handle my case and I will stay till I see him.”

Now, dear Friends, if you are seeking Christ, imitate this sick man or else you will miss the mark altogether! Never be put off with books, or conversations. Be not content with Christian people talking to you, or preachers preaching to you, or the Bible being read to you, or prayers being offered for you. Anything short of Jesus will leave you short of salvation! You have to reach Christ and touch Christ, and nothing short of this will serve your turn. Picture the case of the prodigal son when he went home. Suppose, when he reached the house, the elder brother had come to meet him? I must make a supposition that the elder brother had sweetened himself and made himself amiable—and then I hear him say, “Come in, Brother. Welcome home!”

But I see the returning one stand there with tears in his eyes and I hear him lament, “I want to see my father. I must tell him that I have sinned and done evil in his sight.” An old servant whispers, “Master John, I am glad to see you back. Be happy, for all the servants are rejoiced to hear the sound of your voice. It is true your father will not see you, but he has ordered the fatted calf to be killed for you. And here is the best robe, and a ring, and shoes for your feet, and we are told to put them on you.” All this would not content the poor penitent! I think I hear him cry—“I do not despise anything my father gives me, for I am not worthy to be as his hired servant. But what is all this unless I see his face and know that he forgives me? There is no taste in the feast, no glitter in the ring, no fitness in the shoes, no beauty in the robe unless I can see my father and can be reconciled to him.”

Do you not see that in the case of the prodigal son the great matter was to get his head into his father’s bosom and there to sob out, “Father, I have sinned”? The one thing necessary was the kiss of free forgiveness, the touch of those dear, warm, loving lips, which said, “My dear child, I love you and your faults are blotted out.” That was the thing that gave his soul rest and perfect peace! And this is the mystery we come to preach to you—God Himself drawing near to you in Christ Jesus and forgiving you all your trespasses. We are not content to preach unless Jesus Himself is the theme. We do not set before you something *about* Christ, nor something that *belongs* to Christ, nor something *proclaimed* by Christ, nor somebody that has *known* Christ, nor some truth which extols Christ! No, we preach Christ Crucified!

We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord! And we say to you, never be content till you clasp the Savior in your arms as Simeon did in the Temple. That venerable saint did not pray to depart in peace while he only *saw* the Child in Mary’s bosom! But when he had taken the dear One into his own arms, then he said, “Lord, now let Your servant depart in peace.” A personal grasp of a *personal* Christ, even though we only know Him as an Infant, fills the heart to the fullest, but nothing else will do it! I go a little farther. As it must be Christ Himself, and none other, it must also be Christ Himself rather than anything which Christ *gives*.

I was thinking, the other day, how different Christ is from all the friends and helpers that we have. They bring us good things, but Jesus gives us *Himself*. He does not merely give us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption, but He Himself is made of God all these things to us! Hence we can never do without Him. When very ill, you are pleased to see the doctor, but when you are getting well you say to yourself, “I shall be glad to see the back of the good man, for that will be a sure sign that I am off the sick list.” Ah, but when Jesus heals a soul, he wants to see Jesus more than ever! Our longing for the constant company of our Lord is the sign that we are getting well! He who longs for Jesus to abide with Him, forever, is healed of his plague! We never outgrow Christ—we only grow to hunger more and more!

If you eat a meal you lose your appetite, but if you feed upon Christ, you hunger and thirst still more after Him. This insatiable desire after Him is not a painful hunger, but a heavenly, pleasant hunger which grows upon you the more its cravings are gratified. The man who has little of Christ can do with little of Christ. But he that gets more of Christ pines for a yet fuller supply. Suppose a wise man were to instruct you? You would learn all he had to teach and then say, “Let him go on and teach somebody else.” But when Jesus teaches, we discover so much of our own ignorance that we would gladly keep Him as our life-tutor! When our Lord taught the two disciples on the road to Emmaus, He opened the Scriptures and He opened their minds until their hearts burned within them! What next? Shall the Divine teacher pass on? No, no! They constrained Him, saying, “Abide with us; it is toward evening, and the day is far spent.” The more He taught them, the more they wished to be taught!

This is *always* the way with Christ—He is growingly dear, increasingly necessary! Oh my Brothers and Sisters, you cannot do without Him! If you have your foot upon the threshold of pure gold and your finger on the latch of the gate of pearl, you now need Christ more than ever! I feel persuaded that you are of Rutherford’s mind, when he cried to have his heart enlarged till it was as big as Heaven, that he might hold all Christ within it—and then he felt that even then is was too narrow a space for the boundless love of Jesus, since the Heaven of heavens cannot contain Him! And so he cried out for a heart as large as *seven* heavens, that he might entertain the Well-Beloved. Truly, I am content with what God has given me in all points, except that I long for more of Christ! I could sit down happy if I knew that my portion in the house and in the field would never grow—but I am famished to have more of my Lord!

The more we are filled within of Christ, the more we feel our own natural emptiness! The more we know of Him, the more we long to know Him! Paul, writing to the Philippians, when he had been a Christian for many years, yet says, “That I may know Him.” Oh, Paul, do you not know Christ yet? “Yes,” he says, “and no.” For he knew the love of Christ, but felt that it surpassed all knowledge. “All the rivers run into the sea, yet the sea is not full”—this is not our case in one respect, and yet it is in another, for all the streams of Grace and love and blessedness flow into our souls and we are full—yet, being full, we are longing for more! Not Your gifts, Lord, but Yourself! You, You are the desire of our hearts! Christ alone is enough.

Mark this. Nothing must be placed with Christ as if it were necessary to Him. Some hold a candle to the sun by preaching Christ*and* man’s philosophy, or their own priestcraft. When the blessed rain comes fresh from Heaven, they would gladly perfume it with their own dainty extract of fancy. As for God’s blessed air, fresh from the eternal hills, they dream that it cannot be right unless by scientific experiments they load it with their own smoke and clouds! Come, clear out, let us see the sun! We do not need your rush lights. Away with your gauges and your fineries! Let the clear sunlight enter! Let the holy water drop from Heaven! We want not your scented essences. Out of the way and let the fresh air blow about us. There is nothing like it for the health and strength of the soul! We rejoice in Christ and nothing else but Christ! Christ and no priestcraft! Christ and no philosophy! Christ and no modern thought! Christ and no human perfection! Christ, the whole of Christ, and nothing else but Christ—here lies the mystery of the Gospel of the Grace of God!

Brethren, what else but Christ can satisfy the justice of God? Look around you when a sense of sin is on you and the dread tribunal is before your eyes—what can you bring, by way of expiation, but Christ? What can you bring *with* Christ? What dare you associate with His blood and merits? Oh, my God, nothing will content You but Your Son, Your Son, alone! What else can quiet conscience? Some professors have consciences as good us new, for they have never been used. But he that has once had his conscience thoroughly exercised and pressed upon with all the weight of sin till he has felt as if it were better for him not to be than to be guilty before God—that man acknowledges that nothing but Christ will ever quiet his agonized heart!

See the bleeding Lamb and you will be pacified! See the exalted Lord pleading His righteousness before the Throne of God and conscience is even as a weaned child—and all the storm within the spirit is hushed into a great calm. What else will do to live with but Christ? I do not find, in times of pain and depression of spirit, that I can keep up upon anything but my Lord. The mind can feed at other times on pretty kickshaws and fine confectionery such as certain divines serve out in the form of orations and essays and the like, but when you are sorely sick, your soul abhors all manner of earthly meat and nothing will stay in the stomach but the Bread of Heaven, even the blessed Christ of God! Think also, when you come to die, what else will do but Christ? Oh, I have seen men die with Heaven in their eyes, the eternal Godhead seeming to transfigure them because they rejoiced in Christ! But a deathbed without Christ—it is the darkening twilight of eternal night! It is the gloomy cave which forms the entrance of the land of darkness.

Do not venture on life or death without Jesus, I implore you. “None but Christ, none but Christ”—this has been the martyr’s cry amidst the fire— let it be ours in life and death.

**II.**Secondly, we are to consider THE SWEETNESS OF THIS MYSTERY, WHICH IS CHRIST IN YOU. This is a grand advance. I know that there are a great many fishermen here, this morning, and I heartily welcome them. When you are out at sea you like to know that there are plenty of fish in the sea all round your boats. It is a fine thing to get in among the great shoals of fish. Yes, but there is one thing better than that! Fish in the sea are good, but the fish in the boat are the fish for you! Once get them in the net, or better still, safe into the vessel, and you are glad. Now Christ in Heaven—Christ free to poor sinners is precious—but Christ here in the heart is most precious of all! Here is the marrow and fatness. Christ on board the vessel brings safety and calm. Christ in your house, Christ in your heart, Christ in you—that is the cream of the matter, the honey of the honeycomb!

Gold is valuable, but men think more of a pound in their pockets than of huge ingots in the bank vault. A loaf of bread is a fine thing, but if we could not eat it, and so get it within us, we might die of starvation. A medicine may be a noble cure, but if it is always kept in the vial and we never take a draught from it, what good will it do us? Christ is best known when He is Christ *in* you. Let us talk about that a little. Christ *in* you—that is, first, Christ accepted by faith. Is it not a wonderful thing that Christ Jesus should ever enter into a man? Yes, but I will tell you something more wonderful, and that is, that He should enter in by so narrow an opening as our little faith! There is the sun—I do not know how many thousands of times the sun is bigger than the earth, and yet the sun can come into a little room or a close cell—and what is more, the sun can get in through a chink!

When the shutters have been closed I have known him come in through a little round hole in them. So Christ can come in through a little faith—a mere chink of confidence. If you are such a poor Believer that you can hardly think of assurance or confidence, yet if you trust the Lord, as surely us the sun comes in by a narrow crack, so will Christ come into your soul by the smallest opening of true faith! How wise it will be on your part, when you see your Lord’s sunny face shining through the lattices, to say, “I am not going to be satisfied with these mere glints and gleams, I would rather walk in the light of His Countenance. Pull up those blinds! Let the heavenly sun shine in and let me rejoice in its glory.” Grow in faith and enlarge your receiving power till you take in Christ into your inmost soul by the Holy Spirit, for it is Christ in you by faith that becomes the hope of glory.

By Christ in you we mean Christ possessed. You see, nothing is so much a man’s own as that which is within him. Do you tell me that a certain slice of bread is not mine and that I have no right to it? But I have eaten it and you may bring a lawsuit against me about that bread if you like, but you cannot get it away from me! That question is settled—that which I have eaten is mine. In this case, possession is not only nine points of the law, but *all* the points. When a man gets Christ into Him, the devil himself cannot win a suit against him to recover Christ, for that matter is settled beyond question. Christ in you is yours, indeed! Men may question whether an acre of land or a house belongs to me, but the meat I ate yesterday is not a case of property which Chancery or any other court can alter. So, when the Believer has Christ in him, the Law has no more to say! The enclosure made by faith carries its own title deeds within it.

It means, too, Christ experienced in all His power. There may be a valuable medicine that works like magic to expel a man’s pains and cure his diseases, but it is of no efficacy till it is within him! When it commences to purify his blood and to strengthen his frame, he is in a fair way to know it without depending upon the witness of others. Get Christ in you curing your sin, Christ in you filling your soul with love to virtue and holiness, bathing your heart in comfort and refining it with heavenly inspirations— then will you know the Lord! Christ *believed* in, Christ *possessed*, Christ *experienced*, Christ *in you*—this is worth a world! Moreover, Christ in us is Christ reigning. It reminds me of Mr. Bunyan’s picture of Mansoul, when the Prince Immanuel laid siege to it and Diabolus, from within the city, strove to keep Him out.

It was a hard time for Mansoul, then, but, at last, the battering rams had broken down the gates and the silver trumpets sounded and the Prince’s captains entered! Then the Prince, Himself, did ride down the city’s streets, while liberated citizens welcomed Him with all their hearts, hung out all their streamers and made the Church towers ring again! The bells rang out merry peals, for the King, Himself, was come. Up to the castle of the heart, He rode in triumph and took His royal throne to be henceforth the sole lord and king of the city. Christ in you is a right royal word! Christ swaying His scepter from the center of your being, over every power and faculty, desire and resolve, bringing every thought into captivity to Himself—oh, this is glory begun and the sure pledge of Heaven!

Oh for more of the imperial sovereignty of Jesus! It is our liberty to be absolutely under His sway. Yes, and then Christ in you is Christ *filling* you. It is wonderful, when Christ once enters into a soul, how, by degrees, He occupies the whole of it. Did you ever hear the legend of a man whose garden produced nothing else but weeds, till at last he met with a strange foreign flower of singular vitality? The story is that he sowed a handful of this seed in his overgrown garden and left it to work its own sweet way. He slept and rose and knew not how the seed was growing till one day he opened the gate and saw a scene which astounded him. He knew that the seed would produce a dainty flower and he looked for it. But he had little dreamed that the plant would cover the whole garden! So it was—the flower had exterminated every weed, till, as he looked from one end to the other—from wall to wall he could see nothing but the fair colors of that rare plant and smell nothing but its delicious perfume.

Christ is that plant of renown! If He is sown in the soil of your soul, He will gradually eat out the roots of all evil weeds and poisonous plants, till over all your nature there shall be Christ in you! God grant we may realize the picture in our own hearts, and then we shall be in Paradise! It may sound strange to add that Christ in you transfigures the man till he becomes like Christ, Himself. You thrust a bar of cold, black iron into the fire and keep it there till the fire enters into it. Look, the iron is like fire, itself—he that feels it will know no difference. The fire has permeated the iron and made it a fiery mass. I should like to have seen that bush in Horeb before which Moses took off his shoes. When it was all ablaze it seemed no longer a bush, but a mass of fire, a furnace of pure flame. The fire had transfigured the bush. So it is with us when Christ enters into us—He elevates us to a nobler state, even as Paul said—“I live, yet not I, but Christ lives in me.”

Jesus sanctifies us wholly—spirit, soul, and body—and takes us to dwell with Him in the perfect state above. Christ in you—how can I explain it? We are the little graft and He is the strong and living stem. We are laid to Him, bound to Him, sealed to Him—and when there is nothing between the new shoot and the old tree, at last the sap flows into the graft and graft and the tree are one! You know right well how Christ enters into us and becomes our life. Christ in you means power in you. A strong man armed keeps his house till a stronger than he comes—and when the stronger enters, the first tenant is ejected by the power of the new comer and kept out by the same means. We were without strength till Christ came, but now we war with principalities and powers and win the victory. Christ in you! Oh, what bliss! What joy! The Bridegroom is with us and we cannot fast! The King is with us and we are glad!

When King Charles went to live at Newmarket, it is said that a most poverty-stricken village became a wealthy place. Truly, when Christ comes to dwell in our hearts, our spiritual poverty suddenly turns to blessed wealth. Christ in you! What a wonder it is that He should deign to come under our roof! Lift up your heads, O you gates, and be you lifted up, you everlasting doors, that the King of Glory may come in. See the honor which His entrance brings with it! He glorifies the place where His foot rests even for a moment. If Jesus does but enter into your heart, His court comes within Him—honor, glory, immortality, Heaven and all other Divine things follow where He leads. “Oh,” says one, “I wish He would come and dwell in me.” Then, be humble, for He loves to dwell with him that is humble and of a contrite spirit.

Next, be clean, for if they must be clean that bear God’s vessels, much more they that have Christ, Himself, in them. Next, be empty, for Christ will not live amid the lumber of self, pride and carnal sufficiency. Learn abundantly to rejoice in Christ, for he who welcomes Christ will have Him always for a guest. Jesus never tarries where He is not desired. If His welcome is worn out, away He goes. Oh, desire and delight in Him! Hunger and thirst after Him, for Christ delights to dwell with an eager people, a hungry people, a people who value Him and cannot be happy without Him. Surely I have said enough to make you feel that the sweetness of true godliness lies in having Christ in you.

**III.**Thirdly, we are to consider that the OUTLOOK OF ALL THIS IS CHRIST IN YOU, THE HOPE OF GLORY. Last Sunday morning, as best I could in my feebleness, I spoke to you about the time when this earthly house of our tabernacle shall be dissolved, when we shall find that we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. But this morning’s text goes a little further—it speaks of glory which is a hope for soul as well as body. Why glory! Glory? Surely that belongs only to God. To Him alone be glory! Yes, but Christ has said, “Father, I will that they, also, whom You have given Me be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory.”

And He also says, “And the glory which You have given Me, I have given them.” Think of it! Glory for us poor creatures! Glory for you, Sister! Glory for me! It seems a strange thing that a sinner should ever have anything to do with glory when he deserves nothing but shame. We are neither kings nor princes, what have we to do with *glory*? Yet glory is to be our dwelling, glory our light, glory our crown, glory our song! The Lord will not be content to give us less than glory. Grace is very sweet, but might we not be content to swim forever in a sea of Grace? But no, our Lord “will give Grace *and* glory.”—

***“All needful Grace will God bestow,***

***And crown that Grace with glory, too.”***  
We shall have glorified bodies, glorious companions, a glorious reward and glorious rest!

But how do we know that we shall have glory? Why, first, He that has come to live in our hearts and reigns as our bosom’s Lord, makes us glorious by His coming! His rest is glorious—the place of His feet is glorious—He must mean some great thing towards us, or He would never dwell in us. I saw a line carriage stopping, the other day, at a very humble hovel, and I thought to myself—“that carriage is not stopping there to collect rent, or to borrow a broom.” Oh, no, that lady, yonder, is calling round and visiting the poor, and I doubt not she has taken in some nourishment to an invalid. I hope it was so. And I am sure my Lord Jesus Christ’s carriage never stops at my door to get anything out of me! Whenever He comes, He brings countless blessings with Him. Such a one as He is, God over all, blessed forever—it cannot be that He took our nature, unless with high designs of unsearchable love!

Thus we nourish large expectations upon the food of solid reason. I am sure our Lord Jesus would never have done so much if He had not meant to manifest the immeasurable breadth and length of a love which is beyond imagining. What He has done, already, surprises me even to amazement. I think nothing can appear strange or hard to believe, let Him do what He may in the future. If the Scriptures tell me my Lord is going to fill me with His own glory and to set me at His own right hand, I believe it. He who went to the Cross for me will never be ashamed of me. He who gave me Himself will give me all Heaven and more! He that opened His very heart to find blood and water to wash me in—how shall He keep back even His *kingdom* from me?

O sweet Lord Jesus, You are, indeed, to us the hope, the pledge, the guarantee of glory! Friend, do you not feel that Christ in you is the dawn of Heaven? Besides this, Christ is He that has entered into covenant with God to bring His people home to glory. He has pledged Himself to bring every sheep of His flock safe to His Father’s right hand and He will keep His engagement, for He never failed one Covenant promise yet. Moreover, this we do know, that the Christ who is come to live with us will never be separated from us. If He had not meant to stay, He would not have entered our heart at all. There was nothing to tempt Him to come, and if, in Sovereign Grace, He deigned to live in the poor cottage of our nature, then, Brothers and Sisters, He knew what He was doing. He had counted the cost, He had foreseen all the evil that would be in us and about us, and when He came, He come with the intent to stay.

Someone asked another, the other day, “What persuasion are you of?” And the answer was, “I am persuaded that neither life, nor death nor things present, nor things to come shall separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Are not you of that persuasion, Brother? If so, you can see how Christ in you is the hope of glory. Why, look, Sirs, Christ in you is glory! Did we not show that just now? “Lift up your heads, O you gates, and be you lifted up you everlasting doors, that the King of Glory may come in!” You have Heaven in having Christ, for Christ is the biggest part of Heaven! Is not Christ the *soul* of Heaven, and having Him you have glory? What is more, having gotten Christ, Christ’s glory and your glory are wrapped up together.

If Christ were to lose you, it would be a great loss to you, but a greater loss to Him. If I can perish with Christ in me, I shall certainly be a fearful loser, but so will He, for where is His honor, where His glory if a Believer perishes? His glory is gone if one soul that trusts in Him is ever cast away. Comfort yourselves with this word—Christ in you means you in glory, as surely us God lives! There is no question about that! Go your ways and rejoice in Christ Jesus and let men see who it is that lives in you! Let Jesus speak through your mouth, weep through your eyes and smile through your face! Let Him work with your hands and walk within your feet, and be tender with your heart. Let Him seek sinners through you! Let Him comfort saints through you until the day breaks and the shadows flee away!

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**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.** Sermon #2581 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

**÷Col 1.28**

PERFECTION IN CHRIST  
NO. 2581

A SERMON  
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S-DAY, JULY 31, 1898.

***DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK, ON A THURSDAY EVENING, IN THE YEAR 1856.**

***“Perfect in Christ Jesus.”***Col 1:28***.***

Perfection in Jesus Christ! What effect ought it to have upon our hearts if it really is ours? Perfection! What do we know of it from Scripture? We know that it is a word so large that while it takes us little time to say it, yet it comprehends all words within its meaning. There is no good word of any description which can be applied to any creature but this word, *perfection*, takes it in. And though it is easy to utter it with our lips, I question whether there is any mortal mind capable of grasping the idea of perfection any more than it can grasp the idea of eternity! When we begin to think of eternity—without beginning, without end—we are lost in trying to comprehend it because we are finite. And when we once endeavor to conceive perfection—without fault, without flaw—we are lost because we are imperfect! And therefore we cannot understand perfection any more than the finite can grasp the infinite! Perfection, indeed, seems to be the sole prerogative of God. He is perfect in everything. In all His attributes there is no lack. From whatever point of view we regard Him, He is without blot or blemish. And no man, speaking truthfully of God, can say that there is anything of imperfection in Him. If we speak of majesty, His Glory is unsurpassed. If we talk of power, His is Omnipotence and that, indeed, is infinite power! If we speak of wisdom, His is the wisdom of the Godhead—He knows all things, from the most minute to the most immense. He comprehends all secrets and grasps all knowledge in His mighty mind.

It does seem, at first sight, as if perfection could belong only to the Creator. But we remember that the works of God are also perfect and so are all His ways. When He made the earth, the sun, the moon, the stars, He looked upon them and said, “They are very good.” Written on the face of Nature, there was then this one word, Perfection! All God’s works were perfect, without a flaw—the great Artificer completed all His workmanship and left nothing undone. There was no rough and crude matter which He had not formed—there was no substance He touched which He did not turn into the gold of perfectness. All things were good, yes, very good—all were perfect!

There is one thing on earth, even now, which is perfect. Albeit that perfection was blasted by the Fall and ever since the Garden of Eden was devastated by the sin of man, perfection has gone, yet there is one thing on earth which we possess which is perfect. You all know what that is—it is the perfect will of God contained in the Sacred Scriptures. He who would be able to spell perfection in mortal language must read the Bible through, for he will find it perfect in all its parts—perfectly true, perfectly free from all error, perfect in everything that is necessary for man to know, perfect in all that can guide us to bliss, perfect in all that can warn us of dangers on the road. There is still something of perfection left here, but when we come to look *within*, where is perfection then, Beloved?

I shall not stop to prove the depravity of mankind, I will not talk much about the fall of Adam, how it injured us and destroyed the perfection of our nature, but I would ask this simple question of you—Do you not feel in your own souls that perfection is not in you? Does not every day teach you that? And though there are times when you are striving to be like Christ and seeking to serve Him, yet in the very striving and seeking you forget that you must live wholly on Christ, that you must trust Him as well in your duties to sanctify them as in your sins to forgive them! And then you begin to set up a perfection of your own, although you have so often had a view of your own heart that you ought not, for a moment, dream of any perfection there! Without making it a doctrine, I simply state it as a fact which you will not deny—that in you, that is, in your flesh—there is not only imperfection—but there dwells no good thing. Honestly, from the depths of your soul, you must confess that whether Adam lost perfection or not, whether you ever had perfection when you were born or not—it is not to be found in you—not in your conduct, conversation, or life! You only wish it were there. Daily experience makes you bemoan the lack of it. Every tear that trickles from your eyes say, “Imperfection.” Every sigh which comes from your heart says, “Imperfection.” Every harsh word which proceeds from your lips says, “Imperfection.” And every duty which is not done with the most holy, strict and rigid observance of God’s Law cries out, “Imperfection!” You sit down, like the captive daughter of Zion, and confess that the crown of perfection is gone from your head and departed from your heart. Guilty you must lie before God, for perfection is not in you.

But, then, while speaking of the Doctrine of Perfection, we must remember that, according to the sacred oracles, perfection is absolutely necessary for all who hope to enter Heaven! We may have lost perfection, but that does not alter God’s demand for it. It may be impossible that we should ever be perfect in ourselves, but God demands that we should be perfect. The holy Law was given by God and if we wish to be saved by it, we must keep it perfectly—no man who is not perfect can ever hope to enter Heaven! Unless he can find perfection somewhere—in another, if not in himself—He must be irretrievably ruined and driven from God’s Presence. No man under the sun can ever walk the starry plains of Heaven, or tread the golden streets of bliss until he gets perfection somehow or other! Let me tell you why.

First of all, it would be unjust of God if He did not punish man if he is not perfect. God required of all men, originally, that they should keep His entire Law. Now, if a man is not perfect, it stands to reason that he must have broken God’s Law, otherwise he would be perfect. Having broken it, God has said, “I will punish sin. ‘The soul that sins, it shall die.’” And— with reverence to the Most High God, we say it—if He does not punish every sin, He is not a just God. If He does not exact the punishment for every transgression, there is a blot upon His escutcheon—the whiteness of His Throne is tinged with stains and He is no longer that awfully, severely just God we have considered Him to be! I tell you, Man, the very Nature of God demands that you should be punished if you are not perfect! If but one sin has been committed by you, you have broken the tablets of God’s Commandments and you are guilty of breaking them all! Ah, but it is not merely one sin that you have committed, but ten thousand times ten thousand! You are far from perfection and unless you can get perfection somewhere—in Christ, or in yourself—you are lost beyond all hope of remedy, for perfection God must have, as a just God*,*or else He must punish you for your sin!

Moreover, remember that we must be perfect or else we shall never be fit companions for those who are perfect in spirit and stand before the Throne of God. Are not the angels perfect? Has sin ever stained their purity? Once, it is true, “There was war in Heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, and prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in Heaven.” But now the spirits before God’s Throne are spotless and pure even as God is. Has God any stain on Him? Will any dare to say there is imperfection in Him? No, God and the angels are perfect—and would men be fit companions for angels and God if they had imperfections? If men should have sin when they come to die, would they be fit to live with those spirits who know no sin and in whose breasts there has been no guile? Could I hold acquaintance and familiar converse with the man whose lips are always guilty of profane swearing? Could I live in peace with the man whose character is not akin to my own conduct? And, surely, there is not so much difference between me and my fellow creatures, here, as between the sinner and his God. No, my Friend, unless you get perfection somewhere—in Christ, or somewhere else—you cannot go to Heaven! You must have perfection, for God has declared that nothing that defiles shall in any way enter the gates of Paradise—

***“Those holy gates forever bar  
Pollution, sin and shame.”***

None but those washed whiter than snow and as pure as the Almighty can hope to be companions of the Deity and co-heirs with the celestial spirits. You must have perfection if you would enter Heaven—this is evident not only from the Nature of God, but from the holiness of Heaven itself! Otherwise you would be unfit to enter and you would not be happy if you were there.

“Where, then, is perfection to be found?” cries the poor sinner. We find a multitude of persons ready to tell us, “Here is perfection,” or, “There is perfection.” *The ceremonialist* says, “I will give you perfection! Here it is— you shall, in your infancy, have sacred drops fall upon your forehead and hallowed words shall be pronounced over you—and you shall be regenerated! In your later years, you shall kneel before the sacred table and the bishop’s hands shall be solemnly laid upon your head, and you shall take the sacramental bread and wine. And when you come to die, the priest shall sit by your side and he shall give you, in your last expiring moment, some drops of goodly cheer called wine, and a piece of bread, and these shall be your passport to Heaven—and so you shall be perfect!” Ah, poor ceremonialist, you will find yourself mightily mistaken and much deceived! Like a dream when one awakes, God will scatter all the baseless fabric of your hands—all that you have done and all those pretty garments you have woven shall be torn sunder and cast into the fire—and you shall stand naked before Him!

Then comes *the speculative perfectionist.* He tells you that you must believe in Jesus Christ and then, by a rigid system of devotion and constantly observing religious duties, you will attain to three or four stages. You will get, in the first place, to justification, then to sanctification and go on, by degree, until you will be perfectly sanctified and come to the highest degree men can have in the body. I have met with some of these “perfectly sanctified” gentlemen, but I could have spoiled their perfection simply by treading on their corns—and I believe I have done so, for they have seemed to be immensely cross when I have denied their proud boast! I have heard of a particularly perfect man who came to John Betridge one morning. The quaint and honest minister treated him very rudely, whereupon the man turned round at once and began to speak all manner of evil words. John said to him, “Pretty perfection was yours, that I could spoil in so easy a manner!” You will always find those socalled “perfection” gentlemen far from perfect. I would not trust the man who called himself, “perfect,” in anything whatever, for he that says he has no sin is a liar, and the Truth of God is not in him. He that says he is perfect, mistakes God’s Word and knows not himself.

Where, then, is perfection to be found? The text tells us that all Christians are perfect in Christ Jesus, that the sons and daughters of the Lord God Almighty are perfect in Christ Jesus. Let me try to explain the meaning of this perfection in Christ.

**I.**First, consider HOW GOD’S PEOPLE ARE “IN CHRIST.” I remark, first, *they are, all of them, in Christ in the Covenant of Election.* When God chose His people, He did not choose them one by one, separately, but He chose Christ and all His people were chosen in Him. Just as when I select an acorn, I select all the unborn forests slumbering in that acorn cup, so, when God chose Jesus, He chose all the people that were in Him, all whom Christ had taken to Himself by an eternal union and had made one with His own Person.  
Secondly, *the chosen ones are also all in Christ by redemption.*When Jesus died, each one of us who believe in Jesus died in Him. And when He suffered, we suffered in Christ. Our sins were laid on Christ’s head and now, Christ’s merits are laid on us. Christ made an atonement for the sins of all His elect through the shedding of His blood upon the Cross. We were in Him when He died. We were in Him when they laid Him in the grave. We were in Him when He rose and led captivity captive. And we are in Him now!

Thirdly, *we are in the Lord Jesus Christ actually, positively and, to our own knowledge, when we believe in Him.* It is then, when faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God, that we become*consciously* in Christ! We were in Christ before, but we did not know it. We were made secure in Jesus from before the foundation of the world, but we did not know it—we had no evidence of it whatever. We were like a man who is underage—the possessions of his father, or those which have been left to him when he turns twenty-one, are positively his, but he cannot touch them until he comes of age. So, all the possessions of the Covenant belong to the elect even before they believe, but they cannot touch them until the appointed time comes when, by Sovereign Grace, they believe. A man who has not attained his majority cannot get much comfort from what he is to have when he comes to full age. He cannot live on it. He cannot be supported by it. So, the Christian cannot feed on what he has not received. When we have faith, then we come into our inheritance! The moment we believe, we have attained full age—we are no longer under tutors, governors and schoolmasters, but we are brought to Christ—we are of perfect age and then we are said to be “in Christ.” The moment a sinner believes, then he is “in Christ” and no man whatever has any right to make any pretense that he is in Christ until he believes—until he has surrendered himself to Christ, until he has given himself to Jesus to be saved by Him—to serve Him, to live for Him and, at last, to die in Him and live with Him forever!

**II.**The doctrine of our text is THAT EVERY MAN WHO IS “IN CHRIST” IS PERFECT.  
Does not this startle us? The majesty of our text demands someone who could discourse with eloquence. Yes, it needs an angel to proclaim its glorious meaning! Believers are, in Christ, perfect—every one of them! He is a new-born child of God! It may be only ten minutes since he put his faith in Jesus Christ. Before that time he had been a drunk, a swearer, a blasphemer. But yet I tell you, if that man has really believed and is in Christ, he is perfect in Christ! There is another man who has been a backslider. Once he walked in God’s ways, but he has been suffered to wander from the faith. Now God is bringing him back. He is laying hold on him and the man is weeping, repenting and crying out! His bones are broken through the fall, his soul is sore and sick, even unto death! Look at him as he stands with tears of penitence coursing down his cheeks! I tell you, that man, backslider though he may have been— though he has sinned even as David did—is perfect in the Person of Christ!  
There is another, a gray-headed old man. Long has he fought his Master’s battles—he has received many a wound and scar—and the troubles and trials of this mortal life have greatly weakened him. If you ask him whether he is perfect, he tells you, “No, from the crown of my head to the soles of my feet, by nature I feel diseased. In me, that is, in my flesh, dwells no good thing.” He disclaims all righteousness of his own, all trust in himself, all hope out of Christ. I tell you, that old man is perfect in Christ! I care not what may be his frailties, what may be his weaknesses—he is perfect in Christ! And then, O Christian, what though your sins are many, what though infirmities beset you, though you have a hasty temper and, perhaps, the lusts of the flesh sometimes rise—and only preventing Grace saves you from going astray—what though evil thoughts cross your mind and today you are bemoaning your sad case and crying out, “O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?”—I tell you, Christian, you are complete in Him, you are perfect in Christ Jesus! Having been washed in His blood, clothed with His righteousness*,*united to His Person, you are, this moment, perfect in Him!  
There is one passage in Solomon’s Song which once flashed in my mind with great brilliancy when I was reading that blessed Canticle. It says, “You are all fair, My love; there is no spot in you.” That is Jesus Christ talking to His Church. She says, “I am black, because the sun has looked upon me.” She acknowledges her own imperfections and her lack of beauty, but Jesus Christ says, “You are all fair, My love; there is no spot in you.” Looking at His Church from the crown of her head to the sole of her feet, He sees not a blemish because she is in Him! She does not stand in herself. Her divisions and the sins of her members and of her ministers are sore blemishes if you look at her with the eye of the world, or with the eyes of Christians—but if you look at her in Christ, all her blemishes are gone—she is covered with a robe that makes her shine like a queen! Though her old garments may have been those of beggary and ruin, she now has the garments of majesty and light. “You are complete in Him,” yes, you are “perfect in Christ Jesus.”  
I think it would be very hard to make some who are the Lord’s people believe this. Some of you are drudging on in bondage because you do not completely understand Justification by Faith. And I believe that the great fault of the ministry of our day is that complete justification in the Person of Jesus Christ is not preached in all its length and breadth. Because there are some ministers who, while preaching it, say things which have a tendency to lead men to licentiousness, therefore we are forbidden to say anything at all about it. But, Beloved, I am sure that all I can say to you about our perfection in Christ will never lead a Christian to licentiousness, for, because he is “perfect in Christ,” he will long to be more like Christ! And he will seek more and more, day by day, to have the sanctifying influence of the Holy Spirit exerted upon him to keep him from sin.  
Many go to Arminians and semi-Calvinists to hear this, that and the other. They have all kinds of divinity conglomerated into one—little bits of Pelagianism tacked on to small scraps of Arminianism, these hooked on to Calvinism and that, again, joined to Socinianism—all sorts of strange combinations mixed up into one curious medley for them to drink! Whereas they need, instead of that, the pure unadulterated milk of God’s Word in the shape of the doctrinal preaching of Justification by Faith!  
How are we justified? That is the question for us to answer. Are we justified by works, or by Grace? Every true Christian says, “We are justified by faith. By Grace are we saved, through faith, and that not of ourselves, it is the gift of God.” Well then, if we are saved by faith in Christ, can we be said to be saved by works? If I had no good works at this moment, and if I have faith, am I not as completely justified as though I had ten thousand good works? I know, if I am justified by faith, good works will always follow, but good works will never *merit* justification. They are the handmaidens, not the mistress! Faith in Christ is the foundation, the cornerstone and top stone of justification. Good works are *evidences* of justification—they have nothing to do with procuring it. The poor thief who died, having been hardly able to *do* a good work, went to Heaven just as surely as the man shall who lives 80 years in the service of his Master! It is not anything in *myself* that saves me—it is Christ alone. If I feel myself the most loathsome of all creatures, even though I hate and abhor myself, yet if I know I have faith in Christ—if I have cast myself on His atoning Sacrifice, He has not altered though I have—He is as perfect as ever, in Him there is no sin! And therefore I, standing in HIM, am perfect this moment notwithstanding all my corruptions and frailties!  
**III.**Now I come very briefly to consider THE INFLUENCE OF THIS DOCTRINE of Perfection in Christ when it is realized in the heart.  
I know that at the outset, some will say that this doctrine, stated so broadly, must necessarily lead persons to imagine that good works are of little service. I ask them, if they ever read any of Luther’s writings, whether they have noticed how broadly he speaks concerning good works and the righteousness of the flesh? If they have read his writings, they will find that, as a Protestant and a follower of Luther, I have not overstepped the mark. And if they will turn to the Epistle to the Romans they will see how Paul declares, “And if by Grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise Grace is no more Grace. But if it is of works, then it is no more Grace: otherwise work is no more work.” If they will read the other Epistles, they will see that I might have said even more upon this theme. I deny that this doctrine has any tendency to lead men to sin. I can speak for myself, so far as my own life is concerned, I always find myself most holy when I know myself to be most unholy. I can live most *like* Jesus when I live most *on* Jesus and most out of myself. When I say, “I must live on Christ alone, I must rest solely on Him for salvation and believe that, however unworthy, I am saved in Jesus,” then there rises up, as a motive for gratitude, this thought, “Will I not live wholly to Christ? Will I not love Him and serve Him, seeing that I am saved by His merits?” That is the strongest tie to virtue and the greatest bond to a holy life.  
Then let me tell you the next effect of this doctrine. *It gives a Christian the greatest calm, quiet, ease and peace.*How often are the saints of God downcast and sad! They ought not to be so. I do not think they would be if they could always see their perfection in Christ. I know you have your, “corruption men,” who always preach corruption and nothing else, telling you about the depravity of the heart and the innate evil of the soul. I like to read their works and to hear them—but I like to go a little further and to remember that I am “perfect in Christ Jesus.” I do not wonder that those men who always dwell upon corruption should look so sad and seem so miserable. But I think, if a man could always see his perfection in Christ, he would be happy. What if distresses afflict me? I am perfect in Christ! Though Satan assaults me, I am perfect in Christ Jesus! Though there are many things to be done before I get to Heaven, those are done for me in the Covenant of Divine Grace! There is nothing needed—Christ has done it all.”—  
***“‘It is finished!’  
Hear the dying Savior cry.”***  
And if it *is* finished, then am I complete in Him and can “rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.”  
Poor Christian, you are perfect in Christ! Tried Christian, you are perfect in Jesus! If the Holy Spirit does but apply this Truth of God to your soul, if you were in the very caverns of the ocean, it would be enough to carry you up to the stars for joy, to think that you are perfect in Christ! There are some who are conscious that they have no perfection, but are covered with sin from head to foot. There is a poor wretch who has crept into this Chapel, tonight, and has felt that he would crawl down a mouse hole or stay in any corner of the building if he might but hear the sermon. He felt it was too hallowed a place for him to sit down—he was almost ashamed to stand in the company of the saints, he believed himself to be such an unworthy sinner. I tell you, Friend, if you are a poor, stripped, law-condemned sinner, you shall yet be able to see yourself “perfect in Christ Jesus.” Man, does not this make your ears tingle? Does not your heart leap for joy at the very thought of it? Black with sin as you are, you shall be white one day! Filthy as you are, you shall yet be cleansed! Evil as you are, you shall be made good! Yes, however enormous your transgressions, however black your crimes—you may even have been a murderer—Christ’s blood can wash the blood off your hands! You may have been a thief, but Jesus Christ restored that which He took not away, and He will forgive even your sins. You may be the vilest one that ever disgraced this earth—you may be a walking nuisance in the very streets—yet I tell you, if you believe in Jesus Christ this night, you shall go away perfectly clean! Oh, it is marvelous, this salvation! Christ takes a worm and transforms it into an angel! Christ takes a filthy thing and makes it into a cherub! Christ takes a black and deformed thing and makes it clean and matchless in its glory, peerless in its beauty—and fit to be the companion of seraphs!  
O my Soul, stand and admire this blessed doctrine of Perfection in Christ Jesus! Though you should become more pure and pure every day, yet perfection would still be beyond you. The heights say perfection is not in them! The depths say, “Perfection is not here!” The caverns in the heart of the earth tell us, “Perfection is not in us.” Perfection is in the Person of Jesus Christ, alone! O Christian, think of this! The robes of Jesus are put on you! The royal crown Christ Jesus wore is now, in God’s eyes, on your head! The robe of azure which once He had upon His shoulders is now on yours! His silver sandals are yours! The golden zone, His belt of Glory, is yours! The matchless purity of His sinless life is yours! Everything that Christ has is yours—you are perfect in Him— there is nothing you can want which He cannot give you! If you go to His storehouse with a large list of your needs, saying, “I need this,” or, “I need that,” it is all there! And more than you will ever need is there. Do you want sanctification? It is there! Do you want redemption? It is there! Do you want strengthening Grace? It is there! Do you want preservation? It is there! Man, are you standing, tonight, poor, naked, blind, miserable, desponding? I say—Be not so foolish as to remain in all your poverty and wretchedness when you may be rich! Why, Christian, are you now poor, ragged, stripped? Do you see the hole in that wall? It has a mark upon it in the shape of a cross. I will lend you the key called, “Promise.” Go, insert it in the keyhole, and when you open it, whatever you need you shall find. First, there is a bath of gold—in it you shall be washed and become white as snow! Further on there hangs a robe and though you are now naked, you shall put it on. There is a crown for you to wear and there is everything else you can want. If you need bread, you shall find it, for it is said, “Bread shall be given him, his waters shall be sure.” If you need comfort, it is there, for Christ is “the consolation of Israel.” If you need forgiveness, it is there. All things are wrapped up in Christ!  
This morning my eyes were dazzled when I saw the Queen’s plate. I am not much of a believer in the Queen’s plate, or anybody else’s plate, but when I saw things of so much value—the precious jewels that sparkled here and there—I wondered at their amazing costliness and could not guess how much they would come to if they were all sold and the money given to the poor—which I rather felt inclined to wish they might be. But if I were once to get to see all the riches of Christ could I tell you how large His riches are—I would have to hold up my hands in astonishment and say, as I took up one mercy after another, “This is a golden mercy— how much is it worth?” I would be unable to tell you the value of any one of them! “Ah,” the angels would say, “Do not try to estimate these precious things, for they had to be bought with Christ’s blood. And until you know the price of Divine blood, you cannot tell the value of these mercies.”  
Now, to wind up my discourse, let me enquire who of you can take to yourselves this blessed doctrine? How many of you are “perfect in Christ Jesus?” Some man says, “I think I am perfect in myself. I am as respectable a gentleman as anybody living and I am not going to be insulted by any of your nonsense! I am at least as good as other people and, perhaps, rather better. And I think if Heaven does not go by favor, I most certainly shall get in, for I feel myself to be very good and righteous.” Then hear the voice of Jesus—“Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like unto whited sepulchers which, indeed, appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men’s bones and of all uncleanness. Even so you, also, outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within, you are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.” “Verily I say unto you that the publicans and the harlots go into the Kingdom of God before you.”  
Another says, “Perfect in Christ Jesus? No, Sir, that I am not. I know I have no interest in the blood of Christ and if I were to say I had, it would be a barefaced lie—and my conscience would cry out against me. There is something in my heart which would forbid my lips to say it.” Then, pray, do not say it, dear Heart, for I would not have you speak what is not true. If you feel that you have not any interest in Christ, say so to your own souls. It is best for you to look the matter in the face. You say you do not know that Christ died for you. You say you are sure that you will sink into eternal torments if you die tonight. Well, take that thought home to your heart and, for half-an-hour think it over—“I am out of Christ. I am a condemned sinner and if I were to die, I feel I should sink into Hell.” Do not be afraid of the thought. Do not be like the man who says, “I will not have that thought anymore,” but be honest with yourselves. What is the good of cheating yourselves? Deal fairly with your own souls*.*It never does a man any hurt to examine his books and see if his accounts are all right. If he is a bankrupt, he will not lose anything by knowing it—if he is insolvent, he will get no richer by hiding it from himself. You may say, “It is true, I am a lost and condemned sinner.” Well, the thought will bring you to your knees and you will cry, “O God, give me an interest in Jesus Christ!” And that mighty God who always hears prayer, will save you and you shall go on your way rejoicing and triumphing in Christ!  
Then there is one who, when I ask the question, “Are you perfect in Christ Jesus?” will reply, “Ah, I trust I am! By humble faith I lay my hand on the head of Jesus and I know that I stand perfect in Him.” Then, my Brother, give me your heart, let us shake hearts tonight! Oh, it is a sweet brotherhood, the brotherhood of the perfect in Christ Jesus! You are perfect in Him—then, my Brothers and Sisters, wipe those tears away—you are perfect in Christ! Do you know what yon poor sinner says? He says, “O Lord, if I could say that, I would not care about health, I would not care whether I was in poverty, or whether I was rich.” He thinks, if he only knew himself to be “perfect in Christ,” he would never be miserable as long as he lived. Then why, Beloved, are you down in your spirits while you are “perfect in Christ?” Why do you lie on the ground? It is time for you to take your harp from the willows, if you are “perfect in Christ.” I can see no room for sadness! Suppose that you are going to a poor house where you have not a bit of fire? Never mind, you can say, “I am perfect in Jesus.” Perhaps you will scarcely know where the next meal will come from—let this thought cheer you, “Perfect in Jesus.”  
Though the wind may come and blow between the rags that cover you, if you can say*,*“I am perfect in Jesus,” you can be content with poverty! Though you are in pain and tossing about in your bed, if you can say, “I am perfect in Jesus,” it will be like medicine to soothe your spirits! And when grim Death appears, you only need look him in the face and say, “Perfect in Jesus,” and in that moment Death will change into an angel, pain will be turned into bliss and sorrow into immortal Glory! God give all of us to realize that we are perfect in Jesus, in Jesus only, in Jesus forever! Bless His precious name! Hallelujah to His Person, glory to His Grace! Seraphs, sing out His praises! Cherubs, take up the note! You rocks, you hills, burst forth into song! All you Christians, sing praises to Him who loved us with an everlasting love and who will carry us safely home to Glory to be with Him forever and ever!

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:  
*Isaiah 55***

**Verse 1.***Ho! Everyone who thirsts, come to the waters, and he that has no money; come, buy, and eat; yes, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.* Let no one ask whether he may come to Christ for salvation—he is bid to come! Whoever wills to come is welcome. “Ho!” says God, as men cry when they have goods to sell and would attract the passerby. And not merely to one does He speak, but to everyone—“Ho! Everyone who thirsts”—whatever is the age he lives in and to whatever age he may, himself, have attained “Ho! Everyone who thirsts.” But is there anything to be had by those who come? There is in God exactly that which every soul needs! First, “waters” for the thirsty. There is even more than absolute necessities—“wine and milk,” God has an abundance of Grace, yes, a superabundance! He can give us all we need and even more than we desire. Oh, turn not away when God the Father cries, “Ho!”

**2** ***.****Why do you spend money for that which is not bread? And your labor for that which satisfies not? Listen diligently to Me and eat that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness.* Apart from God, there is nothing for us but destruction. We may spend our money and our labor, too, but happiness is not to be found by the creature apart from the Creator, or by a sinner apart from the Savior. God has so constituted the human mind that it cannot be perfect without Him.

**3** ***.****Incline your ear, and come unto Me: hear, and your soul shall live.*It seems a very little thing to do, does it not? Simply to hear—to incline the ear—yet that is the way of salvation. “Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.” Alas, nowadays the mass of men will not hear God’s message of mercy—they pass it by as if it were an old worn-out tale of which they knew quite enough! Hear, then, what God says to His poor forgetful creature—“Hear, and your soul shall live.”

**3** ***.****And I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David.* Will God make a covenant with man? Can it be that He will strike hands with sinful man and enter into league and compact with him? Yes, so He says. If men will but incline their ear and come to Him, He will enter into covenant with them. “I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David.” “But David is dead,” says someone. Yes, I know he is, but the David, here meant, always lives—it is Jesus, the Son of God!

**4** ***.****Behold, I have given Him for a witness to the people, a leader and commander to the people.*Jesus Christ is the people’s Witness and Leader. Born among them, living among them, dying for them, living still to save them—and God declares that He gives this Christ to such as hear Him, to such as incline their ear and come unto Him.

**5** ***.****Behold, you shall call a nation that you know not and nations that knew you not shall run unto you because of the Lord your God, and for the Holy One of Israel; for He has glorified you.*Brothers and Sisters, our Lord Jesus Christ did not die in vain. He died to redeem His chosen people and those whom He redeemed, He will certainly have. Even though some reject Him, others will not. God has power over human hearts and where Christ’s Gospel is faithfully preached and attended by the Holy Spirit’s power, sinners must come to Christ! Their will shall sweetly yield to the supremacy of love. Even though they set themselves against Christ, yet they shall come when the Lord draws them! And Glory shall be gotten for His holy name by the salvation of those who never even thought of being saved!

**6** ***.****Seek the LORD while He may be found, call upon Him while He is near.*“Seek the Lord while He may be found.” That is, *NOW.*“Call upon Him while He is near.” He is near now! Wherever Christ is lifted up and His Gospel is proclaimed, there He is according to His promise, “Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.”

**7** ***.****Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon.*What a grand word that is! “He will abundantly pardon.” However abundant sin may be, God’s pardon is still more abundant! As Paul puts it, “Where sin abounded, Grace did much more abound.” Sin may be like the great mountains, but the mercy of God is like Noah’s flood that rose above the tops of the highest hills! “He will abundantly pardon.”

**8** ***.****For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, says the LORD.* Oh, what a mercy it is to be taught to think God’s thoughts and to be led in God’s ways! It is the entrance into a new life! It is something infinitely beyond the greatest elevation to which any ordinary life can ever reach by its own unaided power!

**9-12.***For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts. For as the rain comes down, and the snow from Heaven, and returns not there, but waters the earth, and makes it bring forth good and bad, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: so shall My Word be that goes forth out of My mouth: it shall not return unto Me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it. For you shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace: the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.* “For you”—that is, you who have heard God’s Word and believed it—“you shall go out with joy.” Happy hearts help to make a happy world! He who has found his Savior, received God’s pardon and learned God’s thoughts, shall find the whole world full of music to him, wherever he may be!

**13** ***.****Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree: and it shall be to the LORD for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.* Wherever God’s Grace begins to work, it cuts up thorns and thistles—and plants in place of them fir trees and myrtle trees. Oh, that His Grace might renew each one of us! And, then, when that blessed work has been done, may we never cease to glorify that dear name by the power of which we have been changed!

Adapted from*The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307  
**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.** Sermon #914 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

**÷Col 1.29**

**WORK IN US AND WORK BY US.**

**NO. 914**

**DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, FEBRUARY 6TH, 1870,***BY C. H. SPURGEON,***AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON. *“Whereunto I also labor, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily.” —*** [Col 1:29](tw://bible.*?id=51.1.29|_AUTODETECT_|)***.***

THE apostle Paul could very truthfully assert that he labored and agonised. When the Holy Spirit had anointed the apostles, they all became ardent enthusiasts for the spread of the Redeemer’s kingdom. Having the whole world committed to them that they might enlighten it, they labored most ardently each one in his sphere to spread abroad the truth of the gospel; but the apostle of the Gentiles labored more abundantly than they all. Into how many countries did he carry the testimony of Christ! How often did he cross the sea, traverse mountains, and ford rivers! One sees in his career something more than an ordinary Christian life; he was so indefatigable in service, that surely nothing beyond could have been possible to humanity, even under the help of God. His public labors were not only abundant, but they were the cause of continual inward conflict. He never preached a sermon, wrote epistle, or attempted a work, without earnest prayer and soul-consuming zeal. Night and day with tears, he said of a certain church that he had labored for its good. He was a man so whole hearted and intense in all that he did, that we ought to remember not merely the amount of his labors, but the way in which he wore out himself by the intensity of his zeal in them. Probably never man led a more intensely ardent life than be. Moreover, added to all this, he carried a weight of care enough to crush him; for there came upon him the care of all the churches — to plant them, to defend them against rising errors, to prevent schisms from dividing the flock, to lead in the converts from grace to grace, to instruct them, and to present every one perfect before God. The burden resting upon the apostle was greater than the cares of all empire; and then, as if to complete the whole, he was called to suffer persecutions of which he has given us a list, which as we read it makes us shudder that one man should have endured so much, and makes us also glory in humanity that it should be possible that so much should be borne and done for God by a single individual.

Yet, note it well, the apostle takes no honor to himself, but humbly ascribes whatever he had done or suffered entirely to his Lord. He declares that he labored and agonised, but he confesses that it was through the work of the Lord Jesus Christ, who mightily by the Holy Spirit wrought in him. In another place, when he had mentioned his abundant labors, he added, “Yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.” He remembered where to put the crown; he took care not to steal an atom of the glory for himself, but he ascribed all to the power of him who loved him and gave himself for him. Let us imitate the apostle in these two things. My brethren, let us live, while we live, a life of energy, but let us at the same time confess, when we have done all, that we are uprofitable servants; and if there be any glory and any praise resulting from the work which we achieve, let us be careful to lay it all at the Redeemer’s feet.

The doctrine of the text upon which I intend to preach, this morning, as I may be enabled, is this, it is clear from what Paul has here said that the work of Christ in us and for us does not exempt as from work and service, nor does the Holy Spirit’s work supersede human effort, but rather excites it. Paul speaks of an inner work, a mighty work wrought in him, but he also declares, “whereunto I also labor, striving.” So that the doctrine of the work of the Holy Spirit is not intended in any degree to lull our minds into sloth, but wherever the Holy Spirit works he makes men work; he worketh in us to will and to do of his own good pleasure, that we also may work out our own salvation with fear and trembling. I shall try to illustrate this truth in the two respects, first, in reference to a man’s own salvation; and secondly, in the matter of the Christian man’s ministry for the salvation of others. The work of the Holy Spirit does not supersede Christian effort in either case.

**I. First, then, IN THE BELIEVER’S SALVATION.**

We believe, each one of us, and we have scriptural warrant for it, that if any man be saved, the work within his soul is entirely wrought by the Holy Ghost. Man is dead in sin, and the dead cannot raise themselves from the grave. Quickening and spiritual resurrection must be accomplished by divine power. Man musk be born again, and this birth must be effected by divine power, for unless a man be born from above, he cannot see the kingdom of God. As the commencement of salvation is dependent upon the Holy Spirit, so is the carrying of it on. “Without me ye can do nothing,” is Christ’s testimony. We shall never persevere except as grace shall keep us from falling, nor may we hope to be presented faultless before the august presence except as the Holy Spirit shall sanctify us from day to day, and make us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light. I trust, my brethren, I need not do more than assert this doctrine in your hearing, since you know how continually we insist upon it, and our trumpet never gives an uncertain sound as to the great truth that God worketh all our works in us, and that salvation is of the Lord from first to last. But at this present we intend to insist upon this further truth, that the working of the Holy Spirit in us does not exempt the believer from the most energetic labor, but rather necessitates his doing all that lieth in him.

To enforce this we remark, first, that the Christian life is always described as a thing of energy. Sometimes we read of it as a pilgrimage. That master allegorist, John Bunyan, has not pictured Christian as carried to heaven while asleep in an easy chair. He makes Christian lose his burden at the cross-foot, he ascribes the deliverance of the mart from the burden of his sin entirely to the Lord Jesus, but he represents him as climbing the Hill Difficulty; ay, and on his hands and knees too, Christian has to descend into the Valley of Humiliation, and to tread that dangerous pathway through the gloomy horrors of the Shadow of Death. He has to be urgently watchful to keep himself from sleeping in the Enchanted Ground. Nowhere is be delivered from the necessities incident to the way, for even at the last he fords the black river, and struggles with its terrible billows. Effort is used all the way through, and you that are pilgrims to the skies will find it to be no allegory, but a real matter of fact; your soul must gird up her loins; you need your pilgrim’s staff and armor, and you must foot it all the way to heaven, contending with giants, fighting with lions, and combating Apollyon, himself.

Our life is in Scripture represented as a race which is even sterner work than pilgrimage. In such foot-races as were witnessed among the Greeks, in every case the man spent all the strength there was in him, and underwent a training beforehand, that he might be fit for the contest. It sometimes happened, and indeed not seldom, that men fell dead at the winning-post, through their extreme exertions. Running to heaven is such running as that, we are to strain every nerve. We shall require all the power we have, and more in order to win that incorruptible crown which now glitters before the eye of our faith. If we are so to run that we may obtain, we shall have no energy to spare, but shall spend it all in our heavenly course.

Not unfrequently the apostle compares our spiritual life to a boxing match, and the terms in the original Greek if they were translated into pure vernacular English, would remind us very much of a boxing ring and of the place where wrestlers strive for the mastery. To wit, in that notable passage, “I keep under my body,” we are told by scholars that the Greek word alludes to the getting of the antagonist’s head under the arm, and dealing it heavy blows. So the flesh must be mortified. Now the wrestlers in the Greek and Roman games strained every muscle and sinew, there was no part of the body that was not brought into action to overthrow their adversary. For this they agonised till often blood would spurt from the nostrils, and veins would burst. Such in a spiritual sense must be the agony of a Christian if he is to overcome temptation, and subdue the power of sin. Ah brethren! it is no child’s play to win heaven. Saved, as I repeat it, through the power of Christ’s blood and with the energy of his Holy Spirit within us, yet we have no time to loiter, no space in which to trifle; we must labor, striving according to his working who worketh in us mightily. All the figures which represent the Christian life imply the most energetic exertion.

Secondly, be it remarked that there is no illustration used in Scripture to set forth the heavenly life, which allows the supposition that in any case heaven is won by sloth. I do not remember ever finding in Scripture the life of the Christian described as a slumber. To the sluggard I find a warning always; thorns and thistles in his garden, and rags and disease in his person. “The hand of the diligent maketh rich.” There may be occasional opportunities by which even idle men may become wealthy, but such spiritual wealth I have never heard of. I find that wherever the Spirit of God comes upon men, it never leaves a saved man effortless or fruitless, but as soon as it descends upon him, according to his capacity he begins to work out his own salvation. Remember the question of the inspired writer, “Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way?” Her faith saved her; and though it was very weak and very ignorant faith, it made her work, and therefore she hid the spies to save their lives. Look at the dying thief, with his hands and feet fastened to the wood, and ready to expire, yet he rebuked the reviling malefactor. thus doing all he possibly could for his Lord, in whom he trusted for salvation, what more could he have done? It maybe said of him, “He hath done what he could.” It shall be well if as much can be said for us. No, brethren, you cannot be carried to heaven on “flowery beds of ease.” You must fight if you would reign, you must stem the flood, you must breast the waves if you mean to reach the further shore. Grace will help you, else were the work an impossibility; but even with the aid of grace you are not permitted to slumber into glory, nor sleep your way to the celestial throne. You must be up and doing, watching diligently, lest any man fail of the grace of God. The trumpet sounds, and not the dulcimer, the call is to conflict, not to feasting.

I would next bid you note, dear friends, that it is natural it should be so; it is unavoidable in the nature of things, that when the Holy Spirit comes he should not beget a spirit of slumber, but awaken us to diligent action. It is natural, I say, because one of the first results of the Holy Spirit’s entrance into a man’s heart is to let him see his sin and his danger. If I feel myself guilty, and perceive that God is angry with me, and that I shall be cast byand-by into the lake of fire, what is the inevitable result? Shall I not hear a voice crying, “Escape for thy life! Look not behind thee! Stay not in all the plain”? Wherever the Holy Ghost works a sense of sin, the sinner is constrained to cry, “What must I do to be saved?” Never does the Spirit effectually show a man his sin, and then leave him to fold his arms and ask for “a little more sleep and a little more slumber.” No, the awakened soul exclaims, “I am guilty, I am accursed of God. How can I escape? Lord help me, help me now to find rest if rest is to be found!” Then the Holy Spirit farther reveals to us the excellence of the salvation of Christ, the happiness of those who rest in Jesus, the future reward of such as serve God on earth. And what is the result? The enlightened soul cries, “I fain would find this pearl of great price, I fain would be enriched by an interest in Christ, I too, would, with the blessed, take my everlasting heritage.” See you not then that the Holy Ghost cannot make a man appreciate salvation without at the same time creating a desire to gain it, out of which arises prayer for the promised blessing? After a man has found Christ to the pardon of his sin, the Holy Spirit is pleased to endear Christ more and more to him. It is the office of the spirit to take of the things of Christ and show them to us. Now, my brethren, you know very well that whenever you have a sight of the preciousness of Christ, you are moved at once to glorify him. Do you not cry —

***“Oh, for this love let rocks and hills  
Their lasting silence break,  
And all harmonious human tongues  
The Savior’s praises speak”?***

I know it is so. It is because we think so little of Christ that we do so little for him; but when Christ is brought with vivid power home to the mind, then at once we cry, “Lord, what wouldst thou have me to do?” and we bestir ourselves to honor him.

Brethren, the fact that the Holy Spirit is working in a man, never can be a reason for his not working; on the contrary, the moment a man perceives that the Spirit is helping him, he is encouraged diligently to labor. “Why,” saith he, “my work may fail, but if it be the Spirit’s work it cannot fail.” I bow my knee in prayer, and if I believe that all acceptable prayer is wrought in me by the Holy Spirit, I am fully assured that God will not refuse to grant what he himself by his Spirit suggests to me to ask. If the Holy One of Israel himself breaks my heart and leads me to long after a Savior, surely he does not intend to tantalise me; be will continue his work till he has saved me. Thus encouraged, a man is certain to give diligence to make his calling and election sure. Moreover every intelligent man feels that if he does not work when the Spirit of God is working in him, he is dishonoring that Divine Person, and is running the solemn peril of committing the sin against the Holy Ghost which shall never be forgiven him. He feels that if he should be slothful that text would condemn him, “How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?” Neglect, mere neglect, nobody ever gets to heaven by it; but ah, how many perish by that alone!

To conclude this point, it is most certain that all saving acts must be performed by the man himself. Faith is the gift of God, but the Holy Ghost never believed for anybody; it is not his office to believe. The sinner must believe. Repentance is the work of the Holy Spirit, but the Holy Ghost never repented. What had he to repent of? He has done no ill. It cannot be possible for him to repent for us. Nay, we ourselves must repent. My brethren, this is self-evident to every candid mind. There must be in every man a personal faith, and a personal repentance; and though these are wrought in him by the Holy Spirit, yet they are his own acts; they cannot be the acts of anybody else, or else the man has not believed, and has not repented, and there is no life in him. Right on to the end of the Christian life all those acts which bring us into communion with God are our own. For instance, the Holy Ghost helps men to pray. He helps their infirmities. But they pray; they themselves pray. Prove to me that the man does not himself pray, and I will be bold to tell you that he is not saved. The intercession of Christ is prevalent, but it will not save those who live and die without praying for themselves. True desires after God must be your own desires. The desire is wrought in you, but still it is yours. And the expression of that desire is helped by the teaching of the Spirit, but still it is your own expression, or else what are you but a dead soul? There must be a voluntary putting forth on your part of the life which is quickened in you by the Spirit. This is so plain as to be self-evident.

Note again, if we were not made active, but are simply acted on by the Holy Ghost, there is a reduction of manhood to materialism. If the man does not believe nor pray, and if spiritual acts are not a man’s own acts, but the acts of another in him, then what is the man? There is no moral good or moral evil in a work which is not my own — I mean no moral good or evil to me. A work which I do not myself perform may be creditable or discreditable to somebody else, it is neither to me. Take an illustration. In the Square of St. Mark, at Venice, at certain hours the bell of the clock is struck by two bronze figures as large as life, wielding hammers. Now, nobody ever thought of presenting thanks to those bronze men for the diligence with which they have struck the hours; of course, they cannot help it, they are wrought upon by machinery, and they strike the hours from necessity. Some years ago a stranger was upon the top of the tower, and incautiously went too near one of these bronze men; his time was come to strike the hour, he knocked the stranger from the battlement of the tower and killed him; nobody said the bronze man ought to be hanged; nobody ever laid it to his charge at all. There was no moral good or moral evil, because there was no will in the concern. It was not a moral act, because no mind and heart gave consent to it. Am I to believe that grace reduces men to this? I tell you, sirs, if you think to glorify the grace of God by such a theory, you know not what you do. To carve blocks, and move logs, is small glory, but this is the glory of God’s grace, that without violating the human will, he yet achieves his own purposes, and treating men as men, he conquers their hearts with love, and wins their affections by his grace.

I warn any here present, who imagine that man is a merely passive being in salvation, against putting their theory in practice. I am alarmed for you if you say, “God will save me if he so decrees, and therefore I will sit still and wait.” My hearer, I am afraid for you, you are neglecting the great salvation, and I again remind you of the warning: “How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation”? I confess, I have no hope for you. But on the contrary, if you cry, “Lord, save, or I perish,” I have good hope of you, you shall not perish: the Spirit of God is working in you these desires and this longing and seeking. Whosoever calleth upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. I pray you check not your aspirations. Quench not the Spirit. Led and guided by his mighty working, come to the foot of Christ’s cross; trust alone to him, and a voice shall sound in your heart, “Thy sins which are many, are all forgiven thee.” God grant it may be so.

**II. We shall now turn to the second part of our subject, in reference to**

THE MINISTRY OF THE SAINTS FOR THE CONVERSION OF OTHERS.

The Holy Spirit alone can convert a soul. All the ministries in the world put together, be they what they may, are utterly powerless for the salvation of a single soul apart from the Holy Ghost. “Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit saith the Lord.” But wherever the Holy Spirit works, as a general rule (so general that I scarcely know an exception), it is in connection with the earnest efforts of Christian men. This is clear, first, from the example of the text. The apostle Paul certifies that the salvation of souls is the sole work of Christ, but he declares that he labored, and the next word he adds “striving,” or as in the Greek, “agonising.” Though the Spirit did the work, it was in connection with the apostle’s labor and agony for souls. Now, my brethren, laboring implies abundant work. No man can be said to labor who only does half an hour’s work in a day. A man who is a thorough laborer makes long hours, and is ever at it. The apostle Paul was this. The winning of souls was not a piece of by-play with him; it was his one object, to which he consecrated everything. He was “in labors more abundant.” In the morning he sowed his seed, and in the evening he withhold not his hand. If we are to have souls saved we must do the same. No tradesman expects his shop to prosper who has it open only one hour a day, and you must not expect to be soul-winners if you only now and then seek to be such. There must be, as far as time and capacity allow, the consecration of yourselves to this work, even to an abundance of effort.

Labour, again, means hard work. It is not trifling. He is no laborer who takes the spade to play with it as a little child upon the sand. He that labors works till the sweat streams from his face; and he that would win souls will find that, though it is all of the Holy Spirit, yet it involves on his part the sternest form of spiritual work. Baxter used to say if any minister found his ministry easy, he would find it hard to answer for it at the day of judgment; and I add, if any one of you teaching in your classes, or officiating in any form of Christian work, find it easy, you will find it hard to give an account of your stewardship at the Lord’s coming.

The labor must be personal labor, for no man is a laborer who does it through his servants. He may be an employer, and in a certain sense he may be said to do the work, but he cannot say, “I labor.” The apostle performed personal work. Ah! brethren, the power of the church very much lies under God in the personal influence of her members. On this platform I feel that I am a long way off from you. I wish I could devise some mode of speech by which I could thrust my hand into your hearts and get my soul to pulsate close by yours to make you feel what I feel. Between the pulpit and the pew there is too often a great gulf fixed. But you who get your friends into the parlour, and talk concerning eternal things, you have a fine opportunity. Your personal influence then bears with mighty force upon the person with whom you are speaking, and you may hope that a blessing will be the result. Learn ye from your adversaries. What is the strength of the shavelings of Rome? What but their conversing with men and women by themselves at the confessional? Who could not prevail, with such an instrument? We, with nobler ends and aims, must use personal private intercourse in all honest earnestness to bring men to repentance, to faith, and to the foot of the cross.

My brethren, I do not believe that even this will suffice. Abundant Christian work, and hard Christian work, and personal Christian work, must have combined with it inward soul conflict. If your soul never breaks for another, you will not be the means of breaking that other’s heart; but when it comes to this, “I must have that soul saved, I cannot bear the thought that it should be cast away” — you are near winning that soul. Suppose it be your child, your unconverted husband, or your brother, and you are enabled to say in yourself, “I have continual heaviness for my kinsmen according to the flesh,” so that you could almost sacrifice your own soul if they might but be saved; when it comes to tears the Lord will not deny you. My brother, when your heart breaketh with love to souls, they shall be yours. But there must be conflicts. I pity that minister whose life is one of uninterrupted spiritual ease. What, can we see ye backslide and not weep till ye come back to the cross? Can I know that among these thousands who are listening to my voice, perhaps half are dead in trespasses and sins, and can I be insensible as a marble statue? Then God have mercy upon me as well as upon you! Unhappy souls to be entrusted to the care of one so utterly unfit for such a service. No, the heart must be stirred, there must be an anguishing and yearning for souls. They tell us that in the sea certain waves rise from the bottom, and these cause the ground swells and the breakers. There must be great ground swells of desire within us that souls may, by some means, be delivered from the wrath to come; and where these deep heart-searchings are found there must be conversions. Where these four things, of which we have spoken, are the result of the Holy Ghost working in any of you, it is as certain that souls will be saved as that spring will follow when the sun returns from his southern tropic.

We must further note that this is plain from the work itself. For, brethren, souls are not converted as a rule without previous prayer for them on the part of some one or other. Well, then, we must be stirred up to prayer, and the praying which God hears is not that of people half asleep. The petitions which pierce the ears of God are not those that fall from careless lips, they must come from your heart or they will never go to his heart. The importunate pleader prevails with heaven. Souls are saved instrumentally through teaching, but the teaching which saves souls is never cold, dead teaching. God may occasionally bless such words, for he doeth great wonders, but as a rule the teaching that convinces and enlightens is earnest and enthusiastic. We have heard of a traveler who, journeying onward, met with one who said, “Sir, the night is dark, and I should not advise you to go on to the river, for the bridge is broken in the middle, you will be in the stream before you know it.” This was said in so careless a tone that the traveler went on. He was met sometime afterwards, fortunately for him, by another who again warned him; “The bridge is broken! don’t go on, you will be sure to lose your life if you attempt it. You cannot ford the stream and the bridge is broken.” The traveler replied, “Why, I have been told that tale before, but the man who told me it spoke in such a tone that I could see through him, I knew it was all a hoax.” “Oh, but sir,” said the other,” it is true! I have but now escaped myself. I am sure it is true!” “But,” said the traveler, “I am not so easily seared.” “Well, then,” said the other, “I beseech you once again do not go on, for you will perish,” and rushing up to him he said, “I will not let you go.” He grasped him and held him fast. “Now,” said the other, “I believe you have spoken the truth, and I will turn with you.” So there are some who, warn souls of their danger in such a careless tone, that they create an unbelief which many an earnest tongue will not be able to dispel. But if you get hold of the soul and say to it, “I will not let thee perish;” if you say to your friends as Whitfield would say to his congregation, “If you perish is shall not he for want of praying for, it shall not be for want of weeping over; if you are damned it shall not be because my heart was cold towards you,” you will win them, they will be led to believe from your earnestness. Who knows how many your earnest spirit may bring to Jesus? Praying and teaching if effectual must be earnest, and hence when the Spirit comes to save the sons of men he always gives us earnest praying men and earnest teachers.

But, brethren, teaching is not all. We must come to persuasion with men, and that persuasion must be very persevering. Certain men we must dog day after day with our entreaties. Some souls will not come with one invitation, they must therefore be plied with many. I remember a minister who went to see a dying laborer, and the man growled from his bed, “Tell him to begone — I want none of the like of him to disturb me.” He called again, and received the same rude answer. He called again, and went halfway up the stairs; he heard an oath, and would not intrude. He continued to call till he had numbered twenty times, and the twenty-first time the man said, “Well, as you are so set on it, you may come in,” and he did go in, and that soul was won for God. Humanly speaking where had that man been but for persevering zeal? When the Lord means to save men by you, he will give you perseverance in seeking them, he will work in you mightily by his Spirit; you will feel a determination, that twist and turn as they may with indefatigable earnestness of self-destruction, you will still pursue them if by any means you may prevent their everlasting misery.

Earnest zeal is a natural result of the Holy Spirit’s working upon the souls of men. Whenever the Spirit of God comes, he sanctifies in men the natural instinct which leads them to wish others to be like themselves. Whether a man be bad or good, he seeks to make others like himself; the Holy Ghost lays hold of this, and constrains Christians to desire to bring others to their state of mind. This done, he arouses in the Christian mind the commendable principle of love to our fellow men. Having experienced the blessedness of salvation for ourselves, we desire to see others enjoying like happiness. The patriot’s bosom glows with the same passion as before, but now it is refined and purified, and he prays for his nation that not only it may be free, but that the Spirit of God may make it free indeed.

The Holy Spirit bestirs in us the impulse of gratitude, “Has Christ saved me?” then the man exclaims, “I will live for him; The Spirit gives impetus to that suggestion, and we resolve that since Jesus has loved us so, we will give to him all that we are, and all that we have.

In addition to this, the Holy Spirit sanctifies many other natural emotions, such for instance as that which we sometimes call the esprit de corps, by which men are moved to desire the prosperity of the community to which they belong. The Holy Spirit makes us feel one with Christ’s church, and we ardently desire her success. A holy emulation as to which shall serve the Master most runs through our ranks, not that we may get honor, but that we may honor him. We cannot endure it that our brethren should go to the war and we sit still. We begin to be afraid lest the denunciation should go forth against us, “Curse ye Meroz, said the angel of the Lord, curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof; because they came not to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty.” Inspired by such feelings we rush to the fight that we may rescue souls for Christ.

Then the Spirit in some men, I pray it may be in your case, my dear friends, sheds abroad the love of Christ at such a rate that the soul is all on fire to exalt Christ. Nay, in some he has made this sacred passion to eat them up till they have been consumed with holy zeal. Like men inspired, like ancient apostles, certain choice spirits have lived the life of Christ on earth with an awful vehemence of enthusiasm. Wherever such men are raised up, God is about to save souls. Whenever you listen to a man who is carried away by an all-consuming desire for the glory of God, you may conclude that he is the instrument of God to thousands; his lips shall feed many, he shall be the spiritual progenitor of tribes of believers. Thus where the Spirit of God comes, energy is evinced and souls are saved; but we do not find it otherwise.

I would have you notice, once more, that the whole history of the church confirms what I have stated. When the Holy Spirit descended, there were two signs of his presence; the one was a rushing mighty wind, the other was the tongue of fire. Now if the Holy Spirit intended to do all the work himself, without using us as earnest instruments, the first emblem would have been stagnant air; and the next might have been a mass of ice, or what you will, but certainly not the tongue of fire. The first emblem was not only wind, but it was a mighty wind, and not only that, but a rushing mighty wind, as if to show us that he intended to set every spiritual sail in the most rapid motion; and as birds are drifted before the gale, so would he impel his people forward with his mighty influences. The other emblem was fire, a consuming, devouring, imperial element. May we be baptised in the Holy Ghost, and in fire, so shall we know what is meant by the symbol. Our Lord’s commencement of the gospel ministry was signalised by vehemence. Here is his own experience, “From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.” Christ’s ministry and life were notably earnest, he was clad with zeal as with a cloak. His apostles also were men so vehement, that in their earliest deliverances they were thought to be drunken with wine. Every era of the church’s prosperity has been marked by this same holy violence. Hear Chrysostom speak, he is no player upon a goodly instrument, he gives forth no dulcet tones for gentle ears. Listen to his denunciation of the Empress Eudoxia! Hear how he denounces the sins of the times! How vehemently he calls upon men to escape for their lives because of coming judgment! Listen to Augustine, his vehement tones you will not soon forget. Turn to the notable era of the Reformation. The men who wrought the Reformation were no dullards, no men of polite speech, of elegant chillinesses and dainty sentences. Luther was a type of them all, vehement to the extreme of vehemence. I say not that their natural violence was the power which wrought the Reformation, but that the Holy Ghost made their hearts vehement, and so they wrought marvels. And we, dear brethren, if we are to see in these days a genuine revival of religion, worthy of the name, must return to the old enthusiasm which once made the church fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners. O that we may live to see it, and the Lord’s name shall be glorified!

The conclusion of the whole matter is just this. Let us combine the two things of which we have spoken. Dear brethren, let us rely upon the Holy Ghost, and the Holy Ghost only. Let us not go a warfare at our own charges. Let us believe that without the Lord nothing good can be done. But let us rest assured that Jesus is never absent where he gives the spirit of prayer, as he has given to this church; and that he never deserts those to whom he vouchsafes holy zeal for his kingdom, such as he has bestowed on many here present. Let us be encouraged by his presence. Gideon, when he obtained the token of the fleece wet with dew, and when by night he heard the story of the barley cake that overturned the tents of Midian, did not straightway go to his home and renounce the enterprise, because God was with him. No, but on the contrary, thus encouraged he gathered together his three hundred valiant men in the darkness of the night, they broke the pitchers, bade the torches shine, and shouted the watchword, “The sword of the Lord and of Gideon! The sword of the Lord and of Gideon!” Even so be it with us at this hour. Knowing that God the Holy Ghost is with us, let us lift the cry amid the midnight of our age, “The sword of the Lord and of his Son Jesus!” and we shall see what God will do, for he will surely put to flight the armies of the aliens, and get to himself renown.

But, brethren, let us combine with this confidence in the Holy Spirit, the most earnest effort on the part of every one to do all he can. I have a scene before my mind’s eye at this moment; I see in this church and neighborhood the counterpart of the mountain side when the multitude were fainting for lack of bread. They must be fed, Christ willed it. The disciples must bring their barley loaves and fishes-what were they among so many? Christ must break and multiply. The disciples must receive from his band, they must then go among the many, the fifties and the hundreds, and break the bread that Christ had blessed, for the hungry must be fed; not only men, but women and children must be satisfied. Behold, my brethren, this great city hungry and faint, and ready to die. Bring hither, all ye disciples of Christ, your loaves and fishes — I mean not to me but to the Master. What you have of ability, however slender, bring it out. Christ will not begin to multiply till you have brought forth all you have. Miracles are not to be expected till nature is brought to a nonplus. Bring out then, whatever of talent or grace you have, consecrate all to Jesus, and then as he begins to multiply stand ready as your master’s servants to wait upon the crowd; and if the push and clamor, yet weary not, break still the bread till, every soul shall have been supplied. Go on, go on, and do not say the toil is hard, it is so blessed to do good to others. It is thrice blessed, nay, sevenfold blessed, to turn a sinner from the error of his ways, and save a soul from death. Nay, weary not, though you have been so long at it that your spirit is faint. My brother, your physical frame is weary, but be of good cheer. Do ye not hear them? Hearken, I pray you! Up yonder, there are angels bending from their thrones, and I think I hear them say, “How blest a work to feed the hungry, and those men how honored to be permitted to hand round the Master’s precious gift! Do they not whisper, “We would fain be with them”? One bright spirit thinks he would exchange his crown with the meanest of the disciples, if he might share the service of gospel teaching. Might they not envy you; those blessed harpers upon the sea of glass, because you can do what they cannot; you can tell of Jesus, you can fetch in the prodigals, you can find the lost jewels for the Master’s crown!

I charge you, my brethren, by the living God, unless your religion be hypocrisy, help me this month, help ray brethren the elders and deacons, help us every one of you. By the blood that bought you, if ye be indeed redeemed; by the Holy Ghost that is in you, except ye be reprobates; by everything that God in lovingkindness has done for you, I charge you come to the help of the Master in this the hopeful hour. So may the Lord do unto you as you shall deal with us this day. If you shall indeed consecrate yourselves to him, and serve him, may he enrich you with the increase of God, and may the peace of God that passeth all understanding keep your hearts and minds; but if ye refuse your service, the Lord shall judge you. He that knoweth his Master’s will and doeth it not, shall be beaten with many stripes

÷Col 2.6

A CONSISTENT WALK FOR TIME TO COME  
NO. 3030

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, MARCH 7, 1907.

***DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, DURING THE YEAR 1864.**

***“As you have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him.”*** Col 2:6***.***

THOUGH the shepherd cares for the lambs and carries them in his arms, he does not cease his care when they become sheep. But, as long as they shall need to be tended, so long will he watch over them. Hence it is that our Apostle, though always quick of eye after newborn souls and abundantly anxious to bring sinners to a knowledge of the Truth of God as it is in Jesus, is equally in a conflict of soul for the spiritual healthfulness of those who have been born-again. Our text contains one of those loving admonitions. It is addressed, not to the ungodly, not to those who are strangers to our Lord and Master, but to those who have “received Christ Jesus the Lord.” Longing for their spiritual good and anxious that they should be established in the faith, he admonishes them thus, “As you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him.”

In endeavoring, by God’s help, to speak upon this subject, we shall have three points. There is here, *first, a fact stated concerning Believers—* they have “received Christ Jesus the Lord.” Then there *is an exhortation, or a counsel, offered to such—*“walk in Him.” Besides which we have*a model held up for our imitation.*How are we to walk in Him? Why, just in the same way as we at first received Him! Let our first coming to Christ be to us the mirror of how we shall walk in Him all our days.

**I.**All true Christians are here described in the text as HAVING RECEIVED CHRIST JESUS THE LORD.  
The first point to which I would particularly direct your attention *is the personality of this reception.*Believers have, it is true, received Christ’s words. They prize every precept, they value every Doctrine, but this is not all. They have received Christ *Himself.* While they have received Christ’s ordinances and are not slow to walk in obedience to the things which He has commanded, they do not stay here. They have received Christ Himself—His Person, His Godhead and His Humanity. They have “received Christ Jesus the Lord.” And, mark you, there is a very great distinction here—and also a great mystery. A great distinction, I say, for there are some who do, I think, wholly believe the doctrines which Christ has taught, and are profoundly orthodox, full of an earnest controversial spirit for the faith once delivered to the saints and yet, for all that, they do not seem to have received Him, the very Christ of God! And, truly, there are many who have received both Baptism and the Lord’s Supper, yet, despite what any may say, we believe that they have not received Christ, but are still as great strangers to Him as though they had only passed through the rites common to mankind, or the rites in which heathens indulge! There is a vast difference between the outward reception of the Doctrine, or the ordinance, and the inward reception of *Christ.*  
We also said that herein is a mystery—such a mystery that only he who has received Christ can understand. The preacher cannot tell you what it is to receive Christ. Human language is not adapted to convey to the mind this deep enigma, this matchless secret. We know what it is, for “truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son, Jesus Christ.” We can describe it in such a measure that our friends who have also received Christ will know that we understand the mystery—but to the carnal mind it will always remain a puzzle how Christ can be “in us the hope of glory”—how we can eat His flesh and drink His blood. They run away to some carnal interpretation and suppose that the bread is turned into flesh at the Eucharist or that the wine is transformed into blood. That is *carnal* talk and this they talk because they know not what is the mystery of this receiving Christ and this walking in Christ.  
This much, however, we may affirm. *The Believer has received Christ into his knowledge.* He knows Him to be God and to be Man. He knows Him to be set forth of the Father as the Redeemer, but, he also knows Him by a personal acquaintance. His eyes have not seen Him and yet he has looked to Him and has, by faith, seen the King in His beauty! His hands have not handled Him and yet there has been a secret touch by which the virtue has come out of Christ and has flowed into him! He has never sat down at a Communion Table when Christ has been physically present and yet full often he could say, “He brought me to the banqueting house and His banner over me was love.” He has talked with me as a man talks with his friend and the strongest sense that can be attached to that sweet word, “communion,” is tame in reference to the Believer’s connection with the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ! And in that sense of knowing Him, intimately knowing Him, the Believer has received Christ!  
Not only has he received Christ into his cognizance, but *into his understanding.*He understands, with all saints, the love of Jesus in its height, depth, length and breadth. He has so seen Christ as to understand of Him that He was before all time as the Ancient of Days and then had His delights with the sons of men in the great Covenant decree of electing love. He understands how He became made flesh with us—married to us—when He came on earth, the Son of Mary, “bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh.” He knows by experience what is the meaning of the Atonement. He can understand how Justice is satisfied and Grace magnified. Without confounding or making mistakes, he knows how God was always gracious and full of love and yet how Christ Jesus came that the love of God might be shed abroad in our hearts and we were reconciled unto God by His death. Hence the Christian does not read of Christ as though He were a mere historical personage, nor of His work as a great mystery which he cannot comprehend, but he has received Christ into his understanding!  
Ah, Beloved! This is a very poor and shallow sense compared with the next. I have received but one ounce of Christ into my understanding, but, bless His name, I have received the whole of Him *into my affections.* Good Rutherford used to pray for a larger heart, that he might hold more of Christ and, perhaps, you remember that strange extravaganza of prayer in which he says, “Oh, that I had a heart as deep, and wide, and high as Heaven, that I might hold Christ in it!” And then he said, “Since the Heaven of heavens cannot contain Him, oh, that I had a heart as vast as seven heavens, that I might get the whole of Christ into me and hold Him in my arms!” And truly, Christian, in one sense you have taken all of Christ into your soul, have you not? Do you not love Him—not a part of Him, but the whole of Him? I hope you can truly say to Christ— ***“Have You a lamb in all Your flock  
I would disdain to feed?  
Have You a foe, before whose face  
I fear Your cause to plead?  
You know I love You, dearest Lord  
But oh, I long to soar  
Far from the sphere of mortal joys—  
And learn to love You more!”***  
We must not leave this part of the subject without adding that the Believer has received Christ *into his trust,* and this he did at his spiritual birth. He received Christ into the arms of his faith. He took Jesus Christ to be, henceforth, the unbuttressed pillar of his confidence, the one Rock of his salvation, his strong castle and high tower. And, in this sense, every soul that is saved has “received Christ Jesus the Lord.”  
Our text seems to point to a threefold character in which we have received Christ. *We have received Him as the Christ.*My Soul, have you ever seen Him as the Father’s Anointed One—as the Chosen and Sent One, ordained of old—as One that is mighty, upon whom help should be laid? Have you seen Him as God’s great High Priest, ordained as was Aaron, chosen of God from among men? Have you looked upon Him as David did, as One chosen out of the people? We must accept Christ as the Anointed One and the right way to thus receive Him is to receive Him as the garments of Aaron received the oil that flowed from his head. Christ is the Anointed One and then you and I become anointed ones through the Holy Spirit which distils from Him to us—and so we receive Him as Christ.  
And then He is called, “Jesus,” and*we must receive Him as the Savior.*“You shall call His name, Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins.” Justification is receiving Christ as Jesus. So is sanctification! Only I think I must say justification and pardon receive Christ as Jesus—and sanctification receives Him as Christ Jesus, both as the Anointed One and the Savior. May you and I be daily delivered from sin—the guilt and power of it—and so receive Him as Jesus!  
There is a peculiar emphasis about the next expression. The article is emphatic here, “Christ Jesus *the* Lord.” To me*, if I receive Christ, He must be Lord—*not one of the lords that may have dominion over me, but *the Lord,*peculiarly and specially. And though hitherto other lords have had dominion over me, now I am to obey Him and only Him. What do you say, professor? Have you received Christ Jesus *the Lord?* Is your will subject to His will? Do you desire only to act according to His bidding? Are His commands your desire? Is His will your will? Is He your Lord? For, mark you, you can never truly receive Him as Christ*,*or as Jesus, unless you receive Him as *the* Lord! Thus, another sense in which we receive Him is by subjecting ourselves entirely to Him, sitting at His feet, wearing His yoke, taking up His Cross and bearing His reproach.  
You will note that there is also, in this description of a Christian, the thought of his *entire dependence.*The Apostle does not say, “As you have therefore fought for and won or earned Christ Jesus,” but, “as you have therefore *received*Him.” It is a humbling word which divests the creature of everything like boasting! What is there to glory in if I am a receiver? The Apostle in another place says, “If you did receive it, why do you glory, as if you had not received it?” The vessel that is filled under the flowing stream cannot boast, though it is ever so full, for it was naturally empty and owes its fullness to the stream. The beggar in the street, let him receive gold, yet cannot boast of the gold because he is a receiver. He who gave must have the honor of the benefaction—not the person who received! So let your faith be ever so strong, let your confidence in Christ be ever so glorious, you have nothing to boast of in it, for you have “received Christ Jesus.” Beloved, here is a test for us—is our religion a receiving religion, or is it a working and an earning religion? An earning religion sends souls to Hell! It is only a *receiving* religion that will take you to Heaven! You may tug and toil, and do your best and make yourselves, as you think, as holy as the best of the Apostles—but when you have done your utmost, you have done nothing whatever! You have built a house of cards which shall soon fall down. But when you come as an empty-handed sinner, having nothing of your own—and *receive* Christ Jesus—then you have bowed your will to God’s will. Or rather, Divine Grace has bowed it and you are saved according to the Lord’s own word, “He that believes on Me is not condemned.” Thus you have dependence connected with the personality of the Christian’s faith!  
We also have here *certainty*—“As you *have* received Christ Jesus the Lord.” Oh, how many Christians—I hope they are Christians—talk as if they really thought it was impossible to attain to any assurance of faith whatever! It is the fashion with some Christians to say, “Well, I hope,” and, “I trust”—and they have a notion that this is being very humbleminded. But to say, “I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him,” is thought to be pride! The declaration of Job, “I know that my Redeemer lives,” or of the spouse in the Canticles, “My Beloved is mine, and I am His; He feeds among the lilies,” is thought to be vain presumption and boasting. But indeed, Beloved, it is no such thing! Doubting is pride, but believing is humility! Let me prove it.  
I think I used this illustration among you some little time ago. There are two children of one parent and the father says to the two children, “On such a day I intend to give you both a toy which has been the object of your ambition for many a day.” Well, the older boy of the two sits down and calculates that the present will be expensive—and he begins to doubt whether his father can afford to purchase it. He remembers many times in which he has offended his parent, or broken his parent’s commands and, therefore, he doubts whether he shall ever have it. He feels that he is unworthy— therefore he goes about the house without any joy, without any confidence. If anybody asks him whether his father will give him this present or not, he says, “Well, I—I hope so. I trust so.”  
Now, there is his little brother and the moment he heard that he was to have this present, he clapped his hands and ran out to his companions and said, “I am to have such-and-such a thing given me!” His brother checked him, “You are too presumptuous to say that.” “No,” said the little one, “for Father said he would give these toys to us.” “Oh, but,” said the other, “remember that you and I have often broken his commands!” “But he said he would.” “Oh, but the thing is expensive!” “Ah, but Father said he would and unless you can*prove* that my father tells lies, I shall go and rejoice in the bright hope that he will keep his promise!” Now, I think that the younger of the two is less presumptuous than his brother, for certainly it is a high presumption for a child to doubt the veracity of his parent! No matter how excellent your reasoning may seem to be, and how clear it may be to the eyes of the flesh, it is always pride to doubt God! And to believe God—though, to the carnal mind which can never understand the bravery of faith, it may look like presumption—is always a badge of the truest and most reverent humility!  
Beloved, you *may* know whether you are Christ’s or not! I exhort you not to give sleep to your eyes till you know it! What? Can you rest when you do not know whether you are saved or not? O Sirs, can you sit down at your tables and feast—can you go about your daily business with this thought in your mind, “If I should drop dead, I do not know whether I should be found in Heaven or in Hell”? I tell you nothing but certainties will suit my soul! I hope I never shall rest comfortable while under a doubt of my interest in Christ. Doubts may come—these we can understand—but to be

comfortable under doubts, we hope we never shall comprehend! No, nothing but to—  
***“Read my title clear  
To mansions in the skies”***  
can give me joy and peace through believing! “You *have*received Christ the Lord.” Just pass the question around the gallery there, and ask yourselves down below, “Have I received Christ Jesus the Lord?” Say, “Yes,” or, “No,” and God help you to give the answer solemnly as in His sight!  
**II.**As briefly as possible we turn to notice THE COUNSEL GIVEN—“As you have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him.” There are three things suggested by the word, “walk”*—*continuance, progress, activity.  
To walk in a certain way means *continuing in it.* Now, Christian, you took Christ to be your All-in-All, did you not? Well, then, *continue* to take Him as your All-in-All. The true way for a Christian to live is to live entirely upon Christ. Living by frames and feelings is a dying form of life. “He lived by a feeling experience,” said one—and a poor method of living, too! Christians have experiences and they have feelings, but, if they are wise, they never feed upon these things, but upon Christ, Himself. You took Christ to be your All-in-All at first. You did not, then, mix up your frames and feelings with Him—you looked entirely out of self to Him. Well now, continue in the same frame of mind! You sat down at the foot of the Cross and you said—  
***“Now free from sin, I’ll walk at large  
My Savior’s blood’s my full discharge!  
At His dear feet myself I lay—  
A sinner saved, and homage pay.”***  
Well, then stay there! Stay there! Never get an inch beyond that position. When you get sanctified, still look to Christ as if you were unsanctified! When you are on the verge of being glorified, look to Him as if you were just newly come out of the hole of the Pit. Hang upon Christ, you who are the best, just as though you were the worst! The same faith which saved Mary Magdalene, which saved Saul of Tarsus—must save you in the moment when you shall be the nearest to the perfect image of Christ Jesus! It is “none but Jesus” now to your soul—let it be “none but Jesus—none but Jesus,” as long as you live!  
In walking, there is not only continuance, but also*progress.*After a man becomes a Christian, he has not to lay again the foundation, but he has to go on and to advance in the Divine Life. Still, wherever he shall advance, he is always to say, “None but Christ! Christ is all!” Depend upon it, every inch of progress that you make beyond a simple reliance upon the Lord Jesus Christ will entail the painful necessity of your going back. If you begin to patch Christ’s robe of righteousness with the very best rags of your own, no matter how cleanly you may have washed them, every rag will have to be unraveled, and every stitch will have to be cut! There is the Rock, Christ Jesus. Some Christians begin building their own stages on the Rock. How carefully they tie the timbers together. How neatly they plane and smooth them. And then they get high up upon these stages that they have built and they feel so happy—they have such frames! Such feelings! Such graces! Such fullness! And they are inclined to look down upon those poor souls who are crying, “None but Jesus!” By-and-by there comes a storm and the edifice they have built begins to creak, and crack, and rock to and fro—and they begin to cry, “Ah, where are we now? Now we shall perish! Now Christ’s love begins to dry up! Now He will fail us!” No—no such thing! It is not Christ who is failing you! It is not the Rock that is shaking, but what you have built upon the Rock! Come down from the stage which you have built and, as Job says, “embrace the Rock for want of a shelter.” I believe those souls have the most safety and comfort who simply trust to Christ. Was it not Irving who said that he believed his good works had done him more harm than his bad works had done him, for his bad ones drove him to Christ, but his good ones led him to rely upon them? And, after all, are not our good works, bad works, for is there not something in all of them to make us fly to the fountain of the Savior’s blood for cleansing?  
“As you have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him,” also implies *activity.* Christians are not to be lie-a-beds, nor forever to sit still. There is an *activity* in religion without which it is of little worth. Feed the hungry. Clothe the naked. Help the poor. Teach the ignorant. Comfort the miserable. But take care that when you do all this, you do it in Christ, and for Christ—and let no thought of merit stain the act! Let no reflection of getting salvation for yourself come in to mar it all, but in Christ Jesus walk day by day. Ah, Brothers and Sisters, if a thunderstorm were to come on just now while we are sitting here, and if the lightning should come flashing in at these windows and run with its blue flame down these columns, you and I might begin to feel some alarm! And if one were struck dead in our presence, in what kind of state would you and I likely to be amidst such confusion and alarm? If I were to choose the words which I would like to say at such a moment, they would be these—  
***“Nothing in my hands I bring—  
Simply to Your Cross I cling.”***  
You are on board ship in a storm just now. There goes a mast into the water! The lifeboats have all drifted away. The ship is pretty sure to be dashed on yonder rock! Pallor is on every cheek and turmoil every side. What is your prayer as you kneel down? What are your thoughts? Do you think, now, about your sermons, about your visiting the sick, about your prayers and your experiences? No! I tell you that they will seem to you to be nothing better than dross and dung when you are in such a state of apprehension! But you will cling to Christ’s Cross and be conveyed to Heaven, let the stormy winds blow as they will! And if everything were silent, tonight—could we hear nothing but the ticking of the clock were we, ourselves, reclining on our death pillow? While loving friends wiped the clammy sweat from our brow, surely we would, each one, wish to say—  
***“My hope is built on nothing less  
Than Jesus’ blood and righteousness!  
I dare not trust the sweetest frame  
But wholly lean on Jesus’ name.  
On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand!  
All other ground is sinking sand.”***  
Well, walk in Him just as you would walk in the Valley of the Shadow of Death, but walk on the mountaintops of life’s activities!  
**III.**Let us now say a few words on our third point—THE MODEL WHICH IS PRESENTED TO US HERE. We are to walk in Him *as we received Him.*  
And how did we receive Him? Let us remember. You will not have to strain your memories much, for, I think, though other days have mingled with their fellows and, like coins worn in the circulation, have lost their impression, yet the day when you first received Christ will be as fresh as though it were newly minted in time. Oh, that first day!—  
***“Do mind the place, the spot of ground  
Where Jesus did you meet?”***  
Some of us can never forget either that place or that time. Well, how did we receive Christ?’  
*We received Him very gratefully, having no claim whatever to His Grace.*We felt that we had done everything to deserve God’s wrath. We confessed that there was no merit in us, but we perceived that there was mercy in Him—  
***“We saw One hanging on a tree  
In agonies and blood”  
—***and as He told us to look at Him and assured us that there was life in a look, we did—and we were lightened, and we found life in Him! Surely we had shaken our hands of all merit, as Paul shook off the viper into the fire at Melita. We had no confidence, then, in any resolutions of our own, in any performances yet to come, much less in anything past. Well, then, we are to come now as empty-handed as we came then! Our song is to be—  
***“Nothing in my hands I bring—  
Simply to Your Cross I cling.”***  
How did we receive Christ? Well, we *received Him very humbly.*Whatever pride may be in our heart—and there is much of it—and, I suppose we shall never get rid of it till we are wrapped in our windingsheets—there was as little that day as we ever had at any other time. Oh, how humbly did we creep to the foot of the Cross! We were then broken in heart and contrite in spirit. Ah, Christian, can you remember what humble views you had of yourself—what a sink of depravity you felt your heart to be? Do you not recollect Augustine’s expression when he compares himself to a walking dunghill? And did you not feel yourself to be something of that kind—so base, so loathsome that you could only stand afar off and cry*,*“God be merciful to me, a sinner”? And you cried to Christ just as Peter did, “Lord, save me!” And just as the sea seemed about to swallow you up, you laid hold upon His outstretched hand and you were saved! Now, tonight, do the same. Your danger is as great as ever out of Christ. Your sin is as great as ever out of Him. Come then, casting away all the pride which your experiences and graces may have worked in you—come to Him and take Him for your All-in-All!  
How did we receive Christ? If I recollect rightly—and I think I do*—we received Him very joyfully.*Oh, what joy my soul had when first I knew the Lord! It was holy day in my soul that day. Perhaps we have never had such joyous days since then, and the reason has been, most likely, because we have been thinking about other things and have not thought so much about Christ Jesus the Lord. Come, let us again take Him! The wine is as sweet—let us drink as deeply as ever. Christ, the Bread of Heaven, is as nourishing. Come, let us eat as heartily as ever. Fill your omers, O you poor and weak ones! Gather much, for you shall have nothing left over. This Manna is very sweet—it tastes like wafers made of honey. Come to my Master as you came at first and He will give you to drink of the living waters once again!  
How did we receive Christ? I am sure *we received Him very graciously.*He stood at the door and knocked, and we said, “Come in.” Your Savior, my dear Friends, was long a stranger to your hearts. “Come in,” we said. We knew that He meant to take the best seat at the table. We understood that He came as Master and Lord, but we said, “Come in.” We did not quite know all that the Cross might mean, but whatever it might mean, we meant to take it! Surely that day, when He asked us, “Can you drink of My cup, and can you be baptized with My Baptism?” our soul said, “We are able.” And though we have been unfaithful to Him, yet I hope tonight we can take Christ as unreservedly as ever. Had I dreamed, when first I preached His Gospel, that the way of the ministry would be so rough and thorny, my flesh would have shunned it! But, despite all, let it be what it is and ten thousand times worse, come in, my Master! Come and take Your servant—let me lie like a consecrated bull upon the altar, to be wholly burned, and not an atom left! Brothers, do you not feel the same? On this platform I have sometimes prayed that if the crushing of us might lift Christ one inch higher, it might be so! And if the dragging of our names through mire and dirt could make Christ’s Church more pure, we have prayed that it might be so! We have prayed that if any shame, if any dishonor, if any pain might put one more jewel in His crown than could be there in any other way, we might have the honor of suffering and being made ashamed for His sake!  
And I think, Brothers and Sisters, though the flesh struggles, we may pray tonight, “Lord, bind the sacrifice with cords*,*even with cords to the horns of the altar.” We have received Christ and in that same way*— unreservedly,*we desire to walk in Him—  
***“Have you counted the cost? Have you counted the cost You followers of the Cross?  
And are you prepared, for your Master’s sake, To suffer all worldly loss?  
And can you endure with that virgin band, The lowly and pure in heart  
Who, where ever the Lamb does lead,  
From His footsteps never depart?  
Do you answer, ‘We can’? Do you answer, ‘We can, Through His love’s constraining power’?  
But do you remember the flesh is weak,  
And will shrink in the trial-hour?  
Yet yield to His love who around you now The bands of a man would cast.  
The cords of His love who was given for you To His altar binding you fast.  
You may count the cost, you may count the cost Of all Egypt’s treasure,  
But the riches of Christ you can never count— His love you can never measure.”***  
“As you have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him.”  
But oh, some of you have never received Him, so my last word is to them. Do you ask, “What is the way of salvation?” It is by receiving Christ. Oh, then come and receive Him! May the Holy Spirit’s power lead sinners to Christ! You need not bring anything to Him. You need not bring a soft heart to Him. You need not bring tears of repentance to Him. But just come and take Christ. Remember, it is not what you are, but it is what Christ is that saves you! Never look at yourself, but look at the wounds of Jesus! There is life there. God help you to look—to look tonight! And if you shall find Him, our prayer shall be that from this day forth, you shall walk in Him and He shall have the glory!

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: *Psalms 90.***

A Prayer of Moses, the Man of God.  
It may help us to understand this Psalm if we recollect the circumstances which surrounded Moses when he was in the desert. For forty years he had to see a whole generation of people die in the wilderness. In addition to the deaths which might occur among those who were born in the wilderness, the whole of that great host which came out of Egypt, numbering, probably, between two and three million persons, must lie in their graves in the desert so that there must have been constant funerals—and the march of the children of Israel could be perceived along the desert track by the graves which they left behind them. You do not wonder, therefore, at this expression of the awe of “Moses, the man of God” as he was so continually reminded of the mortality of mankind. And note how reverently and trustfully he turns to the ever-living and eternal God and rests in Him.

**Verse 1.** *LORD, You have been our dwelling place in all generations.* “Did not Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all our fathers dwell in You? And though we are now weary-footed pilgrims who have no fixed dwelling place on earth, we do dwell in You. You, Lord, are the true home of all the generations of Your people.”

**2.***Before the mountains were brought forth, or before You had formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God.*God is the only Being who has had eternal and essential Existence independently of all others—and all others have owed their existence to Him.

**3.***You turn man to destruction and say, Return, you children of men.*He sends us forth into life, and He calls us back again in death.  
**4.***For a thousand years in Your sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night.* Yesterday, while it was with us, was a short period of 24 hours. But when it is past, it seems like nothing at all. A thousand years, all big with events which we consider to be full of weight and importance, make up a long period in which myriads of men come and go—yet those thousand years, in God’s sight, “are but as yesterday when it is past,” or but as the few hours in the night during which the mariner keeps watch at sea and then is relieved by another. A thousand years are but “as a watch in the night” to the Eternal—and He needs no one to relieve Him, for “He that keeps Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep.”  
**5*.****You carry them away as with a flood.*They have no power to stem the torrent.  
**5.***They are as a sleep.*Our earthly existence is but “as a sleep.” Many things are not what they seem to us to be in our fevered dreams. The time of awaking is coming and then things will appear very different to us from what they seem to be now.  
**5.***They are like grass which grows up.*Fresh, green, vigorous, lovely, restful to the eyes.  
**6*.****In the morning it flourishes, and grows up; in the evening it is cut down and withers.* It needs no long period, ages upon ages, to destroy its beauty. Only let the swiftly-passing day come to its waning and the grass “is cut down and withers.”  
**7*.****For we are consumed by Your anger, and by Your wrath are we troubled.* If we had to endure the flames of God’s anger, we would be consumed by it. But I think that Christians should not read this passage as though it applied to them. They are not under the Divine anger, nor need they fear being troubled by the Divine wrath, for His anger is turned away from them through the great atoning Sacrifice of His Son, Jesus Christ. But the children of Israel in the wilderness were being consumed by God’s anger and by His wrath they were being troubled, so that the words of Moses did apply to them.  
**8, 9.***You have set our iniquities before You, our secret sins in the light of Your Countenance. For all our days are passed away in Your wrath: we spend our years as a tale that is told.*Like a romance, with which the Orientals still delight to beguile the passing hours. Such is the life of man—“as a tale that is told.”  
**10.***The days of our years are threescore years and ten.*This was a gloomy fact to Moses, who lived to be 120 years of age and who probably remembered other men who had been far older than himself. Yet it is well that the ordinary period of human life has been shortened. It is still far too long for those who do evil, though it may not be too long for those who do good. Yet there are, even now, some who outlive their usefulness, and who might have been happier if they had finished their course sooner. “The days of our years are threescore years and ten.”  
**10.***And if by reason of strength they are fourscore years, yet is their strength labor and sorrow: for it is soon cut off, and we fly away.* Where do we fly? That is the all-important point! The cutting of the string that holds the bird by the foot is a blessing or a curse according to the way in which it takes its flight. If we fly up to build our nest on yonder trees of God that are full of sap, then, indeed, we do well when we fly away. And we may even long for the wings of a dove, that we may fly away and be at rest.  
**11, 12.***Who knows the power of Your anger? Even according to Your fear, so is Your wrath. So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.*It has been well said that many men will number their cows, and number their coins, but forget to number their days! Yet that is a kind of arithmetic that would be exceedingly profitable to those who practiced it aright. Counting our days and finding them but few, we should seek to use them discreetly—we should not reckon that we could afford to lose so much as one of them! Who would be a spendthrift with so small a store as that which belongs to us?  
**13, 14.***Return, O LORD, how long? And let it repent You concerning Your servants. O satisfy us early with Your mercy that we may rejoice and be glad all our days.*“If they are but few, yet let them be happy. Give us an abundance of Your mercy, O Lord, and let us have it at once, so that however few our days may be, every one of them may be spent in the ways of wisdom and, consequently, in the ways of peace and happiness.”  
**15.***Make us glad according to the days wherein You have afflicted us, and the years wherein we have seen evil.*“Balance our sorrows with an equal weight of joys. Give us Grace equivalent to our griefs and if You have given us a bitter cup of woe, now let us drink from the golden chalice of Your love, and so let our fainting spirits be refreshed.”  
**16.***Let Your work appear unto Your servants.*May we have Grace to devote ourselves entirely to God’s service and do the work which He has appointed us to do!  
**16.***And Your glory unto their children.*If we may not live to see the success of our efforts, may our children see it! If the glory of that bright millennial age, which is certain to come in due time, shall not gladden our eyes before we fall asleep in Jesus, let us do the Lord’s work as far as we can that our children may see His Glory.  
**17.***And let the beauty of the LORD our God be upon us: and establish You the work of our hands upon us.*Even if we die, let our work live. May there be *something* permanent remaining after we are gone—not wood, hay, and stubble, which the fire will consume, but a building of gold, silver, and precious stones which will endure the fire that, sooner or later, will “try every man’s work of what sort it is.”  
**17.***Yes, the work of our hands establish You it.*

—Adapted from *The C. H. Spurgeon Collection,* Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307  
**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.** Sermon #3173 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

“AS” AND “SO”  
NO. 3173

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, DECEMBER 2, 1909.

***DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORD’S-DAY EVENING, AUGUST 3, 1873.**

***“As you have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk you in Him.”*** Col 2:6***.***

[Two other Sermons by Mr. Spurgeon upon the same text are Sermons #483, Volume 8— LIFE AND WALK OF FAITH and #3030, Volume 53—A CONSISTENT WALK FOR TIME TO COME— Read/download the entire sermons, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.]

THIS is a very simple text, yet no human being has ever discovered its full meaning. It is a great deep—happy are they who know how to dive into its depths and to swim at ease in its lengths and breadths! Blessed are they who continually obey the exhortation which it contains, “As you have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk you in Him.” The text divides itself into faith and practice. “You have received Christ Jesus the Lord,” there is your faith. “Walk you in Him,” that is to be your daily practice!

The text also contains a model for that practice in the “as” and the “so” which are its cardinal points. “*As* you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, *so* walk you in Him.” What we have done suggests the way in which we are to do what still lies before us. “As you have received...so walk.”

**I.**Notice in the text, first, THE FACT STATED. “You have received Christ Jesus the Lord.”  
Whatever else you have done or have not done, *you have received Christ*. The act of faith was the putting out of your empty hands to receive all the fullness of the Godhead in receiving Christ. There are some precious experiences to which you have not yet attained, some lofty heights to which you have not yet climbed, but you “have received Christ Jesus the Lord.” That is the distinguishing mark of all true Christians! Though you may not all belong to the same denomination, yet without a single exception this is true concerning you, whether you are old or young, whether you are well-instructed or ill-taught, whether you are full of faith or are troubled with many a doubt and many a fear, you “have received Christ Jesus the Lord.”  
There is nothing in this fact to cause you one boastful thought. You have *received*, that is what emptiness does in order that it may be filled, that is what hunger does in order that its cravings may be satisfied, that is what the beggar in the street does when he craves and obtains alms. There is *nothing* of which you can glory in the fact that you have received, for I may further remind you that even your very receiving you have received! The faith by which you received Christ was as much the gift of God to you as was the Christ upon whom your faith was fixed. You know that it is so and, therefore, you also know that boasting is forever excluded from the fact that you are saved! You have received Christ Jesus, that is all. I hope you prize the Gift, and praise the Giver. I trust that you often cry with the Apostle Paul, “Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift!” And that your soul makes her boast in the Lord concerning the Savior whom you have received, but no other boasting is permissible even for a moment!  
I remind you once more, Beloved, that, *you have received* CHRIST. It is true that you have received His Doctrines and that you still believe them. It is true that you have received His precepts and that you have obeyed them, though, alas, your obedience has been far from perfect. It is true that you have received His ordinances and that you have conformed to them by being baptized on profession of your faith in Him—and by sitting down with your fellow Believers at His Table. But, after all, the main point is that you have received Jesus Christ, Himself! Every word that He has spoken is sweeter than honey and the honeycomb, but sweeter far are the lips with which He uttered those words! Every command of His is to be esteemed more highly than the finest of fine gold, but as for the King who gave those commands, “He is altogether lovely.” Human language cannot describe Him and yet *you have received Him—*His very Self—you have received into your hearts to dwell there as your only Lord and Master. You have received Him as your life, for you live through Him. And you receive Him day by day as the Bread of Life upon which your soul feeds and as the Water of Life which quenches the thirst of your soul. You have not merely received His offices, His gifts, His Grace, His promises, but you have received *Him*! He is the center of your confidence, the target of your hopes!  
The text says that you have received “Christ Jesus the Lord.” Here are three out of His many names and, first, Beloved, you have received Him as *Christ*, the Anointed of God. You see in Him no amateur Savior, uncommissioned—but One sent by the Father, the authorized Representative of the Most High—the Christos, the Messiah, the Sent One, who could rightly apply to Himself the ancient promise, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me because He has anointed Me to preach the Gospel to the poor. He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord.” Christ came to this world because the Father sent Him. He said to the Jews, “I came down from Heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him that sent Me.” He lived and died here because it pleased the Father for Him to do so. And He is still appointed by the Father to distribute unnumbered gifts to His people. “It pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell.” You believe that upon Christ, the Spirit rests without measure, that He is anointed with the oil of gladness above His fellows, and in receiving Him as the Anointed One, you also have an unction from the Holy One and, therefore, you also are anointed to be kings and priests unto God. So you have received Him as Christ, the Anointed.  
But you have also received Him as *Jesus*, and you love that charming name. No hymn more truly expresses your feelings than that one by John Newton which begins—  
***“How sweet the name of Jesus sounds  
In a Believer’s ears!  
It soothes his sorrows, heals his wounds, And drives away his fears.”***  
You also sing with Bernard of Clairvaux—  
***“Jesus, the very thought of You  
With sweetness fills my breast.  
But sweeter far Your face to see  
And in Your Presence rest.  
Nor voice can sing, nor heart can frame,  
Nor can the memory find  
A sweeter sound than Your blest name,  
O Savior of mankind!”***  
You received Him as your Savior and, therefore, He has saved you from the penalty of sin and He will also save you from the dominion and power of sin. If you are saved, you are saved entirely through Jesus—and you do not need, and you do not desire any other Savior! You look to Jesus for all that can be comprehended in the word, *salvation*. His name means Savior and you have found Him to be a Savior to you. So you have received the anointed Savior, Christ Jesus.  
And you have received Him as *the Lord*. You have not accepted Him as merely one of many anointed Prophets, nor as a man sent from God, as John the Baptist was, but you worship Him as the Lord! And oh, how blessed it is to adore the Son of God! We cannot make any terms of peace with those who deny the Deity of Christ, nor ought they to want to be at peace with us, for if Christ is not the Son of God, we are idolaters. And if He is, they are not Christians! There is a great gulf between us and them and we do not hesitate for a moment to say on which side of that gulf we stand. That same Jesus who was nailed to the tree is to us both Lord and Christ. By faith we put our finger into the print of the nails and our hand into His pierced side—and never questioning the fact that He is truly Man, we rejoice to say to Him, as Thomas did, “My Lord and my God.” Jesus Christ is, indeed, to us “very God of very God.” This being so, we have received Him as our Lord to rule and govern us. In spiritual matters He is our only King—we acknowledge no master save Him who is *The* Master, of whom Martha said to her sister Mary, “The Master is come, and calls for you.”  
No teacher has any right to impart to us any instruction except that which he has received from the only Infallible Teacher. “He is the head of the body, the Church,” and we recognize no other headship. We joyfully acknowledge that He is our Sovereign Lord in the spiritual realm! He is the absolute Monarch of our soul! He is that perfect Husband who is the true Head of His mystical body, the Church. Oh, that we more fully carried out, practically, in every thought, wish and action of our entire life, all that is implied in receiving Jesus Christ as Lord!  
Beloved Friends, as I look round upon you all and gaze into your faces, this question rushes from my heart to my lips—Have all of you received Christ Jesus the Lord? Alas, I am sorrowfully persuaded that there are some of you who have not received Him! He has knocked again and again with those pierced hands of His, at the door of your heart, but you have not let Him in! This fountain of the Water of Life has flowed close to your feet, yet you have not drunk of it. Christ has been set before you as the Bread of Life sent down from Heaven, but you have not eaten of Him—you have refused Him even until now! “No,” you say, “you are too severe in charging us with having refused Christ, for we have not done that!” Well, it seems to me that this is just what you *have* done, but I will put it more softly and say that, at any rate, you have not *received* Him. You have put Him off to a more convenient season which will probably never come to you. O poor Souls, poor Souls, how sad is your state in not having received Christ Jesus the Lord! Leaving out Heaven and eternity for the moment—and speaking only of today—how wretched you must be in not having received Christ! When I see a man who has never seen the sun, I pity him, but not as I pity you who have never seen the Sun of Righteousness! If I heard of a child who had never known a father’s love and who had never looked up with affection into a mother’s face, I would pity that poor orphan, but not as much as I pity you who are living without a Savior! If I knew a man who had never known what health was, but who, from the day of his birth, was always sickly and bowed down with pain and infirmity, I would pity him, but not as I pity you who are sick unto death, yet who will not accept healing from the Great Physician! May God look down upon you, now, not only with pity, as He always does, but also in the power of His Almighty Grace and turn the heart of stone to flesh and lead you to receive Christ Jesus as Lord! That is all you have to do—to receive Jesus as the parched earth receives the refreshing showers, and as the wilted lilies receive the reviving rain drops and lift up their drooping heads again. That is all you have to do— receive Jesus! A child can receive. The feeblest can receive. Yes, one lying at the point of death, the sick man dying of fever may receive the cooling draught that is put to his lips! This is all that is asked of you—that you will *receive* Christ Jesus the Lord! Oh, that you would all receive Him now! God grant that it may be so and He shall have the praise!  
**II.**Now, secondly, notice THE COUNSEL GIVEN—“so walk you in Him.” The text not only reminds us of what we have done, but it also tells us what we are now to do!  
Brothers and Sisters in Christ, it is not easy to decide whether this counsel is to be regarded as a permission or as a precept—“so walk you in Him.” Taking them either way, the words are a sweet morsel in my mouth. Yet I think I prefer to regard them as a permission. Suppose I had been to Jesus as a poor sinner and that He had saved me and that He had then said to me, “there, you are saved, so go your way. You have been a prodigal, but you are forgiven. You have shoes on your feet, a ring on your finger and the best robe to cover your nakedness—now go and do what you can for yourself”? Well, it would have been Infinite Mercy that would have welcomed me and pardoned me, but how much more gracious and tender is the Lord’s message, “Come, My child take up your abode with Me and wander away no more.” It is thus that God speaks to all who have believed in Jesus, “You have received Jesus Christ the Lord, so now you may walk in Him and you may always walk in Him! What He was to you at the first, He may be to you, still, and He may be to you forever and ever! Did you at the first eat Him as the Bread of Life to your soul? Then go on still eating Him! Did you spiritually drink of Him as the Water of Life? Then still drink of Him. He is yours forever, so continue to draw from His fullness all that you need! As you have received Him, so keep on receiving Him.” Surely, this is a most gracious permission as well as a very precious precept!  
“Walk in Him.” Does not this mean, first, look upon Jesus Christ as your Way to Heaven and walk in Him? Look upon Him as your Forerunner and follow Him. Look upon Him as your Companion and lean upon Him. Look upon Him as your delight and live in Him, abide in Him! The expression, “Walk in Him,” implies action and progress. Let your whole life be practically governed by your union with Christ, let your actions speak of your fellowship with Him. But walking also means progress, so do not stand still in Christ, but go on to know more and more of Him— make advances in the Christian life—“grow in Grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.” There is also something of the idea of permanence in the precept, “Walk you in Him.” It means go nowhere else, but continue in Him—let your ordinary life and your common conversation indicate your closeness of communion with Him!  
“Walk you in Him.” I trust that at least some of us know what it is to “walk in Him.” Though we could not tell to others all that it means, yet it is a blessed fact in our experience and we intend, by God’s Grace, to “walk in Him” as long as we live. I think this is what walking in Him means—to wake up in the morning and to have our first thoughts full of the Savior—to seek His guidance and blessing in everything that is to happen to us during the day, to go down to our morning meal with our heart’s affection fixed upon Jesus, to go off to the business or the workshop in the full consciousness that He is going with us—when our hands are busy and our mind is occupied with our trading or our working, still realizing that our heart is with our Beloved in the secret place where none can follow us, and so, as the hours run on, through the noontide heat, Christ is our shade and shelter, in the cool of the evening His company is our supreme delight and then, as we retire to our bed, our last thought being—  
***“How sweet to rest  
Forever on our Savior’s breast!”***  
Christian, this ought to be your way of living! And if you are right with God, this is the way in which you actually do live. You “walk in Him.” What a lovely garden! What a delightful place! The air is balmy, the scenery all around is charming. There is nothing to distract, or disturb, or disgust—everything to delight, gratify and satiate the spirit—so “Walk in Him.” Climb to every lofty hill of His Infinite Love, explore the deepest recesses of His eternal purposes so far as they are accessible to mortal man! And in this way, “as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk you in Him.”  
**III.**Notice, thirdly, THE MODEL WHICH IS PRESENTED TO US IN THE TEXT. “*As* you have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, *so* walk you in Him.” The two emphatic words are, “as,” and, “so.” We are to walk in Christ Jesus as we received Him.  
There is great safety in going back to first principles. To make sure of being in the right way, it is well to look back to the gate by which we entered the way. You know how, in ordinary life, in the matter of mutual love, we often look back upon the early days of that experience as the sweetest. Not long ago I heard a good man, whose time had been very fully occupied in business so that for many a year he had scarcely been able to have a holiday, say that, when at last he did manage to take one with his wife, it was like his honeymoon. You also recollect how the Lord said to Israel, “I remember you, the kindness of your youth, the love of your espousals, when you went after Me in the wilderness.” God likes us to go back in thought to the time when we began with Him—and I want to take you who are

Christians back to your first love of God. Perhaps with some of you, religion has become a very mechanical sort of thing— you have become stereotyped in your religious observances. You need to go back to the place where you first received Christ Jesus the Lord and there refurbish your faith, love and all your other Divine Graces!  
So I ask you, how did you receive Christ? Possibly your first answer is, “*I received Him in the depth of sorrow and humiliation of soul*. I had been broken in pieces by the great plow of the Law and was rent and torn asunder by my own consciousness of guilt. I lay before the Cross moaning and roaring like a wounded beast and in my extremity I received Christ as being the very Savior that I needed. I felt myself to be less than nothing and I took Him to be my All-in-All. Shivering in my nakedness through sin, I took His righteousness as my perfect covering. Famished to death, I took Him to be both my life and the food of that life. I grasped Christ in my despair at finding there was nothing else to which I could cling! Out of the great deeps of my soul’s distress, I cast myself upon His mercy, saying—  
***“I can but perish if I go,  
I am resolved to try—  
For if I stay away,  
I know I must forever die!’”***  
Our daily walk in Christ must be very much like that. Not exactly so, for there should be no unbelief in it. As for myself, I must confess that I never realize Christ’s preciousness so much as when I feel myself still to be apart from Him, an undeserving, ill-deserving, Hell-deserving sinner. Sometimes when our Lord gives us sweet enjoyments, we make too much of them by letting them come between Him and our souls. And when the Holy Spirit bestows upon us certain Graces, we think we are very fine fellows and carry our heads aloft very proudly—instead of giving all the Glory to His holy name. Now, if we ever act like that, we may rest assured that as we go up in our own estimation, Christ will go down—and that would be a sorry thing, indeed! Grow in Grace, but not in selfesteem. Have more faith, but do not boast of having it. Be full of zeal, but not of conceit concerning it. Be as holy as it is possible for you to become, but do not prate and brag about your holiness as some have done. Be not like those who push with horn and with shoulder the weak ones of the flock because they have not attained to such heights as these strong ones profess to have reached—though, possibly, the feebler and humbler ones are really nearer to God than the boasters are! Lie low, Brothers and Sisters, lie low, for what the old Essex farmer used to tell me is true, “If you are one inch above the ground, you are just that inch too high.” So lie low and thus continue to walk in Christ—yourself being *nothing*—and Christ being *everything*. You know that if you get to be something, Christ cannot then be everything to you. But if you are still nothing—and less than nothing in your own estimation—as you sink in self-esteem, your Lord will rise to His right position in your sight and so you will be walking humbly in Him as you ought!  
Think again how you received Christ. When you really did lay hold of Him by faith, I am sure that *you received Him with great certainty*. There was no mockery, no sham about your reception of Christ. You were a lost sinner and you were pointed to the only Savior—and you did really and truly look unto Him who said, “Look unto Me, and be you saved.” Whatever else there was in your look, there was intense earnestness in it. There was no pretence or affectation about it, it was very real! Is all your religion as real as that first faith-look at Jesus was? Do you walk in Him as truly and as decidedly as you did that first day? My dear Brother, do you ever pray sham prayers? My dear Sister, do you ever sing sham praises? Is there not a very great risk of our making our religion into a mere shell with no life in it? May God save us from everything that would be such a sham as that and make us as sincere in our walk in Christ as we were in our first reception of Him! I know that I was most anxious to be certain that I had really believed in Jesus to the saving of my soul. I was not satisfied with just one look at Jesus, but I looked, and looked, again and again, with a holy anxiety lest I might possibly have been mistaken and not really have trusted Christ as my Savior. I wish we had more of that sacred anxiety concerning our walking in Christ.  
We were not only very sincere in our early repentance and faith, but *our reception of Christ was very vital*. Salvation was to us a matter of life or death. It was not something about which we were only slightly concerned. It would be well if we manifested a similar vitality about our daily walk in Christ. There are some professors whom I know who do not seem to me to be alive much above their ankles—they have not sufficient vitality to reach up to their knees so as to make them mighty in prayer. They are alive, I hope, but they remind me very vividly of a remarkable but gruesome picture of the Resurrection that I once saw. There were skeletons coming out of the graves, with the bones only partly covered with flesh. One man had a head without any eyes in it. Another was stretching out an arm that was all bone—and the rest of the figures in the picture were of a similar character. It was a strange conception on the part of the painter, yet I fear it was only too true a representation of the spiritual state of many nominal Christians! I hope they are really rising from among the dead, but they have not risen yet into fullness of life. Many professors appear to have a very low vitality, if they are alive at all! Their hearts are hard and stony, their consciences insensitive—sin does not shock them as it shocks the young convert—*he* is startled and alarmed at the very *appearance* of evil—but*they* have become so callous that they walk unconcerned among scenes that ought to break their hearts! May the Lord save you, beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ, from all such callousness as that! May you have the same tender sensitiveness to sin that you had when you received Christ Jesus the Lord. And as you then welcomed Him with warm, loving, overflowing emotion, so may you walk in Him, all your days, as one who is alive from the dead—thoroughly alive—with all your powers and faculties in active exercise and your whole soul brimming over with love to Him!  
Did you not also, Beloved, *receive Christ very eagerly*? Have you ever helped to feed a man who had long been without food? If so, you know that it is a great treat to see how eagerly he eats. He does not pick over the meat to see if it is well done—it is all well done to him. He does not leave a scrap of food upon the plate and he looks round to see if there is any more that he can beg. It was in such a fashion that we feasted upon Christ when we first received Him. We had been for months, perhaps even for years, longing with a great heart-ache to find the Savior. And when we did find Him and began to feast upon Him, we thought we never could have enough of Him! Do you recollect how eager you were in those days to go where you could hear the Gospel? You went to a place which was so crowded that you could not get a seat, but you did not mind standing in the aisle and you did not feel tired, then! But now you need a nice soft cushion to sit on and a cushion even for your feet—and you are weary long before the sermon is finished! In those early days you would have walked many miles to hear about Jesus Christ—and even if the preacher’s language was somewhat rough and uncouth, what did you care about that, as long as he faithfully preached Jesus Christ and Him crucified? That is the way in which we should still eagerly walk in Christ, feeling that we can never have too much of His company, longing to be often where He meets with His people, delighting in His worship, charmed with everything He says and does! We received Christ eagerly, so let us walk in Him with the same eagerness and earnestness!  
Many of us also received Christ very resolutely. I know that I asked the question, over and over again, “Shall I go to Him?” And at last, when I was almost driven to despair, I cried, “I must, I will—  
***“‘I’ll go to Jesus, though my sin  
Has like a mountain rose.  
I know His courts, I’ll enter in,  
Whatever may oppose.’”***  
That was how many of us received Christ Jesus the Lord. There were difficulties in our way, but we overcame them, for we were determined to be saved if it was possible. What sacred doggedness, what holy pertinacity will a soul bestow when it is resolved on being saved! Hunger will make a man break through stone walls and iron bars, but a soul that is hungering and thirsting after Christ does not know that there are any walls or bars, so overpowering is its eagerness to get to Him! It was with such eagerness as this that we received Christ Jesus the Lord. Are we just as eager to walk in Him? I know that some of you are sorely tempted—are you standing fast? Are you standing up for Jesus as you used to do when you first knew Him? Are you firm as a rock in your resistance to everything that is opposed to Him and to His Truth? You ought to be! Your song should still be that one of which you were so fond in those early days— ***“Through floods and flames, if Jesus leads, I’ll follow where He goes.”***  
A lion-like spirit was then in you! You would gladly have gone to prison for Christ’s sake, or even to death if He had required it. If somebody had told me, when I was converted, that I should have to go to prison and lie there for 12 years as John Bunyan did if I became a Christian, I verily believe that I would have leaped for joy at the prospect of so high an honor! To be a martyr for the Truth’s sake—the prospect looked glorious—the ruby crown glowed in the sunshine of our ardent anticipation and we envied those who had been privileged to wear it! It was so then. But, Beloved, is it so now? Can you cleave to Christ as tenaciously now as you did then? Can you bear to be in ill repute for His sake? Can you rejoice in being scoffed at because you are a Christian as you did when you received Christ Jesus the Lord? If you cannot, blush and be ashamed and, from henceforth, pray that with the same undaunted courage and determination with which you received Him, you may continue to walk in Him!  
I will not weary you by multiplying words, but I must ask whether you do not recollect *how joyfully you received Christ*. Ah, you cannot forget that, for in proportion to your sorrow before, was your joy when you accepted Christ as your Savior. No wonder you sang—  
***“Happy day, happy day,  
When Jesus washed my sins away!”***  
We are not surprised that Miriam and the women went out with timbrels and with dances when Pharaoh and all his host were drowned in the Red Sea. And we do not marvel at Miriam’s jubilant song, “Sing you to the Lord, for He has triumphed gloriously,” for our soul took a timbrel and our feet danced before the Lord as we sang unto Him who had triumphed so gloriously for us! As I go back and remind you of those early joys, I again ask you whether you are as joyous now as you were then? You ought to be a great deal more joyous, for you have had so much more cause to praise the Lord than you had then! Come, Brothers and Sisters, let us go again to Jesus as we went to Him at the first—let us go as poor, guilty, needy sinners to Jesus Christ upon the Cross just as though we had never gone before! If we do so, I can tell you what the consequence will be just as it was at the first. As we—  
***“View the flowing  
Of our Savior’s precious blood,  
With Divine assurance knowing  
He has made our peace with God”—***  
we shall feel as though we were young converts once again! We may be getting old and gray and, perhaps, cold as well as gray, but we shall become like little children again and we shall shout, “Hosanna! Hosanna! Hosanna!” as the Son of David rides in triumph down the streets of our soul! Oh, that it may be so with many of us here! It ought to be so and it will be so if you walk in Christ Jesus the Lord as you received Him in the hour of your conversion!  
I will close my discourse when I have reminded you that when we received Christ Jesus the Lord, *we received the whole of Him*. We took Him for all that we knew of Him and we found that He was much more than we then thought He was. And we did not pick and choose and say, “We will have His pardon, but we will not have His sanctification.” We took the many-sided Christ, the Christ of many glorious Characters, the Christ of ten thousand times ten thousand beauties! We took Christ to teach us, Christ to lead us, Christ to feed us, Christ to cheer us, Christ for us to obey and Christ for us to delight in—we took a whole Christ! And then we gave Him our whole selves. We said, “Lord, take us, body, soul and spirit.” We prayed that the sacrifice might be bound with cords to the horns of the altar forever! We made no bargains with Him—we gave the freehold of our souls to Jesus—and of our bodies, too. And we only asked that we might not have a pulse beating except for Him, or our lungs heaving except as He was our very life. And we took Christ—at least I know I did—for better or worse, in health or in sickness, to have and to hold so that even death should never part us! We put our hand in His and asked Him to take us and keep us forever. And we took Him and said, “We will hold to You and will not let You go.” Since then there has been many a tug from Satan, who has tried to drag us away from Christ, or to make us think that Christ was going away from us—but we have managed to hold to Him to this hour! Perhaps you feel as though you had only got a hold of the hem of His garment. If so, try to get a firmer hold on Him! Gasp Him, hold Him by the feet, throw your arms about Him and tell Him that without a smile from Him, your spirit cannot rest! Tell Him that you are sick in love and need His Presence, and must have it! And beg Him, by the roes and by the hinds of the field, to come to you. Say unto Him, “My Lord, if You love me, come and show Your love. If, indeed, there is between You and me a union of an eternal nature, come to me! Be not a stranger to Your own flesh, but be now as You were of old. Come to me again and let Your left hand be under my head while Your right hand does embrace me.” Oh, for more of these blessed hungerings and longings! Beloved, we will never let Christ go! We took Him forever and we will hold Him forever! And, blessed be His name, He will hold us forever! We are in His hands and none can take us out. There shall we be when earth and Heaven are in a blaze! There shall we be when He shall sit upon His Judgment Seat! And there shall we be world without end. Amen!  
I leave this sermon with God’s people, but I cannot help adding that I do earnestly pray that all of you may receive Christ Jesus the Lord. Oh, come to Him tonight! He is willing that you should have Him—and every soul that wills to have Christ may have Him, for, “the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that hears say, Come. And let him that is thirsty come. And whoever will, let him take the Water of Life freely.” Amen, and Amen.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:**1Jn 3:10-21***.***

**Verses 10-12.***In this the children of God are manifest and the children of the devil: whoever does not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loves not his brother. For this is the message that you heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. Not as Cain, who was of that Wicked One, and slew his brother. And why did he slay him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother’s righteous.* Some people try to deceive us with the notion that all men are the children of God, but John, writing under the Inspiration of the Holy Spirit, shows how false that idea is! Holiness and love distinguish the children of God from the children of the devil!

**13.***Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hates you*. As Cain hated Abel, so worldlings hate the saints whose holiness is a continual rebuke to the ungodly.

**14-16.***We know that we have passed from death unto life because we  
love the brethren.*[See Sermon #2556, Volume 44—LIFE PROVED BY LOVE—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.]*He that loves not his*

*brother abides in death. Whoever hates his brother is a murderer: and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him. Hereby perceive we the love of God, because He laid down His life for us* [See Sermons #2656, Volume

46—THE DEATH OF CHRIST FOR HIS PEOPLE and #2959, Volume 51—GOD’S LOVE TO THE SAINTS—Read/download the entire sermons, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.]*and*

*we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.*Such self-sacrifice as this is the very highest form of love to the brethren and is a following of the example of Christ, who “laid down his life for us.”

**17, 18.***But whoever has this world’s goods and sees his brother has need and shuts up his heart of compassion from him, how dwells the love of God in him? My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in Truth.*Love that consists only of words is utterly worthless. If it is true love, it must prove itself by kind deeds and gracious actions.

**19.***And hereby we know that we are of the Truth, and shall assure our hearts before Him*. The love that will pass this test will bring a restful assurance of peace to the heart.

**20-22.***For if our heart condemns us, God is greater that our heart, and knows all things. Beloved, if our heart condemns us not, then have we confidence toward God. And whatever we ask, we receive of Him because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight.* It is not everyone who can have whatever he chooses to ask of God in prayer. This privilege is only granted to those who “keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight.” [See Sermon

#1103, Volume 19—THE CONDITIONS OF POWER IN PRAYER—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.]

**23.***And this is His commandment, that we should believe on the name of His Son, Jesus Christ, and love one another, as He gave us commandment*. Faith and love—faith in Christ and love to one another—are here most happily joined together! Let us never put them asunder.

**24.***And he that keeps His commandments dwells in Him, and He in him. And hereby we know that He abides in us, by the Spirit which He has given us*. Though this great Truth of our dwelling in God and God dwelling in us is a great mystery, it is a mystery concerning which we need not be in doubt if we will learn of the Holy Spirit what He delights to teach us!

—Adapted from *The C. H. Spurgeon Collection,* Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307  
**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.** Sermon #483 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

LIFE AND WALK OF FAITH  
NO. 483

**SERMON DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, DECEMBER 7, 1862, *BY REV. C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“As you have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk you in Him.***Col 2:6***.***

OUR nature is fond of change. Although man was made in the image of God at first, it is plain enough that any trace of immutability which he may once have possessed has long ago departed. Man, unrenewed, could he possess the joys of Heaven, would in time grow weary of them and crave for change. When the children of Israel in the wilderness were fed on angels’ food, they murmured for variety and groaned out, “Our soul loathes this light bread.” It is little wonder, then, that we need cautions against shifting the ground of our hope and the object of our faith.

Another evil principle will work with this love of change in our hearts and produce much mischief—our natural tendency to build upon our own works. For a time that pernicious habit is cured by conviction of sin. The Law, with its sharp axe, cuts down the lofty cedar of fleshly confidence and withers all its verdure. But, since the root still remains, at the very scent of water it sprouts again and there is good need to set the axe going with all its former edge and weight. When we think legality quite dead, it revives, and, linking hands with our love of change, it tempts us to forsake our simple standing upon Christ, the Rock of Ages. It urges us to advance to a something which it decorates before our eyes with fancied colors and makes out, to our feeble understandings, to be better or more honorable to ourselves.

Though this will certainly be again beaten down in a Christian, for he will meet with trouble after trouble when once he goes astray from his first path, yet again the old secret desire to *be* something, to *do* something, to have some little honor by performing the works of the Law, will come in and we shall have need to hear the voice of Wisdom in our hearts saying to us, “As you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk you in Him.” Persevere in the same way in which you have begun, and, as at the first, Christ Jesus was the source of your life, the principle of your action, and the joy of your spirit, so let Him be the same even till life’s end—the same when you walk through the valley of the shadow of death and enter into the joy, and the rest, which remain for the people of God.

In trying to teach this very useful, though simple lesson, I shall, in the plainest possible language, first of all talk a little of the text *by way of exposition*. Then, secondly, *by way of advocacy*. And then, thirdly, *by way of application*.   
I. Oh that the gracious Spirit, who alone can lead us into all the Truth of God, would aid me while I endeavor to open up this verse BY WAY OF EXPOSITION. In expounding the text, we readily break it up into two parts—here is the life of faith—receiving Christ Jesus the Lord. Here is, secondly, the walk of faith—so walk you in Him.   
1. The Holy Spirit here reveals to us *the life of faith—*the way by which you and I are saved, if saved at all. Mark, carefully, that it is represented as *receiving*. Now the word, “receiving,” *implies the very opposite of anything like merit*. Merit is purchasing—merit might be called making by labor, or winning by valor. But receiving is just the accepting of a thing as a *gift*. The eternal life which God gives His people is in no sense whatever the fruit of their exertions. It is the gift of God. As the earth drinks in the rain, as the sea receives the streams, as night accepts light from the stars, so we, giving nothing, partake freely of the Grace of God.   
The saints are not, by nature, wells or streams. They are but cisterns into which the living water flows. They are but as the empty vessel. Sovereign mercy puts them under the pipe and they receive Divine Grace upon Divine Grace till they are filled to the brim. He that talks about winning salvation by works—he that thinks he can earn it by prayers, by tears, by penance, by mortification of the flesh, or by zealous obedience to the Law—makes a big mistake. For the very first principle of the Divine life is not giving out, but *receiving*. It is that which comes *from* Christ *into* me which is my salvation. Not that which springs out of my own heart, but that which comes from the Divine Redeemer, and changes, and renews my nature. It is not what I give out but what I *receive*, which must be life to me.   
The idea of receiving, again, seems to imply in it *a sense of realization*, making the matter *a reality*. One cannot very well receive a shadow. We receive that which is substantial. Gold, silver, precious stones—such things we can receive. Estates, riches, bread, water, food, raiment—all these are things which are substances to us, and therefore it becomes possible for us to *receive* them. We do not receive a dream. We do not receive, again, I say, a shadow. We do not speak of receiving a specter. We do not receive a phantom. There is something real in a thing that is received.   
Well now, so is it also in the life of faith. We realize Christ. While we are without faith, Christ is a name to us, a Person that may have lived a long while ago, so long that His life is only a history to us now! By an act of faith Christ becomes a real Person in the consciousness of our heart, as real to us as our own flesh, and blood, and bones—and we speak of Him and think of Him as we would of our brother, our father, our friend. Our faith gives a substance to the history and idea of Christ, puts real solidity into the spirit and name of Christ—and that which to the worldly man is but a phantom, a thing to hear about and talk about—becomes to us a thing to taste and handle, to lay hold upon and to receive as real and true.   
I know, you that are unconverted, think all these things an idle tale. But you that are saved, you who have received Christ—you know that there is substance here—and shadow everywhere else. This has become to you the one grand reality, that God is in Christ reconciling you unto Himself. But receiving means also a third thing, that is *getting a grip of it, grasping it*. The thing which I receive becomes my own. I may *believe* it to be real, but that is not *receiving* it. I may believe, also, that if I ever do get it, it must be given to me, and that I cannot earn it for myself. But still that is not *receiving* it. Receiving is the *bona fide* taking into my hands, and appropriating to myself as my own property that which is given to me.   
Now this is what the soul does when it believes on Christ. Christ becomes *my* Christ. His blood cleanses *my* sin, and it is cleansed. His righteousness covers *me*, and I am clothed with it. His Spirit fills me, and I am made to live by it. He becomes to me as much mine as anything that I can call my own. No, what I call my own here on earth is not mine. It is only lent to me, and will be taken from me. But Christ is so mine, that neither life, nor death, nor things present, nor things to come, shall ever be able to rob me of Him. Oh, I hope, dear Friends, you have that blessed appropriating faith which says, “Yes, He is not another man’s Christ, He is *my* Christ,” I hope you can look into His face today and say, “*My* Beloved, who loved *me* and gave Himself for me.”   
I hope you do not talk of these things as I might talk of my lord So-and-So’s park, and admire its beauties, while I, myself, have no right to one acre of the many thousands within the fence. But I trust, on the other hand, you can say— “The blessings and promises of the Lord, my God, are all my own. Whatever I read of in the Covenant of Grace that is good, that is comely, that is desirable, I have heard a voice say in my ears, “Lift up now your eyes and look to the north and the south, to the east and the west: all this have I given *you* to be your possession forever and ever by a covenant of salt.”   
Now put these three things together and I think your have the idea of receiving Christ. To receive Him is to have Him as the result of God’s free gift. To realize Him. And then to appropriate Him to yourselves. The word “receive” is used in some ten or a dozen senses in Holy Scripture. Five of them will suffice my purpose just now. To receive is often used for *taking*. We read of receiving a thousand shekels of silver, and of receiving money, garments, sheep and oxen. Perhaps in this sense we understand the words of the Master—“No man can receive anything unless it is given him from above.” And that other sentence—“To as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God.”   
We take Christ into us—to return to my old simile—as the empty vessel takes in water from the stream—so we receive Christ. The love, life, merit, nature, and Grace of Jesus freely flow into us, as the oil into the widow’s vessels. But the word is also used in Scripture to signify *holding that which we take in*. Indeed, a vessel without a bottom could hardly be said to receive water. I do not suppose anyone would talk of a sieve receiving water except in a mock sense. But the life of faith consists in holding within us that which Christ has put into us, so that Jesus Christ is formed in us the hope of glory. By faith it comes in. By faith it is kept in. Faith gives me what I have, keeps what I have. Faith makes it mine, faith *keeps* it mine. Faith gets hold of it with one hand, and then clasps it with both hands with a grasp that neither death nor life can loose.   
Then, receiving sometimes means in Scripture simply *believing*. “He came unto His own and His own received Him not.” We read of receiving false prophets, that is, believing them. Now, to receive Christ is to believe Him. He says, “I can save you.” I receive that. He says, “I will save you.” I receive that. He says, “Trust Me and I will make you like Myself.” I receive that. Whatever Jesus says, I believe Him, and receive Him as true. I make His words so true to myself that I act upon them as being true, and regard them not as a word that may *possibly* be true but which *must* be true, even if Heaven and earth should pass away. This is receiving Christ—believing what He has said.   
Receiving, also, often signifies in Scripture *entertaining*. Thus the barbarous people at Melita received Paul and his companions kindly and kindled a fire. Ah, after we have once found all in Christ to be our own and have received Him into ourselves by faith, then we entreat the Lord to enter our hearts and sup with us. We give Him the best seat at the table of our souls. We would feast Him on the richest dainties of our choicest love. We ask Him to abide with us from morn till eve. We would commune with Him every day and every hour of the day. We entertain Him. We have a reception chamber in our hearts and we receive Christ.   
And then, once again, receiving in Scripture often signifies *to enjoy*. We hear of receiving a crown of life which fades not away. That is, enjoying it, enjoying Heaven, and being satisfied with all its bliss. Now, dear Friends, when we receive Christ, there is intended in this an enjoying of it. I am only now talking the simplicities of our faith, but I do want to make them very personal to you. Are you thus enjoying Christ? If you had a crown you would wear it. You have a Christ—feed on Him. If you were hungry and there was bread on the table, you would eat. Oh, eat and drink, Beloved, of your Lord Jesus Christ! If you have a friend, you enjoy his company—you have a Friend in Christ. Oh, enjoy His conversation! Do not leave Him, like a bottle of cordial for the fainting, sealed up from us.   
Let him not be as some choice dainty all untasted, while you are hungry. Oh, receive Christ, for this is the very Heaven and rest of the soul. His flesh is meat, indeed. His blood is drink, indeed. Never did angels taste such Divine fare. Come here, Saints, and satisfy yourselves in Him. To take Him into one’s self, to hold Him there, to believe every word He says, to entertain Him in our hearts, and to enjoy the luscious sweetness which He must confer upon all those who have eaten His flesh and have been made to drink of His blood—this it is, to receive Christ.   
But we have not brought out the real meaning of this life of faith yet till we dwell upon another word. As you have received. Received what? Salvation may be described as the blind receiving sight, the deaf receiving hearing, the dead receiving life. But Beloved, Beloved, here is a thought here—oh that you may get hold of it! We have not only received these things but we have received CHRIST. “As you have received *Christ Jesus the Lord*.” Do you see it? It is true that He gave us life from the dead. He gave us pardon of sin. He gave us imputed righteousness. These are all precious things— but do you see we are not content with them?   
We have received *Christ Himself*! The Son of God has been poured out into us, and we have received Him, and appropriated Him. Mark, I say, not merely the blessings of the Covenant, but *Himself*! Not merely the purchase of His blood, but He Himself, from whose veins the blood has flowed, has become ours. And every soul that has eternal life is this day a possessor of Christ Jesus the Lord. Now we will put this, also, personally to you. Have I received *Christ*, that is the *Anointed*? My soul, have you seen Christ as the Anointed of the Father in the Divine decree to execute His purposes? Have you seen Him coming forth in the fullness of time wearing the robes of His priesthood, the Anointed of the Father?   
Have you seen Him standing at the altar offering Himself as a Victim, an anointed Priest, anointed with the sacred oil by which God has made Him a Priest forever after the order of Melchisedek? My Soul, have you seen Jesus going within the veil and speaking to Your Father and to His Father as One whom the Father has accepted, of whom we can speak, in the language of David, as our shield and God’s Anointed? Oh, it is a delight, indeed, to receive Christ not as an unsent Prophet, not as a man who came of His own authority, not as a teacher who spoke His own words, but as One who is *Christos*, the Anointed, the Anointed of God, ordained of the Most High, and therefore most certainly acceptable!   
As it is written, “*I* have laid help upon One that is mighty, I have exalted One chosen out of the people. It pleased the *Father* to bruise Him, He has put Him to grief.” Delightful is the contemplation of Christ under that aspect! Soul, do you thus receive the Messiah of God? But the text says,” Christ *Jesus*.” Now Jesus means a Savior. *Christ* is His relation to God, *Jesus* His relation to *me*. Have I received Christ in His relationship to *me* as a Savior? My Soul, has Christ saved you? Come, no “ifs” and “ands” about it. Have you received Him as your Savior? Could you say in that happy day when your faith closed with Him, “Yes, Jesus, You have saved me”?   
Oh, there are some professors of religion who do not seem to have received Christ as *Jesus.* They look upon Him as One who may *help* them to save themselves, who can do a great deal for them, or may *begin* the work, but not complete it. Oh, Beloved, we must get a hold of Him as one that has saved us, that has finished the work. What? Don’t you know that you are this day whiter than the driven snow because His blood has washed you? You are this day more acceptable to God than unfallen angels ever were, for you are clothed in the perfect righteousness of the Divine One. Christ has wrapped you about with His own righteousness. You are saved! You have received Him as God’s Anointed. See that you receive Him as Jesus, your Savior.   
Then, again, it is clear that saving faith consists also in receiving Him *as He is in Himself, as the Divine Son*. “You have received Christ Jesus *the Lord*.” Those who they say cannot believe in His Deity have not received Him. Others theoretically admit Him to be Divine, but He is never a subject of confidence as such. They have not received Him. But I trust I speak to many hundreds this morning who willingly accept His Godhead and say, “I entertain no doubt about His Deity and, moreover, on that I risk my soul. I do take Him into my heart as being God over all, blessed forever, Amen. I kiss His feet while I see His humanity. But I believe that, since those feet could tread the waters, He is Divine.   
“I look up to His hands, and as I see them pierced I know that He is human. But as I know that those hands multiplied the loaves and fishes till they fed five thousand, I know that He is Divine. I look upon His corpse in the tomb, and I see that He is Man. I see Him in the resurrection, and I know that He is God. I see Him on the Cross, suffering, and I know that He is bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh. But I hear a voice which says, ‘Let all the angels of God worship Him.’ ‘Your throne, O God, is forever and ever.’ And I bow before Him and say, ‘Oh Lord, You Son of God, and son of Mary, I receive You as Christ Jesus *the Lord*.’ ”   
Now this is all very plain talking, you will say. And I remind you that souls are saved by very plain truths, and the dealings of men’s souls with Christ are not carried on in learned or metaphysical terms. We do believe, and so take Christ Jesus the Lord into us, and by that act of faith, without any doing of our own, we are completely saved.   
I shall only make this further remark here, that the Apostle speaks of this as a *matter of certainty* and goes on to argue from it. Now we do not argue from a supposition. I must have you clear, dearly Beloved in the Lord, that this is a matter of certainty *to you*. We can hardly get to the next point unless you can say, “I have received Jesus.” The verse runs, “As, or since, *you have* received Christ Jesus the Lord so walk you in Him.” We must not alter it into, “Since *I hope* I have,” “Since *I trust* I have.” You either have or have not.   
If you have not, humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God and cry to Him for His great gift. But if you have, O, dear Friends, do not let it be a question with you, but say, “Yes, yes, yes, I can say, once and for all, I have received Him. Poor, weak, and worthless though I am, I do put my humble seal to the fact that God is true, and I trust in Him who is able to save unto the uttermost them that come unto God by Him.” This is the life of faith.   
2. Now, in expounding the text, our second point was *the walk of faith*. “Since you have received Him, walk in Him.” Walk implies, first of all, *action*. Do not let your reception of Christ be a mere thing of thought to you, a subject only for your chamber, and your closet—but act upon it all. If you have really received Christ, and are saved, act as if you were saved—with joy, with meekness, with confidence, with faith, with boldness. Walk in Him—do not sit down in indolence—but rise and act in Him. Walk in Him. Carry out into practical effect that which you believe.   
See a man who has received an immense fortune, his purse is bursting, and his caskets are heavy. What does he do? Why, he behaves like a rich man. He sees a luxury which pleases him, and he buys it. There is an estate he desires, and he purchases it. He acts like a rich man. Beloved Brethren, you have received Christ—act upon it. Do not play the beggar, now that boundless wealth is conferred upon you!   
Walking, again, implies *perseverance.* Not only being in Christ *today—*that would be standing in Him and falling from Him. But being in Him tomorrow, and the next day, and the next, and the next, and the next—walking in Him all your walk of life. I remember Matthew Henry, speaking about Enoch walking with God, says he did not only take a turn or two up and down with God, and then leave Him, but he walked with God four hundred years. This implies perseverance. You have received Christ—persevere in receiving Him. You have come to trust Him—keep on trusting Him. You hang about His neck as a poor, helpless sinner—remain hanging there. In other words, abide in Him.   
Walking implies *habit*. When we speak of a man’s walk and conversation, we mean his habits, the constant tenor of his life. Now, dear Friends, if you and I sometimes enjoy Christ, and then forget Him, if sometimes we say He is ours and soon loose our hold, that is not a habit. We do not *walk* in Him. But if you have received Him, let it be your habit to live upon Him, keep to Him—cling to Him, never let Him go—live and have your being in Him. This walking implies a *continuance*. There is no notice given in the text of the suspension of this walking, but there must be a continual abiding in Christ. How many Christians there are who think that in the morning and evening they ought to come into the company of Christ, but then they may be in the world the rest of the day?   
Ah, but we ought *always* to be in Christ, that is to say, all the day long, every minute of the day. Though worldly things may take up some of my thoughts, yet my soul is to be in a constant state of being in Christ, so that if I am caught at any moment, I am in Him. At any hour, if anyone should say to me, “Now, are you saved?” I may be able still to say, “Yes.” And if they ask me for an evidence of it, I may, without saying so, prove it to them by the fact that I am acting like a man who is in Christ, who has Christ in him, has had his nature changed by receiving Christ’s nature, and has Christ to be his one end and aim. I suppose, also, that walking signifies *progress*. So walk in him—proceed from Divine Grace to Grace—run forward until you reach the uttermost limit of knowledge that man can have concerning our Beloved. “As you have received Him walk in Him.”   
But now I want you to notice just this. It says, “Walk you *in Him*.” Oh, I cannot attempt to enter into the mystery of this text—“Walk *in* Him!” You know if a man has to cross a river, he fords it quickly and is out of it again at once. But you are to suppose a person walking *in* a certain element always, *in* Christ. Just as we walk in the air, so am I to walk in Christ. Not sometimes, now and then coming to Him and going away from Him, but walking in Him as my *element*. Can you comprehend that? Not a soul here can make anything out of that but the most silly jargon, except the man who, having received the inner spiritual life, understands what it is to have fellowship with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ.   
Dear Friends, in trying to open up that point just for a moment, let us notice what this walking in Christ must mean. As Christ was at first when we received Him *the only ground of our faith—*so as long as we live, we are to stand to the same point. Did you not sing the other day when you first came to Him—   
*“I’m a poor sinner and nothing at all,   
But Jesus Christ is my All in All”?*Well, that is how you are to continue to the end. We commence our faith with—   
*“Nothing in my hands I bring,  
Simply to the Cross I cling.”*When you are old with honors, when you are covered with fame, when you have served your Master well, still come in just the same way with—   
*“A guilty weak and helpless worm,   
On Christ’s kind arms I fall,   
He is my strength and righteousness,   
My Jesus and my All”*Let not your experience, your sanctification, your graces, your attainments, come in between you and Christ. But just as you took Him to be the only pillar of your hope at first, so let Him be even to the last.   
You received Christ, again, as *the substance of your faith*. The infidel laughed at you, and said you had nothing to trust to. But your faith made Christ real to you. Well, now, just as the first day when you came to Jesus you no more doubted the reality of Christ than you did your own existence, so walk in Him. Well can I remember that first moment when these eyes looked to Christ! Ah, there was never anything so true to me as those bleeding hands, and that crown of thorns on His head. I wish it were always so, and indeed, it ought to be. As you have received Christ really, so keep on realizing and finding substance in Him.   
And remember that day, Beloved, when Christ became to us *the joy of our souls*? Home, friends, health, wealth, comforts—all lost their luster that day when He appeared, just as stars are hidden by the light of the sun. He was the only Lord and giver of life’s best bliss, the one well of living water springing up unto everlasting life. I know that the first day it mattered not to me whether the day itself was gloomy or bright. I had found Christ! That was enough for me. He was my Savior. He was my All. I do think that that day I could have stood upon the fire wood of Smithfield to burn for Him readily enough.   
Well now, just as you received Him at first as your only joy, so receive Him still, walking in Him, making Him the source, the center, yes, and the circumference, too, of all your souls’ range of delight, having your all in Him. So, Beloved, that day when we received Him, we received Him as *the object of our love*. Oh, how we loved Christ then! Had we met Him that day, we would have broken the alabaster box of precious ointment, and poured it upon His head. We would have washed His feet with our tears, and wiped them with the hairs of our head.   
Ah, Jesus, when I first received You, I thought I should have behaved far better than I have. I thought I would spend, and be spent for You, and should never dishonor You or turn aside from my faith and devotedness and zeal. But ah, Brethren, we have not come up to the standard of our text—walking in Him as we have received Him. He has not been by us so well beloved as we dreamed He would have been. I take it, then, to be the meaning of our text, as Christ Jesus the Lord was at the first All in All to you, so let Him be while life shall last.   
II. I shall be very brief upon THE ADVOCACY OF THIS PRINCIPLE, for surely you need no urgent persuasion to cleave unto such a Lord as yours. In advocating this principle, I would say, first of all, suppose, my Brethren, you and I, having been saved by Christ, should now begin to walk in someone else, what then? Why, *what dishonor to our Lord*! Here is a man who came to Christ and says he found salvation in Him. But after relying upon the Lord some half-a-dozen years, he came to find it was not a proper principle, and so now he has begun to walk by feelings, to walk by sight, to walk by philosophy, to walk by carnal wisdom. If such a case could be found, what discredit would it bring upon our Holy Leader and Captain!   
But I am certain no such instance will be found in you, if you have tasted that the Lord is gracious. Have you not up till now found your Lord to be a compassionate and generous Friend to you, and has not simple faith in Him given you all the peace your spirit could desire? I pray you, then, unless you would stain His glory in the dust, as you have received Christ, so walk in Him.   
Besides, *what reason have you to make a change*? Has there been any argument in the past? Has not Christ proved Himself all-sufficient! He appeals to you today—“Have I been a wilderness unto you?” When your soul has simply trusted Christ, have you ever been confounded? When you have dared to come as a guilty sinner, and believed in Him, have you ever been ashamed? Very well, then, let the past urge you to walk in Him. And as for *the present*, can that compel you to leave Christ? Oh, when we are hard beset with this world or with the severer trials within the Church, we find it such a sweet thing to come back! Pillow our head upon the bosom of our Savior. This is the joy we have today—that if we are in trial—we are saved in Him. And if we find this today to be enough, why should we think of changing!   
I will not forswear the sunlight till I find a better, nor leave my Lord until a brighter Lover shall appear. And, since this can never be, I will hold Him with a grasp immortal, and bind His name as a seal upon my arm. As for *the future*, can you suggest anything which can arise that shall render it necessary for you to tack about, or strike sail, or go with another captain in another ship? I think not. Suppose life to be long—He changes not. Suppose you die—is it not written that, “neither death, nor life, nor things present, nor things to come, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord”?   
You are poor. What better than to have Christ who can make you rich in faith? Suppose you are sick. What more do you want than Christ to make your bed in your sickness? Suppose you should be maltreated and mocked at, and slandered for His sake—what better do you want then to have Him as a Friend who sticks closer than a brother? In life, in death, in judgment—you cannot conceive anything that can arise in which you would require more than Christ bestows.   
But, dear Friends, it may be that you are tempted by something else to change your course for a time. Now what is it? Is it the wisdom of this world, the cunning devices and discoveries of man? Is it that which our Apostle mentions as philosophy? The wise men of the world have persuaded you to begin questioning. They have urged you to put the mysteries of God to the test of common sense, reason and so forth, as they call it, and not lean on the inspiration of God’s Word. Ah, well, Beloved, it is wisdom, I suppose, which philosophy offers you. Well, but have you not that in Christ, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge? You received Christ at first, I thought, as being made of God unto you wisdom, and sanctification, and righteousness, and so on. Well, will you cast Him off when you have already more than all the wisdom which this philosophy offers?   
Is it *ceremonies* that tempt you? Has the priest told you that you ought to attend to these, and then you would have another ground of confidence? Well, but you have that in Christ. If there is anything in the circumcision of the Jews, you have that, for you are circumcised in Him. If there is anything in Baptism—as some think that to be a saving ordinance—you have been buried with Him in Baptism. You have that. Do you want life? Your life is hid with Him. Do you want death? You are dead with Christ, and buried with Him. Do you want resurrection? He has raised you up with Him. Do you want Heaven? He has make you sit together in heavenly places in Him.   
Getting Christ, you have all that everything else can offer you. Therefore be not tempted from this hope of your calling, but as you have received Christ, so walk in Him. And then, further, do you not know that your Jesus is the Lord from Heaven? *What can your heart desire* beyond God? God is infinite. You cannot want more than the infinite. “In Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.” Having Christ, you have God. And having God, you have everything. Well might the Apostle add to that sentence, “And you are complete in Him!”   
Well, then, if you are complete in Christ, why should you be beguiled by the bewitcheries of this world to want something besides Christ? If resting upon Him, God is absolutely yours, and you are, therefore, full to the brim with all that your largest capacity can desire, oh, why should you thus be led astray, like foolish children, to seek after another confidence and another trust? Oh, come back, you Wanderer! Come you back to this solid foundation and sing once again with us—   
*“On Christ the solid rock I stand,   
All other ground is sinking sand.”*III. And now, last of all, a few words BY WAY OF APPLICATION “So walk you in Him.” One of the first applications shall be made with regard to some who complain of a want of communion, or rather, of those of whom we ought to complain, since they injure us all by their distance from Christ.   
There are some of you who never have much communion with Christ. You are members of the Church and very decent people, I dare say, in your way. But you do not have communion with Christ. Ask some professors—“Do you ever have communion with Christ?” They would be obliged to say—“Well, I do not know that my life is inconsistent. I do not think anybody could blame me for any wrong act towards my fellow man. But if you come to that, whether I have ever had communion with Christ, I am compelled to say that I have had it now and then, but it is very seldom—it is like the angels’ visits—few and far between.”  
Now, Brethren, you have received Christ, have you not? Then the application of the principle is as you have received Him, so walk in Him. If it were worth while for you to come to Him at first, then it is worth while for you always to keep to Him. If it were really a safe thing for you to come to Him and say, “Jesus, you are the way,” then it is a safe thing for you to do now. And if that were the foundation of blessedness to you, to come simply to Christ, then it will be the fountain of blessedness to you to do the same now. Come, then, to Him *now*.   
If you were foolish in trusting Him at the first, then you are wise in leaving off doing so now. If you were wise, however, in approaching to Christ years gone by, you are foolish in not standing by Christ now. Come, then, let the remembrance of your marriage unto the Lord Jesus rebuke you! And if you have lost your fellowship with Jesus, come again to His dear body wounded for your sake and say, “Lord Jesus, help me from this time forth as I have received You, day by day to walk in You.”   
There are many of you who complain of *a want of comfort*. You are not so comfortable as you would like to be and why? Why, you have sinned. Yes, yes, but how did you receive Christ. As a saint? “No, no,” you say, “I came to Christ as a sinner.” Come to Him as a sinner now, then. “Oh, but I feel so guilty.” Just so, but what was your hope at first? Why, that guilty though you were, He had made an atonement and you trusted in Him. Well, you are still guilty—do the same as you did at first—walk in Him, and I cannot imagine a person without comfort who continually makes this the strain of his life, to rest on Christ as a poor sinner, just as he did at first.   
Why, Lord, You know the devil often says to me, “You are no saint.” Well, then, if I am not a saint, yet I am a sinner—and it is written—“Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners.” Then—  
*“Just as I am and waiting not,  
To rid my soul of one foul spot,   
To Him whose blood can cleanse each blot,   
O Lamb of God,I come, I come.”*Why, you cannot help having comfort if you walk with your Surety and Substitute as you did at the first, resting on Him and not in feelings, nor experience, nor graces, nor anything of your own—living and resting alone on Him who is made of God unto you all that your soul requires.   
There is yet another thing. There are many Christians whose lives really *are not consistent*. I cannot understand this if they are walking in Christ. In fact, if a man could completely walk in Christ, he would walk in perfect holiness. We hear an instance, perhaps, of a little shopkeeper who puffs and exaggerates as other shopkeepers do—he does not exactly tell a lie, but something very near it. Now I want to know whether that man was walking in Christ when he did that. If he had said to himself, “Now I am in Christ,” do you think he would have done it?   
We hear of another who is constantly impatient, always troubled, fretting, mournful. I want to know whether that man is really walking in Christ as he walked at first, when he is doubting the goodness, the Providence, the tenderness of God. Surely he is not! I have heard of hard-hearted professors who take a Christian Brother by the throat with, “Pay me what you owe.” Do you think they are walking in Christ when they do that? We hear of others, when their Brothers have need, shut up the heart of their compassion—are mean and stingy. Are they walking in Christ when they do that?   
Why, if a man walks in Christ, then he so acts as Christ would act. For Christ being in him, his hope, his love, his joy, his life—he is the reflex of the image of Christ. He is the glass into which Christ looks. And then the image of Christ is reflected, and men say of that man, “He is like his Master. He lives in Christ.” Oh, I know, dear Brethren, if we lived now, as we did the first day we came to Christ, we should live very differently from what we do. How we felt towards Him that day! We would have given all we had for Him! How we felt towards sinners that day! Lad that I was, I wanted to preach and—  
*“Tell to sinners round,   
What a dear Savior I had found.”*How we felt towards God that day! When we were on our knees, what pleading there was with Him! What a nearness of access to Him in prayer! Oh, how different! How different with some now! This world has with rude hands brushed the bloom from the young fruit. Is it true that flowers of Divine Grace, like the flowers of nature, die in the autumn of our piety? As we all get older, ought we to be more worldly? Should it be that our early love, which was the love of our espousals, dies away? Forgive, O Lord, this evil, and turn us anew unto You—   
*“Return, O holy Dove! return,  
Sweet messenger of rest!   
We hate the sins that made You mourn,   
And drove You from our breast.   
The dearest idol we have known,   
Whatever that idol be,   
Help us to tear it from Your throne,   
And worship only You.   
So shall our walk be close with God,   
Calm and serene our frame—  
So purer light shall mark the road   
That leads us to the Lamb.”*“As you have received Him walk in Him,” and if you have not received Him, oh, poor Sinner, remember He is free and full—full to give you all you need—and free to give it even to you. Let the verse we sung be an invitation to you— *“This fountain,though rich, from chargeis quite clear;   
The poorer the wretch, the more welcome here—   
Come, needy and guilty; come, loathsome and bare;   
Though leprous and filthy, come just as you are.”*Trust in God’s anointed—that is receive Him—and then, having trusted Him, continue still to trust Him. May His Spirit enable you to do it and to His name shall be glory forever and ever.

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÷Col 2.12

CHRISTIAN BAPTISM  
NO. 381

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON TUESDAY EVENING, APRIL 9, 1861, *BY REV. HUGH STOWELL BROWN,*  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“Buried with Him in Baptism, wherein also you are risen with Him through the faith of the operation of God who has raised Him from the dead.”*** Col 2:12***.***

IT is the firm belief of almost all Christian people that our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, before He left the earth, instituted two ordinances, namely, Baptism and the Lord’s Supper—ordinances which were to be observed by His disciples throughout every age on to the end of the world. Perhaps, indeed, I ought to say that all Christian people without any exception whatever, acknowledge the appointment to which I have just referred. Even the Society of Friends, although it rejects the outward and visible signs, nevertheless believes in those great principles which those signs are intended to symbolize, viz., the Baptism of the Holy Spirit and the communion of the soul with Christ.

By almost all Christians in every age of the world, the observance of the outward sign as well as the recognition of the inward grace has been regarded as part of the will of the Lord Jesus Christ. On this occasion we have to do only with the ordinance of Baptism and to this I wish to draw your candid and careful attention. The ground upon which this ordinance is founded is the command of our Savior addressed to His disciples just before He ascended to Heaven when He said, “Go you, teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” Now if this is a command of Christ, (and I am not aware that the genuineness of the passage in which it appears has ever been called into question), then, of course, it is the duty of all Christian people according to their convictions as to the nature and meaning of this command to observe and to maintain it on to the end of time.

I think it may also be asserted that with the exception of the Society of Friends, all Christians regard the ordinance of Baptism as one in which water is to be employed in some way or other and very rightly so, because if Baptism is altogether inward and spiritual—the Baptism of the Holy Spirit—then we must believe that the Baptism of the Holy Spirit is a Baptism which one man cannot administer to another. The very fact that the Baptism mentioned in the Scripture is a Baptism which one man *can* administer to another, is sufficient to prove that in this Baptism there is some outward, visible, material rite, ceremony, or ordinance which Christian people are to observe.

Thus far, with the exception of the Society of Friends, I believe we are all agreed that the ordinance of Baptism does imply the use and application of water in some way or other. So far we all, or nearly all, travel together. But at this point, the body of Christians to which we belong feel compelled to pursue a different course from that which is adopted by their

Brethren. The very name we bear indicates that there is something or other in connection with the ordinance of Baptism in which we do not agree with the great majority of Christian people. And for the information of such as may not be thoroughly well informed upon this point, (and I by no means cast the slightest slur or rejection on any man’s intelligence if I suppose him to be a little uninformed upon this point, for very extensive ignorance with regard to it prevails) I shall in a very few words try to explain the difference or differences which exist—between us and other Christians upon this matter.

The majority of Christian people believe that so far as the outward rite is concerned, the conditions of the ordinance are fulfilled when water, in however small a quantity, is poured or sprinkled upon the candidate. We, on the other hand, believe that the outward conditions of the ordinance are *not* fulfilled unless the candidate is wholly immersed in water. Again, (and this is by far the most important point of difference), the very great majority of Christian people think infant children are fit and proper subjects for this ordinance. We, on the other hand, believe that none are fit and proper subjects for the ordinance of Baptism, excepting such as really believe and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ as their Savior and their King.

You will perceive that the difference resolves itself into two questions—a question with regard to the *mode* of this ordinance and a question with reference to the *subjects*. These two questions, “How ought Baptism to be administered?” and, “to whom ought Baptism to be administered?”—these are the questions to which we in our consciences feel compelled to offer answers which differ very materially from those which are given by other Christian people. Again let me explain this matter and set in as plain terms as possible. We believe that this ordinance should never be administered apart from the entire immersion of the candidate in water and we also believe that none should be candidates for this ordinance excepting those who avow their faith in Christ.

And here let me observe that the very common notion that we are in the habit of practicing adult Baptism is utterly a mistake. We do not contend for the Baptism of adults. We contend for the Baptism of *believers*. Show us a child however young who believes in Christ and we gladly accept him. But if a man as old as Methuselah were to come to us in unbelief, we should say to him, “Sir, your age certainly entitles you to our respect, but it gives you no manner of claim to Baptism as ordained by Jesus Christ.”

But now, perhaps, someone will exclaim, perhaps in scorn, perhaps in great surprise, “Who are you that you presume to differ from the general verdict of the Christian world? Who are you that you so pertinaciously maintain these crotchety notions of yours, when all the world is against you and when there is not only the decision of the Church of Rome, against which we should ourselves rebel, but the voice of the Church of England, the voice of the Church of Scotland the voice of the Lutheran Church, the Presbyterians, the Methodists and the Congregationalists, all against you and the most able Divines of the Christian world all testifying that you are in error? Who are you, that you should thus set up your opinions against everybody else? Call a solemn assembly—canvass the Christian world and certainly for one hand held up in favor of your opinions there will be a thousand held up to their decided and utter condemnation.”

Well, we do not choose to put it to the vote in this way. We have not such entire faith in the infallibility of majorities as to submit our religious convictions to any such tribunal. If the Copernican system of astronomy had been put to the vote two hundred and fifty years ago, it would have had a smaller minority than our views would have if put to the vote now. If the doctrine of justification by faith had been put to the vote four hundred years ago, the “Nos” would have had it. If the Truth of Christianity were now submitted to the vote of the entire world, there would be somewhere about five hundred *millions* against it. And further, let the voters be all Christian people, let the suffrage be confined to those who really believe in Christ and then if you as a Church of England man, or you as a Methodist, or you as a Congregationalist, or you as a Presbyterian, submit your views of Church-government and some other things, depend upon it you would as certainly be defeated as we should be if we submitted Baptism to the decision of such a council as that.

I hope that no one is so silly as to suppose that we are necessarily in error because we are in the minority—for let this be borne in mind— especially by the worshipper of majorities, that every great Truth was at one time held by a very small minority, if indeed it is not held by a small minority now. Every great Truth, whether in the province of religion, or in the domain of science, or in the region of politics, is at first and for a very long time held by small minorities. And in all the currency of Proverbs, there is no more pernicious maxim than that, “what everybody says must be true.”

But of course you will ask our reasons for maintaining this opinion. I think we have just as good a right to ask your reasons for maintaining the opposite opinion. Galileo had just as good a right to ask his opponents why they believed the world did not move, as they to ask him why he believed it did. However you ask for our reasons and I shall endeavor to give those reasons as clearly and as briefly as I can. We ought to have good reasons, because I can assure you it has never been much to our secular comfort and advantage that we hold those views. These views have never done us very much good, considered in a merely secular or worldly sense. We are not bound to them by any golden chain. They have not been made plain and clear and attractive to us by rich benefices and comfortable livings.

Our opinions are not endowed with prelacies and pretender stalls, with manses and glebes and royal bounties. Thank God, whatever people may choose to say of us, they cannot say we are Baptists for the love of filthy lucre. One thing is certain, “the root of all evil” is not likely to draw much nourishment from the soil of Baptist ministerial stipends. We must of course state our reasons and I say they ought to be somewhat substantial reasons. Well, then, we go on this principle mark you—that the only appeal is to the Word of God.

This is a principle in which every holy and sound-hearted Protestant must agree with us. It is his principle as much as ours and it is the only principle that will save him from all the errors and superstitions of

Romanism. So that, taking the matter into the court of God’s Word only, it signifies very little to us what may have been said by such-and-such a council, or such-and-such a Church, or such-and-such a reverend father—it greatly simplifies the matter when it’s understood that we intend to submit this question to the Word of God and to the Word of God only.

And I say to every Protestant here that he must accept the principle and act upon it. If he begins to refer to fathers and churches and councils, well then, let him take care. He may rely upon it—on such a principle he will not be able to stand for one moment. If he thinks with such weapons to vanquish us, let him rest assured that he will very soon be vanquished himself by the same. It may be that the charge from such ordnance shall destroy us, but depend upon it, the recoil will destroy the man who has the temerity to fire it.

This principle, then, will be agreed in by every Protestant, excepting those who in these days are beginning to protest Scripture itself. But every sound-hearted, honest-minded Protestant will go with us in saying that the Word of God is the only tribunal to which we can go. This being the case, let us see how the matter stands.

It is alleged by us, then, that in the ordinance of Baptism the candidate should be wholly immersed in water. And now, if we were disposed and if we recognized any other authority than Scripture, we might refer to the law of the Church of England, which is most distinctly to the effect that excepting in cases of certified weakness, immersion shall be the mode of administering this ordinance and the Church of England man, at all events, has nothing to say against the adoption of this practice. It is his practice as much as ours. It is his law as much as ours. His prayer book tells him we are right.

The large fonts, three feet in diameter, which he sees in so many parish churches, tell him we are right. And he knows that in this respect we are the only faithful Church of England people in this land. We might also refer to the testimony of the ancient Church and the practice of the olden time, with regard to which it may be said with perfect certainty that in the first ages *immersion* was the commonly accepted mode. But of course we appeal to the Scriptures and appealing to the Scriptures, we find that Baptism is, as our text informs us, a burial and resurrection with Christ— that it is a sign and symbol of the believer’s participation in Christ’s burial and resurrection—and this, I think as plainly as possible, shows us what the mode was in ancient times.

This, indeed, is generally admitted by Divines who still maintain that this mode is not binding upon Christians at the present time. But surely, if Baptism is to be a representation of burial and resurrection there must be something in the ordinance itself which shall be suggestive of such a Truth. And then again, we appeal to the meaning of the word. This word Baptism has not been translated in our Scriptures excepting in one or two instances, in which it appears in the form of the word “wash” or “washing,” and in these cases the idea of immersion, if not absolutely required, is at all events perfectly admissible and involves no incongruity. And if you search the Scriptures through you will not find a single passage in which this word, whether it is employed literally or figuratively, does not suggest, or may not suggest the idea of immersion.

When we consider that Philip and the eunuch “went down both of them into the water.” That our Savior “went up straightway out of the water” after John had baptized Him. That John “was baptizing near Salim because there was much water there,” I think it is very evident that something more than aspersion, or pouring of water must be implied. And if we consult trustworthy authorities for the meaning of this word we shall find that in all cases it either may or must imply the idea of immersion. I lately read a very valuable paper by a most scholarly Divine who tells us that he has thoroughly investigated every instance in which the word can be found whether in the fathers or in the classics.

He gives us upwards of two hundred cases in the great majority of which the word must mean immersion and in every one of which it may have and probably really has, that signification. Indeed, almost all scholarly men are agreed that this is the meaning of the word and not only so, but also that this was the mode that was adopted in the Apostolic age. These things are not disputed, or are scarcely disputed. Men do ask why should you adhere to this mode? And that is a question we shall have to consider presently. But they scarcely dispute anywhere that this mode was ordained by Christ and practiced in the Apostolic age. And therefore, if you ask, “Why do you immerse in Baptism?” I say because Baptism must, in the very nature of things, be a representation setting forth figuratively the burial and resurrection of Christ and because to immerse and to immerse only, is the meaning of this word baptize.

But again, our more important difference with our Christian Brethren is that we decline to accept as candidates for the ordinance all but those who avow their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Now here, although the practice of Christendom is very much against us, I think that even in that practice there are some points that tell very strongly in our favor. For example Baptism is called a Sacrament. This word is scarcely recognized among us I believe, but still let us examine it. Baptism is regarded as a Sacrament. What is a Sacrament? I suppose it is an oath. Now would you administer an oath to an infant child? Is there common sense in such a procedure as that? You would provoke laughter if you were to take your infant child before a Justice of the Peace and there administer to it an oath to the effect that he should to the end of his days be a faithful subject and servant of the queen.

And is there anything more rational than this, when you take an infant child to a minister of God’s Word, that to that child an oath may be administered by which it shall swear fealty to the Captain of our Salvation? But you say it is not to the infant that the oath is administered at all. It is to the sponsors. Well then, I want to know to whom the Sacrament is administered. The oath is administered to the sponsors. The Baptism is then administered to the sponsors, for the Baptism and the oath are one. But it would seem as though the ordinance were divided. The water is administered to the child and the oath is administered to the sponsors. There is something rather like confusion here.  
If Baptism is a Sacrament and a Sacrament an oath, then in administering Baptism to a child, you are administering an oath to a child. But surely every oath ought to be administered to such and such only as understand the nature of an oath and also give a solemn assent to the propositions that are embodied in it. And thus if the word Sacrament is to be applied to Baptism at all, I accept it then and I submit that it protests and protests most strongly against the administration of this ordinance to any except to those who understand and assent to the principles which are connected with it. Although our appeal is to Scripture, our PaedoBaptist friends must really not suppose that the testimony of the Church is all in their favor, for certainly for two or three centuries if not more, the Baptism of infant children was not the general practice of the Christian church.

It was opposed by Tortellini at the latter end of the second century or the beginning of the third. And at a far later date than this, we find Baptism administered to persons of mature years. I do not wish to press into our service such cases as that of Constantine, who was baptized late in life. He was born a heathen and he appears to have continued practically a heathen of the very worst stamp to the last. The mistake in his case was not that he was baptized so late, but that he was baptized at all. As he was baptized during his last illness, his Baptism I presume was clinical and therefore administered by aspersion and those who are in favor of this mode are perfectly welcome to this sprinkled Pagan.

I am very glad that the ordinance in its Scriptural form was never disgraced by having Constantine for a subject. But we find that several of the most eminent and pious fathers of the Church were not baptized until they had arrived at maturity and were thoroughly Christian men. In the fourth century flourished Gregory of Nazianzum, Ambrose of Milan, Jerome, Chrysostom and Augustine. These eminent men, who were afterwards such great theologians, were all of them the sons of Christian parents, at least of Christian mothers and yet not one of them was baptized until mature age and until each of them had strong religious convictions. In fact, none of them were baptized until they were truly converted to Jesus Christ.

The case of Gregory peculiarly in point. Gregory of Nazianzum was the son of a Christian bishop. His pious mother Nona, dedicated him to God from his very birth and yet when was he baptized? When he was thirty years old! The instance of Augustine is perhaps still more remarkable. Augustine was the object of his pious mother’s deepest solicitude, his conversion was the thing nearest and dearest to her heart and yet she did not have him baptized. When he was a grown-up lad, he was attacked with a very dangerous illness and expressed a strong desire for Baptism and yet the ordinance was deferred and the great Augustine was not baptized until he was a man thirty-two years old and was fully imbued with the knowledge and spirit of the Gospel of Christ.

Now mark you, I do not say that these cases prove that there was no such thing as infant Baptism in the fourth century and it is for no such purpose I adduce them, but they do prove this—that Christian mothers such as Nona and Monica and Anthusa—Christian women of the very highest intelligence and piety, did not in that age deem it necessary that their infant children should be baptized—but they left the matter to be one of personal profession when their children should have a faith to profess.

But still we would appeal to the Scriptures and when we come to consult God’s Word, strange as it may appear, there is not one passage from the beginning to the end which indicates the Baptism of any but professed believers in Christ. It is true that households were baptized and it is said that there might have infant children in those households. It is a sufficient answer to this to say that there might *not* have been any infants in those households. As to the Philippian jailer, we read that, “he believed in God with all his house.” As to the house of Stephanas, we read, “they had addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints”—and, as to Lydia, there is not the slightest evidence that she was either a wife or mother.

And in fact, so far as historical narrative is concerned, there is not a single incident in Scripture that leads us to suppose that any but professed believers in Christ were baptized. It would have been very strange if such an incident had turned up anywhere, seeing that our Lord’s commission runs in this order—“*Go you, teach all nations, baptizing them. He that believes and is baptized shall be saved.*” And we read that Peter says, “Repent and be baptized everyone of you.” And again, he says, “Can any man forbid water that these should not be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit as well as we?” Does it not appear that he would have anticipated an objection and would have allowed an objection if there had been no evidence of conversion to God?

And Paul says, “As many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.” Is not this the work of an intelligent and believing man? Or to come to our text, Paul says that we are, “Buried with Him in Baptism, wherein also we are risen with Him through the faith of the operation of God, who has raised Him from the dead.” The meaning of this passage seems to be this—We are buried and risen with Christ through the *faith* of the operation of God, through *faith* in God’s operation, God’s work, energy and power, as manifested in the resurrection of Christ from the dead. That is to say those persons evidently were baptized, buried and raised with Christ through their faith in the fact that God’s energy or power had raised Jesus Christ from the dead. The fact of Christ’s resurrection is evidently attached to Baptism here.

And the Apostle Peter says, “Baptism does also now save us, (not the putting away the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.” That is to say, those persons who have been baptized are persons who have the answer of a good conscience towards God through Christ’s resurrection—through faith in Christ’s resurrection they now have the consciousness of the forgiveness of sins. And so faith in the resurrection of Christ, is represented as an essential and indeed the chief element of Christian Baptism.

These then, are some of our reasons for holding these views. If you ask why we immerse, we say, “Because this is the undisputed—or all but undisputed—sole meaning of the Word and because apart from immersion, there is no sign of burial and resurrection with Christ.” And if you ask, “Why do you baptize only those that believe?” We say, “Because we can

discover no trace in God’s Word of the baptism of any other and we think, that as Baptism is a profession of a man’s faith in Christ, this profession ought never to be made excepting by such as really are the subjects of the faith that is thus professed.”

And now, if anything can be advanced to show that any other but immersion is really the meaning of the word and if any case can be had from the Scriptures, either directly or by implication, showing that any but believer’s were baptized, we give this matter up. We have no interest to subserve but the cause of Truth. Of course many objections are urged against these views of ours. To some of these objections, for we shall not have time to notice them all, I shall now briefly direct attention.

I have heard it said by some and I dare say you have heard it too, that the administration of this ordinance by immersion is scarcely consistent with decency. With decency! There are some people in the world, who I suppose would advocate the omission of the first chapter from the Epistle to the Romans. There are some people who must think it would be a very proper thing to blot the Seventh Commandment from the Decalogue, for it is scarcely decent. And they ought to go in for an expurgated edition of the Sermon on the Mount and that I hope would satisfy them.

My dear Friends, Christ ordained and his Apostles practiced this ordinance of immersion—most certainly they did. There is no dispute about that. There is dispute whether the ordinance is obligatory in this form at the present day, but really there is no dispute that this was commanded and that this was done. Do you think that our Lord Jesus Christ would ever have sanctioned anything that bordered in the slightest degree on indecency? I have only one word to say to such objectors and it is this, “To the pure all things are pure, but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure, but even their mind and conscience is defiled.”

But it is a strong point, or supposed to be a strong point, that on the day of Pentecost three thousand people were baptized and how could they all be immersed. Well, why not? The only objections I can imagine are these—a lack of water and a lack of time. But to suppose that there was a deficient water supply—to suppose this from all that we know and especially from all that we do not know about ancient Jerusalem, appears to me to be a great absurdity. And as to the want of time—if the Apostles alone had baptized these three thousand, there certainly would be something rather formidable in the objection.

But it would seem that the Apostles were not in the habit of baptizing many and that they often gave this work to others—and on that occasion there might have been a hundred administrators of Baptism, those who were first baptized might baptize others and in this way the administration to the whole three thousand might very easily be accomplished before the sun went down upon the day of Pentecost. “Ah, but,” say some, “there is a passage in the first Epistle to the Corinthians that you cannot get over. It is said that the Israelites ‘were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea.’ How can that be a case of immersion?”

Well, I might ask you, how could it be a case of anything else? Undoubtedly it was a case of immersion. When you think of the cloud, you must not think of a small pillar of cloud suspended high above the people and always going before them. It is written in one of the Psalms, “He spread His cloud for a covering.” And they passed under the cloud, the channel of the Red Sea, with the waters piled up on either hand—this constituted the huge baptistery for the people and the cloud was the element in which they were baptized. As plainly as possible it was a case of immersion in the cloud.

But again, there are many who say, “Well, after all what does it really matter—if a man has been baptized by the Spirit of God and is really regenerated and born again and has his sins washed away by the blood of Christ—the outward and visible sign is a thing of very little importance.” Well, if it is such a matter of indifference whether you adopt this or that mode, I should say it would be as well to follow the Society of Friends and adopt neither one nor the other. But you do believe there is some external rite—well, then—surely the external rite should be that which does set forth figuratively the very Truth intended by the ordinance. In the language of symbols, forms are everything—forms give those symbols all their meaning and therefore it is not altogether an unimportant matter that Baptism, signifying burial and resurrection with Christ, should indicate this even in its very form and mode.

But there are also objections to our baptizing none but believers. Infants, it is said, should be baptized, not that there is any positive and direct proof of this in God’s Word, still it may be inferred. For instance. “They brought infants to Jesus.” What did they bring them for? That He might put his hand upon them and pray for them. Yet it is inferred by many that our Savior was in the habit of baptizing infants because they brought infants to Him that He might touch them and bless them! The opposite inference is the one I should be prepared to draw, for if our Savior were in the habit of baptizing infants the disciples certainly would not have rebuked those that brought the infants to Jesus, because such an act would have been quite a matter of course.

On this incident, Jeremy Taylor remarks, “To infer from such a passage as this that infants should be baptized only proves that there is a great want of better arguments.” But again—it is said Baptism came in the place of circumcision and since infants were circumcised, infants ought to be baptized. Now it appears to me to be altogether a matter of assumption that Baptism came in the place of circumcision. There is nothing in God’s Word that states this. And let me particularly call attention to this fact. It is well known to every reader of the Acts and the Epistles that a great controversy arose in the early church with reference to this matter of circumcision—certain men went down to Antioch and said to the Christians there, “Unless you are circumcised you cannot be saved.”

The church at Jerusalem met to consider this matter and they sent their decision. Now, if Baptism is come in the place of circumcision, of course the way in which common sense would settle the question would be this, “No, you need not be circumcised, because you have been baptized and Baptism has come in the place of circumcision.” But in the decision which the church at Jerusalem sent to the church at Antioch there is not the slightest allusion to any such substitution. Then again, Paul was perpetually arguing against those who were insisting upon the importance of circumcision—if Baptism is substituted for that institution, Paul’s short and easy method of silencing every objector would have been this, “No, these people have been baptized and that is the Christian circumcision.”

But what does Paul say?—we read what he says in the verse which precedes our text. He says, “In whom”—that is, in Christ—“In whom also you are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ.” Now observe, “In whom you are circumcised with a circumcision made without hands in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ.” The circumcision of Christ is the Christian circumcision, is that which has come in the place of the old circumcision and this Christian circumcision is a circumcision, “made without hands.”

Will any man in his senses say that this is Baptism? Christian circumcision is something that is accomplished without human agency. Baptism is not an ordinance made or administered without hands. Moreover, he says, with reference to this matter, that we are circumcised “in the putting off the body of the sins of the flesh,” which is certainly the work of an intelligent, conscientious, believing and God-fearing man. In one word, if you want to know what the Christian equivalent for circumcision under the new dispensation is, it is conversion to God. It is this and it is nothing else.

If Baptism has come in the place of circumcision, on what principle then did Paul circumcise Timothy? If this idea of the substitution of Baptism for circumcision is correct, then ought not Paul to have said, “In Christ Jesus circumcision avails nothing, neither uncircumcision, but Baptism?” Ought he not to have said, “We are the circumcised—we who have been baptized”? But what he does say is this, “In Christ Jesus neither circumcision avails anything nor uncircumcision, but the keeping of the Commandments of God,” and, “We are the congregation who worship God in one Spirit and who rejoice in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh.”

Evidently, then, those who have received the Christian circumcision are those who keep the Commandments of God, who worship God in the Spirit and rejoice in Christ Jesus—and these conditions are certainly applicable to none excepting those who are *believers* in the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore I would say there seems to be no fairness in arguing from the one institution to the other. Only consider this fact, that in a controversy which this supposed idea of Baptism having come in the place of circumcision would have settled in a moment, there is no allusion to such mode of settling the question and I think that we are led to infer, with the most absolute certainty, that it is altogether a baseless assumption that circumcision is represented by Baptism.

No, in the Christian dispensation, if there is any equivalent, any succession to the circumcision of the old covenant, it is conversion to God—it is the circumcision of the *heart*, it is the putting off of the body of the sins of the flesh. *That* is the Christian circumcision. But it will be said by some, “You make a great deal too much of this ordinance of Baptism.” Well, I am free to confess that there may be here and there a good Brother who makes rather too much of this ordinance. Yet this I certainly can say, from a somewhat extensive knowledge of our denomination, that in almost every case you will find that the ordinance of Baptism is held by us in a most thorough and lowly subordination to the Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the work of atonement by His sacrifice and death, to the influence and the indwelling of the Divine Spirit, to the necessity of repentance and of faith, to the importance of a life of personal holiness and to every other great principle of the holy faith which we profess.

I do not think that we are fairly charged with making too much of this ordinance. When we say of this ordinance that it regenerates the soul— when we say that herein persons are made “members of Christ, children of God and heirs of the kingdom of Heaven”—when we rush with all haste to baptize the sick and the dying and when we refuse to accord to those who die unbaptized, the rites, the decencies, the charities of Christian burial—*then* tell us, for indeed we shall deserve to be told—that we do most monstrously exaggerate the importance of this ordinance!

But you shall go through the length and breadth of this realm and you shall visit all the Baptist churches in the States of America and on the continent of Europe and nowhere will you find such sentiments or such practices prevailing among the Baptist people. I trust we make no more of this ordinance and no less than is made of it in God’s Word. We do not baptize our own infant children and this, I think, is evidence enough that we do not very grossly exaggerate the importance of this institution.

Still you say, “You do not regard it as essential to salvation and therefore why do you make this the ground of separation from your Brethren?” My dear Friend, are you a Congregationalist? You do not believe that your Congregational polity is essential to salvation—why then do you not join the Episcopal communion? Are you a Methodist? You do not think the Conference is to save your soul—why do you not return to the bosom of the Established Church? Are you a Free Church of Scotland man? You will admit that people can be saved in the old Church yet. Then why did you make such a fuss about that Disruption business? I do not blame you for the Disruption, not by any means—perhaps you did what was perfectly right.

A thing may not be essential and yet it may be very far from unimportant. We cannot but regard infant Baptism as the main root of the superstitious and destructive dogma of baptismal regeneration, to which as Protestants we are opposed. We cannot but regard infant baptism as the chief cornerstone of State Church, to which as Dissenters we are opposed. We cannot but regard infant Baptism as unscriptural and to everything that is unscriptural we, as disciples of Jesus Christ, must be opposed. And we do trust that all who differ from us and however widely they may differ, will still admit that we are only doing what is right in maintaining what we believe to be the Truth of God with reference to this matter.

Up to now it has been in disgrace and scorn and ridicule and oftentimes in persecution that these principles have been held. Up to now we have been a sect everywhere spoken against. Probably the first martyr burnt in England for religion and certainly the last, was a Baptist. And others had trials of cruel mocking and scourging, yes and of bonds and

imprisonments—and became destitute, afflicted and tormented. We cannot glory in our numbers, we cannot glory in our power, we cannot glory in our wealth. But we can glory in the faith and constancy by which those who went before us were enabled by Divine grace to sustain the infliction of the most grievous wrongs—wrongs which were all the more keenly felt because they were received at the hands of fellow-Christians, fellowProtestants and even fellow-Puritans.

Up to now we have been few in number and have been oftentimes violently and bitterly opposed—nor do I think that there is now any very brilliant prospect of our rising to denominational greatness and basking in the sunshine of popular applause. And indeed, when I see what the effect of such greatness and applause has been upon some Christian churches, I am disposed to say, “God defend us from power and popularity, for these are more dangerous foes than all the contumely and persecution and straitened circumstances with which we have had to struggle in the times gone by.”

I do hope and verily believe that we have a far purer object in view than mere denominational aggrandizement and that we shall be content, as heretofore we have been content, come evil report or good, to have the testimony of a clear conscience that according to the best of our knowledge and to the utmost of our power we have faithfully tried to maintain God’s Truth against the commandments and traditions of men.

Adapted from*The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #2101 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

**÷Col 2.13**

LIFE AND PARDON  
NO. 2101

**DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, AUGUST 25, 1889, *BY C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, has He quickened together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses.”*** Col 2:13***.***

THE teaching of this verse is much the same as that in preceding verses—but the Apostle does not hesitate to dwell again and again upon the important matters of quickening and forgiveness. These lie in the foundation. Ministers of Christ cannot too often go over the essential points—their hearers cannot too often hear vital Truths of God. Our frail memories and dull understandings require line upon line, precept upon precept, in reference to fundamental Truths—our apprehension of them is far too feeble, and can never be too vivid.

To find instances of the work of God in quickening souls and in pardoning sins, Paul does not look far afield. In the text he says, “And you,” and, according to the Revised Version, he repeats the word further on, and the passage runs thus, “You, being dead through your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, you, I say, did He quicken together with Him.” He points personally to the saints at Colossi. We are not about to consider a prophecy to be fulfilled in the millennium, neither are we speaking of matters which concern the unknown dwellers in the moon.

No. The theme belongs to you. To you, I say, if indeed you are the people of God. You are specimens of the Divine Work—you has He quickened, you has He pardoned. It is profitable for us to be engaged upon matters which concern us. I shall speak to you of those things which I have tasted and handled of the good Word of Life, and it is my firm belief that, to the most of you, these matters are familiar in your mouths as household words. If not, I grieve over you. Let none of us be content unless the works of the Holy Spirit are manifest in us. What good is it to me if another man receive life and pardon, if I am cast to death and lie under condemnation?

Press forward, my Beloved, to a personal enjoyment of these chief blessings of the Covenant of Grace—life in Jesus, forgiveness through His blood. Let every part of the sermon have a finger pointed at yourselves. Hear it speak to you, even to you.

In the text we have the conjunction of two things—quickening and forgiveness. We will consider these things in connection with each other. Their order it may be difficult to lay down—in the text they are described as if they were the same thing. Which comes first, the impartation of the new life, or the blotting out of sin? Is not pardon first? Does God pardon a dead man? How can He give life, which is the proof of pardon, to the man who is not forgiven? On the other hand, if a man has not spiritual life sufficient to make him feel his guilt, how can he cry for pardon? And if it is

unsought, how shall it be received?

A man may be spiritually alive so as to be groaning under the pollution and the burden of sin, and yet he may not have received, by faith, the remission of sins. In the order of our experience, the reception of life comes *before* the enjoyment of pardon. We are made to live spiritually and so we are made to repent, to confess, to believe, and to receive forgiveness. First, the life which sighs under sin, and then the life which sings concerning pardon. Misery is first felt—and then mercy is received.

Following the line of experience, we shall notice, concerning the favored ones of God, first, what they were—“You, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh.” Secondly, we shall note what has been done in them—“Has He quickened together with Him.” And then, thirdly, what He has done for them—“Having forgiven you all trespasses.” May the Holy Spirit lead us into these Truths of God and give us the life of God, and the rest of faith!

**I.**First, then, consider WHAT THEY WERE. Beloved, they were all by nature children of wrath, even as others. There is no distinction in the condition of natural men before the Law. We all fell in Adam. We are all gone out of the way and have all become unprofitable. Any difference which now exists has been made by Divine Grace. But by nature we are *all* in the same condemnation and all tainted by the same depravity.

Where were we when the Lord first looked on us? Answer—We were dead according to the sentence of the Law. The Lord had said, “In the day that you eat thereof you shall surely die.” And Adam did die the moment that he ate of the forbidden fruit—and his posterity died in him. What is natural death? It is the separation of the body from the soul, which is its life. What is spiritual death? It is the separation of the soul from God, *who* is its life. It had been the very life of Adam to be united to God. And when he lost his union of heart with God, his spirit underwent a dreadful death.

This death is upon each one of us by nature. Above this comes in the dreadful fact, that, “He that believes not is condemned already.” The position of every Unbeliever is that of one who is dead by Law. As far as the liberties and privileges and enjoyments of heavenly things are concerned, he is written among the dead. His name is registered among the condemned. Yet, Beloved, while we are under the sentence of death, the Lord comes to us in almighty Grace and quickens us into newness of life, forgiving us all trespasses!

Are you trembling because of your condemned condition under the Law? Do you recognize the tremendous Truth of God that death is the sure and righteous result of sin? Then to you, even to you, the life-giving, pardoning Word is sent in the preaching of the everlasting Gospel. Oh that you may believe and so escape from condemnation!

These favored people were dead through the action of their sin. Sin stupefies and kills. Where it reigns, the man is utterly insensible to spiritual truth, feeling, and action. He is dead to everything that is holy in the sight of God. He may have keen *moral* perceptions, but he has no *spiritual* feelings. Men differ widely as to their moral qualities. All men are not alike bad, especially when measured in reference to their fellow men. Some may even be excellent and praiseworthy, viewed from that standpoint. But to *spiritual* things all men are alike dead.

Look at the multitude of our hearers—to what purpose do we preach to them? You may declare the wrath of God against the godless but what do they care? You may speak of Jesus’ love to the lost—how little it affects them! Sin is not horrible, and salvation is not precious to them. They may not controvert your teaching. But they have no sensible apprehension of the Truth of God—it does not come home to them as a matter of any consequence. Let eternal things drift as they may, they are perfectly content so long as they can answer those three questions—“What shall we eat? What shall we drink? And how shall we be clothed?”

No higher question troubles their earth-bound minds. They may entertain some liking towards theological study and Bible teaching, as a matter of education. But they do not view the Truths of God revealed in Scripture as matters of overwhelming importance. They trifle. They delay. They set on one side the things which make for their peace. Their religion has no influence upon their thoughts and actions—they are dead. Sin has slain them. I see them mingled with this great congregation like corpses sitting upright among the living. I look out upon the masses of this vast city and upon the innumerable hosts of populous countries and I see a measureless cemetery, a dread domain of death. A region without life.

One point must be noticed here, which makes this spiritual death the more terrible—they are dead but yet *responsible*. If men were literally dead, then they were incapable of sin. But the kind of death of which we speak involves a responsibility none the less, but all the greater. If I say of a man that he is such a liar that he cannot speak the truth, do you therefore think him blameless? No. But you judge him to be all the more worthy of condemnation because he has lost the very sense which discerns between a truth and a lie.

If we say of a certain man, as we have had to do, “He is a rogue ingrained. He is so tricky that he cannot deal honestly but must always be cheating”—do you, therefore, excuse his fraud and pity him? Far from it. His inability is not physical, but *moral* inability, and is the consequence of his own persistence in evil. The Law is as much binding upon the morally incapable as upon the most sanctified in nature. If, through a man’s own perversity, he wills to reject good and love evil, the blame is with himself. He is said to be dead in sin—not in the sense that he is irresponsible—but in the sense that he is so evil that he will not keep the Law of God.

If a man were brought tomorrow before the Lord Mayor and he were accused of theft, suppose he should say, “My Lord, I ought to be set free, for I am such a rascal that I cannot see an article in a shop but what my fingers itch to lay hold upon it!” Would not the judge give such a worthless person all the more punishment? O Sinners, dead in sin, you are not so dead as thereby to be free from the guilt of breaking God’s Commandments and rejecting Christ. Rather you heap upon yourselves mountains of guilt every day that you abide in this condition.

The ungodly are so dead as to be careless as to their state. Indeed, all gracious things are despised of them. Sometimes they attend religious services. But they get angry if the preacher presses them too hard. I have known them vow that they will never hear the man again because he is so personal. Pray, Sirs, what is a preacher to be, but personal? If he shoots, is he to have no target and take no aim? What is our very office and business but to deal personally with you about your sins?

In ungodly men there is an utter recklessness as to their condition before God. They know that they may die. They know that if they die they will be lost. But they try to forget these facts. The ostrich is said to bury its head in the sand so as not to see the hunter, and then to fancy that it is safe. Thus do men fancy that, by forgetting the danger, they escape it. Some of you have lived in carelessness until gray hairs are on your head. Will you still risk your souls? Alas, you look more anxiously after a battered sixpence, which you miss from your pocket, than after your immortal soul! If you miss a ring from your finger while sitting here, you are more concerned about *it* than about your eternal destiny.

How foolish! How dead are you to all just judgment and prudence! It is your *soul*, your own soul, your only soul, your never-dying soul, to which we beg you to pay attention—and yet you can hardly have patience with us. If a prisoner in the condemned cell had no sort of care whether he should be set free or hanged, but could even joke about the scaffold and the executioner, you would feel that only by an extreme act of mercy could such a person be pardoned. No, if he cares nothing for the penalty, let him bear it—so man would say—and there would be justice in it. Yet God spoke not so in reference to some of us. For while we were in a condition of callousness the Grace of God came to us and by quickening us, gave us to be anxious and led us to pray.

The text adds that we were dead in the uncircumcision of our flesh. I need not dwell upon the external figure here employed. Its meaning is clear enough. The uncircumcision of our flesh means that we were not in covenant with God—it shows, also, the abiding of our filthiness upon us— the willingness of our souls to be aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, without God in the world. This is where we were in the uncircumcision of our flesh. And yet the Grace of God found us out. Oh, I could paint the man! He is anxious about this world, but what does he care for the world to come? He is a master of his own trade and he prospers in it.

But for his God and His service, he spares not an hour’s consideration. He cries, “The Covenant of Grace, what is that?” And he turns on his heel, like Pilate, when he had said, “What is truth?” As to having any sense of the constant Presence of God, and his deep indebtedness to God, and of the sweetness of being pardoned, and the bliss of enjoying the love of God, and walking with God—he has no notion, or, at best, he cries, “Oh, yes, that is all very fine for those who have nothing else to do. Let them find delight in it if they can!”

To him God is nothing. Heaven is nothing. Hell less than nothing. He passes by Calvary, itself, where God in human flesh is bleeding out redemption and it is nothing to him. The wail from the Cross he never hears, though it asks him this question—“Is it nothing to you, all you that pass by? Behold and see if there is any sorrow like unto My sorrow!” What cares he for the wounds of his soul’s best Lover? He has no concern about any purchase made by the Redeemer, or of any death especially on his behalf, or any resurrection with Christ which he may hope to enjoy. The man is dead to faith and glory and immortality. The low and the groveling charm him, but the pure and the noble find him dead to their claims.

Yet to such, even to such, does Sovereign Grace approach. Unbought, unsought—it comes according to that word of Scripture, “I am found of them that sought Me not.”

Again, spiritually, the ungodly are dead and utterly incapable of obtaining life for themselves. Could any of you, with the utmost diligence, create life, even the lowest form of it? To a man who is dead, could you impart life? You might galvanize his limbs into a kind of motion. But real *life*, the pulsing of the heart, the heaving of the lungs—could you create it? You know you cannot! Much less can the dead man himself create life within himself. The man without Christ is utterly unable to quicken himself. We are “without strength,” unable to do anything as of ourselves and while we are in this condition, Divine Grace comes to us.

Alas, there remains one more point! Man may be described as dead and becoming corrupt. After a while the dead body shows symptoms of decay—this is vice in its beginning. Leave the corpse where it is, and it will become putrid, polluting the air and disgusting every sense of the living. “Bury my dead out of my sight,” is the cry of the most affectionate mother or wife. And so it is with many ungodly men. Some of them are restrained from the grosser vices, just as Egyptian bodies were, by spices, preserved from rottenness. By example, by instruction, by fear, by surroundings— many are kept from the more putrid sins, and therefore are not so obnoxious to *society*.

Towards God they are dead as ever. But towards man they are no more objectionable than the mummies in yonder cases in the British Museum. But this embalming of the dead with spices of morality has not been carried out with hosts of those around us. They rot above ground—their blasphemies pollute the air, their lewdness infects our streets, their revelry makes nights hideous. The tendency of dead flesh is towards the corruption which shows itself in loathsome actions. The mercy is, that where even *this* has taken place, where the foul worm of vice has begun its awful work in drunkenness, in blasphemy, in dishonesty, or in uncleanness of life—even *there* the quickening Spirit can come!

As life came to Lazarus, who had been dead four days, so can spiritual life come to those who have fallen into the noisomeness of open transgression. Leaving this painful matter, let us be filled with deep humility. For such were we in days not long since—but let us also be filled with hope for others. For He who quickened us can do the same for them.

**II.**And now, secondly, WHAT HAS BEEN DONE IN US? What has God worked?

We have been quickened. To tell you, exactly, how quickening is worked in us, is quite beyond my power. The Holy Spirit comes to a man when he is dead in sin and He breathes into him a new and mysterious life. We do not know how we receive our natural life—how the soul comes into the body we know not. Do you suppose that spiritual life in its beginning will be less mysterious? Did not our Lord say, “The wind blows where it wishes and you hear the sound thereof but can not tell from where it comes and where it goes: so is everyone that is born of the Spirit”? You know not the way of the Spirit, nor how He breathes eternal life.

We know, however, that as soon as life comes, our first feeling is one of pain and uneasiness. In the case of persons who have been nearly drowned, when they begin to revive they experience very unpleasant sensations. Certainly the parallel holds good in spiritual things. *Now*, the man sees sin to be an exceedingly great evil. He is startled by the discovery of its foulness. He was told all about it and yet he knew nothing to purpose. But now sin becomes a load, a pain, a horror. As dead, he felt no weight. But as quickened, he groans beneath a load. Now he begins to cry, “O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me?”

Now the angels see him on his knees in private. Behold, he prays! “God be merciful to me, a sinner,” is his hourly sigh. Now, also, he begins to struggle against his evil habits—he addicts himself to Bible reading, to praying, and to hearing the Word of God. He is for awhile desperately earnest. Alas, he goes back to his old sins! Yet he cannot rest—again he seeks the Lord. With some men a large part of their early spiritual life has been taken up with agonizing strivings and painful endeavors to free themselves from the chains of sin. They have had to learn their weaknesses by their failures. But the Grace of God has not failed. Some, even for years after their conviction by the Spirit of God, have had no comfortable sense of pardon but very much conflict with sin—still, the life of God has never been utterly quenched within them.

Their struggles have proved that the heavenly germ was alive and was painfully resisting the forces of evil. Men themselves act as if they tried to put out the light which Divine Grace has kindled. But they cannot effect their purpose. When once they have been disturbed in their nest, the Lord has not allowed them to settle down in it again. Their once sweet sin has become bitter as wormwood to them. We have known men under conviction go further into sin to drown their convictions—just as a whale, when harpooned, will dive into the depths. But they come up again and again are wounded—they cannot escape.

In the biography of a man of God, who in his early days was a terrible drunkard, we find that, in struggling against intoxication, he was frequently beaten. And there appears in his diary a long blank of which he says, “Four years and a half elapsed and no account rendered! What can have been the cause of this chasm? Sin! Yes, sin of the blackest dye, of the deepest ingratitude to the Father of mercies!” The wanderer was restless and unhappy in sin. The life within was, like Jonah, thrown into the depths of the sea. But it hated its condition and struggled to rise out of it. God will not leave the life He has given, even under the worst conditions. But quickening leads to far more than this. By-and-by the new life exercises its holy senses and is more clearly seen to be life. The man begins to see that his only hope is in Christ and he tries humbly to hide himself beneath the merit of the Lord Jesus. He does not dare to say, “I am saved,” but he deeply feels that if ever he is saved, it must be through the blood and righteousness of the Lord Jesus. Now, also, he begins to pray, pleading the precious blood. Now he hopes and his hope looks only through the windows of his Lord’s wounds. He looks for mercy only through the atoning sacrifice.

By-and-by he comes to trust that this mercy has really come to him and that Jesus had him on His heart when He suffered on the tree. By a desperate effort he throws himself on Christ and determines to lie at His feet and, if he must perish, to perish looking unto Jesus. This is a glorious resolve. See him after a while, as he rises up into peace and joy and consecration! His life now being joined to that of his Lord, he rejoices that he is never to be separated from Him. I think I hear him say, “I see it all now. The Lord Jesus bore my sin and carried it away. I died because He died. I live because He lives. The Lord accepts me, because He accepts His Son and thus I am ‘accepted in the Beloved.’ ”

From now on the quickened man tries to live for Christ, out of gratitude. This is the nature of the life he has received. He strives to grow up into Christ, and to become like his Lord in all things. From now on he and his Lord are linked together in an everlasting union and the cause of Jesus is the one thing for which he lives and for which he would be content to die. Blessed be God, I am not talking any new things to you—you know what I mean! For these forty years have I felt these things and many of you have felt them longer, still. At first the struggling light within you revealed to you nothing but your darkness—but now you see Jesus and see yourselves alive in Him with a life eternal and heavenly. Blessed be the Lord who has raised Jesus from the dead and has quickened us in Him and with Him!

**III.**Now we come to the third point, upon which I pray for a renewed unction from the Holy One. Let us consider, in the last place, WHAT HAS BEEN DONE FOR US—“Having forgiven you all trespasses.”

Believing in Christ Jesus, I am absolved. I am clear, I am clear before the Lord. “There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.” This is the most joyful theme that I can bring before you. And I want you to notice, first, that pardon is a Divine act. “Having forgiven all trespasses.” Who does that? Why, He that quickened you! is exclusively the Lord’s own—and the same God who gives us spiritual life also grants us pardon from His Throne.

He sovereignly dispenses pardons. We need not go to any human priest to seek absolution, for we may go at once to God, who alone has sovereign right to execute the death sentence or to pardon the offender. He alone can grant it with sure effect. If any man should say, “absolvo te,” (I absolve you), I would take it for what it was worth and its worth would not be much. But if HE says it, who is the Law-giver and the supreme King. If HE says it, against whom I have offended, then am I happy, indeed. Glory be to His name, who is a God ready to pardon! What bliss I have received

in receiving forgiveness from God!

Oh, my Hearer, if you have done wrong to your fellow man, ask his forgiveness, as you are bound to do. And if you get it, be thankful and feel as if a weight were removed from your conscience. But, after all, what is this, compared with being forgiven *all* trespasses by God, Himself? This can calm the ruffled sea of the soul—yes, still its fiercest tempest. This can make you sleep at nights, instead of tossing to and fro upon a pillow, which conscience turns to stone beneath your aching head. This gives the gleaming eye, the beaming face, the bounding heart. This brings Heaven down to earth and lifts us near to Heaven. The Lord has blotted out our sins, and thus He has removed the most bitter fountain of our sorrows. Pardon from God is a charter of liberty, a testament of felicity. God’s pardon is a gift most free.

Look at the text and note that this pardon comes to persons who are dead in sin. They were utterly unworthy, and did not even seek mercy. The Lord who comes to men when they are dead in sin, comes to quicken them and to pardon them. Not because they are ready but because HE is ready. Hearken, O Man! If in your bosom there is at this moment a great stone instead of a heart of flesh—if you are paralyzed as to all good things. If there is only enough life in you to make you feel your terrible incapacity for holiness and fellowship with God, yet God can pardon you—even as you are and where you are. We were in that condition, my Brethren, when the Lord came to us in love. “When we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.”

We saw that Jesus died, we believed in Him as able to save, by His Grace, and we received the forgiveness of sins. Forgiveness is free. The Lord looks for no good thing in the sinner. But He *gives* him every good thing. O my Hearer, if the Lord looked for good in you, He could not find it. He looks for nothing you can *do*, or nothing you can *feel*, or nothing you can *resolve to do or feel*. But He shows mercy because He delights in mercy. He passes by iniquity, transgression and sin, because it is His nature to be gracious. The cause of Divine pardon is in God, Himself, and in His dear Son. It is not in you, O Sinner!

Being dead in the uncircumcision of your flesh, what can you do? He quickens you and He pardons you. Yes, He is All in All to you. Wonders of Divine Grace! When I get upon this subject I do not need to give you illustrations, nor to use choice phrases. The glorious fact stands forth in its own native beauty—infinite pardon from an infinite God—given because of His own mercifulness and the merit of His beloved Son—and not because of anything whatsoever in the man whom He pardons. “But the man repents,” says one. Yes, I know. But God *gives* him repentance. “But he confesses sin.” Yes, I know it. For the Lord leads him to acknowledge his trespasses. All and everything which looks like a condition of pardon, is also *given* by the Free and Sovereign Grace of God—and given freely— without money and without price.

I want you to notice how universal is this pardon in reference to all sin—“Having forgiven you all trespasses.” Consult your memory and think of all your trespasses, if you dare. That one black night! Has it left a crimson spot, indelible, never to be concealed? In many instances one special sin breeds more distress than a thousand others. That crime has left a deeper scar than any other. In vain you cry, “Out, hideous spot!” Should you wash that hand, it would stain ten thousand Atlantics, and it would remain a scarlet spot, never to be erased forever. No process known to men can wash out the stain.

But God’s infinite mercy can put away that hideous, unmentionable crime, and it shall be as though it had never been. Possibly, however, you do not so much remember any one transgression as the whole heap of them. Certainly, a multiplicity of minor sins heaped together, tower upward like a great Alp, although no*one* offense may seem so notable as to demand mention. We have sinned every day and every hour and almost every moment of every hour—how numberless our transgressions! Our sins of omission are beyond all computation. But all these, too many for you to remember, too many for me to number, are forgiven to the man in Christ—“Having forgiven you *all* trespasses”—ALL, not one excepted. You have sins not yet known nor confessed—but they are forgiven. For the blood cleans from all sin.

I should like to help your memory by reminding you of your sins before conversion. Blessed is he whose sin is covered. One does not wish to uncover it. “Lord, remember not the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions.” The child of God, who has long been rejoicing in faith, has need still to pray that. For our sins may vex our bones long after they have been removed from our consciences—the consequences of a sin may fret us after the sin, itself, is forgiven.

Then think of your sins *after* conviction. You were struck down on a certain day with a great sense of sin and you hurried home and cried upon your knees, “O God, forgive me!” Then you vowed you would never do the like again. But you did. The dog returned to his vomit. You began to attend a place of worship. You were very diligent in religious duties. But all of a sudden you went back to your old companions and your old ways. If your sin was drink, you thought you had mastered it and could be very moderate. But a fierce thirst came upon you, which you could not resist— and you were soon as drunken as ever. Remember this with shame.

Or it may have been a more deliberate backsliding. And deliberation greatly adds to the sin of sins. Without being particularly tempted, you began to hanker after your old pleasures and almost to despise yourself for having denied yourself their indulgence. I know a man who was present at a Prayer Meeting and was so worked upon that he prayed. But afterwards he said that he would never go into such a place again, for fear he should again be overcome. Think of being afraid to be led aright— ashamed to go to Heaven!

Ah, Friends, we have been bullocks unaccustomed to the yoke, dogs that have slipped their collars, horses that have kicked over the traces. Sins after conviction, as doing despite to Divine Love, are very grievous trespasses. Like the moth, you had your wings singed in the candle and yet you flew back to the flame—if you had perished in it, who could have pitied you? Yet, after such folly, the Lord had mercy on you—“Having forgiven you ALL trespasses.”

A still worse set of sins must be remembered—sins after conversion— sins after you have found peace with God, after you have enjoyed high fellowship with Jesus. O Brothers and Sisters, these are cruel wounds for our Lord! These are evils which should melt us to tears, even to hear of them. What? Pardoned, and then sin again! Beloved of the Lord, and still rebelling! You sang so sweetly—

***“Your will be done; Your will be done”***  
and then went home and murmured! You talked to others about evil temper, and yet grew angry. You are old and experienced, and yet no boy could have been more imprudent! O God, we bless You for the morning and evening lamb. For Your people need the sacrifice perpetually! We need a morning sacrifice, lest the night has gathered anything of evil. And we require an evening sacrifice for the sins of the day.

Dwell for awhile upon the large blessing of the text. Whatever your sins may have been, if you are a Believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, God has quickened you together with Him and has forgiven you all trespasses. He pardons most effectually. Ask God about your sins and He says, “Their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more!” If God Himself does not remember them, they are most effectually removed. Ask Holy Scripture where they are and Hezekiah tells you, “You have cast all my sins behind Your back.” Where is that? God sees everything, and everywhere, and therefore everywhere is before His face. If, therefore, He casts our sins behind His back, He throws our sins into “the nowhere”—they cease to exist.

“In those days, says the Lord, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for and there shall be none. And the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found.” Surely this is enough to set all the bells of your heart ringing! Remember, also, dear Friends, that this pardon is most perfect. He does not commute the punishment but He pardons the crime. He does not pardon, and then confine for life, nor pardon today and punish tomorrow—this were not worthy of a God. The pardon is given and never revoked—the deed of Divine Grace is done and it can never be undone. God will not remember the sin which He has blotted out, nor condemn the offender whom He has absolved.

O Believer, the Lord so fully absolves you, that all your sins, which might have shut you out of Heaven, shall not hinder your way there! All that sin of yours, which might have filled you with despair, shall not even fill you with dismay. The Lord shall wipe the tears from your eyes, as He has washed the sins from your person. Even the very stain of sin shall be removed. Remember what He says of scarlet and crimson sins. Does He say, “I will wash them so that nothing shall remain beyond a pale red”? Does He say, “I will wash them till nothing shall remain but a slight rosy tint”? No! He says, “They shall be as wool: I will make them white as snow.” The Almighty Lord will do His work of remission in an absolutely perfect style, and not a shadow of a spot shall remain.

Here is a point that I must dwell upon for a moment, namely, that this pardon shall be seen to be perfectly consistent with Justice. If I were pardoned and felt that God had weakened the foundations of His moral government by winking at evil, I should feel insecure in my pardoned state— and should have no rest. If the Justice of God were in the least infringed by my forgiveness, I should feel like a felon towards the universe and a robber of God. But I bless God that He pardons sin in strict connection with Justice.

Behold the costly system by which this was effected. He Himself came here in the Person of His dear Son. He Himself became man, and dwelt among us. He Himself took the load of His people’s sin. He bore the sin of many and was made a curse for us. He put away both sin and the curse by His wondrous sacrifice. The marvel of Heaven and earth, of time and eternity, is the atoning death of Jesus Christ. This is the mystery that brings more glory to God than all creation and all Providence. How could it be that He should be slain for sinners, the Just for the unjust, to bring us to God?

To finish transgression and make an end of sin was a labor worthy of His Godhead—and Christ has perfectly achieved it by His sufferings and death. You had no fiction before you when, just now, you sang concerning Him—

***“Jesus was punished in my place,  
Without the gate my Surety bled  
To expiate my stain—  
On earth the Godhead deigned to dwell,  
And made of infinite avail  
The sufferings of the man.”***

Now are we justly forgiven. And the Throne of God is established. By His death as our Substitute, our Lord Jesus has set forth the righteous severity of God as well as His boundless mercy.

To us Justice and Mercy seemed opposed, but in Jesus we see them blended. We bless the Lord for His atoning sacrifice. We feel an infinite satisfaction in the fact that none can dispute the validity of a pardon which comes to us signed by the hand of the eternal King—and countersigned by the pierced hand of Him who bore our sins in His own body on the tree—and gave for those sins a complete vindication of the Law which we had broken.

Note well the last consideration upon this point of the forgiveness of all trespasses. It ought to make you feel unutterably happy. From now on your pardon is bound up with the glory of Christ. If your pardon does not save you, then Christ is no Savior. If, resting in Him, your sins are not forgiven, then He undertook a fruitless errand when He came to save His people from their sins. Every drop of Christ’s blood demands the eternal salvation of every soul that is washed in it. The Godhead and Manhood of Christ and all the glory of His Mediatorship, stand up and claim for every Believer that he shall be delivered from sin. What? Did He bear sin and shall we bear it, too?

No—if the Lord has found in Him a ransom, His redeemed are free. Since to save me, who was once dead in sin, and in the uncircumcision of my flesh—and now has become the glory of Christ, I am sure I shall be saved, for He will not tarnish His own name. O Believer, to bring you home without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, has become the ambition of your Savior and He will not fail, or be discouraged. He will neither lose His lifework, nor His death throes. God forbid! And yet this must be, unless you, who are quickened together with Him, shall be found at the last without fault before the Throne of God.

Now, let us just think of this—we are forgiven. I do not mean all of you. For if you are out of Christ, you have no part in this grand absolution. May the Lord have mercy upon you, quicken you today and bring you to Christ! But as many as are trusting in Christ and so are living in union with Him, you are forgiven. A person who has been condemned by the Law and then has received a free pardon, walks out of the prison and goes where he pleases. There is a policeman. Does he fear him? No, he has a free pardon, and the policeman cannot touch him. But there are a great many persons who know him and know him to be guilty. That does not matter. He has a free pardon and nobody can touch him. He cannot be tried again, however guilty he may have been. The free pardon has wiped the past right out.

Now, today, Child of God, you begin anew—you are clean—for He has washed you and has done the work right well. We have washed our robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb, therefore shall we be before the Throne of God and praise Him. What could we do less than praise Him day and night? When shall we ever stop? When we are in His temple, free from all danger of future sin and trial, we will forever praise Him who has forgiven us all trespasses. I charge you, let us meet in Heaven, all of us.

Some have dropped in here this morning from all parts of the country and from America. And we may never meet again on earth. Let us meet around the Throne in Heaven and sing, “unto Him that loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood.” God grant that we may. Who wants to be left out? Is there one person here who would like to be shut out in that day? I pray you, enter in at once—

***“Come guilty souls and flee away  
Like doves to Jesus’ wounds;  
This is the welcome Gospel-day,  
Wherein Free Grace abounds.”***

Adapted from*The C.H. Spurgeon Collection*, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #2605 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

DEATH AND ITS SENTENCE ABOLISHED  
NO. 2605

**A SERMON  
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S-DAY, JANUARY 15, 1899. *DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORD’S-DAY EVENING, OCTOBER 14, 1883.**

***“And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, has He quickened together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses; blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to His Cross.”***Col 2:13-14***.***

IT tends to excite gratitude in our hearts if we remember what the Lord has done for us. It is not wrong for us to think of all that we still need from God, but it would be exceedingly ungrateful if we were to forget what we have already received. By far the greater part of salvation is already ours and though, in some respects, we have not yet attained, neither are already perfect, yet in other respects we are complete in Christ Jesus. If we are truly believers in Christ, we are already saved—we are not merely in a salvable state, but we have really obtained salvation. In Christ we are delivered from the curse of the Law of God and we have an eternal inheritance already secured to us. I must not dwell on that blessed theme. I only mention it, in passing, to remind you that it encourages our gratitude if we remember what the Lord has done for us.

It also stimulates us to hope for more blessings in the future. It puts a keener edge upon our prayers and helps us to plead with greater confidence, for we feel that, inasmuch as God has already given us so much and done so much for us, He will perfect that which concerns us, and will not forget the work of His own hands. The remembrance of what the Lord has done for us is also quite sure to inflame our love. We cannot be cold-hearted if we continue to remember God’s goodness to us. We must be glad in the Lord and, with that gladness, there must come fervent love to Him who has worked all these things on our behalf and brought us into the blessed estate of those who are saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation!

This morning, [Sermon #1744, Volume 39—*Where the “If” Lies”——*read/download the entire sermon free of charge at http://www.spurgeongems.org] I talked to those who were seeking the Savior. They had their turn, then, so now I am going to speak to those who have found the Lord. Ah, dear Friends, how precious He is to you! I want you to see what He has done for you—what God the everlasting Father has done for you through Jesus Christ His Son—that you may come and sit at His feet in adoring love and feel your hearts burn within you as you meditate upon the riches of His amazing Grace. Our text speaks of two things which God has done for us through Christ Jesus. First, there is *the removal of the death within us*: “And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, has He quickened together with Christ, having forgiven you all trespasses.” The second thing is *the removal of the handwriting which was against us*. This we have in the 14th verse. “Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to His Cross.”

Before I come to the subject of my discourse, I want every child of God whom I am addressing to feel, “The preacher’s talk is to be about *me* and about what Christ has done for *me,*” for, remember, dear Friends, that the work of Christ is as distinctly on behalf of each Believer as if he were the only object of Divine Love in the whole universe! And while it is true that Christ’s work concerns all His people—and it is a very great comfort that it is so—yet it is also true that it concerns each one of His people and it is all the property of each one. I want you, just now, to eat your own morsel, to claim your own portion and to take home to your own heart what God has given to you by a Covenant of salt, and so given it to you that it can never be taken from you!

**I.**First, then, the Lord has done this for all of us who believe in Him— HE HAS REMOVED OUR INWARD SPIRITUAL DEATH.  
Turn to the text to see *what this death was.* “You being dead in your sins.” We were all, then—the regenerate as well as the rest of mankind— “dead in trespasses and sins.” What kind of death was this? Certainly it was not *physical* death. We lived, moved and had our being. We exercised our wills and did as we pleased in our enmity and opposition to God. The Lord does not treat men as if they were sticks and stones, nor does He ever regard them as such. They are alive, and when they sin, they sin most sadly of their own accord.  
Neither was our death a *mental* death, for the ungodly can think as well as others, and they have all the powers of reason unless, indeed, they have dulled and destroyed them by certain forms of sin which produce that result. Alas, there are some of the most acute minds in the world that are not reconciled to God. The men are alive enough as to their minds, yet they are truly said to be dead! I could almost wish, for some people, that it *was* a mental death rather than the kind of death they have, since now the quickness of their intellect only helps them to increase their guilt and to multiply the reasons for their condemnation.  
And yet again, as it is not a physical death, nor a mental death, so neither is it a *moral* death. Man is not so dead that he sins without guilt, or lives without responsibility. No man who remains out of Christ is without guilt on that account. He who continues an unbeliever may not say that he cannot help it—it is his fault and his sin that he does not believe. Indeed, our Lord told His disciples that the Comforter would convince the world of sin for this very reason—“Because,” He said, “they believe not on Me.” To Nicodemus, our Lord also said, “For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. He that believes on Him is not condemned: but he that believes not is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.” O dear Hearers, if I could believe that you were mere machines, or that you had drifted along the stream of time like some stray timber on a Canadian river. If I believed that you could not in any way help yourselves, but were the mere creatures of your circumstances, then I might be comfortable concerning you, for you would be exempt from criminality. But it is not so—you are men and women living before the living God and you are responsible to Him for your actions and your words—and even for the thoughts and imaginations of your heart! For every rejection of His Gospel you will have to give account at the Last Great Day. And if you remain out of Christ, that account will seal your doom forever.  
The kind of death here spoken of is *spiritual* death—death as to higher things than can be grasped by the hands, or seen with the eyes, or comprehended by the natural mind. Only the spiritual man knows what spiritual things are, for they have to be spiritually discerned. You would not think of teaching a horse the wonders of astronomy because there is no mind in the horse that could learn that science! Neither can we, of ourselves, teach spiritual things to our fellow men, because, until they are born again, born from above, they do not possess the faculty with which they can grasp spiritual things. Our Lord Jesus said to Nicodemus, “That which is born of the flesh is flesh”—and therefore can only lay hold of the things that are fleshly. “And that which is born of the Spirit is spirit”—and until a man is born of the Spirit, he is without the faculty of understanding and enjoying spiritual things.  
As far as spiritual things are concerned, man’s understanding is dead. He can comprehend the highest and most wonderful of sciences, but he cannot—or, what is tantamount to it, he *will* not—understand the things of God. He turns on his heels and says, “I cannot make out what you mean.” No, we know that you cannot, and we are not surprised at your lack of apprehension, for it is just what the Bible leads us to expect. We even find those who consider themselves to be learned divines rejecting the Gospel and saying that it is not consistent with their philosophy. We never thought that it was—and we never imagined that they could receive the Gospel until they are converted and become as little children. The great reason why men reject the Gospel is because they are not born again. Because they have not received the life of God into their souls. If they had, they would understand it so as to delight in it. But the understanding, spiritually, is under a cloud of night which the Word of God calls “death.”  
So also is the human will dead to spiritual things. When a person is literally dead, he cannot will to come to life. Neither does any man ever will to come to Christ till the Spirit of God gives him that will, for his natural will is exerted in quite another direction, as our Lord said to the Jews, “You will not come to Me that you might have life.” The will is a slave, it is held in chains, it is set on mischief and resolved not to subject itself to the will of the Most High. Not morally, nor mentally, but spiritually, the will of man is dead!  
So, too, is it true of the affections that they are dead to spiritual things. Men, in their unregenerate state, will not love that which is good. Alas, they will not love Christ. He is altogether lovely, yet unrenewed men see nothing in Him that they should love. Holiness, purity, the will of God—all these things are worthy of being loved, yet men do not love them. No, they love the very opposite until the Grace of God comes and quickens them.  
Now, Brothers and Sisters, is not all this a true description of what we were before the Spirit of God begin to deal with us in His regenerating power? Were we not dead to all spiritual things? Some of you used to come to the House of God, but you were here just as so many corpses might have been. You used to visit where there were Christian people, but you could not understand what they said about their experience. You had no enjoyment in their joys, neither did you sorrow in their sorrows. There was a deep gulf between you and them—and the secret was that you were *natural* men and they were *spiritual* men! You loved not the things which they loved, even as they took no delight in the things which charmed you, for you were in a condition of spiritual death.  
Consider, next, dear Friends, *what that spiritual death involved*. The text puts it thus—“You being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh.”  
First, we were dead in sin. No, I quoted the text wrongly, for we were dead in our *sins*—the word is in the *plural*. They were our own sins, not the sins of our fate or destiny, or of our circumstances and surroundings, but *our own sins*. We willingly committed them. As the result of our death to everything that was holy, good and spiritual, we sinned and we took pleasure in sin. We repeated our old sins and we devised and invented new sins! They were, with an emphasis, our sins, our own actual, real, personal sins!  
These sins were very varied according to our condition and temperament. Some went after one sin, others after another. Some were quiet and gentle sinners, so that many persons thought that they were holy. Others were noisy outrageous sinners who were a nuisance to the parish in which they lived. Some were sinners under some sort of fear, but they would have sinned more if they had dared to do so. Others had cast off all fear, both of God and man, and plunged headlong into rioting, wantonness and all manner of unmentionable crimes. All these sins were accompaniments of spiritual death—they were just what winding-sheets are to dead men. There, then, is the picture of what we were and of what the unregenerate are—“dead in trespasses and sins”—lying there wrapped in the cerements of sin. We were surrounded, covered with sin, getting ready in that condition to soon be carried out to the eternal burial, to the place “where their worm dies not, and where the fire is not quenched.” That is how I was by nature! That is how you were, Brothers and Sisters, who are now alive unto God. You may, perhaps, have seen an Egyptian mummy, bound from head to foot with the wrappings appertaining to death—so it was with you. Your sins were about your head, your heart, your hands, your feet! Sins surrounded you everywhere—and there you lay, as the text says—“dead in your sins.”  
Now let us see *how we were delivered.* And as we lay our hands on our hearts and think of what God has done for us, let us prepare to bless and magnify His name. “You, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, has He quickened”—He has made you to live—“you has He quickened together with Him.” God, by His Grace, has made you to live in Christ. Do you not feel the difference between what you were and what you now are? Can you imagine what a change there would be if a dead man who had been lying in his grave clothes could suddenly sit upright, or rise out of the shell in which the undertaker had placed him? What a contrast between the state of death and the state of life! That is a very faint figure of the difference between what we now are and what we used to be. Do you not realize it, Brothers and Sisters? The things you once despised, you now value. And the things you then passed by with a sneer, you would now live for and die for! You used to hear about these things and it often seemed dull work to listen to a sermon. But now there is music in it from the first word to the last. That Bible of yours used to be like an old will to you, and old wills are very dry reading, but now you have found the record of a great legacy left to yourself and, oh, it is blessed work to read the will now—you could sit and study it all day long!  
Praying, also, used to be hard work. You managed to mutter, in a dead way, a few dead words, but prayer is now quite another thing with you— your whole spirit is alive when you draw near to God in supplication. In fact, you are a changed man altogether! I suppose that if you were to meet your old self, he would hardly know you, for you are so greatly altered. I daresay he would say to you, “Come, old fellow, let us go to the theater, or turn into this beer-shop, or let us go home and find some way of amusing ourselves.” You would reply, “No, Sir. I cut your acquaintance a long time ago and I do not mean to have anything to do with you, so you may go about your business as soon as you like. I am not what I was, for I have been crucified with Christ—and I am dead, and my life is hid with Christ in God.” There was one of the old saints who used to keep company with a woman in his ungodly days, and when he was converted, she met him in the street, and said to him, “Austin, you know me.” “Well,” he said, “yes, I do. But I am not Austin any longer. At least I am not the person that I used to be.” Oh, it is a blessed thing when we can feel that we are not what we once were! True, we are not yet what we want to be and we are not what we shall be, but we are not what we used to be—and we shall never again be what we used to be! The Grace of God will prevent that, now that we have been quickened.  
But how are we quickened? Paul says that God has quickened us together with Christ. And by this he means, first, that we have been quickened mystically by Christ’s Resurrection. That morning when Christ Jesus rose from the dead, all His people rose in Him! The sun was not yet up, but the Prince of Life and Glory had lingered long enough in the sepulcher, so, awaking into life through Divine power, He began to unwrap Himself from the cerements of the tomb. He laid the napkin by itself for your use and mine, that we may wipe

our eyes when our dear friends are taken away. But He took the grave clothes and put them together, that He might leave the house ready furnished against the time when we should be carried there—our last bed being thus supplied by Him with all the furniture we shall need when our time comes to sleep in it. Then He waited a while till the sheriff’s officer came down to set the hostage free, for the angel descended from Heaven, the stone was rolled away and Jesus breathed the sweet morning air again. He that had been dead arose and left the tomb, no more to die! And, in that hour, everyone who is in Him was virtually made to rise. The resurrection of all whom He represented was guaranteed by His Resurrection, as He said to His disciples, “Because I live, you shall live also.” That is the result of the mystical union between Christ and His people.  
But, as a matter of fact, and practically, you and I began to live, spiritually, *when we became united to Christ by faith*. Do you remember that glad hour when you first believed in Him, trusted Him, put your soul into His hands? Ah, then it was that you began to really live! Oh, what a difference that saving faith makes in us! In our Savior’s parable about the two builders, there is one expression that seems to me very significant. Luke’s account of it runs thus—“Whoever comes to Me, and hears My sayings, and does them, I will show you to whom he is like: he is like a man which built an house, and dug deep, and laid the foundation on a rock: and when the flood arose, the stream bent vehemently upon that house, and could not shake it: for it was founded upon a rock. But he that hears, and does not, is like a man that without a foundation built an house upon the earth; against which the stream did beat vehemently, and immediately it fell; and the ruin of that house was great.”  
Did you notice, as I quoted the words, that in the second instance Christ left out all about coming to Him? Yet that coming to Him is the essential thing. If you come to Him and hear His Words, and do them, you will have a rock for the foundation of your eternal building, and it will stand any storm that may beat upon it. But if you do not come to Christ, even though you hear His Words, that hearing can be of no permanent profit to you. Indeed, it will really increase your condemnation! It is the coming to Him, the getting into union with Him which settles and decides the all-important point in connection with our new life. So, then, it was when we became one with Christ by an act of living faith that we were quickened, blessed be His holy name forever and ever! If we do, indeed, possess this new life, let us show it! Let us prove, by our conduct and conversation, that we are no longer numbered among the dead, that we have risen with Christ and cannot go back to the tomb! We will have nothing to do with whitewashing the outside of our old sepulcher. We have left the outside and the inside, too, and now we live unto God and have done forever with the old state of death. I have set forth all too feebly the great work of God in removing the death that was within us, but if you feel that my words are true concerning you, your heart will beat high with devout thanksgiving to the quickening Spirit who has worked this great miracle in you!  
**II.**Now I come, secondly, to notice the great deed of Christ in THE REMOVAL OF THE HANDWRITING THAT WAS AGAINST US.  
Consider, dear Friends, *what this handwriting was*. When a man has some charge or insinuation against him merely whispered about and floating in the air, he hardly knows what it is. And, perhaps, if he is a sensible man, he does not care much what it is, but he lets it fly about till it flies away. But when he has an accusation made against him in black and white—when there is a handwriting against him, a charge written down and laid before the court, an indictment upon which he is to be tried—that is a most serious matter. Handwriting, especially in legal matters, is generally more accurate than mere speech, and there is, against every ungodly man, something written with the finger of God which he cannot deny, for it is absolutely true. Handwriting also abides. The old Latin proverb says, *“Litera scripta manet,”*that which is written remains. Be very careful as to what you put into black and white because it may be brought against you many years after you have written it— when you may think very differently concerning it. There is, against every unconverted man, a handwriting which will remain and which will be brought up against him at the great Day of Judgment. It is not a mere baseless rumor floating about, but something tangible which will last and which cannot be removed except by the almighty power of God.  
What is meant, in our text, by “*he handwriting of ordinances that was against us*”? I cannot give all the meaning in a word, but, does it not mean, first, that the moral law, which we have broken, has written out a curse against us? Each of the Ten Commandments has, as it were, united with the rest to draw up an indictment against us. The First Commandment says, “He has broken me.” The Second cries, “He has broken me.” The Third, “He has broken me,” and the whole 10 together have laid the same charge against each one of us! That is the handwriting of the Law of God condemning every man of woman born while he remains in a state of nature. The Jews, you remember, came under another law—the Ceremonial Law. Did that Ceremonial Law draw up an indictment against them? Was it not intended to rid them of sin? I answer, No! There was a lamb slain every morning and that sacrifice must have reminded at least some of them that a perpetual atonement was provided, but, as with an undertone of thunder, it also reminded them all that such an atonement was still needed, that, after a thousand years of the offering of lambs, sacrifices were still required! There was ordained a Day of Atonement with specially solemn ceremonies, but what did that day say to the Jews? That an atonement was provided? No, but that an atonement was still needed, for, as soon as ever that year was up, the atonement had not been made and they must have *another* Day of Atonement!  
The Apostle Paul expressly says, “But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.” There was a perpetual remembrance of sin in every one of the offerings under the Ceremonial Law. I need not stay to speak of them in detail, but they were intended— the most of them, at any rate—to continually remind men that sin was *not* washed away. Thus all the ceremonies drew up a handwriting and said to the Jews, and to us, too, “You need an atonement by blood. You are guilty and there is no hope of your ever coming to God except by a sacrifice which these rams and bullocks represent, but the place of which they cannot possibly fill.”  
Then there is another “handwriting of ordinances that was against us.” I think there is written across the very face of Nature the great Truth of God that man has sinned. Sin has so marred the world which God made perfect that none can go through it without feeling inconvenience and often sorrow and pain. There are some men who pass through the world as though it were a burning fiery furnace threatening their destruction. Why howls the blast upon the sea and dashes the galleon upon the rocks? Why have we earthquake, tornado, cyclone, and the like? Why, because man is a sinner! And there is a handwriting in the very ordinances of Nature written, as it were, mystically upon the wall, as it was at Belshazzar’s feast—and this is what it says, “You are weighed in the balances, and are found lacking.” There is also another handwriting to the same effect—for God’s works always sing the same tune—that is, the handwriting of conscience within the heart. Conscience writes, “You have sinned. You have done the things which you ought not to have done, and you have left undone the things which you ought to have done.” And if conscience is permitted to write in its own bold and, it sets down this terrible message, “You are lost, ruined and undone! The wrath of God has gone out against you.” This is “the handwriting of ordinances” which is in every part of God’s creation, though, alas, many are unable or unwilling to read it!  
Now let us ask, concerning this “handwriting of ordinances,” *what is to become of it?*It will certainly be impossible for us to answer it, for “all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.” There may be some men here who know of little pieces of handwriting that have cost them a great deal of trouble. A so-called friend came to see you—it would have been a good thing for you if it had been your worst enemy, for you might have been more on your guard against him. Your friend wanted just a little help for a time—he could not meet a certain liability just then, so he asked you merely to put your name on the back of a piece of paper. You would never see that document again—he would be quite able to meet it in three months—there was really no risk in the matter. The plausible man said, “You have only to put your name there. You will never be called upon in the least degree. I have plenty of money and have only to call it in when I need any, so it will be all right.” You were persuaded by him and, like a fool, put your name at the back of his bill. You knew that you had not the money guaranteed by that paper, yet you promised to pay it! You did not believe that text in the Bible which tells you that, “He that is surety for a stranger shall smart for it; and he that hates suretyship is sure.”  
I do not know when that bill will come due. Perhaps it will be next week, but I know that you are feeling uncommonly uncomfortable about it as you sit there in your pew—and well you may! You say that you will never do such a thing again—it is not likely that you will have the opportunity to do so, but you will find that it is sufficient to have that one piece of handwriting against you—your own handwriting, too! It will be brought home to you sooner or later, you will see it again! Do not comfort yourself with the foolish idea that you will get off Scot free, for you will not. Such a case as that rarely or never occurs. You have given the bond and the man who holds it will, like Shylock, demand his pound of flesh! And the worst of it is that the bond is one of your own making and you voluntarily incurred the debt. I wish I could tell you how to get clear of it, but I am glad that I can tell you how to get free from a worse bond even than that—one into which you have entered through your sin—the bond of your own indebtedness to the infinite Justice of God for all your rebellions against His Law, all your breaches of His Divine Covenant! You have sinned against Him and it is all down in black and white in the handwriting that is against you.  
Now listen, dear Friends. The Lord Jesus Christ has done this for all of us who are believers in Him. First, He has taken that handwriting and He has blotted it out, as our text says, “blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us.” The Greek original has the meaning of smearing over or expunging the handwriting so as to make it illegible as a document to be produced against us. With His own atoning blood, the Lord Jesus Christ has discharged all our debt! As believers in Him, there is nothing whatever due from us to the justice of Almighty God, for Christ has paid it all. We cannot, therefore, be punished for our sin, for that would be unjust, since God will not and cannot punish, first the Substitute, and then the sinners for whom that Substitute bled and died. God’s justice cannot demand the payment twice—  
***“First my bleeding Surety’s hand,  
And then again at mine.”***

Christ became the Surety of all who believe in Him and He was made to smart for it. But, by the carrying out of His suretyship, He discharged all your liabilities at the bar of God if you are a Believer and, therefore, He smeared over, expunged, erased, obliterated the handwriting of ordinances that was against you—and it can never again be laid to your charge. This was the Truth that inspired that brave challenge of the Apostle Paul, “Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect?”

Christ has done something more than this for us. Look at the text again—“blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way.” First it is blotted out. Then it is taken away, lest the blotting out should not prevent it from being read—for you can sometimes trace through an erasure what was written there, and you say, “Oh, yes, I see what the entry was—‘Soand-so, so many pounds in debt.’” Yes, but Christ says, “You need not worry yourselves about that handwriting, for I will take it away.” So He removes the document, itself, out of sight! It lay in the court against you, but Christ first obliterated it and then took the accusation itself—the indictment, the charge upon which you were to be tried—and put it out of the way!

Perhaps someone says, “But, possibly, after all, He may bring the accusation up again. He may only have hidden it for a while and laid it by that He may bring it out against me some other day. And when it is produced, some expert will examine it with his glass and through all the blotting he will make out the original charge and say, ‘This man was guilty of such-and-such crimes.’” “No,” says Christ, “He shall not do that, for I will let you see where I put the handwriting. I will take it quite out of the way, but I will fasten it up where you can see it”—“nailing it to His Cross.” Ah, that is glorious! Just as Christ was fastened to the tree by those dreadful Roman nails, so has He nailed up all the sins of His people! And all that could be laid to their charge! I have heard that they used to drive a nail through the Bank of England notes when they were cashed—a hole was made right through the center and they could never be used again. And our blessed Lord has driven the nails right through the accusation that was against His people—and there you can see the handwriting hanging up upon His Cross!

First He blotted it out. Then He took it out of the way and, finally, He nailed it up to His Cross and there it still is, its accusing and condemning power forever gone! Now, child of God, sit down and say to yourself, “As to all the sins I have ever committed, whatever they may have been, inasmuch as I believe in Jesus, the record is crossed out and, consequently, the very parchment upon which it was written (to use that figure) has been taken out of the way. And of that I may be quite sure that an end has been made of it, once and for all—my Lord has nailed it, as a crucified thing which He has put to death with Himself upon the tree of Sacrifice, and now it has no power to alarm or annoy me.”

What better way can there be of abolishing a debt than by paying it? And Christ has paid your debts and mine. What better way can there be of putting an end to sin than by bearing the punishment which was due to sin? The punishment which was due to sin was for us to lie forever under the wrath of God, but, owing to the majesty of Christ’s Divine Person, the suffering which He endured upon the Cross was accepted as an equivalent for all that suffering which we deserved to endure forever! All the wrath due to Christ’s people was condensed into that one cup of which He began to drink in Gethsemane. As He put His lips to it, and tasted it, so terrible was it that it covered Him with a bloody sweat! But He never ceased to drink until He turned the chalice upside down and not one black drop was found lingering there. At that one tremendous draught of love, the Lord had drunk damnation dry for all His people! And “there is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.” How could there be any when Christ endured it all?

O Beloved Friends, go in thought to Calvary, and with joyful hearts trust in the Crucified! The great transaction is done, and done forever! He has blotted out the handwriting that was against you and put it away, “nailing it to His Cross.” All this is true of everyone who believes in the Lord Jesus Christ. Then, trust yourself with Him, now, and my text shall be true of you at this moment and true forever! “You, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, has He quickened together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses; blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to His Cross.” God bless you all, for our Lord Jesus Christ’s sake! Amen.

**HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK—307, 430, 406. EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:**Col 2:6-23***;*** Col 3:1-3***.***

Col 2:6**.***As you have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk you in Him.* That is, keep on as you began. Christ was enough for you when, as poor, guilty sinners, you came and trusted Him, so keep on trusting Him in the same way as you did at the first. Do not try to live by feeling, after having lived by faith. Do not begin to live upon outward forms and ceremonies after having found salvation by Grace through faith. “As you have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk you in Him.”

**7.***Rooted and built up in Him, and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.*Christians are to make progress in the heavenward road, but they are not to have any other foundation for their faith than they had at the beginning of their Christian career. We are still to stand fast as we stood at the first. We are to be rooted, grounded, “established in the faith,” keeping to the old Truth of God that saved our souls, and laying hold upon the same Savior with greater tenacity every hour of our lives. We are not to be like chaff driven before the wind—forever moving—but to be like the cedars of Lebanon, firmly rooted and withstanding the heaviest storms.

**8.***Beware lest any man spoil you.*Or, “rob you.”  
**8.***Through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.*Cleave to Christ, Beloved! Go no further than He leads you and turn not away from Him either to the right hand or to the left. In Him are contained all the riches of Grace and all the treasures of knowledge. If you would become truly wise, seek to know more of the wisdom of God in Christ Jesus.  
**9, 10.***For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. And you are complete in Him, which is the head of all principality and power.* You have everything in Christ that you ought to need. You are fully furnished, completely supplied and equipped for all future service. You need not go to Christ for the supply of some of your needs and then go elsewhere for the supply of other needs, but, “you are complete in Him.”  
**11.***In whom also you are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ.*Anything good that there was in Judaism, you have secured to you in Christ. Whatever there was of blessing and privilege in the Covenant mark in the flesh of those whom God made to be His people in the olden time, you have handed on to you by the death of Christ.  
**12-15.***Buried with Him in Baptism, wherein also you are risen with Him through the faith of the operation of God, who has raised Him from the dead. And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, has He quickened together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses; blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to His Cross; and having spoiled principalities and powers, He made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it.*The Lord Jesus Christ has done everything for His people—fought their battle, won their victory and, on their behalf, celebrated the triumph in the streets of Heaven, “leading captivity captive.” What more, then, do we need? Surely Christ is enough for us!  
**16.***Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath days.*Do not put yourself under the bondage of any rules and regulations that may be made by men. If you choose to do anything, or to abstain from something else because you judge it to be right and beneficial, do so. Christ is your only Ruler and Leader—and if He does not command anything, let it not matter to you who does command it.

**17.***Which are a shadow of things to come.* All this regard for meats, drinks, holy days and new moons is but a shadow—what is the great substance that is all-important?

**17, 18.***But the body is of Christ. Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels.*Do not be beguiled by those who tell you that you ought to pay reverence to angels, saints and I know not what besides. One day is called St. Matthew’s and another is St. Michael’s. And one, I suppose, is St. Judas’s day—there are all sorts of supposed saints, some of whom are never mentioned in the Bible and about whom nobody ought to care at all! “Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels.”

**18-20.***Intruding into those things which he has not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, and not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increases with the increase of God. Therefore if you are dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are you subject to ordinances?* Such ordinances as these—

**21, 22.***(Touch not; taste not; handle not; which all are to perish with the using) after the commandments and doctrines of men?* I have actually seen this text quoted as though it stood as a matter of teaching—“Touch not; taste not; handle not”—whereas the Apostle here means, “Why are you subject to such ordinances of men when Christ has set you free from them all? If, with a view to the good of your fellow men, you choose not to touch, or taste, or handle, you will act very wisely. But, as far as your own conscience is concerned, do not submit to any merely human regulations as to your manner of life.”

**23.***Which things have, indeed, a show of wisdom in will worship, and humility, and neglecting of the body; not in any honor to the satisfying of the flesh.*  
Col 3:1*If you then are risen with Christ.*Leave all these outward rituals, formalities and ordinances of men.

**1-3.***Seek those things which are above, where Christ sits at the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For you are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.*

—Adapted from *The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307  
**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.** Sermon #273 The New Park Street Pulpit 1

**÷Col 2.15**

CHRIST TRIUMPHANT  
NO. 273

**DELIVERED ON *SABBATH*MORNING, SEPTEMBER *4, 1859, BY REV. C. H. SPURGEON*,  
AT THE MUSIC HALL, ROYAL SURREY GARDENS.**

***“And having spoiled principalities and powers, He made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it.”***Col 2:15***.***

To the eye of reason the Cross is the center of sorrow and the lowest depth of shame as Jesus dies a malefactor’s death. He hangs upon the gallows of a felon and pours out His blood upon the common mount of doom with thieves for His companions. In the midst of mockery, jest, scorn, ribaldry and blasphemy, He gives up the ghost. Earth rejects Him and lifts Him from her surface. Heaven affords Him no light, but darkens the midday sun in the hour of His extremity. Deeper in woe than the Savior dived, imagination cannot descend. A blacker calumny than was cast on Him satanic malice itself could not invent. He hid not His face from shame and spitting—and what shame and spitting it was!

To the world the Cross must ever be the emblem of shame—to the Jew a stumbling block and to the Greek foolishness. How different, however, is the view which presents itself to the eyes of Faith. Faith knows no shame in the Cross except the shame of those who nailed the Savior there. It sees no ground for scorn, but it hurls indignant scorn at Sin, the enemy which pierced the Lord. Faith sees woe, indeed, but from this woe it marks a fount of mercy springing. It is true it mourns a dying Savior, but it beholds Him bringing life and immortality to light at the very moment when His soul was eclipsed in the shadow of Death. Faith regards the Cross not as the emblem of shame, but as the token of Glory!

The sons of Belial lay the Cross in the dust but the Christian makes a constellation of it and sees it glittering in the seventh Heaven. Man spits upon it but Believers, having angels for their companions, bow down and worship Him who ever lives though once He was crucified. My Brethren, our text presents us with a portion of the view which Faith is certain to discover when its eyes are anointed with the eye-salve of the Holy Spirit. It tells us that the Cross was Jesus Christ’s field of triumph! There He fought and there He conquered, too.

As a victor on the Cross He divided the spoil. No, more than this—in our text the Cross is spoken of as being Christ’s triumphal chariot in which He rode when He led captivity captive and received gifts for men! Calvin thus admirably expounds the last sentence of our text—“The expression in the Greek, allows, it is true, of our reading, ‘in *Himself.’* The connection of the passage, however, requires that we read it otherwise; for what would be meager as applied to Christ, suits admirably well as applied to the Cross. For as Paul had previously compared the Cross to a

signal trophy or show of triumph in which Christ led about His enemies, so he now also compares it to a triumphal car in which He showed Himself in great magnificence. For there is no tribunal so magnificent, no throne so stately, no show of triumph so distinguished, no chariot so elevated as is the gallows on which Christ has subdued Death and the devil, the Prince of Death—no, more—has utterly trodden them under His feet”

I shall, this morning, by God’s help, address you upon the two portions of the text. First, I shall endeavor to describe *Christ as spoiling His enemies on the Cross.*And having done that I shall lead your imagination and your faith further on to see *the Savior in triumphal procession upon His Cross,* leading His enemies captive and making a show of them openly before the eyes of the astonished universe.

**I.** First, our faith is invited, this morning, to behold *CHRIST MAKING A SPOIL OF PRINCIPALITIES AND POWERS*. Satan, leagued with sin and death, had made this world the home of woe. The Prince of the power of the air, not content with his dominions in Hell, must need invade this fair earth. He found our first parents in the midst of Eden. He tempted them to forego their allegiance to the King of Heaven and they became at once his bond-slaves—bond-slaves forever, if the Lord of Heaven had not interposed to ransom them.

The voice of mercy was heard while the fetters were being riveted upon their feet, crying, “*You shall yet be free.* In the fullness of time there shall come One who shall bruise the serpent’s head and shall deliver his prisoners from the house of their bondage.” Long did the promise tarry. The earth groaned and travailed in its bondage. Man was Satan’s slave and heavy were the clanking chains which were upon his soul. At last, in the fullness of time, the Deliverer came forth born of a woman. This infant Conqueror was but a span long. He lay in the manger—He who was one day to bind the old dragon and cast him into the bottomless pit and set a seal upon him!

When the old serpent knew that his enemy was born, he conspired to put Him to death. He leagued with Herod to seek the young child that he might destroy Him. But the Providence of God preserved the future Conqueror—He went down into Egypt and there He was hidden for a little season. And when He had come to fullness of years, He made His public advent and began to preach liberty to the captives and the opening of the prison to them that were bound. Then Satan again shot forth his arrows and sought to end the existence of the woman’s Seed. By different means he sought to slay Him before His time.

Once the Jews took up stones to stone Him, nor did they fail to repeat the attempt. They sought to cast Him headlong down from the brow of a hill. By all manner of devices they labored to take away His life but His hour was not yet. Dangers might surround Him but He was invulnerable till the time was come. At last the tremendous day arrived. Foot to foot the Conqueror must fight with the dread tyrant. A voice was heard in Heaven, “This is your hour, and the power of darkness.” And Christ Himself exclaimed, “Now is the crisis of this world; now must the Prince of Darkness be cast out.”

From the table of communion the Redeemer arose at midnight and marched forth to the battle. How dreadful was the contest! In the very first onset the mighty Conqueror seemed to be vanquished. Beaten to the earth at the first assault, He fell upon His knees and cried, “My Father, if it is possible let this cup pass from Me.” Revived in strength, made strong by Heaven, He no longer quailed and from that hour never did He utter a word which looked like renouncing the fight. All red with bloody sweat from the terrible skirmish, He dashed into the thick of the battle! The kiss of Judas was, as it were, the first sounding of the trumpet.

Pilate’s bar was the glittering of the spear. The cruel lash was the crossing of the swords. But the Cross was the center of the battle! There, on the top of Calvary, must the dread fight of eternity be fought! Now must the Son of God arise and gird His sword upon His thigh. Dread defeat or glorious conquest awaits the Champion of the Church**.**Which shall it be? We hold our breath with anxious suspense while the storm is raging. I hear the trumpet sound! The howls and yells of Hell rise in awful clamor! The pit is emptying out its legions! Terrible as lions, hungry as wolves and black as night the demons rush on in myriads. Satan’s reserve forces, those who had long been kept against this day of terrible battle, are roaring from their dens. See how countless are their armies and how fierce their countenances! Brandishing his sword the arch fiend leads the van, bidding his followers fight neither with small nor great, save only with the King of Israel!

Terrible are the leaders of the battle. Sin is there and all its innumerable offspring spitting forth the venom of asps and sinking their poison fangs in the Savior’s flesh. Death is there upon his pale horse and his cruel darts rend their way through the body of Jesus even to His inmost heart. He is “exceedingly sorrowful, even unto death.” Hell comes, with all its coals of juniper and fiery darts. But chief and head among them is Satan—remembering well the ancient day when Christ hurled him from the battlements of Heaven he rushes with all his malice yelling to the attack!

The darts shot into the air are so countless that they blind the sun. Darkness covers the battlefield and like that of Egypt it was a darkness which might be felt. Long does the battle seem to waver, for there is but One against many. One Man—no, listen, lest any should misunderstand me—one GOD stands in battle array against ten thousands of principalities and powers! On, on they come and He receives them all. Silently at first He permits their ranks to break upon Him, enduring terrible hardness to spare a thought for shouting.

But at last the battle cry is heard. He who is fighting for His people begins to shout, but it is a shout which makes the Church tremble. He cries, “I thirst!” The battle is so hot upon Him and the dust so thick that He is choked with thirst! He cries, “I thirst!” Surely, now, He is about to be defeated! Wait awhile—do you see yon heaps? All these have fallen beneath His arm and for the rest, fear not the issue! The enemy is but rushing to his own destruction! In vain his fury and his rage, for look, the last rank

is charging, the battle of ages is almost over!

At last the darkness is dispersed. Hark how the Conqueror cries. “It is finished!” And where are His enemies now? They are all dead! There lies the king of terrors, pierced through with one of his own darts! There lies Satan with his head all bleeding, broken! Yonder crawls the brokenbacked Serpent, writhing in ghastly misery! As for Sin, it is cut in pieces and scattered to the winds of Heaven! “It is*finished,****”***cries the Conqueror, as He came with dyed garments from Bozrah, “I have trodden the winepress alone, I have trampled them in My fury and their blood is sprinkled on My garments.” And now He proceeds to *divide the spoil.*

We pause here to remark that when the spoil is divided it is a sure token that the battle is completely won. The enemy will never suffer the spoil to be divided among the conquerors as long as he has any strength remaining. We may gather from our text, of a surety, that Jesus Christ has totally routed, thoroughly defeated once and for all and put to retreat all His enemies or else He would not have divided the spoil.

And now, what does this expression mean of Christ *dividing* the spoil? I take it that it means, first of all, that *He disarmed all His enemies.* Satan came against Christ—he had in his hand a sharp sword called the Law, dipped in the poison of sin so that every wound which the Law inflicted was deadly. Christ dashed this sword out of Satan’s hand and there stood the Prince of Darkness unarmed! His helmet was split it two and his head was crushed as with a rod of iron! Death rose against Christ. The Savior snatched his quiver from him, emptied out all his darts, cut them in two, gave Death back the feather end but kept the poisoned barbs from him that he might never destroy the ransomed.

Sin came against Christ—but Sin was utterly cut in pieces. It had been Satan’s armor bearer, but its shield was cast away and it lay dead upon the plain. Is it not a noble picture to behold all the enemies of Christ—no, my Brothers and Sisters—all *your* enemies and *mine*, totally disarmed? Satan has nothing left, now, with which he may attack us! He may attempt to injure us but wound us he never can, for his sword and spear are utterly taken away! In the old battles, especially among the Romans, after the enemy had been overcome it was the custom to take away all their weapons and ammunition. Afterwards they were stripped of their armor and their garments, their hands were tied behind their backs and they were made to pass under the yoke. Now, even so has Christ done with Sin, Death, and Hell—He has taken their armor, spoiled them of all their weapons and made them all to pass under the yoke—so that now they are *our* slaves and we in Christ are conquerors of them who were mightier than we!

I take it this is the first meaning of dividing the spoil—total disarming of the adversary. In the next place, when the victors divide the spoil they carry away not only the weapons but all the treasures which belong to their enemies. They dismantle their fortresses and rifle all their stores so that in future they may not be able to renew the attack. Christ has done the like with all His enemies. Old Satan had taken away from us all our possessions. Satan had added Paradise to his territories. All the joy, happiness and peace of man, Satan had taken—not that he could enjoy them himself, but that he delighted to thrust us down into poverty and damnation.

Now, all our lost inheritances Christ has gotten back for us! Paradise is ours and *more* than all the joy and happiness that Adam had, Christ has brought back to us. O robber of our race, how are you spoiled and carried away captive! Did you despoil Adam of his riches? The second Adam has taken them from you! Did you cut the whole earth asunder and cause the waster to become desolate? The second Adam has defeated you—now shall the needy be remembered and again shall the meek inherit the earth! “Then is the prey of a great spoil divided, the lame take the prey.”

Moreover, when victors divide the spoil, it is usual to take away all the ornaments from the enemy—the crowns and the jewels. Christ on the Cross did the like with Satan. Satan had a crown on his head, a haughty diadem of triumph. “I fought the first Adam,” he said. “I overcame him and here’s my glittering diadem.” Christ snatched it from his brow in the hour when He bruised the serpent’s head. And now Satan cannot boast of a single victory—he is thoroughly defeated!

In the first skirmish he vanquished manhood, but in the second battle Manhood vanquished him! The crown is taken from Satan. He is no longer the prince of God’s people. His reigning power is gone! He may tempt, but he cannot compel. He may threaten, but he cannot subdue for the crown is taken from his head and the mighty are brought low. O sing unto the Lord a new song, all you His people! Make a joyful noise unto Him with Psalms all you His redeemed, for He has broken in sunder the gates of brass and cut the bars of iron! He has broken the bow and cut the spear in sunder! He has burned the chariots in the fire! He has dashed in pieces our enemies and divided the spoil with the strong!

And now, what does this say to us? Simply this. If Christ on the Cross has spoiled Satan, let us not be afraid to encounter this great enemy of our souls. My Brethren, in all things we must be made like unto Christ. We must bear our cross and on that cross we must fight as He did with Sin, Death and Hell! Let us not fear. The result of the battle is certain, for as the Lord our Savior has overcome once, even so shall we most surely conquer in Him. Be you, none of you afraid with sudden fear when the Evil One comes upon you. If he accuse you, reply to him in these words— “Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect?”

If he condemns you, laugh him to scorn, crying—“Who is he that condemns? It is Christ that died, yes rather has risen again.” If he threaten to divide you from Christ’s love, encounter him with confidence—“I am persuaded that neither things present nor things to come nor height nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” If he lets loose your sins upon you dash the Hell dogs aside with this—“If any man sin we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.” If Death should threaten you, shout in his very face—“O Grave! Where is your sting? O

Death! Where is your victory?”

Hold up the Cross before you! Let that be your shield and buckler and rest assured that as your Master not only routed the foe but afterwards took the spoil, it shall be even so with you! Your battles with Satan shall turn to your advantage. You shall become all the richer for your attacks. The more numerous they shall be the greater shall be your share of the spoil! Your tribulation shall work patience and your patience experience— and your experience hope—a hope that will not make you ashamed. Through much tribulation shall you inherit the kingdom and by the very attacks of Satan shall you be helped the better to enjoy the rest which remains for the people of God.

Put yourselves in array against sin and Satan. All you that bend the bow shoot at them—spare no arrows, for your enemies are rebels against God! Go up against them—put your feet upon their necks—fear not, neither be dismayed, for the battle is the Lord’s and He will deliver them into your hands! Be very courageous remembering that you have to fight a dragon without a sting! He may hiss, but his teeth are broken and his poison fangs extracted. You have to do battle with an enemy already scarred by your Master’s weapons. You have to fight with a naked enemy! Every blow you give him tells upon him for he has nothing to protect himself with!

Christ has stripped him naked, divided his armor and left him defenseless before his people. Be not afraid. The lion may howl, but he can never tear you in pieces. The enemy may rush in upon you with hideous noise and terrible alarms, but there is no real cause for fear. Stand fast in the Lord! You war against a king who has lost his crown. You fight against an enemy whose cheekbones have been crushed and the joints of whose loins have been loosed. Rejoice, rejoice in the day of battle, for it is for you but the beginning of an eternity of triumph!

I have thus endeavored to dwell upon the first part of the text. Christ on the Cross divided the spoil and He would have us do the same.  
**II.** The second part of our text refers not only to the dividing of the spoil but to THE TRIUMPH**.**When a Roman general had performed great feats in a foreign country, his highest reward was that the Senate should decree him a triumph. Of course there was a division of spoil made on the battlefield where each soldier and each captain took his share. But every man looked forward rapturously to the day when they should enjoy the *public* triumph. On a certain set day the gates of Rome were thrown open, the houses were all decorated with ornaments and the people climbed to the tops of the houses or stood in great crowds along the streets.  
The gates were opened and by-and-by the first legion began to stream in with its banners flying and its trumpets sounding. The people saw the stern warriors as they marched along the street returning from their blood-red fields of battle. After one half of the army had thus advanced, your eyes would rest upon one who was the center of all attraction—riding in a noble chariot drawn by milk-white horses—there came the conqueror himself, crowned with the laurel crown and standing erect! Chained to his chariot were the kings and mighty men of the regions which he had conquered.  
Immediately behind *them* came part of the booty. There were carried the ivory and the ebony and the beasts of the different countries which he had subdued. After these came the rest of the soldiery, a long, long stream of valiant men all of them abating the triumphs of their captain. Behind them came banners—the old flags which had floated aloft in the battle— the standards which had been taken from the enemy.  
And after these, large painted emblems of the great victories of the warriors. Upon one there would be a huge map depicting the rivers which they had crossed, or the seas through which the navy had found their way. Everything was represented in a picture and the populace gave a fresh shout as they saw the memorial of each triumph. And then, behind, together with the trophies, would come the prisoners of less eminent rank. Then the rear would be closed with the sound of trumpets adding to the acclamation of the throng. It was a noble day for old Rome! Children would never forget those triumphs! They would estimate their years from the time of one triumph to another. High holiday was kept. Women cast down flowers before the conqueror and he was the true monarch of the day.  
Now, our Apostle had evidently seen such a triumph, or read of it, and he takes this as a representation of what Christ did on the Cross. He says, “Jesus made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it.” Have you ever thought that the Cross could be the scene of a *triumph*? Most of the old commentators can scarcely conceive it to be true. They say, “This must certainly refer to Christ’s Resurrection and Ascension.” But, nevertheless, so says the Scripture, even on the Cross, Christ enjoyed a triumph! Yes, while those hands were bleeding the acclamations of angels were being poured upon His head! Yes, while those feet were being torn with the nails, the noblest spirits in the world were crowding round Him with admiration!  
And when upon that blood-stained Cross He died in unutterable agonies, there was heard a shout such as never was heard before for the ransomed in Heaven—and all the angels of God with loudest harmony chanted His praise! Then was sung, in fullest chorus, the song of Moses, the servant of God and of the Lamb, for He had, indeed, cut Rahab and sorely wounded the dragon. Sing unto the Lord for He has triumphed gloriously! The Lord shall reign forever and ever, King of kings, and Lord of lords!  
I do not feel able, however, this morning, to work out a scene so grand and yet so contrary to everything that flesh could guess as a picture of Christ actually triumphing on the Cross—in the midst of His bleeding, His wounds and His pains—actually being a triumphant victor and admired of all. I choose, rather, to take my text thus—the Cross is the ground of Christ’s ultimate triumph. He may be said to have really triumphed there because it was by that one act of His—that one offering of *Himself*—that He completely vanquished all His foes and forever sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens. In the Cross, to the spiritual eye, every victory of Christ is contained. It may not be there in fact, but it is there *virtually—*the germ of His glories may be discovered by the eye of faith in the agonies of the Cross. Bear with me while I humbly attempt to depict the triumph which now results from the Cross.  
Christ has forever overcome all His foes and divided the spoil upon the battlefield. And now, even at this day is He enjoying the well-earned reward and triumph of His fearful struggle. Lift up your eyes to the battlements of Heaven, the great metropolis of God! The pearly gates are wide open and the city shines with her jeweled walls like a bride prepared for her husband. Do you see the angels crowding to the battlements? Do you observe them on every mansion of the celestial city, eagerly desiring and looking for something which has not yet arrived?  
At last there is heard the sound of a trumpet and the angels hurry to the gates—the vanguard of the redeemed is approaching the city. Abel comes in alone, clothed in crimson garb, the herald of a glorious army of martyrs! Hark to the shout of acclamation! This is the first of Christ’s warriors, at once a soldier and a trophy, that have been delivered. Close at his heels there follow others who in those early times had learned the coming Savior’s fame.  
Behind them a mighty host may be discovered of patriarchal veterans who have witnessed to the coming of the Lord in a wanton age. See Enoch still walking with his God and singing sweetly—“Behold the Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints.” There, too, is Noah who had sailed in the ark with the Lord as his Pilot. Then follow Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Joshua, Samuel and David—all mighty men of valor. Hearken to them as they enter! Every one of them waving his helmet in the air, cries, “Unto Him that loved us and washed us from our sins in His blood, unto Him be honor, and glory, and dominion, and power, forever and ever!”  
Look, my Brothers and Sisters, with admiration upon this noble army! Mark the heroes as they march along the golden streets everywhere meeting an enthusiastic welcome from the angels who have kept their first estate. On, on they pour, those countless legions—was there ever such a spectacle? It is not the pageant of a day, but the “show” of all time! For 4,000 years on streams the army of Christ’s redeemed! Sometimes there is a short rank, for the people have been often diminished and brought low, but soon a crowd succeeds, and on, on, still on they come, all shouting, all praising Him who loved them and gave Himself for them!  
But look! He comes! I see His immediate herald clad in a garment of camel’s hair and a leather girdle about his loins. The Prince of the House of David is not far behind! Let every eye be open! Now, mark, how not only angels, but the redeemed, crowd the windows of Heaven! He comes! He comes! It is Christ Himself! Lash the snow-white coursers up the everlasting hills. “Lift up your heads, O you gates and be lifted up, you everlasting doors, that the King of Glory may come in.” Look, He enters in the midst of acclamations. It is He! But He is not crowned with thorns. It is He! And though His hands wear the scars, they are stained with blood no longer. His eyes are as a flame of fire and on His head are many crowns! And He has on His vesture and on His thigh written, KING of KINGS and LORD OF LORDS. He stands tall in that chariot which is paved with love for the daughters of Jerusalem! Clothed in a vesture dipped in blood, He stands proclaimed the emperor of Heaven and earth! On, on He rides and louder than the noise of many waters and like great thunders are the acclamations which surrounds Him!  
Look how John’s vision is become a reality, for now we can see for ourselves and hear with our ears the new song whereof He writes, “They sung a new song, saying, You are worthy to take the book and to open the seals thereof, for You were slain and have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation. And You have made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth. And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders—  
“And the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; saying with a loud voice, worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing. And every creature which is in Heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sits upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever. And the four beasts said, amen. And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshiped Him that lives forever and ever.”  
But who are those at His chariot wheels? Who are those grim monsters that come howling in the rear? I know them! First of all there is the arch enemy. Look at the old serpent, bound and fettered, how he writhes his ragged length along! His azure hues all tarnished with trailing in the dust! His scales despoiled of their once-vaunted brightness. Now is captivity led captive and death and Hell shall be cast into the Lake of Fire! With what derision is the chief of rebels regarded. How is he become the object of everlasting contempt. He that sits in the Heaven’s does laugh—the Lord does have him in derision.  
Behold how the serpent’s head is broken and the dragon is trampled under foot. And now regard attentively yon hideous monster, Sin, chained hand in hand with his satanic sire. See how he rolls his fiery eyeballs! Mark how he twists and writhes in agonies. Mark how he glares upon the holy city but is unable to spit his venom there, for he is chained and gagged and dragged along, an unwilling captive at the wheels of the Victor. And here, too, is old Death, with his darts all broken and his hands behind him—the grim king of terrors—he, too, is a captive! Hark to the songs of the redeemed, of those who have entered into Paradise, as they see these mighty prisoners dragged along!  
“Worthy is He,” they shout, “To live and reign at His Almighty Father’s side, for He has ascended up on high, He has led captivity captive and received gifts for men.” And now behind Him I see the great mass of His people streaming in. The Apostles arrive in one goodly fellowship hymning their Lord. And then their immediate successors—and then a long array of those who, through cruel mocking and blood, through flame and sword, have followed their Master. These are those whom the world was not worthy, brightest among the stars of Heaven! Regard, also, the mighty preachers and confessors of the faith, Chrysostom, Athanasius, Augustine and the like.  
Witness their holy unanimity in praising their Lord! Then let your eyes run along the glittering ranks till you come to the days of Reformation. I see in the midst of the squadron Luther, Calvin, and Zwingli, three holy brothers! I see just before them Wickliffe, Huss and Jerome of Prague, all marching together. And then I see a number that no man can number, converted to God through these mighty reformers who now follow in the rear of the King of kings and Lord of lords! And looking down to our own time I see the stream broader and wider. For many are the soldiers who have in these last times entered into their Master’s triumph. We may mourn their absence from us, but we must rejoice in their presence with the Lord*.*  
But what is the unanimous shout? What is the one song that still rolls from the first rank to the last? It is this—“Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever!” Have they changed the tune? Have they supplanted His name by another? Have they put the crown on another head or elevated another hero into the chariot? Ah, no—they are content, still, to let the triumphant procession stream along its glorious length—still to rejoice as they behold fresh trophies of His love, for every soldier is a trophy, every warrior in Christ’s army is another proof of His power to save and His victory over death and Hell!  
I have not time to enlarge further, or else I might describe the mighty pictures at the end of the procession—for in the old Roman triumphs the deeds of the conqueror were all depicted in paintings—the towns he had taken, the rivers he had passed, the provinces he had subdued, the battles he had fought were represented in pictures and exposed to the view of the people—who with great festivity and rejoicing accompanied him in throngs, or beheld him from the windows of their houses and filled the air with their acclamations and applauses.  
I might present to you first of all the picture of Hell’s dungeons blown to atoms. Satan had prepared deep in the depths of darkness a prison house for God’s elect but Christ has not left one stone upon another. On the picture I see the chains broken in pieces, the prison doors burnt with fire and all the depths of the vast deep shaken to their foundations. On another picture I see Heaven open to all Believers. I see the gates that were fast shut heaved open by the golden lever of Christ’s Atonement.  
I see on one, another picture, the grave despoiled. I behold Jesus in it, slumbering for awhile and then rolling away the stone and rising to immortality and glory. But we cannot stay to describe these mighty pictures of the victories of His love. We know that the time shall come when the triumphant procession shall cease—when the last of His redeemed shall have entered into the city of happiness and of joy—and when, with the shout of a trumpet heard for the last time, He shall ascend to Heaven and take His people up to reign with God, even our Father, forever and ever, world without end.  
Our only question, and with that we conclude, is, have we a good hope through Divine Grace that we shall march in that tremendous procession? Shall we pass under review in that day of pomp and glory? Say, my Soul, shall you have an humble part in that glorious pageant? Will *you* follow at His chariot wheels? Will you join in the thundering hosannas? Shall your voice help to swell the everlasting chorus? Sometimes I fear it shall not. There are times when the awful question comes—what if *my* name should be left out when He should read the muster roll?  
Brothers and Sisters, does not that thought trouble you? But yet I put the question again. Can you answer it? Will you be there—shall you see this pomp? Will you behold Him triumph over sin, death and Hell at last? Can you answer this question? There is another, but the answer will serve for both—do you believe on the Lord Jesus Christ? Is He your confidence and your trust? Have you committed your soul to His keeping? Reposing on His might can you say for your immortal spirit—  
***“Other refuge have I none,  
Hangs my helpless soul on You?”***  
If you can say that, your eyes shall see Him in the day of His glory—no, you shall *share* His glory and sit with Him upon His throne even as He has overcome and sat down with His Father upon His throne! I blush to preach as I have done this morning on a theme far beyond my power, yet I could not leave it unsung, but, as best I might, sing it. May God enlarge your faith and strengthen your hope! May He inflame your love and make you ready to be made partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light so that when He shall come with flying clouds on wings of wind, you may be ready to meet Him and may with Him ascend to gaze forever on the vision of His Glory!  
May God grant this blessing, for Christ’s sake. Amen.

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**÷Col 2.18**

A WARNING TO BELIEVERS  
NO. 3466

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, JULY 8, 1915.

***DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON THURSDAY EVENING, JUNE 16, 1870.**

***“Let no man beguile you of your reward.”***Col 2:18***.***

THERE is an allusion here to the prize which was offered to the runners in the Olympic games. And at the outset it is well for us to remark how very frequently the Apostle Paul conducts us by his metaphors to the racecourse. Over and over again he is telling us so to run that we may obtain, bidding us to strive and, at other times, to agonize, and speaks of wrestling and contending. Ought not this make us feel what an intense thing the Christian life is—not a thing of sleepiness or haphazard, not a thing to be left, now and then, to a little superficial consideration? It must be a matter which demands all our strength, so that when we are saved there is a living principle put within us which demands all our energies and gives us energy over and above any that we ever had before! Those who dream that carelessness will find its way to Heaven have made a great mistake. The way to Hell is neglect, but the way to Heaven is very different. “How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?” A little matter of neglect brings you to ruin, but our Master’s words are, “*Strive* to enter in at the straight gate, for many, I say unto you, shall seek”—merely seek—“to enter in, and shall not be able.” Striving is needed more than seeking! Let us pray that God the Holy Spirit would always enable us to be in downright, awful earnest about the salvation of our souls. May we never count this a matter of secondary importance, but may we seek first and beyond everything else, the Kingdom of God and His righteousness. May we lay hold on eternal life—may we so run that we may obtain.

I would press this upon your memories because I observe—observe it in myself as well as in my fellow Christians, that we are often more earnest about the things of this life than we are about the things of the life to come. We are all impressed with the fact that in these days of competition, if a man would not be run over and crushed beneath the wheels of the Juggernaut of poverty, he must exert himself. No man now seems able to keep his head above water with the faint swimmer strokes which our forefathers used to give. We have to strive—and the bread that perishes has to be labored for. Shall it be that this poor world shall engross our earliest thoughts and our latest cares, and shall the world to come have only now and then a consideration? No! May we love our God with all our heart, and all our soul, and all our strength—and may we lay our body, soul and spirit upon the altar of Christ’s service—for these are but our reasonable sacrifices to Him.

Now the Apostle, in the text before us, gives us a warning which comes to the same thing, however it is interpreted. But the passage is somewhat difficult of rendering and there have been several meanings given to it. Out of these there are three meanings which have been given of the text before us which are worthy of notice. “Let no man beguile you of your reward” The Apostle, in the first place, may mean here—

**I.**LET NO MAN BEGUILE ANY OF YOU who profess to be followers of Christ, *of the great reward that will await the faithful at the last*.  
Now, my Brothers and Sisters, we have, many of us, commenced the Christian race, or we profess to have done so—but the number of the starters is far greater than the number of the winners! “They that run in a race, run all, but one receives the prize.” “Many are called, but few are chosen.” Many commence, apparently, in the Christian career, but after a while, though they did run well, something hinders them that they do not obey the Truths of God and they go out from us because they were not of us, or if they had been of us, doubtless they would have continued with us. Now we may expect, now that we have commenced to run, that *some will come and try to turn us out of the racecourse openly*—not plausibly and with sophistry—but with an open and honest wickedness. Some will tell us plainly that there is no reward to run for, that our religion is all a mistake, that the pleasures of this world are the only things worth seeking, that there are delights of the flesh and the lusts thereof, and that we should do well to enjoy them. We all meet the Atheist with his sneer and with his ringing laugh. We shall meet with all kinds of persons who will, to our faces, tell us to turn back, for there is no Heaven, there is no Christ, or, if there is, it is not worth our while to take so much trouble to find Him. Take heed of these people! Meet them face to face with dauntless courage. Mind not their sneers. If they persecute you, only, reckon this to be an honor to you—for what is persecution but the tribute which wickedness pays to righteousness? And what is it, indeed, but the recognition of the Seed of the woman when the seed of the serpent would gladly bite His heel?  
But the Apostle does not warn you so much against those people who openly come to you in this way. He knows that you will be on the alert against them. He gives a special warning against some others who would beguile you—that is to say—*who will try to turn you out of the right road, but who will not tell you that they mean to do so*. They pretend that they are going to show you something better than what you have, to teach you something that you knew not before, some improvement upon what you have here learned. In Paul’s day there were some who took off the attention of the Christian from the worship of God to the worship of angels. “Angels,” they said, “these are holy beings. They keep watch over you— you should speak of them with great respect.” And then, when they grew bolder, they said, “You should ask for their protection.” And then after a little while they said, “You should worship them. You should make them intermediate intercessors!” And so, step by step, they went on and established an old heresy which lasted for many years in the Christian Church—and which is not dead, even now—and thus the worship of angels crept in.  
And now-a-days you will meet with men who will say, “That bread upon the Table—why, it represents the body of Jesus Christ to you when you come to the Lord’s Supper. Therefore you ought to treat that bread with great respect.” By-and-by they will get a little bolder, and then they say, “As it represents Christ, you may worship it, pay it respect as if it were Christ.” By-and-by it will come to this, that you must have a napkin under your chin, lest you should drop a crumb. And they will say it would be very wicked if a drop of the sacred wine should cling to your moustache when you drink! And there will be the directions which are given in some of the papers coming out from the High Church party— absurdities which are only worthy of the nursery—about the way in which the holy bread is to be eaten and the holy wine is to be drunk— bringing in idolatry—sheer, clear idolatry, under the pretence of improving upon the too bare simplicity of the worship of Christ! Be careful of the very first step, I pray you.  
Or, perhaps, it may come to you in another shape. One will say to you, “The place in which you worship—is it not very dear to you? That seat where you have been accustomed to sit and listen, is it not dear?” And your natural instincts will say, “Yes.” Then it will go a little farther. “That place is holy—it ought never to be used for anything but worship.” Then a little farther it will be, “Oh, that is the House of God,” and you will come to believe that, contrary to the words which you know are given to you by the Holy Spirit, that God dwells not in temples made with hands—that is to say, in these buildings—and you will have, by degrees, a worship of places, and a worship of days, and a worship of bread, and a worship of wine! And then it will be said to you, “Your minister, has he not often cheered you? Well then, you should reverence him—call him, ‘Reverend.’” Go a little farther and you will call him, “Father.” Yet a little farther and he will be your confessor! Get a little farther and he will be your infallible Pope! It is all done step by step! The first step seems to be very harmless, indeed. Indeed, it is a kind of voluntary humility! You look as if you were humbling yourselves and were paying reverence to these things for God’s sake—whereas the objective is to get you to pay reverence to *them*, instead of to *God*—and here the Apostle’s words come in, “Let no man beguile you of your reward.” They will often attack you in that insidious manner by setting up other objects of reverence besides those which spiritual men worship!  
So, too, they will, by slow degrees, try to *insinuate a different way of living from that which is the true life of the Christian*. You who have believed in Jesus are saved. Your sins are forgiven you for His name’s sake. You are accustomed to go to Jesus Christ constantly to receive that washing of the feet of which He spoke to Peter when He said, “He that is washed needs not except to wash his feet, for he is clean every whit.” You go to Him with, “Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.” But there will be some who will come in and tell you that to live in that way by a simple faith in Jesus Christ is not, perhaps, the best way. Could you not get a little farther? Could you not lead the life of those recluses who mortify the flesh in such a way that at last they come to have no sins, but commence to be perfect in themselves? Could you not begin, at least in some degree, to commit your soul’s care to some priest, or to some friend? And instead of making every place holy and every day a holy day, would it not be well to fast on such-and-such days in the week, to scrupulously observe this rule and the other rule and walk by the general opinion of the ancient Church, or by the *Anglicanum Directorium*, or some one of those books which profess to show how they used to do it a thousand years ago? All this may have a great show of wisdom, antiquity and beauty—there may be a semblance of everything that is holy about it and names that should never be mentioned without reverence may be appended to it all—but listen to the Apostle as he says, “Beware lest any man beguile you of your reward,” for if they get you away from living upon Christ as a poor sinner from day to day by simple confidence in Him, they *will beguile you of your reward*!  
There is another party who will seek to beguile you of your reward *by bringing in speculative notions instead of the simple Truths of God’s Word*. There is a certain class of persons who think that a sermon is a good one when they cannot understand it and who are always impressed with a man whose words are long! And if his sentences are involved, they feel, poor souls, that because they do not know what he is talking about, there is no doubt that he is a very wise and learned man! And after a while, when he does propound something that they can catch at, though it may be quite contrary to what they have learned at their mother’s knee or from their father’s Bible, yet they are ready to be led off by it! There are many men, now-a-days, who seem to spend their time in nothing else but in spinning new theories and inventing new systems. They gut the Gospel, taking the very soul and heart out of it, and leave nothing but the mere skin and outward bones. The life and marrow of the Gospel is being taken away by their learning, by their philosophies, by their refinements, by their bringing everything down to the test of this wonderfully enlightened 19th Century, to which we are all, I suppose, bound to defer! But a voice comes to us, “Let no man beguile you of your reward.” Stand fast to the old Truths of God—they will outlast all these philosophies! Stand fast to the old way of living—it will outlast all the inventions of men! Stand fast by Christ, for you need no other object of worship but Himself!  
The Apostle gives us this warning, “Let no man beguile you of your reward,” reminding us that these persons are very likely to beguile us. They will beguile us *by their character*. Have I not often heard young people say of such-and-such a preacher who preaches error, “But he is so good a man!” That is not the point. “Though we, or an angel from Heaven preach any other Gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.” If the life of the man should be blameless as the life of Christ, yet if he preaches to you other than the Gospel of Jesus Christ, take no heed of him! He wears but the sheep’s clothing, and is a wolf, after all. Some will plead, “But such-and-such a man is so eloquent.” Ah, Brothers and Sisters, may the day never come when your faith shall stand in the words of men! What is a ready orator, after all, that he should convince your hearts? Are there not ready orators caught any day for everything? Men speak, speak fluently, and speak well in the cause of evil! And there are some that can speak much more fluently and more eloquently for evil than any of our poor tongues are ever likely to do for the right! But words, words, words, flowers of rhetoric, oratory—are these the things that saved you? Are you so foolish that having begun in the spirit by being convicted of your sins, having begun by being led simply to Christ and putting your trust in Him—are you now to be led astray by these poetic utterances and flowery periods of men? God forbid! Let nothing of this kind beguile you!  
Then there will be added to these remarks that the man is not

nly very good and very eloquent, but *that he is very earnest—he seems very humble-minded*. Yes, and of old they wore rough garments to deceive, and in the context of the text we find that those persons were noted for their voluntary humility and their worship of angels! Satan knows very well that if he comes in black, he will be discovered, but if he puts on the garb of an angel of light, then men will think he comes from God and so will be deceived. “By their fruits you shall know them.” If they give you not the Gospel—if they exalt not Christ, if they bear not witness to salvation through the precious blood, if they do not lift up Jesus Christ as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness—have nothing to do with them, speak they as they may! “Let no man beguile you of your reward.” Through it should happen to be your relative, one whom you love, one who may have many claims on your respect—let no man, let no man, however plausible may be his speech or eminent his character—beguile you of your reward!  
Recollect, you professors, you lose the reward *if you lose the road to the reward*. He that runs may run very fast, but if he does not run the course, he wins not the prize. You may believe false Doctrine with great earnestness, but you will find it false, for all that! You may give yourself up indefatigably to the pursuit of the wrong religion, but it will ruin your souls! A notion is abroad that if you are but earnest and sincere, you will be all right. Permit me to remind you that if you travel ever so earnestly to the north, you will never reach the south. And if you earnestly take prussic acid, you will die! And if you earnestly cut off a limb, you will be wounded. You must not only be earnest, but you must be right in it! Hence is it necessary to say, “Let no man beguile you of your reward.” “I bear them witness,” said the Apostle, “that they had a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge, but went about to establish their own righteousness, and have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God.” Oh, may we not be beguiled, then, so as to miss the reward of Heaven at the last!  
But I must pass on, especially as the light fails us this evening—I hope it is prognostic of a coming shower. Here is a second rendering which may be given to the text—  
**II.**LET NO MAN DOMINEER OVER YOU.  
This rendering, or something analogous to it, is in the French translation. One of the great expositors in his commentary upon this passage refers it to the judges at the end of the course who sometimes would give the reward to the wrong person, and the person who had really run well might thus be deprived of his reward. Now, however close a man may be to Christ, the world, instead of honoring him for it, will, on the contrary, censure and condemn him—and hence the Apostle’s exhortation is, “Let no man domineer over you.”  
And, my Brothers and Sisters, I would earnestly ask you to remember this, first, *as to your course of action.* If you conscientiously believe that you are right in what you are doing, care very little who is pleased or who is displeased. If you are persuaded in your own soul that what you believe and what you do are acceptable to God, whether they are acceptable to man or not is of very small consequence! You are not man’s servant, you do not look to man for your reward and, therefore, you need not care what man’s opinion may be in this matter. Be just and fear not! Tread in the footsteps of Christ, follow what may. Live not on the breath of men. Let not their applause make you feel great, for perhaps then their censure will make you faint. Let no man in this respect domineer over you, but let Christ be your Master, and look to His smile.  
So not only with regard to your course of action, *but also with reference to your confidence*, let no man domineer over you. If you put your trust in Jesus Christ, there are some who will say it is presumption. Let them say it is presumption! “Wisdom is justified of all her children,” and so shall faith be. If you take the promise of God and rest upon it, there will be some who will say that you are hare-brained fanatics. Let them say it! They that trust in Him shall never be confounded. The result will honor your faith. You have but to wait a little while and, perhaps, they that now censure you will have to hold up their hands in astonishment and say with you, “What has God worked?” Your confidence in Christ, especially my dear young Friend, I trust does not depend upon the smile of your relatives. If it did, then their frown might crush it. Walk with your Savior in the lowly walk of holy confidence, and let not your faith rest in man, but in the smile of God!  
Let no man domineer over you, again, *by judging your motives*. Men will always give as bad a reason as they can for a good man’s actions. It seems to be innate in human nature never to give man credit for being right if you can help it, and often tender minds have been greatly wounded when they have been misrepresented and their actions have been imputed to sinister and selfish motives—when they have really desired to serve Christ. But do not let your heart be broken about that. You will appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ—do not care about the petty judgment seats of men! Go on with your Master’s work dauntlessly and fearlessly. Let them say, as David’s brothers said of him, “Because of your pride and the naughtiness of your heart have you come to see the battle.” You go and get Goliath’s head and bring it back—and that shall be the best answer to these sneering ones. When they see that God is with you and that He has given you the triumph, you shall have honor, even in the eyes of those who now ridicule you! I think sometimes the Christian should have very much the same bravado against the judgment of men as David had when Michal, the daughter of Saul, came out and said, “How glorious was the King of Israel, today, who uncovered himself today in the eyes of the handmaids of his servants.” And he said, “It was before the Lord, and I will yet be more vile than thus.” Let your eyes be to God and forget the eyes of men! Live so that whether they know what you do, or do not know, you will not care, for your conduct will bear the blaze of the great Judgment Day and, therefore, the criticisms of earth do not affect you! Let no man domineer over you.  
So may I put it in another light—*let no man sway your conscience so as to lead you*. I am always anxious, my dear Hearers, that whatever respect I may ever win from you—and I trust I may have your esteem and your affection—yet that you will never believe a Doctrine simply because I utter it! Unless I can confirm it from the Word of God, away with it! If it is not according to the teaching of the Lord and Master, I beseech you follow me not. Follow me only as far as I follow Christ! And so with every other man. Let it be God’s Truth, God’s Word, the Holy Spirit’s witness to that Word in your soul that you are seeking after! And rest, I pray you, never short of that, for if you do, your faith will stand merely in the wisdom of men—and when the man who helped you to believe is gone, perhaps your faith may be gone, too—when you most need its comforting power! No, let no man domineer over you, but press forward in the Christian race, looking unto Jesus, and looking unto Jesus only!  
But now a third meaning belongs to the text. A happy circumstance it is, this dark night, that the preacher does not need to use his manuscript, for if he did, his sermon would certainly come to an end right now. But here is this point, “Let no man beguile you of your reward.” It may mean this—  
**III.**LET NO MAN ROB YOU OF THE PRESENT REWARD WHICH YOU HAVE IN BEING A CHRISTIAN.  
Let no man deprive you of the present comfort which your faith should bring to you. Let me, just for a few minutes, have your attention while I speak upon this. Dear Brothers and Sisters, you and I, if we are believers in Christ, are this day completely pardoned. There is no sin in God’s book against us. We are wholly and completely justified! The righteousness of Jesus Christ covers us from head to foot and we stand before God as if we had never sinned! Now let no man rob you of this reward. Do not be tempted by anything that is said to doubt the completeness of a believer in Christ. Hold this, and as you hold it, enjoy it! Do not let the man whom you have most to fear, beguile you. Even though conscience should upbraid you and you should have many grave reasons for doubt, as you imagine, yet if you believe in Jesus, stand to it—“There is, therefore, now no condemnation to me, for I am in Christ Jesus! He that believes in Him is not condemned! I have believed and I am not condemned. Neither will He permit condemnation to be thundered against me, for Christ has borne my sin for me and I am clear in Him.” Let no man beguile you of the reward of feeling that you are complete in Christ!  
Further, you who have believed in Jesus Christ *are safe in Christ*. Because He lives, you shall live also. Who shall separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord? He has said, “I give unto My sheep eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of My hands.” Now there are some who will tell you that you are *not* safe and that it is dangerous for you to believe that you are. Let no man beguile you of this reward! You are saved. If you are believing on Him, He will keep you, and you may sing, “Now unto Him who is able to keep us from falling, and to present us faultless before His Presence with exceedingly great joy, unto Him be glory.” Hold to that blessed Truth of God that you are in Jesus—safe in Jesus Christ!  
There is a third blessed Truth, that not only are you pardoned and safe in Christ, but you are accepted at this moment in the Beloved. Your acceptance with God *does not rest upon anything in you*. You are accepted because you are in Christ, accepted for Christ’s sake. Now sometimes you will get robbed of this reward if you listen to the voice which says, “Why, there is still sin in you! Your prayers are imperfect! Your actions are stained.” Yes, but let no men beguile you of this conviction that, sinner as you are, you are still accepted in Christ Jesus!  
The Lord grant that you may feel this within and let no man beguile you of your reward as long as you live! May you live and die in the enjoyment of it, Beloved, for Christ’s sake. Amen.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: *Ephesians 4;*** Eph 6:1-15***.***

***Ephesians 4.*  
Verses 1, 2.***I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that you walk worthy of the vocation wherewith you are called. With all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love.*It is a loving call. Walk lovingly. It is the condescension of God that called you. Be, therefore, lowly. It is God in tenderness who has loved you. Be, therefore, meek, “forbearing one another in love.”

**3-6.***Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as you are called in one hope of your calling. One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.*Therefore, strive for unity. Woe unto those who divide Believers—who rob them of love to one another—who set up another Gospel which is not another, or in any way detract from the unity of the body of Christ.

**7.***But unto everyone of us is given Grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.*It does not mean that God gives stingingly, but that He gives according to our capacity to receive. We are not all made with the same measure of capacity because we are not all intended to fill the same office—and God gives everyone of us as much Grace as we are prepared to receive. The Lord enlarge our hearts that we may hold more of His Grace, “according to the measure of the gift of Christ.”

**8-10.***Therefore He said, When he ascended up on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. Now that He ascended*, *what is it but that He also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that He might fill all things.*Now what were the gifts He gave? He rode up to Heaven in triumph. And in Roman triumphs they scattered gold and silver among the people to show the greatness of the trophies which the warriors had brought home. So Christ, when He ascended up on high, scattered gifts among the sons of men. And what were these? Why they were men, for men are God’s possession—the Man, Christ Jesus, first, and then those whom He uses for Himself afterwards.

**11-13.***And he gave some, Apostles, and some, Prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.*We have not come to that yet. Therefore we need instruction. We need edifying or building up, and so the Lord gives to His Church according to His own mind and will, evangelists, pastors and the like. Sometimes there are pastors whom God never sent—and a man may take upon himself the voice of an evangelist who was never called—and consequently they are not gifts of God to the churches and is a waste of their strength. But if we have those whom God gives, we shall find a priceless gift in the bestowal of such men upon the Church of God!

**14-16.***That we henceforth are no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive, but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into Him in all things, which is the Head, even Christ: from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplies, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, makes increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.*You see then, Brothers and Sisters, where we are. We are each one put into his place to do something for the entire body. No limb of the body lives to itself. It is only healthy when it ministers to the health of the whole body. We are nothing, except as we are joined to the rest of God’s people, and especially joined to Him who is our glorious Head.

**17-19.***This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind. Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart. Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.* This, the member of the body of Christ will never do! The Head is holy, so will the members be by that Holy Spirit who sanctifies us!

**20.***But you have not so learned Christ.*What a beautiful expression this is! It does not say, “Learned the Doctrine of Christ,” or, “the precept of Christ,” though that were a grand Truth, but we learn Christ, Himself! Our school book is Christ! The copy by which we write is Christ! The image to which we desire to be conformed is Christ! “You have not so learned Christ.”

**21, 22.***If so be that you have heard Him, and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus: That you put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts—* You have done with it. You put it off as a beggar puts off his rags when he has fresh garments given him!

**23-25.***And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; And that you put on the man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. Therefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbor: for we are members one of another.*You know the eye will not deceive the head. There is no part of the body that will deceive the rest. If the foot perceives that there is a trap, it tells the body and it does not lead it astray. If the nostril perceives an evil smell, it tells the body, that it may escape from the noxious odor. The body is true to itself. So if we are members, one of another, lying must be abhorrent. Every thought of it in any shape must be detestable to us.

**26.***Be you angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath.* Be angry sometimes. A man that is never angry, surely has no strong convictions in him, for he that is not angry at evil can scarcely be thought to rejoice in that which is good. But anger is a dog that is very apt to bite the wrong persons. Therefore, be you angry, and sin not. Anger is like fire. Let it always be put out at night. “Let not the sun go down upon your wrath,” but if it lights during the day, keep it in the grate— keep it in its proper place, for if fire takes hold where it should not, the house may be destroyed and the man, himself, may perish in the fire. If you are angry, as you sometimes must be, “be angry and sin not. Let not the sun go down on your wrath.” They say that the stings of some obnoxious creatures will not die until the sun goes down. Well, let the sting of anger die when the sun goes down. Rake out the fire when the sun is down. Do not keep it blazing all night long, ready for the morning. Let it go out, lest our anger become hatred and become malice.

**27.***Neither give place to the devil.* He is standing at the door. If you give him a seat, he will come in and it is very easy to do so—to make an opportunity for the devil to come in. “Neither give place to the devil.” Idle persons tempt the devil to depart by being busy—by being prayerful, and by being much with God. Give no place to the devil.

**28.***Let him that stole, steal no more: but rather let him labor—*Honest industry is the cure for dishonesty.  
**28.***Working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needs.* What a splendid change from a thief, up to one that gives to him that needs! Now, between them, we should have put, “Let him that stole steal no more, but rather let him labor with his hands”—a thing which is good—“that he may be able to provide things honest for himself.” A very good idea, too, but the like Christian thought is that he may labor, working with his hands that he may have, to *give*. I wonder how many, even of professing Christians, think of this—that the objective of labor should be that they may have to give? There are some who think the objective is that we may have, to *keep*—that we may have, to *hoard*—but I say Christ, by His Apostle, teaches us that we should labor that we may have, *to give to him that needs.*  
**29.***Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth.*Putrid is the word—“no putrid communication”—no word, therefore, which tends to do harm to the purest mind—nothing which is unsavory. Therefore, also, nothing that is untrue—nothing that is slanderous—nothing that would injure my neighbor. “Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth.” “You may as well say it as think it,” says one. By no manner of means! If you think it, it will do you harm—if you say it, it will do hurt to others! You may have a bottle of poison and it is much better to keep the cork in, for if somebody should drink it, then they will die. No, “let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth.”  
**30-31.***But that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister Grace unto the hearers. And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby you are sealed unto the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice.* Why does the Apostle say “clamor”? Why, because when people are angry they generally talk very loud, and I believe that if persons would correct their tone of voice and resolve, they will not speak above their usual tone! When they feel heated and provoked, it would greatly assist to check the abolition of passion. So the Apostle puts in, “Let all bitterness and wrath, and anger, and *clamor*, and loud talking—all clamor and evil speaking—be put away from you with all malice.”  
**32.***And be you kind, one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake has forgiven you.*

***Ephesians 6.***

**Verse 1.***Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right.* Fitting by nature and pleasing in the sight of God.  
**2-4.***Honor your father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise: that it may be well with you, and you may live long on the earth*. *And you fathers, provoke not your children to wrath, but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.*For the duties are like birds with two wings, or like a pair of scales—balance for each side. There is the child’s duty, but there is the parent’s duty, too.  
**5-9.***Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ. Not with eye service, as men pleasers, but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart. With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men: Knowing that whatever good thing any man does, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he is bond or free. And, you masters, do the same things unto them.* Mind that! We may hear a good deal about the duties of servants. Let us hear something about the duties of masters and mistresses. “You masters, do the same things unto them.”

**9.***Forbearing threats: knowing that your Master also is in Heaven; neither is there respect of persons with Him.* Very beautifully balanced is the whole system of Gospel morals. There is no undue advantage given by the fact of our being rendered equal in Christ, so that the servant is to be less obedient to the master, or the child to the parent—neither is there any undue power given to those who are in authority! But the Grace of God teaches all to do unto all as we would that they should do unto us.

**10.***Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord.*You cannot do right if you are not strong. Unless you have the backbone of principle—unless you have spiritual muscle and sinew by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in you, you cannot continue to do that which is right. “Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord.”

**10, 11.***And in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God.* First, be strong, and then put on armor. It is no use putting armor on a weak man, or else it will be what James I said it was—a capital invention, he said, because he who wore it would come to no harm and certainly do no harm, for he could not stir in it. Now you must be strong, first, but then not trust in your strength, but put on the armor which is here described. And yet it would be useless to have the armor unless you are first strong. “Put on the whole armor of God.”

**11-13.***That you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Therefore take unto you the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.* To keep your ground, not to give way in any respect! And blessed is that man whose name is Stand-Fast, and whose practice is to hold fast—“having done all to stand.”

**14.***Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth.* Nothing will so tighten up your garments and keep them right as a belt of sincerity and truthfulness. If we are not true, whatever else we are, we are but loosely arrayed. We shall come to mischief. “Having your loins girt about with truth.”

**14.***And having on the breastplate of righteousness.* A grand protection when God has given you to be holy, and when the principle which covers your heart and shields your members is righteousness!

**15.***And your feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace.* Peace in your own heart, peace with God, peace with man. Peacefulness and peace. No shoes like these! A man that has a merry heart makes many a mile fly beneath him, but a heavy heart is a slow traveler. “Your feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace.”

—Adapted from the *C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Version 1.0, Ages Software.  
**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.** Sermon #1530 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

**÷Col 3.1**

FOLLOWING THE RISEN CHRIST  
NO. 1530

**DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, MARCH 28, 1880, *BY C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“If you then are risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sits at the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.”***Col 3:1-2***.***

THE resurrection of our Divine Lord from the dead is the cornerstone of Christian doctrine. Perhaps I might more accurately call it the keystone of the arch of Christianity, for if that fact could be disproved, the whole fabric of the Gospel would fall to the ground. If Jesus Christ is not risen, then is our preaching in vain and your faith is also in vain—you are yet in your sins. If Christ is not risen, then they which have fallen asleep in Christ have perished and we, ourselves, in missing so glorious a hope as that of Resurrection, are, of all men, the most miserable! Because of the great importance of His Resurrection, our Lord was pleased to give many Infallible proofs of it, by appearing again and again in the midst of His followers.

It would be interesting to search out how many times He appeared. I think we have mention of some 16 manifestations. He showed Himself openly before His disciples and did eat and drink with them. They touched His hands and His side and heard His voice and knew that it was the same Jesus that was crucified. He was not content with giving evidence to the ears and to the eyes, but even to the sense of touch He proved the reality of His Resurrection. These appearances were very varied. Sometimes He gave an interview to one alone, either to a man, as to Cephas, or to a woman, as to Magdalene. He conversed with two of His followers as they went to Emmaus and with the company of the Apostles by the sea. We find Him at one moment among the 11 when the doors were shut for fear of the Jews and at another time in the midst of an assembly of more than 500 brethren, who, years later, were, most of them, living witnesses to the fact.

They could not all have been deceived. It is not possible that any historical fact could have been placed upon a better basis of credibility than the Resurrection of our Lord from the dead. This is put beyond all dispute and question and it was done on purpose because it is essential to the whole Christian system. For this same cause the Resurrection of Christ is commemorated frequently. There is no ordinance in Scripture of any one Lord’s-Day in the year being set apart to commemorate the rising of Christ from the dead and for this reason*every* Lord’s-Day is the memorial of our Lord’s Resurrection. Wake up any Lord’s-Day you please, whether in the depth of winter, or in the warmth of summer and you may sing—

***“Today He rose and left the dead,***

***And Satan’s empire fell!  
Today the saints  
His triumph spread,  
And all His wonders tell.”***

To set apart an Easter Sunday for special memory of the Resurrection is a *human* device for which there is no Scriptural command. But to make every Lord’s-Day an Easter Sunday is due to Him who rose early on the first day of the week. We gather together on the first, rather than upon the seventh day of the week, because redemption is even a greater work than creation and more worthy of commemoration and because the rest which followed creation is far outdone by that which ensues upon the completion of redemption! Like the Apostles, we meet on the first day of the week and hope that Jesus may stand in our midst and say, “Peace be unto you.”

Our Lord has lifted the Sabbath from the old and rusted hinges whereon the Law had placed it long before and set it on the new golden hinges which His love has fashioned. He has placed our rest day, not at the end of a week of toil, but at the beginning of the rest which remains for the people of God. Every first day of the week we should meditate upon the rising of our Lord and seek to enter into fellowship with Him in His risen life. Never let us forget that all who are in Him rose from the dead in His rising.

Next in importance to the fact of the Resurrection is the doctrine of the federal headship of Christ and the unity of all His people with Him. It is because we are in Christ that we become partakers of everything that Christ did—we are circumcised with Him, dead with Him, buried with Him, risen with Him because we cannot be separated from Him. We are members of His body and not a bone of Him can be broken. Because that union is most intimate, continuous and indissoluble, therefore all that concerns Him concerns us and as He rose, so all His people have arisen in Him! They are risen in two ways. First, *representatively*. All the elect rose in Christ in the day when He quit the tomb. He was justified, or declared to be clear of all liabilities on account of our sins by being set free from the prison of the tomb.

There was no reason for detaining Him in the sepulcher, for He had discharged the debts of His people by dying “unto sin once.” He was our Hostage and our Representative and when He came forth from His bonds we came forth in Him. We have endured the sentence of the Law in our Substitute. We have lain in its prison and even died under its death warrant and now we are no longer under its curse. “Now if we are dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him: knowing that Christ, being raised from the dead, dies no more; death has no more dominion over Him. For in that He died, He died unto sin once: but in that He lives, He lives unto God.”

Next to this representative resurrection comes our *spiritual* resurrection, which is ours as soon as we are led by faith to believe in Jesus Christ. Then it my be said of us, “And you has He quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins.” The resurrection blessing is to be perfected, by-and-by, at the appearing of our Lord and Savior, for then our bodies shall rise again if we fall asleep before His coming. He redeemed our manhood in its entirety—spirit, soul and body—and He will not be content until the resurrection which has passed upon our spirit shall pass upon our body, too. These dry bones shall live! Together with our dead body they shall rise—

***“When He arose ascending high,  
He showed our feet the way;  
Up to the Lord our flesh shall fly  
At the great rising day.”***

Then shall we know in the perfection of our resurrection beauty that we are, indeed, completely risen in Christ and “as in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive.”

This morning we shall only speak of our fellowship with Christ in His Resurrection as to our own spiritual resurrection. Do not misunderstand me as if I thought the resurrection to be only spiritual, for a literal rising from the dead is yet to come. But our text speaks of *spiritual* resurrection and I shall, therefore, endeavor to set it before you.

**I.**First, then, LET US CONSIDER OUR SPIRITUAL RISING WITH Christ—“If you then are risen with Christ.” Though the words look like a supposition they are not meant to be. The Apostle casts no doubt and raises no question, but merely puts it thus for argument’s sake. It might just as well be read, “Since you then are risen in Christ.” The “if” is used logically, not theologically—by way of argument and not by way of doubt. All who believe in Christ are risen with Christ. Let us meditate on this Truth of God. For, first, we were “dead in trespasses and sins,” but having believed in Christ we have been quickened by the Holy Spirit and we are dead no longer!

There we lay in the tomb, ready to become corrupt—yes, some of us *were* corrupt—the marks of the worm of sin were upon our character and the foul stench of actual sin arose from us. More or less, according to the length of time in which we abode in that death and according to the circumstances with which we were surrounded, death worked in us corruption. We lay in our death quite unable to raise ourselves. Ours were eyes that could not see and ears that could not hear; a heart that could not love and withered hands that could not be stretched out to give the touch of faith. We were even as they that go down into the Pit, as those that have been long dead—only we were in a worse plight than those actually dead, for we were responsible for all our omissions and inabilities.

We were as guilty as if we had power, for the loss of moral power is not the loss of moral responsibility! We were, therefore, in a state of spiritual death of the most fearful kind. The Holy Spirit visited us and made us live. We remember the first sensation of life, some of us—how it seemed to tingle in our soul’s veins with sharp and bitter pain—just as drowning persons, when life is coming back to them, suffer great pain. Conviction was worked in us and confession of sin. A dread of judgment to come and a sense of present condemnation were present, but these were tokens of *life* and that life gradually deepened and opened up until the eyes were opened—we could see Christ! Our hands ceased to be withered and we stretched them out and touched His garment’s hem. Our feet began to move in the way of obedience and our heart felt the sweet glow of love within.

Then the eyes, not content with only seeing, fell to weeping and afterwards, when the tears were wiped away, they flashed and sparkled with delight. And oh, my Brothers and Sisters, believers in Jesus, you were not spiritually dead any longer! On Christ you have believed and that grand act proves that you are dead no more! You have been quickened by God according to the working of His mighty power which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenlies. Now, Beloved, you are new creatures—the product of a second birth, begotten again in Christ Jesus unto newness of life! Christ *is* your life—such a life as you never knew before, nor could have known apart from Him. If you then are risen with Christ you walk in newness of life while the world abides in death!

Let us advance another step. We are risen with Christ and, therefore, there has been worked in us a wonderful change. When the dead shall rise, they will not appear as they now are. The buried seed rises from the ground, but not as a seed, for it puts forth green leaves and bud and stem and gradually develops expanding flowers and fruit and even so we wear a new form, for we are renewed after the image of Him that created us in righteousness and holiness! I ask you to consider the change which the Spirit of God has worked in the Believer—a wonderful change, indeed! Before regeneration our soul was as our body will be when it dies and we read that, “it is sown in corruption.” There was corruption in our mind and it was working irresistibly towards every evil and offensive thing.

In many, the corruption did not appear upon the surface, but it worked within. In others it was conspicuous and fearful to look upon. How great the change! For now the power of corruption within us is broken! The new life has overcome it, for it is a living and incorruptible seed which lives and abides forever. Corruption is upon the old nature, but it cannot touch the new, which is our true and real self. Is it not a great thing to be purged of the filthiness which would have ultimately brought us down to Hell where the unquenchable fire burns and the undying worm feeds upon the corrupt?

Our old state was further like that which comes upon the body at death because it was a state of dishonor. You know how the Apostle says of the body, “It is sown in dishonor” and certainly no corpse wears such dishonor as that which rests upon a man who is dead in trespasses and sins. Why, of all things in the world that deserve shame and contempt, a sinful man is certainly the most so! He despises his Creator; he neglects his Savior; he chooses evil instead of good and puts the Light of God from him because his deeds are evil and, therefore, he prefers the darkness. In the judgment of all pure spirits, a sinful man is a dishonorable man.

But oh how changed is man when the Grace of God works within him, for then he is honorable. “Behold, what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God.” What an honor this is! Heaven itself contains not a more honorable being than a renewed man! Well may we cry with David, “What is man, that You are mindful of him? And the son of man, that You visit him?” But when we see man, in the Person of Jesus, made to have dominion over all the works of God’s hands and know that Jesus has made us kings and priests unto God, we are filled with amazement that God should so exalt us! The Lord Himself has said, “ Since you were precious in My sight, you have been honorable and I have loved you.” “Unto you therefore which believe he is an honor,” for so the original text may run. A precious Christ makes us precious—such honor have all the saints!

When a body is buried, we are told by the Apostle, again, that it is “sown in weakness.” The poor dead frame cannot lay itself down in its last bed—friendly hands must place it there. Even so we were utter weakness towards all good. When we were the captives of sin, we could do nothing good, even as our Lord said, “Without Me you can do nothing.” We were incapable of even a good *thought* apart from Him. But “when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly” and now we know Him and the power of His Resurrection! God has given us the spirit of power and of love. Is it not written, “As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name”? What an amazing power is this! Now we “taste of the powers of the world to come” and we are “strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness.”

Faith girds us with a Divine power, for, “all things are possible to him that believes,” and each Believer can exclaim, without boasting, “I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me!” Is not this a marvelous change which the spiritual resurrection has worked upon us? Is it not a glorious thing that God’s strength should be perfect in our weakness? The great change mainly concerns another point. It is said of the body, “It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body.” Before this we were natural men and discerned not the things that are of the Spirit of God. We minded earthly things and were moved by carnal lusts after the things which are seen. But now, through Divine Grace, a spirit has been created in us which feeds on *spiritual* bread, lives for *spiritual* objects, is swayed by *spiritual* motives and rejoices in *spiritual* truths.

This change, from the natural to the spiritual, is such as only God Himself could have worked and yet we have experienced it. To God be the glory! So that by virtue of our rising in Christ we have received life and have become the subjects of a wondrous change—“old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.” In consequence of our receiving this life and undergoing this change, the things of the world and sin become a tomb to us. To a dead man a sepulcher is as good a dwelling as he can want. You may call it his bedchamber if you will, for he lies within it as unconscious as if he were sleeping. But the moment the dead man lives, he will not endure such a bedchamber! He calls it a dreary vault; a loathsome dungeon; an unbearable morgue and he must leave it at once!

So when you and I were natural men and had no spiritual life, the things of this life contented us. But it is far otherwise now. A merely outward religion was all that we desired—a dead form suited a dead soul. Judaism pleased those who were under its yoke in the very beginning of the Gospel. New moons and holy days and traditional ordinances and fasting and feasting were great things with those who forgot their resurrection with Christ! All those things make pretty furniture for a dead man’s chamber! But when the Eternal Life enters the soul, these outward ordinances are flung off—the living man tears off his grave clothes and demands such garments as are suitable for life!

So the Apostle in the chapter before our text tells us to let no man spoil us by the traditions of men and the inventions of a dead ritualism, for these things are not the portion of renewed and spiritual men. So, too, all merely carnal objects become as a grave to us, whether they are sinful pleasures or selfish gains. For the dead man, the shroud, the coffin and the vault are suitable enough—but make the corpse alive and he cannot rest in the coffin! He makes desperate struggles to break it up. See how, by main force, he dashes up the lid, tears off his bandages and leaps from the bier! So the man renewed by Grace cannot live in sin—it is a coffin to him—he cannot bear evil pleasures, they are as a shroud. He cries for liberty!

When resurrection comes, the man lifts up the soil above his grave and scatters monument and headstone, if these are raised above him. Some souls are buried under a mass of self-righteousness, like wealthy men on whom shrines of marble have been heaped. But all these the Believer shakes off! He must have them gone! He cannot bear these dead works. He cannot live otherwise than by*faith*—all other life is death to him. He must get out of his former state, for as a tomb is not a fit place for a living man, so when we are quickened by Grace, the things of sin and self and carnal sense become dreary catacombs to us where our soul feels buried and out of which we must arise. How can we that are raised out of the death of sin live any longer in sin?

And, now, Beloved, we are at this time wholly raised from the dead in a spiritual sense. Let us think of this, for our Lord did not have His head quickened while His feet remained in the sepulcher. He rose a perfect and entire Man, alive throughout. Even so have we been renewed in every part. We have received, though it is but in its infancy, a perfect spiritual life—we are perfect in Christ Jesus. In our inner man our eyes are opened, our ears are awakened, our hands are active, our feet are nimble—our every faculty is there, though as yet immature and needing development and having the old dead nature to contend with. Moreover and best of all, we are so raised that we shall die no more! Oh, tell me no more the dreary tale that a man who has received the Divine Life may yet lose Grace and perish!

With our Bibles in our hands we know better. “Christ being raised from the dead dies no more, death has no more dominion over Him” and, therefore, He that has received Christ’s life in him shall never die. Has He not said, “He that believes in Me, though he were dead yet shall he live; and whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die”? This life which He has given us shall be in us, “a well of water, springing up unto everlasting life.” He has said, “I give unto My sheep *eternal* life and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of My hand.” On the day of our quickening we bid farewell to spiritual death and to the sepulcher where we slept under sin’s dominion!

Farewell, you deadly love of sin! We have done with you! Farewell, dead world, corrupt world! We have done with you! Christ has raised us. Christ has given us eternal life! We forsake forever the dreary abodes of death and seek the heavenly places. Our Jesus lives and because He lives we shall live also, world without end! Thus I have tried to work out the metaphor of resurrection, by which our spiritual renewal is so well set forth.

**II.**We are urged by the Apostle to use the life which we have received and so, secondly, LET US EXERCISE THE NEW LIFE IN SUITABLE PURSUITS. “If you then are risen with Christ, seek those things which are above.” Let your actions be agreeable to your new life. First, then, let us leave the sepulcher. If we are quickened, our first act should be to leave the region of death. Let us quit the vault of a merely outward religion and let us worship God in spirit and in truth. Let us have done with priestcraft and all the black business of spiritual undertaking and let the dead bury their dead—we will have none of it! Let us have done with outward forms and rites and ceremonies, which are not of Christ’s ordaining and let us know nothing except Christ Crucified, for that which is not of the living Lord is a mere piece of funeral pomp, fit for the cemeteries of formalists whose whole religion is a shoveling in of dust on coffin lids. “Earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust.” “That which is born of the flesh is flesh.”

Let us also quit the vault of carnal enjoyments where men seek to satisfy themselves with provision for the flesh. Let us not live by the sight of the eyes, nor by the hearing of the ears. Let us not live for the amassing of wealth, or the gaining of fame, for these ought to be as dead things to the man who is risen in Christ. Let us not live for the world which we see, nor after the fashion of men to whom this life is everything. Let us live as those that have come out of the world and who, though they are in it, are no more of it. Let us be unmindful of the country from where we came out and leave it, as Abraham did, as though there were no such country, henceforth dwelling with our God, sojourners with Him, seeking “a city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God.” As Jesus Christ left behind Him all the abodes of death, let us do the same.

And, then, let us hasten to forget every evil, even as our Lord hastened to leave the tomb. How little a time, after all, did He sojourn among the dead! He must lie in the heart of the earth three days, but He made them as short as possible, so that it is difficult to make out the three days at all. They were there, for there were fragments of each period, but surely never were three days so short as Jesus made them! He cut them short in righteousness and being loosed from the pains of death, He rose early, at the very break of day! At the first instant that it was possible for Him to get away from the sepulcher, consistent with the Scriptures, He left the napkin and the grave clothes and stood in the garden, waiting to salute His disciples!

So let it be with us! There should be no lingering, no loitering, no hankering after the world—no clinging to its vanities, no making provision for the flesh. Up in the morning early, oh you who are spiritually quickened! Up in the morning early from your ease, your carnal pleasure, your love of wealth and self and away out from the dark vault into a congenial sphere of action—“If you then are risen with Christ, seek those things which are above.”

To pursue the analogy—when our Lord had left the tomb thus early, He spent a season on earth among His disciples and we are to pass the time of our sojourning here on earth as His was passed—in holy service. Our Lord reckoned that He was on the move from earth as soon as He rose. If you remember, He said, “I ascend unto My Father and your Father.” He did not say, “I shall ascend,” as though He looked at it as a *future* event, but He said, “I ascend,” as if it were so quickly to be done that it was already doing. Forty days He stayed, for He had 40 days’ work to do—but He looked upon Himself as already going up into Heaven. He had done with the world. He had done with the grave and now He said, “I ascend to My Father and your Father.”

We also have our 40 days to tarry here—the period may be longer or shorter as the Providence of God ordains—but it will soon be over and the time of our departure will come. Let us spend our risen life on earth as Jesus spent His—in a greater seclusion from the world and in greater nearness to Heaven than ever. Our Lord occupied Himself much in testimony—manifesting Himself—as we have already seen, in many ways to His friends and followers. Let us also manifest the fruits of our risen life and bear testimony to the power of God! Let all men see that we are risen! So live that there can be no more doubt about your spiritual resurrection than there was about Christ’s literal Resurrection. Do not publish to the world your *own* virtues that you may be honored among them. “Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in Heaven.”

Put your possession of the new life beyond question so that when you have gone Home your friends and acquaintances may say—“He was a living child of God, for we felt the power of his life. He was a changed man, for we saw the renewing.” Jesus spent His risen life, also, in comforting His saints. He said, “Peace be unto you.” He spoke to one and another, to poor Peter who denied Him and to all the assembled company, cheering them and preparing them for their future career. He spent those 40 days in setting everything in order in His kingdom, arranging as to what should be when He should be taken up and leaving His last commission to His followers was that they should “go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature.” Beloved, let us also spend the time of our sojourning here in the fear of God, worshipping Him, serving Him, glorifying Him, endeavoring to set everything in order for the extension of our Master’s Kingdom, for the comforting of His saints, for the accomplishment of His sacred purposes.

And now I have led you up so far, I want to go further and rise higher. May the Lord help us! Let our minds ascend to Heaven in Christ. Even while our bodies are here we are to be drawn upward with Christ— attracted to Him so that we can say, “He has raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.” Our text says, “Seek those things which are above where Christ sits at the right hand of God.” What is this but rising to heavenly pursuits? Jesus has gone up— let us go up with Him! As for these bodies, we cannot as yet ascend, for they are not fit to inherit the Kingdom of God—yet let our thoughts and hearts mount up and build a happy rest on high! Let not a stray *thought* ascend like one lone bird which sings and mounts the sky, but let our whole mind, soul, spirit, heart arise as when doves fly as a cloud!

Let us be practical, too, and in very deed seek the things that are above—seek them because we feel we need them. Seek them because we greatly prize them. Seek them because we hope to gain them for a man will not heartily seek for that which he has no hope of obtaining. The things which are above, which we are even now to seek, are such as these—let us seek heavenly communion, for we are no more numbered with the congregation of the dead, but we have fellowship in Christ’s Resurrection and with all the risen ones. “Truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ” and, “our conversation is in Heaven.” Let us seek to walk with the living God and to know the fellowship of the Spirit. Let us seek heavenly Graces, for “every good gift and every perfect gift is from above.” Let us seek more faith, more love, more patience, more zeal—let us labor after greater charity, greater brotherly kindness, greater humbleness of spirit.

Let us labor after likeness to Christ, that He may be the firstborn among many brethren. Seek to bear the image of the heavenly and to wear those jewels which adorn heavenly spirits. Seek also heavenly objectives. Aim at the Glory of God in everything. You have to labor and toil in this world for you are yet in the body—take care to use worldly things to God’s Glory. Exercise your privileges and fulfill your duties as men and as Englishmen, as before God, not minding the judgment of men. Wherein you mingle with the sons of men, take heed that you descend not to their level, nor act from their motives. You are not to seek your own selfish ends or the aggrandizement of a party, but to promote the general good and the interests of truth, righteousness, peace and purity. Sanctify everything by the love of God and your neighbor. Seek no party ends, but things which are pure and honest and of good report.

Descend not to the falsehood, the trickery, the policy which are from beneath, but honestly, sincerely, righteously, always seek to live as those who are alive from the dead. “Seek those things which are above,” that is, heavenly joys. Oh seek to know on earth the peace of Heaven, the rest of Heaven, the victory of Heaven, the service of Heaven, the communion of Heaven, the holiness of Heaven! You may have foretastes of all these— seek after them! Seek, in a word, to be preparing for the Heaven which Christ is preparing for you. You are soon to dwell above—robe yourselves for the great festival. Your treasure is above, let your hearts be with it. All that you are to possess in eternity is above, where Christ is! Rise, then, and enjoy it! Let hope anticipate the joys which are reserved and so let us begin our Heaven here below.

If you, then, are risen with Christ, live according to your risen nature, for your life is hid with Christ in God. What a magnet to draw us towards Heaven should this fact be—that Christ sits at God’s right hand! Where should the wife’s thoughts be when her husband is away but with the absent and beloved one? You know, Brothers and Sisters, it is not otherwise with us—the objects of our affection are always followed by our thoughts. Let Jesus, then, be as a great loadstone, drawing our meditations and affections towards Himself. He is sitting, for His work is done, as it is written, “This Man, when He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God.” Let us rise and rest with Him! He is sitting on a Throne. Observe His majesty! Delight in His power and trust in His dominion.

He is sitting at the right hand of God in the place of honor and favor. This is a proof that we are beloved and favored of God, for our Representative has the choicest place, at God’s right hand! Let your hearts ascend and enjoy that love and favor with Him. Take wing, my thoughts, and fly away to Jesus! My Soul, have you not often said, “Woe’s me that I dwell in Meshach and tabernacle in the tents of Kedar! Oh that I had wings like a dove, that I might fly away and be at rest”? Now, then, my Soul, here are wings for you! Jesus draws you upward! You have a right to be where Jesus is, for you are married to Him! Therefore let your thoughts abide with Him, rest in Him, delight in Him, rejoice in Him and yet again rejoice!

The sacred ladder is before us, Brothers and Sisters, let us climb it, until, by faith, we sit in the heavenlies with Him. May the Spirit of God bless these words to you.

**III.**Thirdly, inasmuch as we are risen with Christ, LET THE NEW LIFE DELIGHT ITSELF IN SUITABLE OBJECTS. This brings in the second verse—“Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.” “Set your affection.” These words do not quite express the meaning, though they are as near it as any one clause could well come. We might render it thus—“Have a relish for things above” or, “Study industriously things above” or, “Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.” That which is proper enough for a dead man is quite unsuitable for a risen one! Objects of desire which might suit us when we were sinners are not legitimate nor worthy objects for us when we are made saints. As we are quickened, we must exercise life and, as we have ascended, we must love higher things than those of earth.

What are these “things above” which we should set our affection upon? I ask you, now, to lift your eyes above yonder clouds and this lower firmament to the residence of God. What do you see there? First, there is God Himself. Make Him the subject of your thoughts, your desires, your emotions, your love. “Delight yourself, also, in the Lord and He will give you the desires of your heart.” “My Soul, wait only upon God, for my expectation is from Him.” Call Him, “God my exceeding joy.” Let nothing come between you and your heavenly Father! What is all the world if you have not God and when you once have God, what matters it though all the world is gone? God is all things and when you can say, “God is mine,” you are richer than Croesus. O to say, “Whom have I in Heaven but You? And there is none upon earth that I desire beside You”!

O to love God with all our heart and with all our soul and with all our mind and with all our strength—that is what the Law *required*—but it is what the *Gospel* enables us to *render*. What do I see next? I see Jesus, who is God, but yet is truly Man. Need I press upon you, Beloved, to set your love upon the Well-Beloved? Has He not won your heart and does He not hold it, now, as under a mighty spell? I know you love Him! Fix your mind on Him, then. Often meditate upon His Divine Person, His perfect work, His mediatorial Glory, His second coming, His glorious reign, His love for you, your own security in Him, your union with Him! Oh let these sweet thoughts possess your breasts, fill your mouths and influence your lives. Let the morning break with thoughts of Christ and let your last thought at night be sweetened with His Presence. Set your affection upon Him who has set His affection upon you!

But what do I see above next? I see the new Jerusalem which is the mother of us all! I see the Church of Christ triumphant in Heaven, with which the Church militant is one. We do not realize enough the fact that we are come unto the general assembly and Church of the Firstborn, whose names are written in Heaven. Love all the saints, but do not forget the saints above! Have fellowship with them, for we make but one communion. Remember those—

***“Who once were mourning here below,  
And wet their couch with tears,  
Who wrestled hard, as we do now,  
With sins and doubts and fears.”***

Speak with the brave ones who have won their crowns, the heroes who have fought a good fight and now rest from their labors, waving the palm. Let your hearts be often among the perfected, with whom you are to spend eternity.

And what else is there above that our hearts should love but Heaven itself? It is the place of holiness! Let us so love it that we begin to be holy *here*. It is the place of rest—let us so delight in it that by faith we enter into that rest! O my Brothers and Sisters, you have vast estates which you have never seen—and I think if I had an estate on earth which was soon to be mine, I would wish to take a peep over the hedge now and then. If I could not take possession, I should like to see what I had in reversion. I would make an excuse to pass that way and say to any who were with me, “That estate is going to be mine before long.”

In your present poverty console yourselves with the many mansions. In your sickness delight much in the land where the inhabitants shall no more say, “I am sick.” In the midst of depression of spirit comfort your heart with the prospect of unmixed felicity—

***“No more fatigue, no more distress,  
Nor sin nor death shall reach the place!  
No groans to mingle with the songs  
Which warble from immortal tongues!”***

What? Are you fettered to earth? Can you not project yourself into the future? The stream of death is narrow—cannot your imagination and your faith leap over the brook to stand on the other shore awhile and cry, “All is mine and mine forever! Where Jesus is there shall I be! Where Jesus sits there shall I rest—

***‘Far from a world of grief and sin,  
With God eternally shut in’”?***  
“Set your affection on things above.”

Oh to get away at this present time from these dull cares which, like a fog, envelope us! Even we that are Christ’s servants and live in His court, at times, feel weary and droop as if His service were hard. He never means it to be a bondage and it is our fault if we make it so. Martha’s service is due, but she is not called to be cumbered with much serving—that is her own arrangement! Let us serve abundantly and yet sit with Mary at the Master’s feet. You who are in business and mix with the world by the necessity of your callings must find it difficult to keep quite clear of the dragging down influences of this poor world—it will hamper you if it can. You are like a bird which is always in danger when it alights on the earth. There are twigs and traps and nets and guns and a poor bird is never safe except upon the wing and up aloft. Yet birds must come down to feed and they do well to gather their meal in haste and take to their wings again.

When we come down among men we must speedily be up again. When you have to mix with the world and see its sin and evil, yet take heed that you do not light on the ground without your Father. And then, as soon as ever you have picked up your barley, rise again—away, away, for this is not your rest! You are like Noah’s dove flying over the waste of waters— there is no rest for the sole of your feet but on the ark with Jesus! On this Resurrection Day fence out the world! Let us chase away the wild boar of the woods and let the vines bloom and the tender grapes give forth their good smell and let the Beloved come and walk in the garden of our souls while we delight ourselves in Him and in His heavenly gifts.

Let us not carry our burden of things below on this holy day, but let us keep it as a Sabbath unto the Lord! On the Sabbath we are no more to work with our minds than with our hands. Cares and anxieties of an earthly kind defile the day of sacred rest. The essence of Sabbathbreaking lies in worry and murmuring and unbelief with which too many are filled. Put these away, Beloved, for we are risen with Christ and it is not right that we should wander among the tombs! No, rather let us sing unto the Lord a new song and praise Him with our whole soul.

Adapted from*The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307. Sermon #617 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

**÷Col 3.4**

CHRIST OUR LIFE—SOON TO APPEAR

NO. 617

**DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, FEBRUARY 26, 1865, *BY C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall you, also, appear with Him in glory.”***Col 3:4***.***

MY discourse on Sunday mornings is very frequently the gathering up of the thoughts and experiences of the week—a handful of barley which I have gleaned among the sheaves. But I could not thrust upon you, this morning, the poverty-stricken productions of my own insufferable dullness of brain, weariness of heart and sickness of spirit during this week, for this were a sure method of making you partakers of my misery. I have wandered through a wilderness, but I will not scatter handfuls of the hot sand among you. I have traversed the valley of the shadow of death, but I will not repeat the howling of Apollyon.

This day of rest is appointed for a far better purpose. Scarcely knowing how to fulfill the appointed service of this morning, I sit down and remember the ancient minstrel, who, when the genius of song had for a time departed from him, was nevertheless called upon to discourse sweet music. What could he do but play his fingers among the strings of his harp and begin some old accustomed strain? His fingers and his lips moved at first mechanically. The first few stanzas dropped from him from mere force of habit and fell like stones without life or power. But by and by he struck a string which woke the echoes of his soul—a note fell on his heart like a blazing torch and the smoldering fire within his soul suddenly flamed up. The Heaven-born muse was with him and he sang as in his better times.

So may it be my happy lot this morning—to place my fingers on the strings which know so well the name of Jesus—and begin to discourse upon a theme which so constantly has made these walls ring! Although at first insipid periods may try your patient ears, yet shall they nevertheless lead to something that may kindle in you hope and joy and love, if not rapture and delight! O for the wings of eagles to bear our souls upward towards the Throne of our God! Already my heart warms with the expectation of a blessing!

Does the earth feel the rising of the sun before the first bright beams gild the east? Are there not sharp-witted birds which know within themselves that the sunbeams are on the road and therefore begin right joyously to wake up their fellows to tell them that the morning comes leaping over the hills? Certain hopeful, joyful thoughts have entered within our heart—prophetic of the Comforter’s Divine appearing—to make glad our souls. Does not the whole earth prophecy the coming of the happy days of spring? There are certain little bulbs that swell, and flowers that peep

from under the black mold and say, “We know what others do not know, that the summer’s coming, coming very soon.”

And surely there are rising hopes within us this morning which show their golden flowers above our heaviness and assure us with joyful accents that Christ is coming to cheer our hearts yet again! Believer, you shall once again behold His comfortable Presence! You shall no longer cry unto Him out of the depths, but your soul shall lean upon His arm and drink deep of His love! Beloved, I proceed in the hope that the gracious Lord will favor His most unworthy servant and in His mercy fulfill our best expectations.

Our text is a very simple one and bears upon its surface four thoughts. First, that Christ is our life. That, secondly, Christ is hidden and so is our life. That thirdly, Christ will one day appear. And, fourthly, that when He appears, we, also, shall appear with Him in glory.

**I.**The first most precious and experimental doctrine lies in these words, “CHRIST WHO IS OUR LIFE.” We hardly realize that we are reading in Colossians when we meet with this marvelously rich expression. It is so like John’s way of talking.

See his opening words in his Gospel, “In Him was life and the life was the light of men.” Remember how he reports the words at Lazarus’ tomb, “I am the resurrection and the life.” How familiarly he speaks of the Lord Jesus under the same Character in his first Epistle—“That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon and our hands have handled, of the Word of life. For the life was manifested and we have seen it and bear witness and show unto you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested unto us.”

How closely John cleaves to Jesus! He does not say, as the preacher of this morning will—Christ is the food of our life and the joy of our life and the object of our life and so on. No, but “Christ is our life.” I think that Peter or James would have said, “He is the strength or guide of our life,” but John must put his head right on the Savior’s bosom—he cannot talk at a distance, or whisper from a second seat—his head must go sweetly down upon the Savior’s heaving bosom.

He must feel himself in the closest, nearest possible contact with his Lord. And so he puts it, “The life was manifested,” getting to the very pith and marrow of it at once. Paul has somewhat of the same loving spirit, and if not entitled to be called, “that disciple whom Jesus loved,” the angel might well have addressed him as he did Daniel, “O man, greatly beloved.” Therefore, you see, he leaps at once into the depths of the Truth of God and delights to dive in it. Whereas others, like the Israelites, stand outside the bound which surrounds the mount, he, like Moses, enters into the place where God is and beholds the excellent glory.

We, I fear, must compass this holy Truth round about before we can fully enter into it. Blessed is it to wait at the doors of such a Truth, though far better to enter in. Let it be understood that it is not *natural* but *spiritual* life of which the text treats and then we shall not mislead the ignorant.

**1.**Christ is the source of our life. “For as the Father raises up the dead, and quickens them, even so the Son quickens whom He will.” Our Lord’s own words are—“Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that hears My Word and believes on Him that sent Me has everlasting life and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life. Verily, verily, I say unto you, the hour is coming and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God. And they that hear shall live.”

Four verilies, as if to show the importance of the Truth here taught to us. We are dead in sin. That same voice which brought Lazarus out of the tomb brings us out of our grave of sin. We hear the Word of God and we live according to the promise—“Awake you that sleep and arise from the dead and Christ shall give you light” (Eph 5:14). Jesus is our Alpha, as well as our Omega—He is the Author of our faith, as well as its Finisher. We should have been to this day dead in trespasses and sins if it had not been said, “And you has He quickened.” It is by His life that we live. He gives us the living water which is in us a well of water springing up unto everlasting life.

**2.**Christ is the Substance of our spiritual life. What is life? The physician cannot discover it. The anatomist hunts in vain for it through flesh and nerve and brain. Be quick, Sir, with that scalpel of yours! “Life’s just departed,” men say. Cut quick to the heart and see if you cannot find, at least, some lingering footprint of the departed thing called life. Subtle anatomist, what have you found? Look at that brain—what can you see there but a certain quantity of matter strangely fashioned? Can *you* discover what is life?

It is true that somewhere in that brain and in that spinal cord it dwells and that heart with its perpetual pumping and heaving has something or other to do with it—but where is the *substance*, the real substance of the thing called life? Ariel’s wings cannot pursue it—it is too subtle. Thought knows it but cannot grasp it—knows it from its being like itself, but cannot give a picture of it—nor represent what it is. In the new nature of the Christian there is much mystery, but there is none as to what is its life! If you could cut into the center of the renewed heart you would find sure footprints of Divine life, for you would find love to Jesus.

No, you would find Christ Himself there! If you walk in search of the springs of the sea of the new nature, you will find the Lord Jesus at the fount of all. “All my springs are in You,” said David. Christ creates the lifethrobs of the Believer’s soul! He sends the life-floods through the man according to His own will! If you could penetrate the brain of the Believer you would find Christ to be the central thought moving every other thought and causing every other thought to take root and grow out of itself! You would find Christ to be the true Substance of the inner life of the spiritual nature of every soul quickened by the breath of Heaven’s life.

**3.**Christ is the Sustenance of our life. What can the Christian feed upon but Jesus’ flesh and blood? As to his natural life he needs bread, but as to his spiritual life, of which, alone, we are now speaking, he has learned that, “man shall not live by bread alone, but by every Word which proceeds out of the mouth of God shall man live.” “This is the bread which comes down from Heaven, that a man may eat of it and not die. I am the living bread which came down from Heaven. If any man eats of this

bread, he shall live forever—and the bread that I will give is My flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.”

We cannot live on the sand of the wilderness. We want the manna which drops from on high. Our skin bottles of creature confidence cannot yield us a drop of moisture—we drink of the Rock which follows us and that rock is Christ. O wayworn Pilgrims in this wilderness of sin! You never get a morsel, much less a meal to satisfy the craving hunger of your spirits except you find it in Christ Jesus! When you feed on Him your soul can sing, “He has satisfied my mouth with good things, so that my youth is renewed like the eagle’s.” But if you have Him not, your bursting wine vat and your well-filled barn can give you no sort of satisfaction—rather you will lament over them in the words of Wisdom—“Vanity of vanities, all is vanity!”

O how true are Jesus’ own Words, “For My flesh is meat, indeed, and My blood is drink, indeed. He that eats My flesh and drinks My blood dwells in Me and I in him. As the living Father has sent Me and I live by the Father: so he that eats Me, even he shall live by Me.” Christ is the solace of our life! Noah’s ark had but one window and we must not expect more. Jesus is the only window which lets light into the Christian’s spirit when he is under sharp affliction. Kirke White’s picture of his midnight voyage, when one star alone of all the train could guide the mariner’s foundering boat to the port of peace, is a faint but truthful representation of the Christian’s life in its hour of peril.

Paul says that during his disastrous voyage, “neither sun nor stars for many days appeared, and no small tempest lay on them and all hope that they should be saved was taken away, but then, just then, the Angel of God stood at his side.” And even so will the Lord Jesus appear to His saints in their extremities and be their joy and safety. And, Brethren, if Christ appears, what matters it where we are?—

***“Midst darkest shades if He appears  
My dawning is begun.  
He is my soul’s bright morning star,  
And He my rising sun.”***

Do not talk of poverty! Our tents are the curtains of Solomon and not the smoke-dried skins of Kedar when Christ is present! Speak not of need! There are all manner of precious fruits laid up for my Beloved when He comes into my cot. Speak not of sickness! My soul is no longer sick except it is of love, but full of holy health when once the Sun of Righteousness has risen with healing beneath His wings! Christ is the very soul of my soul’s life. His loving kindness is better than life! There is nothing in life worth living for but Christ. “Whom have I in Heaven but You and there is none upon earth that I desire beside You!”

The rest is mere skim milk and curds fit to be given to the swine, but Christ is the cream. All else is but the husk and bran and coarse gritty meal. The Lord Jesus is the pure flour. All that remains is the chaff—fan it and the wind shall carry it away, or the fire shall burn it and little shall be the loss! Christ is the golden grain, the only thing worth having. Life’s true life, the true heart’s blood, the innermost fount of life is in Jesus. To the true Christian, Christ is the object of his life. As speeds the ship towards the port, so hastens the Believer towards the haven of his Savior’s bosom. As flies the arrow to its goal, so flies the Christian towards the perfecting of his fellowship with Christ Jesus. As the soldier fights for his captain and is crowned in his captain’s victory, so the Believer contends for Christ and gets his triumph out of the triumphs of his Master.

“For him to live is Christ”—at least it is this he seeks after and counts that all life apart from this is merely death in another form. That wicked flesh of his. That cumbrous clay. Those many temptations. That Satanic trinity of the world, the flesh, and the devil—all these mar his outward actions. But if he could be what he would be, he would stand like the bullock at Christ’s altar to be slaughtered, or march forward like a bullock in Christ’s furrow to plough the blood-bought field. He desires that he may not have a hair of his head unconsecrated, nor heave one breath which is not for his Savior, nor speak one word which is not for the glory of his Lord!

His heart’s ambition is to live so long as he can better glorify Christ on earth than in Heaven and to be taken up when it shall be better for him and more honorable for his Master that he should be with Jesus where He is. As the river seeks the sea, so, Jesus, I seek You! O let me find You and melt my life into Yours forever! It follows from all this that Christ is the Exemplar of our life. A Christian lays the life of Christ before him as the schoolboy puts his copy at the top of the page and he tries to draw each line, down-stroke and up-stroke, according to the handwriting of Christ Jesus.

He has the portrait of Christ before him as the artist has in his studio his Greek sculptures, busts and torsos. He knows that there is all the true anatomy of virtue in Christ. If he wants to study life, he studies from Christ, or, if he would closely learn the beauties of the antique, he studies from the Savior, for Christ is ancient and modern, antique and living, too! Therefore God’s artists in their life-sculpture keep to the Savior and count that if they imitate every vein and fetch out every muscle of their great Copy, they shall then have produced the perfection of manhood. I would give nothing for your religion if you do not seek to be like Christ! Where there is the same life within, there will, there *must* be, to a great extent, the same developments without.

I have heard it said and I think I have sometimes noticed it, that husbands and wives who are truly knit together in near and dear conjugal affection, grow somewhat like each other in expression, if not in feature. This I well know, that if the heart is truly wedded to the Lord Jesus and lives in near fellowship with Him, it must grow like He is. Grace is the light, our loving heart is the sensitive plate, Jesus is the Person who fills the lens of our soul and soon a heavenly photograph of His Character is produced. There will be a similarity of spirit, temper, motive and action. It will not be manifest merely in great things but in little matters, too, for even our speech will betray us.

Thus you see I have only been wading along the banks, or at best conducting you up to the knees in the gently flowing stream of my text. Experience must lead you further, for there is a great deep here. Paul could perceive it, for he does not say as I have been saving, “Jesus is the Source of our life, the Substance of our life, the Solace of our life, the Object of

our life, the Exemplar of our life.” Paul says, “Christ is our life,” and so He is, indeed.

Just as we have a natural life of which we know so little, so we have a spiritual life which is more mysterious by far and of that we know beyond its effects and operations little more than this—that Christ is that life. That when we get Christ we have eternal life. That if we have life it is only because we have Christ in us, the hope of Glory. I must pause a minute here to say that what is true concerning our spiritual life, now, is equally true of our spiritual life in Heaven. Different as are the circumstances of the life in Heaven and the life on earth, yet as to real essence there is only one life in both places. Saints in Heaven live by precisely the same life which makes them live here.

Spiritual life in the kingdom of Grace and in the kingdom of Glory is the same—only here it is uneducated spiritual life—there it is educated and trained. Here it is undeveloped, it is the babe, the child—there it is developed, manifested, perfected. But in very deed the life is precisely the same. Saints need not to be born again after once being regenerate. You who have been born again have now within you the life which will last on throughout eternity! You have the very same vital spark of heavenly flame which will burn in Glory, world without end. It will be no digression if we here remark that as we have eternal life in having Christ, this marks our dignity.

“Christ our life!” Why, this cannot be said of princes or kings! What is their life? Talk of blue blood and pedigree, and so on—here is something more, here is God’s own Son—our life! You cannot say this of angels. Bright spirits, your songs are sweet and your lives are happy, but Christ is not your life! No, this cannot be asserted of archangels. Gabriel! You may bend yourself before God’s Throne and worship Him in praises too high for me, but you cannot boast what I can surely claim—that Christ is my life!

Even those mysterious presences—angels of whom we read in Ezekiel and Revelation called the four living creatures—though they seem to bear up the moving throne of Deity, creatures who appear to be an embodiment of Divine power and glory—yet even of these it is not written that Christ is their life! Herein men—redeemed, elect, favored men rise to a supernatural light, for they can say what no spirits but those redeemed by blood may venture to assert—“Christ is our life.” Does not this account for Christian holiness? How can a man live in sin if Christ is his life? Jesus dwells in him and he continues in sin? Impossible! Can he sin without his life? He must do so if he sins, because Christ cannot sin and Christ is his life.

Why, if I see the saint ever so self-denying, ever so zealous, ever so earnest, ever so like his Lord, it is no wonder now, when I understand that Christ is his life! See how secure the Christian is. No dagger can reach his life, for it is hidden beyond the skies. No temptation, no hellish blast, no exhalation from the Stygian pits of temptation can ever, with burning fever or chill consumption, waste the life of the Christian spiritually. No, it is hid with Christ! It *is* Christ and unless Christ dies, the Christian’s life dies not. Oh how safe, how honored, how happy is the Christian!

But we may not linger longer, time warns us to proceed. There is much more than ever we shall be able to bring out. Let down your buckets—here is a deep well! I hope you have something to draw with—and you that have life within have. You that have not may look down the well and see the darkness, or the reflection of the water—but you cannot reach the cooling flood. It is only you who can draw who can know the excellence of this living water. I pray the Lord help you to drink to the full and draw again! There is no fear of ever draining the inexhaustible fullness of this deep Truth of God.

**II.**Now, as our Lord Jesus has not yet appeared in His Glory, OUR LIFE IS THEREFORE HIDDEN. “The earnest expectation of the creature waits for the manifestation of the sons of God,” but as yet they are unknown and unmanifested. The major part of the Believer’s life is not seen at all and never can be by the unspiritual eye. Where is Christ? To the worldling at the present moment there is no such Person as Christ. He says, “I cannot see Him, touch Him, hear Him. He is beyond all cognizance of my senses. I do not believe in Him.” Just such is spiritual life to the unbeliever.

You must not expect, because you are a Christian, that unbelievers will begin to admire you and say, “What a mystery! This man has a new life in him! What an admirable thing, what a desirable possession! We wish we partook of the same.” Nothing of the kind. They do not know that you have such a life at all. They can see your outward actions, but your inward life is quite out of reach of their observation.

Christ is in Heaven today. He is full of joy. But the world does not know His joy. No worldly heart is boasting and rejoicing because Christ is glad in Heaven. Christ today is pleading before the Father’s Throne, but the world does not see Christ’s engagements. Christ’s occupations are all hidden from carnal eyes. Christ at this present moment reigns and has power in Heaven and earth and Hell—but what does the worldly man see of it? Jesus has fellowship with all His saints everywhere—but what does the ungodly discern? I might stand and preach until midnight concerning my Lord, but all that men who are unconverted would gain would be to hear what I have to tell and then to say, “Perhaps it is true.” But they could not possibly discern it—the thing is beyond the cognizance of sense.

So is our spiritual life. Beloved, you may reign over sin, but the sinner does not comprehend your being a king. You may officiate as a priest before God, but the ungodly man does not perceive your priesthood and your worship. Do not expect him to do so! Your labor is lost if you try by any way to introduce him to these mysteries except by the same door through which you came yourself. I never try to teach a horse astronomy—and to teach an unconverted man spiritual experience would be a folly of the same sort. The man who knows nothing of our inner life takes up “Pilgrim’s Progress,” and he says, “Yes, it is a very wonderful allegory.”

It is, Sir, but unrenewed minds know nothing about it. When we have sometimes read explanations of the Pilgrim’s Progress, we could not but detect that the writer of the explanation had need to have had it explained to himself. He could describe the shell, but the kernel of the nut was far

beyond his reach! He had not learned to crack the shell and to feed upon the meat. Now it must be so, it must be so, if Christ is our life. Christ has gone away and cannot be seen. It must be so that the greater proportion of the spiritual life must be forever a secret to all but spiritual men.

But there is a part which men *do* see and that I may liken to Christ when He was on earth—Christ seen of men and angels. What did the world do with Christ as soon as they saw Him? Set Him in the chair of State and fall down and worship His absolute perfection? No, not they— “He was despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.” Outside of the camp was His place! Cross-bearing was for Him His occupation, not of one day, but of every day. Did the world yield Him solace and rest?

Foxes, you have your holes! Birds of the air, you have your nests! But the Son of Man had no where to lay His head! Earth could afford Him no bed, no house, no shelter! At last it cast Him out for death and crucified Him and then would have denied Him a tomb if one of His disciples had not begged His body! Such you must expect to be the lot of the part of your spiritual life which men can see. As soon as they see it to be spiritual life, they will treat it as they treated the Savior.

They will despise it. “Sure!” they say, “pretty fancies, fine airs, nice ideas.” You expect them to give you comfort, do you? Worldlings to give you comfort? Do you think that Christ will have anywhere to lay His head in this world today any more than He had 1800 years ago? You go about to find what God gives the foxes and the birds—but what He never meant to give to you in this world—a place to lay your head. Your place to lay your head is up yonder on your Savior’s bosom, but not here. You dream that men will admire you, that the more holy you are and the more Christlike you are, the more peaceable people will be towards you. My dear Friends, you do not know what you are thinking!

“It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master and the servant as his lord. If they have called the master of the house, Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of His household?” I believe if we were more like Christ we should be much more loved by His friends and much more hated by His enemies. I do not believe the world would be half so lenient to the Church, today, if it were not that the Church has grown complacent to the world.

When any of us speak up boldly, mercenary motives are imputed to us! Our language is turned upside down and we are abhorred of men. We get smooth things, Brethren, because I am afraid we are too much like the false prophets who prophesied peace, peace, where there was no peace. Let us be true to our Master! Stand out and come out and be like He, and we must expect the same treatment which He had. And if we receive it we can only say, “This is what I expected.”—

***“ ‘Tis, no surprising thing  
That we should be unknown.  
The Jewish world knew not their king,  
God’s everlasting Son.”***

**III.**CHRIST WILL APPEAR. The text speaks of it as a fact to be taken for granted. “When Christ, who is our life, shall appear.” It is not a matter of *question* in the Christian Church whether Christ will appear or not. Has not Christ appeared once? Yes, after a certain sort. I remember reading a quaint expression of some old Divine that the book of Revelation might quite as well be called an Obvelation, for it was rather a hiding than a revealing of things to come. So, when Jesus came it was hardly a revealing, it was a hiding of our Lord.

It is true that He was “manifest in the flesh,” but it is equally true that the flesh shrouded and concealed His Glory. The first manifestation was very partial—it was Christ seen through a glass—Christ in the mist of grief and the cloud of humiliation. Christ is yet to appear in the strong sense of the word “appearing.” He is to come out and shine forth. He is to leave the robes of scorn and shame behind and to come in the Glory of the Father and all His holy angels with Him. This is the constant teaching of the Word of God and the constant hope of the Church, that Christ will appear.

A thousand questions at once suggest themselves— *How* will Christ appear? *When* will Christ appear?*Where* will Christ appear? And so on. What God answers we may enquire, but some of our questions are mere impertinence. How will Christ appear? I believe Christ will appear in Person. Whenever I think of the Second Coming, I never can tolerate the idea of a *spiritual* coming. That always seems to me to be the most transparent folly that can possibly be put together, because Christ cannot come spiritually—He is always here! “Lo! I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.”

Christ’s spiritual coming never can be that which is spoken of in Scripture, as the day of our release. I sometimes say to Brethren, “Do you think if Christ were to come spiritually now, we should observe the ordinances better?” “Yes, certainly.” “Do you think, for instance, the ordinance of the Lord’s Supper would be better attended to?” “Yes, no doubt it would.” Yes, but then this proves that this is not the coming which the Bible speaks of, because it is *expressly* said of the Lord’s Supper that we are to do it in *remembrance* of Him, *till He comes*. A*spiritual* coming would make us do it more zealously.

There must be another form of coming which would justify our giving up the Supper altogether and that must be of a *personal* character—for then, and then only, might the Supper properly cease. We shall not need to have a supper to remind us of the Person, when the Person Himself shall be present in our midst reigning and triumphant in His Church! We believe in a *Personal reign* and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. But how will He come? He will doubtless come with great splendor. The angels of God shall be His attendants. We gather from Scripture that He will come to reign in the midst of His people. That the house of Israel will acknowledge Him as King—yes, that *all* nations shall bow down before Him and kings shall pay Him homage.

None shall be able to stand against Him. “Those that pierced Him shall wail because of Him.” He will come to discern between the righteous and the wicked, to separate the goats from the sheep. He will come graciously to adjudge His people their reward according to their works. He will give to those who have been faithful over a few things to be rulers over many things. And those who have been faithful over many things shall be rulers over many cities. He will come to discern between the works of His people—such as are only wood, hay and stubble will be consumed. Such as are gold and silver and precious stones will stand the fire.

He will come to condemn the wicked to eternal punishment and to take His people up to their everlasting mansions in the skies. We look for such a coming and without entering into minute details, drawing charts and painting pictures, we are content to believe that He is coming in His Glory to show Himself to be what He always was—King of kings and Lord of lords, God over all, blessed forever! He is to be adored and worshipped and no more to be despised and rejected of men.

When will He come? That is a question which Unbelief asks with a start. Faith replies, “It is not for you to know the times and seasons. Of that day and of that hour no man knows.” Some simpleton says, “But we may know the week, month, or year.” Do not trifle with God’s Word and make a fool of yourself because you must know that the expression means that you do not know anything about the time at all and never will. Christ will come in a time when we look not for Him. Perhaps when the world and the Church are most asleep. When the wise and the foolish virgins have, alike, fallen into a deep slumber. When the stewards shall begin to beat their fellow servants and to drink and to be drunk. At midnight, or perhaps not till cock-crowing, He will come like a thief and the house shall be suddenly broken up.

But come He will, and that is enough for you and for me to know. And when He comes we shall appear, for as He shall appear, we shall also appear with Him in glory.

**IV.**The fourth thought is THAT WHEN CHRIST SHALL APPEAR, WE ALSO SHALL APPEAR. Do you ever feel like those lions in the Zoological Gardens, restlessly walking up and down before the bars of their cage and seeming to feel that they were never meant to be confined within those narrow limits? Sometimes they are for thrusting their heads through the bars and then for dashing back and tearing the back of their dungeon, or for rending up the pavement beneath them as if they yearned for liberty. Do you ever feel like that?   
Does your soul ever want to get free from her cage? Here is an iron bar of sin, of doubt, and there is another iron bar of mistrust and infirmity. Oh, if you could tear them away, could get rid of them all you would do something for Christ—you would be like Christ! Oh, if you could but by some means or other burst the bands of this captivity! But you cannot and therefore you feel uneasy. You may have seen an eagle with a chain upon its foot, standing on a rock—poor unhappy thing! It flaps its wings—looks up to the sun—wants to fly right straight ahead at it and stare the sun out of countenance—looks to the blue sky and seems as if it could sniff the blue beyond the dusky clouds and wants to be away.   
And so it tries its wings and dreams of mounting—but that chain, that cruel chain, remorselessly holds it down. Has not it often been so with you? You feel, “I am not meant to be what I am. I am sure I am not. I have a something in me which is adapted for something better and higher and I want to mount and soar—but that chain—that dragging chain of the body of sin and death keeps me down.”   
Now it is to such as you that this text comes and says to you, “Yes, your present state is not your soul’s true condition. You have a hidden life in you. That life of yours pants to get out of the bonds and fetters which control it and it shall be delivered soon, for Christ is coming! And when Christ shall appear *you* shall appear—the same appearance that belongs to Him belongs to you! He shall come and then your day of true happiness and joy and peace and everything that you are panting for and longing for shall certainly come.”   
I wonder whether the little oak inside the acorn—for there is a whole oak there and there are all the roots and all the boughs and everything inside that acorn—I wonder whether that little oak inside the acorn ever has any premonition of the summer weather that will float over it a hundred years from now and of the mists that will hang in autumn on its sere leaves and of the hundreds of acorns which itself will cast, every autumn, upon the earth, when it shall become in the forest a great tree?   
You and I are like that acorn! Inside of each of us are the germs of great things. There is the tree that we are to be—I mean there is the *spiritual* thing we are to be—both in body and soul! Even now within us and sometimes here below, in happy moments, we get some inklings of what we are to be. And then how we want to burst the shell, to get out of the acorn and to be the oak! Yes, but stop. Christ has not come, Christian, and you cannot get out of that till the time shall come for Jesus to appear. Then shall you appear with Him in glory.   
You will very soon perceive in your rainwater, certain ugly little things which swim and twist about in it, always trying, if they can, to reach the surface and breathe through one end of their bodies. What makes these little things so lively, those innumerable little things like very small tadpoles? Why are they so lively? Possibly they have an idea of what they are going to be. The day will come when all of a sudden there will come out of the case of the creature that you have had swimming about in your water, a long-legged thing with two bright gauze-like wings which will mount into the air and on a summer’s evening will dance in the sunlight!   
It is nothing more nor less than a gnat! You have, swimming there, a gnat in one of its earliest stages. You are just like that—you are an undeveloped being—you have not your wings yet and yet sometimes, in your activity for Christ, when the strong desires for something better are upon you, you leap in foretaste of the bliss to come! I do not know what I am to be, but I feel that there is a heart within me too big for these ribs to hold! I have an immortal spark which cannot have been intended to burn on this poor earth and then to go out. It must have been meant to burn on Heaven’s altar.   
Wait a bit and when Christ comes you will know what you are. We are in the chrysalis state now and those who are the liveliest worms among us grow more and more uneasy in that chrysalis state. Some are so frozen up in it that they forget the hereafter and appear content to remain a chrysalis forever. But others of us feel we would sooner not be than be what we now are forever. We feel as if we must burst our bonds and when that time of bursting shall come, when the chrysalis shall get its painted wings and mount to the land of flowers, then shall we be satisfied.   
The text tells us—“When Christ, who is our life, shall appear”—when He comes out in all His Glory—“we also shall appear with Him in glory.” If you would like these gracious promises drawn out into detail with regard to the body you may listen to just such words as these. “It is sown a soulish body, it is raised a Spiritual body. The first man is of the earth earthy, the second man is the Lord from Heaven. As is the earthy such are they, also, that are earthy. As is the heavenly such are they, also, that are heavenly.”   
Whatever Christ’s body is in Heaven, our body is to be like it. Whatever its glory and strength and power, our vile body is to be fashioned like unto His glorious body! As for our soul, whatever of absolute perfection—whatever of immortal joy Christ possesses, we are to possess that. And as for honor— whatever of esteem and love Christ may have from intelligent beings, we are to share in the same. And as for position before God—whatever Christ has—we are to stand where He stands.   
Are His enemies put to confusion? So are ours. Do all worlds discern His Glory? They shall discern ours, too. Is all dishonor wiped away from Him? So shall it be from us. Do they forget forever the shame and spitting, the Cross and the nails? So shall they in our case. Is it forever, “Gory! And honor! And power! And dominion! And bliss without end!”? So shall it be in our case! Let us comfort one another, therefore, with these words and look up out of our wormwood and our chrysalis state to that happier and better day when we shall be like Christ, for we shall see Him as He is.   
All this has nothing to do with a great many of you. You will die but you will never rise like Christ. You will die and you will die—why did I say, “and you will die?” Why, because you will have to feel the Second Death, and that second death, mark you, is as much more horrifying than the first as the trumpet of the angel is more terrible than the voice of the preacher can be this morning!   
Oh, I would that Christ were your life, but you are dead and God will say of you one of these days as Abraham said of Sarah, “Bury the dead out of My sight,” and you must be put out of His sight as an obnoxious putrid thing. Oh that He would quicken you this day! “There is life,” says the hymn, “in a look at the Crucified One.” God help you to exercise one look at that Christ of whom I spoke and then you shall join with the rest of His people in saying, “Christ is our life.”   
May God bless these feeble words of mine and own them because of their weakness—the more to illustrate His own Grace and power, for Jesus’ sake. Amen.

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**÷Col 3.11**

CHRIST IS ALL  
NO. 1006

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, AUGUST 20, 1871, *BY C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“Christ is All in All.”***Col 3:11***.***

THE Apostle was arguing for holiness. He was earnestly contending against sin and for the maintenance of Christian graces, but he did not, as some do who would like to be thought preachers of the Gospel, resort to reasons inconsistent with the Gospel of Free Grace. He did not bring forward a single legal argument. He did not say, “This do, and you shall merit reward,” or, “This do not, and you shall cease to be the Beloved of the Lord.” He knew that he was writing to Believers who are not under the Law but under Grace, and he therefore used arguments fetched from Grace, and suitable to the character and condition of “the elect of God, holy and beloved.”

He fed the flame of their love with suitable fuel, and fanned their zeal with appropriate appliances. Observe in this chapter that he begins by reminding the saints of their having risen with Christ. If they, indeed, have risen with Him, he argues that they should leave the grave of iniquity and the grave clothes of their sins behind, and act as those who are endowed with that superior life which accounts sin to be death and corruption. He then goes on to declare that the Believer’s life is in Christ, “for you are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.” He infers holiness from this, also.

Shall those who have Christ for their life defile themselves with guilt? Is it not inevitable that, if the Holy One of Israel is in them as their life, their life should be fraught with everything that is virtuous and good? And then he brings forward the third argument that in the Christian Church Christ is the only distinguishing mark. In the new birth we are created in the image of Jesus, the second Adam, and in consequence all the distinctions that appertain to the old creation are rendered valueless.

“There is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is All, and in all”—the argument from this fact being that since the only abiding distinction in the new creation is Christ, we should take care that His image is most clearly stamped upon us so that we may not only confess with our tongues that we are Christians, but our conversation and our entire character shall bespeak us to be such. As you may recognize the Jew by his physiognomy, the Greek by his gracefulness, and the barbarian by his uncouthness—so should the Christian be known by his Christ-likeness—by the light, love, and life of Christ streaming forth from him.

This is the seal of God which is set upon the forehead of the faithful, and this is the mark of election which is in due season engraved on the right hand of all the elect. Now, as the only distinction which marks the Christian from other men, and the only essential distinction in the new world of Grace, is Christ, we are led to see beneath this fact a great underlying doctrine. In the realm of Grace, things are what they seem. Christ is apparently All, because he is actually All. The fact of a man’s possessing Christ is all in all in the Church, because in very deed Christ is All in All.

All that is real in the Christian—all that is holy, heavenly, pure, abiding, and saving—is of the Lord Jesus. This great granite fact lies at the basis of the whole Christian system, Christ is really and truly All in All in His Church, and in each individual member of it. We shall, this morning, in trying to open up this precious subject, by the help of the Divine Spirit, first, notice *by whom this Truth of God is recognized*. Secondly we shall consider*what this Truth includes.* Thirdly,*what it involves*, and fourthly, *what it requires of us—*for if you observe, the text is followed by a, “Therefore.” There is a conclusion logically drawn from it.

**I.**First, then, BY WHOM IS THIS TRUTH RECOGNIZED? Paul does not say that Christ is All in All to all men, but he tells us that there is a new creation in which the man is “renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him,” where all national and ceremonial distinctions cease, and Christ is All and in all. It is not to every man that Christ is All and in all. Alas, there are many in this world to whom Christ is nothing. He scarcely enters into their thoughts.

Some of the baser sort only use His name to curse by. And as to many others, if they have a religion, it is a proud presumption which excludes a savior. The creed of the self-righteous has no room in it for the sinner’s savior. The Justifier of the ungodly is nothing to them. The worldly, the frivolous, the unchaste, the licentious—these do not permit themselves to think of the Holy Redeemer. Perhaps some such are now present, and though they will hear about Him this morning, and of nothing else but Him, they will say, “what a weariness it is,” and be glad when the discourse is ended.

Jesus is a root out of a dry ground to multitudes—to them He has no form nor comeliness—and in Him they see no beauty that they should desire Him. Ah, what will they do when He is revealed in the glory of His power? They thought it nothing to them as they passed by His Cross, but they will not be able to despise Him as they stand convicted before His Throne. O you who make Jesus nothing, kiss the Son lest He be angry, and you perish from the Way, when His wrath is kindled but a little. Without Christ, you are today without peace, and will be forever without hope!

Nothing remains for Christless souls at the last but a fearful looking for of judgment and of fiery indignation. I could well pause here, and say let us pray for those who are unbelievers, and so are living without a Savior, that they may not remain any longer in this state of condemnation.

There are others in this world to whom Christ is *something*, but not much. They are anxious to save themselves, but since they must confess some imperfections they use the merits of Christ as a sort of makeweight for their slight deficiencies. Their robe is almost long enough, and by adding a little fringe of the Redeemer’s Grace it becomes all they can wish. They say prayers. They go to Church to take the sacrament, to observe Good Friday—these are the main reliances of many a religionist—and then if the coach sticks a little in a deeper rut than usual they call in the help of the Lord Jesus, and hope that He will put His shoulder to the wheel.

They commonly say, “Well, we must do our best, then Christ will be our Savior, and God is very merciful.” They allow the blessed and all-sufficient work and sacrifice of the Savior to fill up their failures. And they imagine that they are extremely humble in allowing so much as that. Jesus is to them a stopgap, and nothing more. I know not whether the condition of such people is one whit more desirable than that of those to whom Jesus is nothing at all, for this is a vile contempt and despising of Christ, indeed—to think that He came to help you to save yourselves—to dream that He is a part Savior, and will divide the world and honor of salvation with the sinner.

Those who yoke the sinner and the Savior together as each doing a part rob Christ of all His Glory. And this is robbery, indeed, to pilfer from the bleeding Lamb of God the due reward of His agonies. “He trod the winepress alone, and of the people there was none with Him.” In the work of salvation Jesus stands alone. Salvation is of the Lord. If Christ is not all to you—He is nothing to you. He will never go into partnership as a part Savior of men. If He is something He must be everything, and if He is not everything He is nothing to you.

There are many who, unconsciously to themselves, think Jesus Christ to be much, but yet they do not understand that He is All in All. I allude to many seeking souls, who say, “I would put my trust in Jesus this morning, but I do not feel as I ought.” I see—you think that there is at least a little of your *feeling* to be *added* to the Savior’s work before it can avail for you. “But I am not as penitent as I should be, and therefore I cannot rest in Jesus.” I see, your penitence is to add the top stone to the Savior’s yet unfinished work. Perhaps it is one of the hardest works in the world, so hard as to be impossible except to the Holy Spirit, Himself, to drive a man away from the idea that he is to *do* something, or to *be* something, in order to his own salvation.

Sinner, you are the emptiness, and Christ the Fullness! You are the filthiness, and He the Cleansing! You are nothing, and he is All in All. And the sooner you consent to this, the better. Have done with saying, “I would come to the Savior if this, and if that!” For this quibbling will delude, delay, and destroy you! Come as you are, just now, even at this moment—for Christ is not *almost* all—He is ALL IN ALL.

There are some, too, who think that Christ is all in some things, but they have not yet seen the full teaching of the text. For it says—“Christ is All, and in all.” He is all, “say they, in Justification. He it is that pardons all our sins and covers us with His righteousness. But as to our *sanctification*, surely, we are to effect *that* ourselves. And as to our final perseverance, it must depend wholly upon our own watchfulness. Are we not in jeopardy still? Are there not some points which depend upon our own virtue and goodness?”

Beloved, God forbid I should say a word against the most earnest watchfulness, against the most diligent endeavors, but I beseech you do not place them in a wrong position, or speak as though the ultimate salvation of the Believer were based upon such shifting sand. We are *saved* in Christ. We are *complete* in Him. We are *sanctified* in Christ Jesus— “And He is made of God unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification,

and redemption.” Christ is ALL, not in my Justification only, but in my sanctification, too. He is ALL, not only in the first steps of my faith, but in the last.

“He is Alpha and Omega. He is the Beginning and the Ending, says the Lord.” There is no point between the gates of Hell and the gates of Heaven where a Believer shall have to say, “Christ fails me here, and I must rely upon my own endeavors.” From the dunghill of our corruption up to the throne of our perfection there is no point left to chance, or set aside for us to supply. Our salvation has Christ to *begin* with, Christ to *go* on with, and Christ to *finish* with—and that in all points, at all times—for every man of woman born that ever shall be saved. There is no point in which the creature comes in to claim merit, or to bring strength, or to make up for that which was lacking. “Christ is all, and in all.”

The saints are “perfect in Christ Jesus.” He said, “it is finished,” and finished it is. He is not the Author of our faith only, but the Finisher of it, too. He is All in All, and man is nothing at all. This is a Truth of God which every Believer has recognized. There are a great many differences among Believers, but there can be no difference as to this essential point. Unhappily, the Christian Church has been divided into sections, but those divisions do not affect our agreement upon this one point, that Christ is All. It is no unkindness if I say that the man who does not accept this is no Christian, nor is it too wide a liberality to affirm that every man who is sound in heart upon this point is most certainly a Believer.

He who trusts alone in Christ, who submits to Him as his sole Teacher, King, and Savior is already a saved man. But he who gives not Christ the glory, though he should speak with the tongues of men and of angels— though he should have the gift of prophecy and all knowledge, and though he should have all faith—and could remove mountains. And though he should appear to have all virtue, yet he is no Christian if Christ is held in light esteem by him, or is anything less than All in All. For in the new creation this one thing stands as the mark of the newly created, that “Christ is All, and in all” to them, whatever He may be to others.

**II.**Having thus shown where this Truth is recognized, we pass on to notice WHAT THIS TRUTH INCLUDES. It was the advice of an aged tutor to a young student not to take too magnificent a text. I have sounded that warning in my own ears this morning. This little text is yet one of the greatest in the whole Bible and I feel lost in its boundless expanse. It is like one of those rare gems which are little to look upon, and yet he who carries them bears the price of empires in his hand. It would not be within the compass of arithmetic to set down the value of this sapphire test.

I might as soon hope to carry the world in my hands as to grasp all that is contained in these few words. I cannot navigate so huge a sea—my skiff is too small—I can only coast along the shore. Who can compress “all things” into a sermon? I will warrant you that my discourse this morning will be more remarkable for its omissions than for what it contains, and I shall hope, indeed, that every Christian here will be remarking upon what I do *not* say. For then I shall have done much good in exciting meditations and reflections. If I were to try to tell you all the meaning of this boundless text, I should require all time and eternity, and even then all tongues, human and angelic, could not avail me to compass the whole. We will swim in this sea though we cannot fathom it, and feast at this table though we cannot reckon up its costliness.

**1.**According to the connection, Christ is All by way of *national distinction, subject for glorying, and ground for custom*. Observe, “there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free,” in the new creation, but “Christ is All, and in all.” In the new world there is no difference between Jew and Gentile—barbarian simplicity and Greek cultivation are as nothing. I suppose as long as we are in the flesh we shall set some store by our nationality, and like Paul, shall somewhat glory that we were free born—but surely the less of this the better.

Within the gates of the Christian Church we are cosmopolitan, or rather we are citizens of the New Jerusalem only. As a man, I rejoice that I am an Englishman, but not with the same holy joy which fills me when I remember that I am a Christian. When I meet another man who fears God, I do not want him to think me an Englishman, nor do I desire to regard him as an American, a Frenchman, or a Dutchman. We are no longer strangers and foreigners but fellow-citizens.

If any man is a Christian and a foreigner after the flesh, he is yet in spirit ten thousand times more allied to me than if he were an Englishman and an unbeliever. Greatly is it to be deplored whenever the convulsions of nations drag Christian men into opposition to one another on the ground of politics. One part of the body of Christ cannot be at war with another. It is a shameful thing whenever we suffer our earthly nationality to dominate over our heavenly citizenship.

Queen Victoria and President Grant are well enough in their places, but King Jesus is Lord of all. We are above all things subjects of His Imperial Highness the Prince of Peace. Nobody comes into the Church as a Jew or a Gentile, nor does he remain there as a Greek or a Scythian—whatever he may have been before. When he becomes a Christian, Christ is All. Earthly distinctions of rank, if they still exist, as they must while we are in this world, are brought to a minimum within the Church. They are almost obliterated, and what remains is sanctified to sacred ends. Christ is All in the Church by way of glorying. The Greek said, “The Hellenes are a race of heroes. Remember Sparta and Athens. Are we not foremost in civilization, and were we not chief in war? Who set bounds to the Persian tyrant, and bade the boastful monarch bite the dust? We hold our heads erect when we think of Marathon and Salamis.”

But when the Greek joined the Christian Church, he forgot his national boasting, and from then on gloried only in the Cross of Him whose single arm defeated the hosts of Satan, and led captivity captive. The Jew, when despised, returned scorn for scorn and said to Greek and Roman, “You may speak of Marathon, but I sing of the Red Sea. You may boast of broken Persia, but I tell of vanquished Egypt. Mine are the glories of the Lord of Hosts in the far off ages. We were a people when you were as yet unknown, and we are the chosen favorites of Jehovah.”

The moment the Jew sat down at the Gospel supper, he laid aside his hereditary pride and bigotry, and recognized the fact that the Greek was as much a Brother as the believing Hebrew at his side. So the Scythian, when he came into the Christian Church, was no longer a Barbarian—he

spoke the language of Canaan as correctly as his Grecian fellow Christian. The slave no sooner breathed the air of the Christian Church than his shackles fell from him. He might be a slave at home with his master, but he was no slave there!

While the freeman, though he had been born free, or with a great price had obtained his freedom, never in the Christian Church looked down upon the slave. Bond and free were one in Christ Jesus. Nobody had any personal ground for glory—neither race, nor pedigree, nor rank, nor position, were of any account—but Christ was All. “*Christianus sum*,” I am a Christian, was and is the universal glorying of all saints. This at the same time obliterated all their sinful national customs. The Greek said originally, “I may certainly indulge in this vice, because the Lacedaemonians have always observed this custom.”

And the Jew, perhaps, might have said, “I will eat nothing common or unclean, neither will I consort with Gentiles, because our fathers did not so.” The Barbarian said, “I cannot submit to the laws of civilized life. My father ranged the desert.” And the Scythian said, “I shall rob, and pillage, and kill, for I am a wild man. Why shouldn’t I? Did not my fathers do so from generation to generation?” When the various tribes came into the Christian Church, down went all separating and evil customs at once. What has Christ said? What has Christ done? What has He bid us? These are Law to us and nothing else. Thus the distinctions of race, the glorying of nationality, and the habits and customs of various nations—all sank into nothing—for Jesus Christ in the Christian Church became All in All. That, I doubt not, is the meaning of the text in its connection. Christ All and in all by way of distinction.

**2.**Secondly, Christ is All in All to us in another three-fold way—*to God, before our enemies, within ourselves*. Happy are you, O child of God, that in all your relationships to the Great Judge of all the earth, Christ is All in All to you! You need a Mediator to stand between you and God—Christ is He. You want a High Priest to present, with His own sacrifice, your prayers and praises—Christ is He. You want a Representative to stand at all times before God, an Intercessor to plead for you, one who shall be a daysman akin to you and akin to God—who can put His hand upon both—Christ is that to you.

Whenever God looks upon you *in* Christ, He sees in you all that ought to be there. Did He look upon you apart from Christ, He would see in you nothing He could commend—but you are “accepted in the Beloved.” Even the Omniscient eye of God detects nothing for which to condemn the soul which is covered with the righteousness of Christ. “Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifies.” Without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, is the entire Church as seen in the Person of Christ Jesus, her Representative and Head. Christ is All for us before the Throne of God.

But, alas, we need someone to stand between us and our enemies. There is Satan—how shall I meet him? He will accuse me! Who shall plead my case? Christ is All in All for that. Whatever fiery darts Satan may shoot, Christ is the Shield that can quench those darts. If Satan tempts me, Christ shall plead for me before the temptation comes. Whenever I have to contend with Satan, this is the Weapon with which I should arm myself. If I reason with him, if I bring forward any strength of my own to oppose him, he may well say to me—“Jesus I know. But who are *you*?” But if I bring *Jesus* into the conflict, and wield the merit of His blood, and the faithfulness of His promise, the Destroying Angel cannot overcome the sprinkled blood. We overcome through the blood of the Lamb. Christ Jesus is both Shield and Sword to us, Armor and Weapons of war.

So in our conflict with the world. Whatever trials you have, my dear Brothers and Sisters, Christ is All in All to meet them. Are you poor? He will make you rich in your poverty by His consoling Presence. Are you sick? He will make your bed in your sickness, and will so make your sickbed better than the walks of health. Are you persecuted? Be it for His sake, and you may even leap for joy! Are you oppressed? Remember how He also was oppressed and afflicted? And you will have fellowship with Him in His sufferings. Amidst all the vicissitudes of this present life, Christ is All that the Believer wants to bear him up, and bear him through. No wave can sink the man who clings to this life buoy. He shall swim to Glory on it.

So, too, *within myself* Christ is All. If I look into the chambers of my inner nature, I see all manner of deficiencies and deformities, and I may well be filled with dismay. But when I see Christ there, my heart is comforted, for He will both destroy the works of the devil, and perfect that which He has begun in me. I am a sinner, but my heart rests on its Savior. I am burdened with this body of sin and death but behold, my Savior is formed in me the Hope of Glory. I am by nature an heir of wrath, even as others, but I am born into the second Adam’s household, and therefore I am beloved of the Most High, and a joint-heir with Christ.

Is there Christ in your heart, Beloved? Then everything that is there that would make you sorrow may also suggest to you a topic for joy. The saint is grieved to think that he has sin to confess, but he is glad to think that he is enabled to confess sin. The saint is vexed that he should have so much infirmity, yet he glories in infirmity because the power of Christ does rest upon him. He is grieved day by day to observe his wanderings, but he is also rejoiced to see how the Good Shepherd follows him and restores his soul. All the evils and shortcomings in me which make me weep, also make me glad when Jesus is seen within. For all I see within myself lacking or sinful, I see a sufficient remedy in Christ who is All in

All. Thus I have given you a second way of meditating upon our text.  
Christ is not only All by way of distinction, but He is All to God, All between us and our enemies, and All within ourselves.

**3.**We may see another phase of the same meaning if we take a third division. Christ is All *for* us, He is all *to* us, He is all *in* us. Christ is all *for* us, the Surety, the Substitute in our place to bear our guilt—“For the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.” “The chastisement of our peace was upon Him.” “He has made Him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.” He is also the Worker standing in our place to fulfill all righteousness for us. He is the end of the Law for righteousness to everyone that believes. All that God requires us to be, Christ is for us.

He has not presented to God a part of what was done, but has to the utmost farthing paid all that His people owed. Acting as our Forerunner in Heaven, He has taken possession of our inheritance, and as our Surety He secures to us our entrance there. *For* us all Jesus is All. And this day He is All *to* us. We trust wholly in Him. I often question myself upon many Christian graces, but there is one thing I never can doubt about, and that is I know I have no other hope but in the blood and righteousness of Jesus Christ. If a soul can perish relying with all its power upon the finished work of the Savior, then I shall perish. But if saving faith is an entire reliance upon Him whom God has sent forth to be a Propitiation for sin, then I can never perish until God’s Word is broken.

Can you not say that, dear Brethren, and will it not yield you comfort? Have you anything else you could trust? Have you *one good work* that you could rely upon? Is there a prayer you have ever offered, an emotion you have ever felt that you would dare to use as a buttress, or as in some degree a prop, to your hope of salvation? I know you reply, “I have nothing, nothing, nothing, nothing! Christ my Savior is all my salvation and all my desire, and I abhor the very idea of putting anything side by side with Him as a ground of my dependence before God.” Oh, then, assuredly you have the mark of Christ’s sheep, for to all of them Christ is All.

I said also that Christ is all *in* us, and so He is. Whatever there is in us that is not of Christ and the work of His Spirit will have to come out of us, and blessed be the day in which it is ejected. If I am growing and advancing, but it is a growth in the flesh and an advance in self, it is a spurious fungus growth. And, like Jonah’s gourd, it will perish in a night. Wood, hay, stubble are quick building, but they are also quick burning—only that which belongs to “Christ formed in me the hope of glory,” will prove to be gold, silver, precious stones. These may seem slow building, but they will abide the fire.

O Christian, pray much and labor much to have Christ in you, for He is all that is worth having in you. He is only the husk of a Christian who has not the precious kernel of Christ in his heart. Christ *on the Cross* saves us by becoming Christ *in the heart*. Jesus is, indeed All for us, All to us, All in us.

**4.**Shift the kaleidoscope, and take the same Truth of God in another way—*Christ is the channel of all, the pledge of all, the sum of all*. The *channel*of all. All love and mercy flow from God through Christ the Mediator. We get nothing apart from Him. “No man comes unto the Father but by Me.” Other conduits are dry, but this channel is always full. “He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever lives to make intercession for them.” Christ is the *pledge*of all. When God gave us Christ, He did as much as say, “I have given you all things.” “He that spared not His own Son, but freely delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?”

He is a Covenant to us, the title deeds of the promised rest. And, indeed, Christ is not only the Channel of all, and the Pledge of all, but the Apostle says He is All—so I take it He is*the Sum*of All. If you are going to travel on the Continent, you need not carry a bed with you, nor a house, nor a table, nor medicine, nor food. If you only have gold in your purse, you have these condensed. Gold is the representative of everything it can buy—it is a kind of universal talisman, producing what its owner wishes for. I have never yet met with a person in any country who did not understand its meaning. “Money answers all things,” says the wise man, and this is true in a limited sense.

But he that has Christ, has, indeed, all things—he has the Essence, the Substance of all good. I have only to plead the name of Jesus before the Father’s Throne, and nothing desirable shall be denied me. If Christ is yours, all things are yours. God, who gave you Christ, has in that one Gift summed up the total of all you will want for time and for eternity, to obliterate the sin of the past, to fulfill the needs of the present, and to perfect you for all the work and bliss of the future.

**5.**Once more let us view our text in another light. *Christ is all we need, all we desire, and all of good that we can conceive*. He is all I need. Jesus is the living water to quench my thirst, the heavenly bread to satisfy my hunger, the snow-white robe to cover me, the sure refuge, the happy home of my soul, my meat and my medicine, my solace and my song, my light and my delight. He is all I *desire*, and when most covetous I only covet more of His Presence. When most ambitious, it is my ambition to be like He. When most insatiable in desire, I only long to be with Him where He is. He is all I can *conceive*of good. When my imagination stretches all her wings to take a flight into realms beyond where the eagle’s wing has been, yet even then she reaches not the height of the Glory which Christ Jesus has promised her.

She cannot conceive with her most expanded powers of anything more rich and precious than Christ, her Christ, herself Christ’s, and Christ all her own. Oh, if you want to know what Heaven is, know what Christ is, for the way to spell Heaven is with those five letters that make up the word JESUS. When you get Him He shall be All to you that your glorified body shall need, and all your glorified spirit can conceive. O precious Christ, You are All in All!

**III.**  
I have shown you then, in a very hurried way, what it is that this Truth includes. Now, with greater brevity still, WHAT DOES THIS TRUTH INVOLVE? It involves a great many things. First, it involves the Glory and excellence of Christ. Of whom else could it be said that He is All in All? There are many things in this world that are good, but there is nothing that is good for everything. Some plants may be a good medicine, but not a good cordial. The plant of renown is good every way.   
Good clothing is not able to stay your hunger, but Christ, the Bread of Heaven, is also the Father’s best robe. You cannot expect any finite thing to be good for all things, but Christ is Infinite Goodness. This Tree of Life bears all manner of fruits, and the leaves are for the healing of the nations. He is Strength and Beauty, Safety and Sanctity, Peace and Plenty, Healing and Help, Comfort and Conquest, Life here, and Life forever. Glory be to the Lord Jesus Christ! What can He be less than God, if He is All? “All.” Is it not a synonym for God? We say there cannot be two Gods, because the one God is everywhere, and fills all space.   
And who, then, can He be who is called “All in All,” but “very God of very God?” Worship Him, my Brethren, with all your hearts! Rejoice in Him! Bless Him from day to day. Let not the world think you poor who are so rich in Him. Never suffer men to think you unhappy, who have perfect happiness in the ever blessed Immanuel!   
See, in the next place, the safety and the blessedness of the Believer. Christ is All. But the Believer can add, “And Christ is mine.” Then the Believer has all things—all that he *will* want, as well as all he *does* want. No emperor that has not Christ is half as rich as he that has Christ and is a beggar. He that has Christ, being a pauper, has all things. And he that has not Christ, possessing a thousand worlds, possesses nothing for real happiness and joy. Oh, the blessedness of the man who can say, “Christ is mine!”   
On the other hand, see the wretchedness of the man who has not the Savior—for if Christ is All, you who believe not on Him are devoid of All—in being destitute of Christ. But you say, “I try my best, I attend public worship, I do a great deal that is good.” You have nothing if you have not Christ. Do not flatter yourself that you are getting on and adding goods to goods in spiritual things. If you have not a Savior you are naked and poor and miserable. You are without All if you are without Christ, who is All. The Christian, then, is rich, but everyone who is destitute of Christ is poor to the extreme of poverty.   
See, too, in the Truth of God before us a rebuke for the doubts of many seekers. They will say, “I have not this, I have not that.” Suppose you have it not—Christ has it—if it is good for anything. “I would gladly cast myself upon the mercy of God in Christ this day, but,”—Ah, away with your “buts.” What do you want? “I want true belief,” says one. Come to Christ for it, then. “I want a broken heart,” says another. If you cannot come with a broken heart to Christ, come *for* a broken heart—   
***“True belief, and true repentance   
Every Grace that brings us near,   
Without money   
Come to Jesus Christ and buy.”***We have an old proverb about the folly of taking coals to Newcastle. But what folly must that be which makes a man think that he can take *something* to Christ, when Christ is All? Come, come, come, come to Him, poor Sinner, and let Him be All in All to you! Simply rely upon Him and be at peace.   
How this, again, rebukes the coldness of saints. If Christ is All in All, then how is it we love Him so little? If He is so precious, how is it we prize Him so little? Oh, my dull, dead, cold Heart, what are you doing? Are you harder than adamant, and baser than brutish, that you are not much more moved with ardor and fervent affection towards such a Lord us this? Christ is All, my Brethren, yet look how little we offer to Him—of our substance how scant a portion—of our time how slender a part—of our talents how small a parcel!   
God stir us to holy fervency, that if Christ is All for us, we may be all for Christ! May we lay ourselves out without reservation to the utmost stretch of our power, asking fresh strength from Him that we may do all that can be done by mortal men! And by His Grace may all be done with us by God, that He shall see it to be compatible with His Glory to do!   
Again, by our text another lesson is furnished us. We learn here how to measure young converts. We ought not to expect them to be philosophers or divines—Christ is All. If they know Christ, and are resting in Him, we are bound to say, “Come, and welcome.” Be they poor, be they unlettered—if Jesus Christ is formed in their hearts, even though we can see Him there only as a dim outline—we are to open wide the gate, and receive *them* as Jesus received *us*. Here is a measure, too, by which to measure *ministers*. The fashion of the world is to admire him most who shall speak most rhetorically. Accursed be the day in which oratory was tolerated in the Christian pulpit! It has been the ruin and plague of the Church of God!   
This labor after flowery speech. This seeking after polished periods and gaudy sentences—what is it but a pandering to the world, and a prostitution of the ministry of reconciliation? Had men learned what the Apostle meant when he said, “I Brethren, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom,” they would have preached far otherwise than they have done. We should strive to speak the Gospel simply from our hearts, and then men’s hearts will be impressed with the Truth of God.  
Alas, this toying with fair words, and seeking after pleasing expressions—this dressing up of the Truth of God in the flaunting finery of falsehood—degrades rather than adorns the Gospel! And it has done incalculable damage to souls, and to the advance of Truth. Measure ministers by this—What is there of Christ about them? That ministry which has no savor of Christ in it, be it what it may, is a ministry which the Lord will not own, and that *you* ought not to own. It is not God-sent, and ought not to be received by you. Give me Christ Jesus, though the speech in which He is set forth is of the most uncouth kind, rather than the choicest inventions of the most ingenious thinkers, from which Jesus Christ is absent, or in which He is not exalted.   
Brothers and Sisters, this will also help you to estimate your own devotions. You came to the communion table the other day, but you did not enter into fellowship with Christ. Ah, then there was a lost opportunity. You were in your closet this morning in prayer, but you did not plead the name of Jesus. Ah, then again there was a lost season of devotion. You are a Bible reader, and your eyes glance over the holy Words but you do not see Jesus in each page—then your reading has failed.   
You have been giving to the poor of late, but have you done it for Christ’s sake? You have sought to win souls— have you done it in Christ’s strength? If Jesus is absent, you have offered a sacrifice from which the heart is gone. And among the Romans, no omen was supposed to be so damaging as the absence of the heart from the sacrifice. No Christ, then there can be no acceptance! But a fullness of Christ proves a fullness of acceptance with God.   
**IV.** There are many other things which I could have said, but time has failed me, and therefore I must close by noticing WHAT THIS TRUTH REQUIRES OF US. Christ is All in All! Therefore “put on, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, heart of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering.” The exhibition of the Christ-life in the saints is the legitimate inference from the fact that Christ is All to them. If Christ is All, and yet I, being a Christian, am not like Christ, my Christianity is a transparent sham—I am nothing but a base pretender, and my outward religiousness is a pompous pageantry for my soul to be carried to Hell in—nothing more.   
It is a gilded coffin for a lifeless spirit. I shall perish with a double destruction if I have dared to profane the name of Christ by taking it upon me, when I have not the essence of the Christian religion within me. Orthodoxy, though it is of the most assured sort, is vanity of vanities, unless there is with it an orthodoxy of *life.* And experience—whatever man may say about it, is but a dream, a fiction of his own imagining—if it does not display itself in shaking off the sins of the flesh, and putting on the adornments of holiness.   
O Brethren, these are searching things to every one of us. Who among us lives as he should at home? Could you bear that the angel who visits your house should publish, before the great cloud of witnesses, all that he has seen there? In your shops, in your businesses—you professors—are you always upright and straightforward as Christians should be? You merchants on the Exchange, are not some of you who profess to be Christians as greedy and as overreaching as others? I charge you, if you have any respect for Christ, lay down His name! If you will not endeavor to honor it you will be lost! You covetous money-grubbers, you earth-scrapers who live only for this world—you will be lost! You need not doubt of that, you will be lost sure enough.   
But why need you make the assurance of your condemnation doubly sure by the base imposture of calling yourselves Christians? Meanwhile, let the Ethiopian call himself white if he will. Let the leopard declare that he has no spots. These things shall not matter. But the falsehood of a man who lives without Christ, while calling himself a Christian, brings such dishonor upon Him who was nailed to the tree, and whose religion is that of holiness, that I beseech you, by the living God, give up your profession if you do not endeavor to make it true.  
If you are not living as you should, do not pretend to be what you are not! Seek you unto God, that the life of Christ being in you, you may manifest it in your conversation. Without Christ you are nothing, though you are baptized, though you are members of churches, though you are highly esteemed as deacons, elders, pastors. Oh, then, have Christ everywhere in all things, and constrain men to say of you, “To that man Christ is All in All—I have marked him. He has been with Jesus, he has learned of Him, for he acts as Jesus did.   
God grant a blessing on these words, for Christ’s sake. Amen.

**PORTIONS OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON— Colossians 3, and 4:1-6.**

Sermon Readers are respectfully reminded that the 200 boys at the Stockwell Orphanage are supported by voluntary contributions and that these are always thankfully received by C. H. Spurgeon, Clapham.

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ALL AND ALL IN ALL  
NO. 2501

**INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S-DAY, JANUARY 24, 1897. *DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORD’S-DAY EVENING, MAY 3, 1885.**

***“Christ is all, and in all.”***Col 3:11***.  
“That God may be all in all.”***1Co 15:28***.***

IN our two texts there are three “alls” rising, one out of the other—the first leading to the second and the second conducting to the third. You will notice at once that the first two are in the present tense. “Christ *is*all” and, “Christ is in all.” The third one refers to the future—it is yet to be fulfilled. When the great consummation shall come, then shall God be, “all in all.” I shall not detain you with any sort of preface, for my sole endeavor at this time will be to impress these texts upon your memory—in the hope that the Spirit of God may make them a living and abiding influence upon your hearts and lives—that to you, Christ may be all, that Christ may be in you all, and that so, in all that you do, and say, and are, God may be all in all.

**I.**We begin at THE FOUNDATION WHERE ALL BLESSING BEGINS. “Christ is all.”  
These are but few words, yet what Divine shall ever fully expound them? “Christ is all.” Here is sea-room enough for all godly mariners! Yet with the best wind that ever blew to speed the ship along, and with every sail set and filled with the breeze from Heaven, who shall ever be able to go from one shore of this great Truth of God to the other—“Christ is all”? I shall not venture upon such a voyage! I can but look across this sea and ask you to kindly notice the connection in which the text stands that we may learn exactly what the Apostle meant. Writing, “to the saints and faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colosse,” Paul says, “There is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free, but Christ is all.”  
That is to say,*in the matter of salvation,*“*Christ is all.”* That which had often seemed the most important thing in the world is here thrown into the background by the Apostolic declaration, “There is neither Greek nor Jew.” For a long time it seemed as if the eternal Light of God was only revealed to the eyes of the seed of the house of Israel. They sat in the brightness and all the rest of the world lay in dense darkness. But, behold, the Christ has come, “a Light to lighten the Gentiles,” and henceforth salvation is “not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man,” but, “Christ is all.”  
It is a great privilege to be born of godly parents, to have come of a race that for generations has feared the Lord. But let no man trust merely in his natural descent. If you had sprung from a lineage of saints. If every one of your progenitors had feared God, yet still, nothing of all this could matter for your own salvation. “Christ is all.” Now may the Gentile dog eat of the crumbs that fall from the Master’s table where He feeds His Israel! No, the dog is transformed into a child—he who was far off is made near! In the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ, both Jew and Gentile are made one and all the sheep of the Good Shepherd are sheltered in the same fold! We who believe in Jesus are children of him who was called the father of the faithful and though, according to the flesh, “Abraham was ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledges us not,” yet by faith we become the spiritual seed of the great father of all Believers! As he believed in a son being born according to God’s promise, and in a seed to which the Covenant promises were given, even so do we. And entering into union with Christ Jesus, that blessed Son of the promise, we become joint-heirs with Him, “heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ.” You see, then, dear Friends, that it is not *race*, or *pedigree*, or *descent* that saves the soul, but that “Christ is all.”  
Then Paul goes on to say, “There is neither circumcision nor uncircumcision,” from which I gather that *there is nothing in outward ceremonies which can save.* Everything is still of Christ—“Christ is all.” That circumcision in the flesh was ordained of God and it was the mark of the seed that He had chosen. It was not, therefore, lightly to be spoken of. But now, “we are the circumcision, which worship God in the Spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.” At this day even the ancient Divine ordinance is put in the background, for, “Christ is all.” So is it with every other ordinance, whether ordained of God or of man. It must never be placed in the front, as if it were the means of salvation! I say to you who may have been sprinkled, or to you who may have been immersed—to you who may bow at your altars, or to you who may come to the Communion Table—I do not place all these rites on a level, certainly, for some are of God and some are not, but I do place them all on a par in this respect—that they enter not into the essence of our salvation! And I say to all of you, “These things cannot save you, for, ‘Christ is all.’” Be you who you may, and do you what you may, you shall not be saved because of your natural birth, nor because of any supposed holy acts that you may perform! Neither shall you be saved by any transactions that may be the work of a human priest! You must have Christ as your Savior and you must rest in Him, alone, or you cannot be saved! He is the one foundation and, “other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ,” for, “Christ is all.” The Lord Jesus Christ sums up everything that ordinances can possibly mean and all that pedigree and descent can possibly bring—and He is infinitely more than all of them!  
Read on in this Epistle and you will find that as race and ceremonialism are both put into the background, so also is culture. “There is neither Barbarian nor Scythian, but Christ is all.” Of course it was for many reasons much better to be a Roman citizen than to be a rude barbarian. And it is much better, now, to be a civilized man than an untutored Indian of the Wild West. But so far as vital godliness and the soul’s salvation are concerned, there is no difference! The simplest and most illiterate, upon believing in Jesus Christ, shall find that “Christ is all.” And the most learned and most fully instructed, if they bring any of their learning and their culture and put it side by side with Christ as a ground of trust, shall sorrowfully discover that none of those things can be placed on an equality with Him, but that, “Christ is all.”  
I rejoice, Brothers and Sisters, in this Truth of God! If the Gospel of Christ were something eclectic which could only be received by a superior few, what a poor prospect there would be for the great mass of people among whom we dwell! If the Gospel of Christ were a matter so deep and profound that it could not be understood except by years of educated thought, where would they be who have never had any culture and, perhaps, can scarcely read the letters of a boy’s schoolbook, if, this day, they were lying upon the bed of sickness, expecting soon to stand before God? Blessed be God, we have a remedy for sin’s sickness which the Great Physician understands! And if *He* is well acquainted with it, it matters not whether the patient fully comprehends it or not! Blessed be God, the effect of Christ’s medicine does not depend upon the degree in which we can realize how it acts, but if we receive it by *faith*, if it penetrates into the *heart*, if it takes possession of the *affections*, it will work in us that wondrous change by which we shall be delivered from the love of sin and saved both from its condemnation and its power! Thank God for a simple Gospel! Blessed be His name that “Christ is all”! If, by the teaching of the Holy Spirit, you have learned that Christ died for the ungodly. If you know that He is the Son of God and the one great Propitiation for sin, and if you accept Him as such, you have that which has delivered you from going down into the Pit, for God has found a ransom even for you!  
Once more. By this expression, Paul means us to understand that *all conditions and position of men in this life are put on a level before Christ,* for He adds, “There is neither bond nor free; but Christ is all.” When the Gospel of Jesus Christ came into the world, it contemplated the saving of bondmen as well as of freemen. Of course there was a great distinction between being bond or free, and the Apostle wrote, “If you may be made free, use it rather,” but as to the real power of God’s Grace, there was no distinction between the noblest citizen of Rome and the poor slave who wore an iron collar and was fastened, like a dog, at his master’s gate! Christ’s Grace could enter into the heart of the servile, as well as into the heart of the noble—and could work alike in each.  
Now, hear you, Sirs! It is well that you should be industrious, that you should be thrifty and that you should make your way in the world. But this is not the way to eternal life! What if you should work till your fingertips were raw? What if you labor during the livelong day and night and deprive yourselves of needed sustenance, that you may hoard up gold and silver? With all this, you cannot buy salvation, or be an inch nearer to it. “Christ is all.” And if you lie penniless upon a workhouse bed, there is that in Christ which can save you! If you beg your food from door to door, yet shall you not stand at a disadvantage with this great and blessed Gospel, for it comes freely to you with this message and, as it asks of you no*learning*, so it asks of you no wealth, no rank and no position—for, from first to last—“Christ is all.”  
Thus have I taken the words in their connection and they are full of important teaching. Remember that they mean just this—that *to the man who is saved, Christ is all his trust.* Our healing lies in His stripes. Our life lies in His death. Our pardon lies in His having suffered the punishment due to us. Our eternal life is in the fact that He once died for us and that He now lives to make intercession for us. “Christ is all.” You must not add anything to Christ as your ground of confidence, but just lean the weight of your sin, your sorrow, your needs and your desires wholly and entirely upon Him who lives to stand for you before God. Christ, then, is all our trust!  
And, as for our belief, *Christ is all our creed.*What He has taught us personally and by His Holy Spirit through the Epistles—what He gives us in His Word—this is what we believe, and nothing else! The Bible and the Bible, alone, is the religion of a Christian! “Christ is all”—and all the Truth that there is in this Book is in Him. This revelation of the Word of God is the same revelation as that which is made in the Christ, Himself, who is the true Logos, the Word of God. “Christ is all” as our creed.  
And, further, *Christ is all as our example.* You may safely do what He did and you may not do what *He* would not have done. You may judge of the right or wrong of everything by this question—What would Jesus Christ do in these circumstances? You may thus know what you should do. And what you cannot suppose He would have thought of doing, you must not venture to do, for, “Christ is all.” He draws a ring around us and we must not go outside that circumference. He is the atmosphere in which we are to live. He is about us. He is above us. He is beneath us. He is within us. He is everywhere and, to us, if we are Christians, “Christ is all.”  
There is the foundation of all our faith and hope—and I want you who preach and you who teach the children to always keep to this one Truth of God—that “Christ is all.” Many other things have a measure of instruction in them, but Christ is all that is necessary. If you want to save men, if you truly wish to elevate men, if you desire still further to exalt them to the very highest degree of which human nature is capable, remember that “Christ is all” as your lever, and in Him is your fulcrum, and in Him is the power to use the lever! “Christ is all.” You need not go abroad for anything, for “you are complete in Him.” The ship is furnished from stem to stern in Him. The house, from its foundation to its rooftop, is all complete in Him. “Christ is all.” Oh, to know Him! Oh, to have Him as our own! Oh, to live wholly upon Him! Oh, to grow like He and always to keep before our mind’s eyes this great Truth that, “Christ is all”!  
**II.**Now we are going a step farther to consider the second part of our first text—“Christ is all, *and in all.”*This is a matter of experience and it reveals to us HOW THE WORK OF GRACE PROCEEDS. Christ is in all His people, this gracious possession is the work of the Spirit of God, by whose means Christ is formed in us, the hope of Glory.  
To my mind it is a very beautiful thing that the Lord Jesus Christ, when He comes into the soul, does *not annihilate any part of the personality,* but shines in each separate being, for He is not only all, but He is *in* all His people! There is, for instance, the Greek—the “Gentile”—shall be the word. Very well, the Grace of God does not turn the Gentile into a Jew. He remains a Gentile, but Christ is in him and, therefore, he is made into a new creature. There have been some beautiful specimens of holiness and Grace found in many of the Gentile nations dwelling in the islands of the sea, or among all sorts and conditions of men scattered up and down the world—and Christ has shone gloriously in them. Then comes the Jew. When he is saved, Christ is in him. The Apostles of Jesus were mostly, at least, of that race, and many later Believers have been of the seed of Abraham. But Christ has been in them and He has gloriously displayed Himself in them. The Lord Jesus Christ, dwelling in the Jew, leaves him still a member of the house of Abraham, but, through the Presence of the Lord Jesus within him, how wondrously his whole character is exalted!  
Then you have the man who is circumcised and the man who is uncircumcised—and in each of these, if he is saved, Christ dwells. And each one, therefore, lives according to his light, his knowledge and his standing. Christ enters into the barbarian and though in certain natural respects he remains, to a large extent, what he was before, yet, as soon as Christ enters into him, all of his barbarism that is *sinful* disappears! He still retains the free spirit of the child of the wilderness or the son of the woods, but how grandly has Christ displayed Himself in such men as he is! The personal piety of a Red Indian, or of an African freshly taken from the wilds of the Dark Continent has been as brilliant and as beautiful— certainly as fresh, bright, clear and striking as the piety of the most educated of the Caucasian race! Whether he is barbarian or Scythian, if Christ is formed in him, the hope of Glory, it is only another form of the same exquisite beauty!  
It is always a pity when our missionaries try to make other nations into English people. If we have pride enough to think so, we may regard ourselves as the model for others to imitate, but it would be a great pity if we should be such a model that every native of India must copy the Englishman! I like the worship of our Black friends in Jamaica and in the Southern States of America, with its delightful simplicity, its vivacity— yes, and I venture to say, even its grotesqueness. And I would not have a black man begin slavishly to imitate the white man. Let him continue to be a black man and let Christ shine in the black man’s face right gloriously. Yes, let a man be a brown man, or a yellow man, or a red man, or whatever color God made him! The more he keeps to his own nationality and reflects the Glory of Christ from that angle, the more will Christ’s Gospel triumph and the more will Christ Himself be honored!  
The Apostle adds, as we have already noticed, “Neither bond nor free, but Christ is all and in all.” May the day speedily come when there shall not be a bondsman under Heaven! But in those days of the worst of all slavery, the Christian slaves were among the most brilliant gems in the Redeemer’s diadem. Oh, what brave deeds they did for the Crucified One! I should think that it was harder to be a Christian *freeman*, in those days, than to be a Christian slave. But whether bond or free, whether the man took his place in the Forum among the senators, or his lot was cast yonder among the slaves—either case, if Christ was in him—the Light of God shone gloriously from Him and God was magnified thereby! Christ is all, and Christ is in all His people, each one remaining the same in His individuality, but Christ shining in each one!  
I must again refer you to the connection of our text and ask you to read in the 9thand 10th verses, where Paul says, “You have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him*.”*You recollect that Adam was made in the image of God and that he lost that image by his sin. But when Christ enters into a man and he is created anew in Christ Jesus, then *he receives afresh the image of God.*The image of God is Christ Jesus*,*for He is the express image of His Father’s Glory. He that has seen Christ has seen the Father and, inasmuch as Christ enters into all Believers and makes them like Himself, the image of God is thereby restored in all Believers.  
So, note again that because Christ dwells in him, *every Believer becomes a copy of Christ.*Read the 13th verse—“Forbearing one another and forgiving one another, if anyone has a quarrel against another, even as Christ forgave you, so also do you.” Is not that beautiful—Christ in every Believer—that Christ the image of God, and that Christian the image of Christ so that, just as Jesus freely forgave, so does every Christian freely forgive! Do you find it difficult to forgive one who has wronged you? Then you will find it difficult to get to Heaven! If you cannot enter Heaven unless you are like Christ, how can you be like Christ unless you can freely forgive? This seems a grand opportunity for you to stand on the same platform with Christ and, in some respects, to do the works of Christ when, having been slighted, ungratefully treated, misrepresented, slandered and injured, you can say, “I as freely forgive you as the Lord Jesus Christ forgave *me.”* This is the token and evidence that Christ is in you—when you become imitators of Christ as dear children!  
It is a remarkable fact, as I have often said to you, that, although our Lord Jesus Christ is more perfect than any other example—indeed, the *only perfect example*—yet it is more easy to imitate Christ than it is to imitate some of the best of His people! That is curious, but it is a fact. I know a Brother whom I greatly admire, an eminent Christian—I would not mention my own name in the same day with his, he lives so near to God and is such a truly gracious man—yet I could not imitate him. It is quite impossible that my nature should ever become exactly like his. Another Brother, whom I used to know—he is now with God—was equally good, but he was as different from the other good man as anyone could be. They were as opposite as the poles in their temperament and behavior. The first Brother I mentioned is solid, calm, quiet, unexcitable. And I should think that he very seldom laughs and that even then, he does not know that he has done it!  
My other friend used to, sometimes, literally roar with laughter! He was full of earnest love for the souls of men and God blessed him greatly in his service. He had a merry vein and a

humorous spirit—and I was more at home with him than I was with the first one. Yet the Lord Jesus Christ is far more easy to imitate than either of my two friends, for sometimes I am so depressed that I cannot show all the cheerfulness of the one. And at other times, having such a humorous vein in my nature, I would be hypocritical and unnatural if I suppressed it and always acted as if I were as solemn as death itself! But in the case of our Lord Jesus Christ, albeit that there is never any mention of laughter, yet there were ripples of holy pleasantry in His life and in His Character though He was *“*a Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief.” He is more of a Man than the best of other men, and more imitable, though altogether inimitable, than those who can be imitated and, perhaps, can even be excelled.  
What is more, Christ in each one of these Believers *creates them all into one body.* Read the 14th and 15th verses—“And above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfectness. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you are called in one body and be you thankful.” The same life is in all Believers—in you and in me—well, then, we are one1 The same life is in ten thousand Christians—then they, also, are all one! If the same life quickens them and they live under the same influences, and they act according to the same rule, then are they one and Christ becomes the glorious Head of a body which He renders glorious by quickening it with His own indwelling!  
I like to think of this blessed Truth of God—Christ in all Believers creating them into one body—this is the beginning of true unity. Here, for instance, is a man who says that he is baptized as I am, but if he has not the life of God within him, I cannot get on with him, whatever he may call himself—I am not in union with him. There, perhaps, comes a Methodist, and we begin to talk about the Lord Jesus Christ and I find that he loves Him with all his heart, and I know that I do, though I wish that I loved Him more. And directly we two get on together—we feel that we are one in Christ because of the one Life which quickens us. Do you not feel it to be so? Have you not been reading a book, sometimes, and said to yourself, “Oh, what a blessed book this is! How full of the Divine life”? Yes, and after you have read it, you have been surprised to find that the person who wrote it was a Romanist—for there are many books of that kind—or the writer was a member of some church that, in many respects, lies in very dangerous error! You say to yourself, “I do not care where this man lived, or what he did, I am one with him as far as he is one with Christ.”  
The one common feeling of union to Christ and Christ being in us makes us feel that we are one with each other. Wherever there is, as Augustine used to say, “*aliquid Christi”—*“anything of Christ”—there our love must go forth, we cannot help it! Christ in you all makes you into one body and unites you together in a mysterious and unique manner. There is not a parallel to it anywhere else—it gives such a living, loving, abiding, undeniable unity that even if you wish to forget it, you cannot! If the man is in Christ, you must love him, do what you may, for you are one body with him.  
Such is this manifestation of Christ in His people, that it leads, further, to *the offering of one oblation.*Read the 16th verse—“Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with Grace in your hearts to the Lord.” Yes, all God’s people love God’s Word! They all find a great sweetness in “Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs.” They all delight to sing praises unto the Most High. Montgomery truly wrote— ***“The saints in prayer appear as one,”***  
but it is equally true that the saints in *praise* appear as one. And the saints in love to the Word of God appear as one because Christ, being in them, and Christ being one, they are knit to one another. Oh, how blessed it is for us to have Christ in us!  
And lastly upon this point, all that I have said leads up to eac*h one acting to the glory of one name,*for if Christ is in you, the 17th verse is true of you—“Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him.” What a life to lead—Christ taking such entire possession of a man that everything he does, he does as if Christ, Himself, were doing it, because he does it in Christ’s name and by Christ’s power! As Paul wrote to the Corinthians, “Whether therefore you eat, or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God,” so that it shall no longer be yourselves that do it, but Christ that dwells in you. This shall sanctify the most common actions of everyday life and make the whole of the Christian’s career to be sublime, so that while he treads the earth beneath his feet, literally, he is also doing it *spiritually—* and all the while his conversation is in Heaven.  
I must just linger one minute here. You all agreed with me when I spoke about Christ being all. You understood clearly that He is the only ground of our hope. Can you also go with me in this part of my subject— Christ is in all His people? Is Christ formed in *you,*the hope of Glory? Do you know anything about an *indwelling* Christ? Verily I say unto you, the Christ on the Cross will never save you unless there is also Christ *within you*! It is the Christ on the Cross in whom we trust, but the outcome of that trust is that He is born in our hearts! His power comes from His love, His Grace, His truth, Himself—and we live because He lives in us. Do you understand this? If you do not, I pray God that you may, for, unless Christ is in you, you know what the Apostle says—“Examine yourselves, whether you are in the faith; prove yourselves. Know you not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, unless you are reprobate?” If you are disapproved of God, Christ is *not* in you. If Christ is not in you, you are disapproved of God. But if He lives in you, you are “accepted in the Beloved” and that life of yours shall never die out, but you shall, by-and-by, behold your Savior’s face in the kingdom of His Glory.  
Brothers and Sisters, we are not what we ought to be! We are not what we want to be, we are not what we shall be! But we are something very different from what we used to be. The change in us is as great as in that blind man who said, “One thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see.” The change is not merely external, but it is vital! The Lord has taken away the heart of stone out of our flesh and given us back the heart of flesh which belonged to man in his unfallen nature—and then upon this heart of flesh He has also worked wondrously, making it conscious to spiritual influences which once did not affect it, and writing upon the fleshy tablets of that renewed heart, His perfect Law. Glory be to the name of Jehovah, a notable miracle has been performed upon us! A miracle so marvelous that it is comparable to the resurrection from the dead and, in some respects, it even surpasses the wonders of creation, itself! We shall tell this story in the streets of the New Jerusalem and we shall draw around us attentive crowds as we narrate our experience and tell the tale of the sin which ruined us, and of the mercy which reclaimed us!  
Thus have we gone up the second rung of this golden ladder. First, “Christ is all.” Next, “Christ is in all.”  
**III.**Now kindly turn back in your Bibles to our other text—the 1st Epistle to the Corinthians, 15th chapter, and 28th verse—“That God may be all in all.” First, Christ is all. Next, Christ is in all His people, but THE CONSUMMATION, the top-stone of all is “that God may be all in all.”  
The passage in which this text stands seems to be a very difficult one to understand. The common meaning that is given to it by nearly every interpreter I have ever met with, I do not believe or accept. It seems to a great many to be taught here that there is to come a time, called, “the end,” when the Lord Jesus Christ, having conquered all His enemies, is to resign His position, abdicate His Throne and cease to be King, “that God may be all in all.” Let us read the connection of the passage—“For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the first fruits; afterward they that are Christ’s at His coming. Then comes the end, when He shall have delivered up the Kingdom to God, even the Father; when He shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For He has put all things under His feet. But when He says all things are put under Him, it is manifest that He is excepted, which did put all things under Him. And when all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the Son, also, Himself, be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that God may be all in all.”  
The general meaning given to these words is that there is to be a time when the mediatorial Kingdom of Christ will come to an end of itself and He will deliver up the Kingdom to God, ceasing, Himself, to be King. I can only say that if this is the teaching of this text, it is not taught anywhere else in the whole Bible—nobody can find any parallel passage to it, or anything like it. Neither do I believe that it is taught in the Bible at all— neither here nor anywhere else! And I can say that for this reason I cannot see that there is to be any end whatever to the mediatorial Kingdom of Christ.  
You perceive that *it is the Son who is to be subject to the Father* but it is of the Son that we read in the first chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews, “Unto the Son He says, Your Throne, O God, is forever and ever,” where the Father, manifestly speaking to the Son, in His complex Person declares that His Throne is to be forever and ever. Brethren, in the day when the Christ shall have overcome all His enemies and Death, itself, shall be destroyed, there will be no abolition of His mediatorial kingdom! There still stands in the Scriptures this promise of our Lord Jesus Christ—“To him that overcomes will I grant to sit with Me on My Throne, even as I, also, overcame, and am set down with My Father on His Throne.” Does that mean that we are to have a temporary reign with a temporary Christ—a brief rule with a short-lived Monarch? I do not believe it!  
*Moreover, the priesthood enters into the mediatorial office most eminently,*yet “the Lord swore and will not repent, You are a priest forever after the order of Melchisedec.” If the priesthood is to continue forever— and Melchisedec was king as well as priest—then the kingdom of Christ is to continue, world without end. Moreover, in the Book of the Revelation—not to mention the almost innumerable passages to the same effect—we find that when the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of our Lord, it is added, “*and of His Christ; and He shall reign forever and ever.”*When the kingdoms are brought back, they will be the kingdoms of our God and of His Christ. Then we read of*“*the throne of God and of the Lamb.” And when all kingdoms are subdued and the Lord God Omnipotent reigns, then we are told to expect the announcement, “The marriage of the Lamb is come and His wife has made herself ready.” What does all this mean but a continuance of that dispensation in which the Christ, the Son of Man, as the Son of God, shall be still at the head of His people, still their Priest and still their King and still reigning? And that is exactly what this passage says, if you will kindly look at it again and dismiss all previous prejudices from your minds!  
The fact is our Lord Jesus Christ has performed and is still performing, *a work which will end in putting everything into its proper order.* Now, the proper order, according to the first Epistle to the Corinthians, the 11th chapter, and the third verse, is this—“I would have you know that the head of every man is Christ and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God.” This is how it stands—the woman with the man for her head, the man with Christ for his Head—and Christ with God for His Head. Such is the Scriptural order—an order which has been disturbed all through except with regard to the Father and the Son, for God has always been the Head of Christ! Now, Christ has come into the world to restore that right order from the bottom, right up to the top! And it is to be so restored, first, by Christ becoming the Head of men—when He shall have put down all His enemies under His feet and when He shall have put down all rule and all authority and power, “for He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.”  
Christ is come into the world that all the evil that is in the world should be subdued. And He will drive it out of the world. There shall remain no power that shall dare revolt against the majesty of Heaven! Over the whole surface of this globe, beneath the new heavens and on the new earth, there shall yet be the Kingdom established of which Jesus Christ shall be the supreme Head and over which He shall reign forever, King of Kings and Lord of Lords! The Lord hasten it in His own time!  
Well, and what then?” asks one. “Does it not say that He is to deliver up the Kingdom to God, even the Father, and to be subject to the Father?” Exactly so. Supposing that India had been in revolt against our Queen and that a Viceroy had been sent there, and that he had warred against all the rebellious tribes and kingdoms, and they had all been conquered. He telegraphs to the Queen, “Your Majesty’s empire is at your feet.” Does he therefore cease to be Viceroy? Not necessarily in the least degree! He may still remain as ruler and yet have delivered up the kingdom. I believe that to be the meaning of this passage—that Christ has so conquered the Kingdom that it is all God’s.  
But what does it mean when it says that *then* shall the Son also be subject unto the Father? It means that He is subject, now, and that *even then* He will continue to be subject to the Father, that is all. It cannot mean that at a certain time Christ will *become* subject to God, because He has been so ever since that day of His glorious humiliation when, for His people’s redemption, he took upon Himself the form of a Servant— and that condition is not to cease. He is still to be the Representative of God even when He shall have put down all power and all authority under His feet and when God has put all things under His feet. It is manifest that He that did put all things under Him is not, Himself, under Him. And it is clear, from the text, that even then, God shall be the Head of Christ. I do not know whether you catch my thought yet, but it is just this—all evil subdued, all the saints having Christ dwelling in them, Christ the Head of all these saints, and then God, still as God, all the more surely and securely supreme over all things—for the Head of Christ is God and God is all in all.  
The conclusion of the whole matter is this, that every day this should be the great consummation to be kept in view, “that God may be all in all.” For this, the heroic labors of the Son of Man here on earth! For this, His cruel death! For this, His rising again! For this, His grasping of the mediatorial scepter! For this, His ruling in Providence! For this, His management of the world’s affairs! For this, His Second Coming and the glory of His saints! All this, while it continues to bring Glory to Him, has been done in subjection to His great Father’s will. He has accomplished it all as the Father’s Representative and Messenger, sent by Him to do it and then, when it is all done, and He shall reign forever and ever, even then, the Son, Himself, shall continue in that position in which He put Himself long, long ago, “that God may be all in all.” Then will the whole universe, restored and brought back to its proper place, be ordered according to the eternal Covenant arrangement.  
And the practical outcome of it all is this. I want you, beloved Friends, so to live as to be persuaded that it will be so one day, that God shall be all in all—that there shall come a time when we shall stand before the Throne of God, God in us all, and everything in us of God, when all His elect, all His redeemed, all to whom Christ is all, and all in whom Christ is, shall only know God as their All in All! God all in their very existence. God their all in every hymn. God their all in every pulsing of their joy. God their all in every hope. God their all in every memory. God all to them and God *in* all of them to the very fullest—all redeemed, all delivered from the power of sin, all quickened into the Divine and God-like life, all summed up in Christ, Christ comprehending them all—and then Christ Himself Head over all things to His Church, standing and giving unto God the Glory forever and ever, that the Father may be All in All.  
I see no abdication of a throne here. I see not even a change of dispensation and I do not believe in any! But, as surely as God lives, our King lives, and our Priest still ministers before Him. And He shall still be King over His people, though still, as the Christ, in His infinite goodness, abiding as subject unto God, Himself, God forever and ever, and yet, in His complex Person, making the Father to be All in All. Looking forward to that glorious consummation, we can join again in the jubilant hymn we sang just now—  
***“Hallelujah!—hark! the sound,  
From the center to the skies,  
Wakes above, beneath, around,  
All creation’s harmonies!  
See Jehovah’s banner furled,  
Sheathed His sword! He speaks—‘tis done! And the kingdoms of this world  
Are the kingdoms of His Son.  
He shall reign from pole to pole,  
With illimitable sway.  
He shall reign when, like a scroll,  
Yonder heavens have passed away!  
Then the end—beneath His rod,  
Man’s last enemy shall fall!  
Hallelujah! Christ in God,  
God in Christ is All in All.”***  
Now let us begin at the beginning. This is very simple—“*Christ is all.”* Then may the Spirit of God help us to go on to the next rung of the ladder—“Christ *is in all His people.”* There is the difficulty! Is He in you, Beloved? Have you received Him by faith? Then comes the third step—this may be, at present, full of mystery, but we shall see it in brighter light, by-and-by—*God shall be all in all.*So shall He be to us even now! Amen and Amen.

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“CHRIST IS ALL”  
NO. 2888

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, JUNE 16, 1904.

***DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORD’S-DAY EVENING, JUNE 4, 1876.**

***“Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, Barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is All and in all.”*** Col 3:11***.***

PAUL is writing concerning the new creation and he says that, in it, “There is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, Barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is All.” The new creation is a very different thing from the old one. Blessed are all they who have both seen the Kingdom of Heaven and entered into it. In the first creation, we are born of the flesh—and that which is born of the flesh is, even at the best, nothing but flesh and can never be anything better. But in the new creation, we are born of the Spirit and so we become spiritual and understand spiritual things. The new life in Christ Jesus is an eternal life and it links all those who possess it with the eternal realities at the right hand of God above.

In some respects the new creation is so like the old one that a parallel might to drawn between them, but, in far more respects, it is not at all like the old creation. Many things are absent from the new creation which were found in the old one—and many things which were accounted of great value in the first creation are of little or no worth in the new—while many distinctions which were greatly prized in the old creation are treated as mere insignificant trifles in the new creation. The allimportant thing is for each one of us to put to himself or herself the question, “Do I know what it is to have been renewed in knowledge after the image of Him who creates anew? Do I know what it is to have been born twice, to have been born-again—born from above by the effectual working of God, the Holy Spirit? Do I understand what it is to have spiritually entered a new world wherein dwells righteousness?” It is concerning this great Truth of God that I am going to speak and, first, I shall say something upon*what is obliterated in the new creation.* And, secondly, upon *what stands in its place*.

**I.**First, as to WHAT IS OBLITERATED IN THE NEW CREATION. “There is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, Barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free.”

That is to say, first, in the Kingdom of Christ *there is an obliteration of all national distinctions*. I suppose there will always be national distinctions in the world until Christ comes, even if they should then be all terminated. The mischief was worked when men tried to build the city and tower, in the plain of Shinar, and so brought Babel, or confusion into the world. The one family became transformed into many—a necessary evil to prevent a still greater one. The unity at Babel would have been far worse than the confusion has ever been, just as the spiritual union of Babylon, that is, Rome, the Papal system, has been infinitely more mischievous to the Church and to the world, than the division of Christians into various sects and parties could ever have been. Babel has not been an altogether unmitigated evil. It has, no doubt, worked a certain amount of good and prevented colossal streams of evil from reaching a still more awful culmination.

Still, the separation is, in itself, an evil and it is, therefore, in the Lord’s own time and way to be done away with. And *spiritually* it is already abolished. In the Church of Christ, wherever there is real union of heart among Believers, nationality is no hindrance to true Christian fellowship. I feel just as much love toward any Brother or Sister in Christ who is not of our British race as I do toward our own Christian countrymen and countrywomen. Indeed, I sometimes think I feel even more the force of the spiritual union when I catch the Swiss tone, or the French, or the German breaking out in the midst of the English, as we often do here, thank God. I seem to feel all the more interest in these beloved Brothers and Sisters because of the little difference in nationality that there is between us. Certainly, Beloved, in any part of the true Church of Christ, all national distinctions are swept away and we “are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and of the household of God.”

Under the Christian dispensation, the distinction or division of nationality has gone from us in this sense. We once had our national heroes— each nation still glories in its great men of the heroic age, or in its mythical heroes—but the one Champion and Hero of Christianity is our Lord Jesus Christ who has slain our dragon foes, routed all our adversaries, broken down the massive fortress of our great enemy and set the captives free! We sing no longer of the valiant deeds of our national heroes— St. George, St. Andrew, St. Patrick, St. Denis and the other so-called “saints” who were either only legendary, or else anything but “saints” as we understand the term! We sing the prowess of the King of all saints, the mighty Son of David who is worthy of our loftiest praises! King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table we are quite willing to forget when we think of “another King, one Jesus,” and of another Table, where they who sit are not merely good knights of Jesus Christ, but are made kings and priests unto Him who sits at the head of the festal board. Barbarian, Scythian, Greek, Jew—these distinctions are all gone as far as we are concerned—for we are all one in Christ Jesus. We boast not of our national or natural descent, or of the heroes whose blood may be in our veins. It is enough for us that Christ has lived, Christ has died and Christ has “spoiled principalities and powers” and trampled down sin, death and Hell even as He fell amid the agonies of Calvary.

Away, too, has gone all our national history, so far as there may have been any desire to exalt it for the purpose of angering Christian Brothers and Sisters of another race. I wish that even the names of wars and famous battlefields could be altogether forgotten, but if they do remain in the memories of those of us who are Christians, we will not boast as he did who said, “But ‘twas a famous victory.” Nor will we proudly sing of—

***“The flag that braved a thousand years***

***The battle and the breeze.”***  
As Christians, our true history begins—no, I must correct myself, for it had no beginning except in that dateless eternity when the Divine Trinity in Unity conceived the wondrous plan of Predestinating Grace, electing love, the Substitutional Sacrifice of the Son of God for the sins of His chosen people, the full and free justification of all who believe and the eternal glory of the whole redeemed family of God! This is our past, present and future history! We who are Christians take down the Volume of the Book wherein these things are written and we make our boast in the Lord—and thus the boasting is not sinful.

As to laws and customs, of which each nation has its own, it is not wrong for a Christian to take delight in a good custom which has been long established, or earnestly to contend for the maintenance of ancient laws which have preserved inviolate the liberty of the people age after age. But, still, the customs of Christians are learned from the example of Christ—and the laws of Believers are the precepts laid down by Him. When we are dealing with matters relating to the Church of Christ, we have no English customs, or French customs, or American customs, or German customs. Or, if we have, we should let them go and have only Christian customs henceforth. Did our Lord Jesus Christ command anything? Then, let it be done! Did He forbid anything? Then away with it! Would He smile upon a certain action? Then perform it at once! Would He frown upon it? Then mind that you do the same! Blessed is the Believer who has realized that the laws and customs for the people of God to observe are plainly written out in the life of Christ and that He has become to us, now, “All and in all.”

Christ, by giving liberty to all His people, has also obliterated the distinctions of nationality which we once located in various countries. One remembers, with interest, the old declaration, “*Romanus sum*,” (“I am a Roman”), for a citizen of Rome, wherever he might go, felt that he was a free man whom none would dare to hurt, else Roman legions would ask the reason why! And an Englishman, in any country wherever he may be, still feels that he is one who was born free and who would sooner die than become a slave, or hold another man or woman in slavery. But, Brothers and Sisters, there is a higher liberty than this—the liberty with which Christ has made His people free! And when we come into the Church of God, we talk about *that* liberty and we believe that Christians—even if they have not the civil and religious rights which *we* possess—should still be as free in Christ as we are. There are still many in various parts of the world who do not enjoy the liberties that we have, who, notwithstanding their bonds, are spiritually free, for, as the Son has made them free, they are free, indeed!

Christ also takes from us all inclination or power to boast of our national prestige. To me it is prestige enough to be a Christian—to bear the cross Christ gives me to carry and to follow in the footsteps of the great Cross-Bearer. What is the power, in which some boast, of sending soldiers and cannon to a distant shore, compared with the Almighty Power with which Christ guards the weakest of us who dares to trust Him? What reason is there for a man to be lifted up with conceit just because he happens to have been born in this or that highly-favored country? What is such a privilege compared with the glories which appertain to the man who is born-again from above—who is an heir of Heaven, a child of God through faith in Jesus Christ—and who can truthfully say, “All things are mine, and I am Christ’s, and Christ is God’s.”

What is the wondrous internationalism that levels all these various nationalities in the Church of Christ and makes us all one in Him? Spiritually we have all been born in one country—the New Jerusalem is the mother of us all. It is not my boast that I am a citizen of this or that earthly city or town. It is my joy that I am one of the citizens of “a city which has foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God.” Christ has fired all of us who are His people with a common enthusiasm. He has revealed Himself to each one of us as He does not unto the world and, in the happy remembrance that we belong to Him, we forget that we are called by this or that national name and only remember that He is our Lord and that we are to follow where He leads the way! He has pointed us to Heaven as the leader of the Goths and Huns pointed his followers to Italy and said, “There is the country whence come the luscious wines of which you have tasted. Go and take the vineyards and grow the vines for yourselves.” And so they forgot that they belonged to various tribes and they all united under the one commander who promised to lead them on to the conquest of the rich land for which they panted. And now we who are in Christ Jesus, having tasted of the Eshcol clusters which grow in the heavenly Canaan, follow our glorious Leader and Commander as the Israelites followed Joshua, forgetting that we belong to so many different tribes, but knowing that there is an inheritance reserved in Heaven for all who follow where Jehovah-Jesus leads the way!

The next thing to be observed in our text is that *ceremonial distinctions are obliterated*. When Paul says that “there is neither circumcised nor uncircumcised,” he recalls the fact that, under the Law, there were some who were peculiarly the children of promise to whom were committed the oracles of God. But there is no such thing as that now. Then there were others who stood outside the pale of the law—the sinners of the Gentiles, who were left in darkness until their time for receiving the Light of God should come. But Christ has fused these two into one and now, in His Church, “there is neither Greek nor Jew.” I marvel at the insanity of those who try to prove that we are Jews—the lost ten tribes, forsooth! I grant you that the business transactions of a great many citizens of London afford some support to the theory, but it is only a theory—and a very crazy one, too! But suppose they were able to prove that we are of the seed of Abraham after the flesh? It would not make any difference to us, for we are expressly told that “there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised”—for all Believers are one in Christ Jesus!

The all-important consideration is—Are we Christians? Do we really believe in Jesus Christ to the salvation of our souls? The Apostle truly says, “Christ is All,” for He has done away with all the distinctions that formerly existed between Jews and Gentiles. He has leveled down and He has leveled up. First He has leveled down the Jews and made them stand in the same class as the Gentiles, shutting them up under the custody of the very Law in which they gloried—and making them see that they can never come out of that bondage except by using the key of faith in Christ. So our Lord Jesus has stopped the mouths of both Jews and Gentiles and made them stand equally guilty before God, for, on the other hand, He has leveled up the outcast and despised Gentiles and has admitted us to all the privileges of His ancient Covenant, making us to be heirs of Abraham in a *spiritual* sense, “though Abraham is ignorant of us and Israel acknowledge us not.” He has given to us all the blessings which belong to Abraham’s seed because we, too, possess like precious faith as the father of the faithful had. So, “now in Christ Jesus we who sometimes were far off are made near by the blood of Christ. For He is our Peace, who has made both one and has broken down the middle wall of partition between us; having abolished in His flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in Himself of two, one new man, so making peace.” Oh, what a blessing it is that all national and ceremonial distinctions are gone forever and that “Christ is All” to all who believe in Him!

A more difficult point, perhaps, is that of *social distinctions*. But that also has gone from the Church of Christ. “There is neither slave nor free,” says the Apostle. Well, blessed be God, slavery has almost ceased to exist! Among Christians it has become a by-word and a proverb, though there was a time when some of them pleaded for it as a Divinely-ordained institution. But, oh, may the last vestige of it speedily disappear and may every man see it to be both his duty and his privilege to yield to his brother man his God-given rights and liberties! Yet, even in such a free country as ours happily is, there are still distinctions between one class and another and I expect there always will be. I do not suppose there can ever be in this world, any system, even if we could have the most profound philosophers to invent it, in which everybody will be equal. Or, if they ever should be all equal, they would not remain so for more than five minutes. We are not all equal in our form, shape, capacity and ability—and we never shall be! We could not have the various members of our body all equal—if we had such an arrangement as that, our body would be a monstrosity! There are some members of the body which must have a more honorable office and function than others have—but all the members are in the body and necessary to its due proportion.

So it is in the Church of Christ which is His mystical body. Yet, Brothers and Sisters, how very, very minute are the distinctions between the various members of that body! You, my Brother, are rich, as the world reckons riches. Well, do not boast of your wealth, for riches are very apt to take to themselves wings and fly away! Probably more of you are poor, as far as worldly wealth is concerned. Well, then, do not murmur, for “all things are yours” if you are Christ’s! And soon you will be where you will know nothing of poverty again forever and ever! True Christianity practically wipes out all these distinctions by saying, “This man, as one of Christ’s stewards, has more of his Lord’s money entrusted to him than others have, so he is bound to do more with it than they do with their portion—he must give away more than they do.” This other man has far less than his rich brother, but Christ says that he is responsible for the right use of what he has—not for what he has not. As the poor widow’s two mites drop into the treasury of the Lord, He receives her gift with as sweet a smile as that which He accorded to the lavish gifts of David and Solomon. In His Church, Christ teaches us that if we have more than others, we simply hold it in trust for those who have less than we have— and I believe that some of the Lord’s children are poor in order that there may be an opportunity for their fellow Christians to minister to them out of their abundance.

We could not prove our devotion to Christ, in practical service such as He loves best, if there were not needy ones whom we could succor and support. Our Lord has told us how He will say in the Great Day of Account, “I was hungry and you gave Me meat,” but that could not be the case if there were not one of the least of His brethren who was hungry and whom we could feed for His sake. “I was thirsty and you gave Me drink.” But He could not say that if none of His poor brethren were thirsty. “I was sick and you visited Me.” So there must be sick saints to be visited and cases of distress, of various kinds, to be relieved, otherwise there could not be the opportunity of practically proving our love to our Lord. In the Church of Christ it ought always to be so, Brothers and Sisters—we should love each other fervently with a pure heart, we should bear each other’s burdens and so fulfill the Law of Christ—and we should care for one another and seek, as far as we can, to supply one another’s needs. The rich brother must not exalt himself above the poor one, nor must the poor Christian envy his richer Brothers and Sisters in Christ, for in Him all these distinctions are obliterated and we sit down, at His Table, as members of the one family of which He is the glorious and ever-living Head—and we dwell together in unity, praising Him that national, ceremonial and social distinctions have, for us, all passed away and that “Christ is All and in all.”

**II.**Possibly I have taken up too much of our time in describing what is obliterated from the old creation, so, now I will try more briefly to show you WHAT TAKES ITS PLACE IN THE CREATION—“Christ is All and in all.”

First, Christ *is all our culture*. Has Christianity wiped out that grand name, “Greek”? Yes, in the old meaning of it and, in some senses, it is a great pity that it is gone, for the Greek was a cultured man. The Greek’s every movement was elegance itself. The Greek was the standard of classic beauty and eloquence, but Christianity has wiped all that out and written, in its place, “Christ is All.” And, Brothers and Sisters, the culture, the gracefulness, the beauty, the comeliness, the eloquence—in the sight of the best Judge of all those things, namely, God, the EverBlessed—which Christ gives to the true Christian, is better than all that Greek art or civilization ever produced! So we may cheerfully let it all go and say, “Christ is All.”

Next, *Christ is all our Revelation.*There was the “Jew”—he was a fine fellow and there is still much to admire in him. The Semitic race seems to have been specially constituted by God for devout worship and the Jew, the descendant of believing Abraham, is still a firm Believer in one part of God’s Word. He is, spiritually, a staunch Conservative in that matter, the very backbone of the world’s belief. Alas, that his faith is so incomplete and that there is mingled with it so much tradition received from his fathers! Will you wipe out that name, “Jew”? Yes, because we who believe in Jesus glory in Him even as the Jew gloried in having received the oracles of God. Christ is “the Word of God” Incarnate—and all the Divine Revelation is centered in Him—and we hold fast the eternal Truths of God which have been committed unto us because of the power of Christ that rests upon us.

Then, next, *Christ is all our ritual*. There is not a circumcision now. That was the special mark of those who were separated from all the rest of mankind. They bore in their body undoubted indications that they were set apart to be the Lord’s peculiar possession. Someone asks, “Will you do away with that distinguishing rite?” Yes, we will, for, in Christ every true Christian is set apart unto God—marked as Jesus Christ’s special separated one by the circumcision made without hands!

Further, *Christ is all our simplicity*. Here is a man who says that “uncircumcision” is his distinguishing mark and adds, “I am not separated or set apart from others, as the so-called ‘priest’ is. I am a man among my fellow men. Wherever I go, I can mingle with others and feel that they are my brethren. I belong to the ‘uncircumcision.’ Will you rule that out?” Yes, we will, because we have, in Christ, all that uncircumcision means, for he who becomes a real Christian is the truest of all men—he is the most free from that spirit which says, “Stand by yourself, come not near me for I am holier than you.” He is the true philanthropist, the real lover of men, even as Christ was! He was no separatist, in the sense in which some use that word. He went to a wedding feast. He ate bread in the house of a publican. And a woman of the city who was a sinner was permitted to wash His feet with her tears. He mingled with the rest of mankind and “the common people heard Him gladly.” And He would have us to be as He was—the true Man among men, the great Lover of our race.

Once more, *Christ is all our natural traditions and our unconquerableness and liberty*. Here is “the rude barbarian,” as the poet calls him. He says, “I shall never give up the free, manly life that I have lived so long. By my unshorn beard,” (for that is the meaning of the term, Barbarian), “I swear it shall be so.” “By the wild steppes and wide plains over which I roam unconquerable,” says the Scythian, “I will never bend to the conventionalities of civilization and be the slave of your modern luxuries.” Well, it is almost a pity to have done with Barbarians and Scythians, in this sense, for there is a good deal about them to be commended—but we must wipe them all out. If they come into the Church of Christ, He must be “All, and in all,” because everything that is manly, everything that is natural, everything that is free, everything that is bold, everything that is unconquerable will be put into them if “Christ is All” to them. They will get all the excellences that are in that freedom—without the faults appertaining to it!

Further, *“Christ is All,” as our Master, if we are a “slave.”*I think I see, in the great assembly at Colosse which Paul addressed, one who said, “But I am a slave! A man bought me at the auction mart and here, on my back, are the marks of the slave-holder’s lash.” And I think I hear him add, “I wish that disgrace could be wiped out.” But Paul says, “Brother, it *is* wiped out! You are no slave, really, for Christ has made you free.” Then the great Apostle of the Gentiles comes and sits down by his side and says to him, “The Church of Christ has absorbed you, Brother, by making us all like you—for we are all servants of one Master. And look,” says Paul, as he bares his own back and shows the scars from his repeated scourging, “from henceforth let no man trouble me, for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus.” “And so,” he says, laying his hand on the poor Christian slave, “I, Paul, the slave of Jesus Christ, share your servitude and with me you are Christ’s free man.”

Lastly, *Christ is our Magna Charta. Yes, our liberty itself if we are “free.”*Here comes the free man who was born free. Shall that clause stand, “neither slave nor free”? Oh, yes, let it stand! But not so stand that we glory in our national freedom, for Christ has given us a higher freedom! I may slightly alter the familiar couplet and say—

***“He is the free man whom  
The Lord makes free,  
And all are slaves beside.”***

Oh, what multitudes of people in London are slaves—miserable slaves to the opinions of their neighbors—slaves to the caprice of Mrs. Grundy— slaves to “respectability!” Some of you dare not do a thing that you know to be right because somebody might make a remark about it. What are you but slaves? Yes, and there are slaves in the pulpit, every Sunday, who dare not speak the Truth of God for fear somebody will be offended! And there are also slaves in the pews and slaves in the shops and slaves all around. What a wretched life a slave lives! Yet, till you become a Christian and know what it is to wear Christ’s bonds about your willing wrists, you will always feel the galling fetters of society and the bonds of custom, fashion, or this or that! But Jesus makes us free with a higher freedom, so we wipe out the mere terrestrial freedom which is too often only a sham—and we write, “Christ is ALL.”

So, to conclude, remember that if you have Christ as your Savior, you do not need anybody else to save you. I see an old gentleman, over there in Rome, with a triple crown on his head. We do not want him, for “Christ is All.” He says that he is the vicegerent of God. That is not true, but if it were, it would not matter, for “Christ is All,” so we can do without the Pope! Then I see another gentleman with an all-round dog collar of the Roman kennel type—he tells me that if I will confess my sins to him as the priest of the parish, he can give me absolution—but, seeing that “Christ is All,” we can do without that gentleman as well as the other one, for anything that is over and above “all” must be a superfluity, if nothing worse. So is it with everything that is beside or beyond Christ— faith can get to Christ without Pope or priest! Everything that is outside Christ is a lie, for “Christ is All.” All that is true must be inside Him, so we can do without all others in the matter of our soul’s salvation.

But supposing that we have not received Christ as our Savior? Then how unspeakably poor we are! If we have not grasped Christ by faith, we have not laid hold of anything, for “Christ is All!” And if we have not Him who is All, we have nothing at all. “Oh,” says one, “I go to chapel regularly.” Yes, so far, so good. But if you have not Christ, you have nothing, for “Christ is All.” “But I have been baptized,” says another. Ah, but if you have not savingly trusted in Christ, your Baptism is only another sin added to all your others! “But I go to communion,” says another. So much the worse for you if you have not trusted in Christ as your Savior. I wish I could put this thought into the heart of everyone here who is without Christ—no, I pray the Holy Spirit to impress this thought upon your heart—if you are without Christ, you are without everything that is worth having, for “Christ is All.”

But, Christians, I would like to make your hearts dance by reminding you that if you have Christ as your Savior, you are rich to all the intents of bliss, for you have “all” that your heart can wish to have! Nobody else can say as much as that! The richest man in the world has only got something, though the something may be very great. Alexander conquered one world but you, Believer, in getting Christ as yours, have this world and also that which is to come—life and death, time and eternity! Oh, revel in the thought that, as Christ is yours, you are rich to an infinity of riches, for “Christ is All.”

Now, if Christ really is yours and as Christ is All, then love Him, honor Him and praise Him! Mother, what were you doing this afternoon? Pressing that dear child of yours to your bosom and saying, “She is my all”? Take back those words, for they are not true! If you love Christ, *He* is your All and you cannot have another “all.” Someone else has one who is very near and very dear. If you are that someone else and you have said in your heart, “He is my all,” or, “She is my all,” you have done wrong, for nothing and no one but Christ must be your “all.” You will be an idolater and you will grieve the Holy Spirit if anything, or anyone except Christ becomes your “all.” You who have lately lost your loved ones and you who have been brought low by recent losses in business—are you fretting over your losses? If so, remember that you have not lost your “all.” You still have Christ and He is “All.” Then what have you lost? I know that you have something to grieve over, but, after all, your “light affliction, which is but for a moment, works for you a far more exceedingly and eternal weight of glory.” Therefore, comfort yourself with this thought—“I have not really lost anything, for I still have All.” When you have all things, find Christ in All and when you have lost all things, then find all things in Christ. I do not know, but I think that the latter is the better of the two!

Now, if Christ is all, then, beloved Brothers and Sisters, let us live for Him! If He is All, let us spend our strength and be ready to lay down the last particle of it that we have and to die for Him—and then let us, whenever we need anything, go to Him for it, for “Christ is All.” Let us draw upon this bank, for its resources are infinite—we shall never exhaust them!

Lastly, and chiefly, let us send our hearts right on to where He is. Where our treasure is, there should our hearts be, also. Come, my Heart, up and away! What have you here that can fill you? What have you here that can satisfy you? Plume your wings and be up and away, for there is your roosting-place! There is the Tree of Life which can never be felled. Up and away and build there forever! The Lord help each one of you to do so, for Jesus’ sake! Amen.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:**Isa 43:1-25***.***

**Verse 1.***But now thus says the LORD that created you, O Jacob, and He that formed you, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed you, I have called you by your name; you are Mine.*I cannot pause to comment upon each of the precious sentences here, but every word is full of marrow and fatness. Ask the Lord to enable you to feed upon each sentence as it passes before your mind.

**2-5.***When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not flow over you: when you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned, neither shall the flame kindle upon you. For I am the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior: I gave Egypt for your ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for you. Since you were precious in My sight, you have been honorable, and I have loved you: therefore will I give men for you, and people for your life. Fear not: for I am with you.*That always seems to me to be the master-consolation—“I am with you.” What more does the most troubled heart need than God’s Presence?

**5.***I will bring your seed from the east, and gather you from the west.*O Church of God, your elect members shall all, in due time, be fetched in— however far they may have wandered!

**6, 7.***I will say to the north, Give up; and to the South, keep not back: bring My sons from far, and My daughters from the ends of the earth; even everyone that is called by My name: for I have created him for My glory, I have formed him; yes, I have made him.*And that in a double sense, for God’s people are twice made—made first in creation, but marred by the Fall—and then new-made as “new creatures in Christ Jesus.”

**8.***Bring forth the blind people that have eyes, and the deaf that have ears.* There are plenty of them, for our proverb is true, “There are none so blind as those that will not see, and none so deaf as those that will not hear.” But even to such people as these God makes His appeal.

**9.***Let all the nations be gathered together, and let the people be assembled: who among them can declare this, and show us former things? Let them bring forth their witnesses, that they may be justified: or let them hear, and say, It is truth.* God challenges all the false gods and their worshippers to produce a single fulfilled prophecy—to show one instance in which they have truly and correctly foretold any event or a chain of events! But all Jehovah’s prophecies have been fulfilled, or will be in due season.

**10-13.***You are My witnesses, says the LORD, and My servant whom I have chosen: that you may know and believe Me, and understand that I am He: before Me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after Me. I, even I, am the LORD; and beside Me there is no Savior. I have declared, and have saved, and I have showed, when there was no strange god among you: therefore you are My witnesses, says the LORD, that I am God. Yes, before the day was, I am He and there are none that can deliver out of My hand: I will work, and who shall reverse it?*It is a great blessing to know that the Lord is God—and not merely to know that as a matter of fact, but to feel it, to realize it—and to trust in God and act towards Him conscious that He, and He alone, is the living and true God.

**14-17.***Thus says the LORD, your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel, For your sake I have sent to Babylon, and have brought down all their nobles, and the Chaldeans, whose cry is in the ships. I am the LORD, your Holy One, the Creator of Israel, your King. Thus says the LORD, which makes a way in the sea, and a path in the mighty waters; who brings forth the chariot and horse, the army and the power; they shall lie down together, they shall not rise: they are extinct, they are quenched as a wick.*You know what happened to the army of Sennacherib when it came against Jerusalem. Horses and chariots were there in vast numbers and all the pomp and pageantry of a vast host of armed men. But they slept their last sleep—from which they never rose—when the Angel of the Lord flew through their ranks. So was it with Babylon itself. When the set time came, that long-established empire with its colossal power, was swept away like a vision of the night! It blazed like a wick and then was quenched forever. What cannot God do for His people when He lifts up His almighty arm?

**18.***Remember not the former things, neither consider the things of old.* For something better is going to be done in the future than all that God has done in the past! He will eclipse all His previous achievements and outdo the mightiest of His own miracles!

**19, 20.***Behold, I will do a new thing; now it shall spring forth; shall you not know it? I will even make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert. The beast of the field shall honor Me.*As it slakes its thirst at an unknown spring.

**20.***The dragons and the owls.*Alarmed and startled, as God’s people pass by on their way to the land which God would give them.

**20-22.***Because I give waters in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert, to give drink to My people, My chosen. This people have I formed for Myself; they shall show forth My praise. But you have not called upon Me, O Jacob.*Have any of you restrained prayer of late? Has your path to the Mercy Seat been but little trodden? Then listen to God’s gentle rebuke—“You have not called upon Me, O Jacob.”

**22.***But you have been weary of Me, O Israel.*Weary of God? Have any of us grown weary of fellowship with Him? Weary of His Truth? Weary of His Day? Weary of His service? Oh, what strange ingratitude this is on our part!

**23.***You have not brought Me the small cattle of your burnt offerings; neither have you honored Me with your sacrifices.*There are some of God’s people, at any rate, who forget to offer their sacrifices to God. If they do love Christ at all, their love is not practical, not self-sacrificing—it does not lead them to bring love-gifts to Him.

**23.***I have not caused you to serve with an offering, nor wearied you with incense.* “I have made no irksome tax of it. I have not demanded anything of you. I have left it to your own free will to give according as your love suggests.”

**24.***You have bought Me no sweet cane with money, neither have you filled Me with the fat of your sacrifices: but—*Alas, instead of good, there has been evil!

**24.***You have made Me to serve with your sins.*What? Made God our servant when we ought to have served Him? Alas, I fear it is often so even with some of His own people!

**24.***You have wearied Me with your iniquities.* O Sirs, how sad it is when God’s people are weary of Him and He is weary of them! What shall we read after this? Surely the next sentence will be a thunder-clap and a lightning flash will blaze out of the sacred page! Listen—and be amazed at the mercy of the Lord!

**25.***I, even I, am He that blots out your transgressions for My own sake, and will not remember your sins.*What a blessed God to deal so graciously with His ungrateful erring people!

**HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—136 (Song of Solomon 1), 738, 732.**  
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“CHRIST IS ALL”  
NO. 3446

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 1915. *DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON*  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON. *“Christ is all.”***Col 3:11***.*

MY text is so very short that you cannot forget it and, I am quite certain, if you are Christians at all, you will be sure to agree with it! What a multitude of religions there is in this poor wicked world of ours! Men have taken it into their heads to invent various systems of religion and if you look around the world, you will see scores of different sects. But it is a great fact that while there is a multitude of *false religions*, there is but one that is *true*. While there are many falsehoods, there can be but one truth—real religion is, therefore, one. There is but one Gospel—the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. What a wonderful thing it is that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, should be born of humble parents and live as a poor Man in this world for the purpose of our salvation! He lived a life of suffering and trial and, at last, through the malignity of His enemies, was crucified on Calvary as an outcast of society. “Now,” they said, “there is an end of His religion! Now it will be such a contemptible thing, that nobody will ever call himself a Christian—it will be discreditable to have anything to do with the name of the Man, Jesus, the Prophet of Nazareth.” But it is an amazing fact that this religion has not only lived, but is at this hour as strong as ever! Yes, the religion He founded still exists and is still powerful, and constantly expanding. While other religions have sunk into the darkness of the past, and the idols have been cast to the moles and to the bats, the name of Jesus is still mighty—and it shall continue to be a blessed power so long as the universe shall endure!

The religion of Jesus is the religion of God. Hence, notwithstanding all the disgrace and persecution which it has had to encounter, it still exists, and still flourishes! It is this religion which I shall attempt to preach to you—the one Gospel of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ—and the text embraces it all in the most comprehensive manner, “Christ is all.”

I shall use it, first, as *a test to try you* and, afterwards, as *a motive to encourage you*. I want, first, to sift you, to see how many of you are the people of God, and how many are not. I shall make my text a great sieve and put you in it to see which is wheat and which is chaff. We must consider this passage in two or three senses in order, first, to use it as—

**I.**A TEST TO TRY YOU.

*Christ must be all, as your Great Master and Teacher* . There are some who set up a certain man as their authority. They regard him as their master, they look up to him as their teacher—and whatever he says is right—it is the truth and is not to be disputed. Or, perhaps, they have taken a certain book, other than the Bible, and say, “We will judge all things by this book”—and if the preacher does not teach exactly the creed written in that book, he is set down as not sound in the faith—and this they do not hesitate to say at once, because he does not come up to the standard of their little book! We meet with many people in this world who make their creed, their one little narrow creed, everything—and they measure everything and everybody by that. But, my Friends, I must have you say that “*Christ* is all,” and not any man, however good or great, before I can allow that you are Christians. We have not to follow men. Our faith stands not in the wisdom of man, but in the power of God! We are to follow no man, except as far as he follows Christ, who alone is our Master! Be not deceived—submit not yourselves to creeds, to books, or to men—give yourselves to the study of God’s Word, derive your creed and the doctrines of your faith from it, alone, and then you will be able to say—

***“Should all the forms that men devise  
Assault my faith with treacherous art,  
I’d call them vanity and lies,  
And bind the Gospel to my heart.”***

Let Christ be your only Master, and say, in the words of our text, “Christ is all.” Now can you say this, or are you boasting, “The Baptists are all”—“The Wesleyans are all”—“The Church of England is all”? As the Lord lives, if you are saying that, you do not know His Truth because you are not testifying that, “Christ is all,” but simply uttering the Shibboleth of your little party! I should like to see the word, “party,” blotted out from the vocabulary of the Christian Church! I thank God that I have no sympathy whatever with that which is merely sectarian, and have Grace given me to protest against it, and to exclaim—

***“Let party names no more***

***The Christian world overspread”***  
since—  
***“Gentile and Jew, and bond and free,  
Are one in Christ, their Head.”***  
If “Christ is all” to you, you are Christians, and I, for one, am ready to give you the right hand of brotherhood! I do not mind what place of worship you attend, or by what distinctive name you may call yourselves— we are Brothers and Sisters in Christ and I think, therefore, that we should love one another. If, my Friends, you cannot embrace all who love the Lord Jesus Christ, no matter to what denomination they may belong, and cannot regard them as your Brothers and Sisters in the Lord, and as belonging to the universal Church, you have not hearts large enough to go to Heaven because, if such are your contracted views, you cannot possibly say, “Christ is all.”  
Next, *Christ must be all as your principal object in life—your chief good*. Your great aim must be to glorify Christ on earth, in the hope and expectation of enjoying Him forever above. But as it regards some of you, Christ is not your all. You think more of your shop than you do of Him. You are up early in the morning looking at your ledgers, and all day long toiling at your business. Do not misunderstand me—I dislike lazy people who let the grass grow over their shoes—and God disapproves of them, too! We want no lazy preachers of the Gospel. The true Christian will say, “I know that I am bound to be diligent in business, but I want to work for eternity as well as for time. I need something besides earthly riches. I need an inheritance not made with hands, a mansion not built by man, a possession in the skies.” Are you making this world your all? Poor Souls, if you are, the world and the fashion thereof are passing away—your all will soon be gone! I fancy I see a rich man, one whose gold is his all, when he gets into the next world, looking for his gold, and wondering where it is, and being, at last, compelled to exclaim, in despair, “Oh, my all is gone!” But if you can say that Christ is your all, then your treasure will never be gone, for He will never leave you, nor forsake you. Not only in this world, but also in that which is to come, you shall be happy and blessed, for you shall be crowned with glory and made to sit with Christ on His Throne forever!  
“Well,” says some easy-going gentleman, “I do not make business my all, I assure you. Not I! My maxim is, let us enjoy this life, let us fill the glass to the brim and live in pleasure while we may.” I also have a word for you. Do you think that such a course of conduct will fit you for Heaven, for the enjoyments of eternity? Do you imagine that when you come to die, it will be any pleasure for you to think of your drunkenness? When you are lying on a sick bed, will your oaths bring you any peace, as they reverberate upon your conscience, just as I hear my voice, at this moment, echoing back to my ears the words I am saying? I think I see you starting up as you hear your blasphemies against God thus returning upon you, while, with a mind oppressed with anguish and eyes starting from their sockets, you exclaim, in your terror, “I hear my own oaths again! God is coming to call me to judgment, to demand of me why I dare blaspheme His name!” And the Judge will say, “You, with oaths and curses, profaned My holy name! You asked Me to curse your soul and now I will do it! You prayed in your profane moments that you might be lost, and now you shall be!” How horrible that would be! You who say pleasure is all, let me warn you that you will have to drink the bitter dregs of the cup of pleasure to all eternity, no matter how sweet the draught may now be to your taste!  
But there are some more moderate people who are by no means extravagant in their pleasures and are great sticklers for religion! They go to Church or Chapel every Sunday and believe themselves to be a very good sort of people—such as will be accepted at the Last Day, and placed at the right hand of the Throne of God. Again I put the question, can you say, “Christ is all”? No, you cannot say that. Many of you make the externals of religion your all, resting in the letter, but knowing or caring nothing for the spirit. This will not do! And you are not such Christians as Christ will acknowledge if you are making anything your all but Him! Religion is not to be stowed away in the dark attic of the brain. Christianity is a *heart* religion, and if you cannot say, from the very depths of your being, “Christ is all,” you have neither part nor lot in the blessings and privileges of the Gospel—and your end will be destruction, everlasting banishment from the Presence of the Lord! God grant it may not be so, but that in both your lives and mine we may each be enabled to say of a truth, “Christ is all”—and that we may meet again around the eternal Throne of God!  
Next, *Christ will be all as the source of your joy*. Some people seem to think that Christians are a very melancholy sort of folk, that they have no real happiness. I know something about religion and I will not admit that I stand second to any man in respect of being happy. So far as I know religion, I have found it to be a very happy thing—  
***“I would not change my blest estate,  
For all that earth calls good or great.”***  
I used to think that a religious man must never smile, but, on the contrary, I find that religion will make a man’s eyes bright, cover his face with smiles and impart comfort and consolation to his soul, even in the deepest of his earthly tribulations! In illustration of this, I might tell you the story of a poor man who lives in one of the courts in Holborn, who experiences great joy in religion, even in the midst of the deepest poverty. A Christian visitor, going up into the poor man’s room at the top of the house, said, “My Friend, how long have you been in this place?” “I have not been downstairs, nor walked across the room, these 12 months.”  
“Have you anything to depend upon?”  
“Nothing,” he replied, but recollecting himself, he added, “I have a good Father up in Heaven, and I depend upon Him entirely, and He never lets me down. Some kind Christian friends are sure to call, and they never go away without leaving me something. And I get enough to live on and pay my rent, and I am very happy. I would not change places with anybody in the world, for I have Jesus Christ with me, and my heavenly Father will take me Home, by-and-by, and then I shall be as rich as any of them—shall I not, Sir? Sometimes I get very low, and Satan tells me that I am not a child of God, and that I had better give up all as lost, but I tell him that he is a great coward to come and meddle with a poor weak creature like I am, and I show him the blood, Sir. And I tell him the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses from all sin—and when I show Satan the precious blood, Sir, he leaves off tempting me, and immediately flees, for he cannot bear the sight of the Savior’s blood.”  
Thus we see that true religion can cheer the sick man’s couch, can make the poor man feel that he is rich and bid him be joyful in the Lord! Well did the old man say that the devil cannot bear the sight of the Savior’s blood! And if, beloved Friends, you can take Christ’s blood and put it on your conscience, however sinful you may have been, you will be able to sing of Christ as all your hope, all your joy and all your support! I ask you who love Jesus—does religion ever make you unhappy? Does love to Jesus distress you and make you miserable? It may bring you into trouble, sometimes, and cause you to endure persecution for His name’s sake. If you are a child of God, you will have to suffer tribulation. But all the afflictions which you may be called upon to endure for Him will work for your good, and are not worthy to be compared with the glory which is to be revealed hereafter!  
Now, then, let me ask, could you agree with me while I have been speaking? Can you now say that Christ is your only Master, your chief good, your only joy? “Oh, yes, I do love Jesus because He first loved me.” Then, welcome, Brother! Welcome, Sister! You are one with Jesus, and we are one with each other! But if you cannot say it, how terrible it shall be with some of you when you shall find your gourds wither, the crops whereon you now lean struck down at a blow, your false refuges swept away and, deprived of all your feathers and finery, your soul will appear before God in its true character! May it not be so with any of you, but may you be united to Christ by living faith which works by love and purifies the heart! Secondly, I shall now consider the text as—  
**II.**A MOTIVE TO ENCOURAGE YOU.  
“Christ is all.” My beloved Friends, in what is He all? Christ is all in the entire work of salvation. Let me take you back to the period before this world was made. There was a time when this great world—the sun, the moon, the stars and all which now exist throughout the whole of the vast universe—lay in the mind of God like unborn forests in an acorn cup. There was a time when the Great Creator lived alone and yet He could foresee that He would make a world, and that men would be born to people it. And in that vast eternity a great scheme was devised, whereby He might save a fallen race. Do you know who devised it? God planned it from first to last! Neither Gabriel nor any of the holy angels had anything to do with it. I question whether they were even told how God might be just and yet save the transgressors. God was all in the drawing up of the scheme, and Christ was all in carrying it out! There was a dark and doleful night! Jesus was in the Garden, sweating great drops of blood which fell to the ground—nobody then came to bear the load that had been laid upon Him. An angel stood there to strengthen Him, but not to bear the sentence. The cup was put into His hands and Jesus said, “Father, must I drink it?” And His Father replied, “If You do not drink, sinners cannot be saved”—and He took the cup and drained it to its very dregs! No man helped Him. And when He hung upon that accursed tree of Calvary, when His precious hands were pierced, when—  
***“From His head, His hands, His feet,  
Sorrow and love flowed mingled down,***  
there was nobody to help Him. He was “all” in the work of salvation! And, my Friends, if any of you shall be saved, it must be by Christ alone! There must be no patchwork! Christ did it all and will not be helped in the matter. Christ will not allow you, as some say, to do what you can, and leave Him to make up the rest! What can you do that is not sinful? Christ has done all for us! The work of Redemption is all finished. Christ planned it all and worked it all out! And we, therefore, preach a full salvation through Jesus Christ!  
What could we poor mortals do towards saving ourselves? Our best works are but mean and worthless to that great end. I am sure I could not do it. My preaching—I am ashamed of that, and there are a thousand faults in my prayers! God needs nothing of us by way of “making up” Christ’s work, but He cancels all the sins and blots out all the transgressions of everyone who trusts to His Son’s death!  
If I have found Christ, I have found all. “I have not strong faith,” you say. Never mind, Christ is all. “I do not sufficiently feel my sins”—but Christ is all. Many people think they must feel a load of repentance before they may hope Christ will receive them. I know every child of God will repent, but we are not all brought to the Cross by the terrors of the Law. It is not your *feelings*, my Friends, that will save you, but only Christ—Christ standing in your place, Christ being your Substitute! If, feeling your need of His Grace to pardon you, and His righteousness to justify you before God, you can but just look to Christ, though you have nothing good about you, you will have done all that is necessary to carry you to Heaven—because it is not *your* act that can save you—but the act of Christ alone! A little while ago I had a conversation with an Irishman who had been to hear me preach. He had come to ask me, he said, the way of salvation. “What troubles me,” he said, “is this—God says that He will condemn the sinner, and punish him—then how can God forgive, because He must punish if He would keep His word?” I placed before him the Scriptural view of the Atonement, in the substitution of Christ for the sinner, and the poor man was astonished and delighted beyond measure, never having understood the beauty and simplicity of the Gospel way of salvation before! “Is it really so?” he asked. “It is in the Bible,” I replied. “Then the Bible must be true,” he said, “for nobody but God could have thought it!”  
If Jesus Christ is our Surety, Friends, we are safe from the demands of the Law. If Christ is our Substitute, we shall not suffer the penalty due to sin, for God will never punish the same sin twice. If I have nothing but Christ, I do not need anything else, for Christ is all! If Christ is your all, you will not need anything to help you, either in living or in dying! Now for two thoughts before I close.  
**1.***If a man has Christ, then what else does he need?* If a man has Christ, he has everything! If I need perfection, and I have Christ, I have absolute perfection in Him! If I need righteousness, I shall find in Him my beauty and my glorious dress. I need pardon, and if I have Christ, I am pardoned! I want Heaven and if I have Christ, I have the Prince of Heaven, and shall be there, by-and-by, to live with Christ and to dwell in His blessed embrace forever! If you have Christ, you have all! Do not be desponding, do not give ear to the whispers of Satan that you are not the children of God, for if you have Christ, you *are* His people and other things will come, by-and-by. Christ makes you complete in Himself. As the Apostle says, “You are complete in Him.” I think of poor Mary Magdalene—she would have nothing to bring of her own—she would remember that she had been a harlot, but when she comes to Heaven’s gates, she will say, “I have Christ,” and the command will go forth, “Let her in, Gabriel! Let her in!” Here comes a poor squalid wretch. What has he been doing—he has never learned to write, he scarcely went even to a Ragged School, but he has Christ in his heart! “Gabriel, let him in!” Next comes a rich bad man, with rings on his fingers and fine clothes upon his person—but the command is, “Shut the gates, Gabriel! He has no business here!” Then comes a fine flaming professor of the Gospel, but he never knew Christ in his heart. “Shut the gate, Gabriel!” If a man has Christ, he has all for eternity—but if he has not Christ, he is poor, blind, naked and will be miserable forever! Will not you, then, who are listening to me now, resolve, in the strength of the Lord, to seek Him at once and make Him your Friend? No matter what may be your state or condition, you are invited to come to Him!  
You blind, you lame, who are far from Christ, come to Him and receive your sight, and obtain strength! He is made your all—you need bring nothing in your hand to come to Him. “Ah!” say one, “I am not good enough yet.” Beggars do not talk thus! They consider that the more needy they are, the more likely are they to obtain that for which they ask. The worse the dress, the better for begging. It is the same with respect to the Gospel—you are invited to come to Christ just as you are, naked and miserable—that He may clothe and comfort you!  
**2.**My last thought is this—*How poor is that man who is destitute of Christ!* If I were to say to some one of you that you are poor, you would reply, “I am not poor—I have £250 a year coming in—a decent house and an excellent job.” And yet, if you have not Christ, you are a poor man, indeed. Look at that poor worldling with a load of £10,000 upon his back, a quantity of stocks and annuities in one hand, policies and railway scrip in the other—but he is wretched with all his wealth, though he can hardly carry it! There is a poor beggar woman, who says to him, “Let me take a part of your burden.” But the miserable man refuses all assistance and resolves to carry all his load himself. But by-and-by he comes to a great gulf and, instead of finding these riches help him, they hang around his neck like millstones and weigh him down! Yet there are some who would do anything for gold. If there is one man more miserable than another in Hell, it must be the man who robbed his neighbors to feather his own nest—such feathers will help the flight of the arrows which shall pierce his soul to all eternity! No matter what your wealth, if you have not Christ, you are miserably poor—but with Christ, you are rich to all eternity!  
I think I see one of you ungodly ones in your last moments. Someone stands by your bedside and watches your face. The death-sweat comes over you and the big drops stand on your brow—the strong man is bowed down and the mighty one falls—and now the eyes close and the hand falls powerless—life is fled. Ah, but the soul never dies! Up it flies to appear at God’s bar. How will it appear there? Oh, the poor soul without Christ! It will be a naked soul—it will have no garment to cover it—it will be a perishing soul, no salvation for it! Mercy cannot be secured, then! It will be in vain to pray, then, because the lamp will be put out in eternal darkness! And the Judge will say, in tones that will pierce you to the quick, “Depart from Me, you cursed!”  
May God give all of you Grace to repent and to embrace the salvation which is revealed in the Gospel! Every sin-sick soul may have Christ, but as for you who are Pharisees and trusting in yourselves that you are righteous—if you know nothing about sin, you can know nothing about Christ. The way to be saved is to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. “But what is it to believe?” you ask. I have heard of a captain who had a little son, and this little boy was very fond of climbing aloft. One day he climbed to the masthead, and the father saw that if the boy attempted to return, he would be dashed to pieces. He therefore shouted to him not to look down, but to drop into the sea. The poor boy kept fast hold of the mast, but the father saw it was his only chance of safety, and he shouted once more, “Boy, the next time the ship lurches, drop, or I will shoot you.” The boy is gone! He drops into the sea and is saved. Had he not dropped, he would have perished. This is just your condition! As long as you cling to works and ceremonies, you are in the utmost peril! But when you give yourselves up entirely to the mercy of Christ, you are safe! Try it, Sinner! Try it, that is all. “He that believes and is baptized shall be saved,” is Christ’s promise, and it shall never fail you. The invitation is to all who thirst. “The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that hears say, Come. And let him that is thirsty come, and take the Water of Life freely.”  
I have heard that in the deserts where they can only get water at long intervals, they send a man on a camel in search of it. When he sees a pool, he springs off his beast, and before he drinks, he calls out, “Come,” and there is another man at a little distance, and he shouts, “Come,” and one further away still repeats the word, “Come,” until the whole desert resounds with the cry, “Come,” and they come rushing to the water to drink! Now I do not make the Gospel invitation wider than the declaration of the Word of God, “Whoever will, let him take the water of life freely.” Whoever you are, and whatever you may have been, if you feel your need of Christ, “Come,” and He will receive you, and give you to drink of the Water of Life freely!

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: *Colossians 3;*** Col 4:1-4***;*** Psa 28:1-6***.***

**Colossians 3.  
Verse 1.***If you, then, are risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sits at the right hand of God.*Oh, how often we need to be called to this, for the flesh is groveling and it holds down the spirit. Very often we are seeking the things below as if we had not yet attained the new life, and did not know anything about the resurrection power of Christ within the soul! Now, if it is that you, Believers, have risen with Christ, do not live as if you had never done so, but “seek those things which are above, where Christ sits at the right hand of God.”

**2.***Set your affection.* Not “your affections.” Tie them up into one bundle. Make one of them.  
**2.***On things above, not on things on the earth.* You say that you were dead with Christ and that you have risen with Christ. Live, then, the risen life, and not the life of those who have never undergone this matchless process! Live above.  
**3.***For you are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.* The old life is dead. You are dead to it. You will not be consumed by it—you cannot be controlled by it. You have a newer and higher life. Let it have full scope.  
**4.***When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall you also appear with Him in glory.* Christ was hidden while He was here. The world knew Him not. So is your life. But there is to be a glorious manifestation! When Christ is made manifest, so shall you be. Wait for Him.  
**5.***Mortify, therefore, your members which are upon the earth— fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry.*Since you are dead, let all the lusts of the flesh be put to death. Kill them! They were once a part of you. Your nature lusted this way. Mortify them! Do not merely restrain them and try to keep them under! These things you are to have nothing to do with.  
**6, 7.***For which things the wrath of God comes on the children of disobedience. In which you also walked some time, when you lived in them.* “When you lived in them.” But now you do not live in them. You are dead to them. If it should ever come to pass that you fall into any of these things, you will loathe yourself with bitterest repentance that you could find comfort, satisfaction, life in them. You are dead to them.  
**8-10.***But now you also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. Lie not to one another, seeing that you have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him.* No lies. Such communications are filthy. But you put these things away through your union with Christ in His risen life. Therefore, abhor them. Avoid the very appearance of them and cry for Grace to be kept from them, for you have been “renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him.”  
**11.***Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all.*In the new life there is no distinction of race and nationality! We are born into one family. We become members of Christ’s body and this is the one thing we have got to keep up—separation from all the world! No separations in the Church, no disunion, nothing that would cause it, for we are one in Christ and Christ is all! Now, as we have to put off these things, that is the negative side—that is the Law’s side, for the Law says, “You shall not.” But now look at the positive side.

**12.***Put on, therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, hearts of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering.*This is what you have got to wear, even on the outside—to put them on, not to have a latent kindness in your heart and a degree of humbleness deep down in your soul if you could get at it—but you are to put them on. They are to be the very clothes you wear! These are the sacred vestments of your daily priesthood. Put them on!

**13.***Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man has a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do you.* Just as readily, just as freely, just as heartily, just as completely!

**14-15.***And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts.* For that is the great foundation of every godly fruit. We are in such a hurry, in such dreadful haste, so selfish, so discontented, so impetuous, and the major part of our sins spring from that condition of mind! But if we were godly, restful, peaceful, how many sins we would avoid! “Let the peace of God rule in your hearts.”

**15.***To which, also, you are called in one body; and be you thankful.*It looks like a very small virtue to be thankful. Yet, dear Friends, the absence of it is one of the grossest of vices! To be ungrateful is a mean thing. To be ungrateful to God is a base thing! And yet how many may accuse themselves of it! Who among us is as grateful as he should be? Be thankful.

**16.***Let the word of Christ dwell in you—*Alexander had a casket of gold studded with gems to carry Homer’s works. Let your own heart be a casket for the command of Christ. “Let the word of Christ dwell in you.”

**16-18.***Richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with Grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him. Wives submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord.*See how our being Christians does not relax the bonds of our Christian relationship? On the contrary, it calls us to the higher exercise of the responsibilities and duties connected therewith!

**19.***Husbands love your wives, and be not bitter against them.* Oh, there are some spirits that are very bitter! A little thing puts them out and they would take delight in a taunt which grieves the spirit. I pity the poor woman who has such bitterness where she ought to have sweetness—yet there are some such husbands.

**20-21.***Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is wellpleasing unto the Lord. Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged.* The duties are mutual. Scripture maintains an equilibrium. It does not lay down commands for one class, and then leave the other to exercise whatever tyrannical oppression it may please! The child is to obey, but the father must not provoke.

**22.***Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eye service, as men pleasers.*How much there is of that! How quickly the hands go when the master’s eye looks on! But the Christian servant remembers God’s eyes and is always diligent. “Not with eye service as men pleasers.”

Col 4:1-2**.** *But in singleness of heart, fearing God: And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; knowing that of the Lord you shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for you serve the Lord Christ. But he that does wrong shall receive for the wrong which he has done; and there is no respect of persons. Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal; knowing that you, also, have a Master in Heaven. Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving.* See how he keeps putting that in—“Be you thankful”—“with thanksgiving.” Why, that is the oil that makes the machinery go round without its causing obstruction! May we have much of that thanksgiving.

**3, 4.***Meanwhile praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds: that I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak.* So the preacher of the Gospel asks your prayers—and it is a part of the duties arising out of the relationship between Christians that those who are taught should pray for those who teach God’s Word.

[Psa 28:1-6](tw://bible.*?id=19.28.1-19.28.6|_AUTODETECT_|)*.*Verse 1. *Unto you will I cry, O LORD my Rock: benot silent to me: lest, if You are silent to me, I become like those who go down into the pit.* Oh, if God did not hear prayer, we would become like dead men—yes, like lost men. Our fall or despair would be terrible, indeed. “Lest, if You are silent to me, I become like those who go down into the pit.”

2. *Hear the voice of my supplications, when I cry unto You,when I lift up my hands toward Your holy sanctuary.* Is that the way you pray, dear Friend? I know there are some who, if they have uttered certain good words—got through a form of prayer—are perfectly satisfied. As to whether God hears them or not, that does not trouble them. But if you are a true child of God, it will be your main thought in prayer, “Will He hear me? Will He hear me? Will He answer me?” And you will think nothing of a prayer at all unless you have the comfortable, believing persuasion that your prayer has reached the ear and heart of God. Oh, believe us, for some of us know by experience that prayer is a real thing! It is no repetition of words. It really is the heart speaking into the ear of God—and God does graciously respond when prayer is truly offered.

3. *Draw me not away with the wicked, and with the workers of iniquity, which speak peace to their neighbors, but mischief is in their hearts.* We are often afraid lest we should get numbered with them—   
*“Oh, were it not for Grace Divine,*

*Their fate so d readful had been mine.”*“Gather not my soul with sinners,” is the prayer of many a godly man. When he looks within and sees the sin that is there—and what he deserves from the hand of God, apart from the blood and righteousness of Christ—he begins, indeed, to pray, “Draw me not away with the wicked. O Lord, do not let me wander into doctrinal error or into errors of life, or into laxity of behavior, or into backslidings, but keep me fast, for unless You hold me fast— ELECTION—ITS DEFENSES AND EVIDENCES  
NO. 2920

A SERMON  
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***DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, IN THE YEAR 1862.**

***“Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God. For our Gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit, and in much assurance…And you became followers of us, and of the Lord having received the word***

***in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit.”***1Th 1:4-6***.***

AT the very announcement of the text, some will be ready to say, “Why preach upon so profound a Doctrine as Election?” I answer, because it is in God’s Word, and whatever is in the Word of God is to be preached! “But some Truths of God ought to be kept back from the people,” you will say, “lest they should make an ill use of them.” That is Popish doctrine! It was upon that very theory that the priests kept back the Bible from the people—they did not give it to them lest they should misuse it. “But are not some Doctrines dangerous?” Not if they are true and rightly handled. The Truth of God is never dangerous—it is error and reticence that are fraught with peril! “But do not men abuse the Doctrines of Grace?” I grant you that they do! But if we destroyed everything that men misuse, we would have nothing left! Are there to be no ropes because some fools will hang themselves? And must cutlery be discarded and denounced because there are some who will use dangerous weapons for the destruction of their adversaries? Decidedly not! Besides all this, remember that men read the Scriptures and think about these Doctrines and, therefore, often make mistakes about them. Who, then, shall set them right if we who preach the Word hold our tongues about the matter?

I know that some men who have embraced the Doctrine of Election have become Antinomians. Such men would probably have found other excuses for their misdeeds if they had not sheltered themselves under the shadow of this Doctrine. The sun will ripen the noxious weed as well as the fruitful plant, but that is not the fault of the sun, but of the nature of the weed, itself! We believe, however, that more persons are made Antinomians through those who deny the Doctrine than through those who preach it. One evidence of this is that in Scotland. You will scarcely find a congregation of Hyper-Calvinists—the simple reason being that the Church in Scotland holds entire the whole Doctrine upon this matter and her ministers, as a rule, are not ashamed to preach it fearlessly and boldly—and in connection with the rest of the faith.

Take any Doctrine and preach upon it exclusively, and you distort it. The fairest face in the world, with the most comely features, would soon become unseemly if one feature were permitted to expand while the rest were kept in their usual form. Proportion, I take it, is beauty—and to preach every Truth of God in its fair proportion, neither keeping back any nor giving undue prominence to any, is to preach the whole Truth as Christ would have it preached! On a Gospel thus entire and harmonious, we may expect to have the blessing of the Most High. So much by way of preface, not by way of apology. It is not my custom to offer any apology for speaking the Truth of God!

**I.**WHAT IS THIS DOCTRINE OF ELECTION? Let us try to understand it as spoken of in the text—“Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God.”

*There is such a thing as election* . Any man who should deny that man is a free agent might well be thought unreasonable, but *free will* is a different thing from free agency. Luther denounced free will when he said that “free will is the name for nothing.” And President Edwards demolished the idea in his masterly treatise. God is the universal Agent and does as He wills—and His will is supremely good. He is the superlative Agent and man, acting according to the devices of his own heart, is nevertheless overruled by that Sovereign and wise legislation which causes the wrath of man (that agency in which the creature cannot govern himself) to praise Him and the remainder thereof He restrains. How these two things are true I cannot tell. It is not necessary for our good, either in this life or the next, that we should have the skill to solve such problems. I am not sure that in Heaven we shall be able to know where the free agency of man and the Sovereignty of God meet, but both are great Truths. God has predestinated everything, yet man is responsible, for he acts freely and no constraint is put upon him even when he sins and wantonly and wickedly disobeys the will of God! But so many as are saved, you will say, are saved because they believe. Certainly it is so! It is most true—God forbid I should deny it—but why do they believe? They believe as the result of the working of the Grace of God in their hearts. Since every man who is saved confesses this, since every true Believer in the world acknowledges that something special has been done for him more than for the impenitent, the fact is established that God does make a difference. No one ever heard it laid as an impeachment against the Lord that He has made such a difference, so I cannot see why He should be impeached for intending to make that difference—which is the Doctrine of Election! I am saved, but I know it is not because of any goodness in me. And if you are saved, you will freely confess that it is the distinguishing love of God that has made you to differ. The Doctrine of Election is simply God’s intention to make the difference between people which you know exists. While He gives mercy to all, He gives more mercy to some so that the mercy already received shall be made effectual to their eternal salvation.

*This Election of God is Sovereign* . He chooses as He wills. Who shall call Him to account? “Can I not do as I will with My own?” is His answer to every quibbler. “No, but, O man, who are you that replies against God?” is the solemn utterance that silences everyone who would impugn the Justice of the Most High. He has a right, seeing we are all criminals, to punish whom He will. As King of the universe, He doubtless acts with discretion, but still according to His Sovereignty. Wisely, not wantonly, He rules, but always according to the counsel of His own will. Election, then, is Sovereign.

Again, *Election is free*. Whatever may be God’s reason for choosing a man, certainly it is not because of any good thing in that man! He is chosen because God will do so. We can get no further. We get as far as those words of Christ, “Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in Your sight,” and there we stop—for beyond that no philosophy and no Scripture can take us.

As it is Sovereign and free, so *Election is irreversible*. Having chosen His people, He does not cast them away nor call back the word that is gone from His lips, for it is written, “He hates putting away.” He is of one mind and who can turn Him?

Once more, Election *is effectual*. For “whom He did predestinate, them He also called: and whom He called, them He also justified: and whom He justified, them He also glorified.”

And this *Election is personal*, for He calls out His children one by one by their names. He calls them even as He leads out the stars and so He brings them, every one, to the Father’s House above.

We have thus given a statement as to what this Doctrine is. There we will leave it. Our present objective is not so much to expound the Doctrine as to strike a blow or two at certain errors which are very common and which spring out of it. I know, dear Friends, there are some who are so afraid of this Doctrine that the mention of it produces alarm. If they were to meet a lion in their way, they would not be more terrified than they are when they see this Doctrine in Scripture or hear it from the pulpit!

**II.**Therefore, secondly, we will NOTICE WHAT ARE THE DEFENSES OF THIS DOCTRINE and try, if we can, should you be laboring under any distress of mind about it, to remove your difficulties.

Will you please remember, then, that *this is not a point which you can understand at the commencement of spiritual and religious life?*You would not teach your children, I suppose, to say their prayers backwards and begin at, “Amen.” And you are beginning at the wrong end when you want, first of all, to know your election instead of commencing with repentance towards God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ! Election is a lesson for the more advanced students. Faith and hope must be learned, first of all, in the infant class to which we all must go if we would be wise unto salvation.

Now, if a child should have a book of algebra put into his hand and should puzzle himself and say, “I shall never get an education, for I cannot understand this.” And then take down some ancient classic and say, “I cannot comprehend this, either,” you would say, “Dear Child, you have nothing to do with these yet! Here is a sampler book for you—a primer. Here you have A, B, C—learn this, first, and then, step by step, you shall attain to the rest.” Even so it is with us. Simple trust in Christ is the first thing you have to understand. After that you shall know the high, the sublime and the glorious Doctrine of God’s Decrees—but do not *begin* with these! You will mystify and ruin yourself—you will lose your way in a fog and get no good thereby.

Again, it is very certain that whatever this Doctrine may be—and we will have no dispute about it just now—*this Doctrine cannot possibly be inconsistent with certain plain promises in God’s Word*. Such promises as these—“Come unto Me, all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” “Whoever will, let him take the water of life freely.” “He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him.” Why, I might quote by the hour together some of these promises which are as wide as the poles—invitations that must not be narrowed, exhortations which are addressed to every man and woman under Heaven—in which every one of them is bidden to hear and live. “Ho, everyone that thirsts, come to the waters.” You know the class of promises to which I allude. Now these are the Words of God which are for you—get hold of them— come to Jesus Christ with them in your hands and rest assured the Doctrine of Election, instead of pushing you back, shall stand like the servants about your father’s table to make music while your whole being shall dance to the glorious tune! It shall be like a dish upon the table at the feast of the returning prodigal, of which you shall eat to the very full! It shall by no means repulse you or show anything to you which may keep you from hoping in Christ.

Once more, it is quite certain that whatever it may be, *this Doctrine of Election does not deliver you from your duty*. Now what is your duty? “This is the work of God, that you believe on Him whom He has sent.” So much is this your absolute duty that, “He that believes not is condemned already, because he has not believed.” This, more than anything else is the reason of men’s condemnation! The Scripture says this is the one great sin. Of the Spirit of Truth we read that “when He is come, He will reprove the world of sin—of sin because they believe not on Me.” Very well, then—in as much as God has so put it, that He commands you this day to trust Christ and to believe on Him—that is what you have to see to—and you may rest perfectly sure that falling back on the Doctrine of Election in order to exonerate you from what God commands you to perform is but a pitiful pretense! You are *commanded* to believe and what God commands, no Doctrine may teach that it is unfit for you to do! May God help you to believe, for this Doctrine comes not to excuse you. The Gospel *commands* you and Election through the Holy Spirit *enables* you. It is your duty to believe, but no man ever was saved as a matter of duty, for that which saves is the gift of God. But your business now is with Christ, only, and not with the Decrees of the Father which are all in the keeping of Christ and shall presently be revealed to you. You have to go to Christ, first, and to His Father afterwards, for He says, “No man comes unto the Father but by Me.” You must go to the Cross to get to the Decree—you must go round by Redemption to get to Election—there is no other way.

**III.**In the third place let us see WHAT ARE THE EVIDENCES OF ELECTION. Our text says, very plainly too, that the Apostle knew the election of the Thessalonians. How did he know it? The way by which the Apostle knew it must be the method by which you and I are to know our election of God, too.

We have known more than once in our day of some men who pretended to know their election by their impudence. They had got into their head the presumption that they were elected and though they lived on in sin and still did as they liked, they imagined they were God’s chosen. This is what I call presuming upon election by sheer impudence.

We know of others, alas, who have imagined themselves to be elect because of the visions that they have seen when they have been asleep or when they have been awake—for men have waking dreams—and they have brought these as evidences of their election. These are of as much value as cobwebs would be for a garment! They will be of as much service to you at the Day of Judgment as a thief’s convictions would be to him if he were in need of a character to commend him to mercy. You may dream long enough before you dream yourself into Heaven—and you may have as many stupid notions in your head as there are romances in your circulating libraries—but because they are in your head they are not, therefore, in God’s Book. We need a more sure word of testimony than this and if we have it not, God forbid that we should indulge our vain heart with the dainty thought that we are chosen of God!

I have heard of one who said in an alehouse that he could say more than any of the rest, that he was one of God’s children. Meanwhile he drank deeper into intoxication than the rest. Surely he might have said, with an emphasis, that he was one of the *devil’s* children—and he would have been correct. When immoral men and women who live constantly in sin, prate about being God’s children, we discern them at once. Just as we know a crab tree when we see the fruit hanging upon it, we understand what spirit these people are of when we see their walk and conversation. Oh, it is detestable—loathsome above all loathsomeness— to hear men whose characters in secret are infamous, and whose lives are destitute of every Christian virtue, boasting as though they had the keys of Heaven and could set up whomever they would, and pull down whomever they might please! Blessed be God, we are not under their domination, for a more terrific set of tyrants than they are, the world has never known! And a more frightful reign of vice than they would inaugurate if they had their way, I am sure villainy, itself, cannot conceive! “Be not deceived, God is not mocked.” “Without holiness no man shall see the Lord.” If Divine Grace does not make us holy, teaching us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, it is not worth the having! Brothers and Sisters, if we are God’s elect we must have some substantial evidence to attest it!

According to our text, what are these evidences? They seem to be four. *The first evidence appears to be the Word of God coming home with power.*If you will turn to the verse, you will soon see how the Apostle says, “Our Gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit.” The Gospel is preached in the ears of all—it only comes with power to some. The power that is in the Gospel does not lie in the eloquence of the preacher, otherwise *men would be the converters of souls*. Nor does it lie in the preacher’s learning, otherwise *it would consist in the wisdom of man*. The power which converts souls does not even lie in the preacher’s simplicity or adaptation to his work—that is a secondary agency, but not the cause. Again, the power which converts souls does not even lie in the pathos which the speaker may employ. Men may weep to the tragic muse in a theater as well as to prophetic strains in a chapel! Their creature passions may be impressed through the acting on the stage as well as by the utterance of God’s own servants! No, there is something more than this needed and where it is absent, all preaching is nothing! We might preach till our tongues rotted, till we should exhaust our lungs and die, but never a soul would be converted unless there were the mysterious power of the Holy Spirit going with it, changing the will of man!

O Sirs! We might as well preach to stone walls as preach to humanity unless the Holy Spirit is with the Word to give it power to convert the soul! We are reminded of Mr. Rowland Hill, who once met a man in the street at night, not quite drunk, but almost so. The man said, “Mr. Hill, I am one of your converts.” “Yes,” he said, “I dare say you are one of *mine*—but if you were one of *God’s*, you would not be in the state in which you now are.” Our converts are worth nothing. If they are converted by man they can be unconverted by man! If some charm or power of one preacher can bring them to Christ, some charm or power of another preacher can take them from Christ. True conversion is the work of the Holy Spirit and of the Holy Spirit alone!

Well, then, my Hearers, did you ever, when listening to the Word, feel a Divine Power coming with it? Never mind where you were, whether in Westminster Abbey, St. Paul’s Cathedral, in this Tabernacle, or at some special service at one of the theaters—the place matters nothing. “Well,” perhaps you will say, “I have felt some impression.” Ah, but that may be wiped away! Have you ever felt something coming with the Word which you could not understand. Which, while it wooed you and won your heart, smote you as though a sword had gone through you and that not with a flesh wound, but with a wound that divides between soul and spirit, between joint and marrow, as if the Truth of God were, as indeed it is, a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the hearts?

Those who are really God’s elect can tell a tale something like this. “There was a time when the Word was to me like a great ten thongedwhip—my shoulders were stripped bare and every time the Word was preached it seemed to make a gash within my soul! I trembled. I saw God in arms against me. I understood that I was in debt to His Justice and could not pay—that I was involved in a controversy against my Maker and could not conquer. I saw myself stripped naked to my shame, leprous from head to foot, a bankrupt and a felon ready to be given over to a traitor’s doom.” Truly the Word came with power to your soul. “And,” you continue, “I remember, too, when the Truth of God came home to my heart and made me leap for very joy, for it took all my load away—it showed me Christ’s power to save! I had known the Truth before, but now I felt it! I had understood that Christ could save, but now that fact came home to me! I went to Jesus just as I was—I touched the hem of His garment and I was made whole! I found now that the Word was not a fiction—that it was the one reality. I had listened scores of times and he that spoke was as one that played a tune upon an instrument—but now he seemed to be dealing with *me*, putting his hand right into my heart and getting hold of *me*. He brought me first to God’s Judgment Seat and there I stood and heard the thunders roll! Then he brought me to the Mercy Seat and I saw the blood sprinkled on it, and I went home triumphing because my sin was washed away.” Oh, again I ask you, did the Word over come home with this power to your souls?

Since the day of your conversion has the Word ever rebuked you? Has it sometimes cut down your hopes? Do you sometimes, after hearing a sermon, feel as if it had been like a great hurricane bearing right through the forest of your thoughts, cleaving its own course, and leaving many a dead thing that you thought alive swept down to the ground? Do you feel, too, when you go home from the sanctuary, as if God Himself had been there? You did not know what else it could be. It could not have been the speaker nor the words he uttered, but the very God came and looked into your eyes and searched the thoughts of your mind—and turned your heart upside down and then filled it full again with His love and with His light, with His truth and with His joy, with His peace and with His desire after holiness? Is it so with you? Where the Word is not with power to your souls, you lack the proof of Election.

Remember, I do not say that it will always be so. You must not expect that God will speak with you every time—in fact, the preacher himself fails often and is painfully conscious of it. How shall one man always speak without sometimes feeling that he, himself, is not in a fit frame to be God’s mouthpiece? But though it be a clown from the country, if he preaches God’s Word, the Spirit will go with it! It is not the clown, nor yet the archbishop that does the work—it is the Word of God that is quick and powerful! Your evidence of Election is blotted and blurred unless the Word has come to you with demonstration of the Spirit and with His Power. People come and hear sermons in this place and then they go out and say, “How did you like it”—as if that meant anything to anybody— “How did you like it?” And one says, “Oh, very well.” And another says, “Oh, not at all.” Do you think we live on the breath of your nostrils? Do you believe that God’s servants, if they are really His, care for what you think of them? No, verily, but if you should reply, “I enjoyed the sermon,” they are inclined to say, “Then we must have been unfaithful or else you would have been angry—we must surely have slurred over something or else the Word would have cut your conscience as with the jagged edges of a knife! You would have said, ‘I did not think how I liked it—I was thinking how I liked myself and about my own state before God. That was the matter that exercised me, not whether he preached well, but whether I stood accepted in Christ, or whether I was a castaway.’” My dear Hearers, are you learning to hear like that? If you are not, if going to church and to chapel are to you like going to a play, or like listening to some orator who speaks upon temporal matters, then you lack the evidence of Election—the Word has not come to your souls with power.

But there is yet a second evidence of Election. *Those whom God has chosen receive the Word “in much assurance.”*They do not all receive it with full assurance—that is a Grace they get afterwards—but they receive it with *much* assurance. There are some professors who go upon very strange principles. It is indeed somewhat difficult to know what principles are enforced and acknowledged in this age, for there are persons whose principles allow them to say black and white are the same thing! And there are certain persons whose religious principles are not much unlike this. They put a hymn book in their pockets when they are going to a meeting. They put a comic song book in their pockets when they are going somewhere else. They can hold with the hare and run with the hounds. Such people as these never have any very great confidence in their religion—and it is very proper that they should not—for their religion is not worth the time they spend in making a profession of it!

But the true Christian, when he gets hold of principles, keeps them and there is no mistake about the grip with which he maintains his hold of them. “Ah,” he says, “that Word which I have heard with my ears is the very Truth of God and it is true to me, real and substantial to me—and here I clasp it with both hands—with a clasp that neither time, nor tribulation, nor death shall ever cause me to let go.” To a Christian his religion is a part of himself—he believes the Truth of God not because he has been told it or taught it by mother or friend, but because it is true to him in his inmost soul. He is like the servant girl who, when she could not answer her infidel master, said, “Sir, I cannot answer you, but I have a something in here that would if it could speak.” There is “much assurance.”

Sinners who have once felt their need of a Savior feel very much assurance about His preciousness. And saints that have once found Him precious have very much assurance about His Divinity, about His Atonement, about His everlasting Love, about His immortal dignity as a Prophet, a Priest and a King. They are sure of it. I know some persons who say if a man speaks positively, he is dogmatic. Glorious old dogmatism, when will you come back to earth? It is these, “ifs,” and “buts,” and qualifications—these, “perhapses,” and “maybe sos” that have ruined our pulpits! Look at Luther when he stood up for the glory of his God—was there ever such a dogmatist? “I believe it,” he said, “and therefore I speak it.” From that day, when on Pilate’s staircase, he was trying to creep up and down the stairs to win Heaven, when the sentence out of the musty folio came before him, “Justified by faith we have peace with God,” that man was as sure that works could *not* save him as he was of his own existence! Now, if he had come out and said, “Gentlemen, I have a theory to propound that may be correct. Excuse my doing so,” and so on, the Papacy would have been dominant to this day! But he knew God had said it and he felt that that was God’s own way to his own soul—and he could not help being dogmatic with that glorious force of secession which soon laid his foes prostrate at his feet!

Now have *you*received the Gospel “with much assurance”? If you have and you can say, “Christ is mine. I trust in Him and though I may sometimes have doubts about my own interest in Him, yet I do know by experience in my soul that He is a precious Christ—I know not by ‘*Paley’s Evidences*’ nor by ‘*Butler’s Analogy*,’ but I know by my heart’s inward evidence. I know by the analogy of my own soul’s experience that the Truth of God which I have received is no cunningly devised fable, but something that came from God to draw my soul up to God”—that is another evidence of Election! If you have that, never mind the rest! I hardly care whether you believe the Doctrine of Election or not—you are elect. As I have sometimes told a Brother who has denied the Doctrine of Final Perseverance, when I have seen his holy life, “Never mind, my Brother, you will persevere to the end and you will prove the Doctrine that you do not believe! You may not be able to receive the Doctrine I now preach, but if such has been your experience, when you get to Heaven you will wake up and say, ‘Well, I am one of the elect! I made a deal of fuss about it while on the earth, but I will make a deal of music about it now that I have got to Heaven. And I will sing more sweetly and loudly than all the rest, ‘Unto Him that has loved me and washed me from my sins in His blood, unto Him be glory forever and ever!’”

But there is a third evidence. *Those who are chosen of the Lord desire to be like Him.* “You became followers of us and of the Lord,” the Apostle says in the text—by which he does not mean that they said, “I am of Paul, I am of Silas, I am of Timothy”—but that they imitated Paul so far as he imitated Christ. Thomas aˆ Kempis wrote a book about the imitation of Christ and a blessed book in some respects it is. But I would like the Holy Spirit to write in your hearts the imitation of Christ. It shall be to you a sweet proof that you are chosen of God. Are you Christlike or do you want to be? Can you forgive your enemy and can you love him and do him good? Can you say tonight, “I am no more any man’s enemy than is the baby that is just born”? And do you now desire to live unselfishly, to live for others, to live for God? Are you prayerful? Do you come to God in prayer as Jesus did? Are you careful of your words and of your acts as Christ was? I do not ask you if you are perfect, but I do ask whether you follow the Perfect One! We are to be followers of Christ, if not with equal steps, still with steps that would be equal if they could! If we follow Christ, that will be to others one of the surest proofs of our election, though perhaps to ourselves, if we are humble-minded, it will be no proof, since we shall rather see our blemishes than our virtues and mourn over our sins more than we rejoice in our Graces. If a man follows not Christ, those who look on may be safe enough in concluding that, whatever he may say about election, and however much he may prate about it, he is not the Lord’s. On that point I shall not say anything more because I have already enlarged upon it in a former part of the discourse.

In the last place I will say *the fourth evidence is the existence of spiritual joy in spiritual service*. If you look further, it seems that those of whose election the Apostle was sure, received the Word of God “in much affliction,” but, “with joy in the Holy Spirit.” What do you say about this, you whose religion consists of a slavish attendance upon forms that you detest? Look how many there are who go to a place of worship just because it is not respectable to stay away, but who often wish it were! And when many of your Christians get to the Continent, where is the Sabbath with them, then? Where is then their care for God’s House? See, too, with what misery some people at home go up to the House of the Lord. Why? Because they have come to regard it as a place where they ought to be very solemn. It is not a home to them—it is a prison. How different it is with your children when they come home for their holidays! How do they come into their father’s house? Dull, demure, as if they could not speak? No, bless their little hearts, they come running up to their father’s knees, so glad to be there, so glad to be home! That is how a man whose religion is his delight comes up to the House of the Lord. He feels that it is his Father’s House. He would be reverent, for his Father is God, but he must be happy, for God is his Father!

See again the Christian when he goes to his closet to pray. Ungodly persons will not go there at all. Or, if they do, it is because they want to win Heaven by it. But look, they go through their dreary prayers—and what a dreary thing it must be for a man to pray when he never expects to be heard and when he has no spirit of prayer! It is like a horse going round a mill grinding for somebody else and never getting any farther— doing the same tomorrow, the same the day after, and ever on and on. Sometimes as the little church bells sound in the morning in certain churches to fetch people out—Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday there are some persons to be found there for early prayers—and they go to evening prayers, too, and a very good thing this would be if those who attend went there with holy joy! But there is the sexton and he says it is a great trouble to be always opening the doors like that when nobody comes except three old women that have got almshouses and two that expect them and are, therefore, there. Do you think that an acceptable service to God? But they who go because they would not stay away if they could—they who worship God because it is an *instinct* and a pleasure, a holy thing and honorable—these are men and women who delight in God’s Word and they give the best evidence of being chosen of God!

Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, who make your faces miserable that you may appear unto men to fast! Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that reads the heart asks not that your head may hang down like a bulrush, but that you may do deeds of mercy and walk humbly with your God! And you who can delight yourselves in your God shall have the desires of your heart! You that rejoice in the Lord, always, and triumph in His name shall go from strength to strength, and going at last to Glory, you shall find that you are there as the result of His Divine Purpose and Decree—and you shall give Him all the praise!

But now, I think I hear some say, “Oh, I want to know whether I am elect. I cannot say that the Word ever came to me with power. I cannot say I received it in much assurance. I cannot say I am a follower of Christ. I cannot say I have received the Word with joy.” Well, dear Beloved, then leave that question alone! Instead of that, let me ask another, “Do you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ? Will you now trust Christ to save your souls?” He will do it, if, just as you are, whoever you may be, you will come to Christ and give yourself up to Him to save you, to have you, to hold you for better, for worse, in life and through death. The moment you believe, you are saved! That act of faith, through the precious blood of Christ, will put away your every sin! You will not begin to be saved—you *are* saved. You will not be put into a salvable condition, but you shall be saved the moment you believe—completely and perfectly saved! “Oh,” says one, “I would I could trust Christ.” Say you so? “Whoever will, let him take,” let him *trust* Christ. God help you now to do it! Trust Jesus and you are saved! This is addressed to every one of you without exception, for, “He that believes on the Son has everlasting life.” The Lord help you to trust Jesus and then you may go on your way with joy, “knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God.”

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:**1Co 9:22-27***.***

The Apostle Paul is here giving a description of the way in which he made everything help toward the fulfillment of his desire to be a faithful minister of Jesus Christ. He longed to be the means of winning souls. He desired that at the last his Master might be able to say to him, “Well done, you good and faithful servant.” And, therefore, everything with which he had to do was made to bend in that direction.

**22-24.***I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some. And this I do for the Gospel’s sake, that I might be partaker thereof with you. Know you not that they which run in a race all run, but one receives the prize?* No matter if 20 or a hundred had entered the race, “but one receives the prize.” Alas, out of these who appear to be running in the Christian ministry, how many will be prize-takers at the last? And out of those who seem to be running the race of the Christian life, how many will win the prize? Ah, Lord, You know!

**24.***So run that you may obtain.* Do not speculate about what others will do, or not do, but see to your own running—“So run that you may obtain.” Salvation is all of Grace, but when a man is saved, he still has to run the Christian race and to be a runner as long as he lives.”

**25.***And every man that strives for the mastery is temperate in all things.* Here Paul is alluding to the athletic games and pugilistic encounters of the time. It was a matter of common notoriety that every man who was going to fight, or wrestle, or run, had to get himself into proper condition—to “go into training,” as we say in similar cases nowadays.

**25.***Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we for an incorruptible crown.* The athletes who completed in the Grecian games passed through great self-denials and mortifications of the flesh in order that every part of their bodily frame might be tough and strong when they came forward to wrestle, or to run, or to fight. “Now,” says Paul, “if they do all that to gain a crown of parsley”—which was generally the crown given—truly, “a corruptible grown”—“how much more ought we to do in order to win a crown that fades not away—‘an incorruptible crown’”!

**26.***I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beats the air.*He would not leave a stone unturned, as it were, that he might gain the prize. He put out all his strength in the name of the Lord.

**27.***But I keep under my body and bring it into subjection.* The Greek word, according to some, implies getting his body into the same position as a man does when, in a sport encounter, he gets his adversary’s head under his arm and smites him with all his might. So Paul says concerning his body, “I bring it into subjection and take care that it feels the full force of my will.” According to other interpreters, the verse may be read, “I drag my body off as a slave”—just as in some of those ancient fights, the victors dragged away their antagonists as slaves, Paul accounted his body to be as a slave to his soul and dragged it behind him in chains.

**27.***Lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.* The Greek word which is translated, “a castaway,” is, “*adokimos*.” It might better have been rendered, “disapproved.” It certainly has no such meaning as that which has been generally given to it. Paul was not afraid of being cast away by God at the last! What he aimed at was this—as he had entered the lists, as a Christian minister, to fight for Christ, to wrestle against principalities and powers, to seek to win souls for Christ, he must keep his bodily powers and passions so in subjection that, at the last, when the prizes were distributed, he would be found to have won his. This is quite another matter from being “a castaway” from salvation and eternal life! Paul was saved and he knew it—and some of us know, to a certainty, that we are saved—but we also know that there is another crown to be won which the Lord will give to His servants who win in the great fight with sin. To win this crown is our high ambition and we long to hear the Master say to each one of us, in that day, “Well done, you good and faithful servant, you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things: enter you into the joy of your Lord.”

—Adapted from *The C. H. Spurgeon Collection,* Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307  
**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.**Sermon #648 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

*‘I feelI must, I shall, decline,   
And prove like them at last.’*Draw me not away with the wicked.”

4. *Give them according to their deeds, and according to the wickedness of their endeavors: give them after the work of their hands; render to them their desert.* And a just mind feels that such ought to be the case. God is a Judge and He will punish sin—and gracious men do not wish that it should be otherwise. Even to that terrible side of God’s Character which is seen in His vengeance upon the ungodly, the Christian turns the loving eye. He is not reconciled to half a god, or to a god with half the attributes of God, namely, love and tenderness, but he loves God as he finds Him. He loves that God who is a consuming fire! I would be afraid if I could not love God under any aspect in which He is presented to me, because just as I would feel that I did not love a man truly if I said, “In such a character I cannot endure him,” I would feel that there was some difference between him and me. We must love God in *every*Character—upon the Throne of Justice, as well as upon the Seat of Love.

5, 6. *Because they regard not the works of the LORD, nor the operation of His hands, He shall destroy them, and not build themup. Blessed be the LORD, because He has heard the voice of my supplications.* Can you say this? Excuse me putting the question again and again to all now present, for it is a very vital question. If you never knew what answered prayer means, God help you to begin to pray, “Blessed be the Lord, because He has heard the voice of my supplications.”

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PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #3447 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

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**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.** Sermon #1841 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

**÷Col 3.13**

DIVINE FORGIVENESS ADMIRED AND IMITATED  
NO. 1841

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, MAY 17, 1885, *BY C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do you.”*** Col 3:13***.***

To whom is this exhortation addressed? The Apostle told us in the 12th verse—“Elect of God, holy and beloved.” Here are three particulars. They are, first of all, “elect of God,” that is to say, chosen according to His eternal purpose. They are made choice ones by being thus chosen. Next, they are sanctified by the Spirit of God and are, therefore, called “holy”—this holiness appertaining to their persons and their pursuits, their calling and their conversation. When the Spirit of God has fully done His work, He sheds abroad in their hearts the love of God, so that *experimentally* they feel themselves to be “beloved.” To abide in the love of God is the fruit of election and the result of holiness. If any of you can, with humble confidence, claim these three titles, “elect of God, holy and beloved,” you are among the most favored of all mankind! The Father has made of you a special choice! In you His Holy Spirit has worked a special work and you possess, within your souls, the special joy of living in the love of God! “Elect of God, holy and beloved”—it is as you enjoy these three things that you will find it easy to carry out the precept which is now set before you, “Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do you.”

Note in our text, before we proceed to the full discussion of it, what an honor this Scripture puts upon our Lord Jesus Christ. In Eph 4:32 a similar precept is placed in a rather different form, for it runs thus— “Even as God, for Christ’s sake, has forgiven you.” Here, as if to show the true and proper equality of the Christ with God, it is written, “Even as Christ forgave you.” In the Revised Version they read, “even as the Lord forgave you,” but they place in the margin, “Many ancient authorities read *Christ*.” In that case we see that *Lord* and*Christ* were interchangeable terms when those ancient authorities were alive. None can forgive sins but God. He alone forgives against whom the sin is committed. Sin, therefore, being against Christ and Christ being able to forgive it, we see that He is exalted on high to give remission of sins. He shares in the high and royal prerogative of God, seeing He is able to forgive sin.

Does not this expression seem to say that albeit the Apostle and other inspired writers had many things to write of, yet one thing was always upon their hearts, namely, to honor their Lord? Is not this a proof of how thoroughly they were under the influence of the Spirit of God, of whom Jesus said, “He shall glorify Me”? Whatever He is teaching, whatever duty He is enforcing, whatever promise He is delivering, the Holy Spirit takes care to do it so that the Lord Jesus Christ is exalted in the hearts of His people! Let us, in our hearts, adore the Anointed One, Christ Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God—and never let us hesitate to honor the Son even as we honor the Father. Let us, as penitents, adore the pardoning Savior, seeing He has power to forgive sins and has cleansed the myriads of His redeemed from all their iniquities.

But, Brothers and Sisters, while this gives glory to Christ, what a weight is lent to the precept, since it is supported by the example and the authority of our Divine Lord—“Even as Christ forgave you, so also do you.” What a model is set before us! How perfect is that spirit of love which we are to manifest! Even as Christ forgave us, we are bid to forgive others. What nobler pattern could have been chosen? Surely He that trifles with this precept, or thinks it one that is left to our option—to obey or to neglect—cannot rightly know the dignity of the Christ in whose pierced hands this Law is held forth before our eyes! Depend upon it, this command, so wondrously linked with the Person of the pardoning Christ, is of no common importance. If the Law given by Moses was so solemnly binding, what shall we say of this Law which is embodied in the life of the Lord Jesus?

Surely I shall scarcely need to plead with you, who are His disciples, that you give your heart’s best attention to such teaching! Your Lord, Himself, stands before you! You remember how He forgave you all your trespasses? Then I am sure you will give earnest heed to His exhortation to forgive. May the dove-like Spirit now brood over this assembly and create love in all our bosoms.

Two things are to be done. First, let us *study the pattern of forgiveness*here set before us. And then, secondly, let us *copy it for ourselves*in our forgiveness of those who trespass against us.

**I.**Carefully STUDY THE PATTERN OF FORGIVENESS set before us in the text. “Even as Christ forgave you, so also do you.” *What is this forgiveness of Christ?* You know how He exhibited it in His daily life. He was much tried, but He was never provoked to wrath. Both by friends and by enemies He was made to suffer, yet He neither accused the one nor the other to His great Father. He never reviled those who reviled Him, but patiently yielded to their malice, giving His back to the smiters and His cheeks to them that plucked off the hair. His disciples He gently rebuked, but He never spoke to them in anger. A life of forgiveness was crowned by His dying prayer for His persecutors, “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.” He loved His enemies. He lived for His enemies. He died for His enemies. He was Incarnate gentleness, the mirror and paragon of forgiveness.

Observe, also, that He forgave offenses most great and grievous. It was a horrible thing that when the Lord Jesus came into the world, moved by pure love, He was not welcomed, but Herod sought to slay the young Child. Afterwards, when He appeared publicly among men, the Jews took up stones to stone Him. He was treated with contumely. His miracles were ascribed to the devil and His holy and unspotted Character was traduced by His being called a drunk and a winebibber. He was the firstborn of the Lord of the vineyard, but when the husbandmen saw Him, they said, “This is the heir; come, let us kill Him and the inheritance shall be ours.” You know with what scornful cruelty they treated Him in the hour of His passion. What could the malice of Hell have invented more contemptuous and cruel than that which men used towards the Well-Beloved? Had He been the basest of beings, His sufferings would have been too cruel. Men did all they could against Him.

Say not that you have never thus transgressed. Oh, Sirs, we, also, have crucified Him, for our sins were laid upon Him by Jehovah. We, also, must confess, “He was despised and we esteemed Him not.” There was a time when we, who are now His followers, once “hid, as it were, our faces from Him.” He called us, but we gave Him no answer! He wooed us, but we were blind to His beauties! We can never remember this without deep emotions of regret. We used no other friend so evilly. We crucified Him and slew Him, as far as we were able to do it, by our rejection of His love. And yet He has forgiven us! He is ready to forgive all such as seek His face. Oh, the splendor of that love which blots out sins like ours! What a flood of Grace is this which rises above the tops of the mountains of our sins and covers them forever!

It matters not how black or crimson our transgressions may have been, the moment we come to Jesus He makes us whiter than snow! He puts away the most horrible of offenses, the most glaring of transgressions in a moment! He says, “I forgive you. Go and sin no more”—and we, then and there—receive a perfect pardon! I would that all of you who have never sought that Grace would be induced by this blessed fact to come with all your sins and receive immediate absolution from the hand of your Lord!

Remember, also, to increase your wonderment at His forgiveness, that these offenses which were committed against Christ were altogether wanton and unprovoked. He could demand of His adversaries, “For which of those works do you stone Me?” Towards no man had He acted unjustly or even harshly. He had been all tenderness and lowliness in every place towards all sorts of men—and yet certain men became incensed against Him because of His goodness! Did they refuse to love Him because He was altogether lovely? Did they despise Him because He was so truly great? Such is the depravity of the human heart, that the very virtues of Christ provoked the hostility of men! What has my Lord Christ ever done against any of you? Why do you refuse Him?

I have heard many a man say, “If I had done anything whatever to provoke this ill-will, I could account for it, but they persecute me wrongfully.” It was pre-eminently so in the case of our Lord, who says in the Psalm, “They hated Me without a cause.” Yet He forgave this wanton malice! He continues to forgive such causeless wrong. With His own blood, He blots out horrible insults against Himself, His people, His Gospel and His love. Even you who oppose His Kingdom and refuse His service shall be, at once, forgiven, if you will bow your hearts before Him and accept that rich mercy which His hand is so ready to bestow! See what a pattern is here of the passing-by of the greatest and most malicious offenses! How can hatred live in the Presence of such love?

Christ has shown this pardon to the most unworthy persons. Of all whom He forgave when He was here below,*none* deserved such kindness. In fact, to talk of *deserving* forgiveness is a contradiction in terms! Certainly in me—and I have no doubt in you, my Brothers and Sisters—who have tasted of His infinite mercy, there was no presence of claim to His mercy in our cases. If He had left us in our sin. If He had passed by us and allowed us to perish, what complaint could we have brought against Him? Since He loved us and forgave us, it must have been because of something within *Himself—*it could not have been from anything in us! We are unworthy, but He is gracious—and herein He teaches us to pardon the most provoking and worthless of those who trespass against us.

Be it never forgotten that He always had the power to have executed vengeance upon any one of us if He had been pleased to do so. Some men pardon because they cannot punish—they are too weak to execute vengeance and, therefore, they refrain from it. Half the forgiveness in the world comes from a feeble hand rather than from a forgiving heart. But the Christ could have crushed His adversaries in a moment if He had willed it, and yet He freely forgave! When they said, “Come down from the Cross”— suppose He had instantly loosed the nails and leaped among them—where had they been, then? They would have begged the rocks to fall upon them and the mountains to cover them from His face if He had but manifested the glory of His power! But He was not provoked to leave the Cross, or to break the silence of His passion by so much as a rebuke. Mercy was stored like honey in His heart and pardon dropped its sweetness from His lips.

The Lord has been greatly long-suffering with ourselves when a breath might have destroyed us. We might easily have been destroyed in accidents which befell us, or we might have died in our various sicknesses and so have sunk to the lowest Hell. But instead of slaying us, our Lord even interposed to spare us—to spare us when our life was rebellion! When He could so easily have blotted out our lives, He did not do so, but in boundless mercy blotted out our *sins*. Let us magnify His amazing Grace and imitate it in our lives.

I want you, for a moment, to consider the question, *How did He forgive?*The manner of our Lord’s forgiveness is as noteworthy as the pardon, itself. The Lord Jesus came and pardoned us when that act of Grace was unsolicited! Before we had *thought* of mercy, He had thoughts of mercy toward us! I remember reading in one of our magazines a story of a city missionary who discovered a poor girl who had wandered from the ways of virtue. He had sought to restore her to a better life. He spoke with her till she became somewhat tender of heart. He enquired about her family and learned that she had once enjoyed a happy home and had known a tender father’s love. “But he would never look at me now,” she said. “I am sure he never would—I am such a degraded creature that I could not venture near his door.” “Have you never written to him?” “No, I could not write to him. It would be of no use. I could not expect him to send me an answer and it would break my heart to be refused.”

“We will try,” said the good man, “we will write to him.” He wrote to the father and the next post brought back an answer, with the word, “Immediate,” written upon the envelope. The sum of the letter enclosed within was, “Ready to forgive.” She was taken to her father. She was soon locked in his embrace. All was forgiven—the wanderer was restored! Notice that her father had been praying for her, night and day, ever since she left his roof—and he had longed to receive her to his home again. Her seeking his forgiveness did not *cause* it—it was in his heart long before—and no doubt it was because of his cries and tears that God, in mercy, touched his girl’s heart and brought her home. O Sinner, before you think of Christ, He has thoughts of love towards you! He says, “I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, your transgressions, and, as a cloud, your sins: return unto Me; for I have redeemed you.” The forgiveness is *first* and the returning to the Lord is urged as a *consequence* of that forgiveness! Pardon is not first in the matter of our personal experience, but it is first as matter of fact with God. Oh! the mercy of the Lord Christ, that before we know our sin, He has made atonement for it by His own precious blood!

The Lord Jesus Christ is to be held up as an example of pardoning love for the true and hearty way in which He forgives sin. Forgiveness, when it comes from human lips in measured, studied phrases, is not worth having, for the heart is not in it, or it would be more free and joyful. The Lord Jesus Christ absolves sinners with all His heart. He never acts in a cold, formal manner. Never does He outwardly forgive and in secret retain His wrath—but wholly, entirely, joyfully, He puts away the sin of those whom He forgives—and puts it away forever! When He forgives, He forgives the whole of our faults, follies, failures and offenses. There is a certain solidarity about sin, so that it makes up one lump. I read the other day of a certain theologian speaking of Christ having put away original sin while He left actual sin. Nonsense! Sin is one and indivisible! Iniquity is not to be done up in separate parcels. The sin, the iniquity of men, is spoken of in the Bible as one thing. Although we sin multitudes of times, the various streams all flow into one sea of evil—when sin is forgiven, *all* sin is put away—not a shred, nor fragment, nor particle remains! The Lord Jesus drowns all the hosts of sin in the depths of the sea and the whole of our guilt is swallowed up forever. This is great forgiveness, indeed! Glory be to Him who gives it! Let us follow Him in His truth and heartiness.

This forgiveness, again, is given by the Lord Jesus Christ in the most complete possible manner. He keeps no back reckonings. He retains no reserves of anger. He so forgives that He forgets. That is the wonder of it! He says, “I will not remember your sins.” He casts them behind His back—they are wholly and completely gone from His observation or regard. Alas, such is poor human nature that even fathers, when they have forgiven a wayward child, will, perhaps, throw the offense in his teeth years after when he again offends. But it is never so with Christ. He says, “Your sins shall not be mentioned against you any more, forever.” He has done with the sins of His people in so effectual a way that not a whisper concerning them shall ever come from His mouth so as to grieve them. They will, themselves, remember their sins with deep repentance, but the Lord will never challenge them on account of their past rebellions. Blessed be the name of Christ for such complete forgiveness as this!

The Lord Jesus Christ forgives His people in a continuous manner. He forgave us long ago—He still forgives us. He does not forgive and afterwards accuse. His forgiveness is eternal. It is not a reprieve He gives to you, believing ones, but a free pardon, under the King’s hand and seal, which shall effectually protect you from accusation and punishment. “In those days, and in that time, says the Lord, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found: for I will pardon them whom I reserve.” He has finished transgression, made an end of sin and brought in everlasting righteousness. Send to Hell a pardoned sinner?! It were a contradiction to the very nature of God! Condemn those for whom Jesus died?! Why, the Apostle mentions that death as a conclusive answer to the challenge, “Who is he that condemns? It is Christ who died, yes, who is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.” How shall He intercede for us and yet accuse us? It is impossible for Christ to be both Redeemer and Condemner to the same persons. So perfect is His pardon that our sin has ceased to be! He has put away sin forever by the sacrifice of Himself.

Greatly do I admire the very gracious way in which that pardon is given. Some people offer forgiveness in an ungracious way. They make it appear that they are coming down from such awful heights when they forgive a fellow mortal. In great dignity they march down in state from their own splendid innocence to the poor Brother who has done them a wrong—as good as saying, “I will condescend to do this, though it is an awful stoop for such an angelic being as I am.” You never feel that about the Christ, for He places His pardon down so low that He seems to say, “Receive My mercy, I beg you to receive it.” He speaks as if He were *favored* by a sinner’s accepting His forgiveness! He humbles Himself and never scalds a sinner with scornful pity.

Though the Christ condescends more than all the condescensions of all men put together, “for worms were never raised so high above their meanest fellow worms,” yet the condescension is so real and royal that there is no ostentation in it! He is born to the manner—He condescends naturally, like condescension’s own self. Some are most proud when they stoop, but Jesus graciously seems to put Himself on a level with us, yes, and even to go *lower* than we are, that He may lift us up! Admire as much the way in which Christ forgives as the forgiveness which He bestows. It breaks my heart to think what a loving Christ He was to me when I sought His forgiveness. Truly, “He gives liberally and upbraids not”—He frowned and thundered when I looked to my own righteousness—but when I turned to His Gospel of Free Grace, I had from Him not even a hard word—He was all love and tenderness to me, the chief of sinners!

Above all, the greatness of His forgiveness is seen in the fact that the offense had brought great trouble into the world and He bore that trouble. The sinner, by his wrong doing, had subjected himself to great loss and calamity. Now, when we forgive a person who has done us a wrong, we say, “I freely forgive you, but you have involved yourself in certain consequences which you will have to bear, and out of these I cannot help you.” Our blessed Master seemed to say, Sinner, you have sinned yourself under the curse of God. You have sinned yourself into misery and into death—and as the proof that I do freely forgive you—I will take all this suffering and this death upon Myself. You have done the wrong wantonly and wickedly, but I will bear the consequences. You have knotted the whips, but they shall scourge My shoulders. You have sharpened the nails, but they shall pierce My hands and feet. You have put yourself under curse and penalty, but I will bear the curse of death that you may be free.”

Was there ever mercy like this? Do not all who know this love accept it gladly? Sinner, do you not know this? Have you never heard about it? Know you not that the Lord, even Jesus, the Son of God, is able to forgive you all your trespasses—that it will be a joy to His heart to do so—and to do it at once? Oh, that before that clock shall strike again you may be able to say, “There is, therefore, now no condemnation, for Christ has put away my sin.” This is not according to the manner of men—it is Godlike! It is a sure proof that Jesus is the Son of God, for who could act like this but One who is Himself the Son of God?

Thus have I set before you, in my poor way, this great forgiveness and the manner of it. I trust you have had an experience of it. Assuredly we all need such forgiveness—do any of you deny it? May the Holy Spirit open your blind eyes and melt your hard hearts. According to the text, those who have received pardon know that they have it, for Paul speaks positively—“Even as Christ forgave you”—as if it were a matter of fact well known among the people of God. There is a theory abroad that we may be forgiven and not know it—that Jesus may forgive and we may never discover it until we come to our dying moments. That is a wretched kind of Gospel! By the *true* Gospel we may know we are forgiven and be sure of it—surer than if we saw, written by the autograph of Christ, the words—“I have forgiven you.” The eyes may deceive, but the witness of the Spirit of God within the heart can never delude us! If you believe that Jesus is the Christ and if you are resting, alone, on Him, your sins, which are many, are forgiven you, “for the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanses us from all sin.” In knowing that we are forgiven by Christ, let us be clear and decided in our forgiveness of others—not only in *word*—but in deed and in truth let us exhibit a forbearing spirit.

**II.**You see your example. Our second word is, COPY IT FOR YOURSELVES. If the Holy Spirit enables you to write according to this copy, you will have the approval of the Lord resting upon you. See how large and clear the letters are! It will be no small success if you can reproduce them. “Even as Christ forgave you”—the imitation should be as exact as possible. Mark the, “even,” and the, “so,” and endeavor to keep up with your gracious Lord.

Notice, however, in the text, that this precept concerning the imitation of Christ in forgiveness is*universally applicable*. The text is not long, but see how unqualified is its range. “Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a quarrel against any.” You see it is not put that *superiors* are to forgive inferiors, or, on the other hand, that the less are to forgive the greater—but the circle of the command includes the whole! It is, “forbearing one another.” The rich are to be forbearing to the poor. The poor are to be forbearing to the rich. The elderly man is to forgive the junior for his imprudence. The junior is to bear with the petulance and slowness of the elder. It is an all-round business, implying that one of these days I shall have to forgive you and you will have to forgive me!

Personally, I tax your forbearance to put up with me and I need not say that, sometimes, I have need to exercise forbearance towards one and another in so large a Church! We have all our own angles and edges and these are apt to come into contact with others. We are all pieces of one puzzle and shall fit in with each other one day and make a complete whole. But just now we seem misshapen and unfitting. Our corners need to be rounded. Sometimes they are chipped off by collision with somebody else and that is not comfortable for the person with whom we collide. Like pebbles in the river of the Water of Life, we are wearing each other round and smooth as the living current brings us into communion—everybody is polishing and being polished—and in the process it is inevitable that some present inconvenience should be sustained. But nobody must mind it, for it is part of a great process by which we shall all come into proper shape and be made meet for endless fellowship.

“Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another”—you see it has two sides. “Ah,” says one, “I cannot understand it. People ought to be far more forbearing to me.” Just so, but the first point is that *you* should be forgiving towards them. What numbers of Church members think that the duties of a Church are all one-sided. “I was ill and nobody came to see me.” “Did you send for anybody to see you?” “No, I did not.” Brother, before you find fault, remember your own fault—you have violated the command, “Is any sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the Church.” “But nobody exhibits Christian love,” says one. Is that true of *yourself*? I have noticed that the man who says that love is dead is usually rather short of love, himself. How very different the Church looks to different eyes—one sees a thousand virtues to admire—and another a world of evil to expose! One gratefully cries, “When I was ill, the dear Brethren came to see me so often that I had to ask them not to stay very long.” Another grumbles, “I might have laid there a month and nobody would ever have come near me.” We understand the reason for this difference—the tone of the speech is the key to the riddle. As a rule, with what measure we mete, it is measured to us. I do not find Christ’s people to be one half so faulty as I am, myself. I meet with many Christians whom I think it an honor to know and commune with—and those of another sort are useful to me as warnings and as fields for exercising my Graces. The forgiveness and the forbearance are needed all round and we must both give and take. By the sweet love of Jesus, let us not fail in this business.

Let me say, here, that this matter is an absolutely essential one— *this forbearance and this forgiveness are vital*. Be not deceived, God is not mocked! No man is a child of God who has not a likeness to God and no man is forgiven who will not, himself, forgive. In the Middle Ages a certain baron had a feud with another nobleman and determined to avenge himself for some insult, real or imaginary. His enemy was to pass by the castle with a small retinue and, therefore, the baron determined to waylay him and kill him, or, at least, to punish him severely and exact a ransom. A holy man who lived in the castle begged and entreated the baron to forbear from bloodshed and make peace. But, for some time, he pleaded in vain. The baron would not be appeased, but swore that he would be avenged of his adversary. So this godly man begged one favor of him, namely, that he would come with him into the chapel and offer prayer before he sallied forth.

They knelt together in prayer and before they rose the saintly man said, “My lord, repeat after me the Lord’s Prayer.” He went on saying, word by word, as the other did, till he came to that, “Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us.” There the good man stopped and said, “I charge you not to say this unless you really mean it! Do not mock the Lord! You may not go out and fight if you thus speak with God. You will have to appear before God and be judged for your sins, for you will not be forgiven if you do not forgive. Choose, then, either to utter this prayer and forgive and be saved, or to refuse the prayer and go forth to battle and be lost.” The baron paused and bit his lips but, at last his better spirit prevailed and he cried, “I cannot renounce my hope of Heaven! I cannot renounce my hope of forgiveness! Therefore my enemy shall pass by my castle in safety and I *will* say, ‘Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us.’”

Do not attempt to deceive God! If you must lie and cheat, practice your impositions upon your fellow men, but do not *imagine* that you can flatter your Maker or deceive the Omniscient One! If you will not forgive, say so, and expect eternal perdition! But if you profess to be a Christian, obey this great and essential precept and forgive as Christ forgave you! Be honest, be straight with God, for He will be honest and straight with you. But if you cannot and will not forgive, then look forward to a portion with the tormentors, for even the loving Jesus says, “Neither shall My heavenly Father forgive you.”

In urging you to this copying of Christ, let me notice that this forgiveness of those who offend against us is *gloriously ennobling*. We are not asked to perform a duty which will, in the least, degrade us. Revenge is paltry—forgiveness is great-minded. Was not David infinitely greater than Saul when he spared his life in the cave and when he would not kill him as he lay asleep on the battlefield? Did not the king humble himself before David when he perceived David’s forbearance? If you would be the greatest among men, bear injuries with the greatest gentleness! If you would win the noblest of conquests, subdue yourself! To win a battle is a little thing if it is fought out with sword and gun. But to win it in God’s way, with no weapons but love, patience and forgiveness—this is the most glorious of victories! Blessed is that man who is more than a conqueror because he inflicts no wounds in the conflict, but overcomes evil with good! In the process of such a conquest the warrior is, himself, a gainer.

A nation in fighting, even if it wins the campaign, has to suffer great expense and loss of life. But he that overcomes by love is the better and stronger man through what he has done. He comes out of the conflict not only victor over his adversary, but victor over sin within himself—and all the readier for future war against evil. He glorifies God and, he, himself, becomes strong in Divine Grace. Nothing is more glorious than love! Your Master, who is King of kings, set you an example of gaining glory by enduring wrong. If you would be knights of His company, imitate His graciousness.

Notice that this imitation of Christ is *logically appropriate to you all*. Brothers and Sisters, if Christ has forgiven you, the parable we read just now shows that it is imperative that you should forgive your fellows. If our Lord has forgiven us our 10,000 talents, how can we take our brother by the throat for the 100 pence and say, “Pay me what you owe”? If we are, indeed, members of Christ, should we not be like our Head? If we profess to be His servants, are we to pretend to a dignity greater than our Master, who washed His disciples’ feet? If He forgave so freely, how dare we call ourselves His brethren if our spirit is hard and malice lingers within us?

I say, to conclude, that this copying of Christ is *most forcibly sustained by the example given in the text*. We are to forbear and to forgive. “Even as Christ forgave you, so also do you.” I have heard it said, “If you pass by every wanton offense and take no notice of it, you will come to be despised and regarded as a person of mean spirit—your honor demands vindication.” When Christ forgave you, did His honor suffer by that forgiveness? You transgressed most wickedly and yet He forgave you—do you regard Him as less honorable because of that readiness to pass by offenses? Far from it—it is His Glory to forgive! The hallelujahs of saints and the songs of angels are sent up to His Throne the more heartily because of the richness of His Grace and the freeness of His mercy! Dishonor, indeed! What pride it is on the part of such poor creatures as we are to talk about our honor! Where is the honor of revenge? It is a dishonorable thing to put yourself on the level of him who injures you.

A heathen philosopher used to say, “If an ass kicks you, is it necessary for the maintenance of your honor to kick that ass, also?” That speech looks like a noble one, but yet it is too much flavored with contempt. When you speak, or even *think* of another who has wronged you as though he were only worthy to be regarded as a *beast*, you are not right in spirit—a degree of evil remains in your heart. Think of the offender without contempt as well as without resentment! Believe that he is a brother worth winning. Say, “If he does me an injury, for that very reason I will do him a double service. My only vengeance shall be double *love*. I will not allow myself to even *think* harshly of him. I will put the best possible construction on all that he does and thus show that the spirit of Christ is in me, conquering the spirit of fallen humanity both in me and in him.”

Says one, “If we always overlook offenses, other people may also be tempted to do us wrong.” Our text furnishes us with a ready answer to this. The Lord Jesus Christ forgave *you*. Have you met anybody who has been tempted to do wrong because the Lord has forgiven you? He has freely forgiven myriads of poor unworthy sinners and has that promoted sin? No. Is it not the very groundwork and case of holiness in the world, that Jesus is so gracious as to pardon sin? Why, then, should your forbearance do harm? Do not pretend to be so very wise, for therein you censure your Master! You are not the ruler of the world. It is not for *you* to be refraining from good for fear that evil may come of it—attend to your own ways—forgive everyone his brother his trespasses and leave consequences with God.

“Oh, but,” says one, “I know several pious persons who are very unforgiving.” You do not know any really good man who is of that character! I make bold to say that no man is really good if he has not a forgiving spirit. Unwillingness to forgive is a grievous flaw in anyone’s character. But if there *were* such good people, what have you to do with them? Is the servant to imitate his fellow servant, especially in his faults? The example set before you is, “Even as *Christ* forgave you.” You have nothing to do with either saints or sinners in this matter! Your Lord says to you, “What is that to you? Follow Me.” Perhaps you do not know all the story which you think proves that a good man has been unforgiving—and if you do know it, you are no judge of others. Mind your own business and even “as Christ forgave you, so also do you.”

Bur I hear another one saying, “These persons would not have forgiven *me*.” Just so, but then you are a child of God—you are, “elect, holy and beloved.” You are not to lower your standard to that of publicans and sinners. Does not Christ continually say, “What do you more than others? Do not even the publicans and the sinners the same?” “If you love them that love you, what thanks have you?” But if you love them that despitefully use you, then blessed are you when men shall persecute you! In that case you have an opportunity of showing your love to your Lord. When Dr. Duff first read to some young Brahmins in the Government school the precept, “Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you,” one of the Brahmins cried out with delight, “Beautiful! Beautiful! This *must* have come from the true God. I have been told to love those that love me and I have not always done that—but to love my*enemies* is a Divine thought.” That young man became a Christian under the influence of that precept. Do not darken this Light of God , but be sure to display it in your life, that many may be attracted to Christ by its luster. Let your goodwill go forth even to the worst of men, for Christ’s sake. Forget *their* evil as you behold *His* goodness.

“Well,” says one, “I would forgive the fellow, but he does not deserve it.” That is why you are to forgive him! If he *deserved* it, you would be bound to do him the justice which he could claim. But, as he does not deserve it, you have, here, an appeal to your Christian love. Does not your heavenly Father give good things to the unthankful and to the evil? Did not Jesus forgive the undeserving when He forgave *you*? Does He not overlook our wretched characters when He has mercy upon us?

I hear one say, “I cannot forgive!” That is a terrible confession. The Apostle of the Gentiles said, “I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me.” Is not the same strength available for you? Some persons find forgiving and forgetting to be hard work, but, as you are bound to do it, or stay out of Heaven, you must cry to God for help and set about it with determination. If you are, indeed, a child of God, you will soon find the difficulty gone. Indeed, forgiveness will become easy to you! To be forgiven is such sweetness that honey is tasteless in comparison with it! But there is one thing still sweeter—and that is to forgive. As it is more blessed to give than to receive, so to forgive rises a stage higher in experience than to be forgiven. To be forgiven is, as it were, the root—to forgive is the flower. That Divine Spirit, who bears witness with our spirit when He breathes peace into us because we are pardoned, bears yet a higher witness with us when He enables us to truly pardon all manner of trespasses against ourselves!

Let it never be said, in a Christian Church, that members bear a grudge against one another. I do not know that it is so in your case—assuredly it should not be so *anywhere*. Let it not be said of any Christian man that he is unloving, ready to take offense, apt to bear malice, or quick to anger. Cultivate forbearance till your heart yields a fine crop of it. Pray for a short memory as to all unkindnesses. I bless God that I know a man who finds it easy to forgive and to forget all offenses against himself. He takes no credit for so doing, for no one ever offends him in a way which is worth remembering. That man has been reminded again and again of the misbehavior of unreasonable and unkind men, but he has honestly said, “I had quite forgotten it.” He does not claim this forgetfulness as a virtue, for as a matter of fact his memory has become weak in that direction and he has no desire to strengthen it. He has never tried to recollect unkindnesses and now, by long disuse, his memory happily fails him upon such matters! That man has often enjoyed exquisite pleasure in doing good to those who have injured him—and he can truly say that, at this moment, he bears no ill-will to any soul upon this earth.

He does not think this to be any singular attainment, for his belief is that every follower of Jesus should be of the same mind. Do you not think the same? I am sure I do. I heard this man once say of another, “He spoke against me that which was false, but if he had known more about me, he might have said something far worse and have been nearer the truth. Perhaps my false accuser believed what he said and thought he was doing a right thing in protesting against what he thought was my fault. At any rate, no one can harm my character, unless I do so myself.” It is a wise thing to profit by every accusation, whether true or false, by trying to be better!

Let us so live as to be able to say, “I am as much at peace with all men as a new-born child.” Thus shall we wear the mark of the Spirit of God. In a word, my Brothers and Sisters—“Even us Christ forgave you, so also do you.” Amen.

***PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Matthew 18.*HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—30, 202, 203.** Adapted from*The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #1693 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

**÷Col 3.15**

THAT HORRIBLE EAST WIND!  
NO. 1693

**DELIVERED AT THE THURSDAY EVENING LECTURE, *BY C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which you are also called in one body; and be you thankful.”***Col 3:15***.***

I do not know how it is, but during the last two or three days I have been called to sympathize with an amount of sorrow such as I have seldom met with before in so short a space of time. One messenger of misery has followed on the heels of another, each one with heavy tidings. Nor is that all, for I have also been perplexed with a large amount of sinning, quarrelling and fault-finding. People are murmuring, grumbling, fretting and fighting on all sides. This has tried me so much that I feel little fitted to act as comforter, for I need comfort, myself. I have endeavored to cheer others till I have drunk of their cup of sorrow and put my own mouth out of taste—I have tried to make peace for others till I am half afraid of losing my own—I have answered the people’s grumblings till I am tempted to have a growl or two on my own account.

Perhaps I may relieve my own mind by the sermon which I hope to deliver. I said to one whom I greatly esteem, “I do not know how it is, but everybody seems out of sorts with everybody else just now.” His wise answer was, “THE WIND IS IN THE EAST.” This fact accounts for a great deal, for—

***“When the wind is in the east,  
‘Tis neither good for man nor beast.”***  
This is that ill wind which seems to blow no man any good. Some humanities feel the east wind terribly—it sets their teeth on edge and they feel that they must bite the first person they meet. I am glad to find some sort of excuse for my fellow Christians and, if I can find it nowhere but in the east wind, I will make the best I can of it. But I earnestly hope that the wind may soon blow from another quarter and not come from the east, again, till we have had a little respite and laid in a new stock of patience. If a cutting wind causes despondency, vexation, discontent and bad temper—may soft gales visit us frequently and bring us healing in their wings! As fair weather will not last forever, it will be well to prepare ourselves to breast the blast. It will never do for us to have a religion which can be killed by the wind—we must be made of better stuff than that! Yet this wind is blamed and I wish, therefore, that it would take itself off. If I could find a snug corner where the cruel east wind was never felt, I would feel inclined to promote an emigration movement for certain persons whom I will not mention! As for myself, I am afraid that it would not suit me to be altogether screened from the wind, for trials are necessary to one who is called to this ministry. Troubles and east winds will come to the servants of God and they are sent to do us good, for perhaps, if we could get our backs against a protecting wall and sit forever in the sunshine, with no east wind to interfere with us, we would go to sleep, or waking, we might come to love this world so well as to be loath to leave it!  
It would be a horrible thing for any one of us if the south wind should softly breathe upon our cheeks and whisper gently in our ears of longcontinued joy to be found on earth—for then we would be tempted to sit down and say, “Soul, take your ease. You have, at last, found a place free from the trials of time. Therefore eat, drink and be merry, and let the future world care for itself.” When I turn over in my mind the events of the last few days I do not suppose that there is more discord or discontent in the world just now than at any other time, but it happens that a number of black lines have all found their center in me and my thoughts have had to travel out in all those directions—all which is trying enough, but all the more so when the wind is in the east.  
It is a coincidence, but the same has happened before. I have had to unravel many tangled skeins in my time out of love to others. I did not get the threads into a ravel, but people are very fond of bringing me their snarls to disentangle and, when I have a hope of succeeding, I try my best. Gladly would I be a peacemaker, but it is much easier to make a snarl than to put it straight, again—especially in the east wind. I have tried to set things right and, meanwhile, I have asked myself, “Is there not a remedy for these mischiefs?” I feel assured there is such a remedy. Family discomfort, husbands and wives that cannot agree, domestic difficulties, brothers and sisters that fall out, Church troubles, members that are not treated kindly by others, (not generally the kindest sort of people, themselves, I notice), difficulties in business, difficulties in preaching—the world teems with these things!  
When the wind is in the east, we meet with many people who cannot earn enough wages, others who do not believe they were ever treated well since they were born. There are others, again, who are highly deserving people, but have never yet been appreciated as they should be. And these all come out in crowds when the wind is in the east. Good men become rabid for something new, find fault with old friends, invite debate and quarrel about nothing—and this happens most often when the wind is in the east. When this kind of spirit gets among Christian people, it is very sad. But surely there must be a remedy for it! Many nostrums are proposed, many quacks are ready to prescribe this and that form of remedy for troubles and discords, but the results of the east wind are not to be removed in that way—a higher power is needed.  
I have heard of pills for the earthquake and medicine for the comet— but I have no such patent medicine for the east wind! All I have to tell you is borrowed from an old Book in which the wisest prescriptions are to be found—prescriptions so excellent that if they were followed, the inhabitant would no more say, “I am sick.” This windy night I shall take you to the great Physician of souls, Jehovah-Rophi—The Lord Who Heals Us—who is able to cure all our diseases and to give permanent relief from all evil so that our spirits shall be at rest. I believe that we have a prescription in this verse, which, if it is well attended to, will deliver you out of all troubles, make you sing all your lives long, help you to travel from earth to Heaven and be, all the while, as happy as the birds in the air! Here it is—“Let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which you are also called in one body; and be you thankful.” If we dissect our text, we shall find, in it, four pieces of advice.  
**I.**First, POSSESS THE PEACE OF GOD—“Let the peace of God rule in your hearts.” It cannot rule in your hearts if you have never felt its power! Therefore, make certain that you are truly reconciled to God by Jesus Christ. Many persons have peace, but, alas, it is false peace. They have the peace of a soft, gentle, timorous, time-serving character—a mean sort of peace, which, if it hurts no one else, often ruins its possessor. Some have the peace of ignorance, the peace of stupidity, the peace of utter indifference—false peace. These are the followers of those false prophets who cried, “peace, peace,” where there was no peace. Woe to the man whose peace of mind is like the deadly smoothness of the current just as it nears the waterfall!  
Many are at ease in a condition which might make a wise man’s hair turn gray in a night. They were never emptied from vessel to vessel and, therefore, they are settled upon their lees—but they shall be poured out to their utter confusion. They think right well of themselves, but already the axe of judgment is lifted against them. The peace that we need to possess is the peace of God, which means, I think, first, peace *with* God. Oh, what a blessed thing it is to feel that the great cause of quarrel between our fallen spirit and the great Spirit is taken away—that we are reconciled to God by the death of His Son—that sin, the great divider, has been cast into the depths of the sea and that there is established between us and God, a happy fellowship!  
I hope many of you are, at this hour, enjoying such peace. If you have it, rejoice in it! If you, then, are at peace with God, do not perpetually act as if that peace were questionable and doubtful. Do not sigh and cry as if the matter trembled in the balance. If we believe in Jesus Christ, “being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” Oh, the joy of knowing that, “as far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us” and that, therefore, they can never return from so immense a distance—yes, never return at all, for the Lord Jesus Christ has cast them into the depths of the sea—and if they are searched for, they shall not be found! Yes, they shall not be, says the Lord! Blessed is that man who has peace with God through the atoning blood!  
Growing out of this there comes, next, a peace with God with regard to all His Providences which can only come through a complete and entire submission to the Divine will, for some there are who are *not* at peace with God, even about a certain Providence that afflicted them years ago. They remain quarrelling with God about the decease of a beloved wife, or child, or mother—they cannot forgive God for having taken a flower out of His own garden. If they were wise, they would not thus rebel, but find in their loving Savior a recompense for all their losses. Was not that fine of Andromache, when she remembered that she had lost all her relatives except her husband, and, gazing on him with delight, said—  
***“While my Hector still survives, I see  
My father, mother, brethren, all in thee!”***  
Cannot a Believer say the same of the Lord Jesus? Far be it from us to raise a question about what the Providence of God has already done! It must be right! The point is to keep on submitting to that Providence in what is now transpiring. If, for the present, the will of the Lord should send me poverty, obscurity, pain, weariness, reproach, I must be at peace with God about it all.  
If the Lord says to me, “Go across the sea and leave all your friends,” I must not delay. If He says, “Preach unwelcome Truths of God which will make you enemies,” I must not hesitate. If He says, “Stay in the house with rheumatism,” I must not come out of doors. If the Lord says, “Lie on your back and cough,” it is not for me to quarrel with Him and say it ought not to be so. If He denies us that which we think would make us not only more happy, but more useful, it is of no use for us to kick against the pricks. The Divine appointment will certainly be fulfilled and the misery to us will be in struggling against the yoke, in endeavoring to have it otherwise than Divine love and infinite wisdom have determined it should be!  
If you cannot change your place, change your mind till your mind shall take to your place and you shall love it! Why, there have been men so helped of God to conquer self that they have hugged their crosses! I think it is Rutherford who somewhere says that he was half afraid lest he should begin to love his cross better than Christ. That is a fear which will seldom need to cross our minds, but, oh, we ought to be perfectly satisfied, perfectly content with that which pleases God! “If this is the Lord’s will, it is my will”—such a saying comes from a happy heart! But if God has one will and we have another, it is clear that the peace of God does not yet rule our hearts. Though forgiven and though the grand cause of quarrel is gone, yet we are raising minor points of difference and these instill strife. It is like a great lawsuit that has been decided on all the grand features of the case and yet, here is the plaintiff picking little points, raising little questions and getting up fresh litigation! The point with us is to say, “It is all given up. Whatever You will, Lord, I will; or at least I wish to will. I ask for Grace that I may will it because You will it.”  
This voluntary submission to our Father’s appointment is the peace of God. This peace of God is, also, peace such as God commends—such as God approves. That, you know, is first, perfect peace with Himself and then with all men—certainly with His people, but also with all mankind. “If it is possible, as much as lies in you, live peaceably with all men.” Take heed that you do not offend! And if you are offended by others, do not offend in return, but accept the offense in patience—forgive it and forget it. Forbear, and when you have done so, forbear! And when you have done so again, forbear! And when you have forborne seven times, still forbear! I will not repeat the advice 70 times seven, though if I did, I should not go beyond the measure of forbearance and of forgiveness which the Lord Jesus would have us display. Be so at peace with God that you feel perfectly at peace with your fellow men.  
Whenever I have suffered a grievous wrong, it has been a satisfaction to me to feel that, if my Lord Jesus Christ made atonement for my offenses and my wrongs, I can look at His Atonement as an atonement for the wrong done to me as well as to God, for He satisfied all parties in that quarrel. Gladly do I say, “Surely, this poor soul may well be forgiven by me, for You have died as the sinners’ Substitute.” In comparison with my own offenses against God, I may well look upon this man’s offense as less than nothing! What if men should do the worst they can do to us? What is it? What if they slay us? It is but a small loss to a Christian to die! Therefore let us harbor no malice, but feel, “No, we have entered into the truce of God and we are the friends of every man that breathes.” For my own part, I have a crusade against the devil and all evil, but the truce of God is upon me with regard to all my fellow men and, from now on, that peace which was proclaimed at Bethlehem by the angels shall stand for me— “Peace on earth: good will toward men.” This is a sweet part of the peace of God! Cultivate it carefully.  
But this peace is called the peace of God because it is peace which God works in the soul. I think I hear you exclaim, “To have such a peace as that—a perfect consciousness of full forgiveness, complete acquiescence in the will of God, perfect forgiveness towards all mankind and an intense desire to live in perfect peace with all, both saints and sinners—how can I get such a peace within me?” Ah, indeed, how can you? It is *impossible* to unrenewed human nature! Man, by nature, is worse than any wild beast, for he is a menagerie. There is lion in him and there is serpent in him. There is tiger in him and there is wolf in him. There is dog in him and there is devil in him. He is half beast and half devil through the Fall. I do not caricature him—his body allies him to the beast and sin makes him a child of Satan!  
Mr. Whitefield used to describe fallen nature and he was pretty near the mark. “How shall this wild beast be taught to love? Shall the lion eat straw like an ox? It never will till it leaves off being a lion. It cannot do so—it has not fit teeth for eating straw, nor a fit stomach for digesting grass. It cannot live on straw, like an ox, till God changes it and gives it an ox-like nature.” So it is with us—we need a new nature before we can possess this peace with God. But how is that to be done? Shall the Ethiopian change his skin? No. He cannot do that. And if he could, it would not equal the miracle which we require. Our default is not skin deep, only, it is much more than that. Changing skins is difficult, but changing *hearts* is impossible except to God. Shall the leopard get rid of his spots? Well, that is difficult, but still, the task of taking spots out of leopards would be small compared with the miracle of taking evil out of the very core of our wild beast- like heart and putting into it the peace of God that makes us love. Only God can do it!  
God’s own mighty Spirit must put forth that same energy with which He will raise the dead out of their graves at the Resurrection—for nothing short of creation and Resurrection power is able to transmute this beastly, devilish heart of ours into a heart in which the peace of God shall reign supreme! Well is it called the peace of God! My dear Hearer, do you know this peace? If so, you will understand that because of its excellence, it is called the peace of God. It is a Hebraism, for among the Hebrews they called certain mountains that were higher than others the hills of God— and certain gigantic trees, such as the cedars of Lebanon, were the trees of God that were full of sap. So the peace that is greater than every other peace is called the peace of God—it means the holiest, deepest peace. It is “perfect peace”—peace that nothing disturbs. It is a deep peace—“the peace of God, which passes all understanding”—solemn peace at which you almost stand in awe! It is a hush within the soul in which there is heard nothing of discord or of fear, but a stillness reigns like that which was maintained in the Holy of Holies, within the veil, where seraphim were silent above the Mercy Seat.  
“The peace of God” signifies the peace that never ends, everlasting peace—the peace that will live with us throughout the whole of our mortal sojourn till we come into the land of the immortal!—  
***“There shall I bathe my weary soul  
In seas of heavenly rest,  
And not a wave of trouble roll  
Across my peaceful breast.”***  
“The peace of God.” Oh, I have known it! You, too, my Brothers and Sisters, must have known it when the Lord, Himself, has dwelt within your hearts and kept all adversaries far away. You have then known days of Heaven upon the earth. It has left nothing to wish for except the perpetuation of itself, for you have been satisfied with favor and full of the goodness of the Lord—filled with all the fullness of God, anchored fast, settled, grounded, established!—  
***“My heart is resting,  
O my God!  
I will give thanks and sing.  
My heart is at the secret source  
Of every precious thing.”***  
That is the peace of God! Win it, dear Friends, and wear it! By God’s good Spirit enter into this serene haven. Rest in the Lord and be happy in Him, for He is our peace! When the Lord and Giver of peace once comes to tarry in your heart, let Him rest there and charge all about you, by the roes and by the hinds of the field, that they stir not up nor awake your Love until He pleases.  
**II.**But now let us consider the second piece of advice that grows out of the text. If you possess this peace of God, let it occupy the throne—LET THE PEACE OF GOD RULE IN YOUR HEARTS. In order to there being any peace in the heart, or anywhere else, there must be a ruler. Those people who are for putting down all kings and principalities and powers may bid farewell to peace. Anybody who is inclined to anarchy should read Carlyle’s, “French Revolution,” with care and ask himself whether the worst king is not, after all, a great deal better than the despotism of the mob— the carnival of misrule wherein every man does that which is right in his own eyes—all eyes love darkness rather than light.  
Let loose the reins of government, let everybody be equal to everybody else—and a little bigger than everybody else as well—and you will soon see what confusion ensues! See how it is in a house! I hear that there was great deliberation over those census papers, in many families, to know who was the head of the household. But I am quite clear that it was not a happy household where that question took long to answer, for the husband is the head of the wife and where he is not so, everything is out of order—monstrous and outrageous. Where the head is not the head, the hand is not the hand, the eye is not the eye, the heart is not the heart— and nothing is itself at all! All is what it should not be and all is misery. You *must* have a governing faculty somewhere and, within your own soul, if nothing governs, I tell you boldly, the devil governs! That man who does not control himself is controlled by the devil, for he must have a master somewhere.  
We cannot

ave two masters, but it is quite as certain that we must have one! One power or another will master you. Shall it be your Creator, or His enemy? Your Savior, or your destroyer? It is a blessed gift of Grace if a man is enabled by the Holy Spirit to say—“The peace of God shall rule in my heart.” Paul advised this—“Let the peace of God rule in your hearts.” If it is in your hearts at all, it must rule, for it has power to put down all rebellion. You know, when we have a government and a magistracy with power at their back, if a riot arises, we appeal to the lawful power to come and protect us and put down the uproar. So in our hearts, if we have a master principle and that master principle is the peace of God, we may, with confidence, pray, “O Lord, put down this riot. I am tossed to and fro in my heart about my circumstances. I do not like them and I quarrel with You about them. Come, peace of God! Come and put down my murmuring! Come and calm my wicked, discontented spirit.” Or do I feel some discord in my spirit towards one whom I ought to love? I must cry, “Come, peace of God. Come, and arrest this bad temper of mine! Handcuff it. Take it off to prison. Give it hard labor and short commons! Bring it down till it is no longer able to rebel as it does. Come, peace of God, and help me in the struggles of my daily life, that I may not break out into anger, wrath, malice and all uncharitableness. Come, peace of God, put forth Your mighty power over my soul.” This is the great remedy for the discord within and the discords without—the grand cure for all distempers of the east wind and all besides. Yield yourself to the control of the blessed peace of God, for I find that the Greek word has that force—“Let the peace of God *umpire* in your hearts.”  
You know the umpire in the Greek games decided how the runners should run; how the wrestlers should wrestle and he ruled a contest to be, or not to be, according to the law of the festival. He said, perhaps, that such-and-such a blow in the fight was a foul blow, and if he said so, there was no questioning him—it was decided. He stood at the finish line when the runners came in and he declared a certain swift-footed racer to be the winner. No man ever questioned the dictate of the umpire! His voice ended all debate. He was the man who decided in the games and whose verdict was never to be disputed.  
Now, the peace of God is to do the same in our hearts. We ought to be resolved to judge all things by the peace of God. “What ought I to do in this case? Must I humble myself? I do not like it, but how ought I to act? Shall I yield?” Pride says, “Never! No, no! Play the man. Never give in!” But what does the peace of God say? It says, “Yield. Submit.” Christ says, “I say unto you, that you resist not evil: but whoever shall smite you on your right cheek, turn to him the other, also. And if any man will sue you at the Law, and take away your coat, let him have your cloak, also.” Christ decides that it will be good to be a sufferer rather than to take revenge. We ought to have the peace of God ruling in our hearts so as to let it decide our course and lead us to do that which is consistent with our own peace with God.  
I do not know how *you* find it, but I know that I cannot afford to be angry. It takes so much that is valuable out of me. I am sure it does. It does a man, physically, an immense mischief. To some men it is a dangerous thing to get excited, it even endangers their lives. But, spiritually, I believe that to get into a state of enmity towards *anybody* is one of the most grievous diseases which can befall a Christian! In such a case you cannot pray as you did. You cannot read some passages of Scripture as you did. You cannot look the Well-Beloved in the face, and say, “I am acting in a way that pleases You.” It is, therefore, a very serious thing for a Believer in the Lord Jesus Christ to break his own peace—serious to himself as well as to those that are round about him.  
I pray you, therefore, dear Friends, let the peace of God decide for you in all trials of temper, enduring of wrongs and questions which lead to debate and separation. Set Peace in the chariot and let it hold the reins, for anger will, like Phaeton of old, set the world on fire. Oh, Peace of God, rule me! Pray God that the power of this peace may be constantly upon you. If you lose your peace with God, you lose your power to judge under difficulties. You lose your power of self-control under provocations. You lose the best sovereign that ever held a scepter! I believe that if a man is walking with God in the Light of God and enjoying full fellowship with Heaven, he may go down into any meeting, however turbulent—into any society, however discordant the elements may be—and yet he will be wise to answer, wise to be silent, wise to do, or wise not to do—for the peace of God will keep him calm and quiet.  
Once let the mind be thoroughly disturbed and unhinged before the Lord—and you are weak as any other man and you will say that which you will have to unsay—and you will do that which you would wish to wipe out with your tears! When rest of soul is gone, hard things are spoken and hard things are done which would not consort with communion with the tender Lord. Let the peace of God always rule, or otherwise you will not always be safe. Especially let the peace of God rule your affections! Be satisfied that you love God and that your heart cleaves to God and does not follow after any other. Be at peace with God as to your heart and, when that is so, and the affections are dominated by conscious love to God, it is *then* that you fight the battles of life with comfort to yourself and with honor to the name of Him to whom you belong.  
**III.**Very briefly, I want, in the third place, to say, STRENGTHEN YOURSELF, dear Friends, BY GOD’S SPIRIT, WITH ARGUMENTS, in order that you may let the peace of God rule in your hearts and may be kept from any breach of that heavenly peace. Remember, you can only be happy in heart and healthy in spirit as long as you keep the peace of God. You are sure to become wretched and unhappy—you are sure to stumble, here and there, into faults—if that peace of God is gone. As you would be in the best possible condition for walking with God in joy while here, below, look to your peace. This is no mean argument—try to feel the force of it.  
And, next, only thus can the Church of God prosper. I am grieved when I receive members from other Churches who come because they say that they are weary of the incessant bickering and jealousies which have disturbed their rest. I am sure that there can be no blessing where there is no peace. A house divided against itself cannot stand. A Church disputing is a Church committing suicide! Many and many a Church has come to its death by bleeding inwardly through strife—otherwise it might have defied the whole world and Hell itself! It is generally the little Churches that squabble most—if they cannot excel in anything else, they certainly claim the first rank in quarrelling. A few Christian people get together to serve God and the devil comes in, at once, and sets them by the ears—they are good men and true—but Satan bewitches them so that they dispute about nothing at all.  
Whenever I have to settle a dispute, I always like to have some big, bad thing in it. This I can point out and we soon agree to set the matter right. When I cannot, with a microscopes on my eyes, find out what it is all about, I find that Brothers and Sisters are hardest to be reconciled. It is easier to shoot an owl than a gnat! Little differences rankle like tiny thorns and you cannot get them out of the flesh. Oh, that the Spirit of God would come upon the Churches and turn them into masses of fire! Then they would not fall to pieces through intestine strife! When souls are being won; when the Gospel is being enjoyed; when Christ is being glorified; when the Church is marching on, conquering and to conquer through the Divine power that is in her, then is there peace within her borders and her citizens are filled with the finest of the wheat! But once let the life of God run low and let the Spirit of God depart, then peace departs, too. Oh, may God save this Church and save all the Churches from missing this blessed peace! Let the peace of God rule in your heart, dear Brother, dear Sister, for the Church’s sake.  
Remember, next, that God cannot be glorified unless there is the peace of God in our hearts. My dear Friend, if you are always troubled and fretting and anxious, I do not see how you can glorify God to any large extent. Seek more faith, more trust, more confidence, more calm of mind and you will personally glorify God. I am sure a Christian man who always finds fault with everybody is of little service to the cause and kingdom of our Lord. He who, wherever he goes, acts like a carrion crow that soars aloft with no other design than finding out where a carcass may be, that he may light upon it—he, I say, is not a man after God’s own heart—and neither will he advance the Lord’s work among men! When you love your fellow Christians so that their faults are covered by your charity and you rather admire their excellences than publish their infirmities, then it is that God is glorified by you! A happy, peaceful people of whom men can say, “See how these Christians love one another”—these shine as lights in the world and the darkness feels their power!  
The passage from which our text is taken offers us other reasons. It says this—“To which you are also called.” You were called to the peace of God. My dear Brother, if you are not a peaceful man, you have not inherited your true calling. When the Lord called you out from the world, He called you to be a peacemaker. He called you on purpose, that the Spirit of peace might be shed abroad in your heart and that afterwards you might carry that peace with you into your own family and among all your neighbors and spread it everywhere. The Lord Jesus never called a man to be a maker of strife! If a Christian woman, as she calls herself, goes from house to house with tittle-tattle, she was *not* called by God to do so—of that I am certain!  
A man goes into his pulpit and preaches a personal sermon on purpose to empty out his own spleen—God did not call him to that, for God loves not firebrands! The man may have been sent as a messenger from other regions, but certainly not as an ambassador from Heaven, when he preaches gall and wormwood. Some seem, wherever they go, to make mischief as speedily as possible—their mission is contention, whereunto they certainly were not called of God! You who are the true heirs of Heaven are called to peace—seek peace and pursue it. Wherever you go, labor earnestly to make peace. If you see two boys fighting, make them stop. If you see two girls in a bad temper, try to make them happy with one another. If you see two people disagree in business, do not back one of them up, and cry, “Go to the law with him,” but plead for peace and mutual concession. “Blessed are the peacemakers.”  
Whatever you may be in a household, whether father or child, husband or wife, master or servant, son-in-law or mother-in-law, let your soul be seasoned and savored with that blessed word, “Peace.” There is always a war party in England—I fear the Jingo is no foreigner, but the genuine offspring of the British bulldog! An unconverted British is all for blood, fire and glory—and as the unconverted are the majority among us—we remain a fighting nation. Fighting—how we delight in it! Down with the Afghans, down with the Zulus! The Boers? Destroy them! We cannot get our fill of glory and honor unless we get knee deep in blood! The policy of peace is voted dishonorable and so we go from land to land till there is hardly a nation which has not been stained with blood by British hands. How fiercely these English talk—but it is not Christian talk! May the Lord teach us the language of peace.  
Be you at peace, “whereunto also you were called.” And then, notice next, “Called in one body.” There must, therefore, be peace among Christians because we are called in one body to peace. What would you think of my hand, if it should say, “I will have no peace with the eye. That prying eye looked sharply at me the other day and spied out a spot. I will put it out”? We shall not enjoy much prosperity if the members of the body thus disagree. Suppose my foot should say, “I am not going to carry that heavy body about. See what I have to suffer through it at times.” Suppose my knee should say, “I will not have it. I have been tortured quite enough with rheumatism—I will no longer carry that heavy fabric.” What will become of me if the members of my body thus fall to quarrelling? And what is to become of the Glory of Christ if His members live in contention? What is the Head to do if the members who make up His one mystical body have nothing to do but to be striving, one against the other? Oh, no! If you have any differences, end them tonight, I pray you, if you can, even though the east wind is so piercing! If you have unwittingly done anything that grieves others, try to remedy it. Or if others have grieved you, end the matter by sweet and swift forgiveness. Let it be all ended with the east wind! We are called in one body, therefore let us dwell in hearty peace and may God the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of peace, bring us into the peace of God and keep us there, for thereunto we are called in one body.  
**IV.**The last point upon which I shall speak is this—to keep yourselves right, OCCUPY YOUR MINDS HEALTHILY. “How?” you ask. The text says, “Be you thankful.” That is the way to keep up our peace with God! “Be thankful.” Do not complain, but bless His name for everything! Do not quarrel with Him, but be thankful. Say, “Shall we receive good at the hands of the Lord, and shall we not receive evil? The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away, and blessed be the name of the Lord.” That is the way to be at peace with Him—to be thankful at all times. Bless God for your mercies and for your miseries! Bless Him for your gains and for your losses! Bless Him for your enjoyments and pleasures, and also for your aches and pains! Bless Him for every hard thing that comes from Him, for there is as much love in the hard as in the soft—God is as kind when He uses the rod as when He gives a kiss. “Be you thankful!” Bless Him from morning to night and all through the night watches. What a mercy to be out of the hospital! What a mercy to have the use of one’s limbs and reasoning powers! What a mercy to be out of prison! What a mercy to be out of Hell! “He has not dealt with us after our sins.” Be thankful! Last Sunday morning, when I read this chapter in the great congregation, I tried to ring it out as loudly as ever I could, and I would like to ring it out as with a whole peal of bells now. Set them all ringing a marriagepeal, if you like— “Be you thankful! Be you thankful! Be you thankful!” Up, you murmuring! Up, you discontented! “Be you thankful.” Rouse yourselves, you sullen ones! You that think you have a heavier load to carry than is fair and say, like Cain, “My burden is greater than I can bear”—“Be you thankful!” All of you, young and old, “Be you thankful.” That is the way to keep up your pence with God and your peace with your fellow men! Well, but it does not mean only, “Be thankful to God,” but be you thankful to your fellow men.  
Too many receive all kinds of Christian kindness as a matter of course. They look upon the spontaneous kindness of their Brethren as a sort of right. Now, that the poor should be helped by Christian generosity is certainly according to Scripture—but this is an *obligation* not of debt but of *Grace*. Whatever is done in almsgiving and charity should be gratefully and heartily received. It is an unholy spirit which scarcely has the courtesy to say, “thank you.” Towards one another we ought to have a thankful spirit. How thankful the child ought to be to his mother and his father! What a happy home we should have if children recognized the deep debt of obligation that is really due to those who have nursed them and cared for them so long! How obliged, I think, the husband ought to be to his wife for all her tender kindnesses—those hundred unseen ministries of love! How grateful, I think, the wife should be to her husband, for all his labors and anxieties! She receives a thousand things from him which make life comfortable. If we live in mutual gratitude, feeling that we are, each one of us, indebted to all others, how merrily will the household wheels go round and what families of love we shall all gather around us! I, of all the people in the world, am most in debt to everybody—and I feel it deeply and truly. There is hardly a person that I look upon from this pulpit but I owe something to his or her Christian love. Everybody has been kind to me and I am not unmindful of it. When I have lain upon my bed, sick and ill, I have marveled at the kindness of you all! I wonder why you treat me so lovingly! In all holy work, whether it is the College or Orphanage, you have been my ready helpers and you still are. I cannot help saying, “God bless you.”  
Surely the wind is changing a point or two—we shall find it blowing from another quarter when we leave this Tabernacle! I feel intense gratitude in my soul towards the dear Brothers who surround me and the Sisters that work with me for Christ. You have often made me happy and cheered my spirit by the kind and generous way in which you have worked with me for the Lord, bearing with all my infirmities. And I believe that it is because I feel thankful that I feel peaceful and so remain the center of your unity. I am not inclined to quarrel with anybody—I would sooner run a mile than I would fight for half a minute! There is nobody in the world that I would like to contend with—my heart is full of good wishes to all men! It has been a sort of rule with me to measure a man before I fight him—if he is bigger than I am, I know he will beat me, so I decline battle! And if he is smaller and I can easily beat him, it would be cruel and cowardly to do so.  
Nobody in the world is worth contending against as to our temporal interests. Even the necessary law is troublesome and vexatious. Be you thankful, then, and if, with thankfulness to God and thankfulness to those around you, you can fill up the day, oh, how happy will the days be! In the family and in the business, God will be glorified, the Church will be sweetened and welded together—we shall see better times and shall no longer grumble at the east wind! May God bless you!

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**÷Col 3.16**

CHRIST’S INDWELLING WORD  
NO. 2679

A SERMON  
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S-DAY, JUNE 17, 1900.

***DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORD’S-DAY EVENING, APRIL 10, 1881.**

***“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with  
grace in your hearts to the Lord.”***Col 3:16***.***

THAT is a very beautiful name for Holy Scripture. I hardly remember to have met with it anywhere else—“Let *the word of Christ* dwell in you.” Remember, dear Friends, that Christ Himself is the Word of God, and also remember that the Scriptures are the word of the Word. They are *“the* word of Christ.” I think that they will be all the sweeter to you if you realize that they speak to you of Christ, that He is the sum and substance of them, that they direct you to Christ, in fact, as John says of His Gospel, that they were “written that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you might have life through His name.”

Remember, also, that the Scriptures do, in effect, come to us from Christ. Every promise of this blessed Book is a promise of Christ, “for all the promises of God in Him are yes, and in Him, Amen, unto the glory of God by us.” They all come to us through Christ, God speaks them to us through Him as the Mediator. Indeed, we may regard the whole of the Sacred Scriptures, from the beginning of Genesis to the end of Revelation, as being “the word of Christ.”

The text tells us, first, *how to treat the Scriptures.* “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly.” And, secondly, it tells us *how to profit by them.* “In all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.”

**I.**First, then, we are told here HOW TO TREAT THE SCRIPTURES— “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly.”  
In order that it may dwell in you, *it must first enter into you.* It is implied, in our text, that the Apostle says, “Let the word of Christ *enter* into you.” Then you must read it, or hear it, for, unless you do, you will not know what there is in it. Yet there must be something more than the mere hearing or reading of it, for some hear the Truth of God with one ear, but let it go away out of the other ear. And others are great readers, yet they seem to read only what is on the surface. The letter passes under their eyes, but the deep spiritual meaning never enters into their heart. If you read a portion of Scripture every day, I commend you for doing so. If you make a practice of reading right through the Bible in a stated period, I commend you still more. Some I know read the Bible through every year, in due course. This is well, but all this may be done and yet “the word of Christ” may never have entered into the reader!  
You know how children sometimes learn their lessons. I am afraid that, at a great many schools, there is no true instruction—the scholars have simply to repeat their lessons without ever getting at the sense and meaning of them. And, a week or two after, they have forgotten all that they were supposed to have learned! Do not let it be so with our knowledge of Scripture—let us not merely know it so as to be able to turn to its different chapters, or to be familiar with certain passages in it, or even to repeat all its words. This is but to let “the word of Christ” pass by your door, or look in at your window! Paul says, “Let it *dwell* in you.”  
So I say again that in order that it may dwell in you, it must first enter into you. You must really know the spiritual meaning of it. You must believe it, live upon it, drink it in—you must let it soak into your innermost being as the dew saturated the fleece of Gideon. It is not enough to have a Bible on the shelf—it is infinitely better to have its Truths stored up within your soul. It is a good thing to carry your Testament in your pocket—it is far better to carry its message in your heart. But mind that you let it get right into you!  
How differently some people read the Bible from the way in which they read any other book! I have seen a young woman sitting down, on board a steamboat, completely absorbed in a very suspicious looking book. I have passed behind her and passed before her, but she has not taken the slightest notice of me. Presently, I saw a tear brushed away from her eye—I knew that she was not reading the Bible—and it was my firm conviction that she was reading a novel. I have often noticed how such people let the novels get right into them, trash as they generally are—but when the most of people read the Bible, they appear to be anxious to get the unpleasant task finished and put away! In some cases they seem to think that they have performed a very proper action, but they have not been in the least affected by it, moved by it, stirred by it. Yet, if there is any book that can thrill the soul, it is the Bible! If we read it aright, we shall, as it were, lay our fingers among its wondrous harp strings and bring out from them matchless music such as no other instrument in the world could ever produce! There is no book so fitted or so suited to us as the Bible is. There is no book that knows us so well. There is no book that is so much at home with us. There is no book that has so much power over us if we will but give ourselves up to it! Yet, often, we only let it look in at our window, or knock at our door, instead of inviting it to enter our very heart and soul—and therefore we miss its power.  
Then, when it once gets into you, let it *remain there.* A person could not be said to dwell in a house even though he should enter into the most private part of it, if he only passed through it and went away. A man who dwells in a house abides, resides, remains, continues there. Oh, to have “the word of Christ” always dwelling inside of us—in the memory, never forgotten! In the heart, always loved! In the understanding, really grasped with all the powers and passions of the mind fully submitted to its control! I love those dear Christian people who do not need to refer to the printed page when you speak to them about the things of God, for they have the Truth in their hearts. They have a springing well within their souls at all times and they have only to hear a Scriptural theme started and, at once, they begin to speak of the things which they have looked upon and their hands have handled of the Word of Life, because it dwells in them.  
What is the good of merely external religion? I heard of some people who met together to pray about a certain matter, but they could not pray because the Bishop had not sent the form of prayer which they were to use on that occasion. I think that if they were believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, they might have managed to speak to God without the necessity of having a written or printed form to guide them. Yet there are many who fancy they cannot offer a proper prayer unless they have it in a book. And they cannot talk about the things of God, or they can say but very little about them because they have not “the word of Christ” dwelling within them. O dear Friends, let it be always in you, from morning to night, abiding as a constant visitor within your spirit—no, not merely as a visitor, let it dwell with you—  
***“No more a stranger or a guest,  
But like a child at home.”***  
Further, “let the word of Christ dwell in you” *so as to occupy your whole being.*If it dwells within you, let it take such entire *possession*of your being that it shall fill you. To push the truth of Christ up into a corner of your nature—to fill the major part of your being with other knowledge and other thought—is a poor way to treat “the word of Christ.” It deserves the fullest attention of the best faculties that any man possesses. The Truth of God revealed by the Holy Spirit is so sublime that its poetry outsoars the eagle wings even of a Milton. It is a deep so profound that the plumb line of Sir Isaac Newton could never find the bottom of it. The greatest minds have been delighted to yield their highest faculties to its wondrous Truths. Dear young Friends, you who have only lately put on Christ, I beseech you not to let other books stand on the front shelf and the Bible lie behind. Do not, for the most part, read those other books and only read small portions of Scripture now and then—let it always have the chief place. The most excellent of all sciences is the science of Christ Crucified and the Bible is the textbook for all who would learn it! If other forms of knowledge are useful, they are like the planets—but the knowledge of God as revealed in Christ Jesus is as the sun. Let this always be the center of your system of knowledge and let all the rest that you know move in subordination and subjection to that first and best form of knowledge.  
If I may know myself, and know my Savior—if I may know my sin and the Atonement by which it is put away—if I may know my way through this life and my way into the eternal life above, I will be content if I know but little else. Gladly would I intermeddle with all knowledge and, though “much study is a weariness of the flesh,” yet would I find a pleasure in such weariness if I only knew even as much as Solomon knew. But it would be vanity of vanities, and altogether vanity, if you and I were as wise as Solomon, and yet did not know the Truth of God. Therefore, “let the word of Christ dwell in you” so as to occupy the whole of your being! Let it be the resident, the occupant, the master and ruler of your entire nature!  
Once more. “Let the word of Christ dwell in you.” That is, *let it be your most familiar friend.* We know the people who live in our home, but we do not really know other people. When someone asked Mr. Whitefield, “What do you think of Mr. So-and-So’s character?” He answered, “I cannot say, for I never lived with him.” Ah, that is the true test! It is living with people that lets you know what they are. In like manner, if you will live with “the word of Christ,” especially if you will let it dwell in you and abide with you as a constant friend, you will get to know it better, and the better you know it, the more you will love it. Ninety-nine times out of a hundred, if you meet with a man who finds fault with the Bible, you may be certain that he never read it. If he would but read it in the right spirit, he would be of another opinion. And if you find a professing Christian indifferent to his Bible, you may be sure that the very dust upon its cover will rise up in judgment against him! The Bible reader is always the Bible lover, and the Bible searcher is the man who searches it more and more. Various pursuits have a measure of fascination about them, but the study of God’s Word is fascinating to the highest degree. Jerome said, when he was pondering a certain text, “I adore the Infinity of Holy Scripture.” I have often felt that I could say the same. The Bible is a book that has no bounds to it. Its thoughts are not as men’s thoughts, a multitude of which may go to make up half an ounce! Any one of the thoughts of God can outweigh all the thoughts of men. This Book is not a book of pence, or a book of silver, or even a book of gold, but a book whose every leaf is of untold value! He shall be enriched, indeed, who lets “the word of Christ” richly dwell in him.  
My dear Friends, I should like you to so read the Bible that everybody in the Bible should seem to be a friend of yours. I should like you to feel as if you had talked with Abraham and conversed with David. I can truly say that there is hardly anybody in the world that I know so well as I know David. In making*The Treasury of David,* I have labored, year after year, in that rich field of Inspiration, the Book of Psalms, till I assure you that David and I are quite familiar friends. And I think I know more about him than about any man I ever saw in my life. I seem to know the ins and outs of his constitution and experience, his grievous faults and the graces of his spirit. I want you to be on just such intimate terms with somebody or other in the Bible—John, if you like, or Mary. Sit at Jesus’ feet with her. Or Martha—it will not hurt you to make the acquaintance of Martha and do a great deal of serving, though I do not want you to get cumbered with it. But do find your choicest friends in the Scripture. Take the whole company of Bible saints home to your heart, let them live inside your soul. Let old Noah come in with his ark, if he likes, and let Daniel come in with his lions’ den, if he pleases—and all the rest of the godly men and women of the olden time—take them all into your very nature and be on familiar terms with them! But, most of all, be specially intimate with Him of whom they all speak, namely, Jesus Christ your blessed Lord and Master!  
As for the doctrines revealed in the Bible, you should have them at your fingertips. The great Truths of the Word of God should be as familiar to you as a scholar makes his much-loved classics to be, or as the mathematician makes his *plus* and *minus,* his *a*and his *x*, familiar to him from hour to hour. So should you prize “the word of Christ.” “Let it dwell in you richly in all wisdom.”  
**II.**But now, secondly, I am to tell you How TO PROFIT BY THE WORD OF CHRIST, if we once get it to dwell in us.  
First, *seek to profit by it yourself.*“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom.” Let it make you wise. The man who studies his Bible well, will become a wise man. If God the Holy Spirit teaches him, I believe that he will become a wise man even in something more than a spiritual sense. Every Scot child used to be taught the Book of Proverbs—it was one of the class books of Scot schools—and I have heard it said that this particular form of instruction has largely helped to make our Scot friends so sharp. And I should not wonder if that is the case. They certainly are as wise a race of people as we are likely to meet with. I wish our Irish friends would also study the Book of Proverbs. If it would make them as cool as it has made our Scot friends, it might improve them without taking away any of their natural humor and warmth of heart. I wish that English people, also,

would read more of the Bible. I can truly say that when I have met with men in whom “the word of Christ” has dwelt richly, I have often found them very shrewd even about common-place things.  
I remember a man, in a certain workshop, making a great many very rude remarks and, at last, he was silenced by one of the workmen who said to him, “I think, Sir, you are referred to in the 20th Chapter of Proverbs.” He did not explain his meaning, but the man who was thus addressed went home and when he looked up the chapter, he found these words in the third verse, “Every fool will be meddling.” It was an admirable rebuke for him and all the better because he had an hour or two before he knew exactly what it was. And when he reached his home and was at leisure to think, he could look up the passage and see how appropriate it was to his case. If you will take the Word of God for your guide, even in domestic and business matters, you will often manifest a shrewdness which, perhaps, may not be natural to you, but which will come to you through “the word of Christ” dwelling in you richly in all wisdom. That, however, is only a small part of the profit which it will bring to you.  
Do you want wisdom with which to master yourself? “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly.” Do you need something to cheer a naturally sinking spirit? “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly.” Do you wish for that which will calm an angry mind, a temper all too apt to be suddenly excited? “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly.” Are you in a calling where you are sorely tempted and do you long to know how to be kept from falling into sin? “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly.” Is your position a very difficult one? Are you scarcely able to balance the claims of different relationships? “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly.” Are you expecting to have a time of intense strain and trial such as you have never experienced before? Prepare yourself for it by letting “the word of Christ dwell in you richly.” It shall give you all manner of wisdom by which you shall be able to baffle even the subtlety of the old serpent himself! We used to have in many of our churches a number of solid, substantial men—“men that had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do”—and an equal proportion of deeplytaught, godly matrons, true mothers in Israel. Well, those stalwart Christians were brought up on such spiritual meat as I have been commending to you. They were diligent students of the Word of God and if we are to have a succession of such men and women, they can only be qualified by going to the University of Scripture and taking their degree by permitting “the word of Christ” to dwell in them richly!  
The next way of using “the word of Christ” to profit is to *seek to profit others by it.* “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.” We are to know the Truth of God so as to be able to teach and admonish one another.  
First, we are to seek the profit of our fellows by teaching one another. No one man can ever teach such a vast congregation as I have, so as to give the separate instruction that is needed by each one. This work must be done by the members of the Church themselves. “The word of Christ” must dwell in you and then you must become a Mutual Instruction Society. Every Christian should exercise the office of the pastorate according to his ability and his opportunity. In such a Church as this, every one of the members must look well not only to his own spiritual affairs, but also to the well-being of others. What sweet and gracious instructions the older ones among you can give if you tell your experience! It is very interesting to any of us to hear it, but how helpful it is to the beginners in the Divine life!  
And if, in addition to relating your experience, you talk of the Scriptures that have been opened up to you—the promises that have been fulfilled to you—the passages in the Bible that have been applied to your heart by the Holy Spirit who Inspired them—you will greatly instruct your fellow Christians. A dear Brother in the Lord said to me, the other day, “I do not often meet, now, with those people who talk about the things of God to one another. Even when I meet with Christians, their conversation is generally concerning a meeting or a Conference that is going to be held, or something that is to be done—we do not seem to talk much about Jesus Christ, Himself, and about experimental Truth, and about the sorrows and the joys of God’s people.” I wish we did talk more of such things. It is well to be busy for the Lord, but it is still better to be in communion with Him. You who are deeply taught in the Scriptures should try to teach others for their profit.  
One way of teaching one another is mentioned in the text—“in Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs.” A learned divine, a little while ago, discovered that no hymn ought to be sung unless it was distinctly directed and addressed to God and was intended to be full of praise throughout. Well, we do have some remarkably wise men nowadays—at least, in their own estimation—but it appears that the Apostle Paul thought that “Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs” were to be used for *instruction and admonition* as well as for the praises of God! And, to my mind, there is no teaching that is likely to be more useful than that which is accompanied by the right kind of singing! When I am preaching, I often find a verse of a hymn the very best thing I can quote—and I have not the shadow of a doubt that, frequently, a verse of sacred poetry has struck a man who has been altogether missed by the rest of the sermon. Think how compactly the Truth of God can be taught by means of “Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs,” and how likely it is to be remembered when the very measure and rhyme and rhythm help the memory to treasure up the message! I shall never forgot what repentance is while I can say— ***“Repentance is to leave  
The sins I loved before,  
And show that I in earnest grieve  
By doing so no more.”***  
It is well to have the Truth of God put into the form of a verse that the memory may be able to lay hold of it, and to retain it. Do try, dear Friends, to get so full of “the word of Christ” in all forms of it, that you may run with it. You know, it cannot come *out* of you if it is not first *in* you. If you do not get “the word of Christ” into you, you will not be instructive in your general conversation.  
In addition to instruction, there is to be admonition. That is a very difficult thing to administer wisely. I have known a Brother try to admonish another and I have felt that he would have done better if he had left the task alone, for he has only caused irritation and resentment. There is a gracious way of admonishing which cannot be too frequently practiced. When I first began to preach, I am afraid that I used to say a great many strange things—which, of course, I do not do now—but having, on a certain occasion, said something rather striking and, perhaps, not quite wise, there was an excellent Christian man who wanted to set me right. He did not come and thrust himself upon me in a very solemn manner and provoke me to scoff at him and his reproof. Neither did he say anything so as to irritate me, but, finding my Bible lying about, he stuck a pin into it at the words, “Sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you.” When I was at home, I looked at that pin, and I looked at that text, and I said to myself, “Whose house was I in last?” When I remembered, I said, “That is the man who stuck that pin in there, depend upon it.” I never felt vexed with him! On the contrary, I was very grateful and I always loved and admired him. And I thought, “Now, if he had spoken to me about what I had said, it is possible that he might have stuck the pin into me where I should not have liked it—but as he only stuck it into my Bible, it did not irritate me.” You see, also, that I gratefully remember the rebuke even to this day.  
Sometimes the best way to give an admonition will be by singing a Psalm or a hymn. The clerks in the old Meeting Houses, when they used to be allowed to choose the hymns, often took away much of the evil effect of an erroneous sermon by their wise selection of the closing verses. Now and then, if you are discreet, you can quote an appropriate verse— as people say, “accidentally on purpose”—and you can bring in a portion of a Psalm that shall exactly say for you what you might have said in a blundering way! And the dear Brother who has done wrong will accept the rebuke without being enraged by it. When you attempt to snuff the candle, do not put it out by your clumsiness, but take the golden snuffers—in the form of a verse of a Psalm, or a hymn, or a spiritual song— and even while you sing it, you will be administering the admonition and the instruction which it is your duty to give.  
I wish to put this matter so that it shall be remembered by you, and I want especially to press it home upon you, dear Friends, members of this Church of more than 5,000 souls. What can we do unless you all look after one another? And how shall we ever get on unless, in addition to preaching, there shall be continual mutual instruction going on, wise and joyful and cheerful—and accepted in a kind, loving and generous spirit? God fill you with “the word of Christ,” that you may thus teach and admonish one another!  
But, lastly, “the word of Christ,” when it dwells in us, is *to profit us in our relation to God Himself,* for, after all, the main objective of our singing—the principal purpose of our teaching and admonishing—must be the glory of God! “Singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.” Oh, may “the word of Christ dwell in us” so richly that you shall bless God from morning to night! May you so overflow with holy thought and sacred knowledge that your whole being shall be a hymn of praise to the Most High and your entire existence shall be a glorious hallelujah! I do not think that we, any of us, sufficiently value the Divine ordinance of praise. Neither do I think that we ever shall, till “the word of Christ” has taken full possession of our souls.  
You have been upstairs to pray, you say, and you have got no comfort from the exercise. Let me suggest that the next time you go upstairs, you sing a Psalm. “Oh, I have been up and down,” says one, “trying to awaken myself into earnestness of supplication.” May I also propose to you that you do not try that method again for a while, *but begin to praise God*. How many times a day do you praise Him? I think you do get alone to pray and you would be ashamed if you did not, once, twice, or three or even more times in the day—but how often do you praise God? Now, you know that you will not pray in Heaven—there it will be all praise*.*Then do not neglect that necessary part of your education which is to “begin the music here.” Start at once praising the Lord! Many of our doubts and fears would fly away if we praised God more. And many of our trials and troubles would altogether vanish if we began to *sing of our mercies*. Oftentimes, depression of spirit that will not yield to a whole night of wrestling, would yield to ten minutes of thanksgiving before God! Praying is the stalk of the wheat, but praise is the very ear of it. Praying is the leaf of the rose, but praise is the rose itself, redolent with the richest perfume.  
Praise God, then, “in Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs,” and if you say you do not know how to do it, then “let the word of Christ dwell in you richly.” It is a praise-begetting thing! Out of every Book of Scripture will stream praises unto Jehovah. Out of every promise will spring a sonnet. Out of every Divine Truth enjoyed and lived upon will rise a spiritual song. The whole Revelation of God is the condensed essence of praise—you have only to give it a fitting opportunity, by setting it simmering on the fire of a graceful heart—and you shall find a sweet cloud of holy incense rising from it, acceptable to the Most High. Therefore, Beloved, be much with your Bibles and let your Bibles be much with you— for your own profit, for the profit of others and for the glory of God! So be it, for Christ’s sake! Amen.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:**Col 3:1-17***.***

**Verse 1** ***.****If you then are risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sits at the right hand of God.* Your Lord and Master has gone up to Heaven. You profess that He represents you and that you have gone up there in Him and with Him. Then do not seek the things that are down here below, the things of earth—but live where your life has gone. Where your treasure is, there let your heart be also. “Seek those things which are above.”

**2, 3** ***.****Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For you are dead.* You profess to be dead to the world. Is that profession false? You have observed that Scriptural ordinance in which you profess to be buried with Christ—was that observance only an empty form? If there was any truth in your profession, “You are dead”—

**3** ***.****And your life is laid with Christ in God.* You have a new life now—it is up yonder, “where Christ sits at the right hand of God.” Do you not feel drawings upward? Are there no longings after the high and heavenly estate where Jesus is? Come, Beloved, let your soul break loose for a while and, like a lark, having found its liberty ascends with joyous wing, singing as it rises till it is out of mortal sight, so let it be with you!

**4.***When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall you also appear with Him in Glory.* You are hidden now, your life is veiled in Him, but, at His Second Coming He shall shine forth in all His Glory and “then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.” Beloved, seek no greatness here! Ask not for any exaltation of yourself among the sons of men, but wait for your true manifestation with Christ in Glory!

**5** ***.****Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry.* Kill all these evil things! Do not let them live in you for a single moment. The command applies not only to the grosser actions which are summed up under the head of fornication and uncleanness, but to all that leads to those foul sins. Not only to the fire, but also to the sparks, such as “inordinate affection,” a sort of softness which is seen in some persons, men and women, too, and which often leads to something far worse—and “evil concupiscence,” the first desires towards that which is unchaste. God give us Divine Grace to kill these loathsome things at once, for if thoughts of evil are indulged, they soon become*acts* of evil, and then who knows how far we may go in the way of unholiness?

Sin, if allowed to grow in the heart, will soon take gigantic strides and come out in the life. Depend upon it, whenever a professing Christian goes into overt sin of the kind mentioned here, he does not do it all of a sudden. The evil has long been festering and fomenting within his heart, or it would not have manifested itself thus. Oh, if he had only watched and destroyed the thief before he broke into the house, what a mercy it would have been! You notice that covetousness is put down with the most filthy sins and it is described as idolatry. The desire to possess the goods that belong to others—the lust to get gain at any price—this is idolatry.

**6, 7.***For which things’ sake the wrath of God comes on the children of disobedience: in which you also walked some time, when you lived in them.* This was true of the Colossians and it was true of almost all those to whom Paul wrote, for these gross evils were scarcely regarded as sins in his time, so polluted had the nations become. I hope that in the case of many now living, they have been preserved by Christian training from having walked even for a time in such sins.

**8** ***.****But now you also put off all these.*Put them all off, like old clothes that are never to be worn again. “Put off all these”—  
**8.***Anger.*It is hard work for some to pull that garment off, for it fits them so tightly. This burning coat of wrath will not readily come off, but the Apostle’s command is, “Put it off! Put it off!” It does not become a Christian to be an angry man.  
**8.***Wrath, malice.*Christ will not live in a heart that harbors malice.  
**8.***Blasphemy.* Thank God that if we ever wore that robe, we pulled it off long ago.  
**8.***Filthy communication out of your mouth.*All talking that is of a dubious character must go. Anything which savors of corruption and defilement must be put away from every Christian.  
**9.***Lie not one to another.*In Paul’s day, lying was thought to be a virtue unless the liar happened to be exposed. In that case it was considered wrong. But to lie through thick and thin, and to lie so dexterously as to deceive, was looked upon by an Oriental as an accomplishment of which he might be proud. So the Apostle might well write, “Lie not one to another”—  
**9, 10.***Seeing that you have put off the old man with his deeds; and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him.* There is nothing false or untrue in God. God is true and in Him is no falsehood at all. And if you and I have really been renewed, as we profess to have been, we shall hate the very semblance of a lie and our word will be as good as our bond.  
**11.***Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all.*Whenever you hear certain very wise Brothers and Sisters say, “Suchand-such a promise in the Bible is for Israel, not for the Gentiles,” do not be misled in the least by their assertion! Just quote this text to them— “There is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all.” These distinctions all vanish when once we come to Christ! We are one in Him and every promise to Believers is good to all who are in Christ Jesus, for “Christ is all, and in all.”  
**12.***Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, hearts of mercies, kindness.* Be ready to feel for others. Be very considerate of their needs. Look at others as if they were your kith and kin. If you and they are in Christ, they are indeed your kin, so put on kinned-ness, or, “kindness”—  
**12.***Humbleness of mind.*Do not try to be a big man. He who thinks himself big has not yet learned the true spirit of Christianity. Especially towards those who are sorrowful and sad, be pitiful, be kind, be humble.  
**12*.****Meekness.*If others try to provoke you, do not be provoked by them, but be gentle and meek.  
***12.****Long-suffering.*Continue to put up with others, remembering the Lord’s long-suffering with you.  
**13.***Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man has a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do you.* Hear this, Beloved, I pray you! Especially those of you who have hot tempers and have fallen out with one another. “Let not the sun go down upon your wrath.” Remember how much Christ has forgiven you and show a forbearing and forgiving spirit to others.  
**14.***And above all these things put on charity.*Or, rather, “love”—  
**14.***Which is the bond of perfectness.* The perfect bond, the belt that goes round and keeps every other garment of virtue in its place.  
**15.***And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you are called in one body.*Do not fall out with one another. You are called to peace, for you are called in one body. Does one hand in the body fight with the other hand? Does the foot contend with the eye? Of course not, for they are in one body. So are you in one body with all your fellow Christians, therefore lay aside all strife. I deeply deplore when I see Christians—and especially eminent Christians—contending with one another about minor matters of small account. Surely, almost anything ought to be borne before there should be public strife among members of the one body! God grant that such a state of things may speedily come to an end wherever it has existed! We have enough to do to “earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints,” without contending for our own dignity or honor.  
**15.***And be you thankful.*That is a nice little text, “Be you thankful.” When you are grumbling at your plain food, put this as a sandwich between your bread and butter, “Be you thankful.” When you are complaining of the East wind, just try if you cannot spell this little sentence, “Be you thankful.” When you are murmuring about those sharp pains and that long sickness, this is the kind of tune for the little bird to whistle at your window, “Be you thankful.” We have all much for which we ought to be thankful, however sad we may think our lot to be. Look on the bright side, rejoice in God! “Be you thankful.”  
**16, 17.***Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him.*Do not draw any line of demarcation, and say, “So far is secular and so far is religious.” Let your *whole life be religious—* and if there is anything proposed to you in which you cannot glorify God—do not touch it! “Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him.” If any of you go to the theater, can you go there in the name of the Lord Jesus? Why, you would not dare to cross the threshold with such blasphemy in your soul! And when you go to any place of doubtful amusement, can you go there giving thanks to God and the Father by Jesus Christ? Can you thank the Lord that you are permitted to go and pray for Divine blessing when you go and when you leave? A lady once said to a Christian minister, “The pleasures of going to the play are very great. There is the pleasure of thinking of it beforehand, the enjoyment of it at the time, and then the pleasure of thinking of it afterwards.” “Yes, Madam,” said the good man, “and there is one other pleasure which you seem to have forgotten—that is the pleasure of thinking of it on your dying bed. I would like you to remember that.”  
Let me read this verse again. “Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus.” If you cannot do it in the name of the Lord Jesus, do not do it at all if you are a Christian! And even if you are not a Christian, you will be accountable to God, by-and-by, for all that you do.

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**METHOD AND MUSIC, OR THE ART OF HOLY AND HAPPY LIVING.**

**NO. 913**

**DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, JANUARY 30TH, 1870,***BY C. H. SPURGEON,***AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON. *“And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.” —*** [Col 3:17](tw://bible.*?id=51.3.17|_AUTODETECT_|)***.***

IT is always an advantage to have the laws of a kingdom as concise as possible. No one will ever be able to tell how much of litigation and consequent calamity has been caused in this country by the confused condition of our laws. When Napoleon issued his celebrated “Code Napoleon,” which is an admirable summary of French law, he conferred upon the empire one of the greatest boons, and proved himself a wise ruler. We want law to be put into such a form that it can be understood, and that its application to divers cases can be discovered at once. In the great moral government of God we have no room to complain in this matter; the precepts of holiness are few and comprehensive. First of all, the whole of morality was summed up in ten commands, and written upon two tables, then, as if this were not concise enough, we have the whole law summarised in two commands, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thy neighbor as thyself;” and even this is brought into shorter compass still, for that one word “love” is the essence of all divine law. We, as Christians, find in the text an instance of the terseness, brevity, and clearness of divine precepts. We have here a law applicable to every believer — to every action, word, and thought, in every place, under all circumstances; and yet this comprehensive command is expressed in very few words. It is a great advantage to the mechanic to be able to carry with him in a small compass his square or rule, by which he can adjust his materials, discover his errors, design correctly, and estimate his work when finished. Without such a rule, he would be quite at a loss; with it he is ready for work. We have before us a compendious rule of life, a standard of morals, a guide to holiness, which we may carry in our memories without the slightest difficulty; and which, if we have but the will to use it, will be found never to fail us on any occasion. As the mariner’s compass or the pole-star to the mariner, so may the text be to us. Here is an infallible directory as to the way of holiness; a judge whose decisions in the matter of righteousness and truth none need distrust. Read the text over, and then I shall ask you to observe the points in it. “Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.” Observe, first, holy walking described; in the second part of the verse note holy music prescribed; and to enforce the whole text bear with me patiently till we close with the third head, which will be holy motive inscribed — inscribed, I trust, upon all our hearts.

**I. HOLY WALKING DESCRIBED. “Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all**

in the name of the Lord Jesus.”

This rule is not applicable to every person here present; it can only be practiced by the regenerate. You must be in Christ before you can do anything in Christ’s name. Until your nature is renewed, until you have submitted yourselves unto the righteousness of Christ, until Christ is formed in you the hope of glory, you are not capable of walking after this high and hallowed fashion. “Ye must be born again.” The precept demanding your immediate attention is not the precept of this text but another; the words of Peter, in the Acts of the Apostles, are for you, “Repent, and be baptised every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost;” or this, “Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.” You must begin at the beginning. It will but mislead you if I exhort you to walk as believers before you have received the inner life. The root must be changed before the fruit can be bettered. You need a radical change, my unconverted hearer, and you must have it or perish everlastingly. Do not imagine that any imitation of Christian manners will save you: do not conceive that hanging upon your lifeless branches the semblance of fruits will transform you into a tree of righteousness, the planting of the Lord. Oh! no, the sap within you must be changed, the life of God must be infused into your soul, you must be made one with Christ, or you cannot serve him. This precept, belongs, therefore, to none of you who have not believed in Christ Jesus, but it belongs to all of you, without exception, who are named by the name of Jesus Christ in truth and sincerity; to all of you who have submitted yourselves to his government, and are trusting in him for salvation. You will listen, I trust, and give earnest heed to this message from your Beloved.

What then meaneth this, that we are to do everything both in word and deed in the name of the Lord Jesus? Answer: there are six points in which this precept requires reverent care. First, do all through the office and name of Christ as Mediator. You as a Christian are bound to offer daily praise; you should often lift up your heart in grateful songs and psalms to God, but see to it that you do all this work of praise in the name of the Lord Jesus. No praise of yours can be sweet with God except it be presented through your great High Priest. Bring therefore your gift of thankfulness to this altar which sanctifieth the giver and the gift, and ever bless God through Jesus Christ. You are also to abound in prayer; it is your vital breath. You cannot flourish as a Christian unless you constantly draw near to God in supplication, but your supplications must always be presented through the name of Jesus Christ. His name gives prevalence to prayer; it is not so much your earnestness or sincerity, as his precious blood, that, speaks in the ears of God and intercedes for you. Pray ever then with your eye upon the finished propitiation and the living Intercessor; ever plead the merit of Immanuel, and heaven’s gate shall open to you. In addition to your prayers and praises, you are bound to serve him according to the abilities entrusted to you in teaching the ignorant the way of salvation, in bringing in the unconverted, and in edifying the saints; but remember that your service to God in these respects can only be acceptable as you present it through the name of Jesus Christ. The hand of the Crucified One must offer for you the sweet cane which you have bought with money, and the fat of all your sacrifices. If you could give to God all the wealth that you possess, all the time of your mortal existence, all the talents with which you have been endowed, if you could do this henceforth without a failure, yet if you did not present the offering through Jesus Christ it would be as though you had done nothing; your burnt offerings and whole burnt offerings would have no acceptance with Jehovah, for your sinful nature pollutes them all. How necessary it is then that we should often pause in our holy work, and say, “I am doing this for God, but am I presenting it in the appointed way? If I see aught of merit in what I am doing I am acting contrary to the gospel rule, and I shall be rejected. I must bring all my work to the High Priest of my profession and offer it through him.”

***Th’ iniquity of all our holy things  
Is cleansed by his blood, which covers all,  
And adds a rich perfume divinely sweet,  
Winning acceptance at the throne of God  
For broken prayers, and faulty songs, and e’en For service marr’d with sad infirmities.***

Take heed, dear hearer, that thou see the blood sprinkled on thy service for God. Almost all things under the law were sanctified by blood, but all things under the gospel, without exception, must be thus made sweet to God. The atoning sacrifice, the prevalent intercession of the one appointed Mediator, Christ Jesus, must be constantly before our minds in all that we attempt to do for our Lord God. Let us never forget this lest we fail utterly.

A second meaning of this precept is, “Do all under the authority of the Lord Jesus as your King.” Say of such-and-such a doubtful or evil action, “This I cannot do; I could not feel that I was authorised to do it by any precept or example of my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. This I cannot do, for I should be stepping aside from the allegiance which I owe to him; therefore this I will not do, be the consequences what they may of loss or of suffering. I am not authorised by Christ to follow this course, neither will I, come fair, come foul.” On the other hand, when the act is allowed in Scripture, and only forbidden by the traditions of men, you may safely say, “This I feel that I may do. I see my Master has laid down no restriction, therefore I will submit to no human tradition or regulation. The commands which will — worship would inflict upon me I cast to the wind, for superfluities of pretended holiness are but superfluities of naughtiness.” When positive duty is concerned, your language will be, “This action I find that I must do, for I see an express command for it; therefore it shall be done; be it difficult, it shall be achieved; be it impossible, I will wait on him who enableth faith to remove mountains.” O that every Christian were altogether and evermore obedient to heavenly rule. As the planet revolves undeviatingly in its orbit, because with the law imposed upon it there has come forth a constraining and impelling force, so may we also pursue our course of duty, because we have not only heard the divine precept, but feel the sacred energy of the Holy Spirit leading us in the prescribed path. Brethren, how safe we feel, and bow happy in our consciences, if we are certain that we have the authority of the Great King for all our actions! The business of a Christian upon earth is not an independent one; he is not acting on his own account, but he is a steward for Christ. What if I compare him to a commission agent who is sent abroad by his firm with full powers from his employer to transact business for the house which he represents? He is not to trade for himself, but he agrees to do all in the name of the firm which commissions him. He receives his instructions, and all he has to do is to carry them out, his whole time and talent being by express agreement at the absolute disposal of his employers. Now, if this man shall lend himself to an opposition firm, or trade on his own account, he is not true to his engagements, and he has to bear the responsibility of his acts; but so long as lie acts for his firm, and does his best, his course is an easy and safe one. If be follows the instructions of his principals he is eased of all responsibility. Should his trade be profitable or otherwise, he need not be vexed with anxieties, provided he has diligently followed the commands received from home. His acts are authorised from headquarters, and they are, therefore, safe for him; he falls back on his principals who gave him the commands, and in whose name he acted. Now if we serve ourselves or the world, we must take the consequences of our unfaithfulness, but if we honestly serve the Lord all is clear. When a Christian can say concerning any course of conduct, “I am bidden to do this by Christ Jesus my Lord, I can find chapter and verse to authorise my acts;” when he can feel that he is working for Christ, and not for himself, with a single eye to the glory of God, and not with sinister aims and selfish motives, then he treads as on a rock, and defies the censures of his enemies. Let us, then, take good heed to our Lord’s words, and walk carefully in his commands, for then his authority protects us, and every tongue that rises against us in judgment we shall condemn.

This rule of acting under the authority of Christ is applicable in an emphatic sense to those who are called to special service in the kingdom of Christ. Every man is called to do all the good he can, but some men are set apart to labor in peculiar departments of Christian work, and these should be doubly careful to do all in their Master’s name. If a man were sinking through the rotten ice, any one of us would be authorised to do all we could to save him, but the iceman, who is appointed on purpose that he may save life, has a peculiar authority for anything that he takes upon himself to do in the way of rescuing the drowning, for he has the name of the Royal Humane Society at his back. If a ship were stranded and breaking up, and the crew were ready to perish, we are all of us authorised to do all we can to save the shipwrecked, but the men who belongs to the lifeboat’s appointed crew have a right to come to the fore and take the oars and put out to sea. They are authorised to lead the way in daring and danger. So, my brethren, those of you who have felt the divine call within you, the sacred impulse which compels you to devote yourself to the salvation of your fellow men, you may do it boldly and without apology. Your authority is from Christ, for the Holy Spirit has set you apart for the work. Let no man hinder or dispirit you. Press forward to the front rank in self-denying labor. Call it not impertinence, O ye carping critics, it is but holy courage which brings earliest hearts to the fore. Push to the very front, ye men of God, filled with daring and self-sacrifice, for if others should impute your zeal to evil motives, the Lord who reads the heart understands you, and having given you a commission he will not fail to vindicate his faithful servants.

A third sense of the text is important. We should do all under the sanction of the Lord Jesus as our exemplar. It is an admirable course for us all to pursue, if when we find ourselves in circumstances of perplexity we ask ourselves the question, “What would Jesus Christ have done if he were in my circumstances?” The answer to that question is the solution of your difficulty. Whatever he would have done it will be safe enough for you to do. It is certain that he would not have been unbelieving; equally certain that he would not have done a wrong thing to deliver himself; we are also sure that he would not have been impatient, rebellious, or despairing, nor would he have grown wrathful or morose. Well then, I know what I must not be, it may be possible to learn my positive as well as my negative behavior from the same guide. I shall be able to discover by turning over the pages of the evangelists some portion of the Savior’s life very like my own; what he was in that situation I must ask grace that I may be, and I shall certainly be led in the path of wisdom. The royal rule for a Christian is not what is fashionable, for we are not to be conformed to this world; not what is gainful, for the pursuit of gain would lead us to run greedily in the way of Balaam for reward; not that which is generally prescribed in society, for full often the prescriptions of society are antagonistic to the teachings of Christ; not even the conduct of professors, for too many even among them walk as Paul tells us even weeping, as the enemies of the cross of Christ. Alas! my brethren, the current holiness of the church falls far below the scriptural standard; neither are the common rules of action among professors such as we could safely follow. A safe example is to be found nowhere but in the life of Jesus Christ himself; even the holiest of men are only to be followed so far as they follow Christ, but no further. My brethren, how calm will your hearts be, how serenely will you face your afflictions if you can feel, “I have done nothing but what my Master did before me; I have sought to tread in the footprints of his pilgrimage!” Why, you must be safe, you must be accepted if you do as Jesus did; for never can Christ’s example lead a simple soul astray.

***‘Tis always safe for souls to follow on  
Where Christ their holy Shepherd leads the way.***

Furthermore, as we are to do all through the office of Christ as Mediator, within the authority of Christ as King, under the sanction of Christ as Exemplar, so we should do everything to the glory of the Lord Jesus as our Lord and God. When the Spanish mariners were traversing the seas upon voyages of discovery, they never touched upon new land, whether an insignificant island or a part of the main continent, without at once setting up the standard of Ferdinand and Isabella, and taking possession of the soil in the name of their Catholic Majesties of Spain. Wherever the Christian goes, his first thought should be to take possession of all hearts in the name of the Lord Jesus, consecrating all opportunities and influences to the Redeemer’s service. Such common things as eating and drinking become by the giving of devout thanks consecrated to Christ’s name. There is no action which is lawful, however common-place it maybe but may be sanctified by the word of God and prayer. If the intense desire of our spirit shall be that we may glorify God as long as we are in this body, we shall find ways and means of accomplishing our object, and the Holy Spirit will help our infirmities. My dear brethren, our soul’s desires should be always true to Christ, most chastely faithful so as not to tolerate any carnal motive or self-seeking. How easily do we give place to self-glorification! How almost insensibly do we expect to receive honor of men! It is very hard to keep ourselves clear of self-seeking under some form or other, for even self-denial may be used with an object which is the reverse of self-denial. The old philosopher seeing a fop in fine apparel, pointed at him, and said, “that’s pride,” but he was equally right when seeing certain Spartans who affected to dress meanly, he said, “and that’s pride.” Pride often stands in the doorway, but it can as readily hide in the corner. There is a pride of self-sacrifice and a pride of apparent humility, which is everyway as haughty as vainglory itself. Dear friends, we must live for Christ, cost us what it may of watchfulness; we must not fail here. We dare not live for a party, or a sect, or even altogether for any one church, however dear to us, for Jesus’ sake. We may live for the truth, but only because God is glorified thereby. First and last, midst and everywhere, the constraining thought of Christian life should be “all for Jesus.”

***All for the Master, all without reserve,  
All to the utmost of our manhood’s might;  
Each pulse, each throb of heart and thrill of nerve, Each hour of busy day and silent night.***

Beloved, it is delightful to know that Christ is all mine, and I am all Christ’s. It is a holy aspiration to desire to enjoy as much of Christ as our nature can receive, and then to exhibit as much of Christ as grace can enable us to reveal. “Everything for Jesus;” “Christ all and in all Christ,” let these be the mottoes of every believer. “Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus,” aiming ever at his glory.

The fifth point is, do all in the strength of the Lord Jesus as your helper. With him is the residue of the Spirit; and the Spirit of God is the believer’s power. “Without me ye can do nothing,” saith our Lord, and we know the truth of that saying by unwise attempts which have ended in mournful failures; but let us in future remember this truth practically. Never let us commence a work without seeking strength from on high. We go about Christian service very often as though we felt ourselves quite up to the mark for it; we pray without asking the preparation of the heart from God; we sing — ah! my brethren, how universally is it so-without at all entreating the Holy Spirit to quicken our praises; and I fear some of us must confess sorrowfully that we preach at times as though the preaching were to be our work and not the work of the Holy Ghost through us. Do not you, as bearers, too often listen to the word as if the mere hearing of it would do you good, or as if the speech of such-and-such a man would be certainly blest to you, instead of waiting upon God beforehand that your going up to the assembly might be profitable to your souls? Do all in the Master’s strength, and how differently everything will be done! Acknowledge all the time you are at your work that your strength comes from the Lord alone. Never let the thought cross your mind that you as an experienced Christian have a fitness for the work peculiarly your own, so that you can dispense with prayers for divine aid, so necessary to the young; never imagine that because through long years you have performed a service with acceptance you can therefore now do it without renewed help. This is the way by which we sink into routine, degenerate into religious automata, and become like formalists and hypocrites. This is the way in which the power of God and the vitality of godliness are rendered so rare in the churches. If we do not feel conscious day by day of abiding weakness and consequent need of fresh strength from the Most High, we shall soon cease to be full of grace. Write this upon the tablets of your heart, “All my fresh springs are in thee,” and from this day forward in word and deed do all in the name of the Lord Jesus; deriving all your spiritual energy from him.

Sixthly, we should do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, for he should be the element in which we live. It is said of the modern Greeks that whatever may be their faults mentally, they are faultless physically, for you never saw a Greek peasant in an ungraceful attitude, however much he might be off his guard and unconscious of your gaze. Gracefulness is a part of the Greek nature. So let the Lord Jesus Christ be so woven and intertwisted into your very self, that you cannot be otherwise than Christlike under any circumstances. Lord, grant us this. It would be a glorious thing to be saturated through and through with the spirit of Christ, so as to live Christ evermore. That eminent ornithologist, M. Audubon, who produced accurate drawings and descriptions of all the birds of the American Continent, made the perfection of that work the one object of his life. In order to achieve this he had to earn his own living by painting portraits, and other labors; he had to traverse frozen seas, forests, canebrakes, jungles, prairies, mountains, swollen rivers, and pestilential bogs. He exposed himself to perils of every sort, and underwent hardships of every kind. Now, whatever Audubon was doing, he was fighting his way towards his one object, the production of his history of American birds. Whether he was painting a lady’s portrait, paddling a canoe, shooting a racoon, or felling a tree, his one drift was his bird-book. He had said to himself, “I mean to carve my name amongst the naturalists as having produced a complete ornithological work for America,” and this resolution ate him up, and subdued his whole life. He accomplished his work because he gave himself wholly to it. This is the way in which the Christian man should make Christ his element. All that he does should be subservient to this one thing, “That I may finish my course with joy, that I may deliver my testimony for Christ, that I may glorify God whether I live or die.” We have thus seen what it is to do all in the name of the Lord Jesus; let us stop a moment to remind you that this text administers a severe rebuke to many professed Christians. Too many church-members do nothing in Christ’s name. Since the day when they were baptised into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, they have done nothing else in that name. Ah, hypocrites! ah, hypocrites! God have mercy upon you! Alas, how many others do but very little in Christ’s name! I noted in a letter, by a certain pastor, not I think given to speak severely, this remark — that he did not think in his own church one in three of the members were doing anything for Christ. I could not speak so sorrowfully as that concerning you; but I much fear that a large proportion of the strength of this church is not used for the Lord. I believe that there is more used here than in almost any other church, but still there is a great deal of waste steam, a great deal of buried talent, and thereby Jesus is defrauded. I noticed in an American paper an observation made concerning the Baptist churches of North Carolina. A man acquainted with them said, “There are a hundred thousand members reported in the various associations, there are a hundred thousand baptised persons, and seventy-five thousand of them are only ‘baptised dead heads.’“ It is an American term, but I am afraid we shall have to import it, for it is frightfully true that numbers of professors are just so many “baptised dead heads.” They are of no use; they are not working — they are perhaps grumbling — the only sign of life they have; but they are neither giving of their substance nor laying out any other talents in the cause of Christ. If there be any such present, I pray that this text may be a thorn in your side, and act as a spur to you; and may you henceforth do all that lies in your power in the name of the Lord Jesus.

The text also rebukes those Christians who do much in the name of some eminent Christian man. I shall not censure any particular denomination, but if the truth censures them, let them hear it. When George Whitfield refused to form a new sect, and said, “Let my name perish, and let Christ’s name last for ever,” he acted as his Lord would have him. Paul was not crucified for you, neither did Apollos die for you, therefore take none of these names, but let the name of Christ be named among you, and under that name be ye known. Though there is a Lutheran church, it was a good saying of Luther, though couched in rugged words, “I desire above all things that my name should be concealed, and that none be called by the name of Lutheran, but of Christian. What is Luther? My doctrine is not mine, but Christ’s. I was not crucified for any. How comes it to pass, that I, who am but a filthy, stinking bag of worms, that any of the sons of God should be denominated from my name? Away with these schismatical names; let us be denominated from Christ, from whom alone we have our doctrine.” It shall be well for all churches when they are ruled by the like spirit. Names which indicate their difference of doctrine will probably survive till Christ comes, but the names of men they will do well to discard.

Once more, what a rebuke is our text to those professors who dishonor the name under which they profess to live! The Spaniards in America acted so cruelly, and with such a dreadful lust for gold, that when they sent their missionaries to convert the Indians, the Indians wished only to know whether the religion that was taught them was the religion of the Spaniards, for if it was they should like to believe something the very opposite of it; and if there was no heaven but where the Spaniards went, they would sooner go to hell than be with them. Truly some professors’ lives give much the same savor to the Christian religion. Men say, “Are these Christians, these mean, covetous, quarrelsome, domineering, or boastful people? then we will sooner be infidels than Christians.” Out upon you, ye caricatures of godliness. If there be one such here, may his conscience prick him. You have crucified the Lord afresh, and put him to an open shame. How dreadful will be your punishment if you die in your present state! Repent of your sin, and ask of God grace to make your profession sincere; and if you will not do this, at least be honest enough to give up your false profession, for you do but degrade but it and yourself. There is no necessity, surely, to add to your innumerable sins, this sin of hypocrisy. What gain you by it? Nay, sir, if you must serve mammon and the devil, serve them; but why with supererogation of iniquity must you pretend to serve Christ?

**II. We leave this first point, and find in the second part of the text, HOLY**

MUSIC PRESCRIBED. “Giving thanks unto God and the Father by him.”

Soldiers march best to battle when the trumpet and drum excite them with enlivening strains; the mariner brightens his toil by a cheery cry at every pull of the rope; and it is an excellent thing when Christian men know how to sing as well as to work, and mingle holy music with holy service. The best music of a Christian consists in thankfulness to God. Thanks should be rendered by the believer with all the acts common to men. Our eating, our drinking, our social meetings, our quiet conversings one with another, in all we should give thanks unto God and the Father. This we should do in the labors peculiar to our vocation. Whatever your trade and calling may be, if you cannot sing aloud, you can sing in your hearts while your hands are busy; you can ring out the praises of God as well to the sound of the hammer on the anvil as to the peal of the organ; your feet at the sewing machine may beat time to a sacred tune; you can as well praise God while you crack your whip as when you sing to a Psalm tune. Why not? If the heart be right you can mount up to the heavens from any place or labor. Whatever your calling may be you shall find some peculiarity in it which shall help you to magnify God, if you will but use a spiritual eye to discover it.

We ought especially to praise God in the exercise of our religion. Whenever the assemblies of God’s people meet, there should be much of holy joy. Some people are so afraid of joy, that one might suppose them to labor under the delusion that all who are devout must also be unhappy. If we worshipped Baal, to lance ourselves with knives were most fitting, if we were worshippers of Juggernaut or Kalee, self-inflicted tortures might be acceptable; if we adored the pope, it might be proper for us to wear a hair shirt and practice flagellation; but as we worship the everblessed God, whose delight is to make his creatures happy, holy happiness is a part of worship, and joy in the Lord one of the accepted graces of the Holy Spirit. Brethren, let us be happy when we praise God. I have noticed with pain the way in which people will get rid, if they can, of happy words out of their hymns. The hundredth Psalm for instance, runs thus:

***“All people that on earth do dwell,  
Sing to the Lord with cheerful voice,  
Him serve with — “***

What? Well, they modernise it into  
***“Him serve with fear.”***But, as I believe, the older form is

***“Him serve with mirth, his praise forth tell,  
Come ye before him and rejoice.”***I wonder some other scribe did not cut out the word “cheerful,” and put in —  
***“Sing to the Lord with doleful voice.”***

In this way the Psalm might have been “improved” until there would not have been a grain of worship left in it. I mean to sing it. “Him serve with mirth;” and with a glad and merry heart will I praise my God. If you are his child, rejoice in your Father’s presence; if you are pardoned, rejoice in the mercy that washed away your sins; even if you are tried and troubled, yet rejoice that your afflictions are working together for your good. “Rejoice in the Lord always; and again I say, Rejoice.”

The text tells us under what aspect we should regard God when we are thus thanking him, “Giving thanks unto God and the Father,” blessing him that he stands in that relation to us as well as to the Lord Jesus. The belief in the divine fatherhood will surely make the sons of God happy. It is instructive to observe that thanks are directed to be offered especially to the Father; I suppose because we are most apt to forget to praise the Father. We love Jesus Christ for dying for us; we forget not the Holy Spirit because he dwells in us; but the common idea of the Father is dishonoring to him. Is he not regarded as all justice, and seldom as the fountain of love? Now, it is the Father who stands at the back of all in the eternal purpose; it is the Father who gave the Son to die; it is the Father who justifies us through the righteousness of Christ, and adopts us into his family. The Father is equally to be loved and worshipped with the Spirit and the Son, and through Jesus Christ we should come to God, the terrible God as he was to us in our ungodliness, and worship him as the Father now with thankful joy, because of the mercies we have received. The gist of this second precept is that you stir up your hearts, my dear friends, to the cultivation of a cheerful spirit; that you excite that cheerful spirit to the use of thankful words, telling to your friends and neighbors the goodness of God to you; that these words be oftentimes elevated into songs; that these songs should, as on wings of flame, ascend up to where perfect spirits praise God both day and night. O we that love the Savior, do not neglect this, “Whoso offereth praise glorifieth God.” Glorify him, then. This praise, this cheerful spirit wins on others. They, marking how you give thanks, will be attracted to your Savior and your God, while you will strengthen yourselves also, for “the joy of the Lord is your strength.” Despondency and murmuring will hamper you in all your efforts to glorify Christ, but to maintain an inward spring of thanksgiving is one of the best ways to keep yourselves in spiritual health. God help you, then, to carry out both these precepts.

***Work and praise! Hearts upraise!  
Drink your fill of joy!  
Happy they who all the day  
Spend in Christ’s employ.  
For their song makes them strong,  
Ready for their toil;  
And their mirth, not of earth,  
Sorrow cannot spoil.***

**III. A few words upon the third point, namely, HOLY MOTIVE TO BE**

INSCRIBED upon our hearts to secure obedience. These motives are four. A word on each.

Beloved in Christ, you have received all you have from God the Father through Christ. That you are not in hell is due to his longsuffering; that you have been spiritually quickened is due to his gracious operation; that you are pardoned is due to his precious blood. Owing all to him, what arises in your mind but gratitude? And what is the dictate of gratitude? Does it not teach you that it is your reasonable service to surrender yourselves to him who bought you at such a price? For, ah, what a return it will be, how poor compared with what he has done for you! If you give your body to be burned for him, yet he deserveth infinitely more than all the sacrifice of the most painful death to recompense his stoop from the highest throne in glory to the cross of the deepest woe. Let your gratitude compel you to do everything for Jesus.

Reflect, too, that the Wellbeloved for whom I plead to-day is worthy. “Him hath God the Father exalted.” Do you demur to that exaltation? Do you not rather rejoice in it? Is not that Song most true —

***“Worthy is he that once was slain,  
The Prince of Peace that groan’d and died;  
Worthy to rise, and live, and reign,  
At his Almighty Father’s side”?***

Will you deny, then, to Christ that which he is worthy to receive? He deserves the crowns of angels, and the songs of all the perfected; will you not give him the best you have, even your hearts? I appeal to the justice which I trust governs your judgment — should not Jesus Christ be the one object of your life? Further, many of us here present have professed to be his disciples. We remember well the day when we were buried with him in baptism unto death. We voluntarily came forward and we took upon ourselves to be immersed in his name, copying his example and obeying his command. If that act meant anything it meant this, that we professed ourselves to be dead henceforth to the world and risen with Christ. Now, by the profession then made, by the communion then enjoyed, I pray you, my dear brother and sister, whatsoever you do in word or deed, do all in the Master’s name. Let not this appeal to your honor be forgotten.

Lastly, I need not thus plead with some of you, for your hearts are pleading with you. I know you love him whose name is as ointment poured forth; I know how the tendrils of your heart have entwined themselves about his cross. His person fixes all your love; you are only happy when you are walking in communion with him; he is the sun of your soul, without whom you cannot live. Well, then, do what love dictates. Bring forth the alabaster box of ointment, break it, pour the sacred nard upon his head, and if any ask, “Wherefore is this waste?” say that he is worthy of it, and that you love much because you have had much forgiven. This day bring forth the best that is within your store, the spiced wine of your pomegranate, and set it before your Lord, while Jesus sups with you and you with him. Again I say arouse yourselves to live at a more vigorous rate, and let the whole of the force and energy that dwells within you, and all that you can borrow from the seventh heaven, be given up to him who loved you and gave himself for you. May my Master’s blessing be with these words, to all who hear or read them, for Jesus’ sake. Amen.

÷Col 3.24

ALL FOR JESUS!  
NO. 1205

**A SERMON DELIVERED OF LORD’S-DAY MORNING, NOVEMBER 29, 1874, *BY C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“You serve the Lord Christ.”***Col 3:24***.***

The Gospel does not merely supply us with directions for holy living but furnishes us with reasons for obedience and tells us where to find the power to obey. Hence in the commencement of this chapter, before the Apostle comes to any practical exhortation, he reminds us of our position and privileges. He bids us remember who and what we are as Believers in Christ, that we may act accordingly. We are risen with Christ and, therefore, our affection should not be set on earthly things. We are dead to the world and, therefore, we must not, cannot live in sin. Christ is our life and, therefore, we must walk after His example.

The Apostle knew right well that the conditions of Believers here below are various and, therefore, he laid down distinct precepts for each position. Some are masters and others servants. Some parents and others children—and in each case the requirements differ. But while he suited the exhortation to each one, he proposed a common motive for all. He reminded all Believers, whether wives or husbands, children or fathers, servants or masters, that there is another and a better life which rewards are worthy of our ambition, which service should engross all our strength. He bade them have respect to that higher life, for they had been representatively lifted up into the highest Heaven in the Person of Jesus Christ and with Him their hearts and desires should always be.

He bade them live the life of Heaven here below and order their footsteps, not in accordance with the fleeting things of time, but the enduring realities of eternity. He knew that in so doing, the inconveniences of the present would be forgotten in the glories of the future—and the trials of today would be more than counterbalanced by the joys of the hereafter. Our authorized translation is in the indicative and states the fact, “You serve the Lord Christ.” Is it the fact with each of you? To how many in this place can it be truly said, “You serve the Lord Christ”? I find it might also, and not incorrectly, be translated in the imperative. “Serve you the Lord Christ.” In this sense it may be directed to those who have no share in it as a statement of fact.

Let us take it in both senses. If we dare to hope that we serve the Lord Christ, let us listen to further exhortation and serve Him better, still. Let us thank God for the measure of service which He has worked in us, and let us earnestly ask Him to work in us still further to will and to do. But if any of you are not yet included in the sacred band who call Jesus, “Master and Lord,” then when you have trusted in His blood, come and yield your whole selves unto Him. If, indeed, you are redeemed from wrath through Him, I charge you to not be disloyal to the obligations under

which you are laid, but from this time forth make it your joy to “serve the Lord Christ.”

To me, my text is one of the most joyful sentences from which I have ever preached. “You serve the Lord Christ.” What an exaltation for a slave of Satan to become a servant of Christ! With what exultation do I hail permission to do *anything* for my Lord! To be blessed by Him, to be enriched with priceless gifts from His bounteous hand—this is lovingkindness! But to be allowed to render tokens of gratitude in return is sweetest of all! Truly, we may say of this condescension, “Your gentleness has made me great.” By receiving anything from us, the Lord has lifted us as beggars from the dunghill and set us among princes, even the princes of His people! It is a greater honor to*serve* Christ in the most menial capacity than to occupy the throne of the Caesars!

I speak of honor. I may also dilate upon the happiness of the service of Jesus! It is the purest of pleasures. We long to express our affection for Jesus by acts of zeal. Love pants for expression and is not obedience the tongue of Love? That love is counterfeit which does not declare itself in some practical form or other by deeds of kindness, or gifts, or sacrifices, or patient endurance, or hearty praise. Beloved, let us count it an unrivalled honor and an unsurpassed delight to do anything for Jesus! For this service let us be insatiably ambitious, resolved at all costs to show our loyalty to our Prince.

To serve us He laid aside His glorious array and girt about Him the garments of a servant! For us He took a basin and towel and stooped to wash His disciples’ feet! For us He became obedient to death, even the death of the Cross! Now, therefore, in our turn, by all the shame He bore, by all the labor He endured, by all the agonies He suffered, let us serve Him and Him, alone, forever!

In handling the subject of Christian service, I shall note three things— first, we serve the Lord Christ *in the common acts of life.* Secondly, we serve Him *in what are usually called religious acts.* And thirdly, we have learned to serve Him, and, I trust, we may do it more and more, *in special acts of direct homage to Himself*.

**I.**First, then, “you serve the Lord Christ,” IN THE COMMON ACTS OF LIFE. The fact that our text was addressed to the lowest rather than to the highest in worldly circumstances is very instructive. Paul has been visiting a family and he has spoken a word to the wife and a word to the husband. He has paid attention to the children and given a warning to the father. He has, also, a message for the master of the house—but he does not address to either master, mistress, or children, that choice saying which he reserves for *servants*—“You serve the Lord Christ.”

The Greek word, here, translated *servants*, may be rendered, “slaves,” though its meaning is not confined to slaves, yet it includes them—and there were many such in the Christian Church in Paul’s days—truly converted men and women who were still held in bondage according to the cruel Roman law. The Apostle goes into the kitchen, the cellar, the field, the winepress, the stable and he says to his Brothers and Sisters toiling there—“You serve the Lord Christ.” He whispers in the ear of the aged man who acts as porter at the door, whom he knows to be a devout Believer—and this is the secret which he whispers—“Fear not, Brother, for despite your bonds you serve the Lord Christ.”

In those hard days, when Paul wrote from Rome to Colosse, many a slave crept out from Caesar’s household by stealth to listen to his gracious words. And poor workpeople gathered around him and were converted—and as he felt deep sympathy with them, he did not merely admonish them to be honest, industrious, conscientious and obedient, as many a preacher would have done—but he went further and cheered them in the performance of their duties by assuring them that they served the Lord Jesus, and from Him they would receive a reward! He knew their sorrows and their provocations and, therefore, presented them with a rich consolation and a stimulus.

He exhorted them to act “as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; with good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not unto men.” This he said to servants and to no other class in particular. He did not mean, thereby, that the wife, the husband, the master and the child might not and did not serve Christ, but he would have us infer that of those who did—whose lot was least distinguished—much more should those do whose responsibilities and opportunities are so much greater. If my poor servant should serve Jesus, how much more ought I to do it? If those with the least education and means are bound to serve Him, how much more should those who have 10 talents, lay out all for His Glory?

My Brothers and Sisters, you see that those to whom Paul spoke were not preachers, nor deacons, nor elders of the Church. Neither were they magistrates, or persons of influence—they were simple servants, engaged in domestic duties—but he says of them, “You serve the Lord Christ.” Though what I have to say bears upon all present, I will keep to the line of thought which this fact naturally suggests. Those who are in low estate serve the Lord Christ by *a quiet acquiescence in the arrangement of Providence which has placed them where they are*. Everyone knows that while the human race exists in its present condition, somebody must serve. It is a paradox, but it is also a truth, that if there were no servants we should practically be all servants.

There are a thousand offices which, if each person were obliged to perform them for himself, would be exceedingly tedious and unpleasant. They are now done for us by persons to whom use renders them not at all irksome. As things are at present constituted, there will be poor and there will be rich, there will be servants and there will be masters. And when a man can say, “I have learned in whatever state I am therewith to be content, for I bow to the Providence of my heavenly Father,” that man is, in his heart, serving the Lord Christ. To stand where the Lord places us and keep our position cheerfully, has in it the essence of obedience.

We serve the Lord, next, in service, or in any other form of life, *if we exercise the Graces of the Holy Spirit* in the discharge of our calling. The servant who is in all things trustworthy and neither wastes his employer’s time nor goods—the servant who does not watch his master’s steps so as to loiter when he is out of sight, but conscientiously renders a fair day’s

work for his wage, treating his master as he would wish to be treated if their positions were exchanged—such an one, exhibiting truthfulness, gentleness, sobriety, honesty and industry, serves the Lord Christ as much in his labor as if he were an Evangelist or an Apostle!

He does not preach *vocally*, but his *life* is a powerful sermon. He is a standing evidence of the power of religion, an argument which logic cannot overthrow, nor the most cunning sophistry confute. Holy living preaches where the minister cannot enter—it preaches from the nursery to a worldly mother, from the shop to a graceless tradesman—from the workroom to a godless employer. Where the preachers’ words are denied a hearing, your lives will, nevertheless, win attention. At the first the Gospel was very much spread in the noble families at Rome by means of their slaves. They noticed how different they were from other slaves and as they observed their conduct, they inquired what this new religion was which so much improved them.

Christians were *Christians* then! They made their Lord their first and last object. They surrendered their whole lives to His service and hence they were a power in all places. The poorest and meanest did not think themselves exempt from the sacred duty of spreading the faith! None, indeed, asked for a discharge in this war. Domestic servants became missionaries to the families in which they resided and acted as Apostles in houses where the Apostles could not enter! We serve Christ in such a position *by displaying the joy of the Lord in our service*. I lay great stress upon this point. Many a soul has been converted to our Lord Jesus by noticing the cheerfulness of poor Christians.

If a heathen master had a Christian slave, he noticed how contentedly he accepted his hard toil and hard fare. He saw his countenance beaming with delight and he even heard him sing for joy! He would naturally want to know the reason for that cheerfulness. Servants had a sorry lot with Roman masters and mistresses. I have seen some of the mere dog holes in which the slave who kept the door found sleeping quarters in the city of Pompeii—yet from such wretched abodes would rise the voice of Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs—and the children would wish to hear them and the mistresses, too. Thus would the Truth of God be spread!

The Christian would not join in the general jollity upon heathen festivals—he would be absent from the amphitheatre when all the rest of the family were eager to view the spectacle. He had a quiet cheerfulness and settled calm of mind which was all his own. And when trouble and distress were in the house he was the general comforter and friend. When he lay sick and scarcely anybody cared for him, he still did not lose heart. And when he was near to die, his joy came to a climax and he breathed out his soul with a song! Such a servant served the Lord most effectually. I hope there are many in this Church who, in these better days, are rendering equally valuable service in households where the name of Jesus is not reverenced.

We, too, should be doing the same in the circles in which we move. Our holy cheerfulness should be an invitation to our friends to come to Jesus. We shall never bring men to believe in a Master whose servants are unhappy in His service! To toll a knell as an invitation to a wedding feast is most absurd! When we invite men to the banquet of Saving Grace let us do it with smiling faces. Beloved, let us mingle with the sternness of our integrity and the solemnity of our life purpose that cheerfulness and joy which are the most natural and the most attractive ornaments of the Christian character. The true way to serve the Lord in the common acts of life is to *perform them as unto Himself* and this can be done with everything which is lawful to do. God forbid we should maintain, as some do, a broad, unbending distinction between things secular and religious.

This wicked age must, indeed, have its holy places and its holy days. What is this but a confession that most of its buildings are unholy and its days unholy, too? Of Heaven it is written, “I saw no temple there,” and we get nearest to the heavenly state when all superstitious notions about sacred places and sacred substances shall be swept away once and for all! To a man who lives unto God nothing is secular, everything is sacred! He puts on his workday garment and it is a vestment to him. He sits down to his meal and it is a sacrament. He goes forth to his labor and exercises the office of the priesthood. His breath is incense and his life a sacrifice. He sleeps on the bosom of God and lives and moves in the Divine Presence. To draw a hard and fast line and say, “This is sacred and this is secular,” is, to my mind, diametrically opposed to the teaching of Christ and the spirit of the Gospel!

Paul has said, “I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself.” Peter saw a sheet let down from Heaven in which were all manner of beasts and four-footed creatures which he was bid to kill and eat. And when he refused because they were unclean, he was rebuked by a Voice from Heaven, saying, “What God has cleansed that call not you common.” The Lord has cleansed your houses, my Brethren. He has cleansed your bed chambers, your tables, your shops. He has made the bells upon your horses holiness to the Lord. He has made the common pots and pans of your kitchens to be as the bowls before the altar if you know what you are and live according to your high calling.

You housemaids, you cooks, you nurses, you plowmen, you housewives, you traders, you sailors—your labor is holy if you serve the Lord Christ in it—if by living unto Him as you ought to live. The sacred has absorbed the secular! The overarching Temple of the Lord covers all your houses and your fields. My Brothers and Sisters, this ennobles life! The bondsman is henceforth free—he serves not man, but God. The galley slave tugs the oar for Jesus! The menial ministers to the Lord. This cheers the darkest shades, for now we no longer complain of the hardness of our lot, but rejoice in it because we bear all for Jesus—and the burden which we carry is His Cross which He, Himself, places on our shoulders! This ensures us a reward for all we do.

If in our service we receive but little thanks from man and, if, after a life of toil, find ourselves but scantily furnished for old age, we will not complain, for our recompense is sure, our reward is in the hands of One who never forgets His servants! There is no unrewarded toil in the service of the Lord Christ, even a cup of cold water He remembers. He who serves

Christ shall have it said of him at last, “Well done, good and faithful servant,” and in the fullness of His Master’s joy, into which He shall enter, He shall forget that for a while he lived unremunerated among the sons of men! Let this stimulate your zeal, my Brethren! If you serve the Lord Christ, serve Him well! If you had work to do for her Majesty the Queen, you would try to do your best. If she honored you with her commands you would cheerfully obey them—how much more should you be aroused to diligence by the call of the Infinite Majesty of Him who bled for you!

Perform your daily work with a heartiness which nothing else could beget in you. Serve the Lord with gladness and do all for love of His name. This I thought most important to bring forward, and though I cannot speak upon it as I would, yet I do earnestly urge all of you to remember that piety shines best around the domestic hearth—and that true religion is always best esteemed by unconverted men when they see it in connection with the common duties of life. They do not care how beautifully you pray at Prayer Meetings.

They have very little respect for the excellent addresses you deliver in the Sunday school. But to *live* godly, soberly, righteously—to make other people happy, to be gentle in temper, to be yielding and forgiving, to be strictly upright and honest in your dealings with your fellow men—this is what the world will read and recognize! And when they see these things in you, the Gospel will be commended to them and they will be the more likely to listen to the Truth of God as it is in Jesus.

**II.**Secondly, Brethren, we ought to serve the Lord Christ in what we more commonly, but incorrectly, call RELIGIOUS ACTIONS. Every professor of religion should have something to do for Jesus Christ. Though the discipline of our Church does not turn out of it everyone who is an idler, I almost wish it did. I am afraid such a rule would diminish our numbers, but it would materially quicken our energy! Drones in the hive are of very little use as to making honey. They are at the bottom of all the quarrels, but they cannot really benefit the community. God save us from being drones! Let every man and woman who is really redeemed by the blood of Jesus have something to do and *do* it.

I wish I could go round the whole of this company, this morning, and say, “Brother, do you serve the Lord Christ? Sister, do you the same?” But I will ask Conscience to be my deputy and leave your own hearts to answer the question. Brother, Sister, do you *really* serve Christ, or does it amount to this—you enjoy hearing, you enjoy singing, and so on, but you do nothing for Jesus? Bestir yourself, dear Brother—put out your talent to interest! Your Lord has said, “Occupy till I come.” Take heed lest He come and find your talent buried in the earth—your Lord’s money and your napkin rotting in the soil. Let each one be serving Christ always according to his ability.

But supposing that we are serving Christ, as we think? It is well to raise a further question—are we with our whole soul serving *Christ*. For mark you, it is very easy to make a mistake here! We may be working in a legal spirit and so not serving Christ. No doubt many attend to the outward matters of religion that they may win merit, or that they may prepare themselves for the receipt of the Divine blessing. I do not wonder at the zeal and earnestness which some people show—if they hope to get to Heaven by their works they ought to be zealous, indeed! The legal spirit has a measure of power in it—the lash drives the slave on—the fear of punishment impels man to toil.

But from such bondage you are free—“you are not under the Law, but under Grace.” Do, therefore, nothing with the hope of deserving well at the Lord’s hands, for this would be serving *self*. You are saved—serve, then, your *Savior* out of gratitude! Work, not to obtain life, but because you have life already and delight to exercise that life to the honor of Him who gave it!

Some, I fear, do not serve Christ in what they do, for they go about it as a part of the general routine of their existence. It is the proper thing to go to a place of worship, therefore they go. It is generally expected of persons in their station to teach in the Sunday school and they do so accordingly. They reckon that they ought to give a guinea if they see the name of a friend down on the list, therefore they do it. I am afraid that a great deal which is put down as *work for Christ* is a kind of sleep-walking, done without thought, or heart, or desire to glorify God! May the Holy Spirit awaken us out of such mere mechanical acts and bring us to be in heart and soul the Lord’s willing, ardent workers.

Some, I fear, render service in a party spirit. They serve and they think it is Christ they are serving—but in fact it is their own denomination or little Church. They would be almost vexed to hear of God’s being honored among any other sort of Christians! They hope there will be a revival, but they would like it to be pretty nearly confined to the walls of their own Chapel. They serve a *clique*, not Christ. Their sympathies never go beyond the particular section of the Church to which they belong and they are rather moved by emulation to see their own opinions dominant than by zeal for the Glory of God. Oh, Brothers and Sisters, break those bonds if they hold you! We ought to be zealous for the whole Truth of God! We ought to labor to increase the number of those Christians who hold the Gospel in its purity—but still—never let our jealousy for pure religion degenerate into bigotry! Let us love the whole Church more than a part, and Christ best of all!

In more instances, still, the self-spirit comes in to usurp the place of Jesus. I wonder how large a proportion of our zeal, if it were analyzed, could be accounted for by the desire of prominence, the ambition to be thought useful and the wish to shine among our fellow men? I cannot set up a furnace here and put my own zeal or yours into the crucible just now, but again I ask your conscience to be my deputy to analyze, honestly, the motive which sways you and to tell you plainly how far you are serving *self* and how far you are serving *Christ*. We are not always serving Jesus, I fear, when we think we are most doing so, for our main object may be to please our fellow creatures.

Our parents wish us to be active in the Church and, therefore, we do it.

Our friends would not be pleased if we were idle and, therefore, we make ourselves active. From our position we are expected to be engaged in some department of Christian service and, therefore, we enter upon it. Brothers and Sisters, we must rise above this! What we do—whether we teach in the school, or visit the sick, or distribute tracts, or preach the Gospel—we must do as unto the Lord, alone. And the master motive which should, indeed, crush out every other, must be this—“we serve the Lord Christ.” Brethren, let others take what they will for their motto, I charge you by the Holy Spirit—write this upon your banners—“We serve

the Lord Christ.”

If any request you to serve this literary group or that political faction, or to give your whole attention to some great moral reform, let your answer be, “We serve the Lord Christ.” Aid in anything that is good—whatever things are lovely and of good report, and are for the benefit of mankind, you are bound to consider—but still your main lifework, your true business which must absorb your energies and eat you up, is this—“We serve the Lord Christ.” They beckon us from this point, crying, “Come over and help us.” They call to us from the other corner, “Come and work with us,” but our answer must be, “We are an independent brigade. We are already committed to the noblest cause—we are sworn to a Captain who has no rival! We are not able to promise ourselves to any of you, though in which you do good we are your allies. Jesus we serve and none else. God forbid that we should glory save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.” May God help us to do this always!

**III.**Now I am coming to the last part of my discourse, which, to me, is the most interesting, and I trust it may be so to you. We serve the Lord Christ IN SPECIAL ACTS DONE TO HIMSELF. I cannot tell how *you* feel, but I often wish I could do something for my Lord, Himself, personally. I frequently meet with kind souls to whom God has blessed my ministry. They express their thankfulness to God and their love to me by aiding the various works committed to my charge, for which I am deeply grateful to them. But now and then a friend says, “I will cheerfully subscribe to your work, but I desire, also, to show my personal thanks to yourself. What can I do *for you*?”

Now, towards those whom we esteem, this is a natural feeling. And in spiritual things there is a similar desire towards our Divine Benefactor. Our hearts long to offer something to Jesus, distinctly to Jesus, Himself. He has gone from us, or we would delight to minister to Him of our substance, to make Him a feast, to furnish Him a chamber, or to wash His feet. How gladly would we lend Him our coat, our animal, our guest chamber or anything we possess! We would watch His every need and endeavor to forestall it if He were here. But He has gone. Are we, therefore, denied the privilege of rendering personal service to Him? I think not.

Let it be our pleasant task, now, to consider what we can do directly and distinctly *for Him*. First, we can *adore our Lord*. We can bow at His feet and worship Him as our Lord and our God. We shall do well to exercise our hearts in frequent acts of devotion to the Son of God. I do not mean offering prayers and petitions, excellent as these are, but holy contemplation, meditation, admiration, thanksgiving and worship of Jesus. Far be it from us to neglect the adoration of any one Person of the adorable Trinity in Unity—that were a grievous sin—but to worship Jesus does not involve forgetfulness of the Father or of the Holy Spirit.

Fix your eyes on the Person of Jesus. View His work on earth. Contemplate His holy life and expiatory death. Meditate upon His great love, His dying love, His living love. Follow Him from the tomb to Olivet, and from the mountain’s brow to Heaven’s gate and the right hand of the Father. Pay your homage before His Throne, blessing, praising and adoring Him. We ought not to be satisfied without special acts of personal thanksgiving in which we exercise our love and reverence for Him who is altogether lovely in our eyes. True, we may be doing nothing for our fellow men while thus occupied, but Jesus is dearer to us than the whole race of men—and it is only His due that we render Him when we bow adoringly at His everblessed feet.

Then, Brethren, when you have adored Him in secret, you should do the like in public by speaking well of Him and extolling Him before others—not so much for their good as for Christ’s Glory. I must confess I enjoy a sermon, best, in which I have to speak most of my Beloved. If I have to set Him forth rather than to exhort you, I feel best pleased. There are other things to be done besides, but this is the sweetest task. I love to spend all my preaching time in making Jesus lovely in man’s eyes, in lifting Him up on a gloriously high Throne in the esteem of those who listen to me. Brothers and Sisters, do this, yourselves, in your common talk! Make a point of turning the conversation round till it bears on Him. Frequently begin a conversation about Jesus and let men know that you glorify Him! In such special acts of devotion to His Person, I pray you abound.

Next, we should *pray for Him*. Do you understand that? Some do not. The Psalmist says, “Prayer also shall be made *for Him* continually.” It is very delightful to pray for sinners and pray for Believers—but there should be special prayer for Jesus Christ—for the extension of His kingdom. That He may see of the travail of His soul and that His Second Advent may speedily arrive. We should pray for the conversion of those who deny His Deity and those who fall into deadly errors as to His substitutionary sacrifice. We should make earnest supplication for the quickening of the love of Jesus in the hearts of the faithful and for the turning of the disobedient to the knowledge of the Truth of God. Such prayers should be very frequent with us for His sake and with an eye to His Glory. We pray for this and that, but surely Jesus ought to have a larger measure of our supplications!

Brethren, next to this there should be much *communion with Him*. I think I hear someone say, “Is that *serving* Him? I call it *enjoying* Him!” Yes, I know it is, and you may take it in which way you will, for He says, “If any man serve Me, let Him follow Me, and where I am there shall also My servant be.” So that you will be sure to be with Him if you serve Him. To be near Him is one of the great essentials of true service. Remember His dying request, “This do you in remembrance of Me.” And what was that? Why, it was to observe the Lord’s Supper, which is the outward and visible sign of communing with Him! If He attaches so much importance

to the outward sign, how much more does He value the inner reality of fellowship with Himself?

The fact is that the head which leans upon His bosom is thereby consecrated to His love and is rendering Him service. The cheek on which He imprints the kisses of His month is doing Him its best homage while it receives His best favors. Walk not at a distance from Jesus or you will grieve Him! Abide in Him and you will bring forth fruit to Him. Let no day pass without a word with Jesus. You are His spouse—can you live without a loving word from your Husband? You are of His flesh and of His bones— let unbroken communion be the very habit of your being! Brethren, the Lord’s Supper is worship rendered to Jesus and is mainly an act which begins and ends upon Him—you commemorate His death, you set forth His flesh and blood. Your union and communion with Christ are not so much meant to benefit others, as to spend itself upon Him. Therefore attend to it for His sake. Let your eyes be fixed upon only Him. Whatever others may think of your raptures and delights in Jesus—however much they may call them emotional and unpractical—remain content with having done it unto Him.

Bear with me while I mention other ways in which you may serve Jesus personally. You may do so by *sitting at His feet and learning of Him*, studying the Word and pleading for the Holy Spirit to give you light into its meaning. Martha prepared a feast for Him and our Lord did not blame her. But He gave Mary the preference who sat at His feet. One in the crowd said concerning Christ, “Blessed is the womb that bore You and the paps that gave You suck.” To administer to His childhood seemed the highest of earthly favors. But Jesus said, “Yes, rather, blessed are they that hear the Word of God, and keep it.” Get that blessing! Hear it from His own lips! Study His Word—make much of every syllable. Try to get at the essential spirit and do not tarry in the killing letter—and you will then be personally serving Him, for as a Teacher He is pleased when we are His attentive pupils. This is a sweet way of pleasing the Lord Christ.

Then, Brothers and Sisters, remember, if you would serve Christ personally, you must *obey Him*. “Oh,” you say, “I did not think that would be a very choice way of *serving* Him.” Listen! “If you love Me, keep My commandments.” He has chosen *obedience* as the special pledge and token of our love! You have said, “I wish I could build a Chapel, or support a minister or a missionary out of my own purse.” I wish you could, but still, Jesus has not selected *that* as *the* love token. He has said, “If you love Me, keep My commandments.” Complete, prayerful, habitual *obedience* to Christ is the most choice pledge of affection which we can present to our Lord. May Infinite Mercy help us to present it!

We may do to Christ personal service, next, by being willing to *bear reproach*for His sake. When you are willing to take upon yourself the defense of a man’s character. To throw yourself so completely into him that the reproaches of them that reproach him fall upon you—you have rendered to that man no mean proof of love. Oh, Brothers and Sisters, if, when they laugh at you for Christ’s sake, you clap your hands for very glee to be counted worthy to be ridiculed for Him! If you take, joyfully, the spoiling of your goods, or the slandering of your character! If you know the meaning of this word, “Rejoice in that day and leap for joy, for so persecuted they the Prophets that were before you”—then have you rendered personal service to Him whom you love! And then you may sit down and be thankful for having been allowed to drink of His cup and to be baptized with His Baptism.

Further, you can show personal kindness to Christ by *caring for His Church*. The Lord had forgiven Peter and Peter, no doubt, wished to do something to prove his love. His Lord somewhat vexed him by three times putting to him the question, “Simon, son of Jonas, do you love Me?” And when the disciple had protested his love, the Master said to him, “Feed My sheep,” and, “Feed My lambs.” Go, then, and teach the little children and instruct those of riper years. What He has taught you, teach to others, and you will be doing service to Him. He bids you consider it so, for to you who love Him, He says, “Feed My sheep.”

If you cannot serve with your tongue, there remains another mode of pleasing Jesus. Feed the hungry, clothe the naked, visit the sick and relieve distress of every kind. “But that is not doing service for *Him*.” I have the best authority for saying that it is, for, “Then shall the King say unto them on His right hand, I was hungry and you gave Me meat, I was thirsty and you gave Me drink. Sick and in prison, and you visited Me. Inasmuch as you have done it unto one of the least of these, My brethren, you have done it unto Me.”

Actual gifts to the poor and helps afforded to those who need them are grateful love tokens to the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus is not here, but His poor saints are. Any saint is an image of Christ, but a *poor* saint is the express image of Christ! There is a something more about him than about the rich, in which he is even, in detail and circumstances, more like his Lord. Do, then, to your Lord’s own members what you would have done to Him if He, Himself, were here. Still, I think that every now and then, for Jesus, there ought to be a *little special wastefulness of lov*e. The woman with her alabaster box of very precious ointment would, no doubt, gladly have joined with the holy ones of substance who ministered to Him. I have no doubt she would very gladly have poured water on His feet when He came into the house weary, or she would have waited at the table when He ate.

But all this would not have sufficed her ardent love. She wanted to perform an extraordinary act which would be all for Him—she looked at that precious box—she must break *that*, for she would give Him something which she could not afford to do every day—in fact, which she never did *attempt* to give but once in her life! Brothers and Sisters, think of something special you can do for Jesus. Let it cost you something and if it pinches you, so much the better! It will be sweet to bear a pinch for Jesus! Think of something that you could not justify in prudence if you had to sit down and talk it over. Do it for Him, not to talk about to others, afterwards, nor for others to brazen abroad. But do it for Him—and then if they do publish it you need not be angry, for Jesus said, “Where ever this

Gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also this, that this woman has done, be told for a memorial of her.”

Be not ostentatious, but do not be in such a great worry to hide your work for Jesus, for the knowledge of it may do other people good and lead them to imitate the deed. Still, do it unto Jesus, only. I cannot suggest what you shall do. And it would be indelicate for me to attempt to do so. Who would think of suggesting to a wife what she should give to her husband as a special private love token? Oh, no! These things are too choice for others to meddle with. They are secrets between the Lord and His elect, suggestions of personal love which cannot come from without. Do you enquire, “What shall I do for Jesus to praise Him?” Bring forth the choicest that you have and offer it when your heart is best attuned and ready for the giving of it.

My whole soul thirsts to be doing this often, for I owe all I have and all I am to Jesus, my Lord! Here stands a man before you who has not one single thing in all the world but what he has received from his Lord! He has not a penny but what is lent him! He is clothed by charity and fed by mercy! He is a pauper by nature and yet wealthier than a millionaire because he lives as a gentleman commoner upon the daily bounty of God in Christ Jesus! Here stands before you an unworthy servant of the best of masters! He is a poor relation of the most generous of householders! He is happy to be in such a case!

Are there other men and women here who owe all to my Lord? If they do, let it be said of them, “You serve the Lord Christ.” So let it be said of them while they live and till they die! What better can they desire? For myself, I am resolved, by Divine Grace, more fully to yield my whole body, soul and spirit to Him whose I am, whom I serve. Grace be with you. Amen.

***PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Colossians 3, 4:1-6.* HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—179, 710, 784.**  
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**÷Col 4.2**

A SERMON FOR THE WEEK OF PRAYER  
NO. 354

A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, JANUARY 6, 1861, *BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,*AT EXETER HALL, STRAND.   
*“Continue in prayer and watch in the same with thanksgiving.”* Col 4:2

THOSE of you who constantly listen to my voice are aware that on the first Sabbath of the year I always receive of a venerable Clergyman—a veteran warrior in the Lord’s hosts—a verse of Scripture which I accept as my New Year’s text and which after being printed becomes the motto of my congregation for the following year. It is somewhat singular that my venerable friend should have sent me in the envelope about a month ago this text. He knew nothing of the proposition for a week of prayer. I do not know that it had been even determined upon at that date—certainly neither to his knowledge nor to mine—and I could not but help thinking when I opened my envelope and saw what was to be my text, that he had been directly and specially guided of God, that my text might be in keeping with the engagements of the week. “Continue in prayer and watch in the same with thanksgiving.”

How greatly do I rejoice that the Churches are aroused to prayer. My honored and venerable Brother will this morning stand up in his village Church, lift up holy hands and bid his people join in the common supplication and I feel but too happy as his younger Brother in Christ—as but a babe compared to so experienced a pastor—to follow his example in stirring you up that you, too, as a great host may join with the general company of the faithful and besiege the Throne of Grace till you carry the gates of Heaven by storm and obtain the mercy which both you and the world so much require.

Without further preface, let me observe that there are three exhortations in the text connected with prayer. The first is *continue*. The second is *watch*. And the third is *give thanks*. “Continuance” sits like Moses on the top of the hill, while Watching and Thanksgiving, like Aaron and Hur, hold up its hands.

I. And first, in regard to prayer, the Apostle says “CONTINUE.” Be you not, O you intercessors with God for men— be you not as those whose goodness is as the morning cloud and as the early dew. Do not begin to pray and then suddenly cease your supplications. That will prove an ignorance as to the value of the mercy which you seek and a want of earnestness as to your obtaining it. How many there are who, under a powerful sermon or during a trying Providence, have bent their knees suddenly in hasty prayer! They have risen from their knees and they have forgotten what manner of men they were.

Take away the whip from them and they have ceased to run. Remove from them the tempest and they have ceased to fly before it. They have ceased to pray when God has ceased to smite. O Church of God, imitate not these heathen men and publicans. Wake not yourself up to a sudden fit of prayer and then return again to your sloth. Stir not yourself a moment from your bed to throw your heavy head back again upon your pillow but continue in supplication—cease not to pray. There is a great distinction between the prayer of the real convert and the merely convicted sinner. The merely convicted sinner, termed by the Law, calls but once. The awakened heart, renewed of the Holy Spirit, never ceases to cry until the mercy comes.

A few days ago, by the seaside, on the coast of the Isle of Wight, a woman thought she heard, in the midst of the howling tempest, the voice of a man. She listened. It was repeated. She strained her ear again and she caught, amid the crack of the blast and the thundering of the winds, another cry for help. She ran at once to the lifeguards who launched their boat and some three poor mariners who were clinging to a mast were saved. Had that cry been but once and not again, either she might have doubted as to whether she had heard it at all, or else she would have drawn the melancholy conclusion that they had been swept into the watery waste and that help would have come too late.

So when a man prays but once, either we may think that he cries not at all, or else that his desires are swallowed up in the wild waste of his sins and he himself is sucked down into the vortex of destruction. If the Church of God shall offer prayer this week and then shall cease to be in earnest, we shall think her never to have meant her prayers. If she shall but now and then start up and make her supplications we shall write her down a hypocrite intent for a moment upon keening appearances, but afterwards relapsing into her lukewarm Laodicean condition. The exhortation of my text, I think, stands in contrast, then, to the transient prayer which is often offered by ungodly men. *Continue* in prayer. Do not pray once and have done with it, but continue in it.

I think further that the exhortation to continue may be put in opposition to the common dealings of many with God who pray and pause and pray and pause—are earnest and then cool, earnest and colder still. There is a sharp frost—a rapid thaw and then a frost again. Their spiritual state is as variable as our own weather. A shower, sunshine, mist, shower, sunshine again. They are everything by turns and nothing long. There are too many Churches which are just of this character. See them one week, you would believe they would carry all before them and convert the town or village in which they are located.

See them next week and they are “As sound asleep as a church,” which is a common Proverb, a church being too often the sleepiest thing in all the world. Sometimes they ran and they did run well— what did hinder them? But they stopped, they paused. They looked about them and after a while they ran again—but they moved not swiftly enough to be able to make up the time lost when they were standing still.

Now I am afraid our Churches have for a considerable period been just in this state—have been sometimes hot and sometimes cold. Look at our revivals everywhere—the American revival, it is a great wave and then dry sand. Look at the Irish revival. I fear that in the end it will come to the same amount. Almost everywhere there have been great stirrings. As if a holy fire had fallen and was about to burn up all the stubble, all men stand in wonder at it, but it ceases and a few ashes remain. The fact is, the Church is not healthy, she has intermittent fits of health. She has starts of energy, she has paroxysms of agony. But she does not agonize for souls—she is not always earnest, she is not always busy. Well did Paul need to say to this age as to his own, *“Continue* in prayer.” Not one week, but every week. Not for a season, but at all seasons. Be you always crying out unto the Lord your God.

In the black country of England, you who have traveled will have observed fires which never in your recollection have been quenched. I believe there are some which have been kept burning for more than fifty years, both night and day, every day in the year. They are never allowed to go out, because, we are informed, the manufacturers would find it amazingly expensive again to get the furnace to its needed red heat. Indeed, the blast furnace, I suppose would all but ruin the proprietor if it were allowed to go out once every week. He would probably never get it up to its right heat until the time came for letting the fire out again.

Now, as with these tremendous furnaces which must burn every day or else they will be useless—they must be kept burning or else it will be hard to get them up to the proper heat—so ought it to be in all the Churches of God. They should be as flaming fires both night and day, caldron after caldron of the coal of earnestness should be put to the furnace. All the fuel of earnestness which can be gathered from the hearts of men should be cast upon the burning pile. The heavens should be always red with the glorious illumination and then—then might you expect to see the Church prospering in her Divine business and hard hearts melted before the fire of the Spirit.

Continue, then, in prayer. Never let your fire go out. But why? Why should the Church always be in prayer? Understand we do not mean by this that men ought to leave their business, forsake their shops and neglect their household, to be always supplicating. There were some fanatics in the early Church who gave up everything that they might be always praying. We know what the Apostle would have said to them for did he not say, “If any man will not work, neither let him eat? “There are some lazy people who like praying better than working—let them learn that the Lord accepts not this at their hands. Did not the Master, even when He was on earth, after He had preached a sermon in Simon Peter’s boat—did He not as soon as ever He was done, say to Peter, “Launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a draught”? He did this to show that work, hard work, the hardest of work is quite in keeping with the hearing and the preaching of the Word and that no man has any right to forsake his calling to which God has appointed him in His Providence, under pretense of seeking the Lord.

Never stain one duty with the blood of another. It is quite possible that you may continue in your labor and yet continue in prayer. You may not always be in the exercise but you may always be in the spirit of prayer. If there shall not always be iron in the furnace to melt, yet let there always be the fire to melt it. If not always shooting the arrow up to Heaven, yet always keep the bow well stringed, so shall you always be archers, though not always shooting. So shall you always be men of prayer, though not always in the exercise of praying.

1. But why should the Church—to come to the question—why should the Church continue in prayer? For several reasons and the first is, *God will answer her*. It is not possible that God should refuse to hear prayer. It is possible for Him to bid the sun stand still and the moon to stay her monthly march. It is possible for Him to bid the waves freeze in the sea—possible for Him to quench the light of the stars in eternal darkness—but it is not possible for Him to refuse to hear prayer which is based upon His promise and offered in faith. He can reverse nature, but He cannot reverse His own nature and He must do this before He can forbear to hear and answer prayer.

The prayers of God’s Church are God’s intentions—you will not misunderstand me—what God writes in the book of His decree, which no eye can see, *that* He in process of time writes in the book of Christian hearts where all can see and read. The book of the believer’s desire, if those desires are inspired of the Holy Spirit is just an exact copy of the book of the Divine decree. And if the Church is determined today to lift up her heart in prayer for the conversion of men, it is because God determined from before all worlds that men should be converted. Your feeble prayer today, Brothers and Sisters, can fly to Heaven and awake the echoes of the slumbering decrees of God.

Every time you speak to God, your voice resounds beyond the limits of time. The decrees of God speak to your prayer and cry, “All hail! Brother, all hail! you, too, are a decree!” Prayer is a decree escaped out of the prison of obscurity and come to life and liberty among men. Pray, Brothers and Sisters, pray, for when God inspires you, your prayer is as potent as the decrees of God. As His decrees bind the universe with spells and make the suns obedient to Him—as every letter of His decree is as a nail, pinning together the pillars of the universe, so are your prayers. They are the pivots on which earth rests. They are the wheels on which Providence revolves. Your prayers are like God’s decrees struggling to be born and to become incarnate like their Lord.

God will, God *must* answer the prayers of His Church. Methinks I can see in vision in the clouds God’s register. His file on which He puts the prayers of his Church. One after another they have been deposited, He has cast none of them away and consumed none of them in the fire, but He has put them on His file and smiled as the heap accumulated. And when it shall reach a certain mark which He has set and appointed in His good pleasure and the last number of the prayers shall be completed and the blood of Christ shall have bedewed the whole, then will the Eternal speak and it *shall* be done—He shall command and it *shall* stand fast.

“Let there be light,” says He and there shall be light at once. “Let the kingdom come.” And the kingdom shall come. He that lets shall be put out of the way, he that hinders shall be cast down and trod as the mire of the streets. Up, Church of God, in all the glory of your prayer, put on your vestments and begin to plead through Jesus Christ your Great High Priest. Enter you within the veil today, for God hears you and He will surely answer you.

2. There is a second reason why the Church should continue in prayer, namely, that by her prayers *the world will most certainly be blessed*. The other evening in visiting the sick, I saw at the distance, down a long street the bright light of a fire. In a moment or so the flames seemed to yield, but again it sprang up and lit the heavens. Again it became dim and dimmer still. As we walked along, we said, “They have got the fire under control. The engines have been at work, how soon it is out!”

I compare this to the Church’s work upon the world. The world is as it were wrapped in flames of the fire of sin and the Church of God must quench those flames. Whenever we meet together and are more earnest in prayer, angels might well see in the distance the flames dimmed and the fire giving way. Whenever we cease our exertions and become languid in our efforts, the flame gets the upper hand of us and once more spirits from the far-off world can see the fiery mantle surrounding our globe.

Hand up your buckets, Sirs! Every man to the pumps! Now strip to it everyone of you, work while you have life and strength. Now each man to his knee, for it is on our knees that we overcome. Each man to his station and to his work and let us continue to pass from hand to hand the quenching water till every spark shall be put out and there shall be a new Heaven and a new earth wherein dwells righteousness. To stop while but one part of the fabric is on fire would be to condemn the whole. To pause until the last spark shall be extinct, would be to give up the world to the devouring element. Continue, then, in prayer, till the world is wholly saved and Christ is universal King.

3. Thirdly, continue in prayer, because *souls shall be saved as the result of your entreatie*s. Can you stand on the beach a moment—you can scarcely see, but yet you may discern by the lights of lanterns sundry brave men launching the lifeboat. It is out—they have taken their seats. Helmsman and rowers, all strong hearts, determined to save their fellows or to perish. They have gotten far away now into the midst of the billows and we have lost sight of them. But in spirit we will take our stand in the midst of the boat. What a sea rolled in just then! If she were not built for such weather, she would surely have been overset.

See that tremendous wave and how the boat leaps like a sea bird over its crest. See now again—it has plunged into a dreary furrow and the wind, like some great plow, turns up the water on either side as though it were clods of mold. Surely the boat will find her grave and be buried in the sheet of foam—but no! She comes out of it and the dripping men draw a long breath. But the mariners are discouraged, they have strained themselves bending to yonder oars and they would turn back, for there is small hope of living in such a sea and it is hardly possible that they will ever reach the wreck.

But the brave captain cries out, “Now, my bold lads, for God’s sake, send her on! A few more pulls of the oar and we shall be alongside. The poor fellows will be able to hold on a minute or two longer. Now pull as for dear life.” See how the boat leaps, see how she springs as though she were a living thing, a messenger of mercy intent to save. Again, he says “Once more, once again and we will do it”—no, she has been dashed aside from the ship for a moment, that sea all but stove her in, but the helmsman turns her round and the captain cries, “Now, my boys, once more!” And every man pulls with lusty sinews and the poor shipwrecked ones are saved.

Yes, it is just so with us now. Long have Christ’s ministers, long have Christ’s Church pulled with the Gospel lifeboat—let us pull again. Every prayer is a fresh stroke of the oar and all of you are oarsmen. Yes, you feeble women confined to your beds, shut up in your chambers—you who can do nothing else but pray—you are all oarsmen in this great boat. Pull yet once more and this week let us drive the boat ahead and it may be it will be the last tremendous struggle that shall be required, for sinners shall be saved and the multitude of the redeemed shall be accomplished. Not we, but *grace* shall do the work, yet is it ours to be workers for God.

4. But continue in prayer once more, because prayer is *a great weapon of attack against the error and wickedness of the world*. I see before me the strong bastions of the castle of Sin. I mark the host of men who have surrounded it. They have brought the battering ram, they have dashed it many times against the gate. It has fallen with tremendous force against it and you would have supposed that the timbers would be split asunder the first time. But they are staunch and strong. He who made them was a cunning architect. He who depends upon them for his protection is one who knew how to make the gate exceeding massive—is one who knew the struggle full well which he would have to endure—Prince of Darkness as he is.

If he knew of his defeat, yet well he knew how to guard against it if it were possible. But I see this ponderous battering ram as it has been hurled with giant force again and again upon the gate and has as often seemed to recoil before the massive bars. Many of the saints of God are ready to say, “Let us withdraw the instrument. Let us take away the besieging armament, we shall never be able to storm this castle, we shall never effect an entrance.” Oh, be not craven, Sirs, be not craven. The last time the battering-ram thundered in its course, I saw the timbers shake. The very gate did reel and the posts did rock to and fro—see now they have moved the earth around their sockets.

Hell is howling from within because it knows how soon its end must come. Now, Christian warriors, use your battering rams once more, for the gates begin to shake and the walls are tottering. They will reel, they will fall before long— one more blow and yet another and another and another and as Israel went up over the walls of Jericho of old, so shall we soon go up over the fallen ruins of the walls of the castle of Sin and Satan. The Church does not know how near her victory is—we do not believe how much God is doing—but let the Holy Spirit for once give us a little more faith and in confidence that we are nearing the victory—we shall continue in prayer. Turn not back when we have all but overcome, continue still, even till the end shall be and the voice shall be heard, “Hallelujah, it is done. The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ.”

**II.** The second exhortation is WATCH. Watch, *for you will soon be drowsy if you watch not*. Joshua fought the Amalekites and I never read that his hand was weary, though the battle occupied a very long day. Moses was on the mountain in prayer and his hands grew heavy because prayer is such spiritual work and we are so un-spiritual that the tendency of prayer upon our nature will be to make us drowsy unless we watch. It is ill-praying, when we are drowsy. It is ill for a Church that is not half-awake to be in supplication. All eyes must be opened. The judgment, the imagination, the hope, the memory—all must be in full vigor, or else we can scarcely hope that prayer shall be successful.

I think I see the Church as I fear she is now. There she is upon her knees, with hands clasped. She mutters a few words. Her head droops, for she is weary. Again she pleads and yet again her head is well nigh fallen on her bosom. She is a sleeping Church in prayer. Am I too severe in this picture? I believe it is true. I think there are some members of the Church thoroughly awake, but they are few. There are multitudes of professors who do not feel the value of souls. There are many who will meet in the room of this lower hall and meet in our own chapels also, to pray who are nevertheless not awake, not awake to the world’s necessities, not awake to Christ’s glory, not awake to the power of the Gospel—nor awake to their own responsibilities, so that they will pray—but pray and sleep. Here, then, we see the value of the exhortation of the Apostle—“Continue in prayer and *watch in the same*.”

But watch for another reason—because *as soon as ever you begin to pray there will be enemies who will commence the attack*. The Church never was earnest yet without sooner or later discovering that the devil was in earnest, too. The devil has had an easy time of it up till the last six or seven years for the Church has been going on her old-fashioned way doing nothing at all. There was very little abuse of ministers—ministers were getting to be very respectable men and very little abuse of any section of Christians—they were all getting to be very easy and loveable sort of people.

But as sure as the Church, or any section of the Church, shall be right-down in earnest, they will be abused. Never think you are good for anything till the world finds fault with you. Never reckon that you have got a success unless many begin to cry you down. I always think that an article against you, if you have sought with an honest conscience to discharge your duty in the sight of God, is one of the highest compliments the press can pay you. Consider it as such. Never expect that the world will be friends with the Church.

Indeed the world will be friendly enough with the Church if the Church will not do her duty. If there were a sentinel set to guard a post against surprise, if you knew him to be a very great friend of those who meant to make the attack, I think you would suspect very soon that he was in collusion with the enemy. No, Sirs, they who fight Christ’s battles, must be men who think as well of the world as the world thinks of them—that is to say, who have no love to the world’s esteem and the world no love to them. Martin Luther used to say, “The world gives me a very bad character, but there is no love lost between us, I can give to it as bad a character as ever it gives to me.” The world says “quack, pretender, fanatic!” Be it so—be it so, O world, you have no power to honor Christ’s ministers, except by upbraiding them. There is no power in the wicked to honor Christ’s minister, except they are either trembling before him, or else laughing at him. Either way we will gratefully accept the honor and write it down as being a proof of our success.

But watch, O Church of Christ, watch! A struggle awaits you as sure as ever you are earnest in prayer. In riding along the south coast of England you may have noticed the old Martello towers in constant succession very near to each other. They are the result of an old scheme of protecting our coast from our ancient enemies. It was supposed that as soon as ever a French ship was seen in the distance the beacon would be fired at the Martello tower and then, across old England, wherever her sons dwelt, there would flash the fiery signal news that the enemy was at hand and every man would seize the weapon that was next to him to dash the invader from the shore.

Now we need that the Church of Christ should be guarded with Martello towers of sacred watchers who shall day and night look out for the attack of the enemy. For the enemy will come. If he comes not when we are prayerless he will surely come when we are prayerful. He will show the cloven hoof as soon as ever we show the bended knee. If our motto is “Prayer,” his watchword will be “Fierce attack.” Watch, then, while you continue in prayer.

But yet again—watch while you pray *for propitious events which may help you in the answer to your prayer*. I have known sea captains, when they have got their ships loaded with coal and they have wished to come up to London with their cargo have been unable to get down the Tyne and out to sea. If they could have got to sea, they could make their passage. And I have once or twice known a wary captain, being well upon the watch, manage to sail out of the river just while there was a little change of the wind and when his fellows have awakened in the morning, they have missed him from his berth and he has stolen a march upon them. He watched and they did not and having lost the wind, they have had to lie in port till he has emptied out his cargo and returned.

Now, the Church should watch while she prays to see if she cannot fulfill her own prayers, look out for opportunities of doing good and see if she cannot steal a march upon her enemies. While she has one eye to Heaven for help, she must have the other eye on earth to look out for opportunities of doing good. God does not always send the Spirit to blow with the same force. We cannot make the wind blow, but we can spread the sails. So, if we cannot command the Spirit of God, when the Spirit of God does come, we can observe His coming and avail ourselves of the glorious opportunity. Watch, then, while you pray.

Watch, too, *for fresh arguments in prayer*. Heaven’s gate is not to be stormed by one weapon but by many. Spare no arrows, Christian. Watch and see that none of the arms in your armory are rusty. Besiege the Throne of God with a hundred hands and look at the promise with a hundred eyes. You have a great work on hand for you have to move the arm that moves the world. Watch, then, for every means of moving that arm. See to it that you ply every Promise. Use every argument. Wrestle with all your might.

When you are wrestling with an antagonist, you must keep your eye on him. You must look to see what he means to do next, of where you can get the next grip at him. See where you can get a hold, or plant your foot, so that you can throw him down. So wrestle with the Angel of Mercy. Watch while you pray. You cannot wrestle with your eyes shut, nor can you prevail with God unless your own soul is in a watchful state. O Spirit of God, arouse the Church and help her to watch while she prays.

But one other remark— *watch for the answers to your prayers*. When you post a letter to a friend, requesting a favor, you watch for an answer. When you pray to God for a favor you do not expect Him to hear you, some of you. If the Lord were to hear some of your prayers, you would be surprised. I do believe that if God should send to you what you have asked for, you would be quite astonished. Sometimes when I have met with a special answer to prayer and have told it, some have said—“is it not wonderful!” Not at all, it would be wonderful if it were not so. God says—“Ask and you shall receive.” If I should ask and not receive, it would be wonderful. “Seek and you shall find.”

If you seek and do not find, it is not only wonderful, but I think it is contradictory to God’s Word. The Church has but to ask and she shall receive. She has but to knock and the door of mercy shall be opened. But we do not believe this. We fritter away God’s Promises and clip the edge of them and then we go to God in prayer and we think that prayer is a very holy exercise—but we do not think that God really hears us. Too many professors believe it is their duty to pray but really they are not so enthusiastic as to think that God actually listens and sends them what they ask for.

A man who should say that he knew that God heard his prayers is in some quarters looked upon as an enthusiast. And what is that but a proof that we do not believe this precious Book? For let the most unprejudiced man be a judge. If this Book does not teach that, “Whatsoever we ask in prayer, believing we shall receive,” then it does not teach anything at all. And if it is not true that prayer is a power which prevails with God, then shut this Book. It is not worthy of any confidence, for it does plainly say that which you say it does not mean.

The fact is, my Brothers and Sisters, the answers to our prayers are always on the way while we are asking. Sometimes they come while we are yet speaking. Sometimes they delay because we have not prayed as we should. God keeps the mercy back at times and puts it out at compound interest because He means to pay it to us interest and all—whereas if we had it at once, we should miss the interest, which sometimes doubles and trebles the principal! We are never losers by His delays, but always gainers. We ought never to say, even though Providence should tell so, that God forgets or is unmindful—we never ought to believe that God has been deaf to our cries, or refused to answer our petitions.

A true believer pleading Christ’s name and sacrifice and asking in faith, must and shall receive that which he asks of God. Now, during the next week, the Churches will meet together to ask for God’s blessing and if that blessing were to come, we should read the *Missionary Herald* and it would begin, “There has been a most surprising awakening throughout all the Churches in such-and-such a country.” That word “surprising,” ought to be struck out. We should say, “God has been as good as His Word. We asked Him to bless the world and He has done it. And if He does not do it, it will be because we have not asked aright, for as sure as ever we had asked aright, God would have heard us.”

I believe this to be as true as a mathematical proposition. If twice two is four, then it is just as true that God hears prayer. I would not look upon it as being a mere notion, a thought, a very fine imagining, or a pretty idea. It is a fact, Sirs. It is a fact. It is a fact which I could prove in my own experience by a hundred instances if this were the time and place to tell them. But I am sure that the people of God universally could prove that God does hear prayer. As certainly as ever when you write to a friend you get your answer—more surely and certainly still if you are pleading the name of Christ God will hear you.

But oh, open your eyes and look for the blessing! Do watch for it. Be not so simple as to sow the seed and never look for the harvest. Do not be planting and never looking for fruit. Give up your prayers, or else expect them to be successful. When we were little children we had a little plot of ground for a garden and we put our seeds into it. I well recollect how the day after I had put in my seed I went and scraped the soil away to see if it was not growing, as I expected it would have been after a day or so at the very longest and I thought the time amazingly long before the seed would be able to make its appearance above the ground.

“That is childish,” you would say. I know it is, but I wish you were childish, too, with regard to your prayers—that you would—when you have put them in the ground, go and see if they have sprung up. And if not at once—be childish in refusing to wait till the appointed time comes—always go back and see if they have begun to sprout. If you believe in prayer at all, expect God to hear you. If you do not expect, you will not have it. God will not hear you unless you believe He will hear you. But if you believe He will, He will be as good as your faith. He will never allow you to think better of Him than He is. He will come up to the mark of your thoughts and according to your faith so shall it be done unto you.

**III.** I have a third point, but my time is almost gone, therefore let me dwell on it very briefly. The third point is, GIVE THANKS.   
Prayer should be mingled with praise. I have heard that in New England after the Puritans had settled there a long while, they used to have very often a day of humiliation, fasting and prayer, till they had so many days of fasting, humiliation and prayer, at last a good senator proposed that they should change it for once and have a day of thanksgiving. It is of little use to be always fasting. We ought sometimes to give thanks for mercies received.   
Now, during this week, there are to be days of prayer. Take care that they are days of praise, too. Why should we go to God as mournful beings, who plead piteously with a hard Master who loves not to give? When you give a penny to a beggar in the street, you like to see him smile at you—do you not? Is he a crossing-sweeper and you have given him a trifle, he looks extremely grateful and happy and you think within yourself, “What a small expense has made that man happy! I think I will buy another pennyworth of joy the next time I pass by.”   
So you give him all the more because of his thankfulness to you. Now, go not before God with a rueful face, you people of God, as though He had never heard you before and you were about to try a great experiment on One who was exceedingly deaf and did not like to give you mercies. God is as pleased to give you His blessing as ever you are to receive it. It is as much to *His* honor as it is to *your* comfort. He takes more pleasure in your prayers than you do in His answers. Come therefore, boldly. Come with thankfulness in your heart and upon your lips and join the hymn of praise with the cry of prayer.   
Be thankful for what God has done. Look at the past year. I commend it to your consideration when you meet for prayer. Has there been for the last twenty years such a year as the last? If any man had said seven years ago there would be preaching in St. Paul’s Cathedral and Westminster Abbey, we should never have believed him. But it is has been and it is to be again. If any friends had said that nearly all the theatres in London would be filled on the Sabbath-Day, “Oh,” you would have said, “it is ridiculous, it is an absurd notion.” But it is done, Sirs, it is done.   
If any had said to you seven years ago there would have been a congregation of many thousands who, without any drawback in numbers, would always assemble every Sabbath-Day to listen to one minister, you would have said, “Ridiculous! There is no precedent for it. It is impossible. It is not at all possible that the Spirit of God can incline a people’s heart so long to listen to *one man*.” It is done, Sirs, by God’s grace it is done. And what are we to do but to give God thanks for it? When we come before Him to ask Him for fresh mercies, let us not be so foolish as to forget the past. “Sing unto Him, sing unto Him, sing Psalms unto Him. Come into His presence with thanksgivings and show yourself glad in Him with Psalms—for the Lord is God and a great King above all gods.” So thank Him for the past and pray to Him for the future. Thank Him, too, for the power to pray. Thank Him for the privilege of taking the Church’s wants before Him.   
And do better still—thank Him for the mercy which is to come. Great God, I thank You for Sinim, the land of China, which shall come unto You. I praise You for India, which shall receive You. I praise You for Ethiopia, which shall stretch out her arms unto You. Great God, today we bless You for what You will do. Your promise is, in the estimation of our faith, as good as the performance itself. We extol and glorify You. For Your right hand, O Lord! Your right hand, O Lord, has dashed in pieces the enemy. You have broken the bow and cut the spear in sunder. You have burned the chariot in the fire. Your right hand, O Lord, has gotten You the victory. Oh come let us sing unto the Lord, for He has triumphed gloriously. Let us laud and extol Him, for He is King forever and ever!   
Say unto Zion, “Your God reigns.” Behold, He comes. He comes to judge the world in righteousness and the people with equity. Rejoice before Him, O you hills, clap your hands, O you cedars! Let the sea roar and the fullness thereof. The world and all that dwell therein! Praise Him, you heavens. And you Heaven of heavens. You spirits that stand before His Throne, for He is God and beside Him there is no God. The whole earth praises You, O God and all Your creatures bless You forever and ever!   
Thus with the censor of prayer and praise let us be this week like priests of God. And You great High Priest, take our sacrifice and offer it before Your Father’s face.   
I close my sermon. O that some here present may lay the subject of prayer to heart this week! Get alone, dear Friends, get alone this week! Pray for your children this week and groan with God over your ungodly sons and daughters! Pray for your neighbors this week! Put God to the test! See if He does not open the windows of Heaven upon you. Be much in prayer and you shall be much blessed.   
And O poor Sinner! You who have never prayed before—the year of God’s redeemed is come. This is the acceptable day of the Lord. If you seek Him, He will be found of you. “Seek you the Lord while He may be found. Call you upon Him while He is near.” Cry to Him now! Say—   
***“O sovereign grace, my heart subdue!”***Trust Jesus with your soul and unworthy though you are, your prayer shall he heard and you shall be able to join with the company of the faithful in praying for others as well as for yourself. God bless you all, for Jesus’ sake! Amen.

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**ELECTION—ITS DEFENSES AND EVIDENCES  
NO. 2920**

**A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, JANUARY 26, 1905.**

***DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,*AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, IN THE YEAR 1862.**

***“Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God. For our Gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit, and in much assurance…And you became followers of us, and of the Lord having received the word***

***in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit.”***[1Th 1:4-6](tw://bible.*?id=52.1.4-52.1.6|_AUTODETECT_|)***.***

AT the very announcement of the text, some will be ready to say, “Why preach upon so profound a Doctrine as Election?” I answer, because it is in God’s Word, and whatever is in the Word of God is to be preached! “But some Truths of God ought to be kept back from the people,” you will say, “lest they should make an ill use of them.” That is Popish doctrine! It was upon that very theory that the priests kept back the Bible from the people—they did not give it to them lest they should misuse it. “But are not some Doctrines dangerous?” Not if they are true and rightly handled. The Truth of God is never dangerous—it is error and reticence that are fraught with peril! “But do not men abuse the Doctrines of Grace?” I grant you that they do! But if we destroyed everything that men misuse, we would have nothing left! Are there to be no ropes because some fools will hang themselves? And must cutlery be discarded and denounced because there are some who will use dangerous weapons for the destruction of their adversaries? Decidedly not! Besides all this, remember that men read the Scriptures and think about these Doctrines and, therefore, often make mistakes about them. Who, then, shall set them right if we who preach the Word hold our tongues about the matter?

I know that some men who have embraced the Doctrine of Election have become Antinomians. Such men would probably have found other excuses for their misdeeds if they had not sheltered themselves under the shadow of this Doctrine. The sun will ripen the noxious weed as well as the fruitful plant, but that is not the fault of the sun, but of the nature of the weed, itself! We believe, however, that more persons are made Antinomians through those who deny the Doctrine than through those who preach it. One evidence of this is that in Scotland. You will scarcely find a congregation of Hyper-Calvinists—the simple reason being that the Church in Scotland holds entire the whole Doctrine upon this matter and her ministers, as a rule, are not ashamed to preach it fearlessly and boldly—and in connection with the rest of the faith.

Take any Doctrine and preach upon it exclusively, and you distort it. The fairest face in the world, with the most comely features, would soon become unseemly if one feature were permitted to expand while the rest were kept in their usual form. Proportion, I take it, is beauty—and to preach every Truth of God in its fair proportion, neither keeping back any nor giving undue prominence to any, is to preach the whole Truth as Christ would have it preached! On a Gospel thus entire and harmonious, we may expect to have the blessing of the Most High. So much by way of preface, not by way of apology. It is not my custom to offer any apology for speaking the Truth of God!

**I.**WHAT IS THIS DOCTRINE OF ELECTION? Let us try to understand it as spoken of in the text—“Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God.”

*There is such a thing as election* . Any man who should deny that man is a free agent might well be thought unreasonable, but *free will* is a different thing from free agency. Luther denounced free will when he said that “free will is the name for nothing.” And President Edwards demolished the idea in his masterly treatise. God is the universal Agent and does as He wills—and His will is supremely good. He is the superlative Agent and man, acting according to the devices of his own heart, is nevertheless overruled by that Sovereign and wise legislation which causes the wrath of man (that agency in which the creature cannot govern himself) to praise Him and the remainder thereof He restrains. How these two things are true I cannot tell. It is not necessary for our good, either in this life or the next, that we should have the skill to solve such problems. I am not sure that in Heaven we shall be able to know where the free agency of man and the Sovereignty of God meet, but both are great Truths. God has predestinated everything, yet man is responsible, for he acts freely and no constraint is put upon him even when he sins and wantonly and wickedly disobeys the will of God! But so many as are saved, you will say, are saved because they believe. Certainly it is so! It is most true—God forbid I should deny it—but why do they believe? They believe as the result of the working of the Grace of God in their hearts. Since every man who is saved confesses this, since every true Believer in the world acknowledges that something special has been done for him more than for the impenitent, the fact is established that God does make a difference. No one ever heard it laid as an impeachment against the Lord that He has made such a difference, so I cannot see why He should be impeached for intending to make that difference—which is the Doctrine of Election! I am saved, but I know it is not because of any goodness in me. And if you are saved, you will freely confess that it is the distinguishing love of God that has made you to differ. The Doctrine of Election is simply God’s intention to make the difference between people which you know exists. While He gives mercy to all, He gives more mercy to some so that the mercy already received shall be made effectual to their eternal salvation.

*This Election of God is Sovereign* . He chooses as He wills. Who shall call Him to account? “Can I not do as I will with My own?” is His answer to every quibbler. “No, but, O man, who are you that replies against God?” is the solemn utterance that silences everyone who would impugn the Justice of the Most High. He has a right, seeing we are all criminals, to punish whom He will. As King of the universe, He doubtless acts with discretion, but still according to His Sovereignty. Wisely, not wantonly, He rules, but always according to the counsel of His own will. Election, then, is Sovereign.

Again, *Election is free*. Whatever may be God’s reason for choosing a man, certainly it is not because of any good thing in that man! He is chosen because God will do so. We can get no further. We get as far as those words of Christ, “Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in Your sight,” and there we stop—for beyond that no philosophy and no Scripture can take us.

As it is Sovereign and free, so *Election is irreversible*. Having chosen His people, He does not cast them away nor call back the word that is gone from His lips, for it is written, “He hates putting away.” He is of one mind and who can turn Him?

Once more, Election *is effectual*. For “whom He did predestinate, them He also called: and whom He called, them He also justified: and whom He justified, them He also glorified.”

And this *Election is personal*, for He calls out His children one by one by their names. He calls them even as He leads out the stars and so He brings them, every one, to the Father’s House above.

We have thus given a statement as to what this Doctrine is. There we will leave it. Our present objective is not so much to expound the Doctrine as to strike a blow or two at certain errors which are very common and which spring out of it. I know, dear Friends, there are some who are so afraid of this Doctrine that the mention of it produces alarm. If they were to meet a lion in their way, they would not be more terrified than they are when they see this Doctrine in Scripture or hear it from the pulpit!

**II.**Therefore, secondly, we will NOTICE WHAT ARE THE DEFENSES OF THIS DOCTRINE and try, if we can, should you be laboring under any distress of mind about it, to remove your difficulties.

Will you please remember, then, that *this is not a point which you can understand at the commencement of spiritual and religious life?*You would not teach your children, I suppose, to say their prayers backwards and begin at, “Amen.” And you are beginning at the wrong end when you want, first of all, to know your election instead of commencing with repentance towards God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ! Election is a lesson for the more advanced students. Faith and hope must be learned, first of all, in the infant class to which we all must go if we would be wise unto salvation.

Now, if a child should have a book of algebra put into his hand and should puzzle himself and say, “I shall never get an education, for I cannot understand this.” And then take down some ancient classic and say, “I cannot comprehend this, either,” you would say, “Dear Child, you have nothing to do with these yet! Here is a sampler book for you—a primer. Here you have A, B, C—learn this, first, and then, step by step, you shall attain to the rest.” Even so it is with us. Simple trust in Christ is the first thing you have to understand. After that you shall know the high, the sublime and the glorious Doctrine of God’s Decrees—but do not *begin* with these! You will mystify and ruin yourself—you will lose your way in a fog and get no good thereby.

Again, it is very certain that whatever this Doctrine may be—and we will have no dispute about it just now—*this Doctrine cannot possibly be inconsistent with certain plain promises in God’s Word*. Such promises as these—“Come unto Me, all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” “Whoever will, let him take the water of life freely.” “He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him.” Why, I might quote by the hour together some of these promises which are as wide as the poles—invitations that must not be narrowed, exhortations which are addressed to every man and woman under Heaven—in which every one of them is bidden to hear and live. “Ho, everyone that thirsts, come to the waters.” You know the class of promises to which I allude. Now these are the Words of God which are for you—get hold of them— come to Jesus Christ with them in your hands and rest assured the Doctrine of Election, instead of pushing you back, shall stand like the servants about your father’s table to make music while your whole being shall dance to the glorious tune! It shall be like a dish upon the table at the feast of the returning prodigal, of which you shall eat to the very full! It shall by no means repulse you or show anything to you which may keep you from hoping in Christ.

Once more, it is quite certain that whatever it may be, *this Doctrine of Election does not deliver you from your duty*. Now what is your duty? “This is the work of God, that you believe on Him whom He has sent.” So much is this your absolute duty that, “He that believes not is condemned already, because he has not believed.” This, more than anything else is the reason of men’s condemnation! The Scripture says this is the one great sin. Of the Spirit of Truth we read that “when He is come, He will reprove the world of sin—of sin because they believe not on Me.” Very well, then—in as much as God has so put it, that He commands you this day to trust Christ and to believe on Him—that is what you have to see to—and you may rest perfectly sure that falling back on the Doctrine of Election in order to exonerate you from what God commands you to perform is but a pitiful pretense! You are *commanded* to believe and what God commands, no Doctrine may teach that it is unfit for you to do! May God help you to believe, for this Doctrine comes not to excuse you. The Gospel *commands* you and Election through the Holy Spirit *enables* you. It is your duty to believe, but no man ever was saved as a matter of duty, for that which saves is the gift of God. But your business now is with Christ, only, and not with the Decrees of the Father which are all in the keeping of Christ and shall presently be revealed to you. You have to go to Christ, first, and to His Father afterwards, for He says, “No man comes unto the Father but by Me.” You must go to the Cross to get to the Decree—you must go round by Redemption to get to Election—there is no other way.

**III.**In the third place let us see WHAT ARE THE EVIDENCES OF ELECTION. Our text says, very plainly too, that the Apostle knew the election of the Thessalonians. How did he know it? The way by which the Apostle knew it must be the method by which you and I are to know our election of God, too.

We have known more than once in our day of some men who pretended to know their election by their impudence. They had got into their head the presumption that they were elected and though they lived on in sin and still did as they liked, they imagined they were God’s chosen. This is what I call presuming upon election by sheer impudence.

We know of others, alas, who have imagined themselves to be elect because of the visions that they have seen when they have been asleep or when they have been awake—for men have waking dreams—and they have brought these as evidences of their election. These are of as much value as cobwebs would be for a garment! They will be of as much service to you at the Day of Judgment as a thief’s convictions would be to him if he were in need of a character to commend him to mercy. You may dream long enough before you dream yourself into Heaven—and you may have as many stupid notions in your head as there are romances in your circulating libraries—but because they are in your head they are not, therefore, in God’s Book. We need a more sure word of testimony than this and if we have it not, God forbid that we should indulge our vain heart with the dainty thought that we are chosen of God!

I have heard of one who said in an alehouse that he could say more than any of the rest, that he was one of God’s children. Meanwhile he drank deeper into intoxication than the rest. Surely he might have said, with an emphasis, that he was one of the *devil’s* children—and he would have been correct. When immoral men and women who live constantly in sin, prate about being God’s children, we discern them at once. Just as we know a crab tree when we see the fruit hanging upon it, we understand what spirit these people are of when we see their walk and conversation. Oh, it is detestable—loathsome above all loathsomeness— to hear men whose characters in secret are infamous, and whose lives are destitute of every Christian virtue, boasting as though they had the keys of Heaven and could set up whomever they would, and pull down whomever they might please! Blessed be God, we are not under their domination, for a more terrific set of tyrants than they are, the world has never known! And a more frightful reign of vice than they would inaugurate if they had their way, I am sure villainy, itself, cannot conceive! “Be not deceived, God is not mocked.” “Without holiness no man shall see the Lord.” If Divine Grace does not make us holy, teaching us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, it is not worth the having! Brothers and Sisters, if we are God’s elect we must have some substantial evidence to attest it!

According to our text, what are these evidences? They seem to be four. *The first evidence appears to be the Word of God coming home with power.*If you will turn to the verse, you will soon see how the Apostle says, “Our Gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit.” The Gospel is preached in the ears of all—it only comes with power to some. The power that is in the Gospel does not lie in the eloquence of the preacher, otherwise *men would be the converters of souls*. Nor does it lie in the preacher’s learning, otherwise *it would consist in the wisdom of man*. The power which converts souls does not even lie in the preacher’s simplicity or adaptation to his work—that is a secondary agency, but not the cause. Again, the power which converts souls does not even lie in the pathos which the speaker may employ. Men may weep to the tragic muse in a theater as well as to prophetic strains in a chapel! Their creature passions may be impressed through the acting on the stage as well as by the utterance of God’s own servants! No, there is something more than this needed and where it is absent, all preaching is nothing! We might preach till our tongues rotted, till we should exhaust our lungs and die, but never a soul would be converted unless there were the mysterious power of the Holy Spirit going with it, changing the will of man!

O Sirs! We might as well preach to stone walls as preach to humanity unless the Holy Spirit is with the Word to give it power to convert the soul! We are reminded of Mr. Rowland Hill, who once met a man in the street at night, not quite drunk, but almost so. The man said, “Mr. Hill, I am one of your converts.” “Yes,” he said, “I dare say you are one of *mine*—but if you were one of *God’s*, you would not be in the state in which you now are.” Our converts are worth nothing. If they are converted by man they can be unconverted by man! If some charm or power of one preacher can bring them to Christ, some charm or power of another preacher can take them from Christ. True conversion is the work of the Holy Spirit and of the Holy Spirit alone!

Well, then, my Hearers, did you ever, when listening to the Word, feel a Divine Power coming with it? Never mind where you were, whether in Westminster Abbey, St. Paul’s Cathedral, in this Tabernacle, or at some special service at one of the theaters—the place matters nothing. “Well,” perhaps you will say, “I have felt some impression.” Ah, but that may be wiped away! Have you ever felt something coming with the Word which you could not understand. Which, while it wooed you and won your heart, smote you as though a sword had gone through you and that not with a flesh wound, but with a wound that divides between soul and spirit, between joint and marrow, as if the Truth of God were, as indeed it is, a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the hearts?

Those who are really God’s elect can tell a tale something like this. “There was a time when the Word was to me like a great ten thongedwhip—my shoulders were stripped bare and every time the Word was preached it seemed to make a gash within my soul! I trembled. I saw God in arms against me. I understood that I was in debt to His Justice and could not pay—that I was involved in a controversy against my Maker and could not conquer. I saw myself stripped naked to my shame, leprous from head to foot, a bankrupt and a felon ready to be given over to a traitor’s doom.” Truly the Word came with power to your soul. “And,” you continue, “I remember, too, when the Truth of God came home to my heart and made me leap for very joy, for it took all my load away—it showed me Christ’s power to save! I had known the Truth before, but now I felt it! I had understood that Christ could save, but now that fact came home to me! I went to Jesus just as I was—I touched the hem of His garment and I was made whole! I found now that the Word was not a fiction—that it was the one reality. I had listened scores of times and he that spoke was as one that played a tune upon an instrument—but now he seemed to be dealing with *me*, putting his hand right into my heart and getting hold of *me*. He brought me first to God’s Judgment Seat and there I stood and heard the thunders roll! Then he brought me to the Mercy Seat and I saw the blood sprinkled on it, and I went home triumphing because my sin was washed away.” Oh, again I ask you, did the Word over come home with this power to your souls?

Since the day of your conversion has the Word ever rebuked you? Has it sometimes cut down your hopes? Do you sometimes, after hearing a sermon, feel as if it had been like a great hurricane bearing right through the forest of your thoughts, cleaving its own course, and leaving many a dead thing that you thought alive swept down to the ground? Do you feel, too, when you go home from the sanctuary, as if God Himself had been there? You did not know what else it could be. It could not have been the speaker nor the words he uttered, but the very God came and looked into your eyes and searched the thoughts of your mind—and turned your heart upside down and then filled it full again with His love and with His light, with His truth and with His joy, with His peace and with His desire after holiness? Is it so with you? Where the Word is not with power to your souls, you lack the proof of Election.

Remember, I do not say that it will always be so. You must not expect that God will speak with you every time—in fact, the preacher himself fails often and is painfully conscious of it. How shall one man always speak without sometimes feeling that he, himself, is not in a fit frame to be God’s mouthpiece? But though it be a clown from the country, if he preaches God’s Word, the Spirit will go with it! It is not the clown, nor yet the archbishop that does the work—it is the Word of God that is quick and powerful! Your evidence of Election is blotted and blurred unless the Word has come to you with demonstration of the Spirit and with His Power. People come and hear sermons in this place and then they go out and say, “How did you like it”—as if that meant anything to anybody— “How did you like it?” And one says, “Oh, very well.” And another says, “Oh, not at all.” Do you think we live on the breath of your nostrils? Do you believe that God’s servants, if they are really His, care for what you think of them? No, verily, but if you should reply, “I enjoyed the sermon,” they are inclined to say, “Then we must have been unfaithful or else you would have been angry—we must surely have slurred over something or else the Word would have cut your conscience as with the jagged edges of a knife! You would have said, ‘I did not think how I liked it—I was thinking how I liked myself and about my own state before God. That was the matter that exercised me, not whether he preached well, but whether I stood accepted in Christ, or whether I was a castaway.’” My dear Hearers, are you learning to hear like that? If you are not, if going to church and to chapel are to you like going to a play, or like listening to some orator who speaks upon temporal matters, then you lack the evidence of Election—the Word has not come to your souls with power.

But there is yet a second evidence of Election. *Those whom God has chosen receive the Word “in much assurance.”*They do not all receive it with full assurance—that is a Grace they get afterwards—but they receive it with *much* assurance. There are some professors who go upon very strange principles. It is indeed somewhat difficult to know what principles are enforced and acknowledged in this age, for there are persons whose principles allow them to say black and white are the same thing! And there are certain persons whose religious principles are not much unlike this. They put a hymn book in their pockets when they are going to a meeting. They put a comic song book in their pockets when they are going somewhere else. They can hold with the hare and run with the hounds. Such people as these never have any very great confidence in their religion—and it is very proper that they should not—for their religion is not worth the time they spend in making a profession of it!

But the true Christian, when he gets hold of principles, keeps them and there is no mistake about the grip with which he maintains his hold of them. “Ah,” he says, “that Word which I have heard with my ears is the very Truth of God and it is true to me, real and substantial to me—and here I clasp it with both hands—with a clasp that neither time, nor tribulation, nor death shall ever cause me to let go.” To a Christian his religion is a part of himself—he believes the Truth of God not because he has been told it or taught it by mother or friend, but because it is true to him in his inmost soul. He is like the servant girl who, when she could not answer her infidel master, said, “Sir, I cannot answer you, but I have a something in here that would if it could speak.” There is “much assurance.”

Sinners who have once felt their need of a Savior feel very much assurance about His preciousness. And saints that have once found Him precious have very much assurance about His Divinity, about His Atonement, about His everlasting Love, about His immortal dignity as a Prophet, a Priest and a King. They are sure of it. I know some persons who say if a man speaks positively, he is dogmatic. Glorious old dogmatism, when will you come back to earth? It is these, “ifs,” and “buts,” and qualifications—these, “perhapses,” and “maybe sos” that have ruined our pulpits! Look at Luther when he stood up for the glory of his God—was there ever such a dogmatist? “I believe it,” he said, “and therefore I speak it.” From that day, when on Pilate’s staircase, he was trying to creep up and down the stairs to win Heaven, when the sentence out of the musty folio came before him, “Justified by faith we have peace with God,” that man was as sure that works could *not* save him as he was of his own existence! Now, if he had come out and said, “Gentlemen, I have a theory to propound that may be correct. Excuse my doing so,” and so on, the Papacy would have been dominant to this day! But he knew God had said it and he felt that that was God’s own way to his own soul—and he could not help being dogmatic with that glorious force of secession which soon laid his foes prostrate at his feet!

Now have *you*received the Gospel “with much assurance”? If you have and you can say, “Christ is mine. I trust in Him and though I may sometimes have doubts about my own interest in Him, yet I do know by experience in my soul that He is a precious Christ—I know not by ‘*Paley’s Evidences*’ nor by ‘*Butler’s Analogy*,’ but I know by my heart’s inward evidence. I know by the analogy of my own soul’s experience that the Truth of God which I have received is no cunningly devised fable, but something that came from God to draw my soul up to God”—that is another evidence of Election! If you have that, never mind the rest! I hardly care whether you believe the Doctrine of Election or not—you are elect. As I have sometimes told a Brother who has denied the Doctrine of Final Perseverance, when I have seen his holy life, “Never mind, my Brother, you will persevere to the end and you will prove the Doctrine that you do not believe! You may not be able to receive the Doctrine I now preach, but if such has been your experience, when you get to Heaven you will wake up and say, ‘Well, I am one of the elect! I made a deal of fuss about it while on the earth, but I will make a deal of music about it now that I have got to Heaven. And I will sing more sweetly and loudly than all the rest, ‘Unto Him that has loved me and washed me from my sins in His blood, unto Him be glory forever and ever!’”

But there is a third evidence. *Those who are chosen of the Lord desire to be like Him.* “You became followers of us and of the Lord,” the Apostle says in the text—by which he does not mean that they said, “I am of Paul, I am of Silas, I am of Timothy”—but that they imitated Paul so far as he imitated Christ. Thomas aˆ Kempis wrote a book about the imitation of Christ and a blessed book in some respects it is. But I would like the Holy Spirit to write in your hearts the imitation of Christ. It shall be to you a sweet proof that you are chosen of God. Are you Christlike or do you want to be? Can you forgive your enemy and can you love him and do him good? Can you say tonight, “I am no more any man’s enemy than is the baby that is just born”? And do you now desire to live unselfishly, to live for others, to live for God? Are you prayerful? Do you come to God in prayer as Jesus did? Are you careful of your words and of your acts as Christ was? I do not ask you if you are perfect, but I do ask whether you follow the Perfect One! We are to be followers of Christ, if not with equal steps, still with steps that would be equal if they could! If we follow Christ, that will be to others one of the surest proofs of our election, though perhaps to ourselves, if we are humble-minded, it will be no proof, since we shall rather see our blemishes than our virtues and mourn over our sins more than we rejoice in our Graces. If a man follows not Christ, those who look on may be safe enough in concluding that, whatever he may say about election, and however much he may prate about it, he is not the Lord’s. On that point I shall not say anything more because I have already enlarged upon it in a former part of the discourse.

In the last place I will say *the fourth evidence is the existence of spiritual joy in spiritual service*. If you look further, it seems that those of whose election the Apostle was sure, received the Word of God “in much affliction,” but, “with joy in the Holy Spirit.” What do you say about this, you whose religion consists of a slavish attendance upon forms that you detest? Look how many there are who go to a place of worship just because it is not respectable to stay away, but who often wish it were! And when many of your Christians get to the Continent, where is the Sabbath with them, then? Where is then their care for God’s House? See, too, with what misery some people at home go up to the House of the Lord. Why? Because they have come to regard it as a place where they ought to be very solemn. It is not a home to them—it is a prison. How different it is with your children when they come home for their holidays! How do they come into their father’s house? Dull, demure, as if they could not speak? No, bless their little hearts, they come running up to their father’s knees, so glad to be there, so glad to be home! That is how a man whose religion is his delight comes up to the House of the Lord. He feels that it is his Father’s House. He would be reverent, for his Father is God, but he must be happy, for God is his Father!

See again the Christian when he goes to his closet to pray. Ungodly persons will not go there at all. Or, if they do, it is because they want to win Heaven by it. But look, they go through their dreary prayers—and what a dreary thing it must be for a man to pray when he never expects to be heard and when he has no spirit of prayer! It is like a horse going round a mill grinding for somebody else and never getting any farther— doing the same tomorrow, the same the day after, and ever on and on. Sometimes as the little church bells sound in the morning in certain churches to fetch people out—Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday there are some persons to be found there for early prayers—and they go to evening prayers, too, and a very good thing this would be if those who attend went there with holy joy! But there is the sexton and he says it is a great trouble to be always opening the doors like that when nobody comes except three old women that have got almshouses and two that expect them and are, therefore, there. Do you think that an acceptable service to God? But they who go because they would not stay away if they could—they who worship God because it is an *instinct* and a pleasure, a holy thing and honorable—these are men and women who delight in God’s Word and they give the best evidence of being chosen of God!

Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, who make your faces miserable that you may appear unto men to fast! Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that reads the heart asks not that your head may hang down like a bulrush, but that you may do deeds of mercy and walk humbly with your God! And you who can delight yourselves in your God shall have the desires of your heart! You that rejoice in the Lord, always, and triumph in His name shall go from strength to strength, and going at last to Glory, you shall find that you are there as the result of His Divine Purpose and Decree—and you shall give Him all the praise!

But now, I think I hear some say, “Oh, I want to know whether I am elect. I cannot say that the Word ever came to me with power. I cannot say I received it in much assurance. I cannot say I am a follower of Christ. I cannot say I have received the Word with joy.” Well, dear Beloved, then leave that question alone! Instead of that, let me ask another, “Do you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ? Will you now trust Christ to save your souls?” He will do it, if, just as you are, whoever you may be, you will come to Christ and give yourself up to Him to save you, to have you, to hold you for better, for worse, in life and through death. The moment you believe, you are saved! That act of faith, through the precious blood of Christ, will put away your every sin! You will not begin to be saved—you *are* saved. You will not be put into a salvable condition, but you shall be saved the moment you believe—completely and perfectly saved! “Oh,” says one, “I would I could trust Christ.” Say you so? “Whoever will, let him take,” let him *trust* Christ. God help you now to do it! Trust Jesus and you are saved! This is addressed to every one of you without exception, for, “He that believes on the Son has everlasting life.” The Lord help you to trust Jesus and then you may go on your way with joy, “knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God.”

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:**[1Co 9:22-27](tw://bible.*?id=46.9.22-46.9.27|_AUTODETECT_|)***.***

The Apostle Paul is here giving a description of the way in which he made everything help toward the fulfillment of his desire to be a faithful minister of Jesus Christ. He longed to be the means of winning souls. He desired that at the last his Master might be able to say to him, “Well done, you good and faithful servant.” And, therefore, everything with which he had to do was made to bend in that direction.

**22-24.***I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some. And this I do for the Gospel’s sake, that I might be partaker thereof with you. Know you not that they which run in a race all run, but one receives the prize?* No matter if 20 or a hundred had entered the race, “but one receives the prize.” Alas, out of these who appear to be running in the Christian ministry, how many will be prize-takers at the last? And out of those who seem to be running the race of the Christian life, how many will win the prize? Ah, Lord, You know!

**24.***So run that you may obtain.* Do not speculate about what others will do, or not do, but see to your own running—“So run that you may obtain.” Salvation is all of Grace, but when a man is saved, he still has to run the Christian race and to be a runner as long as he lives.”

**25.***And every man that strives for the mastery is temperate in all things.* Here Paul is alluding to the athletic games and pugilistic encounters of the time. It was a matter of common notoriety that every man who was going to fight, or wrestle, or run, had to get himself into proper condition—to “go into training,” as we say in similar cases nowadays.

**25.***Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we for an incorruptible crown.* The athletes who completed in the Grecian games passed through great self-denials and mortifications of the flesh in order that every part of their bodily frame might be tough and strong when they came forward to wrestle, or to run, or to fight. “Now,” says Paul, “if they do all that to gain a crown of parsley”—which was generally the crown given—truly, “a corruptible grown”—“how much more ought we to do in order to win a crown that fades not away—‘an incorruptible crown’”!

**26.***I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beats the air.*He would not leave a stone unturned, as it were, that he might gain the prize. He put out all his strength in the name of the Lord.

**27.***But I keep under my body and bring it into subjection.* The Greek word, according to some, implies getting his body into the same position as a man does when, in a sport encounter, he gets his adversary’s head under his arm and smites him with all his might. So Paul says concerning his body, “I bring it into subjection and take care that it feels the full force of my will.” According to other interpreters, the verse may be read, “I drag my body off as a slave”—just as in some of those ancient fights, the victors dragged away their antagonists as slaves, Paul accounted his body to be as a slave to his soul and dragged it behind him in chains.

**27.***Lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.* The Greek word which is translated, “a castaway,” is, “*adokimos*.” It might better have been rendered, “disapproved.” It certainly has no such meaning as that which has been generally given to it. Paul was not afraid of being cast away by God at the last! What he aimed at was this—as he had entered the lists, as a Christian minister, to fight for Christ, to wrestle against principalities and powers, to seek to win souls for Christ, he must keep his bodily powers and passions so in subjection that, at the last, when the prizes were distributed, he would be found to have won his. This is quite another matter from being “a castaway” from salvation and eternal life! Paul was saved and he knew it—and some of us know, to a certainty, that we are saved—but we also know that there is another crown to be won which the Lord will give to His servants who win in the great fight with sin. To win this crown is our high ambition and we long to hear the Master say to each one of us, in that day, “Well done, you good and faithful servant, you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things: enter you into the joy of your Lord.”

—Adapted from *The C. H. Spurgeon Collection,* Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307  
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DEGREES OF POWER ATTENDING THE GOSPEL

NO. 648

**DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, SEPTEMBER 3, 1865, *BY C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“For our Gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit and in much assurance;  
as you know what manner of men we were among you for your sake.”*** 1Th 1:5***.***

PAUL here claimed two things which are absolutely necessary to success in the Christian ministry. He could call the Gospel, “our Gospel,” and this is a foremost essential in a sent servant of Jesus Christ. Paul, Silas and Timothy, here speaking at once, declare the word which they had preached to be their own in a peculiar sense—every true minister must be able to do the same—we must, ourselves, have been saved before we preach salvation. “I believed, therefore have I spoken,” says the Psalmist. “We also believe, and therefore speak,” say the whole college of the Apostles. Without faith, the religious teacher is a mere pretender unworthy of respect.

The Christian *minister* must, however, not only believe the truth of what he asserts, but he must experimentally enjoy it. The farmer that labors must, himself, also first be a partaker of the fruit. Before Ezekiel delivered to the people the prophecies which were written in the roll, the voice came to him, “Son of man, eat this roll.” And he did not only take it into his mouth, where it was like honey for sweetness, but it descended even into his bowels and mingled with his innermost self. We must, ourselves, feel the weight of that burden of the Lord which we proclaim to others, or we shall not be ministers of the Apostolic sort, but rather shall be descendants of the hypocritical Pharisees who bound heavy burdens, grievous to be borne, upon other men’s shoulders but were not willing to touch them with so much as one of their fingers.

The Apostle Paul could, with peculiar propriety, call the Gospel his own. On the road to Damascus he had singularly experienced its mighty power. And afterwards—in many trials, in many difficulties, in varied experiences, in furious temptations—he had made each Truth of Scripture his own by having tasted its sweetness, handled its strength, proved its comfort and tried its power! Do not think of preaching, young man, until you have the Truth of God written on your very soul! As well think of steering the Great Eastern across the ocean without knowing the first principles of navigation! As well think of setting up as an ambassador without your country’s sanction as to dare to intrude yourself into the Christian ministry unless the Gospel is first your own.

No amount of training at Oxford, or Cambridge, or anywhere else—no extent of classical or mathematical teaching can ever make you a minister of Jesus Christ—if you lack the first qualification, namely a personal interest in salvation by Jesus Christ. What? Will you profess to be a physician while the leprosy is on your own brow? Will you attempt to stand between the living and the dead when you are, yourself, devoid of spiritual life? The priests of old were touched with the blood upon their thumb, toe and ear to show that they were consecrated everywhere. And none among us must dare to exercise any office for God among His people till first of all we know the cleansing, quickening, refining and sanctifying power of the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ!

It must be *our* Gospel before we may so much as *think* of aspiring to the high and holy office of the Gospel ministry. But this alone is not sufficient. The Christian minister, if he would imitate Paul, must be very careful of his manner of life among the people. He must be able to say without blushing, “You know what manner of men we were among you for your sake.” Unselfishness must be our prominent attribute—all must be done for our people’s sake. And then we must, in our lives, show the truthfulness of our unselfish professions. O God, how much of Grace is needed that Your servants may be clear of the blood of all men and make full proof of their ministry!

We are not appointed to stand as motionless way-posts to point the way with lifeless accuracy and unsympathizing coldness—this many have done, and while showing the road have never moved one inch in it themselves—such men shall have terrible judgment at the last. We are appointed to be guides to the pilgrims over the hills of life and we are bound to attend their footsteps and tread the road ourselves! Clambering up every Hill of Difficulty and descending every Valley of Humiliation, we are to be crying to the pilgrim band, “Be followers of us even as we are followers of Christ Jesus.”

It is not for us to say, “Go!” but, “Come!” We are not to bid you do anything without first doing it ourselves. It is an ill time with the preacher when he is compelled to say, “Do as I say and not as I do.” Evil practice will drown the best of preaching! Holy living, intense earnestness, passionate longing for souls, vehement importunity in prayer, humility and sincerity must so blend together in our walk and conversation, that having the Gospel to be our own, we may be fully fitted for the work of the Christian ministry—“for your sake”—that you who bear us may not find us unprofitable in the day of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Having said this much upon the ministry itself, we observe that our text deals mainly with the *hearers*, and therefore has a voice for you. We shall use the text for two purposes—first, by way of discrimination. And, secondly, for instruction.

**I.**The text suggests and very strongly, too, a thoroughly heartsearching DISCRIMINATION—a mode of testing ourselves by which our *election* may be proven, or our unregeneracy discovered. The Gospel comes to all who hear it. In our own land, especially among you who constantly attend places of worship, it comes to you all. If I understand Scripture aright, it is the same Gospel which comes to the unregenerate as to the regenerate. And though in some it is “a savor of death unto death,” and in others, “a savor of life unto life,” yet the distinction is not in the *Gospel* but in the way in which it is *received* or *rejected*.

Some of our Brethren—who are very anxious to carry out the decrees of God—instead of believing that God can carry them out Himself, always try to make distinctions in their preaching. They preach one Gospel to one set of sinners and another to a different class! They are very unlike the old sowers, who, when they went out to sow, sowed among thorns and on stony places and by the wayside. These Brethren, with profound wisdom, endeavor to find out which is the good ground. They insist upon it that not so much as a single handful of invitations may be cast anywhere but on the prepared soil.

They are much too wise to preach the Gospel in Ezekiel’s fashion to the dry bones in the valley while they are yet dead. They withhold any Word of the Gospel till there is a little quivering of life among the bones! And then they commence operations. They do not think it to be their duty to go into the highways and hedges and bid all, as many as they find, to come to the supper. Oh, no! They are too orthodox to obey the Master’s will! They desire to understand, first, *who* are appointed to come to the supper and *then* they will invite them! That is to say they will do what there is no necessity to do. They have not faith enough, or enough subjugation of will to the supreme commands of the great Master to do that which only faith dares do—namely, tell the dry bones to live—bid the man with the withered hand stretch out his arm and speak to him that is sick of the palsy and tell him to take up his bed and walk!

It strikes me that refusing to set forth Jesus to *all* men of every character and refraining from inviting them to come to Him is a great mistake. I do not find David suiting his counsels to the ability of men. David gives commands to ungodly men—“Be wise, therefore, O you kings; be instructed you judges of the earth. Kiss the Son, lest He be angry and you perish from the way, while His wrath is kindled but a little.” He did not withhold his exhortation because they were such rebels that they would not, and could not, kiss the king. No! He told them to do it whether they could or not!

So with the Prophets. They boldly say, “Wash you! Make you clean! Put away the evil of your doings from before My eyes; cease to do evil, learn to do well.” One of them absolutely cries, “Make you a new heart and a new spirit,” (Eze 18:31). And yet, I doubt not, that he was perfectly agreed with that other Prophet who taught the powerlessness of man in those two memorable questions, “Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots?” These men did not think that they were to judge of what they were to preach by the degree of power in the *hearers—*they judged by the power which dwells in their God to make the Word effectual!

As it was with Prophets, so was it with Apostles! Peter cried to the crowd who gathered about the Beautiful Gate of the temple, “Repent you, therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out.” They delivered the Gospel, the same Gospel, to the dead as to the living—the same Gospel to the non-elect as to the elect. The point of distinction is not in the Gospel, but in its being applied by the Holy Spirit, or left to be rejected of man. The same Gospel, it strikes me in the text, came to all! And the point of distinction was farther on, namely, in the operation of that Gospel upon the heart.

**1.**It appears, then, in the first place, that to some the Gospel comes only in words. Even here there are different levels. To some it only comes in words in a fashion that they scarcely know what it is all about. Some of you go to a place of worship because it is the right thing to do. You sit down on the seats and sit out an hour-and-a-half or so of penance. When that is done you feel you have performed a very proper act—but you have

no idea what the talk was all about. It may be said of you that hearing you do not hear for your ears are dull and heavy.

You know no more of the Divine mind than the men who were with Saul on the road to Damascus who heard a voice but saw no man. I believe a very large majority of church goers know no more of what the preaching is about than did Jonathan’s lad when he ran after the arrows. Their flight David well understood, “but the lad knew nothing of the matter.” Too many are merely the stolid, unthinking, slumbering worshippers of an unknown God. In others the Word comes in a little better sense, but still in words only. They hear it and they understand it in theory, and probably are much pleased with it, especially if it is delivered in a manner which suits their taste, or which commends itself to their understanding. They hear and they do not quite forget.

They remember and are gratified with illustrations, doctrinal truths, and so on—but when you have said that, you have said it all. The Gospel remains in them as certain potent drugs remain in the chemist’s bottles— they are there but they produce no effect. The Gospel comes to them as an unloaded cannon rumbles into its shed, or as a barrel of gunpowder is rolled into the magazine—there is no force in it because the fire of God’s Spirit is absent. The preacher lashes the air and whips the water. He woos the wind and invites the cloud when he preaches to such as these. They hear, but hear in vain—insensible as steel.

To others it comes in a preferable manner but still only in words. They are really affected by it—the tears stream down their cheeks! They scarcely know how to sit. They resolve, if they once get home, they will *pray*. They think of amending their lives—past follies and present dangers come before them and they are somewhat alarmed. But the morning cloud is not more fleeing, and the early dew vanishes not sooner than these good things of theirs! They look at their natural face in the glass of the Word, but they go away and forget what manner of men they are— because the emotion felt is produced by the *words* and not by the Spirit and Life of the Truth of God.

Why, Brothers and Sisters, men weep at a theater! And weep far more there than they do in many places of worship! Therefore, merely to weep under a sermon is no sign of having derived profit from it. Some of my Brethren are very great hands at unearthing the dead. They conduct you to the funeral urns of your parents, or remind you of your departed little ones, and possibly they may be the means of introducing better feelings by this kind of working upon your emotions! But I am not convinced of it—I am afraid that much of the holy water which is spilt from human eyes in our places of worship is not much more valuable than the holy water at the doors of the Catholic chapels! It is mere eye water, after all, and not *heart sorrow*.

Mere excitement produced by oratory is the world’s weapon in attaining its end. We want something more than that for *spiritual* purposes. If we could “speak with the tongues of men and of angels” and stir you up to as great an enthusiasm as ever Demosthenes worked in the Greeks of old— all that would avail nothing if it were only the effect of the preacher’s impassioned language and telling manner—the Gospel would have come to you “in word only.” And that which is born of the flesh is flesh and nothing more.

At this point I may very solemnly ask whether it is not true of some who compose the present congregation that you know the truth only in word? There is a certain class of persons, and some of them are present this morning, who are professional sermon hearers! You go one Sunday to hear Mr. A. And then another Sunday to hear Mr. B. And you carry with you our sacchraometers—instruments for measuring the quantity of sweetness in each sermon! And you take a gauge of the style and manner of the preacher. You estimate what blunders he makes and how he could be improved. And you compare or contrast him with somebody else, as if you were tea tasters tasting Souchong and Bohea, or cheese mongers trying Cheddar and American!

Some individuals of this order are little better than spiritual vagabonds without settled habitation or occupation! They go about from place to place, listening to this and to that and getting no good whatever. And as to *doing* good, the thought never enters their brain. You cannot expect that the Gospel will come to you in anything else but as a killing letter, for you go to*hear* it as merely words. You do not look for fruit—if you see leaves you are quite satisfied. You do not desire a blessing! If you did, you would receive it. It is at once one of the most wicked and one of the most foolish habits to waste our time in constantly criticizing God’s Word and God’s ministers.

Well said George Herbert, “Judge not the preacher, he is *your* judge.” What have you to do to say of God’s ambassador? That his words were not well mouthed? If God speaks *by* him, God knows who is best to speak *for* Him. And if his Master sent the man, beware lest you ill-treat him, or you may suffer like they of old who ill-treated the ambassadors of David and drove him to proclaim war against them.

**2.**According to the text, there are others to whom the Word comes with three accompaniments. The Apostle speaks of “power,” and “the Holy Spirit,” and “much assurance.” I do not think that the Word of God comes to many people with all these three things. It comes to a very numerous class with “power.” To a smaller number with “power and the Holy Spirit.” And to an inner circle of select ones “in the Holy Spirit and in much assurance.” If I have the meaning of this passage, and I am not so certain about it as to dogmatize, it strikes me that there are three degrees of effect produced by the Gospel.

At any rate, we shall not be wrong in saying that there is sometimes an effect produced by the Gospel which may be called “power,” but which, nevertheless, is not the power which saves. To many of you, my dear Hearers, the word of our Gospel has come with power upon your understandings. You have heard it, weighed it, judged it, and received it as being true and of Divine authority. Your understanding has assented to the various propositions which we have proclaimed as doctrines of Christ. You feel that you could not well do otherwise. These Truths of God agree so well and are so adapted at once to the ruin of your nature and to its best aspirations, that you do not kick, as some do, against it. You have been convinced of the authenticity and authority of the Gospel by the Gospel.

Perhaps you have never read “Paley’s Evidences,” and never studied

“Butler’s Analogy,” but the Gospel itself has come to you with sufficient power to be its own witness to you and your understanding joyfully acknowledges that this *is* the Word of God and you receive it as such. It has

done more than that—it has come with power to the *conscience* of some of you. It has convicted you of sin. You feel now that self-righteousness on your part is folly, and though you may indulge in self-righteousness, it is with your eyes open. You do not sin now so cheaply as you once did, for you know a little of the sinfulness of sin.

Moreover, you have had some alarms with regard to the ultimate end of sin. The Gospel has made you know that the wages of sin will be death. You feel that you cannot dwell with everlasting burnings. Your heart is ill at ease when you think upon the wrath to come. Like Felix you tremble when you are reasoned with concerning “righteousness and judgment to come.” And though you have put it off as yet and have said, “Go your way till I have a more convenient season,” yet it has come to you so far with a degree of power.

More than this, it has had an effect upon your feelings as well as upon your conscience. Your desires have been awakened. You have sometimes said, “Oh that I were saved!” You have advanced as far, at any rate, as Balaam when he said, “Let me die the death of the righteous.” Your feelings of hope are excited—you hope that you may yet lay hold of eternal life and your fears are not altogether dead—you tremble when under the Word of God. Natural emotions, which look like spiritual ones, have been produced in you by the beaming of the Word—though as yet the Gospel has not come with the Holy Spirit. Beyond all this, the Gospel has come with power to some of you on your lives. I can look with anxious pleasure upon some of you because I know the Gospel has done you much good, though it has not saved you.

Alas, there are others to whom it has only been for a time as a bit and bridle. But they have afterwards turned aside from it. There are those here, who, like the dogs, have gone back to their vomit and, like the sow that was washed, to their wallowing in the mire. We had hope for you once, but we must almost cease to hope. Certain persons rush into drunkenness after seasons of abstinence—having known the evil of the sin—and having professed to hate it. The passion has been too strong for them and they have fallen again into that deep ditch in which so many of the abhorred of the Lord lie and rot.

Oh, may God, in His infinite mercy, bring the Gospel with something more than this common power to your souls! May it come with “the Holy Spirit” as well as with power! You see, we have come up by steps to some considerable height already, but we now come to a far nobler elevation and speak of *saving* Grace. To many in this house, as at Thessalonica, the Word has come “in the Holy Spirit.” Brothers and Sisters, I cannot describe to you how it is that the Holy Spirit operates by the Word. The work of the Spirit is figured forth by some such mysterious timing as a birth, or as the blowing of the wind. It is a great secret, and therefore not to be expounded.

But many of you know it *experimentally*. The Holy Spirit, first of all, came to you as a great Quickener. How He made you live you do not know—but this you do know—that what you once had not, you now have! You know that there burns within you a vital spark of heavenly flame far different from that ordinary spark of life which had been there before! You now have different feelings, different joys, different sorrows from any you were conscious of before! While you were listening to the letter which kills, the Spirit of God came with it and the quickening Spirit made you live with a new, higher and more blessed life!

You now have within you Jesus Christ, who is Life and Immortality! You have Heaven begun within your heart! You have passed from death unto life and shall never come into condemnation! To you the Word of God has come with the Holy Spirit in a quickening sense. Then it entered with an illuminating power. It enlightened you as to your sins. What blackness you discovered in your sins when the Holy Spirit once cast a light upon them! Brethren, you had no idea that you were such sinners as you turned out to be. The Holy Spirit startled and astonished you with revelations of that great and fathomless depth of depravity which you found to be surging within your souls!

You were alarmed, humbled, cast into the dust. You began, perhaps, to despair—but the same illumination of the Spirit came in to comfort you— for He then showed you Christ Jesus! He showed you the unbounded power of His blood to take away your unbounded sins! He revealed to you His willingness to receive you just as you were, His suitability to your case and to your circumstances. And as soon as you saw Jesus in the light of the Holy Spirit you looked unto Him and were lightened—and therefore your face has never been ashamed.

So the Spirit of God came to you as light to dispel your darkness and give you joy and peace! Since that time you have experienced the Holy Spirit as comforting you. Amidst darkest shades He has risen as the sunlight upon your souls. Your burdens have been removed by Him, the blessed Paraclete! He has brought Christ, and the things of Christ, to your remembrance. He has opened up to you precious promises. He has cracked the shell and given you to partake of the kernel of the privilege of the Covenant of Grace. He has broken the bone and satisfied you with marrow and fatness out of the deep things of God. His dove-like wings, whenever they brood over you, bring order out of confusion and yield kindly comfort in the midst of adversity.

You have also felt the Holy Spirit in His inflaming energies. He has rested on you when you have heard the Word, as the Spirit of burning— your sin has been consumed by the holy revenge which you felt against it. You have been led to great heights of love to Christ, till you could sing—

***“Had I ten thousand thousand tongues,  
Not one should be silent!  
Had I ten thousand thousand hearts,  
I’d give them all to You.”***

When the Holy Spirit has blessed the Word, your heart has been like the altar of incense with the flame always burning and a sweet perfume going up, acceptable to the Most High!

Beloved, you have also felt the Holy Spirit with the Word as a spirit of rejoicing! Oh, the bliss we have sometimes tasted! I am very frequently heavy in spirit, but oh, the raptures which my heart has known when the Holy Spirit has shown me my eternal election of God! My standing in Christ Jesus! My completeness and acceptance in the Beloved! My security through the faithfulness of the eternal God! What delights come streaming into the soul when you read of everlasting love, of faithfulness never wavering, of affection never changing, of a purpose standing fast as

pillars of brass and firm as the eternal hills!

And oh, Beloved, what extravagance I was about to say, of joy do we sometimes feel in anticipation of the glory to be revealed! Looking from Nebo’s brow we see the landscape down below, but, better than Moses could do, we drink already of the rivers which flow with milk and honey and pluck ripe fruits from celestial trees. While in communion with Christ Jesus we get the best taste of the glory that remains. Now this it is to receive the Word, “in the Holy Spirit.” Beloved, I hope we know what this means and you who do not know it, may a prayer go up from every living soul here, “Lord, let the Holy Spirit go with the preaching of Jesus Christ and let it be made effectual unto salvation.”

Beloved, the highest point in the text is, “much assurance.” If I understand the passage, it means this—first, that they were fully persuaded of its truthfulness and had no staggering or blinding doubts about it. And secondly, that they had the fullest possible conviction of their interest in the Truth delivered to them! They were saved, but better still they knew that they were so! They were clean, but better still they rejoiced in their purity! They were in Christ, but what is more joyous still, they *knew* that they were in Christ! They had no doubts, as some of you have, no dark suspicions. The Word had come with such blessed demonstration that it had swept every doubt clean out of their hearts!

According to Poole the Greek word used here has in it the idea of a ship at full sail, undisturbed by the waves which ripple in its way. A ship, when the wind is thoroughly favorable and its full sails are bearing it directly into harbor, is not held back by the surging billows. True, the vessel may rock, but it neither turns to the right hand, nor to the left. Let the billows be as they may, the wind is sufficiently powerful to overcome their contrary motion and the vessel goes straight ahead.

Some Christians get the Gospel in that way. They have not a shadow of a doubt about its being true. They have not even the *beginning* of a doubt about their interest in it, and therefore they have nothing to do, but with God’s strong hand upon the tiller and the heavenly wind blowing right into the sail, to go straight on, doing the will of God and glorifying His name. May the Word come to you, dear Friends, as it does to so very few! May it come in “full assurance,” as well as in “power,” and in “the Holy Spirit!”

**3.**I shall leave this first head of the text when I observe that this is the way in which God’s elect are known. The Apostle says, “Knowing, Brethren beloved, your election of God.” Why? Knowing it not by making a *guess* about it—not by questioning you whether you are awakened sinners—whether you are sensible or insensible sinners! Not by waiting to preach the Gospel to you when you are prepared to receive the Gospel— but preaching the Gospel to you as you were and finding out who were the elect by this—that the elect of God received the Gospel as it came, “in power, and in the Holy Spirit and in much assurance.” *This* is the test of election—the Holy Spirit blessing the Word!

And, dear Friends, if the Holy Spirit has blessed it to you, you need not turn over the mysterious pages of the Divine decrees—for your name is there! You have not *my* word for it, but God’s Word for it. He would not have brought you to feel the indwelling life of the Holy Spirit if He had not, from before all worlds, ordained you unto eternal life! But mark and observe from the ensuing context—you must give good proof that it is so, or we cannot say, and even the Apostle could not have said—“Knowing, Brethren beloved, your election of God.”

We cannot tell whether the Word has come to you in the Holy Spirit and in much assurance unless there are the corresponding *results*. Listen to these words—“And you became followers of us and of the Lord, having received the Word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit: so that you were examples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia. For from you sounded out the Word of the Lord not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith to God-ward is spread abroad, so that we need not to speak anything. For they themselves show of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God. And to wait for His Son from Heaven whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.”

So you see an imitation of Apostolic example, a faith which becomes so known as to sound abroad, a joy which affliction itself cannot dampen, and a perseverance which is not to be turned aside by difficulties. You see a conversion which gives up the dearest idols and binds us to Christ and makes us watch and wait for Him—all these are necessary as proofs of the Holy Spirit having been with the Word. O Beloved, I would have you, the members of this congregation, not only converted, but so converted that there should be no doubt about it! I would love to have you not only Christians, but such fruit-bearing Christians that there can be no doubt that you have received the Word “in much assurance.”

Then shall it be equally clear that you are the elect of God. May the Lord grant that the word here may ever be like a powerful magnet thrust into a heap of steel filings and of ashes which shall attract all the filings and bring them out. For that is what the Gospel is to do—it is to discern between the precious and the vile! It is to be God’s winnowing fan to separate His elect from those who are left in their ruin. And it only can do this by the way in which it is *received*, proving the election of those who receive it, “in the Holy Spirit.” Thus much by way of discrimination.

**II.**Have patience for a few minutes while we now use the text by way of PRACTICAL INSTRUCTION. It is clear from the text, by way of practical instruction, that it is not enough to preach the Gospel. Something more is needed for the conversion of souls than even that. I have stirred you up very often to assist me, dear Brethren, in training those of our young men who have been called to preach the Gospel—that they may be more efficient in their ministry—and you have kindly helped me.

But we must ever bear in mind that though God should privilege us to send out hundreds of His ministering servants, yet there will not be a solitary case of conversion worked by them, alone. We wish to do our best to erect fresh places of worship for this ever-increasing city and it is a happy day to me whenever I see the top stone brought out of a new House of Prayer! But not one single soul shall ever be made to rejoice in Christ Jesus by the mere fact of a place of worship being erected, or of worship being celebrated in it! We must have the energy of the Holy Spirit! There is the one all-important matter!

What is there practical about this? Why, then it becomes more and more imperatively necessary that we should be much in prayer to God that the Holy Spirit would come! We have the spirit of prayerfulness among us as a Church. Let me earnestly entreat you never to lose it. There are certain of my Brothers and Sisters here who are never absent from our great gathering on Monday evening, and whose prayers have brought down many blessings! But it is the part of fidelity for me to say that there are some of you who might be here if you would, but seldom favor us with your presence. Or, let me say, who seldom do yourselves the happiness of waiting up on God in Prayer Meetings. You are not the best of our members. You will never be the best of them if you stay away without having a justifiable excuse.

I do not say this to those who I know must be absent. And I do not say it to bring women out who ought to be seeing to their husbands, or to bring men out who ought to be attending to their shops. But I say it to some who might as well be here as not, and would bring no detriment to themselves whatever by being here. And I must qualify what I say with this—I have less to complain of in this respect than any man in Christendom, for there is no place that I ever knew or heard of where the Prayer Meeting bears so good and fair a proportion to the Sunday gathering as it does here.

But still, Brethren, we want you ALL to pray! I would I could see you all! Oh, it were a happy day if we could see this place full on Monday evening. I do not know why it should not be. It strikes me that if your hearts were once to get thoroughly warmed we should fill this house for prayer. And what a blessing we might expect to receive! Why, we have had such a blessing already that we have not room enough to receive it now! But still, as the cup begins to run over, let it run over and over. There are many churches in this neighborhood that can catch the spillover and may they be profited thereby!

Let us increase our praying as we increase our doing. I like that of Martin Luther, when he says, “I have so much business to do today that I shall not be able to get through it with less than three hours’ prayer.” Now most people would say, “I have so much business to do today that I must only have three *minutes’* prayer—I cannot afford the time.” But Luther thought that the more he had to do the more he must pray, or else he could not get through it! That is a blessed kind of logic—may we understand it! “Praying and provender hinder no man’s journey.” If you have to stop and pray, it is no more an hindrance than when the rider has to stop at the farrier’s to have his horse’s shoe fastened, for if he went on without attending to that, it may be that before long he would come to a stop of a far more serious kind.

Let us learn from the text our own indebtedness to distinguishing and Sovereign Grace. You observe, Beloved, that the Gospel does not come with the power of the Holy Spirit to everybody. If, then, it has come to *us*, what shall we do but bless and praise the distinguishing Grace which made it come to us? You observe that the distinction was not in the persons themselves—it was in the *way* in which the Gospel *came*. The distinction was not even in the Gospel, but in the attendant Holy Spirit, making it effectual. If you have heard the Word with power, it was not, dear Brethren, because you were more ready, because you were less inclined to sin, or more friendly towards God. You were an alien, a stranger, a foreigner, an enemy—you were “dead in trespasses and sins”—even as others were and are.

There was in you, whatever Papists may say, no Grace of congruity to meet with the Grace of Christ. They say that there is something in man congruous to the Grace of God, so that when saving Grace comes to those who have the Grace of congruity they are saved. In me I know everything was incongruous, everything contrary to God. There was darkness and Light came. There was death and Life entered. There was hatred and Love drove it out! There was the dominion of Satan and Christ overcame the traitor—

***“Then give all the glory to His holy name, To Him all the glory belongs.  
Be yours the high joy still to sound forth His name, And praise Him in each of your songs.”***

A third practical lesson we will but hint at, namely, we see that there are degrees of attainment even among those who have received the Word with the Holy Spirit. Let us seek for the very highest degree! You are not generally satisfied with the same qualities of life—you desire to possess its comforts and luxuries. I will commend you if you carry this into spiritual things. Do not be content merely to be saved, merely to be spiritually alive—ask to be valiant for the Truth of God! I should feel it a great honor, I hope, to be the most common soldier if called upon to defend my country. But I must confess I should not like to be in the ranks always. I should like, at least, to be made a corporal very soon and a sergeant as soon as possible. And I should grumble wonderfully much if I could not rise to rank among the commissioned officers!

I should like to be found doing my very best and I would reach to the most prominent position if I might better serve my country than in the ranks. So I think it should be with the Christian. He is not to seek for honor among *men*, but, if he can, by getting more Grace be more serviceable to his God and bring more honor to His name, why let him press forward! Ah, my dear Brethren, what business have you to be sitting still and saying, “It is enough.” The “rest-and-be-thankful” policy is not much approved of in politics—and in religion it will never do!

On! Forward! Upward! As the eagle takes for its motto, “Superior,” and still mounts higher and higher and higher till the young wing which first trembled at the height has grown into the strong pinion which makes him companion of the sun and playmate with the lightning, so let the Christian do! If he has learned to “run and not be weary,” let him seek to “mount up as on the wings of eagles.” Onward, fellow soldier! Be yet more valiant till your name is written among the first three.

To close, does not this text, as a last practical lesson, show us indirectly how a privilege may become a curse? The Word of God has come to you all. I suppose there is not one here who has not heard the story of the love of God in Christ Jesus. You have been told many times that though man has fallen and offended God, yet the Lord has set forth His suffering Son, Christ Jesus, to be a Propitiation for sin and that through faith in His name, “Whoever believes on Him shall never perish.”

You have been told that God waits to be gracious and that whoever looks to Christ shall live! Whoever calls upon the Lord shall be saved!

Now, having heard this, regardless of what some may tell you, we feel bound, as in the sight of God, to warn you that if this comes “in word only” to you, it will increase your condemnation! Certain preachers think that this Word is not “a savor of death unto death” to any, but it is, it is! Whatever their theories, whatever hyper-Calvinistic theology may say, it is God’s Word that it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the Day of Judgment than it shall be for cities like Capernaum and Bethsaida, which heard the Word and yet repented not!

You are not machines. You are not creatures merely to be acted *upon*— you are to *act* as well as to be moved. And every good word that reaches your ear is written down as a debt against you. There is no declaration of the Gospel of Jesus Christ which, if refused, does not leave you more disobedient than you were. Remember how the Apostle states it—“Unto them which are disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner and a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed.”

Now they could not have been disobedient if it was not their duty to *obey*. No man is disobedient where there is no law. It is, therefore, the duty of every sinner hearing the Gospel to believe it! And if he does not, this same stone shall fall upon him and shall grind him to powder. Kiss the Son, therefore, lest He, lest He be angry and you perish from the way while His wrath is kindled but a little. The same Savior who blesses will be angry. He who loves His people, grows angry with those who reject Him.

And when His wrath is kindled but a little, woe unto the object of it! Blessed are all they that trust in Him and may we be found among that blessed number to the praise and glory of His Grace, wherein He makes us to differ according to the appointment of His own Divine will. May God bless this assembly for Jesus Christ’s sake. Amen.

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THE GOSPEL IN POWER  
NO. 3551

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 1917.

***DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,*  
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***“For our Gospel came not unto you in word only,” etc., [down to] “from the wrath to come”***1Th 1:5-10***.***

A WORKMAN likes to see that he has been doing something. It is very dispiriting if he has spent much toil and can see no result. God’s workmen by faith would continue still to labor, even if they saw nothing come of it, but it is much more comforting, much more easy for them to continue in service when they see that God is blessing them. Now it is not wrong for a Christian minister to speak about the conversions that have been worked under his ministry, for Paul says that he would have done so, only that others did it so constantly that there was no need of it. Paul, however, would not, under any circumstances, have done a wrong thing and, therefore, we gather that it is sometimes most allowable that we should see what has been done and should speak of it—and the more especially because if any good is done by any ministry, it is God that has done it—and all the glory is due to Him and to Him, alone!

Not to speak of what God has done would be ingratitude. It might have a semblance of humility, but in reality it would be disloyalty to the Most High. Paul, therefore, did not hesitate to speak of his converts at Thessalonica and of their good character—and of the good fruit which they had borne and the way in which they had spread abroad the Gospel. He did not boast—he gave God the glory of it, but he did speak of what had been done. And we think we may do the same in any measure in which God shall bless our work—any one of us may tell of it to the praise and glory of God and to the encouragement of our fellow laborers. Now the Apostle in this passage tells us what God had done at Thessalonica. We will proceed at once, for our text is long—we will proceed at once to the handling of it.

And you will note that he tells us, first, *what he had preached at Thessalonica*. Then*how it had come to the people*. And thirdly, *what had been the result of this to themselves.* And fourthly, *what had been the result of it to other people*. First, the Apostle tells us—  
**I.**WHAT WAS PREACHED AT THESSALONICA. He says, “Our Gospel”—(note that word)—“Our Gospel came not unto you in word only.” Why does Paul call it, “our Gospel”? He did not invent it! He did not think it out and make it fresh every Sunday. No, it was *Christ’s Gospel* long before it was Paul’s Gospel. Yet he calls it our Gospel by way of distinction, for there were other gospels. There were those who came and said, “This is the Good News!” And others, on the other hand, who said, “*This* is the Good News,” but Paul says that there was another Gospel and he adds, “Yet not another, but there are some that trouble you.” He, therefore, put down his foot and he said, “Bring what gospels you like, each of you, but I have a Gospel which I preach, distinct from yours, and that Gospel it is which I have preached to the Thessalonians and which has not come to them in word only.” In these times, Beloved, there must be made a distinction between men’s gospel and God’s Gospel, for nowadays man’s gospel is popular enough. Somebody thinks until his head aches and he gets into nonsense—and then he comes and brings this forward as something fresh. Men go to the bottom of a subject until they stir the mud at the bottom and cannot see their own way, themselves, and nobody else can either—and then forthwith they come out with something marvelous! And, having used some words that are hard to pronounce and harder still to understand, they earn a cheap name for being great scholars and profound divines. Well, let such go their way—that is their gospel, but we have another Gospel from that—one which we have gained in another way and which we desire to propagate in another fashion! Paul said, “our Gospel,” then, by way of distinction.

But he also meant this—it was his Gospel because it had been committed to him. He had received it as a sacred deposit. He was, as it were, a steward for God—put into commission to preserve and keep alive the Truth of God in the world—and Paul did keep it unadulterated, so that when he closed his life he could say, “I have fought a good fight. I have kept the faith.” Whoever may have adulterated the Gospel, Paul did not. He gave it forth as Christ gave it to him. Oh, that each one of us who is called to preach the Gospel and, indeed, every church member would feel that the Truth of God is committed to us to keep it in the world! Our grandfathers kept it at the stake and on the cruel rack—and when they went in their chariots of fire to Heaven, they left the Truth to their sons to preserve. Handed down to us in the long line of martyrs and confessors, Covenanters and Puritans, what will we do with it now? Will we not feel that all the cost expended on it in the centuries past demands of us that we should spend the same—if there is a necessity for it—even our blood and that, while we live, it shall never be said that in our life, in our prayer, in our conversation, or in our preaching, the Gospel suffered anything at our hands? “I know whom I have believed,” said Paul, and, “I am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed to Him.” Or rather, as some read it, “He is able to keep my deposit, that which He committed to me to keep. Christ also will keep and preserve the Gospel pure and clear, even until time’s latest hour.” The Lord grant it, for His name’s sake!

But I think the Apostle used the term, “our Gospel,” not only for distinction and because he felt it was committed to his trust, but because he had enjoyed it, himself, and had experienced it. What right has any man to preach that which he has not himself enjoyed and made his own? I have heard of a certain physician who usually tried his own medicines upon himself—and surely this should always be the practice of those who serve the heavenly Physician. How shall we come and preach of the Balm of Gilead, which is to heal all wounds, if our wounds are unhealed? What a wretched case must that man be in who talks of regeneration, but is not born-again! Who preaches faith, but has never believed! Who talks of pardon, but has never been washed in the precious blood! Who speaks of the righteousness of Christ, but is shivering in the nakedness of his own corruption! Ah, wretched man, to be a herald of good news while he, himself, partakes not therein! Ezekiel, before he had to go and speak of the message of God, had that message given to him, and what was said? “Son of man, eat this roll.” He had to take the message written on the roll and eat it—and when it was in his own body—then it was that he could tell it out with great power! It is a good old saying, “If your preaching is to go to the heart, it must come from the heart.” It must first have moved our souls before we can ever hope to move the souls of others!

The Lord is my witness that in preaching to you here, Beloved, these many years, I have preached to you what I have tasted and handled of the good Word of God. I have preached the Doctrine of human sin, for I have felt its power, felt its bitterness and shame, and lain in the dust before God, even in despair. I have preached to you the power of the precious blood to cleanse from sin, for I have looked to Christ’s dear wounds and found cleansing there. We have only spoken to you what we have, ourselves, known and felt, and proved to be true—and I would go to my chamber this night wretched, indeed, if I had no other assurance of the Truth of God of my message than that which I could find in the experience of other men! Now many of you are engaged in preaching Christ to others and in teaching Christ to the children in the schools. Always speak out of the fullness of your own hearts, for when you can say, “I have tried this. I am rejoicing in this,” then your words will be pretty sure to come with power to the hearts of those that hear you. The man who desires to bring others to Christ should imitate Elisha, the Prophet, who, when he found the child dead in the bed and that it could not be raised to life by any other means, went and put his mouth upon the child’s mouth, his hands upon the child’s hands and his feet upon the child’s feet—and then, by-and-by, the life was restored to the child. We must feel an inward sympathy with those whom we would bring to Christ! And then we must tell out from our own soul what we know about the Savior and it will be sure to come with freshness and with power, God, the Holy Spirit, blessing it! This, then, I think, was Paul’s reason for calling it, “our Gospel”—the Gospel committed to him and the Gospel which he had tasted and handled personally. Now I shall want you to observe in the second place—

**II.**HOW THE GOSPEL CAME TO THE THESSALONIANS. He describes it as coming in four degrees. First, he says, “It came not in word only, but in power and in the Holy Spirit.” And, fourthly, in much assurance. Now these four words enable me to divide the present audience. To all who have been here present, who have been sitting in these pews for any length of time, *our Gospel has certainly come in the Word of God*. They have all heard it—heard it, too, so as to understand the run, the gist of it. They have heard it in many forms and shapes commending itself to their attention. But, oh, it is to be feared that there are some to whom it has come in word only and it is, indeed, to the preacher (and more still it should be to those who are in such plight) sad that this life-giving Word should be only a word. There was the Gospel feast and the message was sent, but they who were invited came not to the feast. They heard the message—that was all. Here are sick men lying at Bethesda’s pool—they see the water and that is all—but they step not in and are not healed. Oh, to lie sick, with healing within reach! To be hungry and bread hard by! To be thirsty, with the stream flowing at one’s feet and not to drink! Remember dear Hearers, that if the Word of God comes to you as word only, today, it will one day be something more than that, for it is an undoubted Truth of Scripture that hearers are responsible for what they hear. “Take heed how you hear!” shall have to be answered for at the Day of Judgment. “You heard the Gospel, but you rejected it!”—shall be one of the charges brought against those who listened to it—and it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon than it shall be for such an one! I would now like to divide the congregation upon this question, “How many are now here to whom the Gospel has come in word, only?” Let conscience speak! Let each man put his hand upon his heart and answer, “Is that my case?” If so, may it not be your case any longer, no, not a single day longer, but may the Word of God come to you in another way!

But there were, secondly, some to whom it came in power. Now there are hearers to whom the Gospel comes with an awakening power. They used to be careless, but they cannot be, now! They hear the words, “Eternity! Eternity! Eternity,” ringing in their ears and it startles and awakens them. They cannot be at ease while they are at enmity with God! They feel that their nest is stirred up. It has come with power to them. More than that, there are some to whom the Word has come with crushing effect—it has struck them down! It has bruised their righteousness. It has dashed to shivers their hopes of themselves and though they have not looked to Christ for the true hope, yet they feel the power of the Gospel which lays all other hopes in the dust! Ah, I know some of you have felt the power of the Gospel, for you went home and prayed, perhaps dozens of times—after hearing the sermon! You have gone up to your chambers and you have begun to pray, but the next morning you have forgotten. Your goodness has been like the morning dew and has melted when the heat of the day’s cares have come upon it. Alas! Alas! Alas! In many a furrow we have sown in vain! We have cast the Seed on stony ground, we have thrown it on the highway side and we have lost our pains—nevertheless, we are to continue to preach the Gospel, for in some it will come with a greater power than this!

Again, I would entreat another division of the house. I know there are some who will come under this head. They are not saved, but still they cannot ridicule it—they cannot pass it off with indifference. It is like a sharp two-edged sword—it pierces, cuts and wounds. I pray God it may kill them spiritually, that they may yet be made alive!

Now the third degree of the coming of the Word to Thessalonica was that it came in the Holy Spirit. Ah, here is the blessed way, for if it shall come in any other power than this, it will come in vain! But if it comes in the Holy Spirit, oh, then—then its end is achieved, for the Holy Spirit quickens men by a mysterious operation which we cannot describe—but which some of us have felt! It comes upon men and creates in them a new life and whereas they were dead in sin, they begin to live as they never lived before! That same Spirit then enlightens them, showing them a thousand Truths of God in a light in which they never saw them before. They find they have entered into a new world. They have passed from darkness into marvelous light! Then the Spirit of God begins to purify them. He purges them from this sin and that and He refines and renews them. He is in them as a Spirit of burning—consuming sin—a cleansing Spirit purging them from unrighteousness! Then He comes as a consoling Spirit and gives them joy and peace, lifts them up above their cares, their temptations, their doubts and fills them with a preface of eternal bless! Oh, blessed is that man to whom our Gospel comes with the Holy Spirit! Beloved, we do not wonder if persons sneer at the Gospel in itself, or if others hear it and are unaffected by it, for the Gospel, in itself, is like a sword without a warrior’s arm to wield it. But when the Spirit of God comes, man is a doubter no longer! When He lays home the Truth of God, He cuts so to the dividing of soul and spirit, joint and marrow, so that men are convinced, converted, saved—and the Truth is to them, indeed a living thing! Pray, O beloved members of this Church, pray that the Word of God, even our Gospel, may come with the Holy Spirit!

But there was a fourth class to whom the Word came in a yet higher degree, for it is added, “and with much assurance.” To all Christians it comes with the Holy Spirit, but to some with a still greater degree of spiritual power! They believe the Gospel, but they do not believe it timidly— they accept it as a matter of firm, solid, indisputable fact! They grasp it as with an iron hand and their own interest in it does not remain a question. No, they know whom they believe and are persuaded that He is able to keep that which they have committed to Him. They believe in Christ with the faith of Abraham, which staggered not at the promise through unbelief. Clouds and darkness have gone away from their sky and they see the clear blue ether of God’s own Presence above them. They rejoice in the Lord always, and again they do rejoice. There are some such in this house. I bless God for every one of them. May there be many more, for you that possess full assurance are the men who are strong for service! Having the joy of the Lord in your souls, it becomes your strength as you go forth to fight the Master’s battles because you feel the Master’s Love! The Lord give us many, many such in the Church, to whom the Word of God shall come with the Holy Spirit and with much assurance! Now this is how the Word of God came to them. I must pass on to the third point, and that is—

**III.**WHAT HAD BEEN THE RESULT OF THIS IN THEMSELVES? You will kindly observe that the Apostle first says, “You became followers of us and of the Lord.” A man, when he is first converted, is not fit to be a leader—he has to be a *follower*. We do not take recruits and make them captains! They must be drilled. They must go into the rank and file a bit. So one of the first things that Divine Grace does is to make a man a disciple, that is, a learner—and then he sees in God’s Word what his life and conduct should be and, looking about him, he sees some whom God has blessed with His Grace whose life and conduct is according to the Word—and he follows God’s servants, but not slavishly. He draws a distinction between them and their Master and only follows them as long as they keep company with their Lord. “You became followers of us and of the Lord.” Brothers and Sisters, I know that many of you here present, when the Word of God came to you, became followers of holy men. If you heard of any good action, you desired to imitate it. If you read any biography that told of noble deeds, you aspired to emulate such deeds. And when you read the Character of your Lord and Master in the four Evangelists, you asked that you might have Grace to live a life of self-sacrifice, of devotion to God and of philanthropy to men. Well, this is no mean work of Divine Grace when a man is brought to be a follower of that which is good.  
At the same time he tells us that these people received the Word of God “*in much affliction*, with joy of the Holy Spirit.” I know that there are some in this house who, when they received the Gospel, had to suffer for it, but they rejoiced to do so! From the day in which they publicly put on Christ, they were jeered—they became subjects of derision. Some have gone back from us because they could not bear the perpetual taunt, but others of you have been kept by the Grace of God and made able to bear any stigma or any sneer! And, indeed, is it not a small thing to bear the jests and jeers of men if the heart is right towards God? What do we care—what should we care though all men point the finger and should hiss because of it? Be true to God, Believer, and to your conscience, too, and you may well receive the Word “with joy of the Holy Spirit,” even “in much affliction”! This is one proof of every Christian minister’s ministry, when he can point to a people who have become followers of that which is good and have continued to follow when they have been made to suffer for it!  
But it appears that these people at Thessalonica went farther. They grew out of being followers in some sense and, therefore, *became leaders*. “So that you were examples to all Believers in Macedonia and Achaia.” Now it is a very easy thing for a Christian to be an example to a sinner. He ought to be—and he is not a Christian if he is not. I won’t give twopence for your religion if you do not set a fair example to the ungodly. But it is a higher degree of Divine Grace when a man becomes an example even to Christians—when he is such a Believer that others may look upon him as the typical Christian, for that is the word used here—may regard him as the type of what a Christian ought to be! Paul says that some of those degraded idolaters to whom he had preached the Gospel, first followed him and the Lord, and afterwards grew in Grace so that they stood in the front rank and became an example to Believers! Let me hold this up, Beloved, to your emulation. Let none of us be content to be according to the ordinary cold Christianity of this age! What cold, poor stuff it is! If the Lord, Himself, should come, would He find faith in the earth? Where is the zeal of the days gone by? Where is the ardor, where is the courage of the ages that have gone? If these things are found nowhere else, O my Brother, seek to have them in your own soul! Ask God, if you are compelled to see others decline, that you may not decline, for God’s Grace can make you an example to the rest of His people! There are such here tonight of whom I might speak—only the Lord bless them and keep them as they are—for I have seen Apostolic Christianity here! If I have seen it nowhere else, I have seen it here among some of my Brothers and Sisters here present, whose service for the Lord shall be remembered in the Day of Account! They wish it not to be known here, nor will it be, but they have, with tears and prayers, devoted themselves to Christ and served Him well—and He will remember them in that Day.  
Further, the Apostle goes on to tell us what was done by these Thessalonians—that they turned from idols. Oh, that God might turn all of us from every idol that we have! We do not worship gods of wood and stone, but how many professors are there still who worship learning? Let them seek it, but let them not worship it! There are some that worship fame, others that worship pleasure. This city is full of idolaters from end to end! When the Grace of God comes, it makes men worship the unseen God and leave their idols to those that choose them. Turning from idols, it appears that these people served the living God. They did not merely acknowledge that He was the living God, but they began to *serve* Him! They put forth their strength in His cause. So will it be among us wherever the Word has come with the Holy Spirit—we shall spend and be spent in the service of our Creator and Redeemer! And he adds that they waited for the coming of the Lord. Oh, this is a high mark of Grace, when the Christian expects his Lord to come—and lives like one that expects Him every moment! If you and I knew tonight that the Lord would come before this service was over, in what state of heart should we sit in these pews? In*that* state of heart we ought to be! If I knew that I would see my Lord before another sun should rise, how would I preach? I ought to preach just in that way as though He were sure to come at once and there could be no doubt about it! We would hold very loosely the things of this world if we knew that Christ was speedily coming—and so loose we ought to hold them! We would care but little for the discomforts of life if we knew that it would all be over and Christ would come very shortly— so little ought we to think of life’s discomforts. Blessed is that man whose soul is always looking for the coming of the Lord! He may not study texts of Scripture to know the times and seasons, but if he is always expecting that his Lord may come at any time, and shall live under the feeling of that belief and in the power of it, he will be the holy man! “What manner of persons,” says Peter, “ought you to be in all holy conversation and godliness?” Such we desire to be by the power of the Holy Spirit! Thus we have noticed what the Grace of God did for the Thessalonians themselves. Now let us mark—  
**IV.**WHAT WAS THE RESULT OF THIS TO OTHERS?  
And here I wish to speak practically to the members of this Church. Thessalonica was a seaport. It was also a principal town in Macedonia. Therefore, whatever was done in Thessalonica was pretty sure to be known throughout Macedonia and the rest of Greece. If the Church at Thessalonica had been a dull, sleepy Church, as some Christian Churches are, it would have lost a fine opportunity of doing good—but being a thoroughly awake Church, really full of God’s own power—from that Church was sounded forth the Word of God throughout all Greece! And when the ships left that port they carried the tidings to Asia Minor and to other lands, so that Thessalonica became the starting point for the heralds of the Cross. Now if there is any place in the world that ought to feel its responsibility, it is London. We are not egotistical, I think, when we say that it is the very heart of the world! Whatever is done here is sure to be known and an earnest Church in London is only what it should be! A Church in London of any prominence that is sleepy, dull, and cold will have a very heavy account to render when the great Master shall come! *The Church at Thessalonica sounded forth the Gospel involuntarily*, and also voluntarily. They did it involuntarily, for their very lives spoke! If they did not preach, they were so full of faith, good works and holiness, that other people talked about it. And the matter was known and the work of God in the hearts of the Church could be perceived in the lives of the members—and so it went out. Oh, how happy would any pastor be whose people should be so godly, so united, so generous, so persevering, so prayerful, so full of faith and of the Holy Spirit that everywhere they should be spoken of and through them, through their conduct, the Word of God should be sounded abroad! See to that, my Brothers and Sisters—see to it. God has placed us where we are observed by many. Give them something to observe worth seeing! With the eyes of a multitude of witnesses upon us, let us run with patience the race that is set before us!  
But then the Church at Thessalonica *sent out the Word voluntarily*. I have no doubt that if they had any men among them that could preach the Gospel, they bade them go and preach it! And if any went on their travels, whether they were sea captains or merchants who went from place to place, or persons of influence, or whatever they might be—they said to them, “Wherever you go, keep up the propaganda. Preach the Gospel! Tell of Jesus Christ! Be, all of you, missionaries.” Now in this I can rejoice and will rejoice that it has been so among us. At this present moment I suppose that not less than 300 of our sons that have been borne upon our knees are preaching the Gospel while I am preaching here—I mean ministers of Christ preaching the Gospel! Besides that, all round these streets are our Evangelists preaching at street corners. There ought to be more of them. Some of you that come to hear me on Sunday nights ought not to come. If you have got the Grace of God in your heart, come and get enough spiritual meat to feed you, but remember that London is perishing for the lack of the Gospel! How dare you, then, sit still to enjoy the Gospel while men are perishing? There are lodging houses that are accessible! There are halls, large and small! There are the street corners! There are all sorts of places where Jesus can be preached! Oh, let us labor with all our might to make Him known throughout the length and breadth of this great city!  
At this moment we have our sons, the sons of this Church, preaching in Australia, in America—an abundance of them there, preaching the Gospel of Christ—in the islands of the Pacific—all through every portion of our Dominions. God be thanked that there are so many, but there ought to be many more. I propound as a theory, not that a Christian man ought to say, “Am I called to preach the Gospel?” but that he ought to say, “Am I excused from preaching the Gospel?” The old plan was for young men to preach before the Church to see if they could preach. I think we must bring them all up to make them prove that they *cannot preach*. Now Mr. Oncken has been blessed in Germany, as you knew, to the raising of many Baptist Churches, and he always works upon this theory—Every member of the church must say, when he comes in, what he can do. If he says he cannot do anything, and he is old, and infirm, and bed-ridden, very well, he can serve God by patiently suffering. But if he has any ability and says, “I cannot do anything,” then the reply is, “You cannot come into the Church.” We cannot have any drones—we must have all working bees in the hive. I think it would be a good resolution for the Tabernacle to expel every member that is not doing something or other for the Lord Jesus Christ. I am afraid some of you would have to go!  
Well, we won’t move that resolution, but we will move another—that every member who has been a drone up till now shall pray to be a bee! That everyone who has done nothing shall ask the Lord to help him to begin! That those who have done half as much as they could, will do the other half! And that those who are doing all they can will always try to do a little more, for it is always that point of doing more than you can do that, in the long run, is the best kind of doing—for then you have to lean upon God’s strength when you have gone to the limit of your own—and there is the point where the results are pretty sure to follow! I ask the prayers of the dear Brothers and Sisters who have been with us—some of them 16 and 17 years in this service—that God would not stay His hand in our midst. That as He has multiplied us to an unexampled company of some 4,500 persons or thereabouts in membership, that He may give us unexampled Grace! That our zeal and earnestness, and enthusiasm may be in proportion to the number and that the success achieved for God may be commensurate with the responsibilities laid upon us. I sound the clarion again tonight! As God said, “Speak to the children of Israel that they go forward,” so would I speak to you. Forward in God’s name! Forward! The world still lies in the Wicked One. Forward, you light-bearers! Scatter the darkness! Satan still laughs at God! Forward, with the invincible weapon of the Cross and put him to flight!  
Now sound your trumpets around the walls of Jericho—continue still to compass it. Now let the trumpet sound and the wall shall fall flat to the ground by the power of the eternal God. Forward! I hear the angels say it! Forward! I seem to hear innumerable spirits say, beckoning us like the Man of Macedonia, who beckoned Paul across the sea, Forward! The very powers of Hell behind us might well drive us on. Forward! The love of Christ within us shall impel us and let each man and women here that has been redeemed by blood, resolve tonight, in Jehovah’s strength, to do for God and for His Truth something more than yet we have thought of— to the praise of the Glory of His Grace! God bless you, for Jesus’ sake. Amen.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: *1 Thessalonians 1.***

**Verse 1.***Paul, and Silvanus, and Timotheus, unto the Church of the Thessalonians which is in God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.*Paul is very full of Christ. His heart is full of love to God our Father and, therefore, it is that twice over in as many lines he mentions both names. He uses no vain repetitions, as the heathen do—his inmost soul is taken up with communion with the Father and with the Son—and so in one single verse he twice gives us their names!

**2-4.***We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers, remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father. Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God.*Paul had a very high opinion of the Church in Thessalonica and no doubt it deserved it. See how he speaks of it—with such confidence. “Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God.” Their character was such that he felt sure that he saw the mark of God’s elect about them and he speaks most positively of them—perhaps more positively than he does of any other Church. Well, there were three grand signs. There was the work of faith, the labor of love and the patience of hope. And where we see three works of the Spirit, we may be fully persuaded that electing love is there.

**5.***For our Gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit. And in much assurance; as you know what manner of men we were among you for your sake.*Paul never had a happier time in preaching, it would seem, than when he preached to these Thessalonians! He felt a power resting upon him. He spoke the Gospel with great positiveness and assurance and, consequently, the people received it in power—and the assurance of the hearer made the assurance of the speaker! It is a great mercy when it is so.

**6.***And you became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the Word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit.* Ah, dear Friends, we read of one that he was more honorable than his brethren because his mother bore him with sorrow. And so when faith is born in the heart in the midst of affliction, it is a very precious faith. It is faith, indeed. “Having received the Word in much affliction with joy.” I seem to see that joy of theirs floating, like Noah’s ark, above the floods of their affliction. It seems to be a contradiction that we can be in affliction and yet be full of joy. But many a Believer will tell you that there is no contradiction in it. He knows what it is to be sorrowful and yet to be always rejoicing!

**7.***So that you were examples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia.* Brothers and Sisters, let us not only be Christians, but let us be examples of Christians! They are sure to pick out the best for an example. Oh, that we might be such that if God, Himself, were to select Christians to show what they are like, He might select us to be examples!

**8-10.***For from you the Word of the Lord has sounded out, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place. Your faith toward God has spread abroad, so that we need not to speak anything. For they themselves declare concerning us what manner of entry we had unto you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God. And to wait for His Son from Heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus, who delivered us from the wrath to come.*Paul here states that all the Churches abroad knew what a wonderful time he had had with the Thessalonians and with what alacrity they had received the Gospel—and how they had turned away from their idols in thorough earnest to become worshippers of the living God! This was a great comfort to Paul and he speaks about them here with great joy!

—Adapted from *The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307  
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**÷1Th 1.8**

SOUNDING OUT THE WORD OF THE LORD  
NO. 2076

**DELIVERED ON LORD’S DAY MORNING, MARCH 24, 1889, *BY C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“For from you sounded out the Word of the Lord not only in Macedonia and Achaia but also in every place your faith to God-ward is spread abroad; so that we need not to speak anything.”***1Th 1:8***.***

PAUL went to Thessalonica from Philippi with a sore back but with a sound heart. He went resolved to spend and to be spent for his Lord in that city. On the first three Sabbaths he spoke to the Jews in the synagogue but he soon found that they were obstinately resolved to reject Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah. Therefore he directed his attention to the heathen of Thessalonica and among them he had wonderful success. Large numbers of persons, some of honorable rank, turned from their idols to worship the living God and he soon gathered about him an enthusiastic people.

During his stay at Thessalonica he pretty nearly wore himself out—for he had determined that he would accept no help from the people who appeared to have been in great straits at that time. He toiled night and day at his trade of tent-making but even then could not earn sufficient income to survive. He might have failed to maintain his existence had not the Believers at Philippi sent once, and again, to assist him. Thus, being affectionately desirous of winning them to Jesus, the Apostle was willing to have given to them not the Gospel of God, only, but even his own life. The Lord accepted the cheerful sacrifice and gave the Apostle the reward he sought.

The Thessalonians not only received the Word with joy of the Holy Spirit but became zealous in making it known. Their intensity of faith helped to spread the Gospel, for their lives were notably affected by it. And for their earnestness and godliness they were everywhere talked of. Living in a trading town, to which many went and from which many came, their singular devotion to the faith of the Lord Jesus became the theme of conversation all over Greece. And thus enquiry was promoted and the Gospel was sounded out far and wide. In their case, learners speedily became teachers. The Lord Jesus had thus not only given them drink but He had made them into a well overflowing, to refresh the thirst of thousands.

They had heard the Gospel trumpet and now they had become trumpeters themselves! In their lives the echoes of Paul’s preaching were preserved. This was a very happy circumstance for the tried Apostle and greatly cheered his spirit. These Thessalonians must have been especially gracious people for Paul to praise them so heartily. “As the fining-pot for silver and the furnace for gold; so is a man to his praise.” Many can bear slander better than they could endure praise. Many, when commended,

become puffed up. But the Thessalonians were in such a happy spiritual condition that Paul could safely speak of them as, “examples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia.”

That praise was all the more precious because it was not indiscriminate—“not laid on with a trowel,” as the Proverb puts it. The Thessalonians had faulty ones among them. The best Church that ever existed has had in it imperfect members. And the very virtues of the Thessalonians carried them into certain faults. They were notable for their expectation of the coming of the Lord and certain of them became fanatical and ceased from work because of the speedy approach of the last day. The Apostle was obliged to talk to them about this in his two Epistles, and even to lay down the rule very strongly—“If any man will not work, neither let him eat.” Under whatever pretense men might cease from their daily callings they were not to be maintained by their Brethren. These good people were too ready to be deceived by idle rumors of coming wonders.

Even the Thessalonian Church had its spots. But, then, there are spots on the sun and yet we do not speak of it as a dark body since its light so much preponderates. Grave faults in the Thessalonian Church did not prevent our honest Apostle from awarding praise where praise was due. When a man is sound at heart, praise does not become an intoxicating wine, but an invigorating tonic. Feeling a modest fear that he does not deserve the warm commendation, the good man is anxious to live up to the character imputed to him. This will be the case, however, only with those whose spiritual life is vigorous.

I entreat you, dear Friends, to learn practically from these Thessalonians by being led to imitate them. May it be truly said of us also, “From you sounded out the Word of the Lord”! It is true even now in a measure— may it be far more so! The expression to which I would call your attention is this—“From you sounded out the Word of the Lord.” It reminds us of a trumpet and its far-sounding notes. Having heard the Gospel sounding within, they in return sounded it out.

First, let us carefully look at the trumpeters. What sort of men are these who make God’s Word to sound out? When we have talked about the men we will look at their trumpets and see how it is that they give forth so telling a sound. Next, we will speak of the need of such a trumpet blast just now. And close by enquiring whether we are not called to give forth that trumpet sound.

**I.**We begin by looking at THE TRUMPETERS. Who are these by whom the Word of the Lord is sounded out? I shall hastily give you a picture of these Thessalonians drawn from Paul’s letters to them.

Observe at the outset that they were a people whom the three cardinal Graces were conspicuous. Kindly look at the third verse—“Remembering without ceasing your work of faith and labor of love and patience of hope.” The three Divine sisters—Faith, Hope, Love—linked hands in their lives. These were with them in their best condition—faith working, love laboring, hope enduring. Faith without works is dead. Faith performing her work with energy is healthy and alive. Paul saw the Thessalonian Believers to be fulfilling the lifework of a true faith.

Nor was faith left to work alone—at her right hand was love, sweetening and brightening all. Their love did not consist in words or in mere amiability of temper. But it worked with a *will*. They threw their whole hearts into the cause of God—they loved Jesus and rapturously waited for His appearing. They loved one another and shared the sufferings of their leaders in the time of persecution. They exhibited a labor of love—it was not work, only, but in intensity it deserved to be called “labor.”

As for hope—that bright-eyed Grace which looks within the veil and realizes things not seen as yet—it was peculiarly their endowment. This enabled them to bear with patience their suffering for Christ—whether it lay in false accusation, or in the spoiling of their goods. Of them it could be said, “Now abides faith, hope, charity, these three.” Brethren, it is of no use for us to attempt to sound out the Word of the Lord if we have not the spiritual power which lies in those three Divine Graces.

These are of first importance. Those precious Truths of God which faith believes, which love delights in, which hope relies upon—these are the Truths of God we shall diligently make known. We believe, and therefore speak. We love, and therefore testify. We hope, and therefore make known.

Next I note these Thessalonian Believers were a people whose election was clear. Read the fourth verse—“Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God.” Paul said the same of them in the second Epistle (2:13)—“We are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God has from the beginning chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.” They were not ashamed to believe the doctrine of election as some professors are. They rejoiced in having been chosen of God from the beginning. They saw the practical nature of election for they perceived that they were chosen unto *sanctification*.

Their lives were such as to prove that they were the Lord’s chosen people for they became choice Brethren. They gave evidence of the secret choice of God by their holy lives. I hope this is true of us as a people—we are old-fashioned enough to rejoice in the electing love of God and Free Grace has a sweet sound to our ears. If it is so, we ought to bring forth fruits worthy of it. Gratitude for Sovereign Grace and eternal love should operate upon us mightily. Let the slaves of Law go to their tasks with a lash at their backs—the chosen of God will serve Him with delight and do ten times more from love than others from hope of wages. None can show forth the praises of God like those who taste His especial love and know the unutterable sweetness of it.

These trumpeters had received the Word of God themselves in much assurance and with much power. Note the fifth verse—“For our Gospel came not unto you in word, only, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and in much assurance.” The Apostle also says, in the thirteenth verse of the second chapter, “For this cause, also, we thank God without ceasing, because, when you received the Word of God which you heard of us, you

received it not as the word of men but as it is in truth, the Word of God, which effectually works also in you that believe.”

Beloved, it is a poor thing to receive the Gospel in word only. You then say, “Yes, it is true, I believe it.” And there the matter ends. It is a far different matter to *feel* the power of the Word as it comes from the Omnipotent Lord so as to have your heart broken by it and then healed by it. To receive the Gospel as indisputable, infallible and Divine is to receive it, indeed. To receive it not because you think a certain way but because it carries conviction with it and bears you away by its irresistible force—*that* is to receive it in its *power*.

Beloved, I do not believe a man will spend his life in spreading a doctrine which has never mastered his spirit. But when the Truth of God takes possession of a man and holds him by force as a strong man armed keeps his own house, then will he run up his flag and openly acknowledge the Mighty One who reigns within. He who believes, and is sure, is the man who will propagate the faith and desire that others should accept it. What a difference there is between the man who has felt the Omnipotence of Truth and another who merely professes to entertain sound opinions!

If the almighty Word has carried you captive you will hold it fast and nothing will persuade you either to surrender it or to stifle it. The Thessalonians were a people whose constancy was proven. They received the Word “with much affliction.” The Apostle says, “For you, Brethren, became followers of the Churches of God which in Judea are in Christ Jesus: for you also have suffered like things of your own countrymen, even as they have of the Jews.” The assault by the mob, recorded in Acts 17, was, doubtless, only one of their many trials. They remained steadfast and enthusiastic under all their tribulations. And therefore the Gospel was sounded out by them.

Cowards hold their tongues—but brave men are not to be put down. Having already borne slander, reproach and misrepresentation of every kind, we are not abashed but rather are hardened to endurance and publish our belief more unreservedly than ever. We have nothing to conceal, nothing to fear. Slander can say no more. Therefore we, the more boldly sound forth the Word of God. Brethren, unless you can hold on in rough weather and bear up under opposition you will do little in sounding out the Word of God. Trumpets must be made of hard metal and trumpeters must have something of the soldier about them, or little will come of it.

Again—these people really and lovingly served God. Look at the ninth verse—“For they themselves show of us what manner of entering in we had unto you and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God.” I have no doubt many of these folks had been great devotees of their idols for it is amazing what idolaters will do for their deities! At this day the gifts of Hindus to idol shrines put to shame the offerings given by Christians to their Lord. Have you not heard how they were likely to throw their very lives away beneath the wheels of the chariot of their demon god? Shall hideous deities of wood and stone command a zeal which is not shown in the service of the living God?

I doubt not that these Thessalonians became as earnest worshippers of the living Jehovah as they had once been earnest votaries of their idols. They turned from idols but they turned to serve God. They were not turned in opinion, only, but in a practical manner. What a pity it is that to many Christian professors, religion is opinion, and conversion a feeling! Do not many live as if God were a myth and the service of God a sham? If God is God, serve Him—service is the right of Godhead. Does not the Lord Himself say, “If then I am a father, where is My honor? And if I am a master, where is my fear?”

Oh, that to us the service of the Lord may be a delight—and then it will he as natural to us to sound out the Word of the Lord as it is for birds to sing! For one thing the Thessalonians were peculiarly notable—they were enthusiastic expectants of the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul says of them in the tenth verse that they waited for the Son of God from Heaven. They really expected Christ to come and to come speedily. They even carried this expectation beyond its proper bounds—they grew impatient of the Lord’s apparent delay. Some of their number died and they laid it to heart as though in their case their hope had failed.

Paul wrote to them concerning this—“But I would not have you to be ignorant, Brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that you sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.” They were not losers by their death. Those who remained alive till the advent would have no preference over those who slept. In their case there was no need to write “of the times and the seasons,” for they well knew that the Lord would come as a thief in the night. They came to expect the immediate coming of the Lord as to fall into unhealthy excitement about it. And it was needful for Paul, to prevent their becoming fanatical, to say, “Now we beseech you, Brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and by our gathering together unto Him, that you be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand.”

Paul delighted to see them waiting for the coming of Christ. But he also prayed, “The Lord direct your hearts into the patient waiting for Christ.” He wishes rest to the troubled—but this unrest was a virtue carried to excess. We are not, many of us, in danger of exaggeration in that direction. I fear that we are more likely to forget the Lord’s coming, or to treat it as an unpractical speculation. If any Truth of God should arouse us this should do it—yet even the wise virgins, as well as the foolish, are all too apt to slumber and sleep because the Bridegroom delays His coming.

Hear you not the midnight cry? Does not this startle you? “Behold, the Bridegroom comes; go out to meet Him.” If you hearken to that call you will be the men to sound out the Word of the Lord in every place. If we, as a Church and people are more and more influenced by the expectation of our Lord’s appearing, we shall be more eager to spread His Gospel. Remember that He may come at once. Those things of which Paul spoke as hindering His coming have now come and gone. Eighteen centuries and

more have passed away since Paul wrote that the Lord comes quickly. Stir up yourselves then, to use all diligence. Proclaim His Word and according to your ability go forth into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature. You that look for your Lord—you are the men who should herald His coming by a clear testimony to His name in every place.

Thus I have given you hints as to what kind of men are likely to sound forth the Word of God. Judge, my Brethren, whether you yourselves have these qualifications. It is my sincere impression that they are to be found in many of you.

**II.**Secondly, let us notice THEIR TRUMPETS. “From you sounded out the Word of the Lord.” Their testimony was distinct, clear, resonant and far-sounding. We may find an illustration in the silver trumpets of the sanctuary which were sounded to gather the people together. Let your trumpets ring out the call to assemble to our Lord Jesus, the true Shiloh—unto whom shall the gathering of the people be. We may further think of the Jubilee trumpet which early in the morning proclaimed clearance of debts, release from bondage and restoration to lost heritages. Such are the glad announcements of the Gospel. Let us hasten to make them.

Trumpets are also blown in time of war—many are the allusions to this in Scripture. Oh, that the Church of God may boldly sound the war trumpet, at this time, against impurity, intemperance, false doctrine and loose living! Our Lord has come to send a sword upon earth in these matters. Oh that from each one of us the war blast may be sounded without fear or hesitation! Gladly would we also earn the name given to the Apostles, “They that turn the world upside down.” For at present it is wrong side up. A trumpet is also used simply for musical purposes and the testimony of the Church to her Lord Jesus should be the most melodious sound the ears of man have ever heard—

***“How sweet the name of Jesus sounds!”***

Oh, to sound forth the glorious name “with trumpet and sound of cornet,” that multitudes might be compelled to hear it! Oh, to make all earth and Heaven ring with that dear name! Somebody writing upon this verse compares the sounding forth to the voices of Church bells. I will suppose that you are sojourning among the hills and have almost lost reckoning of the days. How clearly are you told that it is the Sabbath morning when you hear the sweet voices of the bells from yonder tower far away! The call comes through the wood and over the moor and it seems to say, “Come here and worship, for the day of rest has come.”

Each Church should find in its living members its best peal of bells. Every individual, great and little, should give forth his sound—no one should be dumb, Oh that it were always so—that everyone would constantly show forth the praises of the Lord! The Lord of Hosts is with us. Let us lift up the shout of a King. He is All in All to us. Let us make Him known. God grant us to realize that we may give a loud fanfare upon the silver trumpets to our coming Prince!

What was the means by which these excellent people made the Gospel to sound out? It was made known by the remarkable conversions which happened among them. These men had been idolaters and had fallen into many lusts common in those times. Paul’s preaching had made a change which none could have looked for. They had been brought to worship the true God and to look for His Son from Heaven and to walk worthy of their high calling. Everybody asked, “Why, what has happened to these Thessalonians? These people have broken their idols—they worship the one God. They trust in Jesus. They are no longer drunken, dishonest, impure, contentious.”

Everybody talked of what had taken place among these converted people. Oh, for conversions plentiful, clear, singular and manifest—so the Word of God may sound out! Our converts are our best advertisements and arguments. Have you not known a whole town startled by the conversion of one great sinner? A distinct, clear-cut conversion will often astound an entire parish and compel the crowd to say, “What is this Word of the Lord?” Brothers and Sisters, may your own conversions and those of many around you proclaim aloud the power of the Word of God and the efficacy of faith in the precious blood of Jesus.

The attention commanded by their conversion was further secured by their unmistakable, unquestionable character. They became such godly, honest, upright, sober, saintly people that all who observed them took note of their excellence. They were Christians, indeed, for they were Christians in their deeds. Their whole lives were affected by their faith—both at home and abroad. They were so admirable in character that they had become examples to those who were already saved. Notice in the seventh verse the remarkable expression, “You were examples to all that believe.” It is not so difficult to become an example to the ungodly, for their level is a low one. But it is a high attainment to become an example to those who fear God.

This requires Divine Grace. If even saints may copy from you, you had need write a good hand. The Thessalonians had attained to this, and it was by this that they were able to give such voice to the Gospel. Holy living is a grand pulpit. A godly character has a louder voice in it than the most eloquent tongue. Character is our Chrysostom—holiness has a golden mouth. The Apostle says that their lives were so complete a publication of the Gospel that he did not need to call attention thereto. He writes, “We need not to speak anything”—as much as to say, “We have only to point to you.” Shall I ever feel that I have little need to preach in words since my people preach far better by their lives? Yes, there are many cases among you concerning which I might say—“There, watch that friend’s life and see what the Gospel is—there is no need for me to tell you.”

Nobody stands on a summer day and points upward, saying, “There is the sun.” No, the great light sheds its radiance everywhere and nobody mistakes him for the moon or a star. Oh, that all of us were of such a character that none should mistake us! Till we have more grace in our hearts and more holiness in our lives, we shall lack the greatest means of

making the Gospel known. We must shine by our works if men are to see our light. Oh, what a sounding forth of the Word will your holy lives be! Without these, all is vain. If the life contradicts the voice, it will be as when a trumpet is stopped up and blow as you may, no sound is heard.

I have no doubt that the Thessalonians added to their character many earnest efforts for the spread of the Truth of God. They went about telling what they had heard, believed and enjoyed. Some of them became preachers of the Word at home and others went abroad to publish the glad tidings. Jesus would be made known to the poor in the back slums of Thessalonica and talked of to the sailors on board the vessels and to the merchants on the wharfs. Are you, Beloved, all of you, making Jesus known? Are there any of you silent? Have we not among us some who should now be working in foreign lands? Have we not in these pews many whose voices should be heard in our streets? We shall never be as we ought to be till every talent is utilized. We must be all at it, always at it, and at it with all our might. We have not come to this yet. May the love of Christ constrain us thereto!

Meanwhile, it was by their faith that their teaching was made so clear and forcible. They were intense Believers, so that Paul says, “Your faith to God-ward is spread abroad.” They did not half-heartedly teach what they half-heartedly believed. They accepted the teaching of the Apostle as being not the word of man but the Word of God. And so they spoke with the accent of conviction. Those who heard them felt that they were enfeebled by no doubts but were filled with full assurance of the eternal verities. Their goods were spoiled—they were themselves brought before magistrates and yet they stood fast in the faith and had no secret mistrust. There was no moving them, although the philosophers sneered at them and the superstitious persecuted them. They stood like rocks amid raging seas. This was a trumpet for the Gospel blasting loudly.

When holy constancy is to the front under reproach and ridicule, the Gospel is sounded as with a bugle note and men are compelled to hear it. Brothers and Sisters, you possess this confidence. Have it more and more! May we have among us remarkable conversions, unquestionable character, earnest effort and intense faith. And these will be to us all the trumpet that we need. We need not blow our own trumpets nor borrow the whistles of politics or amusement. But the Word of the Lord will by these sound forth all around us. I cannot keep you long upon these points—my aim is not to fill up the time but to fill you with an eager desire to sound out the Truth of God.

**III.**Oh that the Holy Spirit would put fire into my sermon—that its live coals may touch your hearts while I say that THERE IS NEED, AT THE PRESENT TIME, FOR A TRUMPET BLAST OF THIS KIND.

Brethren, the Word of the Lord ought to be sounded out because it is the Word of God. If it is the word of man let *him* spread it as he can. We are not concerned to help him. The word of man comes from a dying source and it will return to it. But the Word of the Lord endures forever—

***“Float, float, you winds, His story!  
And you, you waters, roll,  
Till, like a sea of glory,  
It spreads from pole to pole.”***

The Word of the Lord is so all-important that it should have a free course, run and be glorified. When He gives the word, great should be the company of them that publish it. If you believe the Gospel to be the Divine Word you dare not withhold it. The stones would cry out if you were silent.

With many of us this is a matter of solemn obligation. The Word of God has been to us life from the dead, deliverance out of bondage, food for our hunger, strength for our weakness, comfort for our sorrow and satisfaction for our hearts. Spread it then—

***“Can you, whose souls are lighted  
With wisdom from on high,  
Can you, to men unenlightened,  
The lamp of life deny?”***

Seeing that God’s Word has come to you with power and has saved you from all evil, you *must* sound it abroad.

Remember too, that this is salvation to the perishing. Did not one dear Brother and deacon on Monday night pray to the Lord with great fervor, reiterating these words, “They are perishing, they are perishing, they are perishing, Lord, save them!”? You believe that men are diseased with sin and that Christ is the only remedy—will you not tell them the remedy? You see men dying without hope—will you not tell them where there is hope as to the hereafter? You tremblingly feel that for souls to die without accepting the Savior is eternal woe—will you not pray for them, in Christ’s place, to be reconciled to God? O Sirs, by everything that is terrible in the doom of those who die in unbelief, I charge you, sound out the Word of the Lord! As you will shortly appear before the judgment seat of Christ, be clear of the blood of all men. The Gospel has power to save today and to save forever—sound it out!

This is a time in which the Word of the Lord is much abused. Many venture to say that it has lost its power and has proved unsuitable to the age. They tell us that we need something more advanced than it. O you that love it, avenge this insult by manifesting its power in your lives and by sounding out the old Gospel with new vigor! By your holy characters, and by your incessant labors, force men to see the power of the Divine Word. Let its secret power be embodied in your practical consecration and proclaimed in your incessant witness-bearing. When I wish to speak best, my tongue fails me. I am a poor advocate. But oh, I pray you, by the glory of the Ever Blessed—which is tarnished by the foul mouths of ungodly men—seek with sevenfold energy to make known Christ Crucified and the way of salvation by faith in Him!

If you have slept until now, “Awake, awake! Put on strength!” for the enemy is at the gate. I beseech you, now that Christ’s crown and Throne are assailed by His adversaries, put on your armor, grasp the sword and stand up for the sacred cause.

At this time many other voices are clamoring to be heard. The air is full of din. Men have devised new methods by which to elevate the race and loud are the voices that proclaim the man-invented nostrums. “Shall we be heard?” cries one, “if we lift up our voices?” Yes, if you take the Gospel trumpet you will enforce a hearing. It chanced one evening, when there was a large gathering of friends at the Orphanage that our boys were sweetly discoursing a hymn tune upon their bells. An American organ was being played as an accompaniment and all the gathered company were singing at their best, making a rushing flood of music.

Just then I quietly hinted to our friend, Mr. Manton Smith, to put in a few notes from his silver cornet. And when he placed it to his lips and threw his soul into it, the lone man was heard above us all. Bells, organ, voices—everything seemed to yield before that one clear blast of trumpet music! So will it be with the Gospel. Only sound it out as God’s own Word and let the power of the Holy Spirit go with it, and it will drown all music but its own. At any rate, you will have done your part and will be no longer responsible, even if men do not hear it, if from your very soul you sound out the Word of the Lord.

Need I say more to show you how needful it is that we now should put a tongue into the heavenly doctrine and let it proclaim salvation to all lands?

**V.**I want, during my last few minutes, to hint to the members of this Church and to those many friends far and near who have so generously associated with me in holy enterprises that WE ARE THE PEOPLE TO GIVE FORTH THIS SOUND.

It is our duty, first of all, because of our position. Thessalonica was a well-chosen center because it was a place of great resort. Ships were always coming into that port and going out again. Whatever was done at Thessalonica would soon be known in all quarters. We are placed in a central position in London. Who does not know the Tabernacle? Here the tribes come up and here the multitudes continually assemble. Friends from the country flock to this spot. And on any summer Sabbath, persons from all countries are in these pews and aisles. I state the simple truth when I speak of this house as known to some of all nations, and therefore what is done here, is done in the heart of England and in the center of the world.

If you, as a Church, can sound forth by your character and exertions the Word of God, you are in the most fit place for it. The position demands it of you—act not unworthily. Providence has forced us into prominence. We have not desired it, but we are known and observed by multitudes. If, Beloved, we keep the fire burning here it will be a beacon seen afar. If we are consecrated men and women we have a great opportunity. If my helpers will see to it that nothing fails in this place, we shall encourage many. But we shall dispirit thousands unless we carry on the work here with great vigor, the Lord being our helper.

Nor can I forget our numbers. There may have been Churches of larger numbers than ours but I have never heard of them. In this I do not glory but I dare not conceal from you the anxiety which it causes me. If little is done by such an assembly it will be a great disgrace to us all. I am overwhelmed with the thought of more than five thousand souls united here in Church fellowship. Large numbers may be our weakness. We may become a mere horde of men without discipline, without unity, without power. But I trust in the great Lord that it shall not be so. If God has caused us to be as large as almost any other ten Churches put together, does He not call upon us to exert ourselves with tenfold energy to spread abroad the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ?

I am sorely burdened with this great host—will you allow it to be a burden? Will you not make it a joy? Will all these professed Believers make up a crowded hospital? Shall not this house rather be a barrack of soldiers? Shall not our voice be louder for our Lord than if we were but five hundred instead of five thousand? How would I plead with you if I knew how! Do not make this community a gigantic failure. God grant that, remembering our numbers, we may not be satisfied with a thin and feeble voice for Jesus. Our voice should be as the noise of many waters. Is it so? Is it as much so as it ought to be? Oh, for the Spirit of God among us as a rushing mighty wind!

Through our agencies we ought to sound out the Word of the Lord very loudly. At this moment you have, by the College, sent out more than seven hundred preachers of the Word into all countries. Oh, that they were all as faithful as some are! Many are the Churches presided over by those trained in your school of the Prophets—pray that the Lord may be with them. Your orphan children are growing up—oh, that they may be a seed to serve the Lord! Your peddlers are going from door to door with holy literature. Oh for the power of God with their laborious efforts! Your Evangelists are heard by tens of thousands—implore the unction from on high for them.

The sermons preached in this place are not only printed in our own tongue but many of them are translated into other languages and are widely read. This is no mean agency for good. All this, and much more which I will not speak upon, I mention not to boast, but that we may be humbled under our responsibilities and may cry to God for His power. All this, if the Holy Spirit is with us, must accomplish great results. But without Him—and we shall be without Him unless we are a holy, godly, earnest, Christ-loving people—nothing will be accomplished. Our agencies will become burdens to us until that which should be the armor of our warfare will become the sepulcher of our life. I feel this more than anyone else since the very finding and using of funds for so great a work would crush me if the Lord were not my helper.

Beloved, I press home upon you the duty of sounding out the Word of God because of your prayers. If there is a people under Heaven that constantly meets in large numbers to pray, we are that people. However some of you are lax on this point, but I am bound to say that I rejoice in your gatherings for prayer. In this you are my joy and crown. God be praised for it! But if any cry to God and then do not work for Him, what hypocrisy it is! What if we ask Him to save souls and never lift a finger to spread

the Gospel? Is this truthful? Dare we hang the trumpet on the wall and then pray, “Lord, let it be blown”? No. By the honesty of your hearts set that trumpet to your lips if you desire its sound to go forth. Give it your very life’s breath. Lift up your voice with strength—lift it up! Be not afraid.

Once more—you have stood with me in solemn protest against the declensions of the age. He who knows all things knows what this has cost me. But your love has been a great relief to me in the bitter sorrow. We will have no complicity with error—we will not aid the Philistines in shearing away the locks of the Gospel’s strength. Having protested, we must justify our position by our lives. We shall be dishonored unless we have the power of God especially resting upon us—that may be a small thing— but the Truth of God itself will be dishonored. And this we cannot bear.

If the Gospel is indeed true—and we have no doubt about it—we beseech the God of Truth to grant us the sign and seal from Heaven by baring His holy arm in our midst. Today, again, I lay the sacrifice upon the altar by reasserting the old Gospel against the down-grade of the times. The God that answers by fire let Him be God! May the tongues of fire descend and rest on you. May you who are with me, whether in London or in the utmost parts of the earth, be inflamed with zeal and fired with love. May the water in the trenches be licked up by the flame and the whole sacrifice be consumed with Heaven’s own fire till the people, once deluded by Baal, shall be forced to cry, “Jehovah, He is the God! Jehovah, He is the God!”

May the substitutionary sacrifice of Christ triumph in the midst of the earth and become, as it always has been, the Truth by which the Glory of the Lord shall be revealed! The Lord grant it. Labor, all of you to secure it.

I have not preached to sinners. I leave that, for once, to you. I lay on you this burden—that you each one make the Word of the Lord to sound out “so that we need not to speak anything.” God grant it may be so, for Jesus’ sake! Amen.

Adapted from*The C.H. Spurgeon Collection*, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #1806 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

**÷1Th 1.9**

A SUMMARY OF EXPERIENCE AND A BODY OF DIVINITY  
NO. 1806

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, OCTOBER 26, 1884, *BY C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“For they themselves show of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; and to  
wait for His Son from Heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus, who delivered us from the wrath to come.”*** 1Th 1:9-10***.***

IN Thessalonica the conversions to the faith were remarkable. Paul came there without prestige, without friends and when he was in the very lowest condition, for he had just been beaten and imprisoned at Philippi, and had fled from that city. Yet it mattered not in what condition the ambassador might be—God, who works mighty things by weak instruments, blessed the word of His servant, Paul! No doubt when the Apostle went into the synagogue to address his own countrymen, he had great hopes that, by reasoning with them out of their own Scriptures, he might convince them that Jesus was the Christ. He soon found that only a few would search the Scriptures and form a judgment on the point. The bulk of them refused, for we read of the Jews of Berea, to whom Paul fled from Thessalonica, “These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the Word with all readiness of mind and searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so.”

Paul must have felt disappointed with his own countrymen. Indeed, he often had cause to do so. His heart was affectionately warm toward them, but their hearts were very bitter towards him, reckoning him to be a pervert and an apostate. But if he seemed to fail with the Jews, it is evident that he was abundantly successful with the Gentiles! These turned from their idols to serve the living God and their turning was so remarkable that the Jews charged Paul and Silas with turning the world upside down! In those days there was a good deal of practical atheism abroad and, therefore, the wonder was not so much that men left their idols, as that they turned unto the living God. It became a matter of talk all over the city and the Jews, in their violence, helped to make the matter more notorious, for the mobs in the street and the attack upon the house of Jason all stirred the thousand tongues of rumor.

Everybody spoke of the sudden appearance of three poor Jews, of their remarkable teaching in the synagogue, the conversion of a great multitude of devout Greeks and of the chief women not a few. It was no small thing that so many had come straight away from the worship of Jupiter and Mercury to worship the unknown God—who could not be seen, nor imaged—and to enter the kingdom of one Jesus who had been crucified! It set all Macedonia and Achaia wondering and, as with a trumpet blast, it awakened all the dwellers in those regions. Every ship that sailed from Thessalonica carried the news of the strange ferment which was moving the city—men were caring for *religion* and were quitting old beliefs for a new and better faith.

Thessalonica, situated on one of the great Roman roads, the center of a large trade, thus became a center for the Gospel. Wherever there are true conversions, there will be more or less of this kind of sounding forth of the Gospel. It was especially so at Thessalonica, but it is truly so in every Church where the Spirit of God is lifting up men from the dregs of evil, delivering them from drunkenness, dishonesty, uncleanness, worldliness and making them to become holy and earnest in the cause of the great Lord! There is sure to be a talk when Grace triumphs! This talk is a great aid to the Gospel. It is no small thing that men should have their attention attracted to it by its *effects*—for it is both natural and just that thoughtful men should judge of doctrines by their *results*—and if the most beneficial results follow from the preaching of the Word of God, prejudice is disarmed and the most violent objectors are silenced.

You will notice that in this general talk the converts and the preachers were greatly mixed up—“For they themselves show of us what manner of entering in we had unto you.” I do not know that it is possible for the preacher to keep himself distinct from those who profess to be converted by him. He is gladly one with them in love to their souls, but he would have it remembered that he cannot be responsible for all their actions. Those who profess to have been converted under any ministry have it in their power to damage that ministry far more than any adversaries can do. “There!” says the world when it detects a false professor, “*this* is what comes of such preaching!” They judge unfairly, I know, but most men are in a great hurry and will not examine the logic of their opponents—while many others are so eager to judge unfavorably that a very little truth, or only a bare report, suffices to condemn both the minister and his doctrine. Every man that lives unto God with purity of life brings honor to the Gospel which converted him, to the community to which he belongs and to the preaching by which he was brought to the knowledge of the Truth of God.

But the reverse is equally true in the case of unworthy adherents. Members of Churches, will you kindly think of this? Your ministers share the blame of your ill conduct if ever you disgrace yourselves. I feel sure that none of you wish to bring shame and trouble upon your pastors, however careless you may be about your own reputations. Oh, that we could be freed from those of whom Paul says, “Many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the Cross of Christ: whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.” When these are in a Church, they are its curse! The Thessalonians were not such— they were such a people that Paul did not blush to have himself implicated in what they did. He was glad to say that the outsiders “show of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how you turned to God from idols, to serve the living and true God, and to wait for His Son from Heaven.”

Quitting this line of thought, I would observe that these two verses struck me as being singularly full. Oceans of teaching are to be found in them. A father of the Church in the first ages was apt to cry, “I adore the infinity of Holy Scripture.” That remark constantly rises from my lips when I am studying the sacred Word! This Book is more than a book—it is the mother of books, a mine of truth, a mountain of meaning! It was an ill-advised opinion which is imputed to the Muslims at the destruction of the Alexandrian Library, when they argued that everything that was good in it was already in the Koran and, therefore, it might as well be destroyed.

Yet it true with regard to the inspired Word of God, that it contains everything which appertains to eternal life. It is a Revelation of which no man can measure! It compasses Heaven and earth, time and eternity! The best evidence of its being written by an Infinite mind is its own infinity. Within a few of its words there lie hidden immeasurable meanings, even as perfume enough to sweeten leagues of space may be condensed into a few drops of oil of roses. The first part of my text contains *a summary of Christian experience.* The second part contains *a body of divinity*. Here is ample room and verge enough. It is not possible to exhaust such a theme!

**I.**The first part of the text contains A SUMMARY OF EXPERIENCE— “What manner of entering in we had unto you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for His Son from Heaven.” Here we have, in miniature, the biography of a Christian man. It begins, first, with *the entering in of the Word*—“What manner of entering in we had unto you.” When we preach the Word, you listen and, so far, the Word is received. This is a very hopeful circumstance. Still, the hearing with the outward ear is comparatively a small matter or, at least, only great because of what may follow from it. The preacher feels, even with some who listen with attention, that he is outside the door. He is knocking and he hopes that he is heard within—but the Truth of God is not yet received—the door remains shut, an entrance is not granted and in no case can he be content to speak with the person outside the door. He desires an *entrance* for the Word.

All is fruitless until Christ enters into the heart. I have seen the following—the door has been a little opened and the man inside has come to look at the messenger and, more distinctly, to hear what he may have to say. But he has taken care to secure the chain on the door, or hold it with his hand, for he is not yet ready to admit the guest who is so desirous of entering. The King’s messenger has sometimes tried to put his foot in when the door has stood a little open, but he has not always been successful and has not even escaped from a painful hurt when the door has been forced back with angry violence. We have called again and again with our message, but we have been as men who besieged a walled city and were driven from the gates! Yet we had our reward, for when the Holy Spirit sweetly moved the hard heart, the city gates have opened of their own accord and we have been received joyfully!

We have heard the hearty cry, “Let the Truth of God come in! Let the Gospel come in! Let Christ come in! Whatever there is in Him, we are willing to receive! Whatever He demands, we are willing to give! Whatever He offers us we are glad to accept! Come and welcome! The guest chamber is prepared. Come and abide in our house forever!” The Truth has its own ways of entrance, but in general it first affects the *understanding*. The man says, “I see it! I see how God is just, and yet the Justifier of him that believes in Jesus! I see sin laid on Christ that it may not be laid on me and I perceive that if I believe in Jesus Christ my sins are put away by His Atonement.” To many, all that is needed is that they should understand this fundamental Truth of God, for their minds are prepared of God to receive it. Only make it plain and they catch at it as a hungry man at a piece of bread! They discover, in the Gospel of our Lord Jesus, the very thing for which they have been looking for years—and so the Truth of God enters by the door of the understanding.

Then it usually commences to work upon the conscience, conscience being the understanding exercised upon moral truth. The man sees himself a sinner, discovering guilt that he was not aware of—and he is thus made ready to receive Christ’s pardoning Grace. He sees that to have lived without thinking of God, without loving God, without serving God was a great and grievous crime. He feels the offensiveness of this neglect. He trembles, he consents unto the Law, that it is good, and he acknowledges that if the Law condemns him, he is worthy to be condemned.

When it has thus entered into the understanding and affected the conscience, the Word of God usually awakens the *emotions*. Fear is awakened and hope is excited. The man begins to feel as he never felt before. His whole manhood is brought under the heavenly spell! His very flesh creeps in harmony with the amazement of his soul. He wonders and dreads, weeps and quivers, hopes and doubts. No emotion is asleep—life is in all! When a tear rises to his eye, he brushes it away, but it is soon succeeded by another. Repentance calls forth! The proud man is broken down; the hard man is softened. The love of God, in providing a Savior; the unsearchable riches of Divine Grace, in passing by transgression, iniquity and sin—these things amaze and overwhelm the penitent! He finds himself suddenly dissolved, where before he was hard as adamant, for the Word is entering into him and exercising its softening power.

By-and-by the entrance is complete, for the Truth of God carries the central castle of Mansoul and captures his heart. He who once hated the Gospel now loves it! At first he loves it, hoping that it may be his, though fearing the reverse—yet admitting that if it brought no blessing to him, yet it was a lovable and desirable thing. By-and-by the man ventures to grasp it, encouraged by the Word that bids him lay hold on eternal life. One who in digging his land finds a treasure, first looks about for fear lest someone else should claim it. But soon he dares to examine his prize more carefully and, at length, he bears it in his bosom to his own home. So it is with the Gospel—when a man finds it by the understanding, he soon embraces it with his heart and, believe me, if it once gets into the heart, the archenemy, himself, will never get it out again! Oh, that such an entrance with the Gospel might commence the spiritual life of all here present who are as yet unsaved!

What comes next? Well, the second stage is *conversion*. “They themselves show of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how *you turned*from idols to serve the living and true God.” There came a *turning*, a decided turning. The man has come so far in carelessness, so far in sin and unbelief, but now he pauses and he deliberately turns around and faces in that direction to which, up to now, he had turned his back. Conversion is the turning of a man *completely* around—to hate what he loved and to love what he hated! Conversion is to turn to God decidedly and distinctly by an act and deed of the mind and will. In some senses we are *turned,* but in others, like these Thessalonians, we *turn*. It is not conversion to think that you *will* turn, or to *promise* that you will turn, or *resolve* that you will turn—but *actually* and in very deed to *turn*—because the Word of God has had a true entrance into your heart. You must not be content with a reformation! There must be a revolution—old thrones must fall and a new king must reign. Is it so with you?

These Thessalonians turned from their idols. Do you tell me that you have no idols? Think again and you will not be quite so sure. The streets of London are full of fetish worship and almost every dwelling is a temple crammed with idols. Why, multitudes of men are worshipping not calves of gold, but gold in a more portable shape! Small circular idols of gold and silver are much sought after. They are very devoutly worshipped by some and great things are said concerning their power. I have heard the epithet of “almighty” ascribed to an American form of these idols! Those who do not worship gold may yet worship rank, name, pleasure, or honor. Most worship *self*—and I do not know that there is a more degrading form of worship than for a man to put himself on a pedestal and bow down thereto and worship himself! You might just as well adore cats and crocodiles with the ancient Egyptians as pay your life’s homage to yourselves. No wooden image set up by the most savage tribe can be more ugly or degrading than our idol when we adore ourselves!

Men still worship Bacchus. Do not tell me they do not! Why, there is a temple to him at every street corner. While every other trade is content with a shop or a warehouse, this fiend has his palaces in which plentiful libations are poured forth in his honor. The gods of unchastity and vice are yet among us. It would be a shame, even, to speak of the things which are done for them in secret. The lusts of the flesh are served even by many who would not like to have it known. We have many gods and many lords in this land! God grant that we may see, through the preaching of the Gospel, many turning from such idols! If you love *anything* better than God, you are idolaters! If there is anything you would not give up for God, it is your idol! If there is anything that you seek with greater fervor than you seek the Glory of God, that is your idol—and conversion means a turning from *every* idol!

But then that is not enough, for some men turn from one idol to another. If they do not worship Bacchus, they become teetotalers and possibly they worship the golden calf and become covetous. When men quit covetousness, they sometimes turn to profligacy. A change of false gods is not the change that will *save*—we must turn unto God—to trust, love and honor Him, and Him alone! After conversion comes *service*. True conversion causes us “to serve the living and true God.” To serve Him means to worship Him, to obey Him, to consecrate one’s entire being to His honor and Glory and to be His devoted servant. We are, dear Friends, to serve the “living” God.

Many men still have a dead God. They do not feel that He hears their prayers. They do not feel the power of His Spirit moving upon their hearts and lives. They never take the Lord into their calculations. He never fills them with joy, nor even depresses them with fear. God is unreal and inactive to them. But the true convert turns to the *living* God, who is everywhere and whose Presence affects him at every point of his being. This God he is to worship, obey and serve.

Then it is added, to serve the *true* God—and there is no serving a true God with falsehood. Many evidently serve a false god, for they utter words of prayer without their hearts—and that is false prayer, unfit for the true God who must be worshipped in spirit and in truth. When men’s lives are false and artificial, they are not a fit service for the God of Truth. A life is false when it is not the true outcome of the soul—when it is fashioned by custom, ruled by observation, restrained by selfish motives and governed by the love of human approbation. What a man does against his will is not, in truth, done by himself at all. If the will is not changed, the man is not converted and his religious life is not true. He that serves the true God acceptably does it with delight. To him, sin is misery, and holiness is happiness. This is the sort of service which we desire our converts to render— we long to see rebels become *sons*. Oh the sacred alchemy of the Holy Spirit who can turn men from being the slaves of sin to become servants of righteousness!

Carefully notice the order of life’s progress. The *entering* in of the Word of God produces*conversion* and this produces *service*. Do not put those things out of their places. If you are converts without the Word entering into you, you are unconverted. And if professing to receive the Word, you are not turned by it, you have not received it! If you claim to be converted and yet do not serve God, you are not converted. And it you boast of serving God without being converted, you are not serving God! The three things are links which draw on each other.

A fourth matter follows to complete this Christian biography, namely, *waiting—*“To wait for His Son from Heaven.” That conversion which is not followed up by waiting is a false conversion and will come to nothing. We wait, dear Brothers and Sisters, in the holy perseverance of faith. Having begun with Christ Jesus our Lord, we abide in Him—we trust and then we wait. We do not look upon salvation as a thing which requires a few minutes of faith and then all is over—salvation is the business of our *lives*! We receive salvation in an instant, but we work it out with fear and trembling all our days. He that is saved continues to be saved and goes on to be saved from day to day, from every sin and from every form of evil! We must wait upon the Lord and renew the strength of the life which He has imparted. As a servant waits on her mistress, or a courtier upon his king, so must we wait upon the Lord.

This waiting also takes the shape of living in the future. A man who waits is not rising on the wages of today, but on the recompenses of a time which is yet to come—and this is the mark of the Christian—that his life is spent in eternity rather than in time! And his citizenship is not of earth but of Heaven! He has received a believing expectancy which makes him both watch and wait. He expects that the Lord Jesus will come a second time and that, speedily. He has read of His going up into Heaven and he believes it! And he knows that He will come back in like manner as He went up into Heaven. He looks for the Second Advent with calm hope. He does not know when it may be, but he keeps himself on the watch as a servant who waits his Lord’s return. He hopes it may be today. He would not be amazed if it were tomorrow, for he is always looking for and hasting unto the coming of the Son of God.

The coming of the Lord is his expected reward! He does not expect to be rewarded by men, or even to be rewarded of God with temporal things in this life, for he has set his affection upon things yet to be revealed, things eternal and infinite. In the day when the Christ shall come and the heavens which have received Him shall restore Him to our earth, He shall judge the world in righteousness and His people with His truth—and then shall our day break and our shadows flee away! The true Believer lives in this near future. His hopes are with Jesus on His Throne and with Jesus crowned before an assembled universe! The convert who has come to this condition is assured of his salvation. See how he has been rising from the time when he first held the door ajar! He is assured of his salvation, for Paul describes him as one who is delivered from the wrath to come and, therefore, he looks with holy delight to the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Once he was afraid of this, for he feared that Jesus would come to condemn him. But now he knows that when the Lord appears, his justification will be made plain to the eyes of all men. “Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun, in the kingdom of their Father.” And so he cries, “Even so, come Lord Jesus!” He would *hasten* rather than delay the appearing of the Lord! He groans in sympathy with travailing creation for the manifestation of the sons of God! He cries with all the redeemed host for the day of the Savior’s Glory! He could not do this were he not abundantly assured that the day would not seal his destruction, but reveal his full salvation.

Here, then, you have the story of the Christian man briefly summed up, and I think you will not find a passage of merely human writing which contains so much in so small a compass. It has unspeakable wealth packed away into a narrow casket. Do you understand it? Is this the outline of *your* life? If it is not, the Lord grant that His Word may have an entrance into you this morning—that you may now believe in Jesus Christ and then wait for His glorious appearing.

**II.**I shall need you to be patient with me while I very briefly unfold the second half of this great roll. Here, even to a greater degree, we have *multum in parvo—*much in little. A BODY OF DIVINITY packed away in a nutshell! “To wait for His Son from Heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus, who delivered us from the wrath to come.” To begin my body of divinity, I see here, first, *the Deity of Christ*. “To wait for His Son.” “His Son.” God has but one Son in the highest sense. The Lord Jesus Christ has given to all Believers power to become the *sons of God*, but not in the sense in which He, and He, alone, is the Son of God. “Unto which of the angels said He at any time, You are My Son, this day have I begotten you?” “When He brings in the First-Begotten into the world, He says, Let all the angels of God worship Him.”

The Eternal Sonship is a mystery into which it is better for us never to pry. Believe it. But how it is, or how it could be—it is certainly not for you or for me to attempt to explain. There is one “Son of the Highest,” who is “God—of the substance of the Father, begotten before all worlds,” whom we, with all our souls, adore, and acknowledge to be most truly God— doing so, especially, every time in the benediction we associate Him with the Father and with the Holy Spirit as the one God of blessing.

Side by side with this in this text of mine is *His humanity*. “His Son whom He raised from the dead.” It is for *man* to die. God, absolutely considered, dies not. He, therefore, took upon Himself our mortal frame and was made in fashion as a Man. Then willingly, for our sakes, He underwent the pangs of death and, being crucified, was dead and so was buried, even as the rest of the dead. He was truly Man, “of a reasonable soul, and human flesh subsisting”—of that we are confident. There has been no discussion upon that point in these modern times, but there was much questioning thereon in years long gone—for what is there so clear that men will not doubt it or mystify it? With us there is no question either as to His Deity, which fills us with reverence, or His Manhood, which inspires us with joy! He is the Son of God and the Son of Mary. He, as God, is, “immortal, invisible.” And yet, for our sakes, He was seen of men and angels—and in mortal agony yielded up the ghost. He suffered for our salvation, died upon the Cross and was buried in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathaea, being verily and truly Man.

Notice a third doctrine which is here, and that is *the unity of the Divine Person of the Lord*, for while the Apostle speaks of Christ as God’s Son from Heaven, and as One who had died, he adds, “even Jesus.” That is to say, one *known*, undivided Person! Although He is God and Man, yet He is not two, but one Christ! There is but one Person of our blessed and adorable Lord—“one altogether; not by confusion of substance, but by unity of Person.” He is God. He is Man—perfect God and perfect Man—and, as such, Jesus Christ, the one Mediator between God and man. There have been mistakes about this made in the Church, though I trust not by any one of us here present. We worship the Lord Jesus Christ in the unity of His Divine Person as the one Savior of men.

Furthermore, in our text we perceive a doctrine about *ourselves* very plainly implied, namely, that *men by nature are guilty*, for otherwise they would not have needed Jesus, a Savior. They were lost and so He who came from Heaven to earth bore the name of Jesus, “for He shall save His people from their sins.” It is clear, my Brothers and Sisters, that we were under the Divine wrath, otherwise it could not be said, “He has delivered us from the wrath to come.” We who are now delivered were once “children of wrath, even as others.” And when we are delivered, it is a meet song to sing, “O Lord, I will praise You: though You were angry with me, Your anger is turned away, and You comforted me.” We were guilty, otherwise we had not needed a propitiation by the Savior’s death! We were lost, otherwise we had not needed One who should seek and save that which is lost! And we were hopelessly lost, otherwise God Himself would not have shared our nature to work the mighty work of our redemption. That Truth is in the text—and a great deal more than I can mention just now.

But the next doctrine, which is one of the fundamentals of the Gospel, is that *the Lord Jesus Christ died for these fallen men*. He could not have been raised from the dead if He had not died. That death was painful and ignominious—and it was also *substitutionary*—“for the transgression of My people was He stricken.” In the death of Christ lay the essence of our redemption. I would not have you dissociate His life from His death—it comes into His death as an integral part of it—for as the moment we begin to live, we, in a sense, begin to die, so the Man of Sorrows lived a dying life which was all preparatory to His passion. He lived to die, panting for the baptism with which He was to be baptized, and reaching forward to it. But it was especially, though not only, by His death upon the Cross that Jesus put away our sin. Without shedding of blood there is no remission of sin. Not even the tears of Christ, nor the labors of Christ could have redeemed us if He had not given Himself for us as an Offering and a Sacrifice.

“He die, or justice must,” or man must die. It was His bowing His head and giving up of the ghost which finished the whole work. “It is finished” could not have been uttered except by a bleeding, dying Christ! His death is our life. Let us always dwell upon that central Truth of God and when we are preaching Christ risen, Christ reigning, or Christ coming, let us never so preach any of them as to overshadow Christ crucified! “We preach Christ Crucified.” Some have put up as their ensign, “We preach Christ glorified,” and we, also, preach the same. But yet, to us it seems that the *first* and foremost view of Jesus by the sinner is as the Lamb of God which takes away the sin of the world. Therefore do we preach, first, Christ Crucified, while at the same time we do not forget that blessed hope of the child of God—namely, Christ in Glory soon to descend from Heaven.

The next doctrine I see in my text is *the acceptance of the death of Christ by the Father*. “Where is that?” you ask. Look! “Whom He raised from the dead.” Not only did Jesus rise from the dead, but the Father had a distinct hand therein. God as God gave the token of His acceptance of Christ’s Sacrifice by raising Him from the dead. It is true, as we sometimes sing—

***“If Jesus had not paid the debt,***

***He never had been at freedom set.”***  
The Surety would have been held in prison to this day if He had not discharged His suretyship engagements and wiped out all the liabilities of His people. Therefore it is written, “He was delivered for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification.” In His glorious rising from the dead lies the assurance that we are accepted, accepted in the Beloved—the Beloved being Himself certainly accepted because God brought Him again from the dead!

Further on we have another doctrine, among many more. We have here the doctrine of *our Lord’s Resurrection*, of which we spoke when we mentioned the acceptance of His offering. Christ is risen from the dead. I pray you, do not think of the Lord Jesus Christ as though He were now dead. It is well to dwell upon Gethsemane, Golgotha and Gabbatha, but remember the empty tomb, Emmaus, Galilee and Olivet! It is not well to think of Jesus as forever on the Cross or in the tomb. “He is not here, but He is risen.” You may “come and see the place where the Lord lay,” but He lies there no longer! He has burst the bands of death by which He could not be held, for it was not possible that God’s Holy One could see corruption! The rising of Jesus from the dead is that fact of facts which establishes Christianity upon an historical basis and, at the same time, *guarantees* to all Believers their *own* resurrection from the dead! He is the first fruits and we are the harvest.

Further, there is here the doctrine of *His Ascension—*“to wait for His Son from Heaven.” It is clear that Jesus is in Heaven or He could not come *from* it. He has gone before us as our Forerunner. He has gone to His rest and reward. A cloud received Him out of sight. He has entered into His Glory. I doubt not our poet is right when he says of the angels—

***“They brought His chariot from on high,  
To bear Him to His Throne.  
Clapped their triumphant wings and cried, ‘The glorious work is done!’”***

That ascension of His brought us the Holy Spirit. He “led captivity captive, and received gifts for men.” And He gave the Holy Spirit as the largess of His joyous entry to His Father’s courts, that man on earth might share in the joy of the Conqueror returning from the battle! “Lift up your heads, O you gates; and be you lift up, you everlasting doors; and the King of Glory shall come in,” was the song of that bright day!

But the text tells us more—not only that He has gone into Heaven, but that *He remains there*, for these Thessalonians were expecting Him to come “from Heaven” and, therefore, He was there. What is He doing? “I go to prepare a place for you.” What is He doing? He is interceding with authority before the Throne of God. What is He doing? He is from yonder hilltop looking upon His Church, which is as a ship upon the sea buffeted by many a storm. In the middle watch you shall see Him walking on the waters, for He perceives the straining of the oars, the leakage of the timbers, the rending of the sails, the dismay of the pilot, the trembling of the crew—and He will come to us and save us! He is sending heavenly succors to His weary ones! He is ruling all things for the salvation of His elect and the accomplishment of His purposes. Glory be to His blessed name!

*Jesus is in Heaven with saving power, too* , and that, also, is in the text. “His Son from Heaven, even Jesus, who delivers us from the wrath to come.” I alter the translation, for it is a present participle in the case of each verb, and should run, “Even Jesus, delivering us from the coming wrath.” He is, at this moment, delivering! “Therefore He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever lives to make intercession for them.” He is away in Heaven, but He is not divided from us—He is working here the better because He is there! He has not separated Himself from the service and the conflict here below. He has taken the post from which He can best observe and aid. Like some great commander who, in the day of battle, commands a view of the field and continues watching, directing and so winning the fight, so is Jesus in the best place for helping us! Jesus is the master of legions, bidding His angels fly here and there, where their spiritual help is needed. My faith sees Him securing victory in the midst of the earth. My God, my King, You are working all things gloriously from Your vantage ground and, before long, the groans and strifes of battle shall end in Hallelujahs unto the Lord God Omnipotent! Christ’s residence in the heavens is clearly in the text.

Here is conspicuously set forth *the Second Coming*, a subject which might well have occupied all our time—“To wait for His Son from Heaven.” Every chapter of this Epistle closes with the Second Advent. Do not deceive yourselves, oh you ungodly men who think little of Jesus of Nazareth! The day will come when you will change your minds about Him. As surely as He died, He lives! And as surely as He lives, He will come again to this earth! With an innumerable company of angels, with blast of trumpet that shall strike dismay into the heart of all His enemies, Jesus comes! And when He comes, there shall be a time of judgment and the rising, again, of the dead. And “Every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him: and all the kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him.” He may come tomorrow! We know not the times and the seasons—these things are in the Father’s keeping—but that He comes is certain! And that He will come as a thief in the night to the ungodly is certain, too! Lay no flattering unction to your souls as though when He was crucified there was an end of Him—it is but the *beginning* of His dealings with you, though you reject Him. “Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and you perish from the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him.”

A further doctrine in the text is that *Christ is a deliverer—*“Jesus delivering us from the coming wrath.” What a blessed name is this! Deliverer! Press the cheering title to your breast. He delivers by Himself—bearing the punishment of sin. He *has* delivered! He *is* delivering! He *always will* deliver them that put their trust in Him. But there was something to be delivered *from*, and that is, *the coming wrath*, which is mentioned here. “Oh,” says one, “that is a long way off, that wrath to come!” If it were a long way off, it were wise for you to prepare for it. He is unsafe who will be destroyed most certainly, however distant that destruction may be! A wise man should not be content with looking as an ox does, as far as his eyes can carry him, for there is so much beyond which is as sure as that which is seen!

But it is not far-off wrath which is here mentioned. The text says, “who delivers us from the coming wrath.” That is, the wrath which is now coming, for wrath is even now upon the unbelieving. As for those Jews who had rejected Christ, the Apostle says of them in the 16th verse of the next chapter, “Forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they might be saved, to fill up their sins always: for the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost.” The siege of Jerusalem and the blindness of Israel are a terrible comment upon these words. “Indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that does evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile.” It is said of everyone that believes not in Christ Jesus that, “the wrath of God abides on him.” “God is angry with the wicked every day.” This wrath abides upon some of you. It is the joy of Believers that they are delivered from this wrath which is daily coming upon unbelievers—and would come upon themselves if they had not been delivered from it by the atoning Sacrifice.

There is evidently in the text the doctrine of *a great division* between men and men. “He has delivered *us*.” All men have not faith and, therefore, all men are not delivered from wrath. Today there is such a division—the “condemned already” and the “justified” are living side by side. But before long the separation shall be more apparent. While some will go away into everlasting punishment, the people of God will be found pardoned and absolved—and so will be glorified forever!

Lastly, there is here the doctrine of *Assurance*. Some say, “How are you to know that you are saved?” It can be known! It *ought* to be known. “Surely,” cries one, “it is *presumption* to say that you are sure.” It is presumption to live without knowing that you are delivered from wrath! Here the Apostle speaks of it as a thing well known, that, “Jesus delivers us from the coming wrath.” He does not say, “if,” or, “perhaps,” but he writes that it is so and, therefore, he knew it, and we may know it! My Brothers and Sisters, you may know that you are saved! “That would make me inexpressibly happy,” cries one! Just so, and that is one of the reasons why we would have you know it this day. God says, “He that believes in Him has *everlasting* life” and, therefore, the Believer may be sure that he has it! Our message is, “He that believes and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believes not shall be damned.”

God make you to escape that dreadful doom! May you be delivered from the wrath which is coming for Jesus’ sake. Amen.

***PORTIONS OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—*** Act 17:1-10***; 1 Thessalonians 1.*HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—485, 483, 484.**

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**÷1Th 2.13**

THREE SIGHTS WORTH SEEING  
NO. 1979

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON THURSDAY EVENING MARCH 24, 1887, *BY C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“For this cause we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the Word of God which you heard from us, you received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the Word of God which also works effectually in you that believe. For you, brethren, became followers of the churches of God which in Judea are in Christ Jesus. For you also suffered the same things from your own countrymen, even as they have of the Jews.”***1Th 2:13-14***.***

PAUL seems very much at home when he is writing to the Church at Thessalonica. In his letters to that favored people he unveils his inmost feelings. He is rather apt to do so when he feels himself quite at ease, for Paul is by no means a man shut up within himself who is never at home to anyone. When he is battling with an ungrateful people, he keeps himself to sharp words and strong arguments, but when he is writing to a loving, attached, affectionate Church, he lets them have the key of his heart and he lays bare before them his secret emotions. I feel as if we were interviewing Paul to-night—as if we were all sitting in a room with him, Silas and Timothy—and were hearing their private conversation. We have come to a roundtable conference with them and we are listening to their talk about the ministry which God had committed to them. Even in these two verses we hear of how these holy preachers loved the Gospel, told out the Gospel and saw that Gospel take hold of their hearers’ hearts.

They were not obliged to be reticent about their own conduct, or their experience with the Thessalonian friends—they were able to tell the story of their transactions with the Church of Thessalonica from the very beginning. It is a happy thing to be the pastor of a Church where one may wear his heart upon his sleeve. In certain positions, prudence demands that we keep ourselves to ourselves until we know more of the character of those who surround us. This is by no means pleasant. Indeed, it is a painful thing to go through life like a man in armor who scarcely dares to move a single plate of steel lest somebody should wound him in an unguarded place! One is glad to know that on the face of this earth there is a Church where the minister feels himself as much at home as a brother among his brothers and sisters and as safe as a father among his sons, since he is not afraid of being misunderstood. It is my joy that for many years I have found such a place of peace, so that I can say with the Shunammite, “I dwell among my own people.”

But to return to our text—we find the Apostle at home, telling out his thoughts in the freest manner. Indeed, he seems to me to show us three sights of the most interesting kind, which it will be pleasing and profitable for us to consider with care. I shall try to speak upon these three things, one after the other.

The first is, *ministers giving thanks*. “For this cause we also thank God without ceasing.” Then we have the cause of it, which brings up a second beautiful sight, namely, *hearers receiving the Word of God*. Paul speaks of them thus—“When you received the Word of God which you heard from us, you received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the Word of God, which also works effectually in you that believe.” In these words we find a window into the heart of the Thessalonian Christians and what we see is like a vault of jewels! Then we have a third thing which is exceedingly interesting, namely, *new converts exhibiting the family likenes*s, turning out to be very much like the Believers of older Churches. Born many miles away from Judea, with a sea dividing them from the first country where the Gospel was preached, yet these Thessalonian Gentiles, when converted, looked wonderfully like the converts from among the Jews—“For you, brethren, became followers of the churches of God which in Judea are in Christ Jesus. For you also suffered the same things from your own countrymen, even as they have of the Jews.”

**I.**To begin, then, we are asked out to a little social party. We are placed in a corner of a cozy room where we have license and favor to gaze upon MINISTERS GIVING THANKS.

Paul, Silas and Timothy make up a little meeting. No doubt the Lord is with them, for they form what He has made a quorum. They are within the number to which the promise is made—“Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them.” These three godly ministers are holding what, if I use a Greek word, I may call a holy eucharistical service—a service of thanksgiving. “For this cause, we also thank God without ceasing.” It is a pleasant sight to see *anybody* thanking God, for the air is heavy with the hum of murmuring and the roads are dusty with complaints and lamentations. It is a delightful vision to see hard-working, earnest ministers of Christ met together and occupying their time with thanksgiving, for many waste their hours in speculations, doubts and discussions. Let us turn aside and look into their smiling faces! It will do us good to see who these good men were and how they came to be in this thankful condition.

And, first, I would remark that *this thankfulness of theirs followed upon sore travail*. It is of no use for you to say, “I shall thank God for a harvest,” if you neither plow nor sow. You will have no harvest without labor and patience. “They that sow in tears shall reap in joy,” but if there is no sowing and no tears, there is no promise of any kind of reaping. I have known young preachers envy those who have had many converts and I do not wonder that they should. But if they, themselves, desire to be greatly useful and successful, they must go the same way to work that others have done. In the cause and Kingdom of Christ, although the race is not to the swift, it certainly is not to the sluggish—and although salvation is not of him that wills nor of him that runs, it certainly is not of him that does not will and does not run! We may sit and sigh as long as we like, but we shall see no result from lethargy! Dead bees make no honey either in the land of Grace or of Nature. Neither is anything worked by merely rolling up your sleeves and making a brave show. We may plot and we may plan. We may propose and we may expect, but expectations and proposals will fall to the ground like apple-blossoms that have never knit unless we stir ourselves up in the name of God and throw all the strength we have into the work of faith and labor of love!

We shall fail unless we cry for much more strength than Nature will yield us. With a vehemence that will not take a denial, we must plead with the Lord until we prevail, for in this matter, “the Kingdom of Heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force.” Yes, Paul, Silas and Timothy, you would not be sitting together thanking God if you had not, for many a day, put your shoulders to the wheel! If you had not labored night and day; if you had not exercised much labor and travail and been willing to impart to the people not only the Gospel, but even your own lives, you would never have rejoiced together in the way you have described. Ministers giving thanks to God are ministers who have worked!

*And this work of theirs had been backed by holy living* , for the Apostle is bold to declare, “You are witnesses, and God, also, how devoutly and justly and blamelessly we behaved ourselves among you that believe.” Brothers, we shall not win success unless we hunt for it by careful lives. You wish to see your Sunday school class converted. You are anxious to be blessed in your tract-district. You want to see that little Mission Hall crowded and souls converted. Begin by looking to your own life! As the man is, depend upon it, so will his life-work be! There will not come *out* of any one of us that which is not*in* us. You must fill the pitcher or you cannot go round and fill the cups of those who thirstily ask you for water. That which you would impart of Grace or life must be in yourself, first, and when God has worked it in you, then it shall be yours to work out! The Water of Life must be placed in you to be a well of Living Water, springing up—and then the Word of God shall be fulfilled in you—“Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.” Personal piety is the backbone of success in the service of God! You can be sure of that. Our mistakes and blunders in the work itself usually originate in faults in the closet, faults in the family, faults in our own souls. If we were better, our works would be better. If we walk contrary to God, He will walk contrary to us.

We cannot be too careful of our conduct if we aspire to be used of the Lord. Though the Lord is jealous of all His servants, He is especially jealous of those whom *He honors in service*. “Be you clean, that bear the vessels of the Lord.” That which He might have passed over in one of His common servants, He will not wink at in those whom He largely blesses. Therefore, dear Friends, let us remember that *rejoicing* servants of God must be *holy* servants of God. They shall not give thanks for the purity of their people unless they, themselves, have set a holy example. This renders all work for Christ a very solemn thing. May we always think it so and never go to it in a trifling spirit, but with many cries to the Holy One of Israel that He would make and keep us clean and bright as vessels fit for the Master’s use!

You see, dear Friends, that these three Brothers who met together and were thanking God, were men who had worked and who had lived holily. But further notice that when they congratulated each other, *this mode of expressing their joy by thankfulness prevented their falling into anything like self-laudation*. Neither Paul, nor Silas, nor Timothy had any reason to glory—and they did not meet together for self-glorification, or for mutual admiration! They glorified God and thanked Him without ceasing. Let us copy the example of these holy men. Brother, be much in thanking the Lord. If you have had one soul converted by your teaching, thank God! If in your class in the Sunday school, or if in your own family at home you have had one conversion, thank God! I am afraid that we fail in thankfulness. We pray for blessings and forget to praise for them. We are not grateful enough.

I was chiding myself last Tuesday. I think that I selected 28 persons whom I could venture to propose for Church fellowship out of many who came. What a number it was! I felt, when the day was over, very weary with the blessed service, and then I chided myself that I had permitted weariness to come in when I should rather have been praising and blessing God. I could not help my weakness and yet I thought my gratitude ought to have borne me above it. Oh, I remember the day when I would have given my eyes—yes, given my *head*—for 28 converts! I feel that I would sacrifice my all for such a blessing even now! To think that God should send so many in one week and give me evidence that there are plenty more to follow! Was not this a delight? They still keep coming to confess Christ in great numbers! We ought to be very joyful for this. The whole Church should bless God for so many and pray for more. If it were one soul saved by 20 years’ work, we ought to feel that we could dance for joy and count the service to be as nothing. But hundreds added to the Church should carry us up to the third Heaven of delight! As Jacob forgot all his toils when at last he could call the beloved Rachel his own, so should we count nothing hard, laborious, or trying, so long as souls are saved! Oh, to bring souls to God! Whenever we think of it, or see it done, let us say, like these three holy men, “For this cause we also thank God without ceasing.”

Notice that *this thankfulness was of a social kind*. “*We*thank God.” They all joined in it. Why, if there is a soul saved anywhere, we ought to *all* thank God for it! I hope that over at Walworth Road this week there may be some brought to Christ by their special meetings. And if they are so brought, glory be to God! What does it matter which Church they join? We hear of God blessing Mr. Moody or somebody else right away in America. Glory be to God for it! The success of any Church is our success. It is all in the family! Let us praise God for it. But some are accustomed to look with a rather jealous eye at God’s blessing other denominations, or other preachers. Let us fight against this spirit! O Brothers, those of us who have had the most of God’s blessing, what a mercy it would be if we were cut out altogether by better and more useful men! Let our star cease to shine if brighter stars will but shine and more souls see the blessed Light of God! Do not, those of you whom God has blessed, feel that you would gladly get out of the way and leave a clear road for somebody else if the Lord would use them more than you? If you do*not* feel so, I am afraid that the Master will put you out of the way because you are not completely absorbed in His Glory. When we are up to the neck in consecration, we are willing to be made nothing of if God can be glorified thereby! When we cannot be content to see Christ glorified by others and ourselves laid on the shelf, there is a little bit of *self* left and we must try to get rid of it.

At any rate, let us rejoice with those that do rejoice and triumph in the success of our Brothers. Be it ours to make joint-stock in praising God for all that He works by us all! What a sweet thing it would be if we more often met together, when God blessed us, and said, “For this cause we thank God”! We ought all to join in the hallelujahs of the Church over souls saved by Grace. We must not waste our time in allotting the success to this man, or to that man. Let us at once give all the glory to God! One cries, “It was Timothy that did it.” “Oh, no!” says another, “Silas is the man that brought *me* to Christ.” “Ah!” says another, “but I like to hear Paul. He is the master preacher. That young Timothy—why, he is nothing and Silas is nowhere by the side of Paul.” Such comparisons are odious. This kind of talk is evil! All God’s servants belong to you all and you must get all the good you can out of them. But to *compare* and to contrast them is to trifle! Let ministers discourage such vain talk among their people by their hearty love to each other. It is good for God’s servants to get together and to make a common heap of their spoils—and send up a joint thanksgiving for the joint results of their joint labor. “For this cause *we* thank God without ceasing.” Yes, and we do, my Brothers! I can see some here tonight who I know join with me in thanksgiving, as I join heartily with them whenever I think of them. I will bless and praise God for His exceeding mercy in saving souls by them, by me and by all His workers!

One thing more is to be noticed: *this was a continual thanksgiving day*, for the Apostle says, “For this cause we also thank God *without ceasing*.” Our gratitude to God should be as lasting as life, as constant as the bounty to which it bears witness. Our American friends have one Thanksgiving Day in the year, but it was Thanksgiving Day all the year round with Paul and Silas and Timothy when they thought of the Thessalonians! They felt as it they never could leave off thanking God for the Thessalonians, for they knew, by sad experience, that all Churches were not of the same happy kind. There were those Corinthians, forever quarrelling and thus grieving the Apostle. “Never mind,” he says, “we will thank God for the Thessalonians.” Oh, but there are those Galatians! They have gone off the line, bewitched by Judaizing teachers. They have wandered into “modern thought” and left the old orthodox faith. “Yes,” says the Apostle, “those Galatians are a burden to me but, then, blessed be God for the Thessalonians!” So I think we ought to bless God for those that are kept, for those that are true and for those that are faithful—and when our harp is made to hang upon the willows because part of the work is barren and unfruitful, yet let us not cease to praise and bless the Lord our God for that part of the work which prospers! Let us magnify Him for those that are brought to know His name. “For this cause we also thank God without ceasing because you received the Word of God.”

*This spirit of thanksgiving tends to make us stronger and stronger for labor in days to come*. Yes, let us sing unto the Lord instead of sighing unto ourselves! Let us not rob Him of His revenue of praise even in our most desponding moments. “Although my house is not so with God, yet has He made with me an everlasting covenant ordered in all things and sure.” What if Satan does not appear to fall from Heaven? What if the devils do not seem to be subject unto us? Yet let us rather rejoice because our names are written in Heaven! O child of God, fall back upon what the Lord has done and this shall make you encounter every difficulty with a brave heart! What the Lord has done is but a token of what He is going to do! Let us hold the fort and look for better times. Never let us dream of fainting or retreating! Do not say, “I will give it up because of the Galatians.” No, but go at it again because of the Thessalonians. Do not say, “I am worried and wearied with the Corinthians.” No, but with your heart full of joy, persevere in your Master’s service because many Thessalonians have received the Word, not as the word of man, but as the Word of God! Hallelujah, there is still something to sing about! Bring out the trumpets—we are not yet silenced, nor shall we be while the Lord lives! The walls of Jericho will be more likely to fall before our trumpets than our trembling.

So I have painted for you an ancient interior—you can see those three good men singing together to the praise of God as they think of their Thessalonian converts.

Ah, my Hearers, you could make some of us very happy! If you gave your hearts to the Lord, how you would cheer and comfort us! And some of you that do love the Lord would do us a world of good if you would come and tell us what the Lord has done for your souls. If you have been blessed, do not hide it! If you do, you will rob us of our wages, for our wages come to us very much through our knowing that God has blessed our ministry. Think of this and treat us fairly and kindly, even as we have sought your good. I, for one, have had such weary times of wolf hunting that I should be heartily glad to have the quiet joy of watching the young lambs and noting the growth of the sheep.

Now we leave the ministers, and think of the people.  
**II.**The second sight which we have to look at is HEARERS RECEIVING THE WORD. Let us keep close to the text. “When you received the Word of God which you heard from us, you received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the Word of God which also works effectually in you that believe.”  
Notice, first, *these people received the Word of God*. They were willing to hear it; they were anxious to hear it; they heard it and they were attentive in the hearing of it! They lent a willing ear and a ready mind. They did not quibble, dispute and question, but they *received* the Word of God. Happy preacher who has such people to deal with! If we have them not, let us work on till we gather them. Whether they will hear or whether they will forbear, let us tell the people our Lord’s message. But if God favors us with receptive hearers, let us be instant in season and out of season! A good bit of soil like that ought to be most diligently plowed and sown. Thank God, there are, I trust, many here who have received the Word of God so far that they are willing to learn and anxious to know its meaning and feel its power! Among you our labor is lightened by hope and cheered with expectation.  
But next, *these people had doubly received the Word of God.*At least the Word is twice mentioned in our version. “When you received the Word of God which you heard of us, you received it.” In the Greek those are two different words altogether. The second, “received,” might, perhaps, better be read, “accepted.” I do not think that I should be straining a point if I read it, “You *welcomed* it.” They first received it by eagerly hearing it. They wanted to know what it was all about. They were attentive to it and wanted to understand it. When they had heard it, they rejoiced, and said, “Oh, yes, yes, yes, this is the very thing we need!” They embraced it. That word will do—they *embraced* it! They put their arms around it and would not let it go. They were hospitable to the Gospel and said, “Come in, you blessed of the Lord. Come and live in our hearts!” They assented and they consented to the Word of the Lord. They first appreciated the Gospel and then they apprehended it by faith. They were like the man that was hungry in a foreign land and he could not make the people quite understand. But as soon as they brought an article of food which he liked he fell to, directly, and made them comprehend that he would be glad for more of that sort of thing. By his hearty reception of what they brought, the hungry man said plainly, “Bring some more of that.”  
So we have a people about us, thank God, that are looking out for the Gospel! They are always willing to hear it if men will but preach it! And when they do get it, they mean business and feed upon the Word with hearty appetite. How glad I am to feed men that will eat! It is a pleasure, indeed. The spiritually hungry welcome heavenly food—they take it into themselves and receive it as the bread their soul craves! Oh, what a mercy it is when sermons are preached which feed souls and souls hear so as to feed thereon! It is a happy day when a full Christ and empty sinners meet!  
Now, I am persuaded, dear Friends, that if any of you do not know the Gospel—*really* do not know it—and yet are heavy of spirit and cannot rest and are unhappy, it will be a very blessed thing for you to find out what the Gospel is. I am pretty sure that many of you are in such a condition that as soon as you really know that the doctrine proclaimed to you is God’s Gospel, you will receive it into your very souls and say, “There is none like it. That is the very thing we have been looking for all our lives.” I think I hear one of you say, “I have been hunting after this for years. I did not know that there was anything like it, but it suits me to a turn! It fits me as a key fits a lock—it enters every ward of the lock of my soul as if it were made for me.”  
Brothers and Sisters, I bear witness that when I received the Gospel of Jesus Christ, it seemed to me as if Jesus Christ had made the Gospel on purpose for me and for me only! If there had been nobody else in the world and Jesus had made a Gospel for me only, it could not have been more adapted for me! His Gospel exactly suited that poor sinner who, on one snowy morning, looked to Him and was lightened! My dear Hearer, you will find Jesus the very Savior for you. “But I am an out-of-the-way sinner,” cries one. Have you never heard of Him who can have compassion on the ignorant and on those that are out of the way? What a wonderful text that is for you—you out-of-the-way ones! He can have compassion on those that are out of the way! There is a remedy in the Gospel for your disease. For the particular shape your malady has taken, the Lord has a special eye. His Son, Jesus, has a plaster suited for your peculiar sore—a medicine adapted to your peculiar need. May the Holy Spirit bring you to receive it as these Thessalonians did!  
And then, if I may trouble you to look at the text again, you will notice that the word, “*it*” is in italics. And so is the word, *“as*.” Let me read the text again—“When you received the Word of God which you heard from us, you received not the word of men.” You see I have left out the, “it,” and the, “as,” because they are not really there, though they are correctly added by the translators as giving the meaning of the Apostle. Verbally they are not in the text. I take the sentence out of its connection and say that *these Thessalonians received not the word of men*. And I like them for that! Oh, but there were very learned men in those days! When Paul was on the earth and a little before his day, some of the greatest natural minds that ever existed were in Greece teaching the people. Yet the Thessalonians were in such a state that they received not the word of men! They did not listen to Plato, or accept Socrates, for there was a something about them which made them hunger for more than the philosophers could bring them. God’s elect are of that mind. You may know the Lord’s sheep by the fact that “a stranger they will not follow: for they know not the voice of strangers.” They will not receive the word of man! It is too light, too chaffy, too frothy for them. You may put it before them in the daintiest guise, illustrate it with poetry and prove it by the fictions of science—but they will not feed on such wind! They receive not the word of men! They will not have it! They want something more substantial.  
To come back to our translation—*they received not the Gospel as the word of men*. In these days there are some who receive the Gospel, but they receive it as the word of men. This is their spirit—“Yes, I know that such is the view that is held by Mr. Black. But there is another view held by Dr. White and another view is upheld by Professor Gray. All these different ‘views’ are supposed to be very much upon a par.” Beloved Friends, this is not our way! There is the Truth of God and there is a lie! And I want you always to feel that there is a solemn difference between the true and the false—and that no lie is of the Truth of God. “Believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God.” If one says, “Yes,” and the other says, “No,” it cannot be that they are both true! Salvation is of Grace—or of works—it cannot be of both! Salvation is the work of God or else of man—it cannot be a joint-stock-company affair! There is the Truth of God and there is error—and these are opposite to each other. Do not indulge yourselves in the folly with which so many are duped—that the Truth of God may be error, and error may be the Truth of God—that black is white, and white is black, and that there is a whitey-brown that goes in between, which is, perhaps, the best of the whole lot!  
There is an essential difference between man’s word and God’s Word— and it is fatal to mistake the one for the other. If you receive even the Gospel as the word of man you cannot get the blessing out of it, for the sweetness of the Gospel lies in the confidence of our heart that this is the Word of God. You fall back upon Holy Scripture in the grief of an aching heart, but you cannot rest, however soft the pillow of the promise may seem to be, till you can surely say, “I know that it is of God.” If you have even a shadow of a doubt about it, comfort oozes out. The life of comfort flies before doubt, even as love is said to fly out the window when want comes in the door. Prick the heart—yes, with but a needle’s point—and life will go! And prick the heart of faith—yes, even with the smallest doubt—and the life of joy is gone! The joy of faith and the strength of faith, yes, and the *life* of faith, are *gone* when you distrust the Word of the Lord!  
Are we, then, infallible? No, but the Book is! Do we infallibly understand the Book? No, but the Spirit of God will teach us what He, Himself, means—and of those Truths which He teaches us we get so firm a grip that we say, “No, no; I am never going to argue about this any more! This is proved to my heart and soul beyond all further question. It is woven into my experience. It has stamped itself on my consciousness. It has done that for me which no lie could do. This is the Revelation of God and I will die sooner than I will ever, by any action of mine, permit a doubt to be cast upon it.” Brothers and Sisters, do you accept the Word of God as Infallible? Thus have I learned the Gospel of Christ. Have you learned it in this fashion? Then you have received the Gospel aright, but not else.  
To receive the Gospel as the word of man is not to receive the Gospel! But to receive it as a Revelation from God—true, sure, Infallible, so as to risk your whole soul on it and to feel that there is no risk—this is to receive the Gospel in truth! After this manner we receive it with the deepest reverence—not as a thing that I am to judge, but as that which judges me! Not as a matter of opinion, but as a sure Truth with which I must make my opinion agree! It makes all the difference whether we rule the truth or the Truth of God rules us! The reverent obedience of the understanding to the Word

of the Lord is a great part of sanctification.  
To receive the Gospel as the Word of God is to receive it with strong assurance. Other things *may be* true, but this *must be* true. Other things may be questioned, but this must be implicitly believed. This Gospel of Jesus Christ is of God as surely as you live—and you have not received it at all if you do not know it to be the Word of God.  
It is to receive it with obedience, because it comes with authority—to say, “This I must yield to. Other truths I may be master of, but this is master of me. Other truths I may or may not hold—they may not be of sufficient importance for me to bow before them. But this Truth has God Himself enshrined within it and, therefore, I cannot be disobedient to the heavenly vision.” With man’s statements we are men, but before God’s Truth we are converted into little children. Is this so with you?  
This Gospel, if it is received as the Word of God, comes with power. Do not let us be misunderstood—the power we mean is by no means a common thing! It is not the force of persuasion, nor the energy of rhetoric. It is Divine Power—the finger of God! There is still in the world a miraculous force—the Divine energy of the Holy Spirit. It does not have us speak with tongues, neither do we hear it in rushing, mighty wind. But it is as unmistakable to those who have it as if it did come with such extraordinary signs! Sometimes a Truth of God has been borne in upon my soul—and I doubt not you can say the same—with an inward evidence which is beyond all argument for force and certainty. Though it is not logical, we are more sure than if conquered by reasoning! We prefer it to the demonstrations of mathematics so far as our own assurance is concerned. In my own case, I could not see, but I did *more* than see—my inner soul without eyes beheld the essential principle of the Truth of God! I did not touch it and yet my inner soul handled it, tasted it, fed on it. It went into the secret spring-head and well-spring of my being and became one of its first principles.  
If any man said that the Lord Jesus was not able to save and that His Gospel was not true, I snapped my fingers at him! I could not stop to answer him because he seemed to be willfully denying self-evident fact—and there is no answering such folly! For a man to tell me that the Gospel is not true, when the Spirit seals it on my heart, is all in vain! He might as well tell me that there was no light when I stood gazing on a landscape in the brightness of the sun, or assure me that there was no such thing as air when the strong north wind was on my cheeks. He might as well tell me that there was no nutriment in food when I had just lost my hunger and felt refreshed by what I had eaten. There are some things that we have no patience to argue about—we have done with discussion concerning them!  
If you do not know spiritual things, ask God to let you know them. But you are out of court as a witness—you cannot prove a negative, nor can your negative disprove our positive! We cannot argue with you who are dead in sin and have not received, as yet, spiritual senses. What can you know? Why should we dispute with the blind concerning colors? How can we discuss music with the deaf?  
“Oh,” says one, “but I do not believe in your spiritual experience!” I did not say you did! On the contrary, I expected you *not* to believe in it. But what does that prove? Why, only that you have no spiritual perception! It is true that you have not perceived spiritual things, but it is no proof that there are none to perceive! The whole case is like that of the Irishman who tried to upset evidence by non-evidence. Four witnesses saw him commit a murder. He pleaded that he was not guilty and wished to establish his innocence by producing 40 persons who did *not* see him do it. Of what use would that have been? So, if 40 people declare that there is no power of the Holy Spirit going with the Word of God, this only proves that the 40 people do not know what others *do* know. If there are four of us that know it—well, we shall not cease our witness. We receive God’s Word as the Word of God because it comes to us with that power which effectually works in them that believe. It works in us a horror of sin, a detestation of self-confidence and an aspiration after holy and heavenly things. It works in us love to God and good-will to men. It works in us aspirations after the Divine. It works in us victory over evil from day to day and, while it does that, the proof of it is within us! The witness and seal of the Truth of the Gospel are within our own character and being and we cannot, therefore, give up our confidence.  
People who have come to this pass make their ministers glad! Paul, Silas, and Timothy are all happy men when surrounded by hearers who have received the Gospel in all its Divine authority and power!  
**III.**Now my time has gone, otherwise my third point would have been a very interesting one. These three men are rejoicing in CONVERTS WHO ARE EXHIBITING A FAMILY LIKENESS.  
I only call your attention to the fact that the Apostle says, “You, brethren, became followers of the churches of God which in Judea are in Christ Jesus.” Here are people converted in Judea and they are of a strongly Jewish type. Quite another set of people over at Thessalonica become converted to Christ—and though they are thoroughly of the Greek type—they are very much like the converts in Judea! They know nothing about the Law of Moses. They have been*heathens—*worshipping idols—and yet, when they are converted, the strange thing is that they are exceedingly like those Jews over yonder, to whom idolatry was an abomination!  
Greek Believers are like Hebrew Believers! They have never spoken to one another and nobody has been there to tell them the peculiarities of Christians and yet a family likeness is distinctly visible! Were you never startled with this, that if, in the preaching of the Gospel today, we were to bring to the Lord Jesus a person of high rank and another of the very lowest extraction, they have the same experience—and upon the greatest of subjects they talk in the same way? “Oh, but,” you say, “they pick up certain phrases.” No, no! They differ in speech! The likeness is in *heart* and *character*. I frequently meet with converts who have not attended this place of worship more than half-a-dozen times, but they have been converted—and when they come to tell the story of their inner life you would suppose that they had been born and bred among us, and had learned all our ways, for, though they do not use the phrases which we use, yet they say the same things! The fact is, we are all alike—lost and ruined—and we are born again in the same way. And we find the Savior in the same way. And we rejoice in Him when we do find Him, after much the same fashion, and express ourselves very much after the same style. Believers differ in many things and yet they are alike in the main things. There are no two exactly alike in all the family of God—and yet the likeness to the Elder Brother is to be seen more or less in each one!  
It is to me one of the evidences of the Truth of God and Divine Nature of the work of Grace in the heart, that if you take a Hottentot in his kraal— and he is converted—and you take a university man who has won all the degrees of learning, and he is converted, yet you would not know Sambo from the Doctor when they begin to talk about the things of God! The Hottentot’s English may be broken, but his theology is sound! The uneducated man’s words may limp, but his heart will leap! Ruin, redemption and regeneration are the chief subjects in every case.  
When I am talking, sometimes, with young converts and they put their statements oddly and ignorantly, I am reminded of Brother Taylor, when he was getting old. The old man sometimes lost the thread of his discourse and whenever he did so, he used to say, “There, I cannot find the end of that sentence, but I am bound for the Kingdom! Brethren, I am bound for the Kingdom!” Off he went to something else, for though he could not complete the paragraph, he was bound for the Kingdom! Some Brothers and Sisters cannot see to the end of their own experience, but they are bound for the Kingdom! They cannot put this and that together to make it ship-shape—but you can see that they are bound for the Kingdom! There is the same tear of repentance, the same glance of faith, the same thrill of joy, the same song of confidence—each one, according to his measure, enjoys the same life if he is, indeed, bound for the Kingdom! The babe is like the man and the man reminds you of the babe. We are one spirit in Christ Jesus!  
I will not enlarge except to say that it makes us sing for joy when we can see in ourselves a likeness to the children of God. We, too, resemble the early saints in our experiences. Opposition and tribulation come to us in our measure as they did to them. There are the same afflictions, the same persecutions, the same trials wherever the work of Christ goes on— but there is the same mighty God to carry on the work of Grace and the same promises of Grace to be fulfilled to every Believer!  
Dear Friends, are you believers in the Lord Jesus Christ? If you are, joy and rejoice with me! But if you are not, oh, how I wish you were! Whatever comforts of life you enjoy, you are missing the only thing that makes life worth having. If you are not yet resting on Christ Jesus, you have not yet found out the kernel of the nut. You are boring away at the hard shell of life and unless you turn to Christ you will die worrying and wearying over the shell—and you will never taste the sweet kernel. If you did but know our Lord Jesus. If you did but trust Him. If you did but find salvation in Him, then you would find that if earth cannot be Heaven, it can become marvelously like it! The earnest of our everlasting inheritance may be enjoyed even here. Would God you would seek my Lord and Master, for if you seek Him, He will be found of you! What a pleasure it would be if everyone at this time would receive the Gospel as the Word of God! Spirit of God, grant that it may be so, for Jesus’ sake! Amen.

***PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON— 1 Thessalonians 1.*  
HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—433, 483, 331.**

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**÷1Th 2.18**

SATANIC HINDRANCES

NO. 657

**DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, OCTOBER 29, 1865, *BY C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“Satan hindered us.”***1Th 2:18***.***

PAUL, Silas and Timothy were very desirous to visit the Church at Thessalonica, but they were unable to do so for the singular reason announced in the text, namely, “Satan hindered us.” It was not from want of will, for they had a very great attachment to the Thessalonian Brethren and they longed to look them in the face again. They said of the Thessalonians, “We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers: remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labor of love and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the sight of God and our Father.”

Their will was overruled as to visiting the Church together, but being anxious for its welfare, they sent Timothy alone to minister for a time in its midst. It was not want of will which hindered them, but want of power. They were not prevented by God’s special Providence. We find on certain occasions that Paul was not allowed to go precisely where his heart would have led him. “They assayed to go into Bithynia: but the Spirit suffered them not.”

“They were forbidden of the Holy Spirit to preach the word in Asia,” but their course was directed towards Troas that they might preach in Europe the unsearchable riches of Christ. They could not, however, trace their absence from Thessalonica to any Divine interposition. It appeared, to them, to proceed from the great adversary—“Satan hindered them.” How Satan did so it would be useless to affirm dogmatically, but we may form a reasonable conjecture. I find in the margin of my pulpit Bible by Bagster, this note, which may probably be correct: “Satan hindered Paul by raising such a storm of persecution against him at Berea and other places, that it was deemed prudent to delay his visit till the storm was somewhat allayed.”

Yet I can hardly allow this to have been the only hindrance, for Paul was very courageous, and having a strong desire to visit Thessalonica, no fear of opposition would have kept him away. He did not shun the hottest part of the battle, but like a truly valiant champion, delighted most to be found in the thick of his foes. Possibly the antagonism of the various philosophers whom he met with at Athens and the heresies at Corinth, from which it seems that this Epistle was written, may have called for his presence on the scene of action. He felt that he could not leave struggling churches to their enemies—he must contend with the grievous wolves and unmask the evil ones who wore the garb of angels of light.

Satan had moved the enemies of the Truth of God to industrious opposition and thus the Apostle and his companions were hindered from going to Thessalonica. Or it may be that Satan had excited dissensions and discords in the churches which Paul was visiting and therefore he was obliged to stop first in one, and then in another, to settle their differences—to bring to bear the weight of his own spiritual influence upon the various divided sections of the Church to restore them to unity.

Well, whether persecution, or philosophic heresy, or the divisions of the Church were the outward instruments we cannot tell, but Satan was assuredly the prime mover. You will, perhaps, wonder why the devil should care so much about Paul and his whereabouts. Why should he take so much interest in keeping these three men from that particular Church? This leads us to observe what wonderful importance is attached to the action of Christian ministers. Here is the master of all evil, the Prince of the Power of the Air, intently watching the journeying of three humble men. And apparently far more concerned about their movements than about the doings of Nero or Tiberius!

These despised heralds of mercy were his most dreaded foes. They preached that name which makes Hell tremble. They declared that righteousness against which Satanic hate always vents itself with its utmost power. With malicious glance the archenemy watched their daily path and with cunning hand hindered them at all points. It strikes us that Satan was desirous to keep these Apostolic men from the Church of Thessalonica because the Church was young and weak and he thought that if it was not fostered and succored by the preaching and presence of Paul he might yet slay the young Child.

Moreover, he has of old a fierce hatred of the preaching of the Gospel and possibly there had been no public declaration of the Truth throughout Thessalonica since Paul had gone and he was afraid lest the fire-brands of Gospel Truth should be again flung in among the masses and a gracious conflagration should take place. Besides, Satan always hates Christian fellowship—it is his policy to keep Christians apart. Anything which can divide saints from one another he delights in. He attaches far more importance to godly communion than we do. Since union is strength, he does his best to promote separation—and so he would keep Paul away from these Brethren who might have gladdened his heart and whose hearts he might have cheered.

He would hinder their fraternal communion that they might miss the strength which always flows from Christian communion and Christian sympathy. This is not the only occasion in which Satan has hindered good men—indeed, this has been his practice in all ages and we have selected this one particular incident that some who are hindered by Satan may draw comfort from it and that we may have an opportunity (if the Spirit of God shall enable us) of saying a good and forceful word to any who count it strange because this fiery trial has happened to them.

**I.**Let us open our discourse by observing that IT HAS BEEN SATAN’S PRACTICE OF OLD TO HINDER, WHEREVER HE COULD, THE WORK OF GOD. “Satan hindered us,” is the testimony which all the saints in Heaven will bear against the arch enemy. This is the witness of all who have written a holy line on the historic page, or carved a consecrated name on the rock of immortality—“Satan hindered us.” In sacred Writ, we find Satan interfering to hinder the completeness of the personal character of individual saints. The man of Uz was perfect and upright before God and to all appearances would persevere in producing a finished picture of what the Believer in God should be.

Satan could find no fault with his actions and only dared to impute wrong motives to him. He had considered Job and he could find no mischief in him—but then he hinted to God, “Have You not made an hedge about him and about his house and about all that he has on every side?” Satan sought to turn the life-blessing which Job was given of God into a curse, and therefore he buffeted him sorely. He stripped him of all his substance. The evil messengers trod upon one another’s heels—and their tidings of woe only ceased when his goods were all destroyed and his children had all perished.

The poor afflicted parent was then struck in his bone and in his flesh till he was made to sit upon a dunghill and scrape himself with a potsherd. Even then the picture had no blot of sin upon it—the pencil was held with a steady hand by the patient one. And therefore Satan made another attempt to hinder his retaining his holy character—he excited his wife to say, “Why do you hold fast your integrity? Curse God and die.” This was a great and grievous hindrance to the completion of Job’s marvelous career, but, glory be unto God, the man of patience not only overcame Satan, but he made him a steppingstone to a yet greater height of illustrious virtue!

You know the patience of Job and you would not have known it if Satan had not illuminated it with the blaze of flaming afflictions! Had not the vessel been burnt in the furnace, the bright colors had not been so fixed and abiding. The trial through which Job passed brought out the luster of his matchless endurance in submission and resignation to God! Now, just as the enemy of old waylaid and beset the Patriarch to hinder his perseverance in the fair path of excellence, so will he do with us. You may be congratulating yourself this morning, “I have up to now walked consistently. No man can challenge my integrity.”

Beware of boasting! Your virtue will yet be tried! Satan will direct his engines against that very virtue for which you are the most famous. If you have been up to now a firm Believer, your faith will, before long, be attacked. If up till now you have been meek as Moses, expect to be tempted to speak unadvisedly with your lips. The birds will peck at your ripest fruit and the wild hoar will dash his tusks at your choicest vines. O that we had among us more eminence of piety, more generosity of character, more fidelity of behavior! In all these respects, I doubt not, many have set out with the highest aims and intentions, but alas, how often have they had to cry, “Satan hindered us!”

This is not the enemy’s only business—he is very earnest in endeavoring to hinder the emancipation of the Lord’s redeemed ones. You know the memorable story of Moses—when the children of Israel were in captivity in Egypt, God’s servant stood before their haughty oppressor with his rod in his hand and in Jehovah’s name he declared, “Thus says the Lord, Let My people go, that they may serve Me.” A sign was required. The rod was cast upon the ground and it became a serpent. At this point, Satan hindered. Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses. We read that the magicians did so with their enchantments, whether by devilish arts or by sleight of hand, we need not now enquire—in either case they did the devil service and they did it well—for Pharaoh’s heart was hardened when he saw that the magicians worked, in appearance, the self-same miracles as Moses.

Brethren, take this as a type of Satan’s hindrances to the Word of the Lord. Christ’s servants came forth to preach the Gospel. Their ministry was attended with signs and wonders. “My kingdom is shaken,” said the Prince of Evil, “I must bestir myself.” And straightway he sent magicians to work lying signs and wonders without number. Apocryphal wonders were and are as plentiful as the frogs of Egypt. Did the Apostles preach the sacrifice of Christ?—the devil’s Apostles preached the sacrifice of the “mass.” Did the saints uplift the Cross?—the devil’s servants upheld the crucifix! Did God’s ministers speak of Jesus as the one infallible Head of the Church?—the devil’s servants proclaimed the false priest of Rome as standing in the same place!

Romanism is a most ingenious imitation of the Gospel—it is the magicians, “doing so with their enchantments.” If you study well the spirit and genius of the great Antichrist, you will see that its great power lies in its being an exceedingly clever counterfeit of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. As far as tinsel could counterfeit gold, and paste could simulate the gem and candlelight could rival the sun in its glory and a drop in the bucket could imitate the sea in its strength, it has copied God’s great masterpiece, the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. And to this day, as God’s servants scatter the pure gold of the Truth of God, their worst enemies are those who utter base coin on which they have feloniously stamped the image and superscription of the King of kings.

You have another case farther on in history—and all Old Testament history is typical of what is going on around us now. God was about to give a most wonderful system of instruction to Israel and to the human race, by way of type and ceremony, in the wilderness. Aaron and his sons were selected to represent the great High Priest of our salvation, the Lord Jesus Christ. In every garment which they wore there was a symbolical significance—every vessel of that sanctuary in which they ministered taught a lesson—every single act of worship, whether it were the sprinkling of blood or the burning of incense, was made to teach precious and important Truths of God to the sons of men. What a noble roll was that volume of the Book which was unfolded in the wilderness at the foot of Sinai!

How God declared Himself and the Glory of the coming Messiah in the persons of Aaron and his sons! What then? With this Satan interfered. Moses and Aaron could say, “Satan hindered us.” Korah, Dathan and Abiram arrogantly claimed a right to the priesthood. And on a certain day they stood forth with bronze censers in their hands, thrusting themselves impertinently into the office which the Lord had assigned to Aaron and to his sons. The earth opened and swallowed them up alive—true prophecy of what shall become of those who thrust themselves into the office of the priesthood where none but Jesus Christ can stand!

You may see the parallel this day. Christ Jesus is the only Priest who offers sacrifice of blood and He brings that sacrifice no more—for having once offered it He has perfected forever those who are set apart. “This Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down on the right hand of God.” Paul, with the strongest force of logic, proves that Christ does not offer a continual sacrifice, but that, having offered it once and for all, His work is finished and He sits down at the right hand of the Father.

Now, this doctrine of a finished Atonement and a completed sacrifice seemed likely to overrun the world—it was such a gracious unfolding of the Divine mind that Satan could not look upon it without desiring to hinder it. And, therefore, look on every hand, and you can see Korah, Dathan and Abiram in those churches which are branches of Antichrist—I mean the Anglican *and* the Roman. Men to this very day call themselves, “priests,” and read prayers from a book in which the rubric runs, “Then shall the priest say”—these arrogate to themselves a priesthood other than that which is common to all the saints—some of them even claim to offer a daily “sacrifice,” to celebrate an unbloody sacrifice at the thing which they call an “altar”!

And they claim to have power to forgive sins, saying to sick and dying persons, “By authority committed unto me I absolve you from all your sins.” This in England! And this throughout Europe! This is the great hindrance to the propagation of the Gospel—the priestly pretensions of a set of men who are no priests of God, though they may be priests of Baal. Thus the ministers of Jesus are made to cry, “Satan hinders us.” Take another instance of Satanic hatred. When Joshua had led the tribes across the Jordan they were to attack the various cities which God had given them for a heritage and from Dan to Beersheba the whole land was to be theirs. After the taking of Jericho, the first contact into which they came with the heathen Canaanites ended in disastrous defeat to the servants of God.

“They fled,” it is written, “before the men of Ai.” Here, again, you hear the cry, “Satan hindered us.” Joshua might have gone from city to city exterminating the nations, as they justly deserved to be, but Achan had taken of the accursed thing and hidden it in his tent. Therefore no victory could be won by Israel till his theft and sacrilege had been put away. Beloved, this is symbolic of the Christian Church. We might go from victory to victory—our home mission operations might be successful and our foreign agencies might be crowned with triumph—if it were not that we have Achans in the camp at home!

When churches have no conversions it is more than probable that hypocrites concealed among them have turned away the Lord’s blessing. You who are inconsistent, who make the profession of religion the means of getting wealth! You who unite yourselves with God’s people, but at the same time covet the goodly Babylonian garment and the wedge of gold, *you* are they who cut the sinews of Zion’s strength! You prevent the Israel of God from going forth to victory! Ah, little do we know, Beloved, how Satan has hindered us. We, as a Church, have had much reason to thank God, but how many more might within these walls have been added to the number of this Church if it had not been for the coldness of some, the indifference of others, the inconsistency of a few and the worldliness of many more? Satan hinders us not merely by direct opposition, but by sending Achans into the midst of our camp!

I will give you one more picture. View the building of Jerusalem after it had been destroyed by the Babylonians. When Ezra and Nehemiah were found to build, the devil was sure to stir up Sanballat and Tohiah to cast down. There was never a revival of religion without a revival of the old enmity. If ever the Church of God is to be built, it will be in troublous times. When God’s servants are active, Satan is not without vigilant followers who seek to counteract their efforts. The history of the Old Testament Church is a history of Satan endeavoring to hinder the work of the Lord.

I am sure you will admit it has been the same since the days of the Lord Jesus Christ. When He was on earth Satan hindered Him. He dared to attack Him to His face! And when that failed, Pharisees, Sadducees, Herodians and men of all sorts hindered Him. When the Apostles began their ministry, Herod and the Jews sought to hinder them. And when persecution availed not, then all sorts of heresies and schisms broke out in the Christian Church—Satan still hindered them. A very short time after the taking up of our Lord, the precious sons of Zion, comparable to fine gold, had become like earthen pitchers, the work of the hands of the potter. The glory had departed and the luster of Truth was gone, because by false doctrine, lukewarmness and worldliness, Satan hindered them.

When the Reformation dawned, if God raised up a Luther, the devil brought out an Ignatius Loyola to hinder him. Here in England, if God had his Latimers and his Wickcliffes, the devil had his Gardiners and Bonners. When in the modem reformation Whitfield and Wesley thundered like the voice of God, there were ordained reprobates found to hinder them, to hold them up to opprobrium and shame. Never, since the first hour struck in which goodness came into conflict with evil, has it ceased to be true that Satan has hindered us!

From all points of the compass, all along the line of battle—in the vanguard and in the rear—at the dawn of day and at midnight, Satan has hindered us. If we toil in the field he seeks to break the plowshare. If we build the walls he labors to cast down the stones. If we would serve God in suffering or in conflict—Satan hinders us everywhere.

**II.**We shall now, in the second place, INDICATE MANY WAYS IN WHICH SATAN HAS HINDERED US. The Prince of Evil is very busy in hindering those who are just coming to Jesus Christ. Here he spends the main part of his skill. Some of us who know the Savior recollect the fierce conflicts which we had with Satan when we first looked to the Cross and lived.

Others of you here this morning are just passing through that trying season—I will address myself to you. Beloved Friends, you long to be saved, but ever since you have given any attention to these eternal things you have been the victim of deep distress of mind. Do not marvel at this! This is usual, so usual as to be almost universal! I should not wonder if you are perplexed with the doctrine of *election*. It will be suggested to you that you are not one of the chosen of God, although your common sense will teach you that it might just as well be suggested to you that you are, since you know neither the one nor the other, nor indeed *can* know until you have believed in Jesus.

Your present business is with the precept which is *revealed*, not with election which is *concealed*. Your business is with that exhortation, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved.” It is possible that the great battlefield between predestination and free will may be the dry and desert place in which your soul is wandering—now you will never find any comfort there! The wisest of men have despaired of ever solving the mystery of those two matters and it is not at all probable that you will find peace in puzzling yourself about it.

Your business is not with metaphysical difficulty, but with faith in the Atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ, which is simple and plain enough. It is possible that your sins now come to your remembrance and though once you thought little enough of them, now it is hinted to you by Satanic malice that they are too great to be pardoned—to which, I pray you, give the lie, by telling Satan this Truth—“All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men.” It is very likely that the sin against the Holy Spirit much molests you. You read that whoever shall speak a word against the Holy Spirit it shall never be forgiven him.

In this, too, you may be greatly tried. And I wonder not that you are, for this is a most painfully difficult subject. One fact may cheer you—if you repent of your sins, you have not committed the unpardonable offense, since that sin necessitates hardness of heart *forever*. And so long as a man has any tenderness of conscience and any softness of spirit, he has not so renounced the Holy Spirit as to have lost His Presence. It may be that you are the victim of blasphemous thoughts. This very morning, since you have been sitting here, torrents of the filth of Hell have been pouring through your soul.

At this be not astonished, for there are some of us who delight in holiness and are pure in heart, who nevertheless, have been at times sorely tried with thoughts which were never born in our hearts, but which were injected into them—suggestions born in Hell, not in our spirits—to be hated and to be loathed, but cast into our minds that they might hinder and trouble us. Now, though Satan may hinder you as he did the child who was brought to Jesus, of whom we read that as he was, “coming, the devil threw him down and tore him,” yet do you come notwithstanding! For though seven devils were in him, Jesus would not cast the coming sinner out. Even though you should feel a conviction that the unpardonable sin has fallen to your lot, yet dare to trust in Jesus! And, if you do do that, I warrant you there shall be a joy and a peace in believing which shall overcome him of whom we read, that he has “hindered us.”

But I must not stop long on any one point where there are so many. Satan is sure to hinder Christians when they are earnest in prayer. Have you not frequently found, dear Friends, when you have been most earnest in supplication, that something or other will start across your mind to make you cease from the exercise? It appears to me that we shake the tree and no fruit drops from it. And just when one more shake would bring down the luscious fruit, the devil touches us on the shoulder and tells us it is time to be gone! And so we miss the blessing we might have attained. I mean that just when prayer would be the most successful we are tempted to abstain from it.

When my spirit has sometimes laid hold upon the Angel, I have been painfully conscious of a counter influence urging me to cease from such importunity and let the Lord alone, for His will would be done. Or if the temptation did not come in that shape yet in some other, to cease to pray because prayer, after all, could not avail. O Brethren, I know if you are much in prayer you can sing Cowper’s hymn***—***

***“What various hindrances we meet  
In coming to the Mercy Seat.”***

The same is true of Christians when under the promptings of the Spirit of God, or when planning any good work. You have been prompted, sometimes, to speak to such a one. “Run, speak to that young man,” has been the message in your ear. You have not done it—Satan has hindered you. You have been told on a certain occasion—you do not know how, (but believe me, we ought to pay great respect to these inward whispers), to visit such-and-such a person and help him. You have not done it—Satan hindered you. You have been sitting down by the fire one evening reading a missionary report concerning Hindustan, or some district destitute of the Truth of God and you have thought, “Now I have a little money which I might give to this object.” But then it has come across you that there is another way of spending it more profitably on your family—so Satan has hindered you.

Or you yourself thought of doing a little in a certain district by way of preaching and teaching, or commencing some new Ragged School, or some other form of Christian effort—but as sure as ever you began to plan it, something or other arose and Satan hindered you. If he possibly can, he will come upon God’s people in those times when they are full of thought and ardor and ready for Christian effort that he may murder their infant plans and cast these suggestions of the Holy Spirit out of their minds.

How often, too, has Satan hindered us when we have entered into the work! In fact, Beloved, we never ought to expect a success unless we hear the devil making a noise. I have taken it as a certain sign that I am doing little good when the devil is quiet. It is generally a sign that Christ’s kingdom is coming when men begin to lie against you and slander you and the world is in an uproar, casting out your name as evil. Oh, those blessed tempests! Do not give me calm weather when the air is still and heavy and when lethargy is creeping over one’s spirit. Lord, send a hurricane, give us a little stormy weather! When the lightning flashes and the thunder rolls, then God’s servants know that the Lord is abroad and that His right hand is no longer in His bosom—that the moral atmosphere will get clear—that God’s kingdom will come and His will be done on earth, even as it is in Heaven!  
“Peace, peace, peace!” That is the flap of the dragon’s wings! The stern

voice which proclaims perpetual war is the voice of the Captain of our salvation. You say, how is this? “Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father and the daughter against her mother and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a man’s foes shall be they of his own household.” Peace, physical, Christ makes. There is to be no strife with the fist, no blow with the sword, but *moral* peace and *spiritual* peace can never be in this world where Jesus Christ is, so long as *error* is there.

But, you know, Beloved, that you cannot do any good thing but what the devil will be sure to hinder you. What then? Up and at him! Cowardly looks and faint counsels are not for warriors of the Cross! Expect fights and you will not be disappointed. Whitfield used to say that some Divines would go from the first of January to the end of December with a perfectly whole skin. The devil never thought them worth while attacking! But, said he, let us begin to preach with all our might, and soul, and strength the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and men will soon put a fool’s cap on our heads and begin laughing at us and ridiculing us—but if so, so much the better!

We are not alarmed because Satan hinders us! Nor will he only hinder us in working—he will hinder us in seeking to unite with one another. We are about to make an effort, as Christian churches in London, to come closer together and I am happy to find indications of success. But I should not wonder but what Satan will hinder us and I would ask your prayers that Satan may be put to the rout in this matter, and that the union of our churches may be accomplished. As a Church ourselves, we have walked together in peace for a long time, but I should not marvel if Satan should try to thrust in the cloven foot to hinder our walking in love and peace and unity.

Satan will hinder us in our communion with Jesus Christ. When at His table we say to ourselves, “I shall have a sweet moment now,” but just then vanity intrudes. Like Abraham, you offer the sacrifice, but the unclean birds come down upon it and you have need to drive them away. “Satan hindered us.” He is not omnipresent, but by his numerous servants he works in all kinds of places and manages to distract the saints when they would serve the Lord.

**III.**In the third place THERE ARE TWO OR THREE RULES BY WHICH THESE HINDRANCES MAY BE DETECTED AS SATANIC. I think I heard somebody saying to himself this morning, “Yes, I should have risen in the world and have been a man of money now if it had not been that Satan hindered me.” Do not believe it, dear Friend! I do not believe that Satan generally hinders people from getting *rich*. He would just as soon that they should be rich as poor. He delights to see God’s servants set upon the pinnacle of the temple, for he knows the position to be dangerous.

High places and God’s praise do seldom agree. If you have been hindered in growing rich, I should rather set that down to the good Providence of God which would not place you where you could not have borne the temptation. “Yes,” said another, “I had intended to have lived in a certain district and done good and have not been able to go—perhaps that is the devil.” Perhaps it was—perhaps it was not. God’s Providence will know best where to place us. We are not always choosers of our own locality—and so we are not always to conclude when we are hindered and disappointed in our own intentions that Satan has done it, for it may very often be the good Providence of God.

But how may I tell when Satan hinders me? I think you may tell first, by the*object*. Satan’s object in hindering us is to prevent our glorifying God. If anything has happened to you which has prevented your growing holy, useful, humble and sanctified, *then* you may trace that to Satan. If the distinct object of the interference to the general current of your life has been that you may be turned from righteousness into sin, then from the object you may guess the author. It is not God who does this, but Satan. Yet know that God does, sometimes, put apparent hindrances in the way of His own people—even in reference to their usefulness and growth in Grace—but then His object is still to be considered—it is to try His saints and so to strengthen them! While the object of Satan is to turn them out of the right road and make them take the crooked way.

You may tell the suggestions of Satan, again, by the *method* in which they come—God employs good motives, Satan bad ones. If that which has turned you away from your object has been a bad thought, a bad doctrine, bad teaching, a bad motive—that never came from *God*, that must be from Satan. Again, you may tell them from their *nature*. Whenever an impediment to usefulness is pleasing, gratifying to you—consider that it came from Satan. Satan never brushes the feathers of his birds the wrong way—he generally deals with us according to our tastes and likes. He flavors his bait to his fish. He knows exactly how to deal with each man and to put that motive which will fall in with the suggestions of poor carnal nature.

Now, if the difficulty in your way is rather contrary *to* yourself than *for* yourself, then it comes from God. But if that which now is a hindrance brings you gain, or pleasure, or emolument in any way, rest assured it came from Satan. We can tell the suggestions of Satan, once more, by their *season*. Hindrances to prayer, for instance, if they are Satanic, come out of the natural course and relation of human thoughts. It is a law of mental science that one thought suggests another and the next the next and so on—as the links of a chain draw one another.

But Satanic temptations do not come in the regular order of thinking. They dash upon the mind at odd times. My soul is in prayer—it would be unnatural that I should then blaspheme—yet then the blasphemy comes. Therefore it is clearly Satanic and not from my own mind. If I am set upon doing my Master’s will and presently an unfaithful thought assails me and—being apart from the natural run of my mind and thoughts—it may be at once ejected as not being mine and may be set down to the account of the devil, who is the true father of it.

By these means I think we may tell when Satan hinders and when it is our own heart, or when it is of God. We ought carefully to watch that we do not put the saddle on the wrong horse. Do not blame the devil when it is yourself. And on the other hand, when the Lord puts a bar in your way, do not say, “That is Satan,” and so go against the Providence of God. It may be difficult at times to see the way of duty, but if you go to the Throne of God in prayer you will soon discover it. “Bring here the ephod,” said David, when he was in difficulty. Say the same! Go to the great High Priest whose business it is to give forth the oracle! Lo, upon His breast hangs the Urim and Thummim and you shall, from Him, find direction in every time of difficulty and dilemma.

**IV.**Supposing that we have ascertained that hindrances in our way really come from Satan, WHAT THEN? I have but one piece of advice and that is—go on—hindrance or no hindrance, in the path of duty as God the Holy Spirit enables you. If Satan hinders you, I have already hinted that this opposition should cheer you. “I did not expect,” said a Christian minister, “to be easy in this particular pastorate, or else I would not have come here. I always count it,” he said, “to be my duty to show the devil that I am his enemy and if I do that, I expect that he will show me that he is mine.”

If you are now opposed and you can trace that opposition distinctly to Satan, congratulate yourself upon it—do not sit down and fret! Why, it is a great thing that a poor creature like you can actually vex the great Prince of Darkness and win his hate! It makes the race of man the more noble that it comes in conflict with a race of spirits and stands foot to foot even with the Prince of Darkness himself. It is a dreadful thing, doubtless, that you should be hindered by such an adversary, but it is most hopeful—for if he were your *friend—*you might have cause to fear, indeed!

Stand out against him because you now have an opportunity of making a greater gain than you could have had, had he been quiet. You could never have had a victory over him if you had not engaged in conflict with him. The poor saint would go on his inglorious way to Heaven if he were unmolested. But being molested, every step of his pathway becomes glorious! Our position today is like that described by Bunyan, when from the top of the palace the song was heard***—***

***“Come in, come in,  
Eternal glory you shall win.”***

Now merely to ascend the stairs of the palace, though safe work, would not have been very ennobling. But when the enemy crowded round the door and blocked up every stair and the hero came to the man with the ink-horn, who sat before the door and said, “Write my name down, Sir,” then, to get from the lowest step to the top where the bright ones were singing—every inch was glorious! If devils did not oppose my path from earth to Heaven, I might travel joyously, peacefully, safely—but certainly without renown! But now, when every step is contested in winning our pathway to Glory, every single step is covered with immortal fame! Press on then, Christian! The more opposition, the more honor!

Be in earnest against these hindrances when you consider, again, what you lose if you do not resist him and overcome him. To allow Satan to overcome me would be eternal ruin to my soul. Certainly it would forever blast all hopes of my usefulness. If I retreat and turn my back in the day of battle what will the rest of God’s servants say? What shouts of derision will ring over the battlefield? How will the banner of the Covenant be trailed in the mire! Why, we must not, we *dare* not, play the coward—we dare not give way to the insinuation of Satan and turn from the Master— for the defeat were then too dreadful to be endured.

Beloved, let me feed your courage with the recollection that your Lord and Master has overcome. See Him there before you. He of the thorncrown has fought the enemy and broken his head—Satan has been completely worsted by the Captain of your salvation! And that victory was representative—he fought and won it for *you!* You have to contend with a *defeated* foe and one who knows and feels his disgrace! And though he may fight with desperation, yet he fights not with true courage, for he is hopeless of ultimate victory. Strike, then, for Christ has destroyed him! Down with him, for Jesus has had him under His foot! You, weakest of all the host, you will be triumphant, for the Captain has triumphed before you!

Lastly, remember that you have a promise to make you gird up your loins and play the man this day—“Resist the devil and he shall flee from you.” Christian minister, resign not your situation! Do not think of sending in your resignation because the Church is divided and because the enemy is making headway! Resist the devil! Flee not, but make him flee! Young Christian men—you who have begun to preach in the street, or distribute tracts, or visit from house to house—though Satan hinders you very much I pray you, now, redouble your efforts! It is because Satan is afraid of you that he resists you, because he would rob you of the great blessing which is now descending on your head. Resist him and stand fast.

You Christians pleading in prayer—let not go your hold upon the Covenant Angel—for now that Satan hinders you it is because the blessing is descending! You who are seeking Christ, close not those eyes! Turn not away your face from Calvary’s streaming tree—now that Satan hinders you, it is because the night is almost over and the daystar begins to shine! Brethren, you who are most molested, most sorrowfully tried, most borne down, yours is the brighter hope—be courageous now—play the man for God, for Christ, for your own soul—and the day shall yet come when you, with your Master, shall ride triumphantly through the streets of the New Jerusalem!

Sin, death and Hell will be captive at your chariot wheels and you, with your Lord, will be crowned as victor, having overcome through the blood of the Lamb! May God bless dear Friends now present. I do not know to whom this sermon may be most suitable, but I believe it is sent especially to certain tried saints. The Lord enable them to find comfort in it! Amen.

***PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—***1Pe 4:12Adapted from*The C.H. Spurgeon Collection,*Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307  
Sermon #1758 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

**÷1Th 3.8**

THE PASTOR’S LIFE WRAPPED UP WITH HIS PEOPLE’S STEADFASTNESS A PLEADING REMINDER FOR THE NEW YEAR  
NO. 1758

*DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.  
*“Now we live, if you stand fast in the Lord.”***1Th 3:8***.*

MINISTERS who are really sent of God greatly rejoice in the spiritual prosperity of their people. If they see God’s Word prosper, they prosper. If the Church of God is blessed, they are blessed. Their life is wrapped up in the spiritual life of their people. Never is the servant of God so full of delight as when he sees that the Holy Spirit is visiting his hearers, making them to know the Lord, and confirming them in that heavenly knowledge. On the other hand, if God does not bless the word of His servants, it is like death to them! To be preaching and to have no blessing makes them heavy of heart—the chariot wheels are taken off and they drag heavily along—they seem to have no power nor liberty. They get depressed and they go back to their Master with this complaint, “Who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?”

He revives and cheers them—and they come back to their service—but if they do not see a manifest blessing resting upon the people, they cry and sigh and are like dying men. If the Lord willed to do so, He might have made robots to preach and these would only need to be wound up and allowed to run down again! They would have known no feelings of joy or of sorrow and would have been invulnerable to the arrows of grief. We have heard of the Iron Duke. Iron preachers would have been enduring instruments and would never have been laid aside by mental depression. But the sympathy of the preacher is God’s great instrument for blessing the hearer! If you read a sermon in a book it is good, but if you hear it preached fresh from the man’s heart, it is far more effective. There is a living fellow-feeling about it, and that is the power which God has, in all ages, been pleased to use—the power of a spirit which He has made sensitive with affection—so sensitive that it rises to joy when its affectionate purpose is accomplished and sinks to depths of grief when that purpose fails.

This, I take it, is what the Apostle means when he says, “Now we live, if you stand fast in the Lord.” The people can make the pastor happy beyond expression by their being rich in Grace and happy in Christ! But they can make him miserable beyond all description if they are either unstable or insincere. Dearly Beloved, I have often rejoiced in God as I have seen the work of the Spirit among you. It is no small joy that for many years we have never been without an increase to the Church. With few exceptions we have never gathered at our monthly communions without receiving a considerable number into our membership.

During these years some have turned back, to our great sorrow, and some have flagged, to our solemn grief. But others have persistently carried on the work of God and have developed gifts and graces which have made them qualified for larger spheres. At this day those at home come behind in no gifts and those abroad do not forget the hallowed training of Zion. In every part of the earth some are engaged in holy service who have gone out from this Church. For all this, our heart must be grateful. But these are evil times. These are times, the like of which I have not seen before, in which the foundations are removed and “what shall the righteous do?” The winds are out. The tacklings are loosed. The mariners reel to and fro! Everything seems to be drifting. Men know not where they are!

Half the professing Christians of the present day do not know their heads from their heels and the half that *do* know seem inclined to take to their heels and run rather than stand steadfast in the faith and wait till evil days are over! It is time that we spoke to you concerning *steadfastness*—that you be not like idle boys that leap hedges and ditches after every nest that silly birds may choose to make—but that you keep to the King’s Highway of holiness and truth and hold fast to the doctrines and the practices which are taught us in the Word of God. I say to you by this discourse, “Now we live, if you stand fast in the Lord.”

It is a matter of life and death to us that you should be rooted, grounded, and settled. Notice first, that *some are not in the Lord.* Secondly, *some appear to be in the Lord, but they are not standing fast.* And thirdly, that *some in the Lord stand fast in the Lord* and these are our life—“Now we live, if you stand fast in the Lord.”

**I.**First, SOME ARE NOT IN THE LORD AT ALL. A solid mass of infidelity and godlessness hems us in. Our heart is heavy because this great city is determined to shut its eyes to the Light of God . There are streets upon streets in which none attend the House of God and we have it on credible information that in certain districts if one man in a street is seen to go regularly to a place of worship, his neighbors mark him as a singular being. The home-born Londoner of the working classes, as a rule, has no care for a place of worship. If I were living in the country, I think I would be content with but half a wage sooner than to come and dwell in this ungodly place!

Our members try to bring up their children in God’s fear, but they are often compelled to quit their homes because of the filthy conduct of those who defile our streets. Yet this is not my present theme. Our greater sorrow is that there are many who hear the Gospel and are not in the Lord! We are not sorry that they should come to hear the Word of God—would to God that all Christless souls would hear of Christ! But we are sorry that they have come month after month, year after year, and have received no*saving* benefit. I still meet, here and there, with those who tell me, “I used to hear you in Park Street and Exeter Hall,” and yet I gather from them that they are undecided. I have small hope for them if 30 years of ministry have not brought them to Christ!

At any rate, these many years add to the dreadful probability that they will continue to make the Word of God to be unto themselves a savor of death unto death. If I could pick out of this audience, tonight, by Infallible guidance, one man or one woman and could point to that person and say, “Such a one will certainly go down to Hell to endure the everlasting wrath of God”—and if you knew that I was speaking like a Prophet from God and that it was certainly so—you would turn round and look with deepest grief upon that doomed soul! You would shudder to be sitting in the same pew! And yet though, thank God, we may not speak with that certainty, the probability grows so great as almost to amount to a certainty concerning those upon whom entreaties have been wasted, upon whom expostulations have been wasted, by whom invitations have been refused, that they will continue to harden their hearts until at last they sink into the place where mercy never enters!

Ah, Lord, these are heavy tidings and Your saints feel them! I know I am speaking to many who deeply sympathize with me when I say that the thought of this is a worm that makes our joys decay. I mean the thought that some of you contribute to God’s work and are, in many points, excellent—and yet you lack the one thing necessary—and after having joined with God’s people in outward acts of devotion you will be driven from His Presence forever! O Infinite Mercy, grant that it may not be so, but may these men and women, even now, be led to believe in Jesus and be saved! We die when we think of those who are not in the Lord at all! How it would revive us if we could see them saved!

If there is a deadening influence about the thought that some few among us are not converted, think of what the effect must be upon a minister’s mind if he shall have labored long and seen no fruit. There may be instances in which a man has been faithful, but not successful—places where, for a time, the dew falls not and the softening influences of the Spirit are not given. Then the soil breaks the plowshare and the weary ox is ready to faint. I began to preach while yet a youth, scarcely 16 years of age, but before I had preached half a dozen times I saw persons affected by those sermons. I pined to find some heart that had looked to Jesus while I had preached Him—and I have photographed upon my memory, at this very moment, a very humble clay-walled cottage which seemed to me to be a sacred spot, for I was told by a venerable deacon that it was the house of a poor woman who had sought and found the Savior through my ministry.

I did not let the week conclude till I had seen her, for I hungered for the joy of meeting with one whom I had brought to Christ! If I found one soul converted, I took heart and looked for more. Brothers, are you working for Jesus? Then you know what it is to feel the shadow of death when you do not win a soul! Does it not seem hard to be knocking for Christ against a door that never opens, but has fresh bolts put on it to keep it closed? Be not ashamed of yourself because you feel distressed—it proves your capacity for being used. By-and-by God will bless you and then you will understand the text, “Now we live.” You will find that your pulse is quickened, your heart’s blood warmed—you will be filled with a more Divine life as you rise nearer to the dignity of a savior of men and taste the unspeakable joys for which Christ laid down His life!

**II.**We notice, secondly, that THERE ARE SOME WHO PROFESS TO BE IN CHRIST, BUT THEY CERTAINLY ARE NOT STANDING FAST. This is a Marah—a bitter well. This is a source of heartbreak and of sore tribulation to the servant of God in whom the Spirit of God dwells, namely, that, first, there are many over whom we rejoice who, nevertheless, *altogether apostatize*. Use the best judgment that you can, there will be some added to a Church who are not really the Lord’s people. They run well—“What hinders them that they should not obey the truth?” They appear to begin in the Spirit, yet, by-and-by, they attempt to be made perfect in the *flesh*.

Oh, foolish ones, “Who has bewitched you?” They seem to be all that we want them to be, for a time, but soon they are nothing that they should be. And this does not happen merely during the first six months or so, otherwise we might set them on probation, but, alas, it has happened to men that have grown gray in the Church—esteemed and honored—and yet they have fallen till their names cannot be mentioned without sorrow! We can never feel sufficiently grateful to our Lord for allowing a Judas to be among the 12, for thus, He, Himself, bore what has been to His servants the most crushing of grief! The man that went to the House of God in company with us has betrayed, not only us, but our Master, and the Truth of God. This has often happened in the history of the Church and, therefore, we may expect it. But whenever it comes, it is a stab to the very soul! Paul, I think, if he were here, would say, “Now we die, because these men do not stand fast in the Lord.”

Happy am I to have been so largely spared this heart-wounding calamity! Oh, my Brothers and Sisters, we live, if you stand fast in the Lord! But it is as death to us if you turn aside! But there are other forms of instability. Many do not behave in such a way that we could remove their names from the Church roll, but they *decline in Grace*. Far too many grow worldly and it is especially the case when they grow wealthy. Well did one say to me the other day who has risen to riches, “I almost regret that I have ever changed my position, for I find my difficulties wonderfully increased—my difficulties especially with my family. They ask for things, now, in the form of amusements which they never would have thought of if I had not become wealthy.”

When a man toils and moves to heap riches together, he is laboriously endeavoring to make it difficult for himself to be saved. Yet some think that the main objective of life is to load themselves so that they cannot easily follow after Christ. It is poor progress to grow rich in gold but poor in Grace. We see others whom we look upon as likely to be leaders and helpers, who, if not from this cause, yet from some other, *are diverted from the work of God*. We do not, now, expect to see them at Prayer Meeting—it would be rather astonishing if they came! We do not dare expect them to conduct a tract society, or a lay-preaching association, or a Sunday school class, for they are careless as to the salvation of souls.

We know some who were once full of zeal, but now they are neither cold nor hot. These may seem trifles to the thoughtless, but they are not trifles to those who watch after their souls and will have to give an account! Whenever I have seen it, I have said to myself, “How much of this is due to *me*? How much must I blame myself for this?” And one cannot answer that question immediately. Many thoughts and searching considerations are needed, but, believe me, there is nothing which eats more like a sharp acid into a man’s inmost soul to cause him a daily grief than when he sees those that profess to be servants of Christ not answering to the processes of Grace, but acting like worldly men!

There are some of whom I must speak even weeping because they vex our spirit by their neglect of their Master’s business. In these days there are other forms of this lack of steadfastness and they come up in this way. Some are always *shifting their doctrinal opinions*. Within the last 10 years we have had the most remarkable selection of abominations in the way of new doctrines that ever cursed our human race! If all the heresies that have been put forth were true, I do not know whether there would remain either Heaven, or Hell, or earth, or God, or man—for all these have been removed by the foul finger of doubt! Some go in not so much for disbeliefs as for fanaticisms and, believing nothing one day, the world is to believe everything the next!

We have already miracles restored to us and a daring person has arisen who assumes the name of Christ! A bottomless pit of fanaticism is yawning. Hell from beneath is vomiting all manner of absurdities to vex the Church of God. Now is the time for steadfastness! It is a blessed thing for a man to know what he believes and to hold to it—to have no ear for novelty-mongers, but to say—“If it is new, it is not true. I have my colors nailed to the mast and I cannot take them down.” We know some who are *not steadfast in their service of Christ*. When a man claims to be perfect, he is wholly useless to us—he is sure to leave his work. He needs all his time to admire his own perfections! It is not possible for him to be of any further service among such poor sinners as we are—and off he goes to stand by himself and say, “God, I thank you, that I am not as other men are.” I would a great deal sooner remain imperfect and be of some use to God, than brag of my excellence and do nothing!

Brothers, stick to your work for God! If you preach, preach on! If called to teach in the Sunday school, at your peril leave your class! If God has bid you go from door to door with tracts, stick to it, and when the Lord Himself shall come, you cannot be found in a better position than in that of discharging the offices to which He has called you! He would not have us stand with our mouths wide open gazing into the air! The best position for a servant, when his Master comes, is to be found doing his Master’s will. We live, if you stand fast in the Lord as to doctrine and as to holy service, and especially we live if the Lord keeps you, dear Brothers and Sisters, *true in the matter of holy conversation*. I call that holiness which minds its work at home. I call that holiness which makes a kind father, a true brother, an obedient child and makes me mind my daily calling and see that I make others happy and so commend the Gospel to them.

See to it that your personal characters in secret before God, at home before your friends and outside in the world where eagle eyes watch to perceive your infirmities, are spotless and unblameable! For then we live! But when men can turn round and fling in our teeth, “These are your Christians, and they deal as others deal and talk as others talk,” then down goes our spirit and we wish we could die! It is life to lead a band of earnest steadfast men who know the Truth of God and live the Truth of God and are ready to die for the Truth of God! This is an honor of which we feel we are unworthy, though we aspire to it. But to lead inconsistent, dubious, half-hearted, idle people onward to some imaginary goal is a doom compared with which death, itself, is delight.

Now, dear Brothers and Sisters, the reason why every true minister sinks in heart when those who seem to be in Christ do not stand fast is this—unless men are steadfast, *the Church is weakened*. The strength of any Church must be the aggregate of the strength of all the members put together. Therefore if you have a set of weak Brethren, you multiply the weakness of each one by the number of the membership. What a hospital is the result! If each Believer is strong, then the whole Church is strong. And that is our desire—we pine to see the Church of God vigorous in her holy calling! If Believers are steadfast, then God is glorified. Transient piety brings no glory to God! God is not honored by that religion which is taken up today and laid down tomorrow. It is only by perseverance—yes, and perseverance to the *end*, that glory is brought to God.

*The minister is disappointed* of his reasonable expectations when men do not stand fast. He is like a farmer who sees the seed grow and just when it is about to yield him a crop, he spies out black smut and his wheat is blighted. He may well weep over the fact that it went so far and yet so utterly failed! Judge, you mothers, what it is to nurse your children till they are near to manhood and then to see them sink into the grave. You have wished, perhaps, that you had been childless sooner than see your dear offspring taken from you. Very similar is the sorrow of the true pastor—when he expects that God will be glorified by his converts, they turn aside and his work is lost. Or if they do not turn aside unto perdition, yet if they are unstable, their joy is lessened and their usefulness is marred. And this is no small thing.

We live in your joy and if you miss it, we grieve for your incalculable loss, for believe me, there is no joy like the highest form of Christianity— and to lose this is a catastrophe! The beginnings of piety are often bitter— and difficult advances are often made through the sea and through the terrible wilderness—but the higher stage of piety is the Beulah land from which you look into the Paradise of God, yourself living on the borders of it! If any child of God should miss this highest joy, it is a most heavy grief to those who watch for their souls. Be you steadfast, for so we live.

**III.**Then THERE ARE SOME WHO ARE IN THE LORD AND WHO STAND FAST IN THE LORD—and these are our life! They are our life because their holy conduct fills us with living confidence. I tell you, Brothers and Sisters, when I have seen the holy generosity of members of this Church making sacrifices to serve the Lord. When I have seen the holy courage of Brothers and Sisters standing up for Jesus and bearing reproach for the sake of principle—and speaking out the Truth of God in defiance of ridicule. When, in fact, I have seen many things that I will not mention now—I have said to myself, “These are fruits that could not have been produced except by the Truth and by the Spirit of God!”

Then have I felt very confident in the Gospel which has been so adorned by your actions. Certain of our Beloved elders and deacons passed away, to our deep sorrow, not very long ago, and when I came down from their death chambers, I did not require any further argument to prove the religion of the Lord Jesus—the Holy Spirit set His seal upon the Truth by their joyful departures. If infidels had met me as I left those choice deathbeds, I would not have argued with them for a single moment—I would have simply laughed them to scorn—for I would have felt like a man that has looked at the sun till he cannot bear the blaze of it any longer—and then hears a blind man swear that there is no sun! With what confidence we speak when holy lives and joyful deaths prove the Gospel!

Again, how often have I seen fears which have crept into my soul driven away by my dear people! This is a time of fear, when all Solomon’s men that keep watch about his bed had need, each one, to carry his sword drawn because of fear in the night. Yet, when I have seen God’s people steadfast, my fears have fled! Yes, I have said the Lord keeps the feet of His saints. He is as a wall of fire round about His own. If it were possible, the powers of evil would deceive the very elect—but it is not possible! The saints are steadfast and each steadfast one cheers his minister and helps him to lay aside his anxieties and to rejoice in the certainty that the Gospel will triumph!

The steadfast become our life by stimulating us to greater exertion. I believe that the steadfast help the minister to a high degree of usefulness. When the man of God sees his people living to God at a high rate of piety, he speaks many things which otherwise he never would have spoken. He glories in the work of God and with no bated breath or trace of hesitation, he points to his people and cries, “See what God has done!” He exults over his converts with a holy joy. He cries, “See what they used to be and what they are now! See how life has been made to spring up in the midst of death and how the Light of God shines, where before, darkness reigned.”

Take away the living evidences of Divine power from the Church and you lower the preacher’s spirit at once—and deprive him of power to demonstrate his commission by the signs that follow it. I am sure, dear Friends, you would have a deadening influence on me if you were not steadfast in holiness. How can I preach up holiness if someone sitting in the gallery looks down and says, “Yonder is one of his members and a worse thief I do not know!” Can I preach up the glory of Grace when someone cries, “Fine talk, but I saw one of the members of his Church half drunk the other night! Is that what is meant by the free spirit?” If behind me there is a regiment of deceivers and hypocrites, my position is horrible. Surely I had better give over the *preaching* of the Gospel when you give over the *living* of the Gospel! My task, in itself difficult, is rendered absolutely impossible if while I preach one thing, you live another!

Happily it has not been so among you and you will not permit it to be so in the future. May God of Infinite Mercy grant to me that I may live because Christ lives in *you*! That I may be strong because I can fall back upon *you* as my “living Epistles, known and read of all men!” Of godly established Christians, I may quote the words of David, “Happy is the man that has his quiver full of them: he shall speak with the enemies in the gate.” The best answer to all the opponents of the old-fashioned Gospel is the godly zeal of an earnest Church. “Now we live, if you stand fast in the Lord.” I had many things to say to you, but my time has gone. Only may God the Holy Spirit dwell with the preacher that he may preach the Lord Jesus and not himself. And may the Spirit of God dwell with *you*, dear members of this Church, that you may live under His influence and may bear His fruit unto the Glory of God!

As for you that are members of other Churches, may the Lord make you to be to your own pastors, their joy and crown! It will be ill for you if, in the Day of Judgment, they have to give an ill account of you. We do not think enough about that trial which each man will have to undergo, or of that account which all under shepherds will have to render in the Last Great Day. It is written, “If the watchman warns them not, they shall perish, but their blood will I require at the watchman’s hands.” Oh, my Master, when You search my garments for the blood of souls, grant that I may be found clear of the blood of all men! What a Heaven this will be! Remember that other Word of God, “If the watchman warns them, and they take no heed of the warning, they shall perish; but he has delivered his soul.”

May every one of us take care to deliver his soul! It is my highest prayer to be able to make full proof of my ministry, that in all of you I may have an unquestioned testimony to my lifelong fidelity to my Lord and to your souls. Pray for me daily and for yourselves, also, that by our steadfastness this favored Church may be made to live and flourish till our Lord Himself shall come!

***PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—1 Thessalonians 1;*** 1Th 2:18 ***to*** 1Th 3:13***.*  
HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—686, 667, 684.**

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**÷1Th 4.13**

DEATH—A SLEEP  
NO. 3077

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, JANUARY 30, 1908. *DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.

***“But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who are asleep, that you sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.”*** 1Th 4:13***.***

[On January 31, 1892, the Beloved preacher, “after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell asleep.” That verse was the text of the Sermon (#2243, Volume 38) published on the day of his funeral, to which Mrs. Spurgeon gave the title, “HIS OWN FUNERAL SERMON”—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org. Sixteen years have elapsed since his Home-going, but C. H. Spurgeon “yet speaks” by means of the printed page, and so many unpublished manuscripts still remain that the publication of the Sermons can still be continued for several years, by God’s Grace.]

THERE may be some few extraordinary cases “where ignorance is bliss” and where “‘tis folly to be wise.” But for the most part, ignorance is the mother of misery—and if we had more knowledge, we would find it a tower of strength against many fears and alarms which beget sadness and sorrows in dark untutored minds. True it is that the utmost diligence of the student cannot shield his body or his mind from fatigue and distress. In guarding against one class of ills, we may become exposed to another—as Solomon testifies that “much study is a weariness of the flesh,” and again, “in much wisdom is much grief: and he that increases knowledge, increases sorrow.” Still, let it be remembered that “wisdom is a defense, and money is a defense”—in the increase of either we may augment our cares, yet in the increase of both we think there is a remunerative profit!

But I would commend to you a wisdom which springs not up from earth, but comes down from Heaven. He that is rich towards God knows that “the blessing of the Lord, it makes rich, and He adds no sorrow with it.” And he that is made wise unto salvation, has received that wisdom which “gives life to them that have it.” If we had more celestial wisdom, I believe we would have more of heavenly joy and less of carnal sorrow. Many a Doctrine of the Gospel becomes the means of sadness and misery to the heart simply because it is not understood. Ignorance of the Bible often troubles men’s hearts and consciences—and prevents them from finding that peace of God which a little more knowledge of it would be sure to give them. And I am certain that ignorance or forgetfulness of many of the exceedingly great and precious promises of God and of the marvelous things He has engaged to do for His people, often causes our eyes to flow with tears and our hearts to be overwhelmed with suffering. The more a Christian knows of his religion, the better for his peace and for his happiness! The Apostle says, “I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren.” *He*knew that was an ill condition and we may well shun it. Depend upon this—the more thoroughly you understand the Gospel, the more you will find that the Gospel blesses you and makes you happy! Each word that Eternal Wisdom speaks is pure. Give heed, then, to the sure word of Scripture and so shall you journey as with chart in hand, escaping a thousand dangers to which benighted travelers are exposed— and enjoying a thousand delights which they cannot discern! But alas for those who walk in darkness! They have nothing to cheer or enliven, but everything to frighten and terrify them.

Leaving this preliminary point, for I trust you seek to avoid all ignorance and ask God to lead you into the knowledge of all Truth of God, I proceed now to the special application of my text, as the Holy Spirit has designed to place a lamp in the sepulcher where darkness was known to hold an undisputed sway. And here we have, first, *an affecting metaphor—*a metaphor for death—“those who are asleep.” Secondly, there is *a solemn distinction.* There are some that die without hope and there are others for whom we sorrow not as for them that are without hope. And then, thirdly, there is *a very gentle exhortation*—not to sorrow for those who sleep in Jesus, “even as others which have no hope.”

**I.**So, in the first place, here is A MOST AFFECTING SIMILE—“those who are asleep.”  
Scripture continually uses the term, “sleep,” to express death. Our Savior did. He said, “Our friend Lazarus sleeps.” And so well, with such an evident and appropriate truthfulness, did He describe death as being a sleep, that His disciples mistook the sense of His words and said, “Lord, if he sleeps, he shall do well.” But Jesus spoke not of the transient sleep of the weary, but of the deep slumber of death. And very frequently, even in the Old Testament, you find it said that certain persons “slept with their fathers, and were buried in a sepulcher.” Nor did they count that sleep a hopeless end of life, but as David said, “I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with Your likeness”—they expected to awake from that slumber into which they believed death did cast their bodies. In the New Testament the same emblem is continually used. And it is very pleasant to remember that in the old catacombs of Rome, where the bodies of many saints were buried, it is continually found inscribed on their graves, “She sleeps.” “He sleeps in Jesus.” “He shall wake up one day” and similar epitaphs which mark the firm belief of Christians that sleep was a very fine and beautiful *picture* of death!  
Allow me to guard against an evil supposition that may spring up here. When death is called a sleep, it is not because the soul sleeps— that, we are told by Holy Scripture, rises at once to Heaven. The soul of the saint is found at once before the Throne of God. It is the *body* which is said to sleep. The soul sleeps not! Absent from the body, it is present with the Lord. It stretches its wings and flies away up to yonder realm of joy! And there, reveling in delight, bathing itself in bliss, it finds a rest from the turmoil of earth infinitely better than any rest in sleep. It is the body, then, that sleeps, and the body only. I will try and tell you why we think the metaphor is used for the sleep of the body.

In the first place, because *sleep is a suspension of the faculties, but not a destruction of the body.*When we see anyone naturally asleep, we believe that body will wake up again. We do not suppose that those eyes will be sealed up in perpetual darkness, that those bones and that flesh will lie dormant, never more to feel the consciousness of being, or stir with the impulse of life. No, we expect to see the functions of life resumed, the eyelids open to admit the cheering rays of light and the limbs to become again exercised with activity. So, when we bury our dead in their graves, we are taught to believe that they are asleep. Our faith, (which is warranted by the Word of God), discerns in the corruption of death a suspension of the powers of the body rather than an annihilation of the matter itself. The earthly house of this tabernacle must be dissolved, but it cannot be destroyed. Though the bones are scattered to the four winds of Heaven, yet at the call of the Lord God, they shall come together again, bone to bone. Though the eyes are first glazed and then devoured from their sockets, they shall be surely restored—that each saint in his own flesh may see God! In this confidence we deposit the body of each departed saint in the grave as in a bed. We doubt not that God will guard the dust of the precious sons and daughters of Zion. We believe that in the Resurrection there shall be a perfect identity of the body. You may call it unphilosophical if you please, but you cannot show me that it is unbiblical! Science cannot demonstrate it, you say. But then science cannot disprove it. Reason stands abashed while Revelation lifts her trumpet-tongue and exclaims, “Behold, I show you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet: for the trumpet shall sound and the dead shall be raised incorruptible.”

Look not, then, on the corpse of your Brother or your Sister in Christ, Beloved, to take an eternal farewell. Say rather, “When I stretch myself on my couch at night, I *hope*to wake at the first call of the busy morn. But I not only hope, I *am sure* that this sleeping heir of immortality shall awake from the sound slumbers of his sepulchral repose at the dawn of the heavenly Bridegroom’s appearing.” “Ah,” says one, “‘twas but an hour or two ago I was in the closed chamber where my little baby is laid out. I lifted the coffin lid and looked at its dear little placid face, and I can quite believe what you say—death is a sleep—it seemed just like it.” “No,” says another, “it was only yesterday that I was in a London graveyard, appalled with the sight of skulls and bare, disjointed bones, and I can never look upon death in the way you represent.” Now then, my Friends, mark this well, for I can give one reply to you both—it is not by the exercise of your *sense*, but by the exercise of your *faith* that you are to get this blessed hope! You might bitterly gaze on the face of the dead long enough before you would catch a symptom of returning life. You might grope about in the dark damp vault long enough before a ray of light would show you an avenue by which the captives can be liberated from their gloomy cells. No, no! You must visit the tomb of Jesus! You must go and “see the place where the Lord lay”—then you will soon perceive how the stone is rolled away and how to rise again is made possible and certain, too!

Moreover, *the term, “sleep,” is beautifully used to express the quiet of the body.* It rests from labor. Look on the sleeper. He has been weary. He has toiled all day long, but there is no weariness now. He breathes softly. Sometimes a dream may disturb him, but he is not weary—he is resting in the unconsciousness of slumber. It is often pleasing to look upon the face of a weary sleeper. Have you ever passed along a country lane and there, by the roadside, seen the harvestman as he is resting awhile from his toils, lying down upon the bank? What a heavy sleep he has and what a blessed smile there is on his countenance while he is enjoying that rest! Such is the natural sleep of the body, from which comes the metaphor of my text. And is not this sleep of death a resting after toil? The poor limbs are weary. They are now stretched in the grave and covered over with the green sod, that they may not hear the noise above their heads nor be disturbed by the busy din. They are put in their quiet abodes, down deep there in the earth, that none may alarm them. And now let the cannon roar over their tomb, let the thunder shake the sky, let the lightning flash—no sight nor sound can startle them, or cause them dreams! In such still chambers of retirement, their troubles are now over. “There the wicked cease from troubling; and there the weary are at rest.” The body has gone through its battle. The warrior sleeps, the conqueror rests. His brow shall soon be decked with laurels—the very brow which now slumbers in the tomb awhile shall yet rise again to wear the crown of everlasting life! But now it rests awhile till the preparations are complete for the triumphant entry into the Kingdom of God when Christ shall come to receive body and soul into their everlasting resting place!

Note again, *sleep is used as a figure for death to show us the entire unconcern which the dead feel concerning anything which is going on below.* The sleeper knows nothing of what is going on. The thief may be in the house, but he knows it not. There is a storm, but he slumbers and knows no terror. There may happen a thousand accidents abroad, or even in the chamber where he rests, but as long as sleep can hold him fast, he shall be entirely unconcerned about them and shall not notice them! And such, Beloved, is the case with the dead. Their bodies, at least, are entirely free from concern. Empires may totter, kingdoms fall and mighty revolutions shake the world, but none of these things will—

***“Ever make their hearts ache, or***

***Break the spell of their profound repose.”***There may be a falling away, a backsliding in the Church, but the minster in the grave knows it not. The tongue of Wickliffe shall not move with stern rebuke. The eyes of Knox shall not flash with indignation. Yes, and each bodily organ through which the mind was known to reveal itself is now closed. “So man lies down and rises not: till the heavens are no more they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep.”

There is a yet sweeter view of this metaphor which I will now point out to you. Sleep, you know, is a means of refreshment by the recruiting of our exhausted strength to fit us for a fresh exercise of our faculties when we awake. Such, too, is death. The sleep of death is requisite as a preparation for Heaven, so far as the body is concerned. The soul must be prepared by a blessed change worked upon it in this time-state. But the body awaits its full redemption until the Resurrection. Though I may not follow the metaphor in the process by which the change is worked, I can believe it will quite hold good in the result. The refreshing of the body is of course gradually brought about during the hours of sleep, just as changes are successively going on in the grain of wheat that falls into the ground and dies. The awaking of the one and the sprouting of the other, in health and vigor, result from causes that take place in the interval. But I am not prepared to say that it is exactly so with the sleeping dust of man’s earthly tabernacle. The greedy worm that devours it, the general corruption that preys upon it and the foul earth with which it mingles may consume that which is corruptible. But these can have no power to refine the nature, or to produce the glorious likeness to be borne by the saints. You must always guard against straining a figure, especially when, by doing so, you would make it contradict the plain didactic teachings of the Scriptures. We do not look down into the grave as if it were a refining pot to purify our nature, or a bath in which the garments of mortality are to be cleansed—we look upward to Heaven, from whence the Savior shall come—“our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself.”

Once more, there is a very precious word in connection with this sleep which we must not overlook. At the 14th verse it says that they “sleep in Jesus.” Sweet thought! This teaches us that death does not dissolve the union which subsists between the Believer and Christ. When the body dies, it does not cease to be a part of Christ! “Know you not that your bodies are the members of Christ?” said the Apostle to those who were still living in the world. And now, as to those whose earthly course is done, our departed friends “sleep in Jesus”—they are as much in Christ now as they were when upon earth! And their bodies, which were precious to the Lord and preserved as the apple of His eye, are as precious to Him now as they ever were! It was once their delight to have communion with Jesus in His death and Resurrection, as knowing themselves one with Him when He died and rose again. And not less surely did Jesus hold fellowship with them in *their* death, making Himself known to them when they endured their last struggle. How often have we seen the eyes brighten up with an almost supernatural brilliance just before they were closed on all beneath the skies! How often have we seen the hand raised with the parting expression of triumph, and then laid motionless by the side! How often has the Presence of the Beloved sustained the frail tenement of the expiring Christian till he has defied death “to quench his immortality, or shake his trust in God!”

And mark how the saints in Jesus, when their bodies sleep in peace, have perpetual fellowship with Him—yes, better fellowship than we can enjoy! We have but the transitory glimpse of His face—they gaze upon it every moment. We see Him “through a glass, darkly.” They behold Him “face to face.” We sip of the brook by the way—they plunge into the very ocean of unbounded love! We look up, sometimes, and see our Father smile. Look whenever they may, His face is always full of smiles for them. We get some drops of comfort, but they get the honeycomb itself. They have their cup filled with new wine, running over with perennial, unalloyed delights. They are full of peace and joy forever. They “sleep in Jesus!”

Beloved, such a description of death makes us wish to sleep too! O Lord, let us go to sleep with the departed! O happy hour when a clod of the valley shall be our pillow! Though it is so hard, we shall not be affected by it. Happy hour, when earth shall be our bed! Cold shall be the clay, but we shall not know it—we shall slumber and we shall rest. The worm shall hold carnival within our bones and corruption shall riot over our frame, but we shall not feel it. Corruption can but feed on the corruptible—mortality can but prey upon the mortal.

Oh, let me rest! Come, night, and let me slumber! Come, my last hour! Let me bow myself upon the bed! Come, Death, oh, come lightly to my couch! Yes, strike if you will, but your stroke is the loving touch that makes my body slumber! Happy, happy, they who die in the Lord!

**II.**Now, secondly, here is A SOLEMN DISTINCTION.  
All men die, but all men die not alike. There are two sorts of death. I speak not now of the inferior animals—of them we never read in Scripture that they sleep—I speak of MAN, concerning whom it is certain that “there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust.” There is the death of the righteous, which is peaceful, happy and joyous beyond expression! In its future consequences there is, moreover, the death of the wicked, sad in itself, but doleful, indeed, in its inevitable results throughout a dread eternity! Come, then, Beloved, let us consider this distinction. There are some, we must infer from this text, for whom we can sorrow as those for whom we have no hope. While there are others for whom we are told we may not thus sorrow— concerning their death we have every hope and every joy.  
Turning for a moment to the heathen nations, we do not wonder that there is a great deal of grief expressed at their funerals, that they hire women who pluck their hair, make hideous noises and distress their bodies with all kinds of unnatural contortions in order to express the utmost agony—while the relatives and friends cover themselves with sackcloth and ashes and spend their time in weeping and wailing and lamentations. We do not wonder that such customs should prevail and be handed down among those who have no knowledge of a resurrection! They suppose that when the body is consigned to the tomb, they shall never see it again, so we do not marvel that they should cry— ***“Weep for the dead, and bewail her!  
Weep for the dead, and bewail her!  
She is gone; she is gone!  
We shall see her no more—  
Weep for the dead, and bewail her!”***

You see, there is no hope in their case to mitigate their woe. But in a nominally Christian land, although we are persuaded that all men will have a resurrection, yet how many die of whom we have no hope! I mean to say, we have, in the first place, no hope of ever meeting them again. We frequently sing in our Sunday school—our little children sing—

***“Oh, that will be joyful,  
Joyful, joyful!  
When we meet to part no more!”***

But there is another side to that Truth of God—  
***“Oh, that will be doleful,  
Doleful, doleful!  
When we part to meet no more!”***

When our wicked friends die, if we are righteous, we must remember that we shall never meet them again. We may behold them, but it will be a hideous sight. We may see them as Lazarus saw the rich man in Hell. We may behold them with the great gulf fixed between us—but remember that the last shake of the hand with an ungodly relative is an everlasting farewell! That last whisper of sympathy on the dying bed is indeed final— we shall never address them with another soft word of comfort, never again shall we call them friends—we are parted then, forever. Death, like some mighty earthquake, shakes two hearts apart which seemed to be indissolubly united—and a great gulf of fire and wrath shall separate them. One in Heaven and the other in Hell—they shall never meet again—there is no hope of it.

Some of you we could not bear to lose, yet, if you fall asleep, we shall with holy assurance consign you to your grave and say, “Lord, we thank You that it has pleased You to take to Yourself our beloved Brother.” Yet, alas, there are many here—oh, we pray God that they may not die, for we know we should never see them again in peace, and joy, and happiness! There are some of you, now within the reach of my voice—judge you of whom I speak—concerning whom, if you were now to depart, we might say, as David did, “O my son, my son, Absalom! Would God I had died for you, O Absalom, Absalom, my son, my son!” If you were now to depart, we might indeed take up a very bitter cry. We might ask the owl and the bittern, with their dismal hoots, to assist our lamentations. We would have need to weep for you, not because your bodies were dead, but because your *souls* were cast away into unutterable torment! O Sirs, if some of you were to die, it would be your mother’s grief, for she would bitterly reflect that you were gnashing your teeth in fell despair! She would recollect that you were beyond the reach of prayer, cast away from all hope and from all refuge—that she could never see you again—her destiny to be forever with her Lord in Heaven, but your doom to be forever shut out!

Young men and women, yes, and all of you who have had pious friends who have gone before, should you not like to meet them before the eternal Throne? Can you bear the dread thought that you are separated from some of them forever because you are not the Lord’s children, neither do you seek the things that belong to your peace? I think you wish to meet them there, do you not? But you never shall unless you tread the steps they trod, and walk the road they loved. If your hearts are not towards Jesus. If your souls are not given to Him, how can you? For if your way is not the same, your end must differ. You shall not meet at the goal of Heaven unless you meet at the wicket gate on earth, enter in by the strait gate and go along the strait and narrow road! Oh, if some of you were about to die, your minister would have to go to your bedside and say, “Adieu, I shall never see you again.” And were you to look up, and say, “what, Sir—no more?” He might answer, “I have seen you many a time in God’s House. We have sung together, we have prayed together, we have worshipped together in the same sanctuary. But it is all over now. I shall never see you again!” “What, never, Minister? Never hear your voice again?” “No, never! Unless you are in Christ now, farewell forever!” O poor Soul, what a sorrowful thing to shake hands forever, to bid good-bye forever—one to descend to endless flames and the other to mount to realms of everlasting bliss! We may, indeed, sorrow for them, if we have no hope of ever meeting them again.

But we would not grieve so much about not meeting them again if we knew that they were happy, even though we should never see them. But, then, for those who die without Christ, we sorrow because we have no hope that they have any happiness. Or even if they were now in misery and we might cherish the thought that they would one day escape, we could not then sorrow for them as those that have no hope. But, alas, we recollect that our lost friends are lost forever! We recollect that there is no shadow of a hope for them! When the iron gate of Hell is once closed upon them, it shall never be unbarred to give them free exit! When once shut up within those walls of sweltering flame which girdle the fiery gulf, there is no possibility of flight! We recollect that they have, “forever,” stamped upon their chains—“forever” carved in deep lines of despair upon their hearts! It is the Hell of Hell that everything there lasts forever! Here, time wears away our griefs and blunts the keen edge of sorrow, but there, time never mitigates the woe. Here, the sympathy of loving kindred, in the midst of sickness or suffering, can alleviate our pain, but there, the mutual upbraiding and reproaches of fellow sinners give fresh stings to torment too dreadful to be endured! Here, too, when Nature’s last palliative shall fail, to die may be a happy release—a man can count the weary hours till death shall give him rest. But, oh, remember, there is no death in Hell! Death, which is a monster on earth, would be an angel in Hell! But the terrible reality is this, “Their worm dies not, and the fire is not quenched.”

Must we go one step further? It is terrible work to deliver these warnings, but it would be still more terrible to hide any Truth of God, however bitter. When we have uttered a pitiful lament for heathen nations and when we have spoken with deeper emotion of the profane, the profligate, and the despisers of God, we have not finished. These have not the semblance of peace in their own breasts. But alas, alas, there are many who die in the delusion of a false peace! What avails it that they uttered pious sentiments with their lips if their hearts were not changed? What though they received “the bread and wine” in nature’s extremity? Will the sacramental opiate serve them instead of the inward witness of reconciliation to God? Oh, hear this, you that are at ease! Listen, all you whose religion stands in outward forms—“Like sheep they are laid in the grave; death shall feed on them; and the upright shall have dominion over them in the morning.” I confess to you that the metaphor which charms me in the one case appalls me in the other, so great is the distinction among the sleepers! Look at the man who has sought to be justified by the works of the Law, or in some way perverted the Gospel of Christ. With a fatal lull of conscience he nestles down securely. “As when a hungry man dreams and, behold, he eats; but he awakes and his soul is empty: or as when a thirsty man dreams and behold, he drinks; but he awakes and, behold, he is faint and his soul has appetite.” He sleeps the deep sleep of death, prepared, as he supposes, to meet the Judge. When he awakes, the spell shall be dissolved. The terrible sentence, “Depart,” awaits him! O Beloved, I tremble to think that a man may go up with jaunty step to the threshold of Heaven only to be cast down to the nethermost pit! As you stand among the graves of your departed friends, I beseech you to examine yourselves! Only as you can say, “To me to live is Christ,” have you a right to add, “and to die is gain.”

But now there is the case of the Christian. Is it not matter for consolation and holy joy, with some of us, that concerning beloved friends of ours who now sleep quietly in their graves, we have not to sorrow as those who have no hope? The death of the saints is precious in the sight of the Lord! On their account we have cause rather to rejoice than to weep. And why? Because we hope that they are safely housed in Heaven. Yes, more—we have the firm persuasion that already their redeemed spirits have flown up to the eternal Throne! We believe that they are at this moment joining in the hallelujahs of Paradise, feasting on the fruits of the Tree of Life, and walking by the side of the river, the streams whereof make glad the heavenly city of our God! We know they are supremely blessed—we think of them as glorified spirits above who are “forever with the Lord.”

We have that hope and then we have another hope concerning those— we hope that though we have buried them, they shall rise again! In the verse following our text it is written, “Those also who sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him.” We rejoice that not only do “they rest from their labors, and their works do follow them,” but that after they have rested a little while, their bodies shall rise again! We know that their Redeemer lives and we are certain that He will, at the latter day, stand upon the earth and that they shall stand on the earth with Him! We rejoice that the dead in Christ shall rise first—that they shall come on that day when, “with clouds descending,” “He shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them who believe.” We look for a day when buried bodies shall be living frames once more! We expect that glazed eyes shall again be radiant with light! We believe that dumb lips shall yet sing, that deaf ears shall yet hear and that lame feet shall yet leap like the hart!

We are looking for the time when we shall meet the saints in their very bodies and shall know them. It is our hope that they shall rise again and that we shall meet them and shall know them. I trust you all firmly believe that you will recognize your friends in Heaven. I consider the doctrine of the non-recognition of our friends in Heaven a marvelously absurd one! I cannot conceive how there can be any communion of saints in Heaven unless there is mutual recognition. We could not hold communion with unknown beings! If we knew not who they were, how could we be able to join their company? Moreover, we are told that we shall “sit down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.” I suppose we shall know those blessed Patriarchs when we sit down with them. And if we know them, there is but one step to the supposition that we shall know all the general assembly! Moreover, there will be but very little difficulty in discovering them because every seed has its own body by which we are taught that everybody, being different from any other body when sown, will, when it rises in a spiritual fashion, be in like manner different from any other. And although the spiritual body may have none of the lineaments upon its face like we have, and no marks as we have, because it will be far more glorious and splendid, yet it will have so much identity that we, being instructed, shall be able to say of it, “This is the body that sprang from such a seed,” just as we recognize the different kinds of corn or flowers that spring from the different kinds of seed that are sown! Take away recognition and you have taken away, I think, one of the joys of Heaven. There seems to me a great deal of Heaven’s sweetness in the little verse (to quote another of the children’s hymns)—

***“Teachers, too, shall meet above.  
And our pastors whom we love  
Shall meet to part no more.”***

**III.**And now, in the third place, we HAVE A GENTLE EXHORTATION. The exhortation here is delicately hinted at—that the sorrow of bereaved Christians for their Christian friends ought not to be at all like the sorrow of unconverted persons for their ungodly relatives. We are not forbidden to sorrow—“Jesus wept.” The Gospel does not teach us to be stoics—we ought to weep, for it was intended that the rod should be felt, otherwise we could not “hear the rod, and who has appointed it.” If we did not feel the stroke when our friends were taken away, we would prove ourselves worse than heathen men and publicans. God’s Grace does not take away our sensibilities, it only refines them and, in some degree, restrains the violence of their expression. Still, there ought to be some difference between the sorrow of the righteous and the sorrow of the wicked.  
First, *there should be a difference in its vehemence.*It may be natural to the unbridled passions of an ungodly man, who has lost his wife, to tear his hair, to throw himself upon the bed, to clutch the body, to declare it shall not be buried, to rave through the house cursing God and saying all manner of hard things of His dispensations. But that would not do for a Christian. He must not murmur. A Christian may stand and weep. He may kiss the dear cold hand for the last time and rain showers of tears on the lifeless body while “pity swells the tide of love.” But God and His religion demand that he should say, after doing this, “The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.” He may weep—he ought to. He may sorrow—he ought to. He may wear the clothes of mourning—God forbid that we should ever believe in any religion which should proscribe our showing some outward signs of sorrow for our friends!—yet we may not, and we must not weep as others weep! We must not always carry the red and tearful eye. We must not always take with us the face that is downcast and distressed. If we do, the world will say of us that our conduct belies our profession and our feelings are at variance with our faith.  
Again, there is another thing we must never allow to enter into our grief— *the least degree of repining.*A wicked man, when he sorrows for those who are gone without hope, not infrequently murmurs against God. But it is far otherwise with the Christian! He meekly bows his head, and says, “Your will, O God, be done.” The Christian must still acknowledge the same gracious hand of God, whether it is stretched forth to give or to take away. The language of his faith is, “Though He slays me, yet will I trust in Him; though He should take all away, yet will I not repine.” I do not say that all Christians are able to maintain such a cheerful submission of spirit. I only say that they *ought to* and that such is the tendency of the Christian religion—had they more of the Spirit of God within their hearts, that would be their habitual disposition. We may sorrow, Beloved, but not with repining. There must be resignation mixed with the regret. There must be the yielding up, even with grateful acquiescence, that which God asks for—seeing we believe that He does but take what is His own.  
And now, there is just one further observation. I believe that*when the Christian sorrows, he ought to be as glad as he is sorrowful.*Put your sadness in one scale and your gladness in the other scale—then see if the reasons for praise is not as weighty as the reasons for grief. Then you will say, “She is gone—here is a tear for her. She is in Heaven—here is a smile for her. Her body is with the worms. Weep, eyes. Her soul is with Jesus! Shout, lips! Yes, shout for joy! The cold sod has covered her, she is gone from my sight, she sleeps in the sad, sad grave—bring me the clothes of mourning. No, she is before the Throne of God and the Lamb— blessed forever! Lend me a harp and let me thank my God! She has joined the white-robed host on yonder blessed plains! O hearse and funeral, O shroud and garments of woe, you are most fitting for her! I have lost her and she, herself, with many a pang and struggle, has passed through the Valley of the Shadow of Death, but O joyous face! O songs of gladness! O shouts of rapture! You are equally becoming!—for when she passed through the Valley of the Shadow of Death, she feared no evil, for Your rod and Your staff did comfort her. Now, beyond the reach of death’s alarms, she does bathe her soul in seas of bliss—she is with her Lord.”  
It is well to have a little singing as well as weeping at a funeral. It well becomes the burial of the saints. Angels never weep when saints die— they sing. You never heard a saint say, when he was dying, “There are angels in the room. Listen! You can hear them sobbing because I am dying.” No, but we have often heard a saint say, “There are angels in the room and I can hear them singing.” That is because angels are wiser than we are. We judge by the sight of our eyes and the hearing of our ears—but angels judge after another fashion. They “see and hear and know” the joys of the blessed and therefore they have no tears—but they have songs for them, and they sing loudly when the Christian is carried Home, like a shock of corn fully ripe.  
And now, beloved, we shall soon all of us die. In a few more years, I shall have a gravestone above my grave. Some of you, hope, will say, “There lies our minister, who once gathered us together in the house of God and led us to the mercy-seat, and joined in our song. There lies one who was often despised and rejected of men, but whom God did nevertheless bless to the salvation of our souls, and sealed his testimony in our hearts and consciences by the operation of the Holy Ghost.” Perhaps some of you will visit my tomb, and will bring a few flowers to scatter on it, in glad and grateful remembrance of the happy hours we spent together. It is quite as probable that your tombs will be built as soon as mine. Ah, dear friends! should we have to write on your tombstones, “She sleeps in Jesus,” “He rests in the bosom of his Master,” or should we have to speak the honest truth, “He has gone to his own place”? Which shall it be? Ask yourselves, each one of you, where will your soul be? Shall it mount up there, —

***“Where our best friends, our kindred, dwell,  
Where God our Savior reigns;” —***or, —  
***“Shall devils plunge you down to hell,  
In infinite despair?”***

You can ascertain which it will be; you can tell it by this: Do you believe on the Lord Jesus Christ? Do you love the Lord Jesus? Do you stand on Christ, the solid rock? Have you built your hope of heaven alone on him? Have you, as a guilty sinner, cast yourself at his mercy-seat, looking to his blood and righteousness, to be saved by them, and by them alone? If so, fear not to die; ye shall be safe, whene’er the summons comes to you. But if not, tremble, tremble! ye may die to-morrow,-ye must die one day; it will be a sad thing so to die as to be lost beyond recovery. May God Almighty grant that we may be all saved at last, for Jesus’ sake! Amen.

**÷1Th 4.17**

“FOREVER WITH THE LORD”  
NO. 1374

**DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, SEPTEMBER 16, 1877, *BY C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“So shall we be forever with the Lord.”***1Th 4:17***.***

WE know that these words are full of consolation, for the Apostle says in the next verse, “Therefore comfort one another with these words.” The very words, it appears, were dictated by the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, to be repeated by the saints to each other with the view of removing sorrow from the minds of the distressed. The comfort is intended to give us hope in reference to those who have fallen asleep. Look over the list of those beloved in the Lord who have departed from you, to your utmost grief, and let the words of our text be a handkerchief for your tears.

Sorrow not as those that are without hope, for they are with the Lord though they are not with you and, by-and-by, you shall surely meet them where your Lord is the center of fellowship forever and ever. The separation will be very transient—the reunion will be everlasting! These words are, also, intended to comfort the saints with regard to themselves. And I pray that they may be a cordial to any who are sick with fear—a matchless medicine to charm away the heartache from all Believers. The fact that you bear about a dying body is very evident to some of you by your frequent and increasing infirmities and pains and this, it may be, is a source of depression of spirits.

You know that when a few years are gone you must go the way from where you shall not return, but be not dismayed, for you shall not go into a strange country alone and unattended. There is a Friend that sticks closer than a brother who will not fail you nor forsake you! And, moreover, you are going Home—your Lord will be with you while you are departing— and then you will be with Him forever. Therefore, though sickness warns you of the near approach of death, be not in the least dismayed! Though pain and weariness should make your heart and flesh fail, yet doubt not of your triumph through the Redeemer’s blood!

Though it should sometimes make your flesh tremble when you remember your many sins and the weakness of your faith, yet be of good cheer, for your sins and weakness of faith will soon be removed far from you—and you shall be in His Presence where there is fullness of joy—and at His right hand where there are pleasures forevermore! Comfort yourselves, then, both with regard to those who have gone before and in reference to the thought of your own departure.

Observe that the comfort which the Apostle here presents to us may be partly derived from the fact of the Resurrection, but not chiefly, for he does not so much refer to the words, “The dead in Christ shall rise,” as to

these last—“so shall we be forever with the Lord.” It is a great Truth of God that you will rise again. It is a sweeter Truth that you will be “forever with the Lord”! There is some consolation, also, in the fact that we shall meet our departed Brothers and Sisters when we shall all be caught up together in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. Blissful will be the general assembling of the redeemed, never again to be broken up—the joy of meeting, never to part, is a sweet remedy for the bitterness of separation.

There is great comfort in it, but the main stress of consolation does not lie even there. It is pleasant to think of the eternal fellowship of the godly above, but the best of all is the promised fellowship with our Lord— “So shall we be forever with the Lord.” Whatever else you draw comfort from, neglect not this deep, clear and overflowing well of delight! There are other sources of good cheer in connection with the Glory to be revealed, for Heaven is a many-sided joy. But still, none can excel the glory of communion with Jesus Christ! We comfort one another, in the first place and most constantly with these words, “So shall we be forever with the Lord.”

I shall view our text, in order to our comfort at this time, in three lights. I look upon it, first, as a continuance—we are with the Lord even now and we always shall be. Secondly, as an advancement—we shall, before long, be more fully with the Lord than we are now. And thirdly, as a coherence—for we both are and shall be with Him in a close and remarkable manner.

**I.**I regard the text as A CONTINUANCE of our present spiritual state— “So shall we be forever with the Lord.” To my mind, and I think I am not incorrect in so expounding, the Apostle means that nothing shall prevent our continuing to be forever with the Lord. Death shall not separate us, nor the terrors of that tremendous day when the voice of the archangel and the trumpet of God shall be heard. By Divine plan and arrangement, all shall be so ordained that, “So shall we be forever with the Lord.” By being caught up into the clouds, or in one way or another, our abiding in Christ shall remain unbroken. As we have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so shall we walk in Him, whether in life or in death.

I understand the Apostle to mean that we are with the Lord now and that nothing shall separate us from Him. Even now, like Enoch, we walk with God and we shall not be deprived of Divine communion. Our fear might be that in the future state something might happen which would become a dividing gulf between us and Christ, but the Apostle assures us that it will not be so—there shall be such plans and methods used that, “so shall we be forever with the Lord.” At any rate, I know that if this is not the Truth of God, here intended, it is a Truth worthy to be expounded and, therefore, I do not hesitate to enlarge upon it.

We are with the Lord in this life in a high spiritual sense. Read you not, in the Epistle to the Colossians, “for you are dead and your life is hid with Christ in God”? Were you not “buried with Him in Baptism wherein, also, you are risen with Him through the faith of the operation of God, who has raised Him from the dead”? Do you not know what it is to be dead to the world in Him and to be living a secret life with Him? Are you not risen with Christ? Yes, and do you not understand, in some measure, what it is to be raised up together and made to sit together in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus? If you are not with Him, Brothers and Sisters, you are not Christians at all, for this is the mark of the Christian—that he follows *with* Christ.

It is essential to salvation to be a sheep of Christ’s fold—no, more—a partaker of Christ’s *life*, a member of His mystical body, a branch of the spiritual vine! Separated from Him we are spiritually dead. He Himself has said, “If a man abides not in Me, he is cast forth as a branch and is withered. And men gather them and cast them into the fire and they are burned.” Jesus is not far from any of His people—no, it is our *privilege* to follow Him wherever He goes—and His loving words to us are, “Abide in Me, and I in you.” May He enable us sweetly to realize this! We are, dear Brothers and Sisters, constantly with Christ in the sense of abiding union with Him, for we are joined unto the Lord and are one spirit.

Sometimes this union is very sweetly apparent to ourselves.” We know that we are in Him that is true,” and in consequence we feel an intense joy, even Christ’s own joy fulfilled in us! For the same reason we are at times bowed down with intense sorrow, for being in and with Christ, we have fellowship with Him in His *sufferings*, being made conformable with His death. This is such sweet sorrow that the more we experience it, the better—

***“Live or die, or work or suffer,  
Let my weary soul abide,  
In all changes whatever,  
Sure and steadfast by Your side.  
Nothing can delay my progress,  
Nothing can disturb my rest,  
If I shall, wherever I wander,  
Lean my spirit on Your breast.”***

This companionship is, we trust, made manifest to others by its fruits. It ought always to be so —the life of the Christian should be manifestly a life with Christ. Men should take knowledge of us, that we have been with Jesus and have learned of Him.

They should see that there is something in us which could not have been there if it were not for the Son of God—a temper, a spirit, a course of life which could not have come by Nature—but must have been worked in us through Grace which has been received from Him in whom dwells a fullness of Grace, even our Lord Jesus Christ. Brothers and Sisters, if we are what we ought to be, our life is spent in conscious communion growing out of continued union with the Lord Jesus Christ! And if it is so, we have that rich assurance which is written by the Beloved John, “If that which you have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, you, also, shall continue in the Son and in the Father.”

We are with Him, dear Friends, in this sense, too, that His unchanging love is always set upon us, and our love, feeble though it sometimes may be, never quite dies out. In both senses that challenge of the Apostle is true, “Who shall separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord?” We can say, “I am my Beloved’s and His desire is towards me.” And, on the other hand, we, also testify, “My Beloved is mine, and I am His.” He claims us and we claim Him! He loves us and we love Him! There is a union of *heart* between us. We are with Him, not against Him! We are in league with Him, enlisted beneath His banner, obedient to His Spirit. For us to live is Christ—we have no other aim!

He is with us by the continued indwelling of the Holy Spirit who is with us and shall be in us forever. His anointing abides on us and because of it we abide in Christ Jesus! He has sent us the Comforter to represent Himself and through that Divine Paraclete He continues to be with us—and so, even now we are forever with the Lord. Our Lord has, also, promised to be with us whenever we are engaged in His work. That is a grand word of encouragement, “Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.” Think not, therefore, that it will be the first time of our being with Christ when we shall see Him in Glory, for even now He manifests Himself unto us as He does not unto the world.

Has He not often fulfilled His promise, “Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them”? We have heard the sound of our Master’s feet behind us when we have been going on His errands. We have felt the touch of His hands when we have come to the forefront of the battle for His sake. And we have known that He dwells in us by His Spirit and is with us by the power with which He has attended our work, and the deeds which He has worked by the Gospel which we have proclaimed. The Lord Jesus is with His Church in her tribulation for His name’s sake and He will forever be so, for He forsakes not His saints. “Fear not, I am with you,” is as much a word of the Lord under the Gospel as in Old Testament times. By the power of His blessed Spirit Jesus abides with us and through this present dispensation He enables us to be “forever with the Lord.”

But, my Brethren, the time is coming when we shall die unless the Lord shall descend from Heaven with a shout in the meanwhile. Assuredly in the article of death we shall still be with the Lord—

***“Death may my soul divide  
From this abode of clay  
But love shall keep me near Your side  
Through all the gloomy way.”***

“Yes, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff they comfort me.” This makes dying such wonderful work to the people of God, for then, especially, is Jesus seen to be near! By death they escape from death—and from now on it is no more death for them to die! When Jesus meets His saints, there seems no iron gate to pass through, but in a moment they close their eyes on earth and open them in Glory!

Beloved, there should be no more bondage through fear of death since Christ attends His people even in their descent into the tomb and strengthens them upon the bed of languishing. This has been a great joy to many departing saints. A dying Believer who was attended by an apothecary who was, also, a child of God, was observed to be whispering to himself while dying. His good attendant, wishing to know what were his last words, placed his ear against the dying man’s lips and heard him repeating to himself, again and again, the words, “Forever with the Lord. Forever with the Lord.” When heart and flesh were failing, the departing one knew that God was the strength of his life and his portion forever— and so he chose for his soft, low-whispered, dying song, “Forever with the Lord.”

After death we shall abide, awhile, in the separate, disembodied state and we shall know as to our soul what it is to be still with the Lord, for what does the Apostle say? “Knowing that when we are absent from the body we are present with the Lord.” The dying thief was to be, *that day*, with Christ in Paradise, and such shall be our lot as soon as our souls shall have passed out of this tenement of clay into that wondrous state of which we know so little. Our pure spirits shall “come unto Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and Church of the first-born which are written in Heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the New Covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaks better things than that of Abel.”

Who is dismayed when such a prospect opens up before him? Yes, and this body which shall fall asleep, though apparently it shall be destroyed, yet shall not be so, but shall only slumber awhile and then awake again and say, “When I awake I am still with You.” Constantly death is described as sleeping in Jesus—that is the state of the saint’s mortal frame through the interval between death and resurrection. The angels shall guard our bodies—all that is essential to complete the identity of our body shall be securely preserved so that the very seed which was put into the earth shall rise, again, in the beauty of efflorescence which becomes it. All, I say, that is essential, shall be preserved intact, because it is still with Christ.

It is a glorious doctrine which is stated by the Apostle in the first Epistle to the Thessalonians, the 5th chapter, at the 9th and 10th verses, “For God has not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him.” In due time the last trumpet shall sound and Christ shall come and the saints shall be with Him. The infinite Providence has so arranged that Christ shall not come without His people, for, “Them, also, that sleep in Jesus shall God bring with Him.” The saints shall be with Him in the Advent as they are now. Our souls shall hear the shout of victory and join in it! The voice of the archangel shall be actually heard by all His redeemed and the trumpet of God shall be sounded in the hearing of every one of His beloved, for we shall be with Jesus all through that glorious transaction.

Whatever the glory and splendor of the Second Advent, we shall be with Jesus in it! I am not going to give you glimpses of the revealed future, or offer any suggestion as to the sublime history which is yet to be written, but most certainly there is to be a last general Judgment and then we shall be with Christ, assessors with Him at that day. Being ourselves, first acquitted, we shall take our seat upon the Judgment Bench with Him. What does the Holy Spirit say by the Apostle—“Do you not know that the saints shall judge the world? Know you not that we shall judge angels?” The fallen angels, to their shame, shall, in part, receive the verdict of their condemnation from the lips of *men*—and thus vengeance shall be taken upon them for all the mischief they have done to the sons of men.

Oh, think of it! Amidst the terror of the tremendous Day you shall be at ease, resting in the love of God and beholding the Glory of Christ and, “so shall you forever be with the Lord.” There is, moreover, to be a reign of Christ. I cannot read the Scriptures without perceiving that there is to be a millennial reign, as I believe, upon the earth and that there shall be new heavens and new earth wherein dwells righteousness. Well, whatever that reign is to be, we shall reign also! “And he that overcomes and keeps My words unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations. And He shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers; even as I received of My Father.” “And have made us unto our God kings and priests and we shall reign on the earth.”

He shall reign, but it will be “before His ancients gloriously.” We shall be partakers in the splendors of the latter days, whatever they may be, and, “So shall we be forever with the Lord.” The particular incident of the text does not exhaust the words, but you may apply them to the whole story of God’s own children. From the first day of the spiritual birth of the Lord’s immortals until they are received up into the seventh Heaven to dwell with God, their history may be summed up in these words, “So shall we be forever with the Lord.” Whether caught up into the clouds or here below on this poor afflicted earth—whether in Paradise or in the renovated earth, in the grave or in Glory—we shall always be with the Lord!

And when comes the end and God alone shall reign and the mediatorial kingdom shall cease, ages, ages and ages shall revolve, but “so shall we be forever with the Lord.” The saints immortal shall be with their Covenant Head, free from sorrow. All tendency to sin, all fear of change or death shall be gone! And their intimate communion will last on forever—

***“Blessed state! Beyond conception!  
Who its vast delights can tell?  
May it be my blissful portion,  
With my Savior there to dwell.”***

I think the text looks like a continuation of what is already begun, only rising to something higher and better. To be with Christ is life eternal— this we have already and shall continue to have and—“so shall we be forever with the Lord.”

**II.**Secondly, most assuredly, Brethren, the text is A GREAT ADVANCEMENT—“So shall we be forever with the Lord.” It is an advancement upon this present state, for however spiritual-minded we may be and however in consequence, thereof, we may be very near unto our Lord Jesus, yet still we know that while we are present in the body we are absent from the Lord. This life, at its very best, is still comparatively an absence from the Lord, but in the world to come we shall be more perfectly at home. *Now,* we cannot, in the highest sense, be with Christ, for we must, according to the Apostle’s phraseology, “depart, and be with Christ; which is far better.” But there we shall be forever beholding His face unveiled. Earth is not Heaven, though the Believer begins the heavenly life while he is upon it. We are not with Christ as to place, nor as to actual sight—but in Glory we shall be!

And it is an advancement, in the next place, upon the present state of the departed, for though their souls are with the Lord, yet their bodies are subject to corruption. Still does the sepulcher contain the blessed dust of the fathers of our Israel. Though scattered to the four winds of Heaven, the martyr’s ashes are still with us. The glorified saints are not as yet consciously “with the Lord” as to their complete manhood, but when the grand event shall occur of which Paul speaks, the body shall be reanimated. This is our glorious hope! We can say with the Patriarch Job—“For I know that my Redeemer lives, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth; and though after my skin, worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God; whom I shall see for myself and my eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me.”

Know you not, Brothers and Sisters, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God? That is, as they are. But this corruptible must put on incorruption and this mortal must put on immortality—and then shall the entire manhood, the perfected manhood, the fully developed manhood, of which this manhood is, as it were, but a shriveled seed—be in the fullest and most Divine sense, forever with the Lord! This is an advancement, even, upon the present state of departed saints in Paradise!

And now let us consider this glorious condition to which we shall be advanced. We shall be with the Lord in the strongest possible meaning of that language. So with Him that we shall never mind earthly things again, shall have no more to go into city business, or into the workshop, or into the field. We shall have nothing to do but to be engaged forever with Him in such occupations as shall have no tendency to take us off from communion with Him. We shall be so with Him as to have no sin to becloud our view of Him! Our understanding will be delivered from all the injury which sin has worked in it and we shall know Him even as we are known. We shall see Him as a familiar Friend and sit with Him at His marriage feast. We shall be with Him so as to have no fear of His ever being grieved and hiding His face from us again.

We shall never again be made to cry out in bitterness of spirit, “Oh, that I knew where I might find Him.” We shall always know His love, always return it and always swim in the full stream of it, enjoying it to the fullest! There will be no lukewarmness to mar our fellowship. He shall never have to say to us, “I would you were either cold or hot.” There shall be no weariness to suspend our ceaseless bliss—we shall never have to

cease from fellowship with Him because our physical frame is exhausted through the excessive joy of our heart—the vessel will be strengthened to hold the new wine. No doubts shall intrude into our rest, neither doctrinal doubts nor doubts about our interest in Him, for we shall be so consciously with Him as to have risen 10,000 leagues above that gloomy state.

We shall know that He is ours, for His left hand shall be under our head and His right hand shall embrace us and we shall be with Him beyond all hazard of ever losing Him. The chief blessedness seems, to me, to lie in this, that we will always are with Him and with Him always. Now we are with the Lord in conscious enjoyment, sometimes, but then we are away from Him. But there it will be constant, unwavering fellowship! No break shall ever occur in the intimate communion of the saints with Christ. Here we know that our high days and bright Sabbaths with their sweetest joys, must have their eventides and then come the work-days with the burden of the week upon them. But there the Sabbath is eternal, the worship endless, the praise unceasing, the bliss unbounded. “Forever with the Lord.”

Speak of a thousand years of reigning? What is that compared with, “forever with the Lord”? The millennium is little compared with “forever”— a millennium of millenniums would be nothing to it! There can come no end to us and no end to our bliss, since there can be no end to Him— “because I live, you shall live also.” “Forever with the Lord.” What will it mean? I remember a sermon upon this text by a notable preacher, of which the heads were as follows—“Forever life, forever light, forever love, forever peace, forever rest, forever joy.” What a chain of delights! What more can heart imagine or hope desire? Carry those things in your mind and you will get, if you can drink into them, some idea of the blessedness which is contained in being forever with the Lord!

But remember these are only the *fruits*—not the*root* of the joy. Jesus is better than all these! His company is more than the joy which comes out of it. I do not care so much for, “life forever,” nor for, “light forever,” as I do for, “forever with the Lord.” Oh, to be with Him! I ask no other bliss and cannot imagine anything more heavenly. Why, the touch of the hem of His *garment* healed the sick woman! The *sight* of Him was enough to give life to us when we were dead! What, then, must it be to be with Him *actually*, *consciously* and *always*? To be with Him no more by faith, but in very *deed* with Him forever? My soul is ready to swoon away with too much joy as she drinks in even her shallow measure into the meaning of this thought—and I dare not venture further.

I must leave you to muse your souls into it, for it needs quiet thought and room for free indulgence of holy imagination till you make your soul dream of this excess of joy. “Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for them that love Him. But God has revealed them unto us by His Spirit.”—

***“O glorious hour! O blessed abode!  
I shall be near and like my God.  
And flesh and sin no more control  
The sacred pleasures of my soul.”***

We love to think of being with Jesus under the aspect which the text specially suggests to us. We are to be forever with the Redeemer, not only as Jesus the Savior, but as the Lord. Here we have seen Him on the Cross and lived thereby. We are with Him now in His Cross-bearing and shame and it is well—but our eternal companionship with Him will enable us to rejoice in Him as the Lord. What did our Master say in His blessed prayer? “I will that they, also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am; that they may behold My Glory.”

It will be Heaven for us to be forever with Him as the Lord! Oh, how we shall delight to obey Him as our Lord! How we shall triumph as we see what a Lord He is over all the universe! And what a conqueror He is over all His enemies! He will be more and more the Lord to us as we see all things put under Him. We shall forever hail Him as King of kings and Lord of lords. How we will adore Him, there, when we see Him in His Glory! We worship Him, now, and are not ashamed to believe that the Man of Nazareth is, “very God of very God.” But oh, how His Deity will shine upon us with infinite brightness when we come to be near Him! Thanks be to His name, we shall be strengthened to endure the sight and we shall rejoice to see ourselves in the full blaze of His glory!

Then shall we see what our poet endeavored to describe when he said ***— “Adoring saints around Him stand,  
And thrones and powers before Him fall!  
The God shines gracious through the Man, And sheds sweet glories on them all.”***

We shall be forever with the Lord and His Lordship shall be most upon our minds! He has been raised into Glory and honor and is no more able to suffer shame!—

***“No more the bloody spear,  
The Cross and nails no more!  
For Hell itself shakes at His word,  
And all the heavens adore.”***

**III.**Now we come to our third point and shall consider what, for lack of a better word, I entitle A COHERENCE. Those who are acquainted with the Greek language know that the, “with,” here, is not *meta*, which signifies being in the same place with a person, but one which goes much further and implies a coherence—the two who are with each other are intimately connected. Let me show you what I mean.

We are to be forever with the Lord. Now, the Christian’s life is like the life of His Lord and so it is a life with Christ. He was in all things with His Brethren and Grace makes us to be with Him. Just hurriedly look at your spiritual experience and your Lord’s life and see the parallel. When you were newly born as a Christian, you were born as Jesus Christ was, for you were born of the Holy Spirit. What happened after that? The devil tried to destroy the new life in you, just as Herod tried to kill your Lord— you were with Christ in danger, early and imminent. You grew in stature and in Grace and, while Grace was yet young, you staggered those who

were about you with the things you said, did and felt, for they could not understand you! Even thus, when He went up to the Temple, our Lord amazed the doctors who gathered around Him.

The Spirit of God rested upon you, not in the same measure, but still, as a matter of fact, He did descend upon you as He did upon your Lord. You have been with Him in Jordan’s stream and have received the Divine acknowledgment that you are, indeed, the child of God. Your Lord was led into the wilderness to be tempted—and you, too, have been tempted by the devil. You have been with the Lord all along, from the first day until now. If you have been, by Grace, enabled to live as you should, you have trod the separated path with Jesus! You have been in the world, but not of it, holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners. Therefore you have been despised—you have had to take your share of being unknown and misrepresented because you are even as He was in the world. “Therefore the world knows us not, because it knew Him not.”

As He was here to serve, you have been with Him as a servant. You have carried His yoke and counted it an easy load. You have been crucified to the world with Him. You know the meaning of His Cross and delight to bear it after Him. You are dead to the world with Him and wish to be as one buried to it. You have already, in your measure, partaken of His Resurrection and are living in newness of life. Your life story is still to be like the life story of your Lord, only painted in miniature. The more you watch the life of Christ the more clearly you will see the life of a spiritual man depicted in it—and the more clearly will you see what the saints’ future will be.

You have been with Christ in life and you will be with Him when you come to die. You will not die the expiatory death which fell to His lot, but you will die feeling that “it is finished” and you will breathe out your soul, saying, “Father, into Your hands I commend my spirit.” Then our Lord went to Paradise and you will go there, too. You shall enjoy a sojourn where He spent His interval in the disembodied state. You shall be with Him and like He is and then like He, you shall rise when your third morning comes. “After two days will He revive us. On the third day He will raise us up, and we shall live in His sight.” “Your dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise.”

You shall also ascend as Christ did. Do you catch the thought? How did He ascend? In clouds. “A cloud received Him out of their sight” and a cloud shall receive *you*. You shall be caught up into the clouds to meet the Lord in the air and so shall you be always with the Lord, in the sense of being like He, walking with Him in experience and passing through the same events. That likeness shall continue forever and forever. Our lives shall run parallel with that of our Lord! Think, then, Beloved—we are to be like Christ as to our character! We are to be with the Lord by sharing His moral and spiritual likeness! Conformed to His image, we shall be adorned with His beauty!

When the mother of Darius saw two persons entering her pavilion, she, being a prisoner, bowed to the one whom she supposed to be Alexander. It turned out to be Hyphestion, the King’s favorite. Upon discovering that it was Hyphestion the lady humbly begged Alexander’s pardon for paying obeisance to the wrong person, but Alexander answered, “You have not mistaken, Madam, for he, also, is Alexander,” meaning that he loved him so much that he regarded him as his other self. Our Lord looks on His Beloved as one with Himself and makes them like Himself. You remember, Brothers and Sisters, how John bowed down before one of his fellow servants, the prophets in Heaven? It was a great blunder to make, but I dare say you and I will be likely to make the same, for the saints are so like their Lord!

Don’t you know that “we shall be like He when we shall see Him as He is”? Christ will rejoice to see them all covered with the Glory which His Father has given Him! He will not be ashamed to call them Brethren. Those poor people of His who were so full of infirmity and mourned over it so much—they shall be so like He that they shall be at once seen to be His Brothers and Sisters! Where shall such favored ones be found? We shall be with Him in the sense that we shall be partakers of all the blessedness and Glory which our adorable Lord now enjoys. We shall be accepted together with Him. Is He the Beloved of the Lord? Does His Father’s heart delight in Him, as well it may?

Behold you, also, shall be called Hephzibah, for His delight shall be in you! You shall be beloved of the Father’s soul. Is He enriched with all manner of blessings beyond conception? So shall you be, for He has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus, according as He has chosen us in Him! Is Christ exalted? Oh, how loftily is He lifted up to sit upon a glorious high Throne forever! But *you* shall sit upon His Throne *with* Him and *share* His exaltation as you have shared His humiliation! Oh, the delight of thus being joint-heirs with Christ and with Him in the possession of all that He possesses!

What is Heaven? It is the place which His love suggested, which His genius invented, which His bounty provided, which His royalty has adorned, which His wisdom has prepared, which He, Himself, glorifies! In that Heaven you are to be with Him forever! You shall dwell in the King’s own palace! Its gates of pearl and streets of gold shall not be too good for you. You who love Him are to abide with Him forever—not near Him in a secondary place, as a servant lives at the lodge gate of His master’s mansion—but with Him in the same palace in the metropolis of the universe! In a word, Believers are to be identified with Christ forever!

That seems, to me, to be the very life and essence of the text—with Him forever—that is, identified with Him forever. Do they ask for the Shepherd? They cannot behold Him to perfection except as surrounded by His sheep! Will the King be illustrious? How can that be if His subjects are lost? Do they ask for the Bridegroom? They cannot imagine Him in the fullness of joy without His bride! Will the Head be blessed? It could not be if it were separated from the members. Will Christ be forever glorified?

How can He be if He shall lose His jewels? He is *the* Foundation and what would He be if all His people were not built upon Him into the similitude of a palace?

O Brothers and Sisters, there shall be no Christ without Christians! There shall be no Savior without the saved ones! There shall be no Elder Brother without the younger brethren! There shall be no Redeemer without His redeemed! We are His fullness and He *must* have us with Him. We are identified with Him forever! Nothing can ever divide us from Him. Oh, joy, joy forever! Hallelujah!—

***“Since Christ and we are one,  
Why should we doubt or fear?  
If He in Heaven has fixed His Throne,  
He’ll fix His members there.”***

Two or three practical sentences. One word is this—this, “with the Lord” must begin *now*. Do you wish to be forever with the Lord? You must be with Him by becoming His disciple in*this* life. None come to be with the Lord hereafter who are not with the Lord here in time. See to it, dear Hearers, see to it, lest this unspeakable privilege should never be yours. Next, every Christian should seek to be more and more with Christ, for the growth and glory of your life lies there. Do you want to have Heaven below? Be with Christ below! Do you want to know, at once, what eternal bliss is? Know it by living with the Lord *now*.

The next word is, how plainly, then, the way of life is to be with the Lord. If you want to be saved, Sinner, you must be “with the Lord.” There is no other way! Come near to Him and lay hold upon Him by faith. Life lies there. Come to Him by a humble, tearful faith. Come at once! And, lastly, what must it be to be without the Lord? What must it be to be against the Lord? For it comes to that, “He that is not with Me,” He says, “is against Me”—to be forever *without* the Lord, banished from His love, light, life, peace, rest and joy! What a loss this will be!

What must it be to be forever against the Lord! Think of it—forever hating Jesus, forever plotting against Him, forever gnashing your teeth against Him—this is Hell, this is time infinite of misery, to be against the Lord of Love and Life and Light. Turn from this fatal course! Believe on Him—“Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and you perish from the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him.” Amen.

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**÷1Th 5.6**

SLEEP NOT  
NO. 1022

**A SERMON  
*DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“Let us not sleep, as do others.”*** 1Th 5:6***.***

WE do not usually sleep towards the things of this world. We rise up early, and sit up late, and eat the bread of carefulness for Mammon’s sake. In this age of competition, most men are wide enough awake for their temporal interests. But so is it, partly through our being in this body, and partly through our dwelling in a sinful world, that we are all of us very apt to sleep concerning the interests of our *souls*. We drive like Jehu for this present world, but loiter for the world to come. Nothing so much concerns us as eternity, and yet nothing so little affects us. We work for the present world, and we play with the world to come.

Quaint old Quarles long ago likened us to roebucks as to the earth, and snails as to the heart. And then he oddly enough rebuked this fault in rugged verse—

***“Lord, when we leave the world and come to You, How dull, how slur, are we!  
How backward! How preposterous is the motion Of our ungainly devotion!  
Our thoughts are millstones, and our souls are lead, And our desires are dead.  
Our vows are fairly promised, faintly paid, Or broken, or not made.  
Is the road fair, we loiter. Clogged with mire, We stick or else retire.  
A lamb appeals a lion, and we fear  
Each bush we see a bear.  
When our dull souls direct our thoughts to You, As slow as snails are we.  
But at the earth we dart our winged desire, We burn—we burn like fire!”***

A piece of news about a fire in another continent makes a sensation in all our homes, but the fire that never shall be quenched is heard of almost without emotion. The discovery of a gold-field will affect half the markets in the world, and send a thrill through the public pulse. But when we speak of that blessed City where the streets are of gold, how coolly men take it all, regarding it as though it were a pretty fiction, and as if only the things which are seen were worthy of their notice. We sleep when heavenly things and eternal things are before us. Alas, that it should be so.

Even those choice spirits which have been awakened by the Holy Spirit, and not only awakened into life, but aroused into ardor, have to complain that their fervor very frequently is chilled. I was recommended to try a pillow of hops to obtain sleep during my late illness, but I find now that I want a waking pillow rather than a sleeping pillow. And I am of the same mired as that ancient saint who preferred a roaring devil to a sleepy devil.

How earnest, how diligent, how watchful, how heavenly ought we to be, but how much are we the reverse of all this.

When in this respect we would do good, evil is present with us. We would have our hearts like a furnace for Christ, and, behold, the coals refuse to burn. We would be living pillars of light and fire, but we rather resemble smoke and mist. Alas, alas, alas that when we would mount highest, our wings are clipped, and when we would serve God best, the evil heart of unbelief mars the labor. I knew it would be seasonable—I hoped it might be profitable if I spoke a little to you tonight, and to myself in so doing, concerning the need that there is that we shake ourselves from slumber, and leave the sluggard’s couch.

I intend to take the text in reference, first, *to those who are born again from the dead*, and secondly, in reference to *those who are still in the terrors slumber of their sin*. And I shall gather my illustrations tonight from no remote region, but from the same Word of God, from which I take the text. The text says, “Let Us not sleep, as do others.” We will mention some “others,” whose histories are recorded in Scripture, who have slept to their own injury, and I pray you let them be warnings to you.

**I.**First, to those of you who are THE PEOPLE OF GOD, let me say, “Let us not sleep, as do others.”  
**1.**First, let us not sleep as *those disciples did who went with their Lord to the garden* and fell a slumbering while He was agonizing. Let us not be as the eight who slept at a distance, nor as the highly-favored three who were admitted into the more secret chamber of our Lord’s woes, and were allowed to tread the precincts of the most holy place where He poured out His soul, and sweat, as it were, great drops of blood. He found them sleeping, and though He awakened them, they slept again and again. “What, could you not watch with Me one hour?” was His gentle expostulation.  
They were slumbering for sorrow. Though our Lord might in our case make an excuse for us as He did for them—“The spirit truly is willing, but the flesh is weak”—let us endeavor, by His Grace, not to need such an apology by avoiding their fault. “Let us not sleep, as do others.”  
But, beloved fellow Christians, are not the most of us sleeping as the Apostles did? Behold our Master’s zeal for the salvation of the sons of men! Throughout all His life, He seemed to have no rest. From the moment when His ministry began He was ever toiling, laboring, denying Himself. It was His meat and His drink to do the will of Him that sent Him. Truly He might have taken for His life’s motto—“Know you not that I *must* be about My Father’s business?” So intent was He on saving souls that He counted not His life dear unto Him. He would lay it down, and that amidst circumstances of the greatest pain and ignominy—anything and everything would He do to seek and to save that which was lost.  
Zeal for His chosen Church, which was God’s House, had eaten Him up—for His people’s sakes He could bear all the reproaches of them that reproached God, and though that reproach broke His heart, He still persevered and ceased not till salvation’s work was done. He was incessant in toil and suffering, but what are we? There is our Lord, our great Exemplar, before us now. Behold Him in Gethsemane! Imagination readily sees Him amid the olives. I might say that His whole life was pictured in that agony in the garden, for in a certain sense it was *all* an agony. It was all a sweating, not such as distils from those who purchase the staff of life by the sweat of their face, but such as He must feel who purchased life itself with the agony of His heart.  
The Savior, as I see him throughout the whole of His ministry, appears to me on His knees pleading, and before His God agonizing—laying out His life for the sons of men. But, Brethren, do I speak harshly when I say that the disciples asleep are a fit emblem of our usual life? As compared, or rather, contrasted with our Master, I fear it is so. Where is our zeal for God? Where is our compassion for men? Do we ever feel the weight of souls as we ought to feel it? Do we ever melt in the presence of the terrors of God which we know to be coming upon others? Have we realized the passing away of an immortal spirit to the judgment bar of God? Have we felt pangs and throes of sympathy when we have remembered that multitudes of our fellow creatures have received, as their eternal sentence, the words—“Depart you cursed into the everlasting fire in Hell, prepared for the devil and his angels”?  
Why, if these thoughts really possessed us, we should scarcely sleep! If they became as real to us as they were to Him, we should wrestle with God for souls as He did and become willing to lay down our lives, if by any means we might save some. I see by the eye of faith, at this moment, Jesus pleading at the Mercy Seat. “For Zion’s sake,” He says, “I will not hold My peace, and for Jerusalem’s sake I will not rest.” And yet, we around Him lie asleep, without self-denying activity, and almost without prayer— missing opportunities—or when opportunities for doing good have been seized, using them with but a slothful hand, and doing the work of the Lord, if not deceitfully, yet most sluggishly.  
Brethren, “let us not sleep, as do others.” If it is true that the Christian Church is to a great extent asleep, the more reason why *we* should be awake. And if it is true, as I fear it is, that we have, ourselves, slumbered and slept, the more reason now that we should arise and trim our lamps and go forth to meet the Bridegroom! Let us, from this moment, begin to serve our Master and His Church more nearly after the example which He Himself has set us in His consecrated life and blessed death. Let us not sleep then, as did the disciples at Gethsemane—  
***“O You, who in the garden’s shade,  
Did wake Your weary ones again,  
Who slumbered at that fearful hour,  
Forgetful of Your pain!  
Bend over us now, as over them  
And set our sleep-bound spirits free.  
Nor leave us slumbering in the watch  
Our souls should keep with you!”*  
2.**A second picture we select from that portion of the Inspired Pages which tell us of *Samson*. Let us not sleep as that ancient Hebrew hero did, who, while he slept, lost his locks, lost his strength and by-and-by lost his liberty, lost his eyes, and ultimately lost his life. I have spoken under the first head of our slumbering in respect to *others*, but here I come to *ourselves*. In our slumbering with respect to ourselves, Samson is the sad picture of many professors. We are about to sketch a portrait of one whom we knew in years gone by. He was “strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might.”  
Years ago, the man we picture—and it is no fancy portrait for we have seen many such—when the Spirit of the Lord came upon him, did mighty things. And we looked on and wondered, yes, we *envied* him, and we said, “Would God we had an hour of such strength as has fallen upon him.” He was the leader among the weak, and often infused courage into faint hearts. But where is he now? All our Israel knew him, for his name was a tower of strength. And our enemies knew him, too, for he was a valiant man in battle.  
Where is this hero now? We hear little of him now in the fields of service where once he glorified his God and smote the enemies of Israel. We do not meet him now at the Prayer Meeting, or in the Sunday school, or at the Evangelist station. We hear nothing of his seeking for souls. Surely he has gone to sleep! He thinks that he has much spiritual goods laid up for many years, and he is now taking his rest. He has had his share, he says, of labor, and the time has come now for him to take a little ease.  
It is our loss and his peril that he has allowed himself to fall into such a drowsy condition. O that we could bestir him!—

“ ***Break his bonds of sleep asunder—  
Rouse him with a peal of thunder.”***  
Alas, carnal security is always a Delilah. It gives us many a dainty kiss,

and lulls us into tranquil slumbers which we imagine to be God’s own peace, whereas the peace of fascination and of satanic enchantment is upon us. Yes, we have seen the good man—we could not doubt that he had been both good and great—yet we have seen him lying asleep. And, perhaps, some of us who have never been so distinguished or done so much, though, nevertheless, in our own small way we have done something for God, and yet we, too, lie in Delilah’s lap.

Blessed be His name who has not suffered us to lead quite a useless life! But possibly we are degenerating and beginning, now, to take things more easily than we did. In our fancied wisdom we half rebuke what we call our “juvenile zeal.” We are prudent now and wise—would God we were not prudent and not wise—and were as foolish as we used to be when we loved our God with zeal so great that nothing was hard and nothing was difficult! If we were called upon to do it for His name’s sake, we gladly did it.

Now, what do I see in Samson while he lies asleep in Delilah’s lap? I see peril of the deadliest sort. The Philistines are not asleep. When the good man slumbers and ceases to watch, Satan does not slumber, and temptations do not cease to waylay him. There are the Philistines looking on while you see the razor softly stealing over the champion’s head. Those locks, bushy and black as a raven, fall thickly on the ground! One by one the razor shears them all away till the Nazarite has lost the hair of his consecration.

I am terribly fearful lest this should happen to ourselves. Our strength lies in our *faith*. That is our Samsonian lock. Take that away and we are as weak as other men, yes, and weaker still—for Samson was weaker than the weakest when his hair was gone—though before that stronger than the strongest. By degrees, it may be, Satan is stealing away all our spiritual strength. Oh, if it is my case, I shall come up into this pulpit and I shall preach to you, and shake myself, as I have done before, and perhaps expect to see sinners saved, but there will be none! And, possibly, some of you, also, when you awake a little, will go forth to preach in the streets or to seek after men’s souls as you have done before, but, alas, you will find the Philistines will bind you, and that your strength has passed away while you slept.

Your glory has gone—gone amidst the deluding dreams which lulled you—gone not to come back except with bitterest grief, with eyes, perhaps, put out forever. Many backsliders will die thanking God, if ever their strength returns to them, and perhaps it never may till their dying hour. Oh, Brethren, warned by what has happened, not to Samson only, but to many of the Lord’s greatest champions, “Let us not sleep, as do others.”

**3.**Now we change the picture again. It is the same subject under other forms. You remember our Savior’s parable concerning *the tares and the wheat*? There was an enclosure which was reserved for wheat only, but while men slept, the enemy came and sowed tares among the good corn. Now you who are members of the Church of Christ need not that I should enter into a full explanation of the parable. Neither is this the time, but it will suffice to say that when false doctrines and unholy practices have crept into a Church, the secret cause of the mischief has usually been that the Church, itself, was asleep.

Those who ought to have been watchmen, and to have guarded the field, slept—and so the enemy had ample time to enter and scatter tares among the wheat. Now my last illustration spoke to you of your own dangers, this ought to appeal to you with equal force because it concerns dangers incident to that which is dearest to you, I hope, of anything upon earth—namely, the Church of the living God. An unwatchful Church will soon become an unholy Church. A Church which does not carefully guard the Truth of God as it is in Jesus will become an unsound Church, and, consequently, a degenerate Church. It will grieve the Holy Spirit and cause Him to remove His power from the ministry and His Presence from the ordinances.

It will open the door for Satan, and he is quite sure to avail himself of every opportunity of doing mischief. I believe that the only way, after all, in any Church to purge out heresy in it is by having more of the inner life. By this fire in Zion shall the chaff be burned up. When the constitution of a man is thoroughly sound, it throws out many of those diseases which otherwise would have lingered in his system. And good physicians sometimes do not attempt to touch the local disease but they do their best to strengthen the general constitution—and when that is right, then the cure is worked.

So, here and there, there may be a defalcation in the one point—that of doctrine, or in the other—as to an affair of practice. And so it may be necessary to deal with the disordered limb of doctrine, or you may have to cut out the cancer of an evil custom. But as a rule, the main cure of a Church comes by strengthening its inner life. When we live near to Jesus, when we drink from the Fountain Head of eternal Truth and purity, when we become personally true and pure, then our watchfulness is, under God, our safeguard—and heresy, false doctrine, and unclean profession are

kept far away.

Sleeping guards invite the enemy. He who leaves his door unlocked asks the thief to enter. Watchfulness is always profitable and slothfulness is always dangerous. Members of this Church, I speak to you in particular, and forget for the moment that any others are present. We have enjoyed these many years the abiding dew of God’s Spirit, shall we lose it? God has been in our midst and thousands of souls—tens of thousands of souls have been brought to Jesus! God has never taken away His hand, but it has been stretched out still—shall we, by sinful slumber sin away this blessing? I am jealous over you with a holy jealousy. Trembling has taken hold on me lest you lose your first love. “Hold fast,” O Church, “that which you have received that no man take your crown.”

Our sins will grieve the Spirit! Our sleepiness will vex the Holy One of Israel. Unless we wake up to more earnest prayerfulness and to closer fellowship with Christ, it may be we shall hear the sound such as Josephus tells us was observed at the destruction of Jerusalem, when there was heard the rustling of wings and the voice that said “Let Us go from here.” O Lord, though our sins deserve that You should forsake us, yet turn not away from us, for Your mercy’s sake! Tarry, Jehovah, for the sake of the precious blood! Tarry with us still! Depart not from us. We deserve that You should withdraw, but, oh, forsake not the people whom You have chosen!

By all the love You have manifested towards us, continue Your loving kindness to Your unworthy servants. Is not that your prayer, you that love the Church of God? I know it is, not for this Church only, but for all others where the power and Presence of God have been felt. Pray continually for the Church, but remember this is the practical exhortation arising out of it all—“Let us not sleep, as do others,” lest in our case, too, the enemy come and mar the harvest of our Master by sowing tares among the wheat.

**4.**Only one other picture, and a very solemn one, still addressing myself to God’s people. We are told that while the bridegroom tarried, *the virgins* who had gone out to meet Him slumbered and slept. O virgin Hearts! “Let us not sleep, as do others.” When the cry was heard—“Behold, the Bridegroom comes,” they were all slumbering, wise and foolish alike. O you wise virgins who have oil in your vessels and lamps, “sleep not, as do others,” lest the midnight cry come upon you unaware. The Lord Jesus may come in the night. He may come in the heavens with exceeding great power and glory before the rising of another sun.

Or He may tarry awhile, and yet though it should seem to us to be long, He will come quickly, for one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. Suppose, however, He were to come tonight? If now, instead of going along to your homes and seeing once more the streets busy with traffic, the sign of the Son of Man should be revealed in the air because the King had come in His Glory, and His holy angels with Him, would you be ready? I press home the question. The Lord may suddenly come—are you ready? Are you ready? You who profess to be His saints—are your loins girt up, and your lamps trimmed?  
Could you go in with Him to the supper, as guests who have long expected Him, and say, “Welcome, Welcome Son of God”? Have you not much to set in order? Are there not still many things undone? Would you not be afraid to hear the midnight cry? Happy are those souls who live habitually with Jesus, who have given themselves up completely to the power of His indwelling Spirit—who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. “They shall walk with Him in white for they are worthy.” Wise are they who live habitually beneath the influence of the Second Advent, looking for and hastening unto the coming of the Son of God.

We would have our window opened towards Jerusalem. We would sit as upon our watchtower whole nights. We would be ready to go out of this Egypt at a moment’s warning. We would be of that host of God who shall go out harnessed, in the time appointed, when the signal is given. God grant us Grace to be found in that number in the day of His appearing, but, “Let us not sleep, as do others.” I might say, let us not sleep as we have done ourselves. God forgive us and arouse us from this good hour. I feel as if I do not want to go on to the second part of my subject at all, but would be quite content to stand here and speak to you who love the Lord.

Brothers and Sisters, we must have an awakening among us. I feel within my soul that I must be awakened myself, and my oven necessities are, I believe, a very accurate gauge of what is wanted by the most of you. Shall our season of triumph, our march of victory, come to an end? Will you turn back after all that God has done for you? Will you limit the Holy One of Israel? Will you cease from the importunities of prayer? Will you pause in the labors of zeal? Will you bring dishonor upon Christ and upon His Cross? By the living God who sleeps not, neither is weary in His deeds of love, I beseech you, slumber not, and be not weary nor faint in your mind. “Be you steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.”

**II.**But I must pass on to the second part of our subject. I have now to speak TO THOSE OF YOU WHO ARE NOT CONVERTED. And if I felt as I ought to feel, it would be sorrowful work even to remember that any of you are yet unsaved. I like to see these little children here. I pray God they may grow up to fear and love Him, and that their young hearts may be given to our dear Lord and Master while they are yet boys and girls. But I overlook them just now, and speak to some of you who have had many years of intelligent hearing of the Word of God, and are still unsaved. Pitiable objects!

You do not think so. But I repeat the word, Pitiable objects! The tears which flood my eyes almost prevent my seeing you. You fancy you are very merry and happy, but you are to be pitied, for “the wrath of God abides on you.” “He that believes not is condemned already, because he has not believed on the Son of God.” You will soon be where no pity can help you and where the Lord Himself will *not* help you. May God give you ears to hear the words of affectionate warning which I address to you now! “Let us not sleep, as do others.”

I beg you not to sleep, as did *Jonah*. He was in the vessel, you remember, when it was tossed with the tempest, and all the rest in the vessel were praying, but Jonah was asleep. Every man called upon his god except the man who had caused the storm. He was the most in danger, but

he was the most careless. The ship captain and mate, and crew all prayed, every man to his god, but Jonah carelessly slept on. Now, do not some of you here live in houses where they all pray but you? You have a godly mother, but are yourself godless.

John, you have a Christian father, and brothers and sisters, too, whom Christ has looked upon in love, and they pray for you continually. But the strange thing is that your soul is the only one in the house which remains unblest, and yet you are the only one who feels no anxiety or fear about the matter! There are many of us in this house who can honestly say that we would give anything we have if we could save your soul! We do not know what we would *not* do, but we know we would do all in our power if we could but reach your conscience and your heart.

I stand often in this pulpit almost wishing that I had never been born because of the burden and distress it brings upon my soul to think of some of you who will die and be lost forever! Lost, though you love to listen to the preacher! Lost, though you sometimes resolve to be saved! We are praying for you daily, but you—you are asleep! What do you do, while we are preaching, but criticize our words? You act as if we discoursed to you as a piece of display, and did not mean to plead as for life and death with you that you would escape from the wrath to come.

Observations will be made by the frivolous among you during the most solemn words, about someone’s dress or personal appearance. Vain minds will be gadding upon the mountains of folly, while those who are not, by far, so immediately concerned, are troubled and have deep searching of heart about those very souls. I believe God is going to send a revival into this place. I have that conviction growing upon me, but it may be that though the gracious wave may sweep over the congregation, it will miss *you*. It has missed you up to this hour.

Around you all the door is wet, but you, like Gideon’s fleece, are dry, and you sleep though the blessing comes not upon you—sleep though sleep involves a certain and approaching curse. O slumbering Jonah, in the name of the Host on High, I would say to you, “Awake you that sleep, and call upon your God. Perhaps He shall deliver you, and this great tempest shall yet be stayed.” Yes, I would put it above a *perhaps*, for they that seek the Lord shall find Him, if they seek Him with full purpose of heart.

Let us change the illustration now, and take another. You remember *Solomon’s sluggard*? What did he do? It was morning, and the sun was up—yes, the dawning of the day had passed some hours, and he had not yet gone forth to labor. There was a knock at his door and he opened his eyes a little. He listened and he said, “Leave me alone.” “But will you never get up?” “Yes, I will be up soon. But I want a little more sleep: only a little.” Then came another knock, for his master would have him in the field at work. But he turned over again, and he grumbled within himself, and said, “A little more slumber.”

He slept hour after hour. Yes, but he did not mean to sleep *hours*. All he intended was to sleep five minutes. But minutes fly rapidly to men who dream. If at the first onset he had known that if he fell asleep he would slumber till noon, he would have been shocked at such abominable laziness. But what harm could it be just to turn over once more? Who would deny him another wink or two? Surely there can be no fault found with one more delicious doze? Now, there are in this congregation persons who have said to themselves many times, “That appeal is right. My conscience gives assent to that Gospel demand. It shall be attended to very soon. I must, however, enjoy a little pleasure first—not much. I do not mean to risk my soul another twelve months, but we will stay till next Sunday. Then I shall have got over certain engagements which now stand in my way.”

Well, Sirs, you know, some of you, that it has been Sunday after Sunday, and then it has grown to be year after year! And still you are saying a little more sleep and a little more slumber. I met one the other day—I do not see him here tonight but I generally see him on the Sunday. I think he heard the first sermon I preached in London—that is many years ago now. And that man loves me—I know he does. And I can say I love him. But if he dies as he is, he is a lost man. He knows it. He has told me so, and he has said, “Pray for me.” But, oh, what is the benefit of my praying for him if he never prays for himself?

It is grievous to know that many of you are in the same dreadful way of procrastinating and putting off. You would do anything to help the Church, too. And if you knew that I needed anything you would be among the first to do it for me, such is your kindness. You are kind to your minister, but you are cruel to your souls. You have held your soul over Hell’s mouth for these twenty years by your continual delays and indecisions. Yet you never meant it. No, you thought long ago that you would have given your heart to Christ. One of these days I shall have to bury you, and it will be with no hope of your future happiness, for it has always been, “A little more sleep, and a little more slumber, and a little more folding of the hands,” till your “poverty shall come upon you as one that travels, and your want like an armed man.”

Alas, it shall be eternal poverty, and the armed man shall be the archdestroyer from whom none can escape! O young man and young woman, do not procrastinate! Delay is the devil’s great net, and it is filled wish exceeding great fishes. Yet does not the net break. Oh that you could break through it! May God help you to do it, for to you I would say, “Let us not,” in this respect, “sleep, as do others.”

Again, the picture changes. Do you remember the story in the Acts of the Apostles of the *young man*who sat in the third loft while Paul was preaching? It could not have been a dull sermon, I should think. But Paul preached till midnight. That was rather long. You do not allow me such liberal time. And when Paul preached on, Eutychus went to sleep until he fell from the third loft, and was taken up dead. It is true that Paul prayed, and he was restored to life by a miracle. But I have known many an Eutychus fall dead under the Word who were never known to live again. I do not mean that I have known many go to sleep in the House of God and fall from the third loft.

I mean this, that they have heard the Word, and heard the Word till they have been preached into sleep of the deepest kind, and at last preached into Hell. If we, by our preaching do not wake you, we rock your cradles, and make you more insensible every time we warn you. The

most startling preaching in a certain time ceases to arouse the hearers. You know the great boiler factories over here in Southwark. I am told that when a man goes inside the boiler to hold the hammer, when they are fixing rivets, the sound of the copper deafens him so that he cannot bear it, it is so horrible. But, after he has been a certain number of months in that employment, he hardly notices the hammering—he does not care about it.

It is just so under the Word. People go to sleep under that which once was like a thunderbolt to them. As the blacksmith’s dog will lie under the anvil where the sparks fly into his face, and yet go to sleep, so will many sinners sleep while the sparks of damnation fly into their faces. Horrible that it should be so! It would need an earthquake and a hurricane to move some of you! I wish they would come if they would stir you. But even such terrors would be of no avail—only the trumpet which will arouse the dead will ever awaken you.

Oh, dear Hearers, remember that to perish under the Gospel ministry is to perish with a vengeance. If I must be lost, let it be as a Zulu Kaffir, or as a Red Indian who has never listened to the Truth of God. But it is dreadful to go down to the pit with this as an aggravation—“You knew your duty, but you did it not. You heard the warning, but you would not receive it. The medicine was put to your lips, but you preferred to be diseased. The Bread was placed before you, and the Living Water, but you would not take them. Your blood is on your own heads.”

Oh, may this never be said of any of us! May we never sleep under the Word as do others, lest we die in our sins. And, as I told you the other Sunday night, I think that is one of the most dreadful words in the Bible where Christ said twice, one time after another—“If you believe not that I am He, *you shall die in your sins*.” To die on a dunghill, or in a ditch, or on the rack, or on the gallows is nothing compared with this—*to die in your sins*! To die in your sins! And yet this will be your lot if you continue much longer to sleep, as do others.

Another picture. Not to detain you too long. Do you remember in David’s life when he went with one of his mighty men at night into *Saul’s* camp and found the king and his guards all asleep? There were certain men of war who ought to have watched at Saul’s bed to take care of their master who lay in the trench, but no one was awake at all. And David and his friend went all among the sleepers, treading gently and softly lest they should wake one of them. By-and-by they came to the center of the circle where lay the king, with a cruse of water at his bolster, and his spear stuck in the ground.

Little did he know, as he slept so calmly there, that Abishai was saying to David—“Let me strike him. It shall be but this once.” How easily that strong hand with that sharp javelin would have pinned the king to the ground! Only one stroke, and it would be done—and David’s enemy would pursue him no more forever. I think I see you, O you sleeping Sinners, lying in the same imminent peril. At this moment the evil one is saying— “Let me smite him. I will smite him but this once. Let me prevent his hearing the Gospel this night. Let me thrust the javelin of unbelief into his soul but this once. And then the harvest will be past, the summer will be ended, and he will not be saved.”

Slumbering Sinner, I would gladly shout as the thunder of God if thereby I could arouse you. Man, the knife is at your throat, and can you sleep? The spear is ready to smite you, and will you still dream? I think I see the angel of justice who has long been pursuing the sinner who is rejecting Christ, and he cries—“Let me smite him! He has had time enough. Let me smite him!”

Or, as Christ puts it in the parable, there has come one into the vineyard who has looked at you, the barren tree, and seen no fruit. And he has come these three years, and now he is saying—“Cut it down! Why let it cumber the ground?” O Mercy, stay the axe! O God, bid the enemy put away the spear, and let the sleeper wake, not in Hell, but still on mercy’s plains, where there is a Christ to forgive him and a Spirit to sanctify him! Imploringly, I, your Brother, beseech you tonight to turn unto the living God! Even now in this your day, attend to the things which make for your peace—

***“Today, a pardoning God  
Will hear the suppliant pray.  
Today, a Savior’s cleansing blood  
Will wash your guilt away.  
But Grace so dearly bought  
If yet you will despise,  
Your fearful doom with vengeance fraught, Will fill you with surprise.”***

The last picture is this (may it never be seen in you)—there went once into a tent, which he thought to be friendly, a mighty man who had fought a battle and lost the day. Hot of foot and full of fear, Sisera came into the tent of Jael to ask for water, and she gave him milk. She brought forth butter in a lordly dish. He drank, and then, all weary, he threw himself along in the tent. He is a photograph of many ungodly men who have gone where they thought they had friends. For sinners think *sinners* their friends, and think *sin* their friend—and they have asked for pleasure, and they have had it.

And, now, after having had their fill, and eaten butter in a lordly dish, they are tonight in contentment, sleeping in supposed security. They have gone into the house of the Evil One to find pleasure, and they are going there again tonight, and they will continue there, and try to find rest in the house of their enemies. Sometimes it is the house of the strange woman. Often it is the settle of the drunkard, or the chair of the scorner, where men think to rest in peace. Oh, hark you, Man, and beware! Fly from the ways of the destroyer—fly from the haunt of the strange woman—as for your very life!

Fly from every den of sin, for lo, she comes stealthily, the tent pin is in her left hand, and in her right hand the workman’s hammer. Many mighty has she slain before you, for she hunts for the precious life, and her chambers lead down to death. If you sleep on but another night, or even another hour, the destroyer may have done the deed, and you may be fastened to the earth forever—the victim of your own delusions. I may be in error, but I think I speak to some man tonight who must now immediately change his ways, or else the jaws of Hell will close upon him. I do not desire to speak my own words, or my own thoughts, but to speak as the Divine wind blows through my soul.

And I think I am warning someone tonight of whom, if he turns not, it will soon be written, as of another in the Book of Proverbs, “He goes after her straightway, as an ox goes to the slaughter, or as a fool to the correction of the stocks, till a dart strike through his liver. As a bird hastens to the snare, and knows not that it is for his life.” In the name of the Ever Blessed and Most Merciful, “turn! Sinner, turn ! Why will you die?” Your course is destruction, and is near its end. Awake! Why do you sleep? Sleep to others is dangerous. To you it is *damnable*. Awake, arise, or be forever ruined. May God’s Grace bestir you!

Some of you tonight are like Lot and his daughters in the burning city. You must flee. You must flee at once out of Sodom or you will perish in it. Behold, we would put our hand upon you tonight, and press you to flee, the Lord being merciful unto you. His servants and His Spirit constrain you to make haste. Linger not! Look not back! Hesitate not! To your knees! To your knees! “Seek you the Lord while He may be found! Call upon him while He is near.” To the Cross! To the Cross! *There* is your shelter—the mountain where the only refuge can be found from the vengeance of God.

Behold the wounds of Jesus, God’s Beloved Son given for the guilty, slaughtered for the sinful— ***“Thereis life ina look at the crucified One!  
There is life at this moment for you!”***

***—*** and for all who look. But it may be that if this night you look not to Jesus, His Cross may never appear before your eyes again—for they will be sealed in death. Before long, Jael’s tent pin shall have passed through Sisera’s skull—the sin shall have destroyed the sinner—the sin that is unto death shall have shut up the spirit in despair. Oh, may God, who is mighty to save, turn you to Himself at this moment!

“Sound the trumpet in Zion: sound an alarm in My holy mountain,” seems to ring in my ears. And I would gladly sound that alarm to God’s saints, and to sinners, too. May He call many by His Grace, and awaken us all. And His shall be the glory forever and ever! Amen.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—[1 Thessalonians 5](tw://bible.*?id=52.5.0|_AUTODETECT_|).** Adapted from *The C.H. Spurgeon Collection*, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307

AWAKE! AWAKE!  
NO. 163

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, NOVEMBER 15, 1857, *BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT THE MUSIC HALL, ROYAL SURREY GARDENS.**

***“Therefore let us not sleep as do others, but let us watch and be sober.”*** 1Th 5:6***.***

WHAT sad things sin has done. This fair world of ours was once a glorious temple, every pillar of which reflected the goodness of God and every part of which was a symbol of good but sin has spoiled and marred all the metaphors and figures that might be drawn from earth. It has so deranged the Divine economy of nature that those things which were matchless pictures of virtue, goodness and Divine plenitude of blessing have now become the figures and representatives of sin.

‘Tis strange to say but it is strangely true, that the very best gifts of God have by the sin of men become the worst pictures of man’s guilt. Behold the flood, breaking forth from its fountains—it rushes across the fields, bearing plenty on its bosom. It covers them awhile and then it does subside and leaves upon the plain a fertile deposit into which the farmer shall cast his seed and reap an abundant harvest. One would have called the breaking forth of water a fine picture of the plenitude of Providence, the magnificence of God’s goodness to the human race. But we find that sin has appropriated that figure to itself. The beginning of sin is like the breaking forth of waters.

See the fire—how kindly God has bestowed upon us that element to cheer us in the midst of winter’s frosts. Fresh from the snow and from the cold we rush to our household fire and there by our hearth we warm our hands and glad we are. Fire is a rich picture of the Divine influences of the Spirit, a holy emblem of the zeal of the Christian. But alas, sin has touched this and the tongue is called “a fire,” “it is set on fire of Hell,” we are told and it is evidently so often when it utters blasphemy and slanders. Jude lifts up his hand and exclaims, when he looks upon the evils caused by sin, “Behold how great a matter a little fire kindles.”

And then there is sleep, one of the sweetest of God’s gifts, fair sleep— ***“Tired nature’s sweet restorer, balmy sleep.”***God has selected sleep as the very figure for the repose of the blessed. “They that sleep in Jesus,” says the Scripture. David puts it among the peculiar gifts of grace—“So He gives His Beloved sleep.” But alas, sin could not let even this alone. Sin did override even this celestial metaphor and though God Himself had employed sleep to express the excellence of the state of the Blessed, yet sin must have even this profaned, before itself can be expressed. Sleep is employed in our text as a picture of a sinful condition. “Therefore let us not sleep as do others but let us watch and

be sober.”

With that introduction I shall proceed at once to the text. The “sleep” of the text is *an evil to be avoided*. In the second place, the word “therefore” is employed to show us that there are *certain reasons for the avoiding of this sleep*. And since the Apostle speaks of this sleep with sorrow, it is to teach us that there are some, whom he calls “others,” *over whom it is our business to lament*, because they sleep and do not watch and are not sober.

**I.**We commence, then, in the first place, by endeavoring to point out the EVIL WHICH THE APOSTLE INTENDS TO DESCRIBE UNDER THE TERM SLEEP. The Apostle speaks of “others” who are asleep. If you turn to the original you will find that the word translated “others” has a more emphatic meaning. It might be rendered (and Horne so renders it), “the refuse”—“Let us not sleep as do *the refuse*”—the common herd, the ignoble spirits—those that have no mind above the troubles of earth.

“Let us not sleep as do the others,” the base ignoble multitude who are not alive to the high and celestial calling of a Christian. “Let us not sleep as do the refuse of mankind.” And you will find that the word “sleep,” in the original, has also a more emphatic sense. It signifies a *deep* sleep, a profound slumber. And the Apostle intimates that the refuse of mankind are now in a profound slumber.

We will now try to explain what he meant by it. First the Apostle meant that the refuse of mankind *are in a state of deplorable ignorance.*They that sleep know nothing. There may be merriment in the house but the sluggard shares not in its gladness. There may be death in the family but no tear wets the cheek of the sleeper. Great events may have transpired in the world’s history but he knows not of them. An earthquake may have tumbled a city from its greatness, or war may have devastated a nation, or the banner of triumph may be waving in the gale and the clarions of his country may be saluting us with victory—but he knows nothing—

***“Their labor and their love are lost  
Alike unknowing and unknown.”***

The sleeper knows not anything. Behold how the refuse of mankind are alike in this! Of some things they know much but of spiritual things they know nothing. Of the Divine Person of the adorable Redeemer they have no idea. Of the sweet enjoyments of a life of piety they cannot even make a guess. Towards the high enthusiasms and the inward raptures of the Christian they cannot mount. Talk to them of Divine doctrines and they are to them a riddle. Tell them of sublime experiences and they seem to them to be enthusiastic fancies. They know nothing of the joys that are to come.

And alas, for they are oblivious of the evils which shall happen to them if they go on in their iniquity. The masses of mankind are ignorant. They know not—they have not—the knowledge of God. They have no fear of Jehovah before their eyes. Blindfolded by the ignorance of this world they march on through the paths of lust to that sure and dreadful end—the everlasting ruin of their souls. Brethren, if we are saints, let us not be ignorant as are others. Let us search the Scriptures, for in them we have eternal life, for they do testify of Jesus. Let us be diligent. Let not the Word depart out of our hearts. Let us meditate therein both day and night that we may be as the tree planted by the rivers of water. “Let us not sleep as do others.”

Again, sleep pictures *a state of insensibility*. There may be much knowledge in the sleeper. But it is hidden, stored away in his mind. It might be well developed if he but could be awakened. But he has no sensibility, he knows nothing. The burglar has broken into the house—the gold and silver are both in the robber’s hands. The child is being murdered by the cruelty of him that has broken in but the father slumbers. Though all the gold and silver that he has and his most precious child are in the hands of the destroyer he is unconscious. How can he feel, when sleep has utterly sealed his senses?

Lo, in the street there is mourning. A fire has just now burned down the habitation of the poor and houseless beggars are in the street. They are crying at his window and asking him for help. But he sleeps and what does he care though the night is cold and though the poor are shivering in the blast? He has no consciousness. He feels not for them. There, take the title deed of his estate and burn the document. There, set light to his farmyard! Burn up all that he has in the field, kill his horses and destroy his cattle. Let now the fire of God descend and burn up his sheep. Let the enemy fall upon all that he has and devour it. He sleeps as soundly as if he were guarded by the angel of the Lord.

Such are the refuse of mankind. But alas, that we should have to include in that word “refuse” the great bulk thereof! How few there are that feel *spiritually*! They feel acutely enough any injury to their body, or to their estate but alas, for their *spiritual* concerns they have no sensation whatever! They are standing on the brink of Hell but they tremble not. The anger of God is burning against them but they fear not. The sword of Jehovah is unsheathed but terror does not seize upon them. They proceed with the merry dance, they drink the bowl of intoxicating pleasure.

They revel and they riot—still do they sing the lascivious song—yes, they do more than this. In their vain dreams they do defy the Most High, whereas if they were once awakened to the consciousness of their state, the marrow of their bones would melt and their heart would dissolve like wax. They are asleep, indifferent and unconscious. Do what you may to them. Let everything be swept away that is hopeful—that might give them cheer when they come to die—they feel it not. For how should a sleeper feel anything? “Therefore let us not sleep, as do others but let us watch and be sober.”

Again—the sleeper *cannot defend himself*. Behold yonder prince. He is a strong man, yes, and an armed strong man. He has entered into the tent. He is wearied. He has drunk the woman’s milk. He has eaten her “butter in a lordly dish.” He casts himself down upon the floor and he slumbers. And now she draws near. She has with her, her hammer and her nail.

Warrior! You could break her into atoms with one blow of your mighty arm but you cannot now defend yourself. The nail is at his ear, the woman’s hand is on the hammer and the nail has pierced his skull. For when he slept he was defenseless. The banner of Sisera had waved victoriously over mighty foes. But now it is stained by a woman. Tell it, tell it, tell it! The man—who when he was awake made nations tremble—dies by the hand of a feeble woman when he sleeps.

Such are the refuse of mankind. They are asleep. They have no power to resist temptation. Their moral strength is departed, for God is departed from them. There is the temptation to lust. They are men of sound principle in business matters and nothing could make them swerve from honesty—but lasciviousness *destroys* them. They are taken like a bird in a snare, they are caught in a trap, they are utterly subdued. Or maybe it is another way that they are conquered. They are men that would not do an unchaste act, or even think a lascivious thought. They scorn it. But they have another weak point—they are entrapped by the glass. They are taken and they are destroyed by drunkenness.

Or, if they can resist these things and are inclined neither to looseness of fire nor to excess in living, yet maybe covetousness enters into them by the name of prudence. It slides into their hearts and they are led to grasp after treasure and to heap up gold. Even though that gold is wrung out of the veins of the poor and though they do suck the blood of the orphan. They seem to be unable to resist their passion. How many times have I been told by men, “I cannot help it, Sir, do what I may, I resolve, I reresolve but I do the same. I am defenseless. I cannot resist the temptation!” Oh, of course you cannot while you are asleep. O Spirit of the living God, wake up the sleeper! Let sinful sloth and presumption both be startled, lest haply Moses should come their way and finding them asleep should hang them on the gallows of infamy forever!

Now, I come to give another meaning of the word “sleep.” I hope there have been some of my congregation who have been tolerably easy while I have described the first three things, because they have thought that they were exempt in those matters. But sleep signifies also *inactivity*. The farmer cannot plow his field in his sleep, neither can he cast the grain into the furrows, nor watch the clouds, nor reap his harvest. The sailor cannot reef his sail, or direct his ship across the ocean while he slumbers. It is not possible that on the Exchange, or the mart, or in the house of business men should transact their affairs with their eyes fast closed in slumber.

It would be a singular thing to see a nation of sleepers. For that would be a nation of idle men. They must all starve. They would produce no wealth from the soil, they would have nothing for their backs, nothing for clothing and nothing for food. But how many we have in the world that are inactive through sleep! Yes, I say*inactive*. I mean by that, that they are active enough in one direction but they are inactive in the right. Oh, how many men there are that are totally inactive in anything that is for, or for the welfare of their fellow creatures? For themselves, they can “rise up early and sit up *God’s glory* late and eat the bread of carefulness.”

For their children, which is an alias for themselves, they can toil until their fingers ache—they can weary themselves until their eyes are red in their sockets—till the brain whirls and they can do no more. But for God they can do nothing. Some say they have no time, others frankly confess that they have no will—for God’s Church they would not spend an hour— while for this world’s pleasure they could lay out a month. For the poor they cannot spend their time and their attention. They may haply have time to spare for themselves and for their own amusement but for holy works, for deeds of charity and for pious acts they declare they have no leisure. The truth is, they have no will.

Behold how many professing Christians there are that are asleep in this sense! They are inactive. Sinners are dying in the street by hundreds. Men are sinking into the flames of eternal wrath. But they fold their arms. They pity the poor perishing sinner but they do nothing to show that their pity is real. They go to their places of worship, they occupy their wellcushioned easy pew. They wish the minister to feed them every Sabbath. But there is never a child taught in the Sunday-School by them. There is never a tract distributed at the poor man’s house. There is never a deed done which might be the means of saving souls.

We call them good men, some of them we even elect to the office of deacons and no doubt good men they are. They are as good as Anthony meant to say that Brutus was honorable, when he said, “So are we all, all honorable men.” So are we all, all good, if they are good. But these are good and in some sense—good for nothing. For they just sit and eat the bread but they do not plow the field. They drink the wine but they will not raise the vine that does produce it. They think that they are to live unto themselves, forgetting that, “no man lives unto himself and no man dies unto himself.”

Oh, what a vast amount of sleeping we have in all our Churches and Chapels. For truly if our Churches were once awake—so far as material things are concerned—there are enough converted men and women and there is enough talent with them and enough money with them and enough time with them, God granting the abundance of His Holy Spirit, which He would be sure to do if they were all zealous—there is enough to preach the Gospel in every corner of the earth. The Church does not need to stop for want of instruments, or for want of agencies.

We have everything now except the will. We have all that we may expect God to give for the conversion of the world, except just a heart for the work and the Spirit of God poured out into our midst. Oh, Brethren, “let us not sleep as do others.” You will find the “others” in the Church and in the world—“the refuse” of both are sound asleep.

Before, however, I can dismiss this first point of explanation, it is necessary for me just to say that the Apostle himself furnishes us with part of an exposition. The second sentence, “let us watch and be sober,” implies that the reverse of these things is the sleep which he means. “Let us watch.” There are many that never watch. They never watch against sin.

They never watch against the temptations of the enemy. They do not watch against themselves, nor against “the lusts of the flesh, the lusts of the eye and the pride of life.” They do not watch for opportunities to do good, they do not watch for opportunities to instruct the ignorant, to confirm the weak, to comfort the afflicted, to succor them that are in need.

They do not watch for opportunities of glorifying Jesus, or for times of communion. They do not watch for the Promises. They do not watch for answers to their prayers. They do not watch for the second coming of our Lord Jesus. These are the refuse of the world—they watch not, because they are asleep. But let us watch—so shall we prove that we are not slumberers.

Again—let us “ *be sober*.” Albert Barnes says this most of all refers to abstinence, or temperance in eating and drinking. Calvin says not so— this refers more especially to the spirit of moderation in the things of the world. Both are right. It refers to both. There are many that are not sober. They sleep because they are not so. For insobriety leads to sleep. They are not sober—they are drunkards, they are gluttons. They are not sober— they cannot be content to do a little business—they want to do a great deal. They are not sober—they cannot carry on a trade that is sure—they must speculate. They are not sober—if they lose their property, their spirit is cast down within them and they are like men that are drunken with wormwood.

If on the other hand, they get rich, they are not sober—they so set their affections upon things on earth that they become intoxicated with pride, because of their riches. They become purse-proud and need to have the heavens lifted up higher, lest their heads should dash against the stars. How many people there are that are not sober! Oh, I might especially urge this precept upon you at this time, my dear Friends. We have hard times coming and the times are hard enough now. Let us be sober. The fearful panic in America has mainly arisen from disobedience to this command— “Be sober,” and if the professors of America had obeyed this Commandment and had been sober, the panic might at any rate have been mitigated, if not totally avoided.

Now, in a little time you who have any money laid by will be rushing to the bank to have it drawn out, because you fear that the bank is tottering. You will not be sober enough to have a little trust in your fellow men and help them through their difficultly and so be a blessing to the commonwealth. And you who think there is anything to be had by lending your money at usury will not be content with lending what you have got but you will be extorting and squeezing your poor debtors that you may get the more to lend. Men are seldom content to get rich slowly but he that hastens to be rich shall not be innocent.

Take care, my Brethren—if any hard times should come in London, if commercial houses should smash and banks be broken—take care to be sober. There is nothing will get us over a panic so well as everyone of us trying to keep our spirits up—just rising in the morning and saying, “Times are very hard and today I may lose my all. But fretting will not help it, so just let me set a bold heart against hard sorrow and go to my business. The wheels of trade may stop. I bless God, my treasure is in Heaven. I cannot be bankrupt. I have set my affections on the things of God. I cannot lose those things. There is my jewel. There is my heart!”

Why, if all men could do that, it would tend to create public confidence. But the cause of the great ruin of many men is the covetousness of all men and the fear of some. If we could all go through the world with confidence and with boldness and with courage, there is nothing in the world that could avert the shock so well. I suppose the shock must come. And there are many men now present who are very respectable, who may expect to be beggars before long. Your business is so to put your trust in Jehovah that you may be able to say, “Though the earth be removed and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea, God is my refuge and strength a very present help in trouble therefore will I not fear.”

And doing that, you will be creating more probabilities for the avoidance of your own destruction than by any other means which the wisdom of man can dictate to you. Let us not be intemperate in business, as are others. But let us be awake. “Let us not sleep”—not be carried away by the sleepwalking of the world, for what is it better than that—activity and greed in sleep? “But let us watch and be sober.” Oh, Holy Spirit help us to watch and be sober.

**II.**Thus I have occupied a great deal of time in explaining the first point—What was the sleep which the Apostle meant? And now you will notice that the word “therefore” implies that there are CERTAIN REASONS FOR THIS. I shall give you these reasons. And if I should cast them somewhat into a dramatic form, you must not wonder. They will the better, perhaps, be remembered.

“Therefore,” says the Apostle, “let us not sleep.” We shall first look at the chapter itself for our reasons. The first reason precedes the text. The Apostle tells us that, “we are all the children of *the light* and of the day. *Therefore*let us not sleep as do others. I marvel not when, as I walk through the streets after nightfall, I see every shop closed and every blind drawn. And I see the light in the upper room significant of retirement to rest. I wonder not that a half an hour later my footsteps startles me and I find none in the streets. Should I ascend the staircase and look into the sleepers’ placid countenances, I should not wonder.

For it is night, the proper time for sleep. But if some morning at eleven or twelve o’clock, I should walk down the streets and find myself alone and notice every shop closed and every house shut up and hearken to no noise, I should say, “‘Tis strange, ‘tis passing strange, ‘tis wonderful. What are these people at? ‘Tis daytime and yet they are all asleep.” I should be inclined to seize the first rapper I could find and give a double knock and rush to the next door and ring the bell and so all the way down the street. Or go to the police station and wake up what men I found there and bid them make a noise in the street.

Or go for the fire engine and bid the firemen rattle down the road and try to wake these people up. For I should say to myself, “There is some pestilence here, the angel of death must have flown through these streets during the night and killed all these people, or else they would have been sure to have been awake.” Sleep in the daytime is utterly incongruous. “Well, now,” says the Apostle Paul, “you people of God, it is daytime with you. The Sun of Righteousness has risen upon you with healing in His wings. The light of God’s Spirit is in your conscience. You have been brought out of darkness into marvelous light. For you to be asleep, for a Church to slumber is like a city in bed in the day, like a whole town slumbering when the sun is shining. It is untimely and unseemly.”

And now, if you look at the text again, you will find there is another argument. “Let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love.” So, then, it seems, it is wartime. And therefore, again, it is unseemly to slumber. There is a fortress yonder, far away in India. A troop of those abominable Sepoys have surrounded it. Bloodthirsty Hellhounds. If they once gain admission they will rend the mother and her children and cut the strong man in pieces. They are at the gates—their cannons are loaded—their bayonets thirst for blood and their swords are hungry to slay.

Go through the fortress and the people are all asleep. There is the warden on the tower, nodding on his bayonet. There is the captain in his tent, with his pen in his hand and his dispatches before him, asleep at the table. There are soldiers lying down in their tents ready for the war but all slumbering. There is not a man to be seen keeping watch. There is not a sentry there. All are asleep. Why, my Friends, you would say, “Whatever is the matter here? What can it be? Has some great wizard been waving his wand and put a spell upon them all? Or are they all mad? Have their minds fled?

“Surely, to be asleep in wartime is indeed outrageous, Here, take down that trumpet, go close up to the captain’s ear and blow a blast and see if it does not awake him in a moment. Just take away that bayonet from the soldier that is asleep on the walls and give him a sharp prick with it and see if he does not awake.” But surely, surely, nobody can have patience with people asleep when the enemy surround the walls and are thundering at the gates.

Now, Christians, this is your case. Your *life* is a life of warfare—the world, the flesh and the devil are a hellish trinity and your poor nature is wretched mud work behind which to be entrenched. Are you asleep? Asleep? When Satan has fireballs of lust to hurl into the windows of your eyes? When he has arrows of temptation to shoot into your heart? When he has snares into which to trap your feet? Asleep? When he has undermined your very existence and when he is about to apply the match with which to destroy you, unless Sovereign Grace prevents? Oh, sleep not, soldier of the Cross! To sleep in wartime is utterly inconsistent. Great Spirit of God forbid that we should slumber!  
But now, leaving the chapter itself, I will give you one or two other reasons that will, I trust, move Christian people to awake out of their sleep. “*Bring out your dead! Bring out your dead! Bring out your dead*!” Then comes the ringing of a bell. What is this? Here is a door marked with a great white cross. Lord, have mercy upon us! All the houses down that street seem to be marked with that white death cross. What is this? Here is the grass growing in the streets. Here are Cornhill and Cheapside deserted! No one is found treading a solitary pavement. There is not a sound to be heard but those horse hoofs, like the hoofs of death’s pale horse upon the stones, the ringing of that bell that sounds the death knell to many and the rumbling of the wheels of that cart and the dreadful cry, “Bring out your dead! Bring out your dead! Bring out your dead!”

Do you see that house? A physician lives there. He is a man who has great skill and God has lent him wisdom. A little while ago, while in his study, God was pleased to guide his mind and he discovered the secret of the plague. He was plague-smitten himself and ready to die but he lifted the blessed vial to his lips and he drank a draught and cured himself. Do you believe what I am about to tell you? Can you imagine it? That man has the prescription that will heal all these people. He has it in his pocket. He has the medicine which, if once distributed in those streets, would make the sick rejoice and put that dead man’s bell away.

And he is asleep! He is asleep! He is asleep! O you Heavens! Why do you not fall and crush the wretch? O earth! How could you bear this demon upon your bosom? Why not swallow him up? He has the medicine! He is too lazy to go and proclaim the remedy. He has the cure and is too idle to go out and administer it to the sick and the dying! No, my Friends, such an inhuman wretch could not exist! But I can see him here today. There you are! You know the world is sick with the plague of sin and you yourself have been cured by the remedy which has been provided. You are asleep, inactive, loitering. You do not go forth to—

***“Tell to others round,  
What a dear Savior you have found.”***

There is the precious Gospel—you do not go and put it to the lips of a sinner. There is the all-precious blood of Christ—you never go to tell the dying what they must do to be saved. The world is perishing with worse than plague—and you are idle! And you are a minister of the Gospel. And you have taken that holy office upon yourself. And you are content to preach twice on a Sunday and once on a weekday and there is no remonstrance within you. You never desire to attract the multitudes to hear you preach. You had rather keep your empty benches and study propriety, than you would once, at the risk of appearing over-zealous, draw the multitude and preach the Word to them.

You are a writer—you have great power in writing. You devote your talents alone to light literature, or to the production of other things which may furnish amusement but which cannot benefit the soul. You know the Truth but you do not tell it out. Yonder mother is a converted woman— you have children and you forget to instruct them in the way to Heaven.

You yonder are a young man, having nothing to do on the Sabbath-Day and there is the Sunday-School. You do not go to tell those children the sovereign remedy that God has provided for the care of sick souls. The death-bell is ringing even now.

Hell is crying out, howling with hunger for the souls of men. “Bring out the sinner! Bring out the sinner! Bring out the sinner! Let him die and be damned!” And there are you professing to be a Christian and doing nothing which might make you the instrument of saving souls—never putting out your hand to be the means in the hand of the Lord of plucking sinners as brands from the burning! Oh, may the blessing of God rest on you, to turn you from such an evil way that you may not sleep as do others but may watch and be sober. The world’s imminent danger demands that we should be active and not be slumbering.

Hark how the mast creaks! See the sails there, rent to ribbons. Breakers ahead! She will be on the rocks directly. Where is the captain? Where is the boatswain? Where are the sailors? Ahoy there! Where are you? Here’s a storm come on! Where are you? You are down in the cabin. And there is the captain in a soft sweet slumber. There is the man at the wheel, as sound asleep as ever he can be. And there are all the sailors in their hammocks. What? And the breakers ahead? What? The lives of two hundred passengers in danger and here are these brutes asleep? Kick them out. What is the good of letting such men as these be sailors, especially in such a time as this?

Why, out with you! If you had gone to sleep in fine weather we might have forgiven you. Up with you, Captain! What have you been doing? Are you mad? But hark! The ship has struck—she will be down in a moment. Now you will work, will you? Now you will work when it is of no use and when the shrieks of drowning women shall toll you into Hell for your most accursed negligence in not having taken care of them. Well that is very much like a great many of us, in these times, too.

This proud ship of our commonwealth is reeling in a storm of sin. The very mast of this great nation is creaking under the hurricane of vice that sweeps across the noble vessel. Every timber is strained and God help the good ship, or alas, none can save her. And who are her captain and her sailors, but ministers of God, the professors of religion? These are they to whom God gives grace to steer the ship. “You are the salt of the earth.” You preserve and keep it alive, O children of God. Are you asleep in the storm? Are you slumbering now? If there were no dens of vice, if there were no harlots, if there were no houses of profanity, if there were no murders and no crimes, oh, you that are the salt of the earth—you might sleep.

But today the sin of London cries in the ears of God. This behemoth city is covered with crime and God is vexed with her. And are we asleep, doing nothing? Then God forgive us! But surely, of all the sins He ever does forgive, this is the greatest, the sin of slumbering when a world is damning—the sin of being idle when Satan is busy, devouring the souls of men. “Brethren let us not sleep” in such times as these. For if we do, a curse must fall upon us, horrible to bear.

There is a poor prisoner in a cell. His hair is all matted over his eyes. A few weeks ago the judge put on the black cap and commanded that he should be taken to the place from where he came and hung by the neck until dead. The poor wretch has his heart broken within him, while he thinks of the pinion, of the gallows and of the drop and of after-death. Oh, who can tell how his heart is rent and racked while he thinks of leaving all and going he knows not where? There is a man there, sound asleep upon a bed. He has been asleep there these two days and under his pillow he has that prisoner’s free pardon. I would horsewhip that scoundrel, horsewhip him soundly, for making that poor man have two days of extra misery.

Why, if I had had that man’s pardon, I would have been there. If I rode on the wings of lightning to get to him I should have thought the fastest train that ever run but slow, if I had so sweet a message to carry and such a poor heavy heart to carry it to. But that man, that brute, is sound asleep, with a free pardon under his pillow, while that poor wretch’s heart is breaking with dismay! Ah, do not be too hard with him—he is here today. Side by side with you this morning there is sitting a poor penitent sinner. God has pardoned him and intends that you should tell him that good news. He sat by your side last Sunday and he wept all the sermon through, for he felt his guilt.

If you had spoken to him then, who can tell? He might have had comfort but there he is now—you do not tell him the good news. Do you leave that to me to do? Ah, Sirs, but you cannot serve God by proxy. What the minister does is nothing to you. You have your own personal duty to do and God has given you a precious Promise. It is now on your heart. Will you not turn round to your neighbor and tell him that Promise? Oh, there is many an aching heart that aches because of our idleness in telling the good news of this salvation. “Yes,” says one of my members, who always comes to this place on a Sunday and looks out for young men and young women whom he has seen in tears the Sunday before and who brings many into the Church, “yes, I could tell you a story.”

He looks a young man in the face and says, “Haven’t I seen you here a great many times?” “Yes.” “I think you take a deep interest in the service, do you not?” “Yes, I do—what makes you ask me that question?” “Because I looked at your face last Sunday and I thought there was something at work with you.” “Oh, Sir,” he says, “nobody has spoken to me ever since I have been here till now and I want to say a word to you. When I was at home with my mother, I used to think I had some idea of religion but I came away and was bound apprentice with an ungodly lot of youths and have done everything I ought not to have done. And now, Sir, I begin to weep, I begin to repent. I wish to God that I knew how I might be saved! I hear the word preached, Sir but I want something spoken personally to me by somebody.”

And he turns round, he takes him by the hand and says, “My dear young Brother, I am so glad I spoke to you. It makes my poor old heart rejoice to think that the Lord is doing something here still. Now, do not be cast down. For you know, ‘This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.’ ” The young man puts his handkerchief to his eyes and after a minute, he says, “I wish you would let me call and see you, Sir.” “Oh, you may,” he says. He talks with him, he leads him onward and at last by God’s grace the happy youth comes forward and declares what God has done for his soul and owes his salvation as much to the humble instrumentality of the man that helped him as he could do to the preaching of the minister.

Beloved Brethren, the bridegroom comes! Awake! Awake! The earth must soon be dissolved and the Heavens must melt! Awake! Awake! O Holy Spirit arouse us all and keep us awake!

**III.**And now I have no time for the last point and therefore I shall not detain you, suffice me to say in warning, there is AN EVIL HERE LAMENTED.

There are some that are asleep and the Apostle mourns it. My fellow Sinner, you that are this day unconverted, let me say six or seven sentences to you and you shall depart. Unconverted man! Unconverted woman! You are asleep today, as they that sleep on the top of the mast in time of a storm. You are asleep as he that sleeps when the floods are out and when his house is undermined and being carried down the stream far out to sea. You are asleep as he who in the upper chamber, when his house is burning and his own locks are singeing in the fire—he knows not the devastation around him.

You are asleep—asleep as he that lies upon the edge of a precipice with death and destruction beneath him. One single start in his sleep would send him over but he knows it not. You are asleep this day. And the place where you sleep has so frail a support that when once it breaks you shall fall into Hell—and if you wake not till then, what a waking it will be!

“In Hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torment.” And he cried for a drop of water but it was denied him. “He that believes in the Lord Jesus Christ and is baptized, shall be saved. He that believes not shall be damned.” This is the Gospel. Believe in Jesus and you shall “rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.”

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THE ENCHANTED GROUND  
NO. 64

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, FEBRUARY 3, 1856, *BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.**

***“Therefore let us not sleep, as do others. But let us watch and be sober.”*** 1Th 5:6***.***

As the spiritual guide of the flock of God along the intricate mazes of experience, it is the duty of the Gospel minister to point out every turning of the road to Heaven, to speak concerning its dangers or its privileges, and to warn any whom he may suspect to be in a peculiarly perilous position. Now there is a portion of the road which leads from the City of Destruction to the Celestial City, which has in it, perhaps, more dangers than any other portion of the way. It does not abound with lions. There are no dragons in it. It has no dark woods and no deep pitfalls. Yet more pilgrims have been destroyed in that portion of the road than anywhere else! Not even Doubting Castle, with all its host of bones, can show as many who have been slain there. It is the part of the road called the Enchanted Ground. The great geographer, John Bunyan, well pictured it when he said—“I then saw in my dream, that they went on till they came into a certain country, whose air naturally tended to make one drowsy, if he came a stranger into it. And here Hopeful began to be very dull and heavy of sleep: therefore he said unto Christian, I do now begin to grow so drowsy that I can scarcely hold up my eyes. Let us lie down here and take a nap.

CHR. “By no means, said the other, lest sleeping, we never wake again.”  
HOPE. “Why, my Brother? Sleep is sweet to the laboring man. We may be refreshed if we take a nap.”  
CHR. “Do you not remember that one of the Shepherds bid us beware of the Enchanted Ground? He meant by that, that we should beware of sleeping. Therefore ‘let us not sleep as do others, but let us watch and be sober.’”  
There is no doubt, many of us, Beloved, are passing over this plain and I fear that this is the condition of the majority of churches in the present day. They are lying down on the settles of Lukewarmness in the Arbors of the Enchanted Ground! There is not that activity and zeal we would wish to see among them. They are not, perhaps, notably heterodox. They may not be invaded by the lion of persecution—they are somewhat worse than that—they are lying down to slumber, like Heedless and Too-Bold in the Arbor of Sloth! May God grant that His servants may be the means of awakening the Church from its lethargy and stirring it up from its slumbers, lest professors should sleep the sleep of death!  
This morning I intend to show you *what is meant by the state of sleep into which Christians sometimes fall*. Secondly, I shall use some considerations, if possible, to *wake up such as are slumbering.* Thirdly, I shall mark *sundry times when the Christian is most liable to fall asleep*—and shall conclude by giving you some advice as to the mode in which you should conduct yourselves when you are passing over the Enchanted Ground and feel drowsiness weighing down your eyelids.  
**I.**First, WHAT IS THAT STATE OF SLEEP INTO WHICH THE CHRISTIAN MAY FALL? It is not death. He was dead once, but he is now alive in Christ Jesus. And, therefore, he shall never die eternally. But though a living man shall not die, being quickened by an immortal life, yet that living man may sleep and that sleep is so nearly akin to death that I have known slumbering Christians mistaken for dead, carnal sinners! Come, Beloved, let me picture to you the state of the Christian while he is in a condition of sleep.  
First, sleep is a state of *insensibility* and such is that state which too often is upon even the best children of God. When a man is asleep, he is insensible. The world goes on and he knows nothing about it. The watchman calls beneath his window and he sleeps on. A fire is in a neighboring street—his neighbor’s house is burned to ashes—but he is asleep and knows it not! Persons are sick in the house but he is not awakened. They may die and he weeps not for them. A revolution may be raging in the streets of his city. A king may be losing his crown. But he that is asleep shares not in the turmoil of politics. A volcano may burst somewhere near him and he may be in imminent peril, but he escapes not. He is sound asleep, he is insensible! The winds are howling, the thunders are rolling across the sky and the lightning flashes at his window. But he that can sleep on, cares not for these and is insensible to them all. The sweetest music is passing through the street. But he sleeps and only in dreams does he hear the sweetness. The most terrific wailings may assail his ears. But sleep has sealed them with the wax of slumber and he hears not. Let the world break in sunder and the elements go to ruin—keep him asleep and he will not perceive it! Christian, behold your condition! Have you not sometimes been brought into a condition of insensibility? You wished you could feel, but all you felt was pain because you could not feel. You wished you could pray. It was not that you felt prayerless, but it was because you did not feel at all! Once you sighed—you would give a world if you could sigh now! Once you used to groan—a groan, now, would be worth a golden star if you could buy it! As for songs, you can sing them, but then your heart does not go with them. You go to the House of God. But when “the multitude that keep the holy day” in the full tide of song send their music up to Heaven, you hear it, but your heart does not leap at the sound. Prayer goes solemnly like the evening sacrifice up to God’s Throne—once you could pray—but now, while your body is in the House of God, your heart is not there. You feel you have brought the chrysalis of your being but the fly is gone away from it—it is a dead lifeless case! You have become like a formalist. You feel that there is not that savor, that unction in the preaching, that there used to be. There is no difference in your minister, you know. The change is in *yourself*. The hymns and the prayers are just the same but you have fallen into a state of slumber! Once if you thought of a man’s being damned, you would weep your very soul out in tears. But now you could sit unmoved at the very brink of Hell and hear its wailings. Once the thought of restoring a sinner from the error of his ways would have made you start from your bed at midnight and you would have rushed through the cold air to help to rescue a sinner from his sins. Now, talk to you about perishing multitudes, and you hear it as an old, old tale. Tell you of thousands swept by the mighty flood of sin onwards to the precipice of destruction—you express your regret, you give your contribution—but your heart goes not with it! You must confess that you are insensible— not entirely, but too much so. You want to be awake, but you groan because you feel yourselves to be in this state of slumber.  
Then again, he that sleeps is*subject to many illusions*. When we sleep, judgment goes from us and fancy holds carnival within our brain. When we sleep, dreams arise and fashion in our head strange things. Sometimes we are tossed on the stormy deep and another we revel in kings palaces. We gather up gold and silver as if they were but the pebbles of the shore. And another time we are poor and naked, shivering in the blast. What illusions deceive us! The beggar in his dreams becomes richer than Plutus. And the rich man as poor as Lazarus. The sick man is well, the healthy man has lost his limbs, or is dead. Yes, dreams make us descend to Hell, or even carry us to Heaven. Christian, if you are one of the sleepy brotherhood, you are subject to many illusions. Strange thoughts come to you which you never had before. Sometimes you doubt if there is a God, or if you exist, yourself! You tremble lest the Gospel should not be true. And the old Doctrine which once you held with a stern hand, you are almost inclined to let go! Vile heresies assail you. You think that the Lord who bought you was not the Son of God! The devil tells you that you are none of the Lord’s and you dream that you are cast away from the love of the Covenant. You cry—  
***“I would, but cannot sing!  
I would, but cannot pray,”***  
and you feel as if it were all in question whether you are one of the Lord’s or not! Or perhaps your dreams are brighter and you dream that you are somebody, great and mighty, a special favorite of Heaven. Pride puffs you up. You dream that you are rich and have need of nothing, while you are naked, poor and miserable. Is this your state, O Christian? If so, may God wake you up from it!  
Again, sleep is *a state of inaction*. No daily bread is earned by him that sleeps. The man who is stretched upon his couch neither writes books, nor tills the ground, nor plows the sea, nor does anything else. His hands hang down, his pulse beats and there is life, but he is positively dead as to activity. Oh, Beloved, here is the state of many of you. How many Christians are inactive! Once it was their delight to instruct the young in the Sunday school—but that is now given up. Once they attended the early Prayer Meeting—but not now. Once they would be hewers of wood and drawers of water—but, alas—they are now asleep! Am I talking of what *may* happen? Is it not too true almost universally? Are not the churches asleep? Where are the ministers who preach? We have men who read their manuscripts and talk essays—but is that preaching? We have men who can amuse an audience for 20 minutes—is that preaching? Where are the men who preach their hearts out and reveal their souls in every sentence? Where are the men who make it not a profession, but a vocation—the breath of their bodies, the marrow of their bones, the delight of their spirits? Where are the Whitfields and Wesleys, now? Are they not gone, gone, gone? Where are the Rowland Hills, now, who preached every day and three times a day and were not afraid of preaching everywhere, the unsearchable riches of Christ? Brothers, the church slumbers. It is not merely that the pulpit is a sentry box with the sentinel fast asleep, but the pews are affected! How are the Prayer Meetings almost universally neglected? Our own Church stands out like an almost solitary green islet in the midst of a dark, dark sea! By God’s Grace we are one bright pearl in the depths of an ocean of discord and confusion! Look at neighboring churches. Step into the vestry and see a smaller band of people than you would like to think of, assembled round the pastor, whose heart is dull and heavy. Hear one Brother after another pour out the dull monotonous prayer that he has said by heart these 50 years and then go away and say, “Where is the spirit of prayer, where is the life of devotion?” Is it not almost extinct? Are not our churches “fallen, fallen, fallen, from their high estate”? God wake them up and send them more earnest and praying men!  
Once more—the man who is asleep is*in a state of insecurity*. The murderer smites him that sleeps. The midnight robber plunders his house that rests listlessly on his pillow. Jael smites a sleeping Sisera. Abner takes away the spear from the bolster of a slumbering Saul. A sleeping Eutychus falls from the third loft and is taken up dead. A sleeping Samson is shorn of his locks and the Philistines are upon him. Sleeping men are always in danger. They cannot ward off the blow of the enemy or strike another. Christian, if you are sleeping, you are in danger! Your life, I know, can never be taken from you—that is hid with Christ in God. But oh, you may lose your spear from your bolster! You may lose much of your faith. And your cruse of water wherewith you moisten your lips may be stolen by the prowling thief! Oh, you little know your danger! Even now the black-winged angel takes his spear and, standing at your head, he says to Jesus, (to David) “Shall I smite him? I will smite him but once.” (David says) our Jesus whispers, “You shall not smite him. Take his spear and his cruse, but you shall not kill him.” But oh, awake, you who slumber! Start up from the place where you now lie in your insecurity. This is not the sleep of Jacob, in which ladders unite Heaven and earth and angels tread their ascending rounds. But this is the sleep where ladders are raised from Hell and devils climb upward from the pit of Hell to molest your spirit!  
**II.**This brings me to the second point, SOME CONSIDERATIONS TO WAKE UP SLEEPY CHRISTIANS. I remember once in my life having a sleepy congregation. They had been eating too much dinner and they came to the Chapel in the afternoon very sleepy, so I tried an old expedient to awaken them. I shouted with all my might, “Fire! Fire! Fire!” When starting from their seats, some of the congregation asked where it was and I told them it was in Hell for such sleepy sinners as they were! So, Beloved, I might cry, “Fire! Fire!” this morning to awaken sleepy Christians! But that would be a false cry, because the fire of Hell was never made for Christians at all—and they need never tremble at it! The honor of God is engaged to save the meanest sheep and whether that sheep is asleep or awake, it is perfectly safe, so far as *final salvation* is concerned. There are better reasons why I should stir up a Christian and I shall use a very few of them.  
And first, O Christian, awake from your slumber, *because your Lord is coming*. That is the grand reason used in the text. The Apostle says, “You are all the children of light and the children of the day.” You know perfectly well that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night. You, Brothers and Sisters, are not in darkness that that day should overtake you as a thief! O Christians, do you know that your Lord is coming? In such an hour as you think not, the Man who once hung quivering on Calvary will descend in Glory! “The Head that once was crowned with thorns” will soon be crowned with a diadem of brilliant jewels! He will come in the clouds of Heaven to His Church. Would you wish to be sleeping when your Lord comes? Do you want to be like the foolish virgins, who, while the bridegroom tarried, slumbered and slept, or like the wise ones? If our Master were to appear this morning, are there not half of us in such a state that we would be afraid to see Him? Why? You know, when a friend comes to your house, if he is some great man, what brushing and dusting there is! Every corner of the room has its cobwebs removed! Every carpet is turned up. And you make every effort to have the house clean for his coming. What? And will you have your house dusty and the spiders of neglect building the cobwebs of indolence in the corners of your house when your Lord may arrive tomorrow? And if we are to have an audience with the Queen, what dressing there is! How careful will men be that everything should be put on aright, that they should appear properly in court dress! Do you not know, servant of the Lord, that you are to appear before the King in His beauty and to see Him soon on earth? What? Will you be asleep when He comes? When He knocks at the door, shall He have for an answer, “The good man is asleep. He did not expect You”? Oh, no! Be like men who watch for their Lord, that at His coming He may find you ready! Ah, you carnal professors who attend plays and balls, would you like Christ to come and find you in the middle of your dance? Would you like Him to look you in the face in the opera? Ah, you carnal tradesmen, can you cheat and then pray after it? Would you like Christ to find you cheating? You devour widows’ houses and for a show make long prayers. You would not mind Him coming in the middle of your long prayer. But He will come just as that poor widows’ house is sticking in your throat, just as you are swallowing the lands of the poor oppressed one and putting in your own pocket, the wages of which you have defrauded the laborer! Then He will come and how terrible will He be to such as you! We have heard of the sailor, who, when his ship was sinking, rushed to the cabin to steal a bag of gold—and though warned that he could not swim with it tied it about his loins—he leaped into the sea with it and sank to rise no more! And I am afraid there are some rich men who know not how to use their money, who will sink to Hell, strangled by their gold, hanging like millstones round their necks! O Christian, it shall not be so with you—but wake from

your slumbers, for your Lord comes!  
But again, Christian, you are benevolent. You love men’s souls and I will speak to you of that which will touch your heart. Will you weep while *souls are being lost*? A Brother here, some time ago, rushed into a house which was burning and he saved a person from it. He then returned to his wife and what did she say to him? “Go back again, my husband and see if you cannot save another. We will not rest till all are delivered.” I think that is what the Christian would say, “If I have been the means of saving one soul, I will not rest until I have saved another.” Oh, have you ever thought how many souls sink to Hell every hour? Did the dreary thought that the death knell of a soul is tolled by every tick of yonder clock ever strike you? Have you ever thought that myriads of your fellow creatures are now in Hell—and that myriads more are hastening there? And yet do you sleep? What? Physician, will you sleep when men are dying? Sailor, will you sleep when the wreck is out at sea and the life boat is waiting for hands to man it? Christian, will you tarry while souls are being lost? I do not say that *you* can save them—God, alone, can do that—but you may be the instrument! And would you lose the opportunity of winning another jewel for your crown in Heaven? Would you sleep while work is being done? Well, said the British king, at the Battle of Agincourt, “Come on and conquer”—  
***“And gentlemen in England—now a-bed,  
Shall think themselves accursed they were not here— And hold their manhood cheap, when any speaks That fought with us upon this glorious day.’’***  
So I think, when souls are being saved, Christians in bed may think themselves accursed they are not here! Sleepy Christian, let me shout in your ears—you are sleeping while souls are being lost—sleeping while men are being damned—sleeping while Hell is being peopled—sleeping while Christ is being dishonored—sleeping while the devil is grinning at your sleepy face—sleeping while demons are dancing round your slumbering carcass and shouting it in Hell that a Christian is asleep! You will never catch the devil asleep. Let not the devil catch you asleep! Watch and be sober, that you may be always up to do your duty.  
I have no time to use other considerations, though the subject is large enough and I should have no difficulty in finding sticks enough to beat a sleeping dog with. “Let us not sleep as do others.”  
**III.**Now it may be asked, WHEN IS THE CHRISTIAN MOST LIABLE TO SLEEP?  
First, I answer, he is most liable to sleep *when his temporal circumstances are all right*. When your nest is well feathered, you are then most likely to sleep. There is little danger of your sleeping when there is a bramble bush in the bed. When all is downy, then the most likely thing will be that you will say, “Soul, Soul, you have much goods laid up for many years—take your rest—eat, drink and be merry!” Let me ask some of you, when you were more straitened in circumstances, when you had to rely upon Providence each hour and had troubles to take the Throne of Grace—were you not more wakeful than you are now? The miller who has his wheel turned by a constant stream goes to sleep but he that attends on the wind, which sometimes blows hard and sometimes gently, sleeps not, lest haply the full gust might rend the sails, or there should not be enough to make them go round! Those who live by the day often sleep not by day, but they sleep in the night—the sleep of the Beloved. Easy roads tend to make us slumber. Few sleep in a storm. Many sleep on a calm night. He is a brave boy, indeed, who can have his eyes sealed when “upon the high and giddy mast, in bosom of the rude imperious surge.” But he is no wonder who sleeps when there is no danger. Why is the Church asleep now? She would not sleep if Smithfield were filled with stakes, if Bartholomew’s bells were ringing in her ears! She would not sleep if Sicilian Vespers might be sung on tomorrow’s eve. She would not sleep if massacres were common. But what is her condition? Every man sitting under his own vine and his own fig tree—none daring to make him afraid. Tread softly! She is fast asleep! Wake up, Church! Or else we will cut down the fig tree about your ears. Start up! For the figs are ripe, they hang into your sleepy mouth and you are too lazy to bite them off!  
Now, another dangerous time is *when all goes well in spiritual matters*. You never read that Christian went to sleep when lions were in the way. He never slept when he was going through the River Death, or when he was in Giant Despair’s castle, or when he was fighting with Apollyon. Poor creature! He almost wished he *could*sleep, then. But when he had got half way up the Hill Difficulty and came to a pretty little arbor—in he went and sat down and began to read his roll. Oh, how he rested himself! How he undid his sandals and rubbed his weary feet! Very soon his mouth was open—his arms hung down and he was fast asleep! Again, the Enchanted Ground was a very easy, smooth place, and liable to send the Pilgrim to sleep. You remember Bunyan’s description of some of the arbors—“Then they came to an arbor, warm and promising much refreshing to the weary pilgrims. For it was finely worked above head, beautified with greens and furnished with benches and settles. It also had in it, a soft couch, where the weary might sleep. The arbor was called the Slothful’s Friend and was made on purpose to allure, if it might, some of the pilgrims to take up their rest, there, when weary.” Depend upon it, it is in easy places that men shut their eyes and wander into the dreamy land of forgetfulness! Old Erskine said a good thing when he remarked—“I like a roaring devil better than a sleeping devil.” There is no temptation half as bad as not being tempted! The distressed soul does not sleep. It is after we get into confidence and full assurance that we are in danger of slumbering. Take care, you who are full of gladness. There is no season in which we are so likely to fall asleep as that of high enjoyment. The disciples went to sleep after they had seen Christ transfigured on the mountaintop. Take heed, joyous Christian, good times are very dangerous—they often lull you into a sound sleep!  
Yet there is one more thing. And if I ever were afraid of anything, I would fear to speak before my grave and reverend fathers in the faith, the fact that one of the most likely places for us to sleep in is *when we get near our journey’s end*. It is ill for a child to say that, and I will, therefore, back it up by the words of that great pilot, John Bunyan—“For this Enchanted Ground is one of the last refuges that the enemy to pilgrims has, therefore it is, as you see, placed almost at the end of the way and so it stands against us within the more advantage. For when, thinks the enemy, will these fools be so desirous to sit down as when they are weary? And when so like to be weary as when almost at their journey’s end? Therefore it is, I say, that the Enchanted Ground is paced so near to the land, Beulah, and so near the end of their race. Therefore let pilgrims look to themselves, lest it happen to them as it has done to these who, as you see, are fallen asleep and none can awake them.” May a child speak to those who are far before him in years and experience? But I am not a child when I preach. In the pulpit we stand as ambassadors of God and God knows nothing of childhood or age. He teaches whom He wills and speaks as He pleases! It is true, my Brothers and Sisters, that those who have been years in Grace are most in danger of slumbering. Somehow we get into the routine of the thing—it is usual for us to go to the House of God. It is usual for us to belong to the church and that, of itself, tends to make people sleepy. Go into some of your churches in London and you will hear a most delicious sermon preached to a people all sound asleep! The reason is that the service is all alike. They know when they have got to the third, “Our Father which are in Heaven,” when they have passed the general confession and when they have got to the sermon—then it is the time to sleep for 20 minutes! If the minister should smite his ecclesiastic fist upon the Bible, or enliven his faculties with a pinch of snuff, or even use his pocket handkerchief, the people would wake up because it would be something out of the usual course! Or, if he uttered an old sentiment, they might be awakened and would probably think that he had broken the 59th Commandment, in making some of the congregation smile! But he never violates decorum. He stands the very mirror of modesty and the picture of everything that is orderly. I have digressed, but you will see what I mean.  
If we are always going on the same road we are liable to sleep. If Moab gets at ease and is not emptied from vessel to vessel, he sleeps on, for he knows no change. And when years have worn our road with a rut of godliness, we are apt to throw the reins on our horse’s neck and sleep soundly!  
**IV.**Now, lastly, let me give a little GOOD ADVICE to the sleeping Christian. But Christian, if you *are* asleep, you will not hear me! I will speak gently, then, and let you sleep on. No I will not! I will shout in your ears, “Awake you that sleep! Arise from the dead and Christ shall give you light! Go to the ant, you sluggard—consider her ways and be wise. Put on your beautiful garments, O Jerusalem. Put on your glorious array, you Church of the living God.”  
But now what is the best plan to stay awake when you are going across the Enchanted Ground? This book tells us that one of the best plans is*to keep Christian company* and talk about the ways of the Lord. Christian and Hopeful said to themselves, “Let us talk together and then we shall not sleep.” Christian said, “Brother where shall we begin?” And Hopeful said, “We will begin where God began with us.” There is no subject so likely to keep a man awake as talking of the place where God began with him! When Christians talk together, they won’t sleep! Hold Christian company and you will not be so likely to slumber. Christians who isolate themselves and stand alone are very liable to lie down and sleep on the settle or the soft couch—but if you talk much, together, as they did in old times, you will find it extremely beneficial. Two Christians talking together of the ways of the Lord will go much faster to Heaven than one! And when a whole Church unites in speaking of the Lord’s loving kindness, verily, Beloved, there is no way like that of keeping themselves awake!  
Then let me remind you that if you will *look at interesting things,* you will not sleep. And how can you be kept awake in the Enchanted Ground better than by holding up your Savior before your eyes? There are some things, it is said, which will not let men shut their eyes if they are held before them. Jesus Christ, Crucified on Calvary, is one of these! I never knew a Christian go to sleep at the foot of the Cross. But he always said—  
And he said, too— ***“Here I’d sit forever viewing  
Mercy’s streams in streams of blood.”***  
But he never said, “Here I would lie down and sleep,” for he could not sleep with that shriek, “*Eloi, Eloi, lama Sabacthani?*” in his ears! He could not sleep with, “It is finished!” going into his very soul. Stay near to the Cross, Christian, and you will not sleep.  
Then I would advise you to*let the wind blow on you*. Let the breath of the Holy Spirit continually fan your temples and you will not sleep. Seek to live daily under the influence of the Holy Spirit—derive all your strength from Him and you will not slumber!  
Lastly, labor to *impress yourself with a deep sense of the value of the place to which you are going*. If you remember that you are going to Heaven, you will not sleep on the road! If you think that Hell is behind you and the devil pursuing you, I am sure you will not be inclined to sleep. Would the manslayer sleep if the avenger of blood were behind him and the City of Refuge before him? Christian, will you sleep while the pearly gates are open, the songs of angels waiting for you to join them? A crown decorated with delight to be worn upon your brow? Ah, no— ***“Forget the steps already trod  
And onward urge your way!  
Weak as you are, you shall not faint,  
Or, fainting, shall not die.  
He feeds the strength of every saint,  
He’ll help you from on high.”***  
Dearly Beloved, I have finished my sermon. There are some of you that I must dismiss, because I find nothing in the text for you. It is said, “Let us not sleep as do others, but let us watch and be sober.” There are some here who do not sleep at all because they are positively dead. And if it takes a stronger voice than mine to wake the sleeper, how much more mighty must be that voice which wakes the dead? Yet even to the dead I speak. For God can wake them, though I cannot. O, dead Man! Do you not know that your body and your soul are worthless carrion? That while you are dead, you lie abhorred of God and abhorred of man? That soon the vulture of remorse will come and devour your lifeless soul—and though you have lived in this world these 70 years (perhaps) without God and without Christ—in your last hour, the vulture of remorse shall come and tear your spirit? And though you now laugh at the wild bird that circles in the sky, he will soon descend upon you and your death will be a bed of shrieks, howling and wailings and lamentations! Do you not know that afterwards that dead soul will be cast into Hell? And as in the East they burn the bodies, so your body and your soul together shall be burned in Hell1 Go not away and dream that this is a metaphor! It is the Truth of God! Say not it is a fiction—laugh not at it as a mere picture! Hell is a positive flame—it is a fire that burns the body, albeit that it burns the soul, too! There is physical fire for the body and there is spiritual fire for the soul. Go your way, O Man—such shall be your fate. Even now your funeral pile is building, your years of sin have laid huge trees across each other. Look! The angel is flying down from Heaven with a brand already lit! You are lying dead upon the pile—he puts the brand to the base. Your disease proves that the lower parts are kindling with the flame—those pains of yours are the crackling of the fire. It shall reach you soon, old Man—it shall reach you soon, you poor diseased one! You are near death and when it reaches you, you shall know the meaning of the fire that is unquenchable and the worm that dies not!  
Yet while there is hope I will tell you the Gospel. “He that believes and is baptized shall be saved and he that believes not shall be,” *must* be “damned.” He that believes on the Lord Jesus Christ, that is—with a simple naked faith, comes and puts his trust in Him—shall be saved! But he that believes not shall inevitably—hear it, men and women and tremble—*he that believes not shall assuredly be damned.*

***“Sweet the moments, rich in blessing, Which before the Cross I spend.”***

P.S.—It is frequently objected that the preacher is censorious—he is not desirous of defending himself from the charge. He is confident that many are conscious that his charges are *true* and if true, Christian love requires us to warn those who err. Nor will candid men condemn the minister who is bold enough to point out the faults of the Church and the age, even when all classes are moved to anger by his faithful rebukes and pour on his head the full vials of their wrath. IF THIS IS VILE, WE PURPOSE TO BE VILER, STILL!—C. H. S.

Adapted from*The C.H. Spurgeon Collection*, Version 1.0, Ages Software.  
**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.** Sermon #3167 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

**÷1Th 5.8**

THE CHRISTIAN’S HELMET  
NO. 3167

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, OCTOBER 21, 1909.

***DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, IN THE YEAR 1866.**

***“And for a helmet the hope of salvation.”***1Th 5:8***.***

THE very mention of a helmet may well seem to REMIND EVERY CHRISTIAN HERE THAT HE IS A SOLDIER.  
**I.** If you were not soldiers, you would not need armor. But being soldiers, you need to he clad from head to foot in armor of proof. I suppose every Christian here knows, as a matter of theory, that he is a Christian soldier and that he has been enlisted under the banner of the Cross to fight against the powers of darkness until he wins the victory. But we all need to have our memories refreshed upon this matter, for soldiering, in time of war, at any rate, is not a very pleasant occupation—and the flesh constantly attempts to give it over. That “we have no abiding city here,” is a Truth of God which we all know and yet the most of us try to make the earth as comfortable for ourselves as if it were to be our abiding residence! We are all soldiers—we know that—but still, too many Christians act as if they could be the friends of the world and the friends of God at the same time. Now, Christian, remember once and for all that you are a soldier! Did you dream, young man, that as soon as you were baptized and added to the Church, the conflict was all over? Ah, it was then but just beginning! Like Caesar, you then crossed the Rubicon and declared war against your deadly enemy. You drew your sword—you did not sheathe it. Your proper note on joining the Church is not one of congratulation, as though the victory were won, but one of *preparation*—for now the trumpet sounds and the fight begins! You are a soldier at all times, Christian! You ought to sit even at your table as a soldier sits and you should go out especially into the world as a soldier goes out. Never take off your armor, for if you do, in some unguarded moment you may meet with serious wounds! But *keep your armor always about you and be watchful*, for you are always in the midst of enemies wherever you may be! And even when the persons who surround you are your friends, there are still evil spirits, unseen of men, who watch for your tripping—and you must not put up your sword, for you are to wrestle against principalities, powers and spiritual wickedness in high places—against whom you must always be on the watch. You are a soldier, Christian—remember that!  
Nor are you a soldier in barracks, or at home, but *you are a soldier in an enemy’s country*. Your place is either in the trenches or else in the thick of the battle! You who are sick are like soldiers in the trenches. You are patiently hoping and quietly waiting, as it were, upon the ramparts, looking for the time to come. But others of you, out in business and engaged in the concerns of life, are like soldiers marching in a long file to the conflict, like the housemen dashing on to the front of the battle. More or less, according to your circumstances, you are all exposed to the foe and that at every period of life!  
Where are you, let me ask, but *in the country of an enemy who never gives any quarter*? If you fall, it is death! The world never forgives the Christian—it hates him with a perfect hatred and it longs to hurt him. Only let the world see you commit half a stumble and they will soon report and magnify it! What might be done by other men without observation, if it were done by a Christian, would be noticed, reported and misrepresented. The world understands that you are its natural antagonist. Satan perceives in you a representative of his old enemy, the Lord Jesus, and you may rest assured that he will never give you quarter if once he gets an opportunity of destroying you! Mind the enemy, mind the enemy, for he is one of a malicious spirit!  
You have to fight with one, too, *who never yet made a truce*. *You*may come to terms and parley, but the powers of evil never do. *You*may hang out the white flag if you like. The foe may seem, for a time, as though he gave you credit, but never give your foe any credit! He hates you when he seems to love you best. “Dread the Greeks, even when they bring you gifts,” said the tradition of old—and let the Christian dread the world most when it puts on its softest speeches! Stand, then, upon your guard, you warriors of the Cross, when least you fear, the cringing foe will come behind you and stab you under the pretense of friendship! Your Master was betrayed with a kiss, and so will you be unless you watch unto prayer.  
You have to do with an enemy *who never can make any peace with you, nor can you ever make any peace with him*. If you become at peace with sin, sin has conquered you—and it is impossible, unless you give up the fight and yield your neck to the everlasting thralldom—that there should ever be peace for so much as a moment. Oh, Christian, see how guarded you ought to be! How necessary to be clothed with your armor! How necessary to have it of the right kind, to keep it bright and to wear it constantly! You are a soldier, a soldier in battle, a soldier in the foeman’s country, a soldier with a cruel and malicious enemy who knows neither truce nor parley, and who gives no quarter, but will fight with you till you die! Heaven is the land where your sword should be sheathed—there shall you hang the banner high—but here we wrestle with the foe and must do so till we cross the torrent of death. Right up to the river’s edge must the conflict be waged. Foot by foot and inch by inch must all the land to Canaan’s happy shore be won. Not a step can be taken without conflict and strife—but once there, you may lay aside your helmet and put on your crown, put away your sword, and take your palm branch— your fingers shall no longer need to learn to war, but your hearts shall learn the music of the happy songsters in the skies! This, then, is the first thought—that you are a soldier.  
**II.**But the second thought is BEING A SOLDIER, LOOK TO YOUR HEAD.  
Soldiers, look to your heads! A wound in the head is a serious matter. The head, being a vital part, we need to be well protected there. The heart needs to be guarded with the breastplate, but the head needs to be protected quite as much, for even if a man should be true-hearted, yet if a shot should go through his brain he would not be worth much as a soldier—his body would strew the plain. The head must be taken care of. There are a great many Christian people who never have any trouble with their heads at all. There are certain religionists who get their hearts warmed and then they think that that is enough. Now, give me above everything else a good warm heart, but oh, to have that warm heart coupled with a head that is well taken care of! Do you know that a hot head and a hot heart together do a deal of mischief, but with a hot heart and a cold brain you may do a world of service to the Master. Have right Doctrine in the head and then set the soul on fire and you will soon win the world! There is no standing in that man’s way whose head and heart are both right—but to neglect the head has been a serious mischief with many Christians. They have been almost powerless for usefulness because they have not taken care of their brains. They have got to Heaven, but they have not got many victories on the road because their brains have been out of order. They have never been able to clearly understand the Doctrines—they have not been able to give a reason for the hope that is in them. They have not, in fact, looked well to the helmet which was to cover their heads!  
The text refers us to our head because it speaks of a helmet—and a helmet is of no use to any part except the head. Among other reasons why we should preserve the head in the day of battle, let us give these— *the head is peculiarly liable to the temptations of Satan, of self and of fame*. It is not easy, you know, to stand on a high pinnacle without the brain beginning to reel. And if God takes a man and puts him on a high pinnacle of usefulness, he had need to have his head taken care of. If a Brother is possessed of a considerable amount of wealth, there is a great danger in that wealth unless there is a wealth of Divine Grace as well as a wealth of gold. If a man is well spoken of, his sphere may not be very large, but if everybody praises him, he will also need to have his head well protected—for the little praise, even though it should come from fools—would be too much for a fool. If a man can stand commendation, he can stand anything. The severest trial which a Christian has to bear is probably the trial which comes from his kind but inconsiderate friends who would puff him up, if they could, by telling him what a fine fellow he is. If your friends will not do this, you will probably have a friend within who will do it for you—and if you should forget it, the devil will not! “What a capital sermon you gave us this morning, Mr. Bunyan,” said a friend where John had been preaching. “You are too late,” said Bunyan, “the devil told me that before I came out of the pulpit.” Yes, and he will be sure to do it—and hence the need of having a helmet to put on the head so that when you are successful, when you are getting on in life, when friends are speaking well of you—you may not get intoxicated with it! Oh, to have a good, cool helmet to put on your brain when it begins to get a little hot with praise, so that you may still stand fast and not be borne down by vanity! O Vanity, Vanity, Vanity, how many you have slain! How many who then seemed upon the very brink of greatness have stumbled upon this stumbling-block—men who seemed as though they would enter Heaven—but a little bit of honor, some glittering bribe, a golden gift has turned them aside and they fail! Take care of your heads, Brothers and Sisters!  
And is not *the head liable to attacks from skepticism*? People who have no brains are not often troubled with doubts, but people who have brains have probably felt that whether they resolved to use them or not, the brains would use themselves. It is very good of our good fathers to tell us not to read dangerous books, very good of them, indeed! But we do read them for all that—and though we sometimes tell the young folks not to read this and that heretical treatise, and we wish they would take our advice—yet somehow or other they get hold of such things and will ponder them. Brothers and Sisters, I believe that in such times as these, when everything is so free, and when discussion is so common—we must expect that our young fellows will look at a great many things which they had better leave alone—and their heads will be endangered thereby, for the bullets of skepticism threaten to go right through their brains! Well, what then? As we cannot take Christians out of the way of the bullets, we should give them a helmet to preserve them from them! He who has a hope of salvation—a good hope that he is saved, a hope that he shall see the face of Christ with joy at last—is not afraid of all the quibbles of skepticism! He may hear them all and for a moment be staggered by them, as a soldier might be who had a sudden shock or even a wound, but after a while he recovers and feels sound enough to enter into the conflict again. And the Christian can say—  
***“Let all the forms that men devise  
Assail my faith with treacherous art—  
I’d call them vanity and lies,  
And bind the Gospel to my heart.”***  
It has been very well observed that a man is not often a very thorough democrat after he gets a little money in the bank. Well, I think it is very likely that when a man gets a little stake in his country, he begins to be, to the merest extent, conservative. As soon as ever a man gets a stake in Christianity and feels that he has got salvation in Jesus Christ, he gets to be very, very conservative of the old-fashioned Truth of God. He cannot give up the Bible, then, because it is a broad land of wealth to him! He cannot give up Christ, for He is *his* Savior, *his* salvation. He cannot give up a single promise because that promise is so dear to his own soul. The helmet of salvation, then, will preserve the head in times of skepticism!  
The head, again, is very greatly in danger *from the attacks of personal unbelief*. Who among us has not doubted his own interest in Christ? Happy are you who are free from such trouble! But there are seasons with some of us when we turn our title deeds over and we are sometimes afraid lest they should not be genuine. There are times when, if we could, we would give a world to know that we are Christ’s, for at times we cannot—  
***“Read our title clear  
To mansions in the skies.”***  
Well, Beloved, this is very dangerous to our heads, but the man who has got the helmet of a right, sound, God-given hope of salvation—who has received from God the Holy Spirit a helmet which I am going to describe, by-and-by—when these doubts and fears come, they may distress him for a little while, but he knows the smell of gunpowder and he is not afraid! In the midst of all of Satan’s accusations, or the rising up of his old corruptions, or the threats of the flesh and of the world, he stands calm and unmoved because he wears as a helmet, the hope of salvation!  
Nor are these all the dangers to which the head is exposed. *Some persons are attacked by threats from the world*. The world brings down its double-handled sword with a tremendous blow upon the heads of many Christians. “You will suffer the loss of all things for Christ if you are such a fanatic as to do as you do. You will be poor, your children will need bread, your wife will be worse than a widow if you are such a fool.” “Ah,” says the Christian, “but I have a hope of salvation!” And the blow, when it comes, does not go through his head, but just falls on the helmet and the world’s sword gets blunted. “I can afford to be poor,” said Dr. Gill, when one of his subscribers threatened to give up his seat and would not attend if the doctor preached such-and-such a Doctrine. So says the Christian, “I can afford to be poor. I can afford to be despised. I have in Heaven a better and more enduring substance.” So, by the use of this blessed helmet he is not destroyed by the threats of the world!  
We want our young people to wear this helmet, too, *because of the errors of the times*. The errors of the times are many. We have to deal not merely with skepticism, but with superstition. They are tempted on the one side, they are tempted on the other. This and that you will have cried up. “Lo here,” and, “Lo there!” And there will be many misled who are not the people of God. “If it were possible, they would deceive the very elect”—but the elect are not deceived because their heads are not vulnerable to these errors, for they wear the hope of salvation and they are not afraid of all the “ites” or the “isms” in the world. The man knows he is saved. Once you get to know Christ personally and that He loved you and gave Himself for you—and then rejoice that you are forgiven and justified through Him—the world will count you stupid and obstinate, but you will stand firm and be able to resist all its sarcasm

and its ridicule. He who has made a refuge of Jesus Christ may stand safe, whatever errors may invade the land!  
They tell us that the Church of God is in great danger and that Popery will spread over the land altogether. I believe it will, but that it will spread over the *Church of God*—no—I know far better than that! The Church of God can never be in danger! Every man in whom is the life of God would be as ready to die tomorrow for the Truth as our forefathers were in the Marian days! Rest assured there would still be found men and women to stand in the burning piles if the times required them— and our prisons would not long be without heavenly-minded tenants if the Truth needed to be defended by suffering, even unto death! There *is*danger, great danger! There never was such danger in modern times of Popery spreading over the land as now. But there is no danger to the man who has his helmet on! No, let the arrows fly thick as hail and let the foes have all political power and all the *prestige* of antiquity that they may—a little body of true-hearted Christians will still stand out at the thick of the onslaught and cut their way to Glory and to victory through whole hosts because their heads are guarded with the heavenly helmet of the hope of salvation! Soldiers, then, take care of your heads! I will say no more on that point.  
**III.**God has provided a covering for your heads, let us therefore now CONSIDER THE HELMET WITH WHICH HE WOULD HAVE YOUR HEADS PROTECTED.  
“The hope of salvation!” This is not the hope I spoke about this morning, for that was the hope that salvation was possible. This helmet is made up of an actual hope that, being already saved in Christ Jesus, you should abide unto eternal life. It is a personal hope, founded upon personal conviction—and is worked in us by the Holy Spirit.  
To begin, then, describing this helmet. *Who is its Giver*? You ask our friend, the soldier, where he gets his uniforms, and he answers that he gets them from the government stores. He gets his uniforms from Her Majesty. And that is how we must get our helmets. If any of you construct helmets of hope for yourselves, they will be of no use to you in the day of battle! The true helmet of hope must come from the heavenly arsenal! You must go to the Divine Storehouse, for unto God belongs salvation and the hope of salvation must be given to you by His free Grace. A hope of salvation is not purchasable. Our great King does not sell His armor, but gives it freely to all who enlist. They take the shilling and accept faith. They trust Christ and they are enlisted—and then the armor is given them gratis. From head to foot they are arrayed by Grace!  
Do you ask, *who is the Maker of this helmet*? Weapons are valued often according to the maker. A known maker gets his own price for his articles. Armorers of old took much trouble with the ancient helmets because a man’s life might depend upon that very useful means of defense. So we have here the name of God the Holy Spirit upon this helmet! A hope of salvation is the work of God the Holy Spirit in our soul. It is the Spirit who brings us to Jesus, shows us our need of Him and gives us faith in Him—and it is that same Spirit who enables us to hope that we shall endure to the end and enter into eternal life. Be not satisfied with a hope which is natural, but have a hope that is supernatural! Rest not satisfied with that which is made in the workshop of Nature. Go not to those who buy and sell for themselves, but go to the blessed Spirit, who gives freely and upbraids not!  
Or would you inquire, further, *of what metal this helmet is made*? That it is made of hope, we are told, but it is of the utmost consequence that it is a good hope! Beware of getting a base hope, a helmet made of paltry metal. There were some helmets they used to wear in the olden times which looked very well, but they were of no more use than brown-paper hats. And when a soldier goes into the fight with one of those on, the sword went through his skull. Get a good helmet, one made of the right metal. This is what a Christian’s hope is made of—he believes that Christ came into the world to save sinners. He trusts Christ to save him and he hopes that when Christ comes, he shall reign with Him. He believes that when the trumpet sounds, he shall rise with Christ and that in Heaven he shall have a secure dwelling place at the right hand of the Father. This hope is made up of proper and fitting deductions from certain truthful statements. That Christ died for *sinners* is true. That He died to save all who trust in Him is true. That *I*trust Him is true. Therefore that I am saved is true! And, being saved, that I shall inherit all His promises is a matter of course!  
Some people have a hope, but they do not know where they get it from, nor do they know a reason for it. When some people die, you hear it said, “I hope, I hope he is gone to Heaven.” Well, I wish he may have gone, but I dare not say of some that I hope so, because hope must have a *reason*. An anchor is of no use without its barb. It must be able to hold fast. It must have, at any rate, the modern anchor—some weight about it with which it can hold to the bottom. Hope must have its barb, too! It must have its reason, it must have its weight. If I say I hope such-andsuch, I am foolish for hoping it if I have not a reason for hoping. If you were to say you hoped the person sitting next to you would give you a thousand pounder, it would be a most absurd hope! You may wish it if you like, but what ground have you for the hope? But if somebody owes you a thousand pounds and you have his acknowledgement of the debt, you may then very well say that you hope it will be paid, for you have a legitimate right to expect it. Such is the Christian’s hope! God has promised to save those who believe. Lord, I believe You—You have promised to save me, and I hope you will—I *know* You will! The Christian’s hope is not a fancy, not a silly desire. It did not spring up in the night, like Jonah’s gourd, and it will not wither in a night. The Christian’s hope is something that will bear a crack from a club, or a cut from a sharp sword. It is made of good metal. John Bunyan said of a certain sword that it was “a true Jerusalem blade”—and I may call this a true Jerusalem helmet and he that wears it need not fear!  
Having shown the metal of which the helmet is made, let me now describe *the strength of the helmet*. It is so strong that he who wears it is invulnerable under all sorts of assaults. He may stagger under a blow, but he cannot be hurt by it. Recollect what David said. All the troubles in the world once set on David and began to beat him—and they gave him many terrible blows. They thought they had certainly ruined him. David was bleeding and was full of wounds. He half thought he would die and he tells us, himself, that he would have fainted, only he had a bottle of cordial with him called *faith*. He says, “I had fainted if I had not believed.” But just at the time when they thought he would faint and die, suddenly the old hero that slew Goliath made all his enemies fly before him as he cried, “Why are you cast down, O my Soul, and why are you disquieted within me? Hope you in God.” And he laid about him right and left, as he should. “I shall yet praise Him who is the health of my countenance and my God.” “Hope you in God,” Christian! Oh that blessed word, HOPE! You know what the New Zealanders call hope? They call it in their language, “the swimming thought,” because it always swims. You cannot drown it—it always keeps its head above the wave! When you think you have drowned the Christian’s hope, up it comes, all dripping from the brine, and cries again, “Hope you in God, for I shall yet praise Him!” Hope is the nightingale that sings in the night. Faith is the lark that mounts up towards Heaven, but hope is the nightingale that cheers the valley in the darkness! Oh, Christian, be thankful that you have so strong a helmet as this which can bear all assaults and can keep you unwounded in the midst of the fray!  
This hope of salvation *is a helmet which will not come off*. It is of main importance, you know, to have a helmet that will not be knocked off the first thing in the fight. That is why our policemen are dressed differently from what they used to be, because their hats used to get knocked off the very first thing. So it will be with some people’s helmets if they have a commonplace hope—but the Christian wears a helmet that he cannot get off. There was once a good soldier of Jesus Christ—this soldier happened to be a woman, however, and some women are the best soldiers Christ ever had—they are His true Amazons! This good woman had been much attacked by a skeptical person and when she was very much confused with some of his knotty questions, she turned round and said to him, “I cannot answer you, Sir, but neither can you answer me, for I have a something within me that you cannot understand which makes me feel that I could not give up what I know of Christ for all the world.” You see, he could not get her helmet off—and the devil himself cannot drag the Christian’s helmet off when he has once got it fairly buckled on. The world can neither give nor take away the hope of a Christian! It comes from God and He will never withdraw it, for His gifts and calling are without repentance. Once let this helmet be put on and He will never remove it, but we shall hope on and hope always until we shall see His face at the last!  
I should like to go round among this regiment, as the commanding officers sometimes do, to have a look at you. This helmet is an oldfashioned kind of armor and in the old days the lieutenants and other officials, when they went round the regiment, used to look not only to see that the men had their helmets, but to see that they had oiled them, for in those times they used to oil their helmets to make them shine and to keep the various joints, buckles and so on, in good order. No rust was ever allowed on the helmets and it is said that when the soldiers marched out with their bronze helmets and their white plumes, they shone most brilliantly in the sun. David speaks, you know, of “anointing the shield.” He was speaking of a bronze shield which had to be anointed with oil. Now, when God anoints His people’s hope—when He gives them the oil of joy, their hope begins to shine bright in the light of the Savior’s Countenance—and what a fine array of soldiers they then are! Satan trembles at the gleaming of their swords—he cannot endure to look upon their helmets. But some of you do not keep your hope clear—you do not keep it bright. It gets rusty out of use and then before long it gets to sit uncomfortably upon you and you get weary with the fight. O Holy Spirit, anoint our heads with fresh oil and let Your saints go forth tonight terrible as an army with banners!  
Do not let it be overlooked that *the helmet was generally considered to be a place of honor*. The man put his plume in his helmet. He frequently wore his crest there and in the thick of the fight the captain’s plume was seen in the midst of the smoke and dust of battle—and the men pressed to the place where they saw it. Now, the Christian’s hope is his honor and his glory. I must not be ashamed of my hope! I must wear it for beauty and for dignity and he who has a right good hope will be a leader to others. Others will see it and will fight with renewed courage. And where he hews a lane of the foes, they will follow him, even as he follows his Lord and Master who has overcome and sits down upon His Father’s Throne! I hope there are many Christians here who keep their helmets bright—and that there are many more who desire to have such helmets to protect themselves and to grace their profession.  
**IV.**YET THERE ARE SOME HERE WHO HAVE NO HELMETS. The reason is obvious. They are not Christ’s soldiers.  
Of course the Lord Jesus does not provide anybody with armor but those in His service. But Satan knows how to give you a helmet, too. His helmets are very potent ones. Though the sword of the Spirit can go right through them, nothing else can. He can give and has given some of you a headpiece that covers your entire skull—a thick headpiece of indifference, so that no matter what is preached, you do not care. “What do I care?” you say—and that is your helmet.  
Then he puts a piece in the front of the helmet called *a brazen forehead and a brow of brass*. “What do I care?” That is your cry. Then he takes care to fit the helmet right over your eyes so that you cannot see— yes, though Hell itself is before you, you do not see it! “What do I care?” Then he also knows how so to fit the helmet that it acts as a gag to your mouth so that you never pray. You can swear through it, but you cannot pray! Still you stick to your old cry, “What do I care?”  
Ah, it is not very likely that any sword of mine will get at your head! Arguments will not move you, for that is a question that cannot very well be argued—“What do I care?” It is all very well for you to say that, but oh, I pray God the Holy Spirit to get at your head, notwithstanding that horrible helmet, for if not, God has a way of dealing with such as you are— when you come to die, you will sing another song! When you come to lie there upon that bed of sickness and the grim day of eternity is in view, you will not be able to say quite so gaily as you do now, “What do I care?” And when the trumpet rings through earth and Heaven and your body starts up from your grave—and you see the great Judge upon His Throne—you will not be able to say, then, “What do I care?” Your head will then be bare to the pitiless tempest of Divine wrath! Bareheaded, you must be exposed to the everlasting storm that shall descend upon you. And when the great angel binds you up with your fellows in bundles to burn, you will *then* feel that you are not able to say, “What do I care?” for cares will come upon you like a wild deluge when you are banished from His Presence and all hope is gone!  
Oh, I wish you would take off that helmet! May God grant you Grace to unbuckle it tonight, never to put it on again! Do care. You are not a fool, my Friend, are you? It is only a fool who says, “What do I care?” *Surely you care about your soul! Surely Hell is worth escaping from! Surely Heaven is worth winning! Surely that Cross on which our Savior died is worth thinking of! Surely that poor soul of yours is worth caring about*! Do, I pray you, think, and not go hastily on. Oh, may Jesus Christ, who died for such as you are, bring you to trust Him! And then, unbuckling all that evil armor of, “What do I care?” you will bow before His Cross and kiss His hands—and He will put upon you the golden helmet of a hope of salvation and you will rise, one of the Kings own soldiers, to fight His battles and win an immortal wreath of everlasting victory! May it is so with every one of us!

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:**1Th 5:1-28***.***

**Verses 1, 2.***But of the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I write you. For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord comes as a thief in the night.* It will be a great surprise to the wicked. It will take them by surprise. Just at that moment when they least expect it, Christ will come, and as the thief comes to destroy and to kill, so will the coming of Christ be the death of their carnal ease—the destruction of their earthly hopes!

**3.***For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction comes upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape*. A terrible text that—“They shall not escape.” They shall not escape by their own power or force or wisdom! They shall not escape even by the annihilation which they might well desire, but which shall not come to them. They shall not escape.

**4.***But you, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief*. You know that Christ will come. You expect the dissolution of this present state. To you, therefore, it will come as one who calls at daytime. You cannot know the hour. You must not know it. But since you know that He will come, and come to your joy—and since you are in the light, you look with gladness to that coming!

**5, 6.***You are all the children of light and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep as do others.* If we were children of the night, sleep is a proper occupation for the night, but as we are the children of the day, let us not sleep as others.

**6.***But let us watch and be sober*. Watchfulness and sobriety are appropriate duties for the day. To be always serving our Lord with constancy and to keep ourselves from the fascinations of the world which make men’s minds drunk—may these two things be our daily care.

**7.***For they that sleep, sleep in the night; and they that are drunk are drunk in the night*. There are a few who have reached to such a pitch of shameless idleness that they sleep in the day. And there are others who have come to such a state of debauchery that they are drunk in the day. But this is not the common way of things, nor even in the judgment of the most licentious of the world is this at all a proper state of things. “They that sleep, sleep in the night. They that are drunk are drunk in the night.” Let us who are of the day be sober, and let us of course be awake, but let us be more than awake, since watchfulness is here joined to wakefulness and watchfulness in a soldier requires that his armor be on. So Paul pushes the parallel a little farther.

**8.***But let us who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for a helmet, the hope of salvation*. Soldiers, when they sleep, take off their armor. But in the day when they are awake and on their guard they wear their armor and are ready for the fray. See how much is involved in Christian wakefulness. God help us to carry out every virtue to its legitimate consequences—not to be wakeful after a fashion, but wakeful after God’s fashion!

**9.***For God has not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ*. In making us children of light, he gave evidence that our appointment was for the light—that His eternal ordinances were that through the light of Gospel Grace we should, by and by, enter into the light of eternal Glory. “God has not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ.”

**10.***Who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him*. They who have served their day and generation, when they sleep, are not parted from their Lord. They become not the children of the darkness by that fact, for He died for us, that whether we wake or sleep we should live together with Him. Whether we are living here or living there, we shall still live together with Him.

**11.***Therefore comfort yourselves together and edify one another, just as you also are doing*. The more of this the better. Christian people should constantly converse with one another for mutual edification.

**12, 13.***And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labor among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; and to esteem them very highly in love for their work’s sake*. You see, in the Church of old they edified one another, but for all that, they did not cast off God’s ordinance of Christian ministry. There was rule in the Church, then, as there should be now—and the Apostle, when he speaks of this individual edification, this mutual instruction—does not forget to notice those who were the pastors of the flock. He says, “Know them which labor among you and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; and esteem them very highly in love for their work’s sake.”

**13.***And be at peace among yourselves.* How can a Church prosper if it is not?  
**14-16.***Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feeble minded, support the weak, be patient toward all men. See that none render evil for evil unto any man, but always follow that which is good both among yourselves and to all men. Rejoice evermore.*Here follows a string of Christian precepts—a golden chain. “Rejoice evermore.”  
**17-19.***Pray without ceasing. In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you. Quench not the Spirit.*Do not despise His operations, either in yourselves or in your brethren. Do not quench Him by neglect, much less by open opposition!  
**20-22.***Despise not prophesying. Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. Abstain from all appearance of evil.*Not from that which other people choose to *think* evil, but from all real evil whatever it is—even from the very shadow that it casts and the shape which it assumes!  
**23-26.***And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is He that calls you, who also will do it. Brethren, pray for us. Greet all the brethren with a holy kiss.* Give one another a hearty shake of the hands. That is the western interpretation of the eastern form. Outward forms differ. The inward sense abides the same. Let brotherly love continue in a hearty friendliness among yourselves.  
**27, 28.***I charge you by the Lord that this Epistle be read unto all the holy brethren. The Grace of our lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen*.

—Adapted from *The C. H. Spurgeon Collection,* Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307  
**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.** Sermon #1900 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

**÷1Th 5.16**

REJOICE EVERMORE  
NO. 1900

**A SERMON INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S-DAY, MAY 23, 1886, *DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“Rejoice evermore.”***1Th 5:16***.***

THIS is a sunny precept. When we read it, we feel that the time of the singing of birds has come. That joy should be made a duty is a sure token of the blessedness of the New Covenant. Because Jesus has suffered, we are encouraged, commanded and enabled to rejoice. Only the Man of Sorrows and His chosen Apostles can teach for a precept such a word as this—“*Rejoice evermore*.” Happy people who can be thus exhorted! We ought to rejoice that there is a command to rejoice! Glory be unto the God of happiness who bids His children be happy. While musing on this text, I seem carried in spirit to the green woods and their bowers. As in a dell, all blue with flowers, where the sun smiles down upon me through the half-born oak leaves, I sit down and hear the blessed birds of the air piping out their love-notes—their music says only this—“*Rejoice evermore*.” All that I see, and hear, and feel surrounds me with garlands of delight, while the fairest of all the shepherds of Sharon sings to me this delicious pastoral—“*Rejoice evermore*.” The very words have breathed spring into my soul and set my heart blossoming! Thus am I also made to be as a daffodil which long has hidden away among the clods, but now, at last, ventures to lift up her yellow lily and ring out her golden bell. Who can be sad, or silent, when the voice of the Beloved says, “*Rejoice evermore*”?

Our Apostle speaks of rejoicing as a personal, present, permanent duty to be always carried out by the people of God. The Lord has not left it to our own option whether we will sorrow or rejoice, but He has pinned us down to it by positive injunction—“Rejoice evermore.” He will have this cloth of gold spread over the whole field of life. He has laid down as first and last, beginning, middle and end—“Rejoice *evermore*.” Some things are to be done at one time, some at another, but rejoicing is for all times, forever and forevermore, which, I suppose, is more than ever, if more can be! Fill life’s sea with joy up to the high water mark. Spare not, stint not, when rejoicing is the order of the day. Run out to your full tether, sweep your largest circle when you use the golden compasses of joy!

Some things being once done are done with and you need not further meddle with them; but you have never done with rejoicing. “Rejoice evermore.”

*Our text is set in the midst of many precepts* . Notice how from the 14th verse, the Apostle packs together a number of duties of Christian ministers and Church members—one towards another. “We exhort you, Brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feeble-minded, support the weak, be patient toward all men.” All these things are to be done in turn, according as occasion requires, but, “*rejoice evermore*.” You have plenty to do, but this thing you have *always* to do. You shall never be able to fold your hands for lack of some holy task or other, but be not worried— be not fretted by what you have to do—on the contrary, take up the sacred duties with alacrity, welcoming each one of them and entering upon them with delight! Rejoice in each one, because you “*rejoice evermore*.” You will have to warn the unruly and their rebellious tempers will, perhaps, irritate you. Or, if in patience you possess your soul, yet you may grow sad at having so melancholy a duty to perform, but be not troubled, even by the grief of injured love. Warn the unruly, but “rejoice evermore.”

Do not pause in the blessed service of rejoicing when you are called upon to comfort the feeble-minded. There is a danger that the feebleminded may rob you of your comfort, but let it not be so. In attempting to lift them out of the waters you may, perhaps, be almost drowned, yourself—your deliverance will lie in the sweet words, “*Rejoice evermore*.” You will lose your power both to warn the unruly and to comfort the feebleminded if you lose your joy. The joy of the Lord will be your strength in all these matters. Therefore, “rejoice evermore.” Close at your hand will lie the weak who need supporting and you may be half saying to yourselves, “We wish that all God’s people were strong, that we might unitedly spend all our strength against the foe instead of having to use it at home for supporting our own weak soldiers.” But be not dejected on that account—while you are supporting the weak, still, “rejoice evermore.” Your rejoicing will be a great support to the faint—your *ceasing* to rejoice will be a terrible confirmation of their sorrow! Lend the feeble a hand, but do not stop your own singing! Does not a mother carry her baby and sing at the same time?

As you turn about, you find all men gathering to hinder you, to grieve you, to slander you, or to make use of you for their base purposes. But be not grieved. Put up with your poor fellow creatures since the Lord puts up with you, but do not leave off rejoicing! As you are patient towards all men, let your patience have a flavor of joy in it. However great the provocations that you endure, still, “*rejoice evermore*.” As it is written, “With all your sacrifices you shall offer salt,” so let it be your settled purpose with every other duty to offer rejoicing. I am sure, Brothers, that we make a very great mistake if we get like Martha—cumbered with much serving—for that cumbering prevents our serving our Master well. He loves to see those who serve in His house of a cheerful countenance. He wants not slaves to Grace His Throne. He would have His children wait upon Him with a light in their faces which is the reflection of His own! He would have His joy fulfilled in them, that their joy may be full. It is His royal pleasure that His service should be delight, His worship, Heaven, His Presence, Glory! Let your hearts be sanctified, but let not your hearts be troubled. Amidst a thousand duties give not way to a single anxiety! While you are desirous to honor God in everything, yet be not overburdened, even, with the cares of His cause and service, lest you put forth the hand of Uzzah to stay the Ark of the Lord. The Lord forbade His priests to wear garments that caused sweat and He will not have any of us fret and worry about His cause so as to lose our rest in Himself. Wrestle for a blessing, but still “*rejoice evermore*.”

The command to rejoice is set in the midst of duties—it is put there to teach us how to perform them all.  
Also notice that our text *comes just after a flavoring of trouble and bitterness*. Read verse 15—“See that none render evil for evil unto any man.” Children of God are apt to have evil rendered to them. They may have slanderous reports spread about them. They may be accused of things they never dreamed of. They may be cut to the heart by the ingratitude of those who ought to have been their friends, but still they are bid, “*rejoice evermore*.” Even rejoice in the persecution and in the slander! “Blessed are you when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for My sake. Rejoice, and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in Heaven: for so persecuted they the Prophets which were before you.” So says our Lord. “Rejoice,” He says, “and be exceedingly glad.”  
There is an expression in the Greek that never has been rendered into English, and never will be—*agalliasth*e. Old Trapp half puns upon the *agalliasthe* as he says, “dance a galliard.” I do not know what a “galliard” was, but I suppose that it was some very joyous kind of dance. Certainly we know of no better way of translating our Lord’s word than by—*exult*, or *leap for joy*. Even when your good name shall be tarnished by the malice of the wicked, then you are to leap for joy! When are you to be wretched? Surely despondency is excluded. If slander is to make us dance, when are we to fret? Suppose some other kind of trial should come upon you? You are still to rejoice in the Lord always. The dearest friend is dead—“rejoice evermore.” The sweet babe is sickening, the darling of your household will be taken away—“*rejoice evermore*.” Trade is ebbing out, prosperity is disappearing from you—you may even be brought to poverty—but, “rejoice evermore.” Your health is affected, your lungs are weak, your heart does not beat with regularity, very soon you may be sick unto death, but, “rejoice evermore.” Shortly you must put off this tabernacle altogether! Tokens warn you that you must soon close your eyes in death, but, “*rejoice evermore*.” There is no limit to the exhortation! It is always in season! Through fire and through water, through life and through death, “*rejoice evermore*.”  
Now and then a commentator says that the command of our text must mean that we are to be in the habit of rejoicing, for there must necessarily be intervals in which we do not rejoice. It is to be “constant but intermittent.” so one good man says. I do not know how that can be, though I know what he means. He means that it ought to be the general tenor of our life that we rejoice, yet he evidently feels that there must be black clouds, now and then, to vary the abiding sunshine. He warns us that there will be broken bits of road where as yet the steam roller has not forced in the granite. *But that will not do as an interpretation of the text,* for the Apostle expressly says, “Rejoice evermore”—that is, rejoice straight on and never leave off rejoicing! Whatever happens, rejoice! Come what may, rejoice! If the worst darkens to the worst—if the night lowers into a sevenfold midnight, yet, “rejoice evermore!” This carillon of celestial bells is to keep on ringing through the night as well as through the day. “Rejoice, rejoice, you saints of God at every time, in every place, and under every circumstance. Joy, joy, forever! Rejoice evermore. In the midst of a thousand duties, amid the surges of 10,000 trials, still rejoice.” There is to be about the Christian a constancy of joy.  
I am bound to mention that among the curiosities of the Churches I have known many deeply spiritual Christian people who have been afraid to rejoice. Much genuine religion has been “sickened over with the pale cast of thought!” Some take such a view of religion that it is, to them, a sacred duty to be gloomy! They believe in the holiness of discontent, the sanctity of repining—and they recoil from grateful joy as if it were the devil in the form of an angel of light! One of the commandments of the saints of misery is, “Draw down the blinds on Sunday.” Another is, “Never smile during a sermon—it is wicked.” A third precept is, “Never rest yourself and be sure that you never let anybody else rest for an instant. Why should anybody be allowed a moment’s quiet in a world so full of sin? Go through the world and impress people with the idea that it is an awful thing to live.”  
I have known some very good people spoiled for practical usefulness— and spoiled as to being like the Lord Jesus Christ by their deeply laid conviction that it was wicked to be glad. Well do I remember an earnest Christian woman who saw me when I was first converted, full of the joy of the Lord and joyfully assured of my salvation in Christ Jesus. She seemed distressed at the sight of so much joy! She shook her head. She looked at me with that heavenly-minded pity which these good people usually lay by in store. It seemed to her a dreadful thing that so young a Christian should dare to know whom he had believed! If you had been a Christian a hundred years you might, perhaps, begin to think it possible that you were saved—but to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ straight away like a little child—and at once to rejoice in His salvation seemed to this dear old Christian woman to be an act of such shocking temerity that she could only shake her dear head and prognosticate all sorts of horrible things!  
Since then I have found a great many like she and when I have seen them shake their heads they have not shaken me half so much as she shook my heart on that first occasion! I know them, now, and I know that there is, after all, nothing in that shake of the head. The fact is that they ought to shake their heads about themselves for getting into so sad a state while this text stands on the sacred page, “Rejoice evermore.” It cannot be a wise and prudent thing to neglect this plain precept of the Word of God! It cannot be an unsafe thing to do what we are commanded to do! It cannot be a wrong thing for a Believer to abide in that state of mind which is recommended by the Holy Spirit in words so plain and so unguarded, “*Rejoice evermore*.”  
Oh, dear Friends, you may rejoice! God has laid no embargo upon rejoicing! He puts no restriction upon happiness. Do believe it that you are permitted to be happy! Do believe that there is no ordinance of God commanding you to be miserable. Turn this Book over and see if there is any precept that the Lord has given you in which He has said, “Groan in the Lord always, and again I say, groan.” You may groan if you like. You have Christian liberty for that, but, at the same time, do believe that you have larger liberty to rejoice, for so it is put before you! He bids you rejoice and yet, again, He says “rejoice.” Some of God’s sheep dare not go into the Lord’s own pasture. It is dark and thick with rich and luscious food—and into that field their Shepherd has already led them. Yet they dream that there is a gate and that gate is shut—and across it is written this word—“Presumption.” They are afraid to feed where God has made the best grass to grow for them because they are afraid of being presumptuous! The fear is groundless, but painfully common.  
Oh that I could deliver the true Believer from this evil influence! If you are Believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, everything that there is in Christ is yours! If you are resting in Jesus Christ, though you have only lately begun to trust in Him, the whole Covenant of Grace with all its infinite supplies belongs to you and you have the right to partake of that which Grace has provided! Jesus invites you to eat and drink abundantly. Beloved in the Lord, the only sin that you can commit at the banquet of love will be to deny yourselves! The feast is spread by royal hands—and royal bounty bids you come! Hold not back through shame or fear! Come and saturate your souls with goodness. “Eat you that which is good and let your soul delight itself in fatness,” for so God permits you to do.  
But I go a step farther and that is, that *it is a sin not to rejoice*. I will not say it harshly—I should like to say it as softly and tenderly as it could be put—but it must be said and I must not take away from the force of it by my tenderness. If it is a command, “Rejoice evermore,” then it is a breach of the command not to rejoice evermore! And what is a breach of a command? What is a neglect to obey a precept? Is it not a *sin*—a sin of shortcoming, though not of transgression? Beloved, why do your faces wear those gloomy colors? Why do you distrust? Why do you mourn? Why are you continually suspicious of the faithfulness of God? Why are you not rejoicing when there is God’s Word for it, first permitting, and then *commanding* you? Come, you unhappy and dolorous professors, question yourselves rather than others! O you forlorn one, cease to judge those whose eyes flash with exultation!  
Next time that you meet with a rejoicing Christian, do not begin to chide him, but quietly chide yourself because you do not rejoice. As for you who are swift of foot, I hope that you will not say an unkind word of poor Mephibosheth who is lame in both his feet, for he is dear to David and he shall sit at David’s table. But, on the other hand, Mephibosheth, in his lameness, must not grow bitter and censorious and find fault with Asahel who is fleet of foot as a young roe, or otherwise it may seem almost too ridiculous! No, no, Heavy-Heart, chide not the glad. Glad-Heart, deal not roughly with the sorrowful! Bear one another’s burdens and share one another’s joys! If there is any chiding, let it be the chiding of Little-Faith, sorrowfully bemoaning his own weakness of Grace. Oh that God would help us to be faithful to our own experiences—then we shall not criticize others, but judge ourselves.  
All this by way of introduction.  
**I.** And now, just for a minute or two, I desire to speak upon THE QUALITY OF THIS REJOICING which is commanded in our text. May the Holy Spirit enable me to set before you the select taste and special quality of a Believer’s life-long joy! “Rejoice evermore.”  
Brothers and Sisters, *this is not carnal rejoicing*. If it were, it would be impossible to always keep it up. There is a joy of harvest, but where shall we find it in winter? There is a joy of wealth, but where is this joy when riches take to themselves wings and fly away? There is a joy of health, but that is not always with us, for the evil days come and the years of weakness and sorrow. There is a joy in having your children round about you. Sweet are domestic joys, but these do not last forever. At the house of the happiest, knocks the hand of death! No, if your joys spring from earthly fountains, those fountains may be dried up and then your joys are gone. If the foundation of a man’s joy is*anywhere* on earth, it will be shaken, for there is a day coming when the whole earth shall shake and even now it is far from being a stable thing.  
Build not on the floods and what are outward circumstances but as waves of the changeful sea! No, Beloved, it cannot be carnal joy which is commanded here, since carnal joy in the nature of things cannot be forevermore. I know not that carnal joy is commanded anywhere. Men are permitted to rejoice in the things of this life, but that is the most that we can say. They are forbidden to rejoice too much in these things, for they are as honey, of which a man may soon eat till he is sickened. The joy which God commands is a joy in which it is impossible to go too far. It is a heavenly joy, based upon things which will last forever, or else we could not be bid to “rejoice evermore.”  
Again, as this joy is not carnal, so I feel quite sure that *it is not presumptuous*. Some persons ought not to rejoice. Did not the Prophet Hosea say, “Rejoice not, O Israel, for joy, as other people, for you have departed from your God”? There are some persons who rejoice and it would be well if a faithful hand were to dash the cup from their lips! They have never fled to Christ for refuge—they have never been born again—they have never submitted themselves to the righteousness of God and yet they are at ease in Zion. Ah, wretched ease! Many are ignorant of their ruin, strangers to the remedy of Grace, strangers to the blood that bought redemption—and yet they rejoice in their own righteousness. They have a joy that has been accumulated through years of false profession, hypocritical formality and vain pretence. Such as these are not told to “rejoice evermore.”  
There must be sound reasons for rejoicing, now, or there can be no reason for rejoicing always. If your joy will not bear looking at, have done with it! If, when you run with the footmen of common self-examinations in time of health, they weary you, what will you do when you contend with the black horsemen of dark thought in the hour of death? The joy that will abide forever is the joy to be sought after! But joy which a man cannot justify never ought to be thought of as enduring “evermore.” Is your hope fixed on what Jesus did for sinners on the Cross? Are you really a partaker of the life that is in Him? Have you been begotten again unto a lively hope by the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead? If so, it is safe for you to rejoice at once and it will be equally safe for you to “rejoice evermore!” Is it not clear that the rejoicing commanded in our text is not a presumptuous joy, or a carnal joy?  
Again, dear Friends, I feel bound to add that *it must not be a fanatical joy*. Certain religious people are of a restless, excitable turn and never feel good till they are half out of their minds. You would not wonder if their hair should stand bolt upright, like the quills of the fretful porcupine. They are in such a state of mind that they cry, “hallelujah,” at anything or nothing, for they feel ready to cry, or shout, or jump, or dance. I do not condemn their delirium, but I *am* anxious to know what goes with it? Come here, Friend. Let us have a talk. What do you know? What? Is it possible that I offend you the moment I seek a reason for the hope that is in you? Is it so that you do not know anything of the Doctrines of Grace? You were never taught anything? The object of the institution which enlisted you is not to teach you, but only to excite you! It pours boiling water into you, but it does not feed you with milk. That is a miserable business!  
We like excitement of a proper kind and we covet earnestly a high and holy joy, but if our rejoicing does not come out of a clear understanding of the things of God and if there is no Truth of God at the bottom of it, what does it profit us? Those who rejoice without knowing why can be driven to despair without knowing why—and such persons are likely to be found in a lunatic asylum before long. The religion of Jesus Christ acts upon truthful, reasonable, logical principles—it is sanctified common sense. A Christian man should only exhibit a joy which he can justify and of which he can say, “There is reason for it.” I pray you, take care that you have joy which you may expect to endure forever because there is a good solid reason at

the back of it. The excitement of animal enthusiasm will die out like the crackling of thorns under a pot—we desire to have a flame burning on the hearth of our souls which is fed with the fuel of Eternal Truth and will, therefore, burn on forevermore.  
I go a little farther, and I say that I believe that this joy which is commanded here, “Rejoice evermore,” is *not even that high and Divine exhilaration which Christians feel upon special occasions*. We could tell of rapturous ecstasies and sublime joys which, if they are not Heaven, itself, are so near akin to it that we would not change them for the place that Gabriel fills when nearest to his Master’s Throne! Oh, there are times when God’s Elijah, having brought down the fire from Heaven, girds up his loins and runs before Ahab’s chariot with a Divine enthusiasm which onlookers cannot understand! There are moments on the top of the mountain when Peter is no fool for saying, “Let us build three tabernacles.” It is so good to be there that we would willingly stay on that mountain and never come down again to the bustle, turmoil and sin of a guilty world!  
Now, you are not commanded in the text to be always in such a high, exalted, rapturous state of mind as that. “Rejoice evermore,” but you cannot always rejoice at*that* rate! I have said that you cannot and I mean it *literally*. There is a physical impossibility in it! The strain upon the mind would be much too great. We could not live in such a condition of excitement and tension. Sometimes we can swim in the deep waters, but who can *always* swim? We can take to ourselves the wings of eagles and soar beyond the stars—but we are not condors and cannot always fly—we are more like the sparrows which find a house near the altar of God. When we cannot mount as on wings, we think it quite sufficient if we can run without weariness and walk without fainting. The ordinary joy of the Christian is that which is commanded here—it is not the joy of Jubilee but of every year. It is not the joy of harvest but of all the months. “*Rejoice evermore*.” No, Miriam, no, not always the timbrel! Not every day, “Sing unto the Lord, for He has triumphed gloriously.” There is other work for you. No, Moses, not every day, “Your right hand, O Lord, has dashed in pieces the enemy.” No, you have other work to do among these rebels, quite as honoring to your God and quite as useful as writing Israel’s triumphal hymn!  
No, James and John and Peter, not always on the top of Tabor. Sometimes in the house of death with your Master where the young girl is raised. And sometimes in Gethsemane to keep watch, if you can, while He sweats great drops of blood. You are to “rejoice evermore,” but you are not always to be clashing the high-sounding cymbals—sometimes the softer psaltery must satisfy your hand. All days are not holidays. There was a day when Job lost his cattle and his children and yet blessed the name of the Lord. All days are not wedding days. There was a day wherein Jacob cried, “All these things are against me!” All days are not as the days of Heaven upon earth. And until the day breaks and the shadows flee away, we shall have to bear about a joy that is rather a lamp in the night than a sun in the day—a joy that gladdens us when we are cast down, rather than lifts us up to ecstasy.  
I hope that you catch my thought, though I am afraid that I do but dimly put it. This shows you what kind of joy could not always be with us. The joy that can always be with us is a part of ourselves—a power of the new nature which God works in us by His own Spirit. It consists in the great cheerfulness of the new-born disposition—a full conviction that whatever God does is right—a sweet agreement with the Providence of God—let it ordain what it will, an intense delight in God, Himself, and in the Person of His dear Son. And, consequently, a quietness, a calm, a stillness of soul, “the peace of God which passes all understanding.” This holy rejoicing is a drop of the essence of Heaven! You have heard of “songs without words”—such is the joy of the Lord in the soul—a sort of silent song forever sung within the spirit. It is a quiet making of music with every pulse of the heart, a living Psalmody before God with every heaving of the lungs.  
I hope that you know what it means, or that if you do not, you may soon learn. This is a joy that has no wear and tear about it. You can keep, from year to year, the even tenor of this way, for this is the pace for which men’s minds were made. “*Rejoice evermore*.” You can live to be as old as Methuselah in this frame, for this rejoicing will never tear you to pieces. It will conserve you and act as the salt of your physical, mental, and spiritual man.  
Thus much upon the quality of this joy.  
**II.** Suffer a few words upon THE OBJECT OF THE REJOICING, in order to help you, dear Friends, to indulge it. “*Rejoice evermore*.” How can we keep this feast? What are the objects of such a joy as this?  
God helping us, we can always rejoice *in God*. What a God we have! “God, my exceeding joy,” said the Psalmist. “Delight yourself, also, in the Lord.” Every attribute of God, every characteristic of God is an inexhaustible gold mine of precious joy to every man who is reconciled to God. Delight yourself in God the Father, His electing love, His unchanging Grace, His illimitable power, His transcending Glory, in your being His child and in that Providence with which He orders all things for you! Delight yourself in your Father God! Delight yourself, also, in the Son, who is, “God with us.” God with us before the earth was, in the Covenant Council when He became our Surety and our Representative. God with us when His delights were with the sons of men. Delight in Him as Man suffering, sympathizing with you. Delight in Him as God putting forth infinite wisdom and power for you. I would need a month in which to give a bare outline of the various points of our Lord’s Divine and human Character which furnish us with objects of joy! Do but think of Him. Do but for a moment consider His love and if you are at all right in heart, it must bring unspeakable pleasure to you—  
***“Jesus, the very thought of You  
With sweetness fills my breast.”***  
Then think of the Holy Spirit and rejoice in Him as *dwelling in you*, quickening you, comforting you, illuminating you, and abiding with you forever. Think of the Triune God and be blessed.  
Then muse upon the Covenant of Grace. Think of redemption by blood. Think of Divine Sovereignty and all that has come of it in the form of Grace to men. Think of your effectual calling, your justification, your acceptance in the Beloved. Think of your final perseverance. Think of your union with the glorious Person of the Well-Beloved and of all the life and all the Glory that is wrapped up in that surpassing truth. “Rejoice evermore.” With such a God, you have always a source of joy!  
I believe, dear Friends, that if we are right-minded, every doctrine of the Gospel will make us glad, every promise of the Gospel will make us glad, every precept of the Gospel will make us glad. It you were to go over a list of all the privileges that belong to the people of God, you might pause over each one and say, “I could rejoice always in this if I had nothing else.” If ever you fail to rejoice, permit me to exhort you to awaken each one of the Graces of the Spirit to its most active exercise. Begin with the first of them—*faith*. Believe, and as you believe this and that out of the 10,000 blessings which God has promised, joy will spring up in your soul! Have you exercised faith? Then lead out the sister Grace of *hope*. Begin hoping for the resurrection, hoping for the Second Coming, hoping for the glory which is then to be revealed. What sources of joy are these!  
When you have indulged hope, then go on to *love* and let this fairest of the heavenly sisters point you to the way of joy. Go on to love God more and more and to love His people and to love poor sinners. And, as you love, you will not fail to rejoice, for joy is born of love! Love has on her left hand sorrow for the griefs of those she loves, but at her right hand a holy joy in the very fact of loving her fellows, for he that loves does a joyful thing. If you cannot get joy either out of hope, or faith, or love, then go on to *patience*. I believe that one of the sweetest joys under Heaven comes out of the severest suffering when patience is brought into play. “Sweet,” says Toplady, “to lie passive in Your hands and know no will but Yours.” And it is so sweet, so inexpressibly sweet, that to my experience the joy that comes of perfect patience is, under certain aspects, the most Divine of all the joys that Christians know this side of Heaven. The abyss of agony has a pearl in it which is not to be found upon the mountain of delight. Put patience to her perfect work and she will bring you the power to rejoice evermore.  
I will suppose that you have gone through all this and that you still say, “I cannot rejoice as I would.” Then arise, dear Brothers and Sisters, and gird yourself for holy exercise. Begin with *prayer*. Prayer will make the darkening cloud disappear and then you will rejoice. If supplication is over and you are not rejoicing, then sing a Psalm. “Bring here the minstrel.” Often does holy music set the Prophet going. Let us sing a song unto the Lord and if we have no joy in our hearts, already, we shall not have sung very many verses before rejoicing will drop on us like the dew which soaks the dry and dusky tents of the Arabians. If neither prayer nor praise will do it, then read the Word. Sit still and meditate on what the Lord has spoken. Go up to the Communion Table—gather with the people of God in sweet mutual converse. Or go out and preach, my Brothers, to sinners! Go to the Sunday school class, and tell the dear children about Christ. In Christian labor you will joy in the Lord as you would not have rejoiced in Him if you had been at home idle.  
At any rate, when you do not rejoice, say to yourself, “Come, Heart, this will not do. Why are you cast down, O my Soul?” I have heard of a mother that whenever her children began to cry and grow fretty, she said, “They must have medicine.” She was sure that they were not well. Whenever you begin to fret and worry, say to yourself, “I must take heavenly medicine, for I am not right. The leaves of the Scriptures are for my healing—I will use them for my soul’s good. If my heart were right, I would rejoice in the Lord, and as I am not rejoicing I must resort to the great Physician.”  
Brothers and Sisters, we must rejoice. Why should we not rejoice, since all things are ours? Heaven is ours in the future and earth is ours in the present. With the past and all its sins blotted out, the future and all its needs provided for by the bounty of an unchanging God, why should we be sad? If we are not glad, the stars may rebuke us as they twinkle amid the darkness—the sun may rebuke us for refusing to shine in the light of God. Come, Brothers and Sisters, let us obey the Word that says, “*Rejoice evermore*.”  
**III.** Lastly, somebody will say, “But why should we rejoice?” What are THE REASONS FOR THIS REJOICING? We ought not to need arguments to persuade us to be happy! The worldling says that, “he counts it one of the wisest things to drive dull care away.” The child of God may count it the wisest thing to cast his care upon his God. You do not need an argument for rejoicing, but if you did, it is found in the command of your Lord, who says to you, “Rejoice evermore.”  
*Rejoicing wards off temptation*. The Christian may be tempted, but little impression is made upon him by the pleasurable bait if he is happy in the Lord. There is a passage in Paul—I forget, just now, where it is— where he speaks of putting on the armor of light. It is fine poetry as well as solid fact that we wear the armor of light. And part of the meaning is that we are so surrounded with seraphic joy that nothing can tempt us. The joy which we wear is far superior to any which the Evil One can offer us and so his temptation has lost its power. What can the devil offer the joyous Christian? Why, if he were to say to him, “I will give you all the kingdoms of the world and the glory thereof, if you will fall down and worship me,” the Believer would reply to him, “Fiend, I have more than that! I have perfect contentment! I have absolute delight in God. My soul swims in a deep sea of bliss as I think of God.” The devil will speedily quit such a man as that, for the joy of the Lord is an armor through which he cannot send the dagger of his temptation!  
This joy of the Lord will shut out worldly mirth from the heart. The rejoicing Christian is not the kind of man that needs to spend his evenings in a theater. “Pooh!” he says, “what can I do *there*?” You say to the man who has once eaten bread, “I will take you to such a grand feast. I will show you a company of swine all feeding upon husks. Look upon them, see how they enjoy themselves! You shall have as much as you like and be as happy as they are.” He says, “But you do not know me! You do not understand me. I have none of the qualities that link me with swine! I cannot enjoy the things which they enjoy.” He that is once happy in God pours contempt upon the most sublime happiness that a worldling can know! It is altogether out of his line. He does not know their mirth, even as they do not know his rejoicing. I suppose that the fish of the sea have joys suitable to their natures. I do not envy them—I am not inclined to dive into their element. It is so with the children of God—they are not inclined to go after worldly things when they are happy in the Lord.  
But your miserable professors who simply go to a place of worship because they ought to go, and who are very good because they dare not be anything else, they have no joy in the Lord! They go to the devil for their joy—they openly confess that sometimes they must have a bit of pleasure and, therefore, they go to questionable amusements. No wonder that they are found in Satan’s courts, looking up to him for delights, since they find no rejoicing in the ways of the Lord!  
He that rejoices in the Lord always will be *a great encouragement to his fellow Christians*. He comes into the room— you like the very look of his face. It is a half-holiday to look at him and as soon as he speaks, he drops a sweet word of encouragement for the weak and afflicted. We have some Brothers and Sisters round about us whose faces always refresh me before preaching! Their words are cheering and strengthening. Those who rejoice in the Lord evermore cannot help perfuming the room where they are with the aroma of their joy. Others catch the blessed contagion of their contentment and become happy, too.  
*This is the kind of thing that attracts sinners*. They used, in the old times, to catch pigeons and send them out with sweet salves on their wings—other pigeons followed them into the dovecote for the sake of their perfume and so were captured. I would that everyone of us had the heavenly anointing on our wings, the Divine perfumes of peace, joy and rest! For then others would be fascinated to Jesus, allured to Heaven. God grant that it may be so, for Jesus’ sake! Amen.

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**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.** Sermon #1039 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

**÷1Th 5.17**

“PRAY WITHOUT CEASING”  
NO. 1039

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, MARCH 10, 1872 *BY C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“Pray without ceasing.”***1Th 5:17***.***

THE position of our text is very suggestive. Observe what it follows. It comes immediately after the precept, “Rejoice evermore,” as if that command had somewhat staggered the reader and made him ask, “How can I always rejoice?” and, therefore, the Apostle appended an answer, “Always pray.” The more praying the more rejoicing! Prayer gives a channel to the pent-up sorrows of the soul—they flow away and in their place streams of sacred delight pour into the heart. At the same time the more rejoicing the more praying! When the heart is in a quiet condition and full of joy in the Lord, then also will it be sure to draw near unto the Lord in worship. Holy joy and prayer act and react upon each other.

Observe, however, what immediately follows the text: “In everything give thanks.” When joy and prayer are married their first born child is *gratitude*. When we joy in God for what we have and believingly pray to Him for more, then our souls thank Him both in the enjoyment of what we have and in the prospect of what is yet to come. Those three texts are three companion pictures representing the life of a true Christian. The central sketch is the connecting link between those on either side. These three precepts are an ornament of Divine Grace to every Believer’s neck—wear them, every one of you, for glory and for beauty!

“Rejoice evermore.” “Pray without ceasing.” “In everything give thanks.” But we cannot spare any time for the consideration of the context—we must advance to the precept in hand. Our text, though exceedingly short, is marvelously full and we will discuss it under the following heads. We shall ask and answer four questions. What do these words imply? Secondly, What do they actually mean? Thirdly, How shall we obey them? And, fourthly, Why should WE especially obey them?

**I.**WHAT DO THESE WORDS IMPLY? “Pray without ceasing.” Do they not imply that the use of the voice is not an essential element in prayer? It would be most unseemly, even if it were possible, for us to continue unceasingly to pray aloud. There would, of course, be no opportunity for preaching and hearing—for the exchange of friendly conversation, for business, or for any other of the duties of life—while the din of so many voices would remind our neighbors rather of the worship of Baal than that of Zion. It was never the design of the Lord Jesus that our throats, lungs, and tongues should be forever at work.

Since we are to pray without ceasing, and yet could not pray with the voice without ceasing, it is clear that audible language is not essential to prayer. We may speak a thousand words which seem to be prayer, and yet never pray. On the other hand, we may cry into God’s ear most effectually and yet never say a word. In the book of Exodus God is represented as saying to Moses, “Why do you cry unto Me?” And yet it is not recorded that Moses had uttered so much as a single syllable at that time. It is true that the use of the voice often helps prayer. I find, personally, that I can pray best when alone if I can hear my own voice. At the same time it is not essential. It does not enter at all into the acceptability, reality, or prevalence of prayer. Silence is as fit a garment for devotion as any that language can fashion.

It is equally clear that the *posture* of prayer is of no great importance, for if it were necessary that we should pray on our knees we could not pray without ceasing—the posture would become painful and injurious. To what end has our Creator given us feet if He desires us never to stand upon them? If He had meant us to be on our knees without ceasing, He would have fashioned the body differently and would not have endowed us with such unnecessary length of limbs. It is well to pray on one’s knees. It is a most fitting posture. It is one which expresses humility, and when humility is truly felt kneeling is a natural and beautiful token of it. But, at the same time, good men have prayed flat upon their faces. They have prayed sitting, have prayed standing, have prayed in many postures—the posture does not enter into the essence of prayer. Consent not to be placed in bondage by those to whom the bended knee is reckoned of more importance than the contrite heart

It is clear, too, from the text, that the *place* is not essential to prayer, for if there were only certain holy places where prayer was acceptable and we had to pray without ceasing, our Churches ought to be extremely large so that we might always live in them! And they would have to comprise all the arrangements necessary for human habitations. If it is true that there is some sanctity this side of a brick wall more than there is on the other side of it. If it is true that the fresh air blows away Divine Grace and that for the highest acceptance we need arches, pillars, aisles, chancels and such, then farewell, you green lanes and fair gardens! Farewell lovely woods, for from now on we must, without ceasing, dwell where your fragrance and freshness can never reach us!

But this is ridiculous! Therefore I gather that the frequenting of some one particular place has little or nothing to do with prayer. And such a conclusion is consistent with the saying of Paul upon Mars’ Hill, “God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that He is Lord of Heaven and earth, dwells not in temples made with hands.” “Pray without ceasing.” That precept at one stroke overthrows the idea of particular times in which prayer is more acceptable or more proper than at others. If I am to pray without ceasing, then, *every* second must be suitable for prayer. And there is not one unholy moment in the hour, nor one unaccepted hour in the day, nor one unhallowed day in the year!

The Lord has not appointed a certain week for prayer, but *all* weeks should be weeks of prayer. Neither has He said that one hour of the day is more acceptable than another. All time is equally legitimate for supplication, equally holy, equally accepted with God or else we should not have been told to pray without ceasing. It is good to have your times of prayer. It is good to set apart seasons for special supplication—we have no doubt of that—but we must never allow this to gender the superstition that there is a certain holy hour for prayer in the morning, a specially acceptable hour for prayer in the evening and a sacred time for prayer at certain seasons of the year.

Wherever we seek the Lord with true hearts He is found by us! Whenever we cry unto Him He hears us. Every place is hallowed ground to a hallowed heart, and every day is a holy day to a holy man. From January to December the calendar has not one date in which prayer is forbidden! All the days are red-letter days—whether Sundays or weekdays they are all accepted times for prayer. Clear, then, is it from the text that the voice, the posture, the place, the time—none of them enter into the essence of prayer—or else, in this case, we should be commanded to perform an impossibility which we are quite certain is not after the manner of the Lord our God.

There is one other thing implied in the text, namely, that a Christian has no right to go into any place where he could *not* continue to pray. Pray without ceasing? Then I am never to be in a place where I could not pray without ceasing. Hence, many worldly amusements, without being particularized, may be judged and condemned at once. Certain people believe in ready-made prayers cut and dried for all occasions, and, at the same time, they believe persons to be regenerated in Baptism though their lives are anything but Christian. Ought they not to provide prayers for all circumstances in which these, the dear regenerated, but graceless sons and daughters of their Church, are found?

As, for instance, a pious collect for a young prince or nobleman who is about to go to a shooting match, that he may be forgiven for his cruelty towards those poor pigeons who are only badly wounded and made to linger in misery? Or, also, a prayer for a religious and regenerated gentleman who is going to a horserace, and a collect for young persons who have received the Grace of confirmation upon their going to the theater to attend a very questionable play? Could not such special collects be made to order?

You revolt at the idea? Well, then, have nothing to do with that which you cannot ask God’s blessing upon! Have nothing to do with it, for if God cannot bless it, you may depend upon it—the devil has cursed it! Anything that is right for you to do you may consecrate with prayer! Let this be a sure gauge and test to you—if you feel that it would be an insult to the Lord of Heaven for you to ask His blessing upon what is proposed to you—then stand clear of the unholy thing! If God does not approve, neither must you have fellowship with it! These matters are clearly implied in the precept, “Pray without ceasing.”

**II.**But now, WHAT DOES THIS ACTUALLY MEAN? If it does not mean we are to be always on our knees, nor always saying prayers, nor always in Church or in meeting—and does not mean that we are to consider any day as unfit for praying—what then? The words mean, first, a privilege. Secondly, a precept—“Pray without ceasing.” Our Lord Jesus Christ, in these words assures you that you may pray without ceasing. There is no time when you may not pray. You have permission here given to come to the Mercy Seat when you will—for the veil of the Most Holy place is torn in two from the top to the bottom—and our access to the Mercy Seat is undisputed and indisputable.

Kings hold their formal receptions upon certain appointed days, and then their courtiers are admitted. But the King of kings holds a constant reception! The monarch whose palace was in Shushan would have none approach him unless he sent for them. But the King of kings has called for all His people, and they may come at all times. They were slain who went unto the King Ahasuerus unless he stretched out his scepter to them. But our King never withdraws His scepter—it is always stretched out, and whoever desires to come to Him may come now, and come at any time. Among the Persians there were some few of the nobility who had the peculiar and special right of an audience with the king at any time they chose. Now that which was the peculiar right of a very few and of the very great is the privilege of every child of God!

He may come in unto the King at all times. The dead of night is not too late for God! The breaking of the morning, when the first gray light is seen, is not too early for the Most High! At midday He is not too busy! And when the evening gathers He is not weary with His children’s prayers. “Pray without ceasing,” is, if I read it correctly, a most sweet and precious permit to the Believer to pour out his heart at all times before the Lord. I hear its still small voice saying, “Come to the Mercy Seat, O My child, whenever you will! Come to the treasury of Grace whenever you desire—

***“The happy gates of Gospel Grace***

***Stand open night and day.”***  
The doors of the temple of Divine Love shall not be shut. Nothing can set a barrier between a praying soul and its God. The road of angels and of prayers is forever open. Let us but send out the dove of prayer and we may be certain that she will return unto us with an olive branch of peace in her mouth. Evermore the Lord has regard unto the pleadings of His servants and waits to be gracious unto them.

Still, however, it is a precept, “Pray without ceasing.” And what does it mean? It means a great Truth of God which I cannot very well convey to you in a few words, and, therefore, must try and bring it out under four or five points. It means, first, never abandon prayer. Never, for *any* cause or reason cease to pray! Imagine not that you must pray until you are saved, and may then stop. For those whose sins are pardoned, prayer is quite as necessary as for those mourning under a sense of sin. “Pray without ceasing,” for in order that you may persevere in Grace you must persevere in prayer. Should you become experienced in Grace and enriched with much spiritual knowledge, you must not dream of restraining prayer because of your gifts and Graces.

“Pray without ceasing,” or else your flower will fade and your spiritual fruit will never ripen. Continue in prayer until the last moment of your life—

***“Long as they live must Christians pray,  
For only while they pray they live.”***  
As we breathe without ceasing, so must we pray without ceasing. As there is no attainment in life, of health, or of strength, or of muscular vigor which can place a man beyond the necessity of breathing, so no condition of spiritual growth or advance in Grace will allow a man to dispense with

prayer—  
***“Let us pray! Our life is praying.  
Prayer with time alone may cease—  
Then in Heaven, God’s will obeying,  
Life is praise and perfect peace.”***

Never give up praying, not even though Satan should suggest to you that it is in vain for you to cry unto God. Pray in his teeth—“pray without ceasing.”

If for awhile the heavens are as brass and your prayer only echoes in thunder above your head, pray on! If, month after month your prayer appears to have miscarried and no reply has been vouchsafed to you, yet still continue to draw near unto the Lord! Do not abandon the Mercy Seat for any reason whatever. If it is a good thing that you have been asking for, and you are sure it is according to the Divine will, continue to pray! If the vision tarries, wait for it—pray, weep, entreat, wrestle—agonize till you get that which you are praying for. If your heart is cold in prayer, do not restrain prayer until your heart warms—but pray your soul unto heat by the help of the ever-blessed Spirit who helps our infirmities! If the iron is hot, then hammer it. And if it is cold, hammer it till you heat it!

Never cease prayer for any reason or argument. If the philosopher should tell you that every event is fixed, and, therefore, prayer cannot possibly change anything, and, consequently, must be folly—still, if you cannot answer him and are somewhat puzzled—go on with your supplications notwithstanding all. No difficult problem concerning digestion would prevent your *eating*, for the result justifies the practice! And so no quibble should make us cease prayer, for the assured success of it commends it to us! You know what your God has told you, and if you cannot reply to every difficulty which man can suggest, resolve to be obedient to the Divine will, and still, “Pray without ceasing.” Never, never, never renounce the habit of prayer, or your confidence in its power!

A second meaning is this. Never suspend the regular offering of prayer. You will, if you are a watchful Christian, have your times of daily devotion fixed not by superstition, but for your convenience and remembrance. Just as David, three times a day, and as another saint, seven times a day sought the Lord, be sure to keep up your daily prayer without intermission. This advice will not comprehend the whole range of the text—I am not pretending that it does. I am only mentioning it now as supplementary to other thoughts.

“Pray without ceasing,” that is, never give up the morning prayer, nor the evening prayer, nor the prayer at midday if such has grown to be your habit. If you change hours and times, as you may, yet keep up the practice of regularly recurring retirement, meditation, and prayer. You may be said to continue in prayer if your habitual devotions are maintained. It would be quite correct for me to say that I know a man who has been always begging ever since I have been in London. I do not think that I ever passed the spot where he stands without seeing him there. He is a blind person and stands near a Church. As long as my recollection serves me he has been begging without ceasing.

Of course he has not begged when he has been *asleep*. He has not begged when he has gone home to his meals. Nor did you understand me to have asserted anything so absurd when I said he had begged without ceasing for years. And so, if at those times when it is proper for you to separate yourself from your ordinary labors—if you continue perseveringly begging at Mercy’s Throne—it may be, with comparative correctness, said of you that you pray without ceasing. Through all hours are alike to me, I find it profitable to meet with God at set periods, for these seem to me to be like the winding up of the clock. The clock is to go all day, but there is a time for winding it up. And the little special season that we set apart and hedge round about for communion with our God seems to wind us up for the rest of the day. Therefore, if you would pray without ceasing, continue in the offering of the morning and the evening sacrifice, and let it be perpetually an ordinance with you that your times of prayer are not broken in upon.

That, however, is only a help, for I must add, thirdly, between these times of devotion labor to be much in ejaculatory prayer. While your hands are busy with the world, let your hearts still talk with God—not in 20 sentences at a time, for such an interval might be inconsistent with your calling—but in broken sentences and interjections. It is always wrong to present one duty to God stained with the blood of another, and that we should do if we spoiled study or labor by running away to pray at all hours. But we may, without this, let short sentences go up to Heaven. Yes, and we may shoot upwards cries and single words, such as an, “Ah,” an, “Oh,” an, “O that.” Or, without words we may pray in the upward glancing of the eye or the sigh of the heart.

He who prays without ceasing uses many little darts and hand grenades of godly desire which he casts forth at every available interval. Sometimes he will blow the furnace of his desires to a great heat in regular prayer, and, as a consequence, at other times the sparks will continue to rise up to Heaven in the form of brief words, and looks, and desires. Fourthly, if we would pray without ceasing we must be always in the *spirit* of prayer. Our heart, renewed by the Holy Spirit, must be like the magnetized needle which always has an inclination towards the pole. It does not always point to that pole—you can turn it aside if you will—in an iron ship it exhibits serious deflections. Under all circumstances it is not exactly true—but if you put your finger to that needle and force it round to the east, you have only to take away the pressure and immediately it returns to its beloved pole again.

So let your heart be magnetized with prayer so that if the finger of duty turns it away from the immediate act of prayer, there may still be the longing desire for prayer in your soul—and the moment you can do so, your heart reverts to its beloved work. As perfume lies in flowers even when they do not shed their fragrance upon the gale, so let prayer lie in your hearts. But, perhaps the last meaning that I shall give has the most of the Truth of the text in it, namely this—Let all your actions be consistent with your prayers and be, in fact, a *continuation* of your prayers. If I am to pray without ceasing, it cannot mean that I am always to be in the act of direct devotion, for the human mind, as at presently constituted, needs variety of occupations and it could not, without producing madness or imbecility, continue always in the exercise of one function.

We must, therefore, change the modus or the manner of operation if we are ceaselessly to continue in prayer. We must pursue our prayers, but do it in another manner. Take an instance. This morning I prayed to God to arouse His people to prayerfulness. Very well—as I came to this house my soul continued to ejaculate, “O Lord, awaken Your children to prayerfulness.” Now, while I am preaching to you and driving at the same point, am I not praying? Is not my sermon the continuation of my prayer—for am I not desiring and aiming at the same thing? Is it not a continuing to pray when we use the best means towards the obtaining of that which we pray for? Do you not see my point? He who prays for his fellow creatures and then seeks their good is still praying!

In this sense there is truth in that old saying—  
***“He prays best that loves best  
Both man, and bird, and beast.”***

Loving *is* praying. If I seek in prayer the good of my fellow creature, and then go and try to promote it, I am practically praying for his good in my actions! If I seek, as I should, God’s glory above everything, then if all my actions are meant to tend to God’s glory, I am continuing to pray though I may not be praying with my thoughts or with my lips! Oh, that our whole life might be a prayer! It can be. There can be a praying without ceasing before the Lord, though there be many pauses in what the most of men would call prayer.

Pray, then, without ceasing, my Brothers and Sisters. Let your whole life be praying. If you change the method, yet change not the pursuit but continue still to worship, still to adore. This I think to be the meaning of our text—never altogether abandon prayer. Do not suspend the regular offering of prayer. Be much in earnest ejaculations. Be always in the spirit of prayer, and let the whole of your life be consistent with your prayer and become a part of it.

**III.**HOW CAN WE OBEY THESE WORDS? First, let us labor as much as we can to prevent all sinful interruptions. “Pray without ceasing.” Then if it is impossible to be in the act of prayer, always, at least let us be as much as possible in that act. And let us prevent those interruptions which I mentioned in the early part of my discourse—the interruptions occasioned by our own sin. Let us endeavor to keep clear, as far as we can, of anything and everything in ourselves or round about us that would prevent our abounding in supplication.

And let us also keep clear of interruptions from the sins of others. Do others forbid us to pray? Let us not be afraid of their wrath. Remember Daniel, who while he was under the penalty of being cast into a den of lions, yet opened his window towards Jerusalem and prayed seven times a day as he had done before. Under no threats—and for no bribes—let us ever cease to pray. In private let us always pray. And if duty calls us to do so where others observe us, let us so much fear the eyes of God that we shall not dare to fear the eyes of man!

Let us next avoid all unnecessary interruptions of every sort to our prayer. If we know that any matter from which we can escape has a tendency to disturb the spirit of prayer within us, let us avoid it earnestly. Let us try, as much as possible, not to be put off the scent in prayer. Satan’s object will be to distract the mind, to throw it off the rails, to divert its aim. But let us resolve before God we will not turn aside from following hard after Him. Sir Thomas Abney had for many years practiced family prayer regularly. He was elected Lord Mayor of London and on the night of his election he must be present at a banquet. But when the time came for him to call his family together in prayer, having no wish either to be a Pharisee or to give up his practice, he excused himself to the guests in this way—he said he had an important engagement with a very dear Friend and they must excuse him for a few minutes.

It was most true, his dearest Friend was the Lord Jesus, and family prayer was an important engagement. And so he withdrew for awhile to the family altar and in that respect prayed without ceasing. We sometimes allow good things to interrupt our prayers and thus make them evil. Mrs. Rowe observes in one of her letters that if the 12 Apostles were preaching in the town were she lived and she could never hear them again, if it were her time for private devotion she would not be bribed out of her closet by the hope of hearing them! I am not sure but what she might have taken another time for her private devotions and so have enjoyed both privileges—but at the same time, supposing she must have lost the prayer and have only got the preaching in exchange, I agree with her—it would have been exchanging gold for silver!

She would be more profited in praying than she would be in hearing, for praying is the *end* of preaching. Preaching is but the wheat stalk while praying is the golden grain itself—and he has the best who gets it. Sometimes we think we are too busy to pray. That, also, is a great mistake, for praying is a saving of time. You remember Luther’s remark, “I have so much to do today that I shall never get through it with less than three hours’ prayer”? He had not been accustomed to take so much time for prayer on ordinary days, but since that was a busy day, he must have more communion with his God!

But, perhaps our occupations begin early, and we therefore say, “How can I get alone with God in prayer?” It is said of Sir Henry Havelock that every morning when the march began at six, he always rose at four that he might not miss his time for the reading of the Scripture and communion with his God. If we have no time we must *make* time, for if God has given us time for secondary duties, He must have given us time for primary ones—and to draw near to him is a primary duty! We must let nothing set it aside. There is no real need to sacrifice any duty—we have time enough for all if we are not idle. And, indeed, the one will help the other instead of clashing with it!

When Edward Payson was a student at College, he found he had so much to do to attend his classes and prepare for examinations that he could not spend as much time as be should in private prayer. But, at last, waking up to the feeling that he was going back in Divine things through his habits, he took due time for devotion and he asserts in his diary that he did more in his studies in a single week after he had spent time with God in prayer, than he had accomplished in 12 months before. God can multiply our ability to make use of time. If we give the Lord His due, we shall have enough for all necessary purposes. In this matter seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. Your other engagements will run smoothly if you do not forget your engagement with God.

We must, dear Friends, in order to pray without ceasing, strive against indolence in prayer. I believe that no man loves prayer until the Holy Spirit has taught him the sweetness and value of it. If you have ever prayed without ceasing you will pray without ceasing! The men who do not love to pray must be strangers to its secret joy. When prayer is a mechanical act and there is no *soul* in it, it is a slavery and a weariness. But when it is really *living* prayer, and when the man prays because he is a Christian and cannot help praying—when he prays along the street, prays in his business, prays in the house, prays in the field—when his whole soul is full of prayer, then he cannot have too much of it. He will not be backward in prayer who meets Jesus in it, but he who knows not the Well-Beloved will count it a drudgery.

Let us avoid, above all things, lethargy and indifference in prayer. Oh, it is a dreadful thing that ever we should insult the majesty of Heaven by words from which our heart has gone! I must, my Soul, I must school you to this, that you must have communion with God! And if in your prayer you do not talk with God, you shall keep on praying till you do! Come not away from the Mercy Seat till you have prayed! Beloved Brothers and Sisters, say unto your soul—“here have I come to the Throne of Grace to worship God and seek His blessing, and I am not going away till I have done it. I will not rise from my knees because I have spent my customary minutes, but here will I pray till I find the blessing.”

Satan will often leave off tempting when he finds you thus resolute in prayer. Brethren, we need waking up! Routine grows upon us. We get into the mill-horse way—round, and round, and round the mill. From this may God save us! It is deadly. A man may pray 20 years with regularity, as far as the time goes, and the form goes—and have never prayed a single grain of prayer in the whole period! One real groan fetched from the *heart* is worth a million litanies! One living breath from a gracious soul is worth 10,000 collects! May we be kept awake by God’s Grace, praying without ceasing.

And we must take care, dear Brethren, again, if we would perform this duty, that we fight against anything like despair of being heard. If we have not been heard after six times we must, as Elijah, go again seven times! If our Peter is in prison, and the Church has prayed God to liberate him, and he is still in fetters bound in the inner prison, let us pray on, for one of these days Peter will knock at the gate! Be importunate! Heaven’s gate does not open to every runaway knock. Knock, and knock, and knock again—and add to your knocking and to your asking, *seeking*—and be not satisfied till you get a real answer!

Never cease from prayer through presumption. Guard against that. Feel, O Christian, that you always *need* to pray. Say not, “I am rich and increased in goods, and have need of nothing.” You are, by nature, still naked and poor, and miserable. Therefore, persevere in prayer and buy of the Lord fine gold, and clean raiment, that you may be rich and fitly clothed. Thus I have tried to set before you, Beloved, how, by resisting presumption and despair, indolence and lethargy, and trying to put aside all sinful and other interruptions we may pray without ceasing.

**IV.**Now, very briefly, in the last place, WHY SHOULD WE OBEY THIS PRECEPT? Of course we should obey it because it is of Divine authority! But, moreover, we should attend to it because the Lord always deserves to be worshipped. Prayer is a method of worship. Continue, therefore, to always render to your Creator, your Preserver, your Redeemer, your Father, the homage of your prayers!

With such a King let us not be slack in homage. Let us pay Him the revenue of praise continually. Evermore may we magnify and bless His name. His enemies curse Him—let us bless Him without ceasing! Moreover, Brethren, the spirit of love within us surely prompts us to draw near to God without ceasing. Christ is our Husband. Is the bride true to her marriage vows if she cares not for her Beloved’s company? God is our Father. What sort of a child is that which does not desire to climb on its father’s knee and receive a smile from its father’s face? If you and I can live day after day and week after week without anything like communion with God, how does the love of God dwell in us?

“Pray without ceasing,” because the Lord never ceases to love you, never ceases to bless you, and never ceases to regard you as His child. “Pray without ceasing,” for you need a blessing on all the work you are doing. Is it common work? “Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it.” Is it business? It is vain to rise up early and sit up late and eat the bread of carefulness, for without God you cannot prosper. You are taught to say, “Give us this day our daily bread”—an inspired prayer for secular things. Oh, consecrate your seculars by prayer!

And, if you are engaged in God’s service, what work is there in which you can hope for success without His blessing? To teach the young, to preach the Gospel, to distribute tracts, to instruct the ignorant—do not all these need His blessing? What are they if that favor is denied? Pray, therefore, as long as you work. You are always in danger of being tempted— there is no position in life in which you may not be assaulted by the enemy. “Pray without ceasing,” therefore. A man who is going along a dark road where he knows that there are enemies, if he must be alone and has a sword with him, he carries it drawn in his hand—to let the robbers know that he is ready for them. So Christian, pray without ceasing! Carry your sword in your hand—wave that mighty weapon of all-prayer of which Bunyan speaks! Never sheathe it, for it will cut through coats of mail!

You need fear no foe if you can but pray. As you are tempted without ceasing, so pray without ceasing. You need always to pray, for you always need something. In no condition are you so rich as not to need something from your God. It is not possible for you to say, “I have all things,” or, if you can, you have them only in Christ, and from Christ you must continue to seek them. As you are always in need, so beg always at Mercy’s gate. Moreover, blessings are always waiting for you. Angels are ready with favors that you know not of, and you have but to ask and have! Oh, could you see what might be had for the asking you would not be so slack! The priceless benisons of Heaven which lie on one side as yet, oh, did you but perceive that they are only waiting for you to *pray*, you would not hesitate a moment!

The man who knows that his farming is profitable and that his land brings forth abundantly will be glad to sow a broader stretch of land another year. And he who knows that God answers prayer and is ready, still, to answer it, will open his mouth yet wider that God may fill it! Continue to pray, Brothers and Sisters, for even if you should not need prayer yourself, there are others who do—there are the dying, the sick, the poor, the ignorant, the backsliding, the blaspheming, the heathen at home and the heathen abroad. “Pray without ceasing,” for the enemy works incessantly, and as yet the kingdom has not come unto Zion. You shall never be able to say, “I left off praying, for I had nothing to pray for.” On this side of Heaven objects for prayer are as multitudinous as the stars of the sky!

And, now, I said I would say a word as to why *we* ought to especially pray, and that shall close the sermon. Beloved Friends, this Church ought to pray without ceasing! We have been, in years past, notable for prayer. If ever a Church has prayed it has been, by God’s Grace, this Church. I might find many faults with some who hinder prayer, but yet I must say in God’s sight I know and feel that there has been living prayer in this Church for many years, and hence it is we have had many years of peace and prosperity. We have lacked nothing because we have not lacked prayer. I do not doubt we might have had much more if we had prayed more—still prayer has been very mighty here.

Now, Brothers and Sisters, suppose you had no pastor. Suppose the preacher was gone from you, and that the black cloth upon this pulpit was not for a deceased elder of the Church but for the preacher, himself? You would pray, would you not? Will you not pray for me, then, while I live? If you would pray for another to come, will you not pray for me while I am here? I desire to discharge my office before you in God’s sight with all earnestness, but I cannot without your prayers! And as being gone from you, you would lift up many sighs and you would with prayers ask for a successor, pray for me while I am yet with you!

Beloved, you have prayed very earnestly for the pastor when he has been sick. Your prayers have been his consolation and his restoration. Will you not pray for him now that he is able to preach the Gospel—that his health may be sanctified to God’s service and the ministry of the Truth of God may be mighty in the winning of souls? I ask it of you. I think I might *claim* it of you. I do beseech you, Brothers and Sisters, pray for me! Suppose again, dear Brethren, there were no conversions in our midst, would you not pray? And since there are a great many conversions, should that be a reason for leaving off? Shall we worship God the less because He gives us more? Instead of one prayer which would go up were there no conversions, there should be 10 now that He continues to work salvation among us!

Suppose we were divided, and had many schisms, and jealousies, and much bickering—would not the faithful ones pray in bitterness of spirit? Will you not pray, since there are no divisions and much Christian love? Surely, I say again, you will not treat God the worse because He treats you the better! That were foolish, indeed! Suppose we were surrounded today with hosts of persecutors and error everywhere crept into our midst and did us damage—would you not pray, you who love the Lord? And now that we live in days of peace, and error, though it prowls around, is kept out of our fold, will you not commune with the Lord all the more? I will say yet a third time, shall we pray the less because God gives the more?

Oh no! But the better He is to us the more let us adore and magnify His name! Just now we need to pray because some are growing cold and turning to their old sins. We need to pray because we are doing much for Christ. Every agency is in full work. We need a great blessing upon great efforts. We have had such results from prayer as might make a man’s ears to tingle who should hear of them for the first time—our history as a Church has not been second, even, to Apostolic history itself! We have seen God’s arm made bare in the eyes of all the people—and to the ends of the earth the testimony of this pulpit has gone forth and thousands have found the Savior—all in answer to many prayers!

Pray, then, without ceasing! O Church in the Tabernacle, hold fast what you have, that no man take your crown! Oh, continue to be a praying Church that we, together, when we shall stand before the Judgment seat of Christ, pastor and people, may not be accused of being prayerless nor of being slack in the work of the Lord! I earnestly hope all this will tend to make tomorrow’s day of prayer more earnest and intense. But yet more do I pray that at all times all of us may be fervent, frequent, instant and constant in prayer—praying in the Holy Spirit, in the name of Jesus.

÷2Th 1.3

THE NECESSITY OF GROWING FAITH

NO. 1857

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, AUGUST 30, 1885, *BY C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“We are bound to thank God always for you, Brethren, as it is fitting, because your faith grows exceedingly, and the charity of every one of you all abounds toward each other.”*** 2Th 1:3***.***

LAST Lord’s-Day I tried to say cheering and encouraging words to “Little-Faith.” I trust that the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, did thereby strengthen some to whom the Savior said, “O you of little faith, why did you doubt?” But none of us would desire to remain among the LittleFaiths—we long to press forward in our march to the better land. If we have just started in the heavenly race, it is well, for there are grounds of comfort about the first steps in the right way, but we are not going to stop at the starting-point! Our desire is towards the finish line and the crown. My prayer, at the commencement of this discourse, is that we may, each of us, rise out of our little faith into the loftier region of *assurance*, so that those who love us best may be able to say, “We are bound to thank God always for you, Brethren, as it is fitting, because your faith grows exceedingly.”

The Church of Jesus Christ at Thessalonica did not commence under very propitious circumstances. Remember that oft-quoted text about the Bereans—“These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they searched the Scriptures daily whether those things were so.” That record does not relate to the *converts* in Thessalonica, but to those Jews who heard Paul preach in the synagogue and refused to test his teaching by a reference to the Old Testament. They were not a noble sort of people and yet, from among them, there were taken by almighty Grace a certain company who were led to believe in the true Messiah! Thus they became more noble than even the Bereans, for we do not hear of a Church in Berea, neither was an Epistle written to the Bereans. Thessalonica received *two* Epistles, bright with hearty commendations. Paul praised the Philippians, but the Thessalonians he praised even more, thanking God at every remembrance of them, and glorying in them among the Churches of God for their patience and faith.

I shall ask you, with your Bibles open, to see whether we cannot account in some measure for this remarkable condition of things. The verse before us is full of thanksgiving to God for the growth of the Thessalonians in faith and in love. And to my mind, it sounds like an echo of the First Epistle to the Thessalonians. The First Epistle is the key and the cause of the Second. Very often a man’s success in this place, or in that, will tally with his own condition of heart in relation to that place. As we sow we reap. The Grace of God enabled Paul to sow toward the Thessalonians with great hopefulness, trust and prayerfulness and, consequently, he reaped plentifully.

Observe how (1Th 1:2-3) Paul began by distinctly recognizing the existence of faith and love in that Church. “We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers; remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father.” Recognize the root and then look for the flower! See that faith is in the soul, smile upon it and foster it—and then you may expect that the faith will steadily increase. In our text Paul mentions faith as growing and love as abounding, while in the next verse he mentions patience, which is the outgrowth of hope—“the patience of hope.” He noticed in the Thessalonians the birth of those three Divine sisters—faith, hope, and charity! That which he recognized with pleasure, he afterwards saw growing exceedingly! Those who cherish the seed shall rejoice in the plant. Observe in the children under your care the first blossoms of any good thing and you shall observe its increase! Despise not the day of small things. When you have learned to recognize faith in its buds, you shall soon see faith in its flowers and faith in its fruits! Do not overlook feeble Grace, or criticize it because it is as yet imperfect—mark its beginnings with thankfulness and you shall behold its advance with delight!

In addition to recognizing the beginnings of faith, Paul labored hard to promote it. Look in the second chapter and read verses 7, 8, 11, 12—“But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherishes her children: so being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the Gospel of God, only, but also our own souls because you were dear unto us. As you know how we exhorted and comforted and charged every one of you, as a father does his children, that you would walk worthy of God, who has called you unto His kingdom and glory.” He threw his whole strength into the work of building that Church, toiling night and day for it and, consequently, he obtained his desire—for still it is true in the farming of God, that those who sow and steep their seed in the tears of earnestness, shall doubtless come again, rejoicing, bringing their sheaves with them!

Paul had accompanied his public labors with his private prayers. See how 1Th 3:12 tallies with our text—“And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love, one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you.” This was his prayer—and he received exactly what he prayed for. He saw abounding love in each one towards every other! The Lord seemed to have noted the wording of Paul’s prayer and to have answered him according to the letter of his request. If we open our mouth wide, the Lord will fill it! Brothers and Sisters, what we comfortably recognize in its gracious beginnings—what we labor to increase and what we earnestly guard with prayer shall, in due time, be granted to us!

More than this—Paul had gone on to exhort them to abound in love and faith. Look at Chapter 4, verse 9—“As touching brotherly love you need not that I write unto you: for you yourselves are taught of God to love one another. And indeed you do it toward all the brethren which are in all Macedonia: but we beseech you, Brethren, that you increase more and more.” Paul did not only quietly pray for the Church, but he added his earnest admonitions. He bids them increase more and more and, in response, they *do* increase, so that he says, “your faith grows exceedingly.” When a man says, “more and more,” it is only another way of saying, “exceedingly.” Is it not so? There was a big heart in Paul towards the Thessalonians. He wanted them to grow in faith and love “more,” and then, to take another step and add another, “more,” to it! The exhortation being given out of a full heart, behold, God has fulfilled it to His servant and the people have willingly followed up the Apostolic precept!

But Paul had added faith to his prayers and his exhortations. Look at Chapter 5:23, 24, and see if it is not so. “And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is He that calls you, who also will do it.” When we are sure that God will do it, it will surely be done! We miss many a blessing because we ask without faith. The Apostle believed that he had the petition which he had sought of the Lord and he received according to his faith. He who can firmly believe shall, before long, fervently pour out thanksgiving! The Church at Thessalonica, the child of Paul’s prayers, the child of his labors and, at last, the child of his faith, obtained a remarkable degree of faith and an amazing warmth of love. The Lord give to us, who are workers, the mind and spirit of Paul, and lead us to follow him in our conduct to others, and then I do not doubt that our good wishes shall be realized! If we are right, ourselves, we shall see prosperity in the Churches, or classes, or families whose good we seek—and as we feel bound to pray about them, we shall also feel bound to thank God concerning them.

Before I plunge into the sermon, I should like to pause and ask whether we, as Christian men and women, are such that Paul could say of us, “We are bound to thank God always for you, Brethren, as it is fitting, because your faith grows exceedingly, and the charity of every one of you all abounds toward each other.” What do you think? Could your pastor bless God for you? Could your nearest and dearest Christian friend feel that he was bound to always thank God for you? If not, why not? Oh that we may rise into such a happy state that we shall be the cause of gratitude in others! It ought to be so—we ought to glorify God—causing men to see our good works and praise our Father in Heaven.

One more question—Do you think we are in such a condition that it would be safe for anybody to praise *us*? Would it be safe to ourselves for us to be thus commended and made *subjects* of thankfulness? It takes a great deal of Grace to be able to bear praise. Censure seldom does us much harm. A man struggles up against slander and the discouragement which comes of it may not be an unmixed evil, but praise soon suggests pride and is, therefore, not an unmixed good. “As the fining-pot for silver, and the furnace for gold, so is a man to his praise.” Would it be safe if Paul were, here, to say good things about *you* as he did about the Thessalonians? Did it not prove that the Brothers and Sisters, there, were sober, well-established Believers?

Once more, do you ever feel it in your heart to talk like this about your fellow Christians? Paul was in a fine condition when he could thus extol his Brethren. Few men are ready with hearty commendations of others. We are greedy in receiving praise and niggardly in dispensing it. We seldom speak too kindly of one another. Now and then you hear a person say, “There is no such thing as love in the Church at all.” I know that gentleman very well and I never saw any excess of love in *him*. I heard one say, “Brotherly love is all a mockery; there is no reality in Christian charity”—and truly, he measured his own corn very accurately! Most men would see others better if their own eyes were clearer. When a man honestly feels that his fellow Christians are, for the most part, much better than himself and that he would willingly sit at the feet of many of them, then he is, himself, in a healthy state. I admire the Grace of God in many around me! I see their imperfections as though I did not see them! I am not looking for the thorns, but for the roses—and I see so many of them that my heart is glad and in spirit I bless the name of the Lord!

The man who can commend the work of the Lord in others without saying a word about himself, has, by that fact, given himself a good character. His eyes must have been washed in the fountains of Love. They must have been cleansed from the dust of pride, envy and self, or he would not have so seen or so spoken. I love the text because it is an instance of a man of great Grace, of a man under the Inspiration of the Spirit of God who yet delighted to speak enthusiastically of a Church which certainly was far from perfect. I delight in that eye which can be a little blind to faults while it exercises a clear vision in seeing all that is good and praiseworthy towards God!

So, then, we come to our text and the subject runs thus—for us to grow in faith is a *subject for devout thanksgiving*. And, in the second place, it is *an object for diligent endeavor*. Thirdly, if we greatly grow in faith it will be *the source of other growth,* for as faith increases, love, patience and every other virtue will flourish.

**I.**For us to grow and increase in faith is A SUBJECT FOR DEVOUT THANKSGIVING. Paul gives a commendation of the Thessalonian Church which is exceedingly warm and hearty. One critic says the words may be regarded as somewhat extravagant, after the mode of the Apostle when he wishes to be emphatic. He writes fervidly—“Your faith grows exceedingly, and the charity of every one of you all toward each other abounds.” It is an intense and unreserved commendation. As I have already said, this Church was not absolutely perfect for, because of the love of every one towards another and their great kindness towards the poor, certain unworthy persons encroached upon their liberality. To use a very rough word, *beggars*were multiplied among them as they always are where generosity abounds. Shame that it should be so. Read chapter 3, Verse 11—“For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies.” There had been, also, among them, here and there, a person of loose life and of sharp business dealings—and to such Paul spoke in the First Epistle—but these flies in the pot of ointment did not destroy its sweetness. They were, comparatively, so few, that Paul speaks of the whole body with warm praise. When our faith shall grow and our love abound, it may be proper for a pastor to speak with unrestricted admiration of what the Lord has done.

The blessing of increased faith is of unspeakable value and, therefore, praise should be largely rendered for it. Little faith will save, but strong faith is that which builds up the Church, which overcomes the world, which wins sinners and which glorifies God. Little-Faith is slow and feeble and, to suit his pace, the whole flock travel softly. Little-Faith is a wounded soldier and has to be carried in an ambulance by the armies of the Lord. But faith which grows exceedingly lifts the banner aloft, leads the van, meets hand to hand the foes of our Prince and puts them to the rout! If we were invoking blessings upon a Church, we could scarcely ask for a larger blessing than that all the Brothers and Sisters might be strong in faith, giving glory to God! Strong-Faith ventures into large endeavors for Christ and, therefore, missions are projected. Strong-Faith carries out the projects of holy zeal and, therefore, daring ideas are turned into facts! Strong-Faith is a shield against the darts of error and, therefore, she is the object of the contempt and hatred of heresy.

Strong-Faith builds the walls of Zion and casts down the walls of Jericho. Strong-Faith smites the Philistines hip and thigh and makes Israel to dwell in peace. Oh that the night of Little-Faith were over and that the day of glorious faith would come! Soon would our young men see visions and our old men dream dreams if faith were more among us. When the Son of Man comes, shall He find faith in the earth? At the revival of faith, we shall see another Pentecost with its rushing mighty wind and its tongues of flame—but during our lack of faith we still abide in weakness and the enemy will exact upon us. O God, we beseech You, make Your face to shine upon us! Cause our faith to grow exceedingly and our love to abound yet more and more! Then shall there be times of refreshing from the Presence of the Lord.

Paul thus fervently gave thanks to God because the blessing came to the Church at a remarkably seasonable time. The people of Thessalonica had risen against the Church and persecuted it. Thus, without were fights, but within there were no fears, for the Brethren were firm in faith and fervent in love. The Church was subject to constant tribulation, but its faith grew exceedingly. Has it not often been so with the Lord’s people? Times of cloud and rain have been *growing* times. Pharaoh dealt harshly with Israel, but the more he oppressed them, the more they multiplied! The more the Church of God is trod down, the more it rises into power and influence! The bush burns and is not consumed. No, rather, it flourishes in the flame! I say not that this increase of faith is the immediate effect of persecution, but it is singularly the attendant put upon it. God knew that when His poor servants were hauled to prison; when they were brought before rulers and kings for His name’s sake; when they were robbed of their goods, they needed increased strength and, therefore, He gave it to them by growth in *faith*. As the persecution rose upon them like a deluge, their confidence in God rose above it—like Noah’s ark, which rose higher, the deeper the waters became! They stood fast in the day of trial and became an example to all other Churches, whether persecuted or not—and this because their faith grew exceedingly!

Beloved, I pray for each member of this Church that your confidence in God may rise from ebb to flood. We need it much just now. This is a time of depression in trade, when many are suffering need and almost all find their means decreased. We need to be rich in faith, for we are growing poor in pocket! Many children of God cannot find employment in which to earn their bread. This is, moreover, a time of abounding vice. Perhaps never in our memories were any of us so shocked as we have been of late by the discoveries of unspeakable abominations! We need that our faith should grow exceedingly, for sin runs down our streets in torrents! It is also a period of grievous departure from the faith once delivered to the saints. Looking back to our younger days, we are amazed at the progress of error. We mourned, in those days, that men trifled with the Doctrines of the Gospel, but what shall we say now, when men deride those Doctrines and mock at them as antiquated fables? The foundations of the earth are removed and only here and there will you find a man who bears up the pillars—therefore we need that our faith should be exceedingly steadfast. I charge you, Brothers and Sisters, to be rooted and grounded in faith, seeing the times are evil! I cannot speak emphatically enough upon the abounding dangers of the times—they demand of us that we be not of doubtful minds, but that we take firm hold of the Infallible Truths of God and endure as seeing Him who is invisible! He that cannot say, “I believe and am sure,” is one born out of due time.

The Apostle’s commendation was meet and fit, since, if there is any growth in faith, it is the work of God’s Spirit. Faith is the *gift* of God in its beginnings and it is equally the *gift* of God in its increase. If you have faith as a grain of mustard seed, God gave it to you. And if you have faith as a spreading tree, God has given the increase. The infancy of faith is of God and so is its perfect manhood. In the natural world, we ought as much to admire God’s hand in growth as in creation for, indeed, the bursting out of spring, the advance of summer and the maturity of autumn are all a sort of creation seen in detail. Even thus the *progress* of faith reveals the same power as the *commencement* of faith. If you do not look to God for more faith, you will never have more faith—great faith in its strong broad current flows as much from the fountainhead of Grace as in its first trickling stream of hope in Christ. Let God have all the glory of faith from its Alpha to its Omega!

If you are a strong man in Christ Jesus, take heed that you do not sacrifice to your own net, nor burn incense to your own drag and glorify your own experience as if *you* made yourself strong and rich in the things of God. We are bound to render all the thanksgiving unto God—it is meet that it should be so. Look how the Apostle puts it—“We are bound to thank God always for you.” I like the modesty of that. He does not so much say that he thanked God, though he did do so. But in deep humility he admits the debt which he could not fully pay. He did not judge his thanksgivings to be sufficient, but acknowledged that he was still under bonds to render more praise. I rejoice to be bound with these bonds, to be bound to thank God every day and all day! I wear these golden fetters and count them my best ornaments! “Bind the sacrifice with cords, even with cords to the horns of the altar.” I would be bound over not to keep the peace, but to keep *praise* forever. Let the Altar of Incense be always burning, yes, flaming higher and higher with the sweet spices of love and gratitude. Blessed be God for what He is doing for His people when He causes their faith to grow—for it is a blessing so immense, so incalculable that our praises ought to rise to the height and glory of loud-sounding hallelujahs!

Brothers and Sisters, let us bless God for every good man we know whose faith has grown, for every holy woman whose love in the Church is manifest to all! And when we have done so, let us turn our eyes to God and say, “Lord, make me such a one that others may glorify You in me, also. I am, as yet, sadly weak and undeveloped. Make me to grow till all Your image shall be seen in me and my fellow Christians shall bless You concerning me.” Thus have I set growth in faith before you as a subject for thanksgiving. It is, indeed, a jewel worth more than both the Indies!

**II.**In the second place, it is worthy to have AN OBJECTIVE OF DILIGENT ENDEAVOR. If you have it not, labor speedily to attain it. As the merchantman seeks goodly pearls, so seek a growing faith. Covet, earnestly, the best gifts and the noblest Graces. Never be self-satisfied, but cry with Jabez, “Oh that the Lord would bless me, indeed, and enlarge my coast.”

*Why?*Because the *proof* of faith lies in the *growth* of faith. If you have a dead faith, it will always be the same. But if you have the faith of God’s elect, it must grow! If I heard of a child that was born some years ago and had never grown, I should begin to guess that my friend was entrapping me and that the child was dead from birth. Life in its earliest stages is always attended with growth. Brothers and Sisters, you must have *more* faith, or we shall fear that you have *no* faith—you must have more love, or else, for sure, you have no love at all. That which does not *grow* unto God does not*live* unto God!

We ought to have more faith because God’s Truth deserves it. It ought to be the easiest thing in the world for us to trust God. To believe every word of the Lord should be an act to which we need not to be exhorted—it should be as natural as for the lungs to heave, or the heart to beat! We ought, as children of God, to believe our Father by instinct, even as young eaglets hide under their mother’s wing. We ought to exercise faith even as the eye sees and the ears hear because thereunto we were created by the Holy Spirit. It should be a necessity of our spiritual existence that we must and will trust the Lord Jesus Christ yet more and more! I pray that it may be so, for unbelief is a horrible crime. Have you doubted God? Have you, in any sense, mistrusted Him? Have you limited the Holy One of Israel? Then continue not the slave of such a sin, but give unto God your heart’s confidence from this time forward and forever.

Moreover, we ought to grow in faith because it will be so much for our own spiritual health, strength and joy. Does Little-Faith know what he might be, do and enjoy if he could only quit its littleness? There are many ways of being a Christian, as there are many ways of being an Englishman—but all are not equally desirable. I may be an Englishman in banishment, or in the workhouse, or in prison—but I prefer to be an Englishman at home, in health and at liberty. So you may be a Christian and be weak, timorous and sad. But this is not desirable—it is better to be a happy, holy, vigorous, useful Christian! As your being an Englishman does not depend on your health or wealth, so neither does your salvation turn upon the strength or joy of your faith—yet much does depend on it. Why not glorify God on the road to Heaven? Why not have foretastes of it now?

It is not my desire to go through the world in miserable style, singing always—  
***“Do I love the Lord or not?  
Am I His, or am I not?”***

I infinitely prefer to so trust God that my peace may be like a river and my righteousness like the waves of the sea! Look at the difference between Abraham, the Father of the faithful, and his nephew, Lot. Lot was righteous, but he was, by no means, as strong in faith as Abraham. Neither was he as great or as happy. Abraham is calm, bold, royal. Lot is greedy, timid, trembling. Lot, in Sodom, is, with difficulty, made to run for his life, while Abraham, alone with God, is interceding for others! Lot escapes from a burning city with the loss of all things, while Abraham dwells peacefully with the Lord who is the Possessor of Heaven and earth. Abraham’s faith makes him rise like some lone Alp till he touches the very Heaven of God! It is well to be Lot, but it is infinitely better to be Abraham! Seek the highest degree of faith, for if this is in you and abounds, you shall not be barren or unfruitful. Heaven lies that way. More faith, more rest of heart. To grow heavenly we must grow more believing.

The question is, *how* is this to be done? How is my faith to be made to grow exceedingly? I have already told you that it is the *work of the Holy Spirit—*but He still uses us for the increase of our own faith! If we are to grow in faith, certain evils are to be avoided with scrupulous care. Avoid continual change of doctrine. If you have a tree in your garden and you transplant it often, it will yield you scanty fruit. Those who are everything by turns and nothing long, are, “ever learning, but never able to come to the knowledge of the Truth of God.” Unstable as water, they shall not excel! Those Brothers and Sisters who believe this, today, and that, tomorrow, and the other thing the next day, do not believe anything in downright earnest! They cannot grow! They are not rooted and grounded. Like the moon, they are always changing—and what light they have is cold and sickly. He who can change his religion, has none to change! Those who prefer philosophy to Christ, never knew Him!

Then, again, if you had a tree and did not transplant it, but began to dig away the earth from it, removing the ground in which it stood, you would impoverish it and prevent its fruitfulness. I know certain professors who are giving up the ground which their souls should grow in. One doctrine after another is forsaken till nothing is held to be important. They do not believe much, now, and they are on the line to believe nothing at all. The experiment of the Frenchman who had just brought his horse to live on a straw a day, when it died, is being repeated among us, faith being literally starved to death! What low diet some men prescribe for their souls! Marrow and fatness they do not even smell! How can your faith grow when vital Truths of God are abandoned, or held with feeble grasp? Oh for a band of Puritan Believers! Oh for a troop of spiritual Ironsides!

Next, a tree cannot grow if it is shut out from sun, rain and dew. Without heavenly influences, we must be barren. Plant a little tree right under a great oak so that it is always in the shade and it cannot grow! Clear the big tree away or the sapling will dwindle to death. Some men’s faith cannot grow because it is overshadowed by worldliness, by tolerated sin, by love of riches, by the pride of life, by cares of lower things. The pursuit of Christ Crucified must be all-absorbing or it will be ineffectual. To know what you believe and to abide steadfast in it, is the way to be robust in faith. Men whose hearts are not in their trades, men who chop and change—these are the men whose names appear in the *Gazett*e—are not many spiritual bankruptcies due to the same cause?

There are methods which the spiritual farmer uses to cause faith to grow. First, faith grows by an increase of*knowledge*. Many persons doubt because they are not instructed. Some doubt whether they shall hold on to the end—they are ignorant of the Doctrine of the Final Perseverance of the Saints! Some are in despair because they find evil desires arising in their hearts—they do not know the teaching of Scripture as to the two natures and the warfare between flesh and spirit. Many think themselves condemned because they cannot wholly keep the Law—they forget that they are justified by faith! A great deal of unbelief vanishes when knowledge, like the morning sun, drives away the mists! Unbelief is an owl of the night and when the sun rises, it hides away in a dark corner. Study the Word of God—give your heart to searching it! Seek to get at the inner teaching and learn the analogy of faith. Practice deep-sea fishing and you will reach those mysterious Truths which are the secret riches of the soul. These Truths are much despised now, but those who rejoice in them will find their faith growing exceedingly.

Better still than mere knowledge, which, alone, would puff you up, faith grows by *experience*. When a man has tried and proved a thing, then his confidence in it is largely increased. Take a promise and test it, and then you will say, “I know that is so.” When you have tested it again and again, and again, nobody will be able to shake you, for you will say, “I have tasted and handled of this good Word of God. I have made it my own and I am not to be driven from it.” The experienced Christian is the established Christian. The man who proved all things is the man who holds fast that which is good. God give Grace to increase our faith by knowledge and by experience!

Faith also grows by much *meditation and walking with God*. If you want to believe in a man, you must know him. Half the disputes between Christian people arise from their not knowing one another. There is a hymn of Mr. Sankey’s which I venture to alter thus—

***“When we know each other better***

***The mists will roll away.”***  
When we know each other, our suspicions, prejudices and dislikes will speedily disappear. I am sure it is so with our God. When you walk with Him; when your communion with Him is close and constant, your faith in Him will grow exceedingly. Some of you, I am afraid, do not give five minutes in the day to meditation. You are in too great a hurry for that. In London life, men get up in a hurry even as they went to bed in a hurry and slept in a hurry! They swallow their breakfast in a hurry; they have no time to digest it; the bell is ringing at the station and they must hurry to catch the train! They reach business in a hurry. They hurry through it and they hurry to get back from it. Men cannot think, for they have barely time to blink their eyes. As to an hour’s meditation and reading the Scriptures and communing with God, many professors, nowadays, would think they committed robbery against the god of this world if they took half-anhour out of their service to give it to fellowship with the world to come! If our faith is to grow exceedingly, we must maintain constant conversation with God.

Another way of increasing faith is by much *prayer*. Pray *for* faith and pray *with* faith—thus shall your soul become firm in its reliance on the promises. It is while we wrestle with the Angel that we find out our weakness, as the sinew of our thigh shrinks. But, at the same time, we prove our God-given strength, since as princes we wrestle with God and prevail! Power *from* prayer as well as power *in* prayer is what we need. On our knees we gather strength till doubting and fearing disappear.

We must be careful to render *obedience to God*. A man cannot trust God while he lives in sin. Every act of disobedience weakens confidence in God. Faith and obedience are bound up in the same bundle. He that obeys God, trusts God. And he that trusts God, obeys God. He that is without faith is without works and He that is without works is without faith. Do not oppose faith and good works to one another, for there is a blessed relationship between them. And if you abound in obedience, your faith shall grow exceedingly.

Again, faith grows by *exercise*. The man who uses the little faith he has will get more faith. But he that says, “I have not enough faith for suchand-such work” and, therefore, shrinks back, shall become more and more timid, till, at last, like a coward, he runs away! Go forward with your little faith and to your surprise it shall have grown as you have advanced! Accomplish much and then endeavor something more, and something more. I have often used an illustration taken from a person who teaches the art of growing taller. I do not believe in that art—we shall not add a cubit to our stature just yet. But part of this professor’s exercise is that in the morning, when you get up, you are to reach as high as you can and aim a little higher every morning, though it is only the hundredth part of an inch. By that means you are to grow. This is so with faith. Do all you can and then do a little more—and when you can do that, then do a little more than you can. Always have something in hand that is greater then your present capacity. Grow up to it and when you have grown up to it, grow more! By many little additions, a great house is built. Brick by brick, up rose the pyramid! Believe and yet believe more! Trust and have further trust! Hope shall become faith and faith shall ripen to full assurance and perfect confidence in God Most High!

This then, Brothers and Sisters, is what I commend to you. May God the Holy Spirit help you all to go from faith to faith.  
**III.**Finally, this growing faith becomes THE CENTER OF OTHER CHRISTIAN GRACES. “Your faith grows exceedingly, and the charity of every one of you all abounds toward each other.” A firm faith in Gospel Truths will make us love one another, for each Doctrine of Truth is an argument for love. If you believe in God as having chosen His people, you will love His elect. If you believe in Christ as having made Atonement for His people, you will love His redeemed and seek their peace. If you believe in the Doctrine of Regeneration and know that we must be born again, you will love the regenerate. Whatever doctrine it is that is true, it ministers toward the love of the heart. I am sure you will find a deep, firm, fervent unity with one another in those that hold the Truth of God in the love of it. If you are not filled with brotherly love, it must be because you are not firmly believing that Truth which works toward love.  
Firmness in the faith ministers toward the unity of the Church. The Church at Thessalonica did not have a secession, or a split, as some call it—the Church at Thessalonica did not divide under the pressure of persecution—they adhered closely to one another! As they were hammered all the more, the more they were consolidated. They were welded into one solid mass by the hammer of persecution and the fire of love—and the reason was because they each one held the Truth of God with all firmness. I am always afraid of a Church that is made up of mixed elements— when some are Calvinistic, some Arminian, some Baptist and some Paedobaptist. When the minister who holds them together dies, they will disintegrate. When certain reasons that now make them cohere, cease to exist, the Church will divide like quicksilver—each little bit breaking into smaller bits—and so they will go rolling about in innumerable factions. But given a Church that holds the Truths of God firmly, with deep and strong faith, then if the pastor dies, or 20 pastors die, they believe in a Pastor who lives forever—and whoever comes or does not come—the Truth they hold, holds them in living unity. I cannot imagine a greater blessing for you as a Church, in years to come, than for each man and woman to be intelligently established in the Truth of God you have received. Who shall separate the men who are one in Christ by the grip of mighty faith? I commend firm faith to you with all my heart as the source of love and the means of unity in years to come.  
This faith breeds patience in men and patience assists love. Truth to tell, God’s people are, some of them, an amazing tribe! A countryman was accustomed to say that if God had not chosen His people before they were born, He would never have done so afterwards. There is truth in that saying. Therefore if a man loves his fellow Christians as an act of mere nature, he will often feel himself baffled. He will say, “They acted very unkindly to me. Who can love people that are so ill-mannered, so ungrateful?” But when faith is strong, you will say, “What is that to me? I love them for *Christ’s* sake. If I am to have a reward, it shall come from my Lord Christ. As for God’s people, I love them despite their faults. Over the head of the mistaken judgements they form of me, I love all my Brethren.” The way to make men better is not to be always censuring them, but to *love* them more. The quickest way to win a sinner is to love him to Christ! The quickest way to sanctify a Believer is to love him into purity and holiness! Only faith can do this. May faith, therefore, grow exceedingly, for faith, by working patience, helps us to bear with others.  
If there is anything grand, good, desirable—anything Christ-like, anything God-like—the way to it is to let your faith grow exceedingly! If this Church is to become more and more a missionary Church, as I pray God it may, your faith must grow exceedingly! If you are to stand fast as a breakwater in these times of departure from the faith once delivered to the saints, your faith must grow exceedingly! If you are to be made a blessing to this wicked city and shine like a lighthouse over this sea of London, your faith must grow exceedingly! If God has brought you as a Church, together with other Churches, to the Kingdom for such a time as this—if you are to achieve your destiny and work for God and glorify His name— your faith must grow exceedingly!  
The man who is timorous and faint-hearted, let him go home—he is not fit for the day of battle. The age requires heroes! The chicken-hearted are out of their place in this perilous century! You that know what you know and believe what you believe, whose tramp is that of fearless warriors— you have a high calling—fulfill it! You shall see what God will do for you and with you! And it shall be written in the pages of eternity that at such a time the Church grew in its faith and, therefore, God used it for His Glory.  
May it be so. May those among us who have no faith be led to Jesus. O Believers, try your own faith by speaking to unbelievers as they go away this morning! This afternoon, in the Sunday school, prove your faith by winning your dear children for Christ! Try your faith every day in the week by giving sinners no rest until they come to Christ! God bless you, each one, for His name’s sake. Amen.

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A LECTURE FOR LITTLE-FAITH  
NO. 205

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, JULY 18, 1858, *BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT THE MUSIC HALL, ROYAL SURREY GARDENS.**

***“We are bound to thank God always for you, Brethren, as it is meet, because that your faith grows exceedingly and the charity of every one of you all toward each other abounds.”***2Th 1:3***.***

“We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet.” Whether we shall praise God or not, is not left to our opinion Although the commandment saith not, “Thou shalt praise the Lord,” yet praise is God’s most righteous due, and every man, as a partaker of God’s bounty, and especially every Christian, is bound to praise God, as it is meet. It is true we have no authoritative rubric for daily praise; we have no commandment left on record specially prescribing certain hours of song and thanksgiving; but still the law written upon the heart, teacheth us with divine authority that it is right to praise God; and this unwritten mandate hath as much power and authority about it, as if it had been recorded on the tables of stone, or handed to us from the top of thundering Sinai. The Christian’s duty is to praise God. Think not ye who are always mourning that ye are guiltless in that respect; imagine not that ye can discharge your duty to your God without songs of praise. It is your duty to praise him. You are bound by the bonds of his love as long as you live to bless his name. It is meet and comely that you should do so. It is not only a pleasurable exercise, but it is the absolute duty of the Christian life to praise God. This is taught us in the text, — “We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet.” Let not your harps then hang upon the willows, ye mourning children of the Lord. It is your duty to strike them and bring forth their loudest music. It is sinful if you to cease from praising God; you are blessed in order that you may bless him; and if you do not praise God you are not bringing forth the fruit, which he as the divine husbandman, may well expect at your hands. Go forth then, ye sons of God, and chant his praise. With every morning’s dawn lift up your notes of thanksgiving, and every evening let the setting sun be followed with your song. Girdle the earth with your praises; surround it with an atmosphere of melody, so shall God himself look down from heaven and accept your praises as like in kind, though not equal in degree, to the praises of cherubim and seraphim.

It seems, however, that the apostle Paul in this instance exercised praise not for himself but for others, for the church at Thessalonica. If any of you should in ignorance ask the question why it was that Paul should take so deep an interest in the salvation of these saints, and in their growth in faith, I would remind you, that this is a secret known only to the men who have brought forth and nourished children, and therefore love them. The apostle Paul had founded the church at Thessalonica, most of these people were his spiritual offspring, by the words of his mouth, attended by the power of the Spirit, they had been brought out of darkness into marvellous light; and they who have had spiritual children who have brought many sons unto God, can tell you that there is an interest felt by a spiritual father, that is not to be equalled even by the tender affection of a mother towards her babe. “Ay,” said the apostle, “I have been tender over you as a nursing father,” and in another place he says he had “travailed in birth,” for their souls. This is a secret not known to the hireling minister. Only he whom God hath himself ordained and thrust forth into the work, only he who has had his tongue touched with a live coal from off the altar, can tell you what it is to agonize for men’s souls before they are converted, and what it is to rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory, when the travail of their souls is seen in the salvation of God’s elect.

And now, beloved, having thus given you two thoughts which seemed to me to arise naturally from the text, I shall repair at once to the object of this morning’s discourse. The apostle thanks God that the faith of the Thessalonians had grown exceedingly. Leaving out the rest of the text, I shall direct your attention this morning to the subject of growth in faith. Faith hath degrees.

In the first place, I shall endeavor to notice *the inconveniences of little faith;* secondly, *the means of promoting its growth*; and thirdly, *a certain high attainment, unto which faith will assuredly grow, if we diligently water and cultivate it*.

**I. In the first place, THE INCONVENIENCES OF LITTLE FAITH. When faith**

first commences in the soul, it is like a grain of mustard seed of which the Savior said it was the least of all seeds, but as God the Holy Spirit is pleased to bedew it with the sacred moisture of his grace, it germinates and grows and begins to spread, until at last it becomes a great tree. To use another figure: when faith commences in the soul it is simply *looking* unto Jesus, and perhaps even then there are so many clouds of doubts and so much dimness of the eye, that we have need for the light of the Spirit to shine upon the cross before we are able even so much as to see it. When faith grows a little, it rises from looking to Christ to *coming* to Christ. He who stood afar off and looked to the cross by-and-bye plucks up courage, and getting heart to himself, he runneth up to the cross. or perhaps he doth not run. but hath to be drawn before he can so much as creep thither, and even then it is with a limping gait that he draweth nigh to Christ the Savior. But that done, faith goeth a little farther: it *layeth hold* on Christ; it begins to see him in his excellency, and appropriates him in some degree, conceives him to be a real Christ and a real Savior, and is convinced of his suitability. And when it hath done as much as that, it goeth further; it leaneth on Christ. it leaneth on its Beloved; casteth all the burden of its cares, sorrows, and griefs upon that blessed shoulder, and permitteth all its sins to he swallowed up in the great red sea of the Saviour’s blood. And faith can then go further still; for having seen and ran towards him and laid hold upon him, and having leaned upon him, faith in the next place puts in a humble, but a sure and *certain claim* to all that Christ is and all that he has wrought; and then, trusting alone in this, appropriating all this to itself, faith mounteth to full assurance; and out of heaven there is no state more rapturous and blessed. But, as I have observed at the beginning, faith is but very small, and there are some Christians who never get out of little faith all the while they are here. You notice in John Bunyan’s “*Pilgrim’s Progress*,” how many Little-faith’s he mentions There is our old friend Ready-to-halt, who went all the way to the celestial city on crutches but left them when he went into the river Jordan. Then there is little Feeblemind, who carried his feeble mind with him all the way to the banks of the river and then left it, and ordered it to be buried in a dunghill that none might inherit it. Then there is Mr. Fearing, too, who used to stumble over a straw, and was always frightened if he saw a drop of rain, because he thought the floods of heaven were let loose upon him. And you remember Mr. Despondency and Miss Much-afraid, who were so long locked up in the dungeon of Giant Despair, that they were almost starved to death, and there was little left of them but skin and bone; and poor Mr. Feeble-mind, who had been taken into the cave of Giant Slay-good who was about to eat him, when Great-heart came to his deliverance. John Bunyan was a very wise man He has put a great many of those characters in his book, because there are a great many of them. He has not left us with one Mr. Ready-to-halt, but he has given us seven or eight graphic characters because he himself in his own time has been one of them, and he had known many others who had walked in the same path. I doubt not I have a very large congregation this morning of this very class of persons. Now let me notice the inconveniences of little faith.

The first inconvenience of little faith is that *while it is always sure of heaven it very seldom thinks so*. Little-faith is quite as sure of heaven as Great-faith. When Jesus Christ counts up his jewels at the last day he will take to himself the little pearls as well as the great ones. If a diamond be never so small yet it is precious because it is a diamond. So will faith, be it never so little, if it be true faith, Christ will never lose even the smallest jewel of his crown. Little-faith is always sure of heaven, because the name of Little-faith is in the book of eternal life. Little-faith was chosen of God before the foundation of the world. Little-faith was bought with the blood of Christ; ay, and he cost as much as Great-faith. “For every man a shekel” was of redemption. Every man, whether great or small, prince or peasant, had to redeem himself with a shekel. Christ has bought all, both little and great, with the same most precious blood. Little-faith is always sure of heaven, for God has begun the good work in him and he will carry it on. God loves him and he will love him unto the end. God has provided a crown for him, and he will not allow the crown to hang there without a head; he has erected for him a mansion in heaven, and he will not allow the mansion to stand untenanted for ever. Little-faith is always safe, but he very seldom knows it. If you meet him he is sometimes afraid of hell; very often afraid that the wrath of God abideth on him. He will tell you that the country on the other side the flood can never belong to a worm so base as he. Sometimes it is because he feels himself so unworthy, another time it is because the things of God are too good to be true, he says, or he cannot think they can be true to such an one as he is. Sometimes he is afraid he is not elect; another time he fears that he has not been called aright. that he has not come to Christ aright. Another time his fears are that he will not hold on to the end, that he shall not be able to persevere, and if you kill a thousand of his fears he is sure to have another host by to-morrow; for unbelief is one of those things that you cannot destroy. “It hath,” saith Bunyan, “as many lives as a cat;” you may kill it over and over again, but still it lives. It is one of those ill weeds that sleep in the soil even after it has been burned, and it only needs a little encouragement to grow again. Now Great-faith is sure of heaven, and he knows it. He climbs Pisgah’s top, and views the landscape o’er; he drinks in the mysteries of paradise even before he enters within the pearly gates. He sees the streets that are paved with gold; he beholds the walls of the city, the foundations whereof are of precious stones; he hears the mystic music of the glorified, and begins to smell on earth the perfumes of heaven. But poor Little-faith can scarcely look at the sun; he very seldom sees the light. he gropes in the valley, and while all is safe he always thinks himself unsafe. That is one of the disadvantages of Little-faith.

Another disadvantage is that *Little- faith, while always having grace enough* (for that is Little-faith’s promise, “My grace shall be sufficient for thee”) *yet never thinks he has grace enough.* He will have quite enough grace to carry him to heaven; and Great-heart won’t have any more. The greatest saint, when he entered heaven, found that he went in with an empty wallet: he had eaten his last crust of bread when he got there. The manna ceased when the children of Israel entered into Canaan. they had none to carry with them there: they began to eat the corn of the land when the manna of the wilderness had ceased But Little-faith is always afraid that he has not grace enough. You see him in trouble. “Oh!” says he, “I shall never be able to hold my head above water.” Blessed be God he never can sink. If you see him in prosperity, he is afraid he shall be intoxicated with pride; that he shall turn aside like Balaam. If you meet him attacked by an enemy, he is scarcely able to say three words for himself; and he lets the enemy exact upon him. If you find him fighting the battle of the Lord Jesus Christ he holds his sword tight enough, good man, but he has not much strength in his arm to bring his sword down with might. He can do but little, for he is afraid that God’s grace will not be sufficient for him. Greatfaith, on the other hand, can shake the world. What cares he about trouble, trial, or duty?  
He would face an army single-handed, if God commanded him; and “with the jaw-bone of an ass, he would slay heaps upon heaps, and thousands of men.” There is no fear of his lacking strength. He can do all things, or can bear all sufferings, for his Lord is there. Come what may, his arm is always sufficient for him; he treads down his enemy, and his cry every day is like the shout of Deborah, “Oh my soul, thou hast trodden down strength.” Little-faith treads down strength too, but he does not know it. He kills his enemies, but has not eye-sight enough to see the slain. He often hits so hard that his foemen retreat, but he thinks they are there still. He conjures up a thousand phantoms, and when he has routed his real enemies he makes others, and trembles at the phantoms which he has himself made. Little-faith will assuredly find that his garments will not wax old, that his shoes shall be iron and brass, and that as his day is so shall his strength be; but all the way he will be murmuring, because he thinks his garments will grow old, that his feet will be blistered and sore; and he is terrified lest the day should be too heavy for him and that the evil of the day shall more than counterbalance his grace. Ay, it is an inconvenient thing to have little faith, for little faith perverts everything into sorrow and grief.

***He that helped him bears him through, And makes him more than conqueror too.”***

Again, there is a sad inconvenience about Little-faith, namely, that if Littlefaith be sorely tempted to sin, *he is apt to fall*. Strong-faith can well contest with the enemy. Satan comes along, and says, “All these things will I give thee if thou wilt fall down and worship me.” “Nay,” we say, “thou canst not give us all these things, for they are ours already.” “Nay,” says he, “but ye are poor, naked and miserable.” “Ay,” say we to him, “but still these things are ours, and it is good for us to be poor, good for us to be without earthly goods, or else our Father would give them to us.” “Oh,” says Satan, “you deceive yourselves; you have no portion in these things; but if you will serve me, then I will make you rich and happy here.” Strong-faith says, “Serve thee, thou fiend! Avaunt! Dost thou offer me silver? — behold God giveth me gold. Dost thou say to me, “I will give thee this if thou disobey? — fool that thou art! I have a thousand times as great wages for my obedience as thou canst offer for my disobedience.” But when Satan meets Little-faith, he says to him, “If thou be the Son of God cast thyself down;” and poor Little faith is so afraid that he is not a son of God that he is very apt to cast himself down upon the supposition. “There,” says Satan, “I will give thee all this if thou wilt disobey.” Littlefaith says, “I am not quite sure that I am a child of God, that I have a portion among them that are sanctified;” and he is very apt to fall into sin by reason of the littleness of his faith. Yet at the same time I must observe that I have seen some Little-faiths who are far less apt to fall into sin than others. They have been so cautious that they dared not put one foot before the other, because they were afraid they should put it awry: they scarcely even dared to open their lips, but they prayed, “O Lord, open thou my lips;” afraid that they should let a wrong word out, if they were to speak; always alarmed lest they should be falling into sin unconsciously, having a very tender conscience. Well, I like people of this sort. I have sometimes thought that Little-faith holds tighter by Christ than any other. For a man who is very near drowning is sure to clutch the plank all the tighter with the grasp of a drowning man, which tightens and becomes more clenched the more his hope is decreased. Well, beloved, Little-faith may be kept from falling, but this is the fruit of tender conscience and not of little faith. Careful walking is not the result of little faith; it may go with it, and so may keep Little-faith from perishing, but little faith is in itself a dangerous thing, laying us open to innumerable temptations, and taking away very much of our strength to resist them. “The joy of the Lord is your strength;” and if that joy ceases you become weak and very apt to turn aside. Beloved, you who are Little-faiths, I tell you it is inconvenient for you always to remain so; for you have many nights and few days. Your years are like Norwegian years — very long winters and very short summers. You have many howlings, but very little of shouting; you are often playing upon the pipe of mourning, but very seldom sounding the trump of exultation. I would to God you could change your notes a little. Why should the children of a King go mourning all their days? It is not the Lord’s will that you should be always sorrowful. “Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say rejoice.” Oh, ye that have been fasting, anoint your heads and wash your faces, that ye appear not unto men to fast. Oh, ye that are sad in heart, “Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart.” Therefore rejoice for ye shall praise him. Say unto yourselves, “Why art thou cast down, Oh, soul and why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise him, who is the light of my countenance and my God.”

**II. Having thus noticed the inconveniences and disadvantages of little**

faith, let me give you A F EW RULES WITH REGARD TO THE WAY OF STRENGTHENING IT. If you would have your little faith grow into great faith, you must *feed* it well. Faith is a feeding grace. It does not ask you to give it the things that are seen, but it does ask you to give it the promise of the things that are not seen, which are eternal. Thou tellest me thou hast little faith. I ask thee whether thou art given to the meditation of God’s Word, whether thou hast studied the promises whether thou art wont to carry one of those sacred things about with thee every day? Dost thou reply, “No?” Then, I tell thee, I do not wonder at thine unbelief He who deals largely with the promises, will, under grace, very soon find that there is great room for believing them. Get a promise, beloved, every day, and take it with you wherever you go; mark it, learn it, and inwardly digest it. Don’t do as some men do — who think it a Christian duty to read a chapter every morning, and they read one as long as your arm without understanding it at all; but take out some choice text and pray the Lord during the day to break it up to your mind.

Do as Luther says: “When I get hold of a promise,” says he, “I look upon it as I would a fruit tree. I think — there hang the fruits above my head, and if I would get them I must shake the tree to and fro.” So I take a promise and meditate upon it; I shake it to and fro, and sometimes the mellow fruit fans into my hand, at other times the fruit is less ready to fall, but I never leave off till I get it. I shake, shake all the day long; I turn the text over and over again, and at last the pomegranate droppeth down, and my soul is comforted with apples, for it was sick of love. Do that, Christian. Deal much with the promises; have much commerce with these powders of the merchant: there is a rich perfume in every promise of God; taken; it is an alabaster box, break it by meditation, and the sweet scent of faith shall be shed abroad in your house.

Again, *prove the promise*, and in that way you will get your faith strengthened. When you are at any time placed in distress, take a promise and see whether it is true. Suppose you are very near lacking bread; take this promise, “Thy bread shall be given thee, thy water shall be sure.” Rise up in the morning when nothing is in the cupboard, and say, “I will see whether God will keep this promise;” and if he does, do not forget it; set it down in your book; make a mark in your Bible against it. Do as the old woman did, who put T and P against the promise, and told her minister that it means “tried and proved;” so that when she was again in distress, she could not help believing. Have you been exercised by Satan? There is a promise that says, “Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.” Take that and prove it, and when you have proved it, make a mark against it, and say, “This I know is true, for I have proved it to be so.” There is nothing in the world that can confirm faith like proof. “What I want,” said one, “is facts.” And so it is with the Christian. What he wants is a fact to make him believe. The older you grow the stronger your faith ought to become, for you have so many more facts with which to buttress your faith, and compel you to believe in God. Only think of a man who has come to be seventy years of age what a pile of evidence could he accumulate if he kept a note of all God’s providential goodness and all his lovingkindness. You do not wonder when you hear a man, the hairs of whose head are white with the sunlight of heaven, get up and say, “These fifty years have I served God, and he has never forsaken me I can bear willing testimony to his faithfulness, not one good thing hath failed of all that the Lord hath promised, all hath come to pass.” Now we, who are young beginners, must not expect that our faith will be so strong as it will be in years to come. Every instance of God’s love should make us believe him more; and as each promise passes by, and we can see the fulfillment of it at the heels thereof, we must be compelled and constrained to say, that God has kept so many of these promises and will keep them unto the end. But the worst of it is that we forget them all, and so we begin to have grey hairs sprinkled on our heads, and we have no more faith than when we began, because we have forgotten God’s repeated answers, and though he has fulfilled the promise we have suffered it to lie buried in forgetfulness.

Another plan I would recommend for the strengthening of your faith, though not so excellent as the last, is to *associate yourselves with Godly and much tried men*. It is astonishing how young believers will get their faith refreshed by talking with old and advanced Christians. Perhaps you are in great doubt and distress. you run off to an old brother, and you say, “Oh my dear friend, I am afraid I am not a child of God at all, I am in such deep distress, I have had blasphemous thoughts cast into my heart; if I were a child of God I should never feel like that.” The old man smiles, and says, “Ah! you have not gone very far on the road to heaven, or else you would know better. Why I am the subject of these thoughts very often. Old as I am, and though I hope I have enjoyed the full assurance for a long time, yet there are seasons when if I could have heaven for a grain of faith, I could not think heaven was mine, for I could not find so much as a grain in me, though it is there.” And he will tell you what dangers he has passed, and of the sovereign love that kept him; of the temptations that threatened to ensnare him, and of the wisdom that guided his feet; and he will tell you of his own weakness and God’s omnipotence; of his own emptiness, and God’s fullness; of his own changeableness, and God’s immutability, and if after talking with such a man you don’t believe surely you are sinful indeed; for “out of the mouth of two witnesses, the whole shall be established,” but when there are many such who can bear testimony to God, it would be foul sin indeed if we were to doubt him.

Another way whereby you may obtain increase of faith is to *labor to get as much as possible free from self*. I have striven with all my might to attain the position of perfect indifference of all men. I have found at times, if I have been much praised in company, and if my heart has given way a little, and I have taken notice of it, and felt pleased, that the very next time I was censured and abused. I felt the censure and abuse very keenly, for the very fact that I took the praise rendered me liable to lay hold upon the censure. So that I have always tried, especially of late, to take no more notice of man’s praise than of his censure, but to fix my heart simply upon this — I know that I have a right motive in what I attempt to do, I am conscious that I endeavor to serve God with a single eye to his glory, and therefore it is not for me to take praise from man nor censure, but to stand independently upon the one rock of right doing. Now the same thing will apply to you. Perhaps you find yourself full of virtue and grace one day, and the devil flatters you: “Ah! you are a bright Christian; you might join the church now, you would be quite an honor to it; see how well you are prospering.” And unconsciously to yourself you believe the sound of that syren music, and you half believe that really you are growing rich in grace. Well, the next day you find yourself very low indeed in godly matters. Perhaps you fall into some sin, and now the devil says, “Ah! now you are no child of God; look at your sins.” Beloved, the only way in which you can maintain your faith is to live above the praise of self and the censure of self; to live simply upon the blood and merits of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who can say in the midst of all his virtues, “These are but dross and dung; my hope is fixed on nothing less than Jesus Christ’s finished sacrifice” — such a man, when sins prevail, will find his faith remain constant, for he will say “I once was full of virtue and then I did not trust in myself, and now I have none still do I trust in my Savior, for change as I may, he changeth not. If I had to depend on myself in the least degree then it would be up and down, up and down, but since I rely on what Christ has done, since he is the unbuttressed pillar of my hope, then come what may my soul doth rest secure, confident in faith. Faith will never be weak if self be weak, but when self is strong, faith cannot be strong, for self is very much like what the gardener calls the sucker at the bottom of the tree, which never bears fruit but only sucks away the nourishment from the tree itself. Now, self is that sucker which sucks away the nourishment from faith, and you must cut it up or else your faith will always be little faith, and you will have difficulty in maintaining any comfort in your soul.

But, perhaps, the only way in which most men get their faith increased is by *great trouble*. We don’t grow strong in faith on sunshiny days. It is only in strong weather that a man gets faith. Faith is not an attainment that droppeth like the gentle dew from heaven; it generally comes in the whirlwind and the storm. Look at the old oaks: how is it that they have become so deeply rooted in the earth? Ask the March winds and they will tell you. It was not the April shower that did it, or the sweet May sunshine, but it was March’s rough wind, the blustering month of old Boreas shaking the tree to and fro and causing its roots to bind themselves around the rocks. So must it be with us. We don’t make great soldiers in the barracks at home; they must be made amidst flying shot and thundering cannon. We cannot expect to make good sailors on the Serpentine; they must be made far away on the deep sea, where the wild winds howl, and the thunders roll like drums in the march of the God of armies. Storms and tempests are the things that make men tough and hardy mariners. They see the works of the Lord and his wonders in the deep. So with Christians. Great-faith must have great trials. Mr. Great-heart would never have been Mr. Great-heart if he had not once been Mr. Great-trouble. Valiant-for-truth would never have put to fight those foes, and have been so valiant, if the foes had not first attacked him. So with us: we must expect great troubles before we shall attain to much faith.

Then he who would have great faith, must *exercise what he has*. I should not like to-morrow to go and shoe horses, or to make horse shoes on an anvil. I am sure my arm would ache in the first hour with lifting the heavy hammer and banging it down so many times. Whatever the time might be, I should not be able to keep time. The reason why the blacksmith’s arm does not tire is, because he is used to it. He has kept at it all day long these many years, till there’s an arm for you! He turns up his sleeve and shows you the strong sinew that never tires, so strong has it become by use. Do you want to get your faith strong? Use it. You lazy lie-a-bed Christians, that go up to your churches and chapels, and take your seats, and hear our sermons, and talk about getting good, but never think about doing good; ye that are letting hell fill beneath you, and yet are too idle to stretch out your hands to pluck brands from the eternal burning; ye that see sin running down your streets, yet can never put so much as your foot to turn or stem the current, I wonder not that you have to complain of the littleness of your faith. It ought to be little; you do but little. and why should God give you more strength than you mean to use. Strong faith must always be an exercised faith, and he that dares not exercise the faith he has shall not have more “Take away from him the one talent and give it to him that hath, because he did not put it out to usury.” In Mr. Whitfield’s life, you do not often find him complaining of want of faith, or if he did, it was when he only preached nine times a week; he never complained when he preached sixteen times. Read Grimshaw’s life: you do not often find him troubled with despondency when he preached twenty-four times in seven days; it was only when he was growing a little idle and only preached twelve times. Keep always at it, and all at it, and there is not much fear of your faith becoming weak. It is with our faith as with boys in the winter time There they go round the fire, rubbing and chafing their hands to keep the blood in circulation, and almost fighting each other to see which shall sit on the fire and get warm. At last the father comes, and says, “Boys, this won’t do, you will never get warm by these artificial means run out and do some work.” Then they all go out, and they come in again with a ruddy hue in their cheeks their hands no longer tingles and they say, “Well, father, we didn’t think it half so warm as it is.” So must it be with you: you must set to work if you would have your faith grow strong and warm. True, your works won’t save you; but faith without works is dead, frozen to death; but faith with works groweth to a red heat of fervency and to the strength of stability. Go and teach in the Sunday school, or go and catch seven or eight poor ragged children; go and visit the poor old woman in her hovel; go and see some poor dying creatures in the back streets of our great city, and you will say, “Dear me, how wonderfully my faith is refreshed just by doing something.” You have been watering yourself whilst you were watering others.

Now my last advice shall be this — the best way to get your faith strengthened is to have *communion with Christ*. If you commune with Christ, you cannot be unbelieving. When his left hand is under my head, and his right hand doth embrace me, I cannot doubt. When my Beloved sits at his table, and he brings me into his banqueting house, and his banner over me is his love, then indeed I do believe. When I feast with him, my unbelief is abashed and hides its head. Speak, ye that have been led in the green pastures, and have been made to lie down by the still waters; ye who have seen his rod and his stay, and hope to see them even when you walk through the valley of the shadow of death; speak, ye that have sat at his feet with Mary, or laid your head upon his bosom with the well-beloved John; have you not found when you have been near to Christ your faith has grown strong, and when you have been far away, then your faith has become weak? It is impossible to look Christ in the face and then doubt him. When you cannot see him then you doubt him; but if you live in fellowship with him, you are like the ewe lambs of Nathan’s parable, for you lie in his bosom, and eat from his table, and drink from his cup. You must believe when your Beloved speaks unto you, and says, “Rise up my love, my fair one, and come away.” There is no hesitation then; you must arise from the lowlands of your doubt up to the hills of assurance.

III. And now, in conclusion, there is A CERTAIN HIGH ATTAINMENT TO

W HICH FAITH MAY, IF DILIGENTLY CULTIVATED, CERTAINLY ATTAIN. Can a man’s faith grow so strong that he will never afterwards doubt at all? I reply, no. He who has the strongest faith will have sorrowful intervals of despondency. I suppose there has scarcely ever been a Christian who has not, at some time or other, had the most painful doubts concerning his acceptance in the Beloved. All God’s children will have paroxysms of doubt even though they be usually strong in faith. Again, may a man so cultivate his faith that he may be infallibly sure that he is a child of God — so sure that he has made no mistake — so sure that all the doubts and fears which may be thrust upon him may not be able at that time to get an advantage over him? I answer, yes, decidedly he may. A man may, in this life, be as sure of his acceptance in the Beloved as he is of his own existence. Nay, he not only may, but there are some of us who have enjoyed this precious state and privilege for years; we do not mean for years together — our peace has been interrupted, we have now and then been subjected to doubts; but I have known some — I knew one especially, who said that for thirty years he had enjoyed almost invariably a full sense of his acceptance in Christ. “I have had,” he said “very often a sense of sin, but I have had with that a sense of the power of the blood of Christ; I have now and then for a little time had great despondency ,but still I may say, taking it as a general rule, that for thirty years I have enjoyed the fullest assurance of my acceptance in the Beloved.” I trust a large portion of God’s people can say that for months and years they have not had to sing,

*“Tis a point I long to know.”*

But they can say, “I know in whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him.” I will try to depict the state of the Christian, he may be as poor as poverty can make him, but he is rich; he has no thought with regard to the morrow, for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. He casts himself upon the providence of God; he believes that he who clothes the lilies, and feeds the ravens, will not allow his children to go starving or barefooted. He has but little concern as to his temporal estate; he folds his arms and floats down the stream of providence singing all the way whether he float by mud bank, dark, dreary, and noxious, or by palace fair and valley pleasant, he alters not his position; he neither moves not struggles; he has no will nor wish which way to swim, his only desire being to “lie passive in God’s hand, and know no will but his.” When the storm flies over his head he finds Christ to be a shelter from the tempest; when the heat is hot he finds Christ to be the shadow of a great rock in a weary land. He just casts his anchor down deep into the sea, and when the wind blows, he sleeps; hurricanes may come about his ears, the masts creak, and every timber seems to be strained and every nail to start from its place, but there he sleeps. Christ is at the helm. he says, “My anchor is within the vail, I know it will keep its hold.” The earth shakes beneath his feet; but he says, “Though the earth be removed and mountains be cast into the sea, yet will not we fear, for God is our refuge and strength, and a very present help in time of trouble.” Ask him about his eternal interests, and he tells you that his only confidence is in Christ, and that die when he may, he knows he shall stand boldly at the last great day clothed in his Saviour’s righteousness. He speaks very confidently though never boastingly; though he has no time to dance the giddy dance of presumption, he stands firmly on the rock of confidence. Perhaps you think he is proud — ah! he is a humble man; he lies low before the cross, but not before you, he can look you boldly in the face, and tell you that Christ is able to keep that which he has committed to him. He knows that —

*“His honor is engaged to save  
The meanest of his sheep  
All that his heavenly Father gave,  
His hands securely keep.”*

And die when he may he can lay his head upon the pillow of the promise, and breathe his life out on the Saviour’s breast without a struggle or a murmur, crying — “Victory,” in the arms of death; challenging Death to produce his sting, and demanding of the grave its victory. Such is the effect of strong faith; I repeat, the weakest in the world, by diligent cultivation may attain to it. Only seek the refreshing influence of the Divine Spirit, and walk in Christ’s commandments, and live near to him; and ye that are dwarfs, like Zaccheus, shall become as giants; the hyssop on the wall shall start up into the dignity of the cedar in Lebanon, and ye that fly before your enemies shall yet be able to chase a thousand, and two of you shall put ten thousand to flight. May the Lord enable his poor little ones so to grow!

As for those of you who have no faith in Christ, let me remind you of one sad thing — namely, that “without faith it is impossible to please God.” If thou hast not put thy trust in Christ, then God is angry with thee every day. “If thou turn not he will whet his sword, for he hath bent his bow and made it ready.” I beseech thee, cast thyself on Christ; he is worthy of thy trust; there is none other to trust to, he is willing to receive thee; he invites thee; he shed his blood for thee; he intercedes for thee. Believe on him, for thus his promise runs, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.” Do both of these things. Believe on him, and then profess thy faith in baptism; and the Lord bless thee, and hold thee to the end, and make thee to increase exceedingly in faith, to the glory of God. May the Lord add his blessing!

THE GROWTH OF FAITH  
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A SERMON  
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***DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,*  
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***“We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, because that your faith grows exceedingly.”***2Th 1:3***.***

[Two other Sermons by Mr. Spurgeon on the same verse are #205, Volume 4— A LECTURE FOR LITTLE-FAITH and #1857, Volume 31—  
THE NECESSITY OF GROWING FAITH—read/download both sermons free of charge at http://www.spurgeongems.org .]

BEWARE of imagining that you have reached finality in religion. Just as some politicians have said, “We have gone as far in reform as we ever mean to go, so here we shall stop,” certain religious professors say, “We have gone as far in religion as there is any need to go. We are converted, we are saved, so here we shall remain.” Beware, I say, of such a spirit as that, but rather imitate the example of the Apostle Paul who wrote, “Forgetting these things which are behind and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” We are not content with merely being alive! We wish to be in health as well as in life, and we ought not to be satisfied with being saved—we should desire to have our faith in full strength and to have all our graces at the highest degree of development! The men of this world are not usually content with just bread to eat and raiment to put on, they are like those daughters of the horseleech that cry, “Give, give!” But when spiritual things are concerned, these insatiable cravings are not so manifest. Many are content to be wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked when they might buy of Christ all spiritual blessings without money and without price! Even those who have fled for refuge to, lay hold upon the hope set before them are often quite content to lie down just inside the City of Refuge as if they had been sent into this world simply with the selfish end of being saved! They act as if there were nothing for them to do in the way of serving God and reflecting before other men that Glory of God which, in His Grace, has been made to shine upon them! So again I say, beware of that spirit of finality which would permit you to rest content with your present attainments, for if you are, I shall not be able to thank God that your faith grows exceedingly, and you will miss the joy that comes to the Believer who is growing in Grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

I am going to speak to you, first, upon *how Christians grow in faith.* Secondly, *upon the signs of that growth.* And then, thirdly, I hope to give you *some reasons why we should not be satisfied without this growth in faith*.

**I.**First, then, let us consider HOW CHRISTIANS GROW IN FAITH. There are many ways in which the Lord causes faith to grow. One is from *the force of life, itself.* It is natural for life to grow until it has reached its maturity. Here is a living seed. If it is put into the earth under proper circumstances, nothing can prevent it from bursting its shell. In due time the green bade must be seen. You may command that green blade to remain at the same length as at present, but if you pass that way in another month, you will find that it has disobeyed your command—because it lives, it must grow! And if you should continue to visit it until it bends its head in the ripeness of autumn, you would see that it, must, by the very law of its nature, still keep on growing. It is the same with us—the anatomist will tell you that every part of the infant’s body is so prepared that it can grow—there is provision for the growth of every organ and every limb so that, slowly and without difficulty, the whole shall be developed into a full grown man. It is life that grows. Put a bar of iron into the best soil that you can find—water it, and fertilize it, and let the genial sun shine upon it—but never a leaf or a rootlet will you find upon it, for it is dead! It is not so with the Christian. Because of the life that is in him, he must grow. You who are the living branches in the living Vine prove it by your growth. You who are the children of God should increase in wisdom and stature, and go on from strength to strength until you appear in Zion before God. If your faith is as feeble, now, as it was 20 years ago. If you have not made any spiritual advance during the last 10 years, you ought very gravely to question whether you have any spiritual life at all! You may not be able to see the growth, but there must be growth if there is life. There are some plants in which the unseen growth is more valuable than that which is visible—the gardener prizes the potatoes that are underground more than the tops that everyone can see. But with the Christian, there must be both the visible growth in zeal and good works—the hidden growth is in his deep humility and communion with his Lord in secret. So the force of life within produces growth.  
There are certain circumstances under which Believers especially grow, and *they grow in faith by the exercise of faith*. See the blacksmith’s boy when he first tries to swing his father’s big hammer—how soon he gets tired! But ask the smith whether *his* arms ache—“Oh, no!” he says, “I have made too many horseshoes for that.” Exercise has developed his muscles and strengthened his sinews to such an extent that the bringing down of that big hammer with a merry ring is but child’s play to him. So the young Christian, when he begins to exercise faith, can perhaps only imitate him who said, “Lord, I believe, help You my unbelief.” But speak to him some years later, when his faith has been much exercised, and then you will find that he has grown more like Abraham who “staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; and being fully persuaded that what He had promised, He was able, also, to perform.” You know that if you let your arm lie unused, in time you will be unable to use it, like the Indian fakir who holds up his hand in the air until he has lost all power of moving it. So a man may keep his faith unused until it can scarcely be called faith at all— therefore mind that your faith is kept in full exercise for so only will it grow!  
Christians also *grow in faith by holy walking*. Living with Jesus—and to live with Him we must be consistent in holiness—we get to know Him better and to trust Him more. It is said of some men that “the better they are known, the less they are trusted,” but it is not so with the Lord Jesus Christ. Two cannot walk together except they are agreed, but if there is an agreement between our life and the Character of Christ and we are, by Grace, enabled to walk scrupulously in the path of integrity, our faith will grow stronger and stronger as we get to know more of Christ. Sinning is most injurious to faith. I think it is Brookes who said that “either sinning will kill our assurance or our assurance will kill our sinning.” Sin indulged will prevent the full assurance of faith—and even a little sin will do this. Have you ever had a small stone in your boot? If so, and you have tried to walk, you have found it very uncomfortable travelling. If you have a tiny splinter of wood beneath your nail, you know how painful it is—you get it extracted as soon as you can, lest you should lose your finger, or even your hand. Beware of little sins, Beloved, for they will keep all comfort out of your life and effectually hinder the growth of your faith.  
Another way of helping faith to grow is *by a diligent use of Gospel ordinances*. There are some of you who are very lax in this respect. Some who come to the Tabernacle twice on the Lord’s-Day do not come at all during the week. Your bodies would not grow strong if you only fed them once a week—and it is the same with your souls. Prayer Meetings are most soul-fattening ordinances! Many of us can testify that at such gatherings, we have often been able to say, “This is none other but the House of God and this is the gate of Heaven!” I do not expect to see you all at the Prayer Meetings, for some of you have home and business duties requiring your attention and these must not be neglected. Still, there are many more of you who might come if you would. And while I am speaking of ordinances, I must not forget that very precious one of the Lord’s Supper, nor its companion, Believers’ Baptism. Both of these are exceedingly helpful to the Christian. All the means of Grace help the growth of faith and every other virtue. Of course I include the private as well as the public means of Grace. Private prayer is like a conservatory in which God’s plants grow very rapidly. Christians need a temperature higher than this world can give them—they are rare exotics, plants of heavenly birth—and they need Divine warmth before they can bloom and bring forth fruit unto perfection. And this can only be obtained by private prayer, secret fellowship with Christ and devout meditation upon the Scriptures!  
I will only further say, upon this point, that *a Christian may expect to grow in faith the more troubles he has*. If you have ever been at sea in a storm and noticed how unconcerned about it the weather-beaten sailors have been, you must have realized that it was because they had been hardened in many a tempest that they could so calmly go on with their duties while you and other landsmen were in dread of sinking, or longing for the end of the voyage! Storms help to make the sailors sturdy—and trials help to make Christians strong in faith and in every other Divine Grace. Damascus blades have to be annealed and those who are to be like a sharp sword in the Lord’s hand will have to pass through the fire. The more the wind blows, the firmer will the oak’s roots grip the soil— ***“March winds and April showers  
Bring forth May flowers”—***  
and you, as Christians, must have your stormy times and your rainy days if you are to bring forth the flowers of Grace and the fruit of the Spirit! You will probably grow more in the cloudy and dark day of adversity than you will while the sun of prosperity is shining brightly upon you. So be of good courage, Beloved, under the most adverse circumstances, for they are working for your lasting good!  
**II.**I will not say more about how Christians grow in faith. But, in the second place, I will try to point out SOME OF THE MARKS AND EVIDENCES OF THAT GROWTH.  
First, however, let me say that *swelling is not necessarily growing*. We know some people who seem to fancy that they have grown in Grace because they have such big notions as to their own attainments. They evidently imagine that they are *the* people and that wisdom will die with them. We never like to see a child with too big a head, for we fear it is only an indication of disease, and not a sign of health. And we fear that many professors of religion are suffering in a similar fashion. They know too much, for they are wise above what is written and are not content to be teachable and sit as little children at the feet of Jesus, the Great Teacher.  
But there is such a thing as true growing and this can be seen in various ways. First, if you are growing in faith, *Christ becomes increasingly precious to you.*Perhaps you walked by a park one day and you said to yourself, “That is a very pretty place.” Possibly the next time you went that way, somebody said to you, “I should not wonder if that estate should belong to you, some day,” and that made you take a much more personal interest in it. By-and-by, the owner died and you learned that he had left the estate to you! How greatly your interest in it increased, then, and how much more you valued the mansion, the park, the gardens and everything belonging to the estate! In like manner, Christ was precious to me when I first began to hope that He might one day be mine. He was more precious to me when I first realized that He really was mine—and the more fully I am assured of my interest in Him—the more precious does He become to me! This is the best test I can give you, Beloved—the most accurate thermometer by which you can ascertain the rise or fall of your spiritual temperature—Is Christ Jesus more precious to you than He ever was before? If so, then I am bound to thank God always for you, Brothers and Sisters, because your faith grows exceedingly!  
Further, if you are growing in faith, you desire to be more like Christ and you are more and more dissatisfied with yourself because you are so little like He. You are longing to be so completely conformed to His image that all the virtues of His Character shall be reflected and reproduced in you. It is a sure proof of genuine faith in Christ that it produces likeness to Him—and growth in faith is good evidence of growth in likeness to Him. Are you more like Christ than you were years ago, or do you desire above everything else to be more and more like He? If so, my Brother or Sister, I feel confident that you are growing in faith, and I thank God that it is so—  
***“Lord, if You, Your Grace impart,  
Poor in spirit, meek in heart,  
I shall as my Master be,  
Rooted in humility!”***  
Another evidence of growing in faith is that*the promises become more consolatory to us* and our heart and mind are kept more restful under their gracious influence. On board ship, though the vessel may rock and reel and turn whichever way the helmsman may guide, the faithful needle always points to the pole! And it is the same with the true Christian—  
***“Let cares like a wild deluge come,  
And storms of sorrow fall”—***  
His faith still points to Heaven! His trust is fixed on Jesus! Whatever else may move, he remains firm and steadfast, and he cries as David did when he was hunted by Saul as a partridge upon the

mountains, “My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed! I will sing and give praise.” I do not know whether your experience is similar to mine, but I find myself, on the whole, more equable in spiritual things than I used to be. When one has known the Lord for 14 years, one can look back over a considerable period and, taking such a survey as that, I can discover certain times when I had great bursts of exhilaration, great heights of holy joy, followed by deep sinking of spirit and utter prostration of soul! I still have both those experiences at times, but not often, either of them, now. On the whole, I find my soul calmly and quietly resting upon the promises of God—neither unduly delighted at the prospect of the joys of Heaven nor too much depressed by the cares of the world, the responsibilities of my ministry, or the sin that still troubles me—simply resting upon the Rock, Christ Jesus, having few doubts and fears, and comforting assurance of salvation, but not so much of the ecstatic rapture that was one of the characteristics of my early faith. I suppose that this is the condition of many Christians and I am inclined to regard it as one of the evidences of growth in Grace when we become more equable in our spiritual temperament. Children are very much excited over matters which a full-grown man scarcely notices. And the spiritual child is swayed here and there by many winds which have little or no effect upon one who has come to the full stature of a man in Christ Jesus.  
*Love to the saints* is another choice and clear proof of the growth of faith. In the verse from which our text is taken, Paul thanks God, “as it is meet,” for the two Graces which he perceives in the Church of the Thessalonians—“because that your faith grows exceedingly, and the charity (or love) of every one of you all toward each other abounds.” So love to the saints is thus linked with the growth of faith. We need far more true Christian love toward one another, though probably we have less cause for complaint in that respect than most other communities have, for we have learned the blessedness of dwelling together in unity. In some of our churches there is still far too much caste feeling, too much bowing down before rank and fashion. I met the other day with a pretty story concerning Philip Henry, the father of Matthew Henry, the commentator. He wanted to marry the daughter of a gentleman who was one of his hearers. The father of the young lady said to her, “I have no personal objection to Mr. Henry. He is a good man, a Christian gentleman, but I do not know where he came from, so I cannot consent to your marriage with him.” “Well, Father,” said the young lady, “though we don’t know where he came from, we do know where he is going, and I would like to go there with him.” When I meet a genuine Christian, I may not know where he came from. He may have sprung, as men say, from the dunghill. His parents may have been the poorest of the poor, but what does that matter? I know where he is going and that is a much more important consideration! He is going to the upper house where there are many mansions! He is going to the palace of the great King Eternal, Immortal, Invisible, where the princes of the blood royal are forever to bask in the sunshine of the Presence of the King of kings and Lord of lords! And I would like to go with him that I may form one of the blessed company. Never mind the corduroy or the fustian that the man may wear, or the cotton or calico of the poor woman—I love them as Brothers and Sisters in Christ and I want to go to the Heaven where they are bound! The real test of a man’s nobility is not, “From where did he come?” but, “where is he going?” If he is going where the people of God are going. If God is his Father and Jesus Christ is his Savior—and the Holy Spirit is his Guide and Counselor—if Heaven is the haven where he is bound, it will be one of the proofs that your faith is growing if you feel an intense love for him and wish to share with him all the blessings of the Covenant of Grace in time and throughout eternity!  
Another sign of the growth of faith is *the growth of zeal*. I cannot see a man’s faith, but I can see the evidences that it is growing when I perceive how zealous he is in all good works for his Lord. When a train travels at a very rapid rate, the axles grow hot—and the greater the speed, the greater is the heat that is generated by the friction. And in like manner, the more rapidly a man travels in the path of a Divine Life by faith, the greater is the earnestness which he displays in the service of Christ. Do you care but little for the souls of those around you? Are you not doing all that you can to bring glory to God by the extension of the Kingdom of Christ among the sons of men? Then we*cannot* thank God that your faith is growing exceedingly! Indeed, there is grave cause to fear whether you possess the faith of God’s elect if this evidence is lacking! Remember that question of the Apostle James, “What does it profit, my brethren, though a man says he has faith, and has not works?” And his very emphatic answer—“Faith, if it has not works, is dead, being alone.” I find it well to often adopt those lines of Dr. Watts, and would advise you to do the same—  
***“Awake my zeal, awake my love,  
To serve my Savior here below!  
In works which perfect saints above,  
And holy angels cannot do!  
Awake my charity, to feed  
The hungry soul, and clothe the poor—  
In Heaven are found no sons of need,  
There all these duties are no more.”***  
And the more faith you have, *the more liberality will you display*. I do not wonder that some people give so little to the cause of God—they give only as much or as little as they believe! It is said that Dean Swift, preaching from that text, “He that has pity upon the poor lends unto You, Lord, and that which he has given will He pay him again,” made this characteristic commencement to his sermon—“If you like the security, down with the dust!” It seems as if there are many people, nowadays, who do not like the security, for they keep their “sordid dust” to themselves, hoarding it up for those who come after them to scatter as they please! But the more a man believes in the security of godliness, the more will he give to the poor, to the cause of Christ, and to every worthy cause that he can help. After all, the great stimulant to Christian liberality is that which Paul used when he wrote to the Corinthians, “You know the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor that you, through His poverty, might be rich.” Or that which the Master, Himself, used with His disciples, “Freely you have received, freely give.”  
If I were to try to tell you all the good which growth in faith will do to us, I would need to keep you here all night. I was much struck with a remark that I read the other day, to the effect that faith may be compared to the gastric juices in the stomach. When that solvent is in a healthy state, all the food that is eaten is properly dissolved and digested—and then the entire man becomes healthy from head to foot. But if anything should be amiss with this necessary fluid, then everything will go wrong. So, a growing faith is essential to a healthy spiritual life. Let faith be in increasingly vigorous exercise, then the whole life will benefit. But let faith become feeble and inactive, then the whole of your spiritual being will be weakened and injured! I will even dare to say that faith affects Heaven, earth and Hell. If you have but little faith, you cannot tread the world beneath your feet, nor laugh at its troubles, nor smile at its cares. If you have but little faith, you cannot open the windows of Heaven, you cannot bring down a blessing from God. Even Hell itself feels the influence of your faith! Satan trembles when he knows that your faith is firm and strong. But if it is tottering and trembling, then he sounds the note of triumph and seeks to lead his hosts on to make a full end of you because you are beginning to relax your grip of your shield! It was not without good reason that Paul wrote to the Ephesians, “Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith you shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.” And to the Hebrews, “Cast not away, therefore, your confidence, which has great recompense of reward.” The Lord grant that we may always have cause to thank Him because your faith grows exceedingly!  
**III.**I intended, before closing my discourse, to give you SOME REASONS WHY WE SHOULD NOT BE SATISFIED WITHOUT THIS GROWTH IN FAITH, but my time has almost gone and I hope I have already said enough to prove to you the urgent need of an ever-growing faith. For your own soul’s sake, for your own happiness and usefulness, for Christ’s sake, for sinners’ sake, for the Church’s sake, if you would adorn the Doctrine of God your Savior in all things, if you would be a blessing to your day and generation, if you would bring into the fold of the Good Shepherd the lost sheep and lambs that are wandering away from Him, cry continually to Him, “Lord, increase our faith!”  
I have only time for just a word or two with you who have no faith at all. Sad must be the reflections of those of you here who are not Believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. What can you mean by such sinful folly? The Son of God has come from Heaven to earth seeking the lost—and yet you do not believe in Him though you are among the lost! A proclamation of liberty is made to you who are slaves to sin and Satan—yet you will not accept the emancipation which would be so great a blessing to you! Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners and you have been told, over and over again, that if you will but trust Him, you shall be saved even though you are among the chief of sinners! Yet you will not believe in Him! O Soul, why will you not trust in Jesus? Is He not worthy of your confidence? Where will you find anyone else in all the world who so richly deserves to be trusted? No happy or miserable feelings are needed to fit you for believing in Him—no meritorious deeds, no gifts of alms are required as a preparation for faith in Him! Jesus Christ can save you just as you are if you will but trust Him—so trust Him now with your whole heart and you shall be saved! Trust to Him as completely as the drowning man trusts to the lifeboat or the life buoy—if he tried to swim to land, he would be lost—his only hope of being saved is in trusting to a power greater than his own.  
It is just so with you, Sinner! You are powerless to save yourself, but all power in Heaven and in earth has been committed to Christ—He is mighty to save! Therefore trust Him to save you! Rest wholly upon what He is as the Christ of God, the anointed and appointed Savior—and upon what He has done upon Calvary’s Cross to save all who believe in Him— and you shall be saved this very hour! Trust Jesus here and now and you shall be saved here and now—and to God shall be all the Glory forever and ever! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:  
[Gen 22:1-19](tw://bible.*?id=1.22.1-1.22.19|_AUTODETECT_|)*.*Verse 1. *And it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt—*[See Sermon #2223, Volume 37—ABRAHAM’S TRIAL—A LES  
SON FOR BELIEVERS—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org] That is, “God did test or try”—

1, 2. *Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham: and he said, Behold, here I am. And He said, Take now your son.* “But, Lord, I have two sons, Ishmael and Isaac.”   
2. *Your only son.* “But, Lord, both Ishmael and Isaac are my sons and each of them is the only son of his mother.”   
2. *Isaac, whom you love.* See how definitely God points out to Abraham the son who is to be the means of the great trial of his father’s faith—“Take now your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love.”—   
2. *And get you into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one ofthe mountains which I will tell you.* It was usually the way, in God’s commands to Abraham, to make him sail under sealed orders. When he was first bidden to leave his country and his kindred, and his father’s house, he had to go to a land that God would show him. They have true faith who can go forth at God’s command, not knowing where they are going! So Abraham did, and now the Lord says to him, “Take Isaac, and offer him for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell you.”   
3. *And Abraham rose up early in the morning—*Obedience should be prompt. We should show our willingness to obey the Lord’s command by not delaying. “Abraham rose up early in the morning”—   
3. *And saddled his donkey and took two of his young men with him,and Isaac his son, and split the wood for the burnt offering, and rose up, and went unto the place of which God had told him.* All the details are mentioned, for true obedience is very careful of detail. They who would serve God aright must serve Him faithfully in little things as well as in great ones. There must be a saddling of the donkey, a calling of the two young men as well as Isaac, and a splitting of the wood for the burnt offering. We must do everything that is included in the bounds of the Divine command—and do it all with scrupulous exactness and care. Indifferent obedience to God’s command is practically disobedience! Careless obedience is dead obedience, the heart is gone out of it. Let us learn from Abraham how to obey.   
4. *Then on the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes and saw the place afar off.* His was deliberate obedience! He could bear suspense, thinking over the whole matter for three days, and setting his face like a flint to obey his Lord’s command.   
5. *And Abraham said unto his young men,Abide you here with the donkey; and Iand the lad will go yonder and worship,and comeagain to you.* Abraham did not deceive the young men. He believed that he and Isaac would come to them again. He believed that though he might be compelled to slay his son, “God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure.” Abraham bade the young men stay where they were. They must not see all that he was to do before the Lord. Oftentimes, our highest obedience must be a solitary one—friends cannot help us in such emergencies—and it is better for them and better for us that they should not be with us.   
6. *And Abraham took the wood of theburnt offering, and laid it upon Isaac his son; and hetook the fire inhis hand, and a knife.*That knife was cutting into his own heart all the while, yet he took it. Unbelief would have left the knife at home, but genuine faith takes it.   
6-8. *And theywent both of them together. And Isaac spoke unto Abraham his father, and said, My Father: and he said, Here am I, my Son. And he said, Behold the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt offering? And Abraham said, My Son,God will provide Himself a lamb for a burnt offering: so they went both ofthemtogether.*Abraham here spoke like a Prophet. In fact, throughout this whole incident, he never opened his mouth without a prophetic utterance! And I believe that when men walk with God, and live near to God, they will possibly even without being aware of it, speak very weighty words which will have much more in them than they, themselves, apprehend. Is it not written, concerning the man whose delight is in the Law of the Lord, “his leaf also shall not wither”? Not only shall his fruit be abundant, but his casual word, “his leaf also shall not wither.” So was it with it Abraham. He spoke like a Prophet of God when he was really speaking to his son in the anguish of his spirit—and in his prophetic utterance we find the sum and substance of the Gospel—“My Son, God will provide Himself a lamb for a burnt offering.” He is the great Provider and He provides the offering, not only for us, but for Himself, for the sacrifice was necessary to God as well as to man. And it is a burnt offering, not only a sin offering but an offering of a sweet savor unto Himself. “So they went both of them together.” Twice we are told this, for this incident is a type of the Father going with the Son and the Son going with the Father up to the great Sacrifice on Calvary. It was not Christ alone who willingly died, or the Father alone who gave His Son, but they went both of them together”—even as Abraham and Isaac did here.   
9. *And they came to the place which God had told him of; and Abraham built an altar there.* See him pulling out the large, rough, unhewn stones that lay round about the place, and then fling them up into an altar!   
9, 10. *And laidthe wood inorder,and bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar upon the wood. And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son.* So that, in intent and purpose, he had consummated the sacrifice and, therefore, we read in [Heb 11:17](tw://bible.*?id=58.11.17|_AUTODETECT_|), “By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only-begotten son.” He had virtually done so in the esteem of God though no trace of a wound could be found upon Isaac! How often God takes the will for the deed with His people! When He finds them willing to make the sacrifice that He demands, He often does not require it at their hands. If you are willing to suffer for Christ’s sake, it may be that you shall not be caused to suffer—and if you are willing to be a martyr for the Truth of God, you may be permitted to wear the martyr’s crown even though you are never called to stand at the stake, the scaffold or the block!   
11. *And the Angel of the LORD called unto him out of Heaven, and said Abraham, Abraham: and he said, Here am I.* Abraham always gives the same answer to the Lord’s call, “Here am I.”   
12. *And He said, Lay not your hand upon the lad, neither do you anything unto him: for now I know that you fear God seeing you have not withheld your son, youronly son from Me.* The necessary test had been applied and Abraham’s faith had endured the trial! God knows all things by His Divine Omniscience, but now He knew by this severe test and trial which He had applied, that Abraham really loved Him best of all.   
Notice that the Angel says, “Now I know that you fear God.” I do not think that the gracious use of godly fear has ever been sufficiently estimated by the most of us. Here, the stress is not laid upon the faith, but upon the filial fear of Abraham. That holy awe, that sacred reverence of God is the very essence of our acceptance with Him. “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.” “The Lord takes pleasure in them that fear Him.” This is a very different thing from slavish fear—it is a right sort of fear, the kind of fear that love does not cast out, but which love lives within happy fellowship!   
13. *And Abraham lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, behind him a ram caught in a thicket by his horns: and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up fora burnt offering inthe place of his son.* Here is another type of our Savior ’s great Sacrifice on Calvary—the ram offered in the place of Jesus. How often do you and I have our great Substitute very near to us, yet we do not see Him because we do not lift up our eyes and look. “Abraham lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, behind him a ram caught in a thicket by his horns.” So, if you lift up your eyes, and look the right way, you will see the great Sacrifice close by you, held fast for you, even as this ram was caught to die instead of Isaac. Oh, that you may have Grace to turn your head in the right direction and look to Christ and live!   
14. *And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovah-Jireh: as it is said to this day, In the mount of the LORD it shall be seen.* [See Sermon #1803, Volume 30—JEHOVAH-JIREH—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.] God will foresee. “God will—as we usually say—“provide,” which is being interpreted, “foresee.” He will have everything ready against the time when it will be needed. He who provided the ram for a burnt offering in the place of Isaac will provide everything else that is required! And you may depend upon it that He who, in the greatest emergency that could ever happen, provided His only-begotten and well-beloved Son to die as the Substitute for sinners, will have foreseen every other emergency that can occur and will have fore-provided all that is necessary to meet it. Blessed be the name of Jehovah-Jireh!

15, 16. *And the Angel of the LORD called unto Abraham out of Heaven the second time, and said, By Myself have I sworn, says the LORD.* “Because He could swear by no greater, He swore by Himself.”   
16-18. *Because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only son: that in blessing I will bless you, and inmultiplying I will multiply your seed as the stars of the Heaven, and as the sand which is upon the seashore; and your seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; and in yourseed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because you have obeyed My voice.* There stands the old Covenant, the Covenant of Grace made with Abraham concerning his seed. Paul writes to the Galatians, “Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He says not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to your seed, which is Christ.” It is in Christ that all the nations of the earth are to be blessed. If there is a nation that has not yet heard the Gospel, it must hear it, for so the promise stands, “In your seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.” We may look for a glorious future from the preaching of Christ throughout every land, for so the Covenant was made with Abraham because he had obeyed God’s voice! God had been good to Abraham before that time, for he was His beloved friend, but now He lifts him up to a higher platform altogether and makes him a greater blessing than ever! It may be that God is about to test and try some of you in order that He may afterwards make you to be greater and more useful than you have ever been before.  
19. *So Abraham returned unto his young men.* As he said that he would!   
19. *And theyrose up and went together toBeer-Sheba;and Abraham dwelt at Beer-Sheba.* So the Lord bore His servant through this great trial, and blessed him more than He had ever blessed him before.

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÷2Th 1.10

JESUS ADMIRED IN THEM THAT BELIEVE  
NO. 1477

**DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, JUNE 1, 1879, *BY C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“When He shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day.”***2Th 1:10***.***

WHAT a difference between the first and second comings of our Lord! When He shall come a second time it will be to be glorified and admired, but when He came the first time it was to be despised and rejected of men. He comes a second time to reign with unexampled splendor, but the first time He came to die in circumstances of shame and sorrow. Lift up your eyes, you sons of Light, and anticipate the change which will be as great for you as for your Lord—for now you are hidden even as He was hidden and misunderstood even as He was misunderstood when He walked among the sons of men! “We know that when He shall appear, we shall be like He; for we shall see Him as He is.” His manifestation will be *our* manifestation and in the day in which He is revealed in Glory, then shall His saints be glorified with Him.

Observe that our Lord is spoken of as coming in His Glory and as, at the same time, taking vengeance in flaming fire on them that know not God and that obey not the Gospel. This is a note of great terror to all those who are ignorant of God and wickedly unbelieving concerning His Christ. Let them take heed, for the Lord will gain Glory by the overthrow of His enemies and those who would not bow before Him cheerfully shall be compelled to bow before Him abjectly. They shall crouch at His feet! They will lick the dust in terror and at the glance of His eyes they shall utterly wither away! As it is written, they “shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the Presence of the Lord and from the Glory of His power.”

But this is not the main objective for which Christ will come, nor is this the matter in which He finds His chief Glory, for, observe, He does this, as it were, by the way when He comes for another purpose. To destroy the wicked is a matter of necessity in which His spirit takes no delight, for He does this, according to the text, not so much when He comes to do it as when He shall come with another objective, namely, “To be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in them that believe.” The crowning honor of Christ will be seen in His *people* and this is the design with which He will return to this earth in the latter days—that He may be illustrious in His saints and exceedingly magnified in them.

Even now His saints glorify Him. When they walk in holiness they do, as it were, reflect His light. Their holy deeds are beams from Him who is the Sun of Righteousness. When they believe in Him they also glorify Him, for there is no Grace which pays lowlier homage at the Throne of Jesus than the Grace of faith whereby we trust Him and so confess Him to be our All in All. We glorify our gracious Lord, but, beloved Brethren, we must all confess that we do not do this as we could desire, for, alas, too

often we dishonor Him and grieve His Holy Spirit. By our lack of zeal and by our many sins we are guilty of discrediting His Gospel and dishonoring His name.

Happy, happy, happy day when this shall no more be possible—when we shall be rid of the inward corruption which now works itself into outward sin! Happy day when we shall never dishonor Christ again but shall shine with a clear, pure radiance like the moon on the Passover night when it looks the sun full in the face and then shines upon the earth at her best. Today we are like vessels on the wheel half fashioned, yet even now, somewhat of His Divine skill is seen in us as His handiwork. Still the unformed clay is only in part seen and much remains to be done. How much more of the great Potter’s creating wisdom and sanctifying power will be displayed when we shall be the perfect products of His hand! In the bud and germ our new nature brings honor to its Author, but it will do far more when its perfection manifests the Finisher.

Then shall Jesus be glorified and admired in every one of us when the days of the new creation are ended and God shall usher in the eternal Sabbath by pronouncing His Grace-work to be very good. This morning, as God shall help me, I shall speak, first, of *the special glorification of Christ here intended.* And, secondly, I shall conclude the sermon by calling your attention to *the special considerations which this grand Truth of God suggests*.

**I.**Let us consider carefully THE SPECIAL GLORIFICATION HERE INTENDED. And the first point to note is *the time*. The text says, “When He shall come to be glorified in His saints.” The full glorification of Christ in His saints will be when He shall come a *second time* according to the sure word of prophecy. He is glorified in them now, for He says, “All Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine; and I am glorified in them.” But as yet that Glory is perceptible to Himself rather than to the outer world. The lamps are being trimmed—they will shine before long. These are the days of preparation before that Sabbath which is, in an infinite sense, a high day.

As it was said of Esther, that for so many months she prepared herself with myrrh and sweet odors before she entered the king’s palace to be espoused of him, even so are we now being purified and made ready for that august day when the perfected Church shall be presented unto Christ as a bride unto her husband! John says of her that she shall be “prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.” This is our night wherein we must watch, but behold, the morning comes—a morning without clouds—and then shall we walk in a seven-fold light because our Well-Beloved has come! That second advent of His will be His revelation—he was under a cloud here and men perceived Him not, save only a few who beheld His Glory—but when He comes a second time, all veils will be removed and every eye shall see the Glory of His Countenance. For this He waits and His Church waits with Him. We know not when the set time shall arrive, but every hour is bringing it nearer to us and, therefore, let us stand with loins girt, awaiting it.

Note, secondly, *in whom* this glorification of Christ is to be found. The text does not say He will be glorified “by” His saints, but “*in* His saints.” There is a shade of difference, yes, more than a shade, between the two terms! We endeavor to glorify Him, now, by our actions, but then He will be glorified in our own persons, character and condition. He is glorified *by*what we do, but He is, at the last, to be glorified *in* what we *are*. Who are these in whom Jesus is to be glorified and admired? They are spoken of under two descriptions—“in His *saints*,” and, “in all them that*believe*.” In, “His saints” first. All those in whom Christ will be glorified are described as holy ones, or saints—men and women who have been sanctified, made pure and whose gracious lives show that they have been under the teaching of the Holy Spirit. Their obedient actions prove that they are disciples of a Holy Master, even of Him who was “holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners.”

But, inasmuch as these saints are also said to be *Believers*, I gather that the holiness which will honor Christ at the last is a holiness based on faith in Him. It is a holiness of which this was the root—that they first trusted in Christ and then, being saved, they loved their Lord and *obeyed* Him. Their faith worked by love and purified their souls and so cleansed their lives. It is an inner as well as an outer purity arising out of the living and operative principle of faith. If any think that they can attain to holiness apart from faith in Christ they are as much mistaken as he who should hope to reap a harvest without casting seed into the furrows! Faith is the bulb and saintship is the delightfully fragrant flower which comes of it when planted in the soil of a renewed heart.

Beware, I pray you, of any pretense to a holiness arising out of yourselves and maintained by the energy of your own unaided wills—as well look to gather grapes from thorns or figs from thistles! True saintship must spring from confidence in the Savior of sinners and, if it does not, it is lacking in the first elements of truth. How can that be a perfect character which finds its basis in self-esteem? How could Christ be glorified by saints who refuse to trust in Him? I would call your attention, once again, to the second description, “All them that believe.” This is enlarged by the hint that they are believers in a certain testimony according to the bracketed sentence—“because our testimony among you was believed.”

Now, the testimony of the Apostles was concerning *Christ*. They saw Him in the body and they bore witness that He was “God manifest in the flesh.” They saw His holy life and they bore witness to it. They saw His death of grief and they witnessed that “God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself.” They saw Him risen from the dead and they said, “We are witnesses of His Resurrection.” They saw Him rise into Heaven and they bore witness that God had taken Him up to His right hand. Now, all that believe this witness are saved. “If you shall confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus, and shall believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved.” All who, with a simple faith, come and cast themselves upon the Incarnate God, living and dying for men and always sitting at the right hand of God to make intercession for them—these are the people in whom Christ will be glorified and admired at the Last Great Day.

But inasmuch as they are first said to be saints, be it never forgotten that this faith must be a *living* faith—a faith which produces a hatred of sin, a faith which renews the character and shapes the life after the noble model of Christ—thus turning sinners into saints. The two descriptions must not be violently rent asunder. You must not say that the favored

people are sanctified without remembering that they are justified by faith! Nor may you say that they are justified by faith without remembering that without holiness no man shall see the Lord! So at the last, the people in whom Christ will be admired will be those holy ones who were saved by faith in Him.

So far, then, we see our way, but now a question arises— *by whom* will Christ be thus glorified and admired? He shines in His people, but who will see the Glory? I answer first, that His people will see it. Every saint will glorify Christ in himself and admire Christ in himself. He will say, “What a wonder that such a poor creature as I am should be thus perfected! How glorious is my Lord who has worked this miracle upon me!” Surely our consciousness of having been cleansed and made holy will cause us to fulfill those words of John Berridge which we sang just now—

***“He cheers them with an eternal smile,  
They sing hosannas all the while.  
Or, overwhelmed with rapture sweet,  
Sink down adoring at His feet.”***

This I know, that when I personally enter Heaven I shall forever admire and adore the everlasting love which brought me there! Yes, we will all glorify and admire our Savior for what He has worked in us by His infinite Grace.

The saints will also admire Christ in one another. As I shall see you and you shall see your Brothers and Sisters in Christ all perfect, you will be filled with wonderment, gratitude and delight! You will be free from all envy and, therefore, you will rejoice in all the beauty of your fellow saints—their Heaven will be a Heaven to you—and what a multitude of Heavens you will have as you will joy in the joy of all the redeemed! We shall as much admire the Lord’s handiwork in others as in ourselves and shall, each one, praise Him for saving all the rest! You will see your Lord in all your Brethren and this will make you praise and adore Him world without end with a perpetual amazement of ever-growing delight.

But that will not be all. Besides the blood-bought and ransomed of Christ, there will be on that great day of His coming all the holy angels to stand by and look on and wonder. They marveled much when first He stooped from Heaven to earth and they desired to look into those things which, then, were a mystery to them. But when they shall see their beloved Prince come back with ten thousand times ten thousand of the ransomed at His feet—all of them made perfect by having washed their robes and made them white in His blood—how the principalities and powers will admire Him in every one of His redeemed! How they will praise that conquering arm which has brought home all these spoils from the war! How will the hosts of Heaven shout His praises as they see Him lead all these captives captive with a new captivity in chains of love, joyfully gracing His triumph and showing forth the completeness of His victory!

We do not know what other races of innocent creatures there may be, but I think it is no stretch of the imagination to believe that as this world is only one speck in the creation of God, there may be millions of other races in the countless worlds around us—and all these may be invited to behold the wonders of redeeming love as manifested in the saints in the day of the Lord! I seem to see these unfallen intelligences encompassing the saints as a cloud of witnesses and in rapt vision beholding in them the love and Grace of the redeeming Lord.

What songs! What shouts shall rise from all these to the praise of the ever-blessed God! What an orchestra of praise will the universe become! From star to star the holy hymn shall roll till all space shall ring out the hosannas of wondering spirits. “The Wonderful, The Counselor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace,” shall have brought home all that men wondered at and they, with Himself, shall be the wonder of eternity! Then shall Satan and his defeated legions and the lost spirits of ungodly men bite their lips with envy and rage and tremble at the majesty of Jesus in that day! By their confessed defeat and manifest despair, they shall glorify Him in His people in whom they have been utterly overthrown!

They shall see that there is not one lost whom He redeemed by blood; not one snatched away of all the sheep His Father gave Him; not one warrior enlisted beneath His banner fallen in the day of battle, but all *more than conquerors* through Him that loved them! What despair shall seize upon diabolic spirits as they discover their total defeat! Defeated in men who were once their slaves! Poor dupes whom they could so easily beguile by their craftiness—defeated even in these! Jesus, triumphant by taking the lambs from between the lion’s jaws and rescuing His feeble sheep from their power, will utterly put them to shame in His redeemed! With what anguish will they sink into the Hell prepared for them because now they hear with anger all earth and Heaven and every star ringing with the shout—Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Hallelujah, for the Lord God Omnipotent reigns and the Lamb has conquered by His blood!

You see, then, that there are enough spectators to magnify Christ in His saints and so, fourthly, let us inquire *in what degree* will the Lord Jesus be glorified? Our answer is it will be to the very highest degree. He shall come to be glorified in His saints to the utmost, for this is clear from the words, “to be admired.” When our translation was made, the word, “admired,” had, to ordinary Englishmen, a stronger flavor of wonder than it has to us now. We often speak of admiring a thing in the softer sense of loving it, but the real meaning of the English word and of the Greek, also, is *wonder—*our Lord will be *wondered* at in all them that believe!

Those who look upon the saints will feel a sudden wonderment of sacred delight. They will be startled with the surprising Glory of the Lord’s work in them. “We thought He would do great things, but this! This surpasses conception!” Every saint will be a wonder to himself. “I thought my bliss would be great, but not like this!” All His Brothers and Sisters will be a wonder to the perfected Believer. He will say, “I thought the saints would be perfect, but I never imagined such a transfiguration of excessive glory would be put upon each of them! I could not have imagined my Lord to be so good and gracious.”

The angels in Heaven will say that they never anticipated such deeds of Grace—they knew that He had undertaken a great work—but they did not know that He would do so much for His people and in His people. The first-born sons of light, used to great marvels from of old, will be entranced with a new wonder as they see the handiwork of Immanuel’s free

Grace and dying love! The men who once despised the saints, who called them canting hypocrites and trampled on them and perhaps slew them— the kings and princes of the earth who sold the righteous for a pair of shoes—what will they say when they see the *least* of the Savior’s followers become a prince of more illustrious rank than the great ones of the earth and Christ shining out in every one of these favored beings? For their uplifting Jesus will be wondered at by those who once despised both Him and them!

My next point leads us into the very heart of the subject— *in what respects* will Christ be glorified and wondered at? I cannot expect to tell you one tenth part of it! I am only going to give you a little sample of what this must mean—exhaustive exposition were quite impossible to me. I think with regard to His saints that Jesus will be glorified and wondered at on account of their number—“a number that no man can number.” John was a great arithmetician and he managed to count up to 144,000 of all the tribes of the children of Israel. But that was only a representative number for the Jewish Church. As for the Church of God, comprehending the Gentile nations, he gave up all idea of computation and confessed that it is “a number which no man can number.” When he heard them sing, he says, “I heard a voice like the voice of many waters and like great thunder.”

There were so many of them that their song was like the Mediterranean sea lashed to fury by a tempest—no, not one great sea in uproar, but ocean upon ocean, the Atlantic and the Pacific piled upon each other, and the Arctic upon these, and other oceans upon these, layers of oceans—all thundering out their mightiest roar! And such will be the song of the redeemed, for the crowds which swell the matchless hymn will be beyond all reckoning! Behold, you who laughed at His kingdom! Look how the little one has become a thousand! Now look, you foes of Christ who saw the handful of corn on the top of the mountains—see how the fruit shakes like Lebanon and they of the city do flourish like grass of the earth!

Who can reckon the drops of the dew or the sands on the seashore? When they have counted these, then shall they not have *guessed* at the multitude of the redeemed that Christ shall bring to Glory! And all this harvest from one grain of wheat, which, unless it had fallen into the ground and died, would have remained alone! What said the Word? “If it dies, it shall bring forth much fruit.” Is not the prophecy fulfilled? Oh Beloved, what a harvest from the lone Man of Nazareth! What fruit from that glorious Man—the Branch! Men esteemed Him stricken, smitten of God and afflicted—and they made nothing of Him—and yet there sprang of Him (and He as good as dead) these multitudes which are as many as the stars of Heaven! Is He not glorified and wondered at in them? The day shall declare it without fail.

But there is *quality* as well as quantity. He is admired in His saints because they are, every one of them, proofs of His power to save from evil. My eyes can hardly bear, even though it is but in imagination, to gaze upon the glittering ranks of the white-robed ones where each one outshines the sun—and they are all as if a seven-fold midday had clothed them! Yet all these, as I look at them, tell me, “We have washed our robes—for they were once defiled. We have made them white—but this whiteness is caused by the blood of the Lamb.” These were heirs of wrath even as others! These were dead in trespasses and sins! All these, like sheep, had gone astray and turned, everyone to his own ways! But look at them and see how He has saved them, washed them, cleansed them, perfected them! His power and Grace are seen in all of them.

If your eyes will pause here and there, you will discover some that were supremely stubborn—whose neck was as an iron sinew—and yet He conquered them by love! Some were densely ignorant, but He opened their blind eyes! Some grossly infected with the leprosy of lust, but He healed them! Some under Satan’s most terrible power, but He cast the devil out of them! Oh, how He will be glorified in special cases! In you drunks made into saints! In you blasphemers turned into loving disciples! In you persecutors who breathed out threats, taught to sing everlastingly hymns of praise! He will be exceedingly glorified in such!

Brothers and Sisters, beloved in the Lord, in each one of us there was some special difficulty as to our salvation—some impossibility which was possible with God though it would have been forever impossible with us. Remember, also, that all those saints made perfect would have been in Hell had it not been for the Son’s atoning Sacrifice. This they will remember more vividly because they will see other men condemned for the sins with which they, also, were once polluted! The crash of vengeance upon the ungodly will make the saints magnify the Lord the more as they see themselves delivered! They will each feel—

***“Oh were it not for Grace Divine,***

***That fate so dreadful had been mine.”***  
In each one, the memory of the horrible pit where they were drawn and the miry clay out of which they were lifted shall make their Savior more glorified and wondered at.

Perhaps the chief point in which Christ will be glorified will be the absolute perfection of all the saints. They shall then be “without spot or wrinkle or any such thing.” We have not experienced what perfection is and, therefore, we can hardly conceive it. Our thoughts are too sinful for us to get a full idea of what absolute perfection must be, but, dear Brethren, we shall have no sin left in us, for they are, “without fault before the Throne of God” and we shall have no remaining propensity to sin. There shall be no bias in the will towards that which is evil—it shall be fixed forever upon that which is good. The affections will never be wanton again—they will be chaste for Christ. The understanding will never make mistakes. You shall never put bitter for sweet, nor sweet for bitter. You shall be “perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect.”

And truly, Brothers and Sisters, He who works this in us will be a wonder! Christ will be admired and adored because of this grand result. O mighty Master, with what strange moral alchemy did You work to turn that morose dispositioned man into a mass of love! How did You work to lift that selfish Mammonite up from his hoarded gains to make him find his gain in You? How did You overcome that proud spirit, that fickle spirit, that lazy spirit, that lustful spirit—how did You contrive to take all these away? How did You extirpate the very roots of sin and every little rootlet of sin out of your redeemed so that not a tiny fiber can be found? “The sins of Jacob shall be sought for and they shall not be found, yes, they shall not be, says the Lord.” Neither the guilt of sin nor the propensity to sin—

both shall be gone—and Christ shall have done it and He will be “glorified in His saints, and admired in them that believe.”

This is but the beginning, however. There will be seen in every saint, in that last wondrous day, the wisdom and power and love of Christ in having brought them through all the trials of the way. He kept their faith alive when otherwise it would have died out. He sustained them under trials when they would have fainted. He held them fast in their integrity when temptation solicited them and they had almost slipped with their feet. Yes, He sustained some of them in prison, on the rack, at the stake and still kept them faithful! One might hardly wish to be a martyr, but I reckon that the martyrs will be the admiration of us all, or rather Christ will be admired in them. However they could bear such pain as some of them did for Christ’s sake, none of us can guess, except that we know that Christ was in them suffering in His members. Eternally will Jesus be wondered at in them as all intelligent spirits shall see how He upheld them so that neither tribulation, nor distress, nor nakedness, nor famine, nor sword could separate them from His love!

These are the men that wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, afflicted, tormented—of whom the world was not worthy—but now they stand arrayed as kings and priests in surpassing glory forever! Verily, their Lord shall be admired in them! Don’t you agree? Recollect, dear Friends, that we shall see, in that day, how the blessed Christ, as “Head over all things to His Church,” has ruled every Providence to the sanctification of His people. We then will understand how the dark days begat showers which made the plants of the Lord to grow; how the fierce sun which threatened to scorch them to the root filled them with warmth of Divine love and ripened their choice fruit.

What a tale the saints will have to tell of how that which threatened to dampen the fire of Grace made it burn more mightily; how the stones which threatened to kill their faith was turned into bread for them; how the rod and staff of the Good Shepherd was always with them to bring them safely home! I have sometimes thought that if I get into Heaven by the skin of my teeth I will sit down on the Glory Shore and bless Him forever who, on a board, or on a broken piece of the ship, brought my soul safely to land! And surely they who obtain an abundant entrance, coming into the fair havens, like a ship in full sail without danger of shipwreck, will have to praise the Lord that they thus came into the blessed Port of Peace! In each case the Lord will be specially glorified and admired.

I cannot stop over this, but I must beg you to notice that as a king is glorious in his regalia, so will Christ put on His saints as His personal splendor in that day when He shall make up His jewels. It is with Christ as it was with that noble Roman matron who, when she called at her friends’ houses and saw their trinkets, asked them to come next day to her house and she would exhibit her jewels. They expected to see rubies, pearls and diamonds, but she called in her two boys and said, “These are my jewels.” Even so will Jesus, instead of emeralds, amethyst, onyx and topaz, exhibit His saints! “These are My choice treasures,” He says, “in whom I will be glorified.”

Solomon surely was never more full of glory than when he had finished the temple—when all the tribes came together to see the noble structure and confessed it to be “beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth.” But what will be the Glory of Christ when all the *living stones* shall be put into their places and His Church shall have her windows of agates and her gates of carbuncle and all her borders of precious stones? Then, indeed, will He be glorified, when the 12 foundations of His new Jerusalem shall be courses of stones most precious, the likes of which was never seen!

Now, inasmuch as my text lays special stress upon *believing*, I invite you, just for a minute, to consider how as Believers as well as saints, the saved ones will glorify their Lord. First, it will be wonderful that there should be so many brought to faith in Him—men with no God and men with many gods; men steeped in ignorance and men puffed up with carnal wisdom; great men and poor men—all brought to believe in the one Redeemer and praise Him for His great salvation! Will He not be glorified in their common faith? It will magnify Him that these will all be saved by faith and not by their own merits. Not one among them will boast that he was saved by his own good works, but all of them will rejoice to have been saved by that blessedly simple way of “Believe and live.”

They will *all* praise God they were saved by Sovereign Grace through the atoning blood—looked to by the tearful eye of simple faith! This, too, shall make Jesus glorious, that all of them, weak as they were, were made strong by faith; all of them personally unfit for battle were yet made triumphant in conflict because by faith they overcame through the blood of the Lamb! All of them shall be there to show that their faith was honored, that Christ was faithful to His promise and never allowed them to believe in vain. All of them standing in heavenly places, saved by faith, will ascribe every particle of the Glory to the Lord Jesus only—

“ ***I ask them where their victory came?  
They, with united breath,  
Ascribe their conquest to the Lamb,  
Their triumph to His death.”***

They believed and were saved, but faith takes no credit to itself—it is a self-denying Divine Grace—and puts the crown upon the head of Christ and, therefore, is it written that He will be glorified in His saints and He will also be admired in all them that believe.

I have scarcely skirted the subject, even now, and time is falling me. I want you to reflect that Jesus will be glorified in the risen bodies of all His saints. Now, in Heaven they are pure spirits, but when He shall come, they shall be clothed again. Poor body, you must sleep awhile, but what you shall be at your awaking does not yet appear. You are now the shriveled seed, but there is a flower to come of you which shall be lovely beyond all thought! Though sown in weakness, this body shall be raised in power! Though sown in corruption, it shall be raised in incorruption! Weakness, weariness, pain and death will be banished forever! Infirmity and deformity will be all unknown! The Lord will raise up our bodies to be like unto His glorious body! Oh, what a prospect lies before us!

Let us remember that this blessed resurrection will come to us because He rose, for there must be a resurrection to the members because the

Head has risen. Oh, the charm of being a risen man, perfect in body, soul and spirit! All that charm will be due to Christ and, therefore, He will be admired in us. Then let us think of the absolute perfection of the Church as to numbers—all who have believed in Him will be with Him in Glory. The text says He will be “admired in *all* them that believe.” Now, if some of those who believe perished, He would not be admired in them— but they will all be there, the little ones as well as the great ones.

You will be there, you poor feeble folk who, when you say, “Lord, I believe,” are obliged to add, “help You my unbelief.” He shall be admired in all Believers without a single exception and, perhaps, there shall be more wonder at the going to Heaven of the weak Believers than at the stronger ones. Mr. Greatheart, when he comes there, will owe his victories to his Master and lay his laurels at His feet. But fainting Feeblemind and limping Ready-to-Halt with his crutches, and trembling Little-Faith—when they enter into rest, will make Heaven ring with notes of even greater admiration that such poor creeping worms of the earth should win the day by mighty Grace! Suppose that one of them should be missing at the last? Stop the harps! Silence the songs! No beginning to be merry while one child is shut out! I am quite certain if, as a family, we were going to sing our evening hymn of joy and thankfulness, if mother said, “Where is the little mite? Where is the last one of the family?” There would be a pause. If we had to say—she is lost—there would be no singing and no resting till she was found!

It is the Glory of Jesus that as a Shepherd He has lost none of His flock! As the Captain of salvation, He has brought many sons to Glory and has lost none—and hence He is admired, not in *some* that believe, nor yet in all but *one—*but He is “admired in *all* them that believe.” Does not this delight you, you who are weak and trembling, that He will be admired in you? There is little to admire in you at present, as you penitently confess, but since Christ is in you now and will be more fully manifested in you, there will be, before long, much to admire! May you partake in the excellence of our Divine Lord and be conformed to His likeness that He may be seen in you and glorified in you.

Another point of admiration will be the eternal safety of all His believing people. There they are safe from fear of harm. You dogs of Hell, you howled at their heels and hoped to devour them but, lo, they are clean escaped from you! What must it be to be lifted above gunshot of the enemy where no more watch shall need to be kept, for even the roar of the Satanic artillery cannot be heard? Oh glorious Christ, to bring them all to such a state of safety, You are, indeed, to be wondered at forever! Moreover, all the saints will be so honored, so happy and so like their Lord that everything about them will be themes for never-ending admiration!

You may have seen a room hung round with mirrors and when you stood in the midst you were reflected from every point—you were seen here and seen there and there again and there again—and so every part of you was reflected. Just such is Heaven! Jesus is the Center and all His saints, like mirrors, reflect His Glory. Is He human? So are they! Is He the Son of God? So are they sons of God! Is He perfect? So are they! Is He exalted? So are they! Is He a Prophet? So are they, making known unto principalities and powers the manifold wisdom of God! Is He a Priest? So are they! Is He a King? So are they, for He has made us priests and kings unto God and we shall reign forever and ever! Look where you will along the ranks of the redeemed, this one thing shall be seen—the Glory of Christ Jesus, even to surprise and wonder!

**II.**I have no time to make those SUGGESTIONS with which I intended to have finished and so I will just tell you what they would have been. First, the text suggests that the principal subject for self-examination with us all should be—Am I a saint? Am I holy? Am I a believer in Christ? Yes or no?—for on that yes or no must hang your glorification by Christ, or your banishment from His Presence. The next thing is—observe the small value of human opinion. When Christ was here the world reckoned Him to be a nobody and while His people are here they must expect to be judged in the same way!

What do worldlings know about it? How soon will their judgment be reversed? When our Lord shall appear, even those who sneered will be compelled to admire. When they shall see the Glory of Christ in every one of His people, awe-stricken, they will have nothing to say against us—no, not even the false tongue of malicious slander shall dare to hiss out a serpent word in that day! Never mind them, then. Put up with reproach which shall so soon be silenced. The next suggestion is a great encouragement to enquirers who are seeking Christ, for I put it to you, you great sinners—if Jesus is to be glorified in saved sinners, would He not be glorified, indeed, if He saved *you*? If He were ever to save such a rebel as you have been, would it not be the astonishment of eternity?

I mean you who are known in the village as Wicked Jack, or known as a common swearer—what if my Master were to make a saint of you! Bad raw material? Yet suppose He transformed you into a precious jewel and made you to be as holy as God is holy—what would you say of Him? “Say of Him,” you say, “I would praise Him world without end!” Yes, and you *shall* do so if you will come and trust Him! Put your trust in Him! The Lord help you to do so at once and He shall be admired even in *you* forever and ever!

Our text also gives an exhortation to Believers. Will Jesus Christ be honored and glorified in all the saints? Then let us think well of them all and love them all. Some dear children of God have uncomely bodies, or they are blind or deformed, or maimed. And many of these have scanty purses and it may be the Church knows most of them as coming for alms. Moreover, they have little knowledge, little power to please. And they are uncouth in manners and belong to what are called the lowest ranks of society—do not, therefore, despise them—for one day our Lord will be glorified in them! How He will be admired in yonder poor bedridden woman when she rises from the workhouse to sing hallelujah to God and the Lamb among the brightest of the shining ones! Why, I think the pain, the poverty, the weakness and the sorrow of saints below will greatly glorify the Captain of their salvation as they tell how Divine Grace helped them to bear their burdens and to rejoice under their afflictions!

Lastly, Brothers and Sisters, this text ought to encourage all of you who love Jesus to go on talking about Him to others and bearing your testimony for His name. You see how the Apostle Paul has inserted a few words by way of parenthesis? Draw the words out of the brackets and take them home, “Because our testimony among you was believed.” Do

you see those crowds of idolatrous heathens and do you see those hosts of saved ones before the Throne of God? What is the medium which linked the two characters? By what visible means did the sinners become saints? Do you see that insignificant looking man with weak eyes? That man whose bodily presence is weak and whose speech is contemptible? Do you not see his bodkin and needle case? He has been making and mending tents, for he is only a tent-maker.

Now, those bright spirits which shine like suns, flashing forth Christ’s Glory, were made thus bright through the addresses and prayers of that tent-maker! The Thessalonians were heathens plunged in sin and this poor tent-maker came in among them and told them of Jesus Christ and His Gospel! His testimony was believed, by God’s Grace, and that belief changed the lives of his hearers and made them holy—and they, being renewed, came at last to be perfectly holy and there they are—and Jesus Christ is glorified in them!

Beloved, will it not be a delightful thing throughout eternity to contemplate that you went into your Sunday school class this afternoon and you were afraid you could not say much, but you talked about Jesus Christ with a tear in your eyes and you brought a dear girl to believe in His saving name through your testimony? In years to come that girl will be among those that shine out to the Glory of Christ forever! Or you will get away this evening, perhaps, to talk in a lodging house to some of those poor, despised tramps. You will go and tell one of those poor vagrants, or one of the fallen women, the story of your Lord’s love and blood—and the poor broken heart will catch at the gracious Words of God and come to Jesus—and then a heavenly character will be begun and another jewel secured for the Redeemer’s diadem!

I think you will admire His crown all the more because, as you see certain stones sparkling in it, you will say, “Blessed be His name forever! He helped *me* to dive into the sea and find that pearl for Him and now it adorns His sacred brow!” Now, get at it, all of you! You that are doing nothing for Jesus, be ashamed of yourselves and ask Him to work in you that you may begin to work for Him! And unto God shall be the Glory, forever and ever. Amen and amen!

***PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—***2Th 1:11***.*HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—92, 873, 861.**  
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**÷2Th 2.13**

TITLES OF HONOR  
NO. 3300

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, MAY 2, 1912.

***DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON THURSDAY EVENING, APRIL 5, 1886.**

***“Brethren beloved of the Lord.”***2Th 2:13***.***

THE verse from which my text is taken begins thus, “But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord,” so I will commence my discourse by saying that we might often find comfort and relief from gloomy apprehensions by associating with those who are “beloved of the Lord.” If you read the Chapter through, you will perceive that Paul’s mind was greatly exercised concerning the perilous times which were to come to the Church of Christ. He wrote to warn the Thessalonians concerning the coming of antichrist, and then said that there were some to whom God would send “strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteous.” The Apostle ’s heart was so heavily burdened with that sorrowful theme that he was glad to turn his pen to quite a different subject and, therefore, he wrote, “But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord.” Just now, there is a general opinion that the growth of Popery in this land is most alarming and that the declension of vital godliness is very serious. And while we do not fully agree with the alarmists, we are obliged to admit that these are times of peculiar peril. The tendency of those who look only at the black side of the question is to fret and worry—and to feel that God’s Church is in danger. Brethren, I would not have you shut your eyes to the dangers by which we are surrounded, but I would not have you dispirited by them, either! There are still many saints left in the world. There are still they who, like those in Sardis, have not defiled their garments. There are still some who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. There are still many earnest and faithful testifiers to the Truth of God as it is in Jesus. So, although you may mourn over the evils of the times, you are bound to always give thanks to God that there are some “brethren beloved of the Lord” still left upon the face of the earth! David spoke of the saints that were on the earth in his day as “the excellent, in whom is all my delight.” And David’s Lord, our blessed Master, no doubt found no small solace, as a Man, in associating with Mary, Martha and Lazarus, for He seems to have withdrawn from the multitude who mocked and scoffed and to have retired into the privacy of domestic piety—and there to have found joy and comfort in the midst of the happy family that was so closely attached to Him. There are still in the world many of the precious sons of Zion who are comparable to fine gold and concerning whom the Lord says, “They shall be Mine in that day when I make up My jewels.” Be wise, my Brothers and Sisters, and let it be said of you as it was said of them of old, “They that feared the Lord spoke often, one to another,” for there is comfort to be found in the society of God’s saints—let the times be ever so perilous and dark.

But I would advance a step beyond this preliminary observation and remark that when things are outwardly not as the children of God would like them to be, and when there is much within them that is not as it should be, they may often derive much solace by reflecting upon their true condition in the sight of God in connection with the Lord Jesus Christ. Brothers and Sisters in Christ, I know that many of you have grievous trials to endure. And I am well aware that if you look within, you will see much that will distress you. You will perceive that the old Adam still lurks within you and that notwithstanding all the force that has been brought against him by Divine Grace, he is still far too vigorous! It is true that some of you have also to suffer from poverty and that your lot is a very difficult one—yet we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, and you are, yourselves, bound to give thanks on your own behalf because notwithstanding your poverty, and notwithstanding your infirmity, and notwithstanding even the sin of which you have such cause to mourn, you are still “beloved of the Lord”—and in the Person of Jesus Christ you are “without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing”! When faith recognizes the vital union which exists between Christ and the soul and realizes the consequent blessedness and security of the saint, then it cries, “I am bound to give thanks always unto God, for I am still beloved of the Lord notwithstanding all that causes me often to weep and mourn.”

It is my purpose, this evening, to invite all of you who are trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ to contemplate your true standing in the sight of God—that you may be uplifted from the dunghills of your complaints, shake off the ashes of your doubts, unwind the sackcloth of your fears, put on your beautiful garments of holy rejoicing and sing aloud unto Him through whose Grace you are made worthy to be called “brethren beloved of the Lord.” There are two topics on which I have to speak. First, *the titles mentioned in the text*. And, secondly, *the wearers of those titles*.

**I.**First, then, let us think for a while of THE TITLES MENTIONED IN THE TEXT—“brethren” and, “beloved of the Lord.”  
“*Brethren*” is a very special word—the utterance of it awakens an echo in every Believer’s heart. It is naturally a silver word, but spiritually God has transmuted it into gold. I do not wonder that a certain sect has appropriated this title, yet we equally claim the name of, “brethren,” as our own, and we share it with all who are the children of God by faith in Jesus Christ. The title, “brethren,” is very hallowed and very precious to us—let us try to find out what it implies.  
First, it indicates a common nature. Whatever opinions any may hold concerning the unity of the human race, there can be no difference of opinion about the unity of nature in those who are born of the same parents. Where should I expect to find a person more in sympathy with myself than my own brother? Where should I expect to find, beneath the cope of Heaven, another soul that should be more akin to mine than the soul of my brother? If there are not peace and love between us, where can they be found? However much we may differ from one another in some respects, there must be certain lineaments of feature or traits of character in which we are alike. But even if this is not so naturally, it certainly is so spiritually! All Believers are alike partakers of the Divine Nature—we are all equally begotten again unto a lively hope by the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead! The inner life of all true Christians is the same—there is not a Baptist life and a Methodist life, or a Nonconformist life and a Church of England life. The Divine Life is one wherever it is bestowed. The life of my hand and the life of my foot are one and the same, pulsating from the same central source and maintained by the same power. And the life of God is the same in all the members of the Mystical Body of Christ. This is something more than brotherhood—that idea does not cover the whole truth although it includes much of it. There is a distinct unity of nature in all the saints of the living God! Hence, Brothers and Sisters, I can never tolerate any attempts to limit communion between those who are really one in Christ. It always seems to me that it would be an infraction of the Divine Law if I were to say to a Brother in Christ that I could not commune with him because of certain minor matters in which we do not quite agree. Besides, whether I am willing to do so or not, I cannot help communing with him for he is a part of Christ’s Mystical Body of which I also am a part! So that unless I could myself get out of that body, or he could get out of it, which is impossible for either of us, I must remain in spiritual communion with him whatever I may do concerning the outward and visible symbols of that communion. No, more than that, if I could go to Heaven and that Brother still tarried here upon the earth, our communion would not be broken, for Dr. Watts was right when he sang— ***“The saints on earth, and all the dead,  
But one communion make!  
All join in Christ, their living Head,  
And of His Grace partake.”***  
The term, “brethren,” also implies a common experience. The brethren in an earthly family have the same parents, they live in the same house, they partake of the some food, they share all the privileges and varied experiences of the same household. So is it with those who are of the household of faith, the family of God. Their experiences may vary even as one child in the home differs from another, but there is much more similarity than there is diversity in the experiences of the living children of the living God. We have all been broken in pieces. We have all been bound up. We have all been emptied. We have all been brought to the Cross. We have all been led by one Spirit to drink of the same precious Truth! We have not all subscribed to the same creed, yet in substance and in effect, the Doctrine of all the children of God is, to a large extent, identical. They rely for salvation upon the atoning Sacrifice of Christ, and therein they are all one. Their pilgrim path is through the same wilderness, they eat the same manna, they drink of the same Rock, they are led by the same cloudy-fiery pillar, and they come at last to the same heavenly Canaan and go no more out forever! They are and they must be one, not only because they are one in nature, but because the various processes through which that nature has to pass are so largely the same.  
More than this, the title, “brethren,” implies that we love one another. It is said that there is a lack of love in certain churches that profess to be Christian. Well, perhaps there is. I am not going to be an accuser of the brethren in that respect, but I believe there is a great deal more love existing among Christians than many persons imagine. Possibly, those who say there is a lack of love in our midst judge by the state of their own hearts, while those who really love the saints find that the saints also love them. Do not suppose, dear Friends, because the preacher has sometimes to proclaim very unpalatable Truths of God and because he sometimes delivers his message in stern tones, that therefore he has not a tender heart! Fidelity to the Truth of God requires that it should be spoken in such a fashion as to secure public attention, and this involves the use of great plainness of speech and a manner of delivery which some may resent. And the man who honestly and fearlessly acts thus is more acceptable to God and has far greater and truer love in his heart than the one who says, “Peace, peace,” when there is no peace! As I hate Satan and all his works, so my soul hates every false doctrine in this Church and in every Church! But as I love God and all that God loves, so am I desirous to love every child of the loving God. And I will further say that not only do I desire to love every child of God, but I think I really do. Do you not feel, beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ, whenever you meet a Believer in Jesus, and begin to talk of the things that belong to His Kingdom, you have fellowship with him in heart and spirit even though you had never seen him before? When we talk of Jesus, our love to one another soon begins to flow! The true basis of our communion with one another is that we are there in Christ Jesus—and that union manifests itself in love to all who are, as our text puts it, “brethren beloved of the Lord.”  
This word, “brethren,” is a far-reaching word, for it further implies that all Christians have a common Father. Let all Believers rejoice that they can unite in saying, “Our Father, who are in Heaven.” There is a straight line from my heart to the heart of God—and so there is from your heart, my Brother or my Sister in Christ—so our Father’s heart is our common meeting place! We were there in purpose before this world was created. We are there by faith at this moment and we shall be there by blessed experience when this world has passed away and time shall be no more! Having the same Father, we share equally in that Father’s love. We may not always feel the same love to all our Brothers and Sisters in Christ, but God’s love to us and His love to them knows no variation. I trust you all realize that our Father is quite impartial in His love to all His children and that all who are truly members of His family through their union to Christ shall have an equal share of it. Hence the tie of Christian brotherhood become a very solemn and a very precious thing, for it not only binds us fast to our Father in Heaven, but it also binds us closely to one another! I pray that the members of this Church may always act toward each other as Brothers and Sisters in Christ. I wish that among all the saints there might be a sort of spiritual Freemasonry so that whenever we might meet, we should recognize one another by the holy grip of Christian love. There are certain sacred passwords that are common to all the saints and I will defy the hypocrite or the worldling to pronounce them aright—but if he should be able to utter them with his lips—he can never really know their meaning in his heart. There are certain experiences that cannot be learned without the teaching of the Holy Spirit. There is a certain way of speaking about Christ that can never be acquired as a parrot learns to talk. There is a certain ring which God gives to His gold which is never bestowed upon baser metal—and there is a certain something about a true child of God which enables him to recognize others of the same family and which also enables them to recognize him so that when they come together, their hearts leap up at the thought that they are “brethren beloved of the Lord.”  
Perhaps I have lingered too long over that first title, so now I must turn to the second one, “beloved of the Lord.” You do need my explanations here, for the Holy Spirit inspired the Apostle to give the Divine explanation of this title of honor. Turn to the verse from which our text is taken and you will see that the first thought concerning the Lord’s love to you is that of its antiquity—“We are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God has from the beginning chosen you.” You always were “beloved of the Lord”! He did not begin to love you when you first repented and turned to Him. He saw you in the glass of His eternal purpose and he loved you then! That love He proved many centuries before you knew anything about it, for His beloved Son, Jesus Christ, your Lord and Savior, had redeemed you 1800 years before you were born—He gave the fullest proof of His affection for you in laying down His life for you. There was nothing in you to merit this wondrous Self-Sacrifice on the part of Christ—on the contrary, you were His enemies, you profaned His holy name, and despised His Sacrifice after you learned what He had done! But He gave Himself for you because *from eternity* He had loved you with a love that would not be turned from its purpose by anything that He foresaw would be done by you!  
In addition to the antiquity of the Lord’s love to you, think also of its richness. The Apostle says, “God has from the beginning chosen you to salvation.” Have you grasped the full meaning of that word, *salvation*, Beloved? It does not merely mean salvation from Hell, though that is included in it, but it means salvation from sin, salvation from the guilt and power of sin, salvation from your doubts, your fears, your troubles— salvation from that besetting infirmity of yours, salvation from the devil’s dominion over you, salvation in all its fullness from first to last! To all this “God has from the beginning chosen you” who are “brethren beloved of the Lord”! This is no mean inheritance, no slender portion, no slight gift—indeed, it is not easy to find words in which adequately to describe all that God has done for you in choosing you “to salvation.” It will need all eternity to fully explain the meaning of that great word! You are, indeed, “beloved of the Lord” in having such a priceless portion as this bestowed upon you!  
Notice, next, the wisdom, of the Lord’s love to you. “God has from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.” Had it been possible for you to have had salvation without sanctification, it would have been a curse to you instead of a blessing. If such a thing were

possible, I cannot conceive of a more lamentable condition than for a man to have the happiness of salvation without the holiness of it! Happily, it is not possible. If you could be saved from the consequences of sin, but not from the sin, itself, and its power and pollution, it would be no blessing to you. But the salvation to which God has from the beginning chosen you is inseparably linked with the cleansing and sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit who operates within you through the instrumentality of faith! Your belief of the Truth of God has a purifying influence upon your whole life and makes you desire to follow in the footprints of your dear Lord and Savior. Thus God shows His wisdom in the choice of the means which He blesses to your salvation—blessing you as much by the means as by the salvation, itself— blessing you as much in the road as in the end to which it leads! You are, indeed, “beloved of the Lord” in having the Spirit of God thus dwelling in you and bestowing upon you that precious gift of faith by which you are enabled to believe the Truths of God!  
Observe, too, in order to increase your joy in the Lord, the signs of this love. In the next verse, the Apostle goes on to say, “whereunto He called you by our Gospel.” Do you not remember, you who are “beloved of the Lord,” when you were called by the Gospel? Then was the eternal purpose of God fulfilled in your experience. Go back in thought to the time of your espousal to Christ. Recall the sound of the silver trumpet that then brought you into Gospel liberty. You had been to the House of God hundreds of times before when that same trumpet was ringing out the glad refrain—  
***“The year of jubilee is come!  
Return, you ransomed sinners, home”—***  
but your ears and heart had been sealed to the message! But that day the Lord opened your heart and unstopped your ears, so that you were numbered among the happy people who heard the joyful sound! Your calling proved your election, and it stands to you still as gracious evidence of God’s eternal love to you. Happy are we, too, if we can say with the Apostle, “whereunto He called you by our Gospel.” I know that however many may preach the Gospel better than I do, there is no one who can preach a better Gospel than the one I preach, for it is that Gospel which “is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believes.” “Our Gospel” is the best of gospels, the richest of gospels, it cannot be excelled, it cannot be equaled! In fact, it is the only Gospel that is worthy of the name! You remember how Paul wrote to the Galatians, “I marvel that you are so soon removed from Him that called you into the Grace of Christ unto another gospel: which is not another.” That is to say, it is not another gospel and it brings only a curse both upon him who preaches it and those who receive it! But blessed are you who have been called unto salvation by “our Gospel.”  
There is yet one more sign of God’s eternal love which is to be seen by us in the future—“to the obtaining of the Glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.” We who believe in Jesus are so “beloved of the Lord” that He will never be satisfied until we share His Glory! So be glad in the Lord and rejoice in the glorious prospect that He has set before you! God was not content to choose you to happiness here, but He has also chosen you to happiness hereafter! He was not satisfied with making a little Heaven for you here below, but He has made a great Heaven for you up above! He has not appointed an earthly paradise where He might sometimes come to you as He came to Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden, but He has prepared a place for you in His own Home in Glory that you may dwell forever in your Father’s House where there are many abiding places. Rejoice, then, “beloved of the Lord,” that He has “called you by our Gospel to the obtaining of the Glory of our Lord Jesus Christ”!  
Of course it is not in my power to enable every Christian here to suck all the sweet out of this title, but it is in the power of the Holy Spirit to enable you to—and by the exercise of faith you may draw much of it out. I claim this title for myself—“beloved of the Lord”—and each Brother or Sister in Christ may claim it for himself or herself. “O man greatly beloved” was the title given to Daniel, and that is the title that is given to every Believer in Jesus. “That disciple whom Jesus loved” was the distinguishing title of one of His followers when Christ was here in the flesh. And now that after the flesh we know Christ no more, we are His in such a special sense that every child of God is “that disciple whom Jesus loves.” May you get a firm grip of that Truth of God, Beloved, and realize that Jesus loves you! You cannot obtain this assurance except by faith, but when you have believed, joy and peace will quickly follow upon the heels of faith. No, they come hand in hand, for we have joy and peace in believing!  
**II.**I have taken so long in speaking of these titles of honor that I have very little time left for speaking of THE WEARERS OF THESE TITLES.  
Suppose, dear Friends, you had all heard the Gospel preached and that you understood the dignity and happiness of a Christian—what sort of a person would you suppose him to be? If I try to picture him for you, you will see how far your ideas and mine agree. I should think you would so imagine that a man who is “beloved of the Lord” would be the happiest man in the world. You naturally suppose that if the eternal God has loved him, if the infinite heart of the Most High has been set upon him from all eternity, he must experience the greatest imaginable delight in such a belief and he must feel that whatever else he may or may not possess, he is rich to the fairest possible extent in having the love of God shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Spirit who is given unto him! I know that a sorrowful friend over yonder is saying, “If I really could say that Jesus is mine, I would be quite content to be poor. If I were ‘beloved of the Lord,’ I would not mind if I had to lie in a dungeon or even to be burned to death for His sake.” So I conceive that those who are “beloved of the Lord” must be the most happy and joyful people to be found anywhere upon the face of the earth!  
I suppose, too, that the influence of this love upon them would make them very careful not to offend their loving Lord. Naturally, the love of Christ would exercise such a constraining influence upon them that they would feel that men so highly favored as they are ought not to live as other men do—but that, being distinguished by such peculiar privileges, they should be “a peculiar people, zealous of good works.” Without violating the proprieties of conjecture, I can conceive that the “beloved of the Lord” would be most heavenly-minded people. Having such treasure in Heaven, they would naturally not care about the things of earth, but would set their affection on things above so that where their treasure is there would their heart be also. I think the Believer would be longing and panting to get a peep through the pearly gates and that until he could be there with his loving Lord, he would often be singing—  
***“My heart is with Him on His Throne,  
And ill can brook delay!  
Each moment listening for the voice,  
‘Rise up, and come away!’”***  
Further, I can suppose that the “beloved of the Lord” are so grateful for their Lord’s love that they are constantly telling others the story of that love. And that when they meet their fellow Christians, their constant theme of conversation is the riches of Divine Grace. I can suppose that these people are so different from others that wherever they go, they are looked upon with astonishment! Difficulties I suppose they have, but being “beloved of the Lord” they take their difficulties to Him and He enables them to overcome them by His Grace. Trials I suppose they have, but they are sure to go to God about them and He either removes them or gives the necessary strength to endure them. I suppose they are people who compass sea and land, not to make proselytes to their particular sect, but by holy self-denial and consecrated service to glorify God and extend the Redeemer’s Kingdom on earth.  
Is not this what you are longing to do, Beloved? Well, it is a good thing to have high aspirations, but it is an even better thing to turn those aspirations to practical account. Is there not something that we can do for Christ *tonight?* The Israelites found the manna in the wilderness, not by looking up to Heaven, but by looking down on the ground. And instead of looking up to Heaven for means of glorifying God, we may find opportunities of doing so all around our daily path! Let us, each one, ask ourselves these questions and answer them as in the sight of God—What can I do for God in my own family circle? What can I say about Jesus to my friends? How can I bring most Glory to God in my own spiritual life? What choice gift can I bring to my Savior as Mary brought the costly ointment of spikenard and anointed the feet of Jesus? What tears of penitence can I weep before His marred visage? What holy faith can I now exercise in His risen and glorified Person? Let me, as the “beloved of the Lord,” with my largest ideas concerning His Glory and the coming of His Kingdom, see what I can practically do to show that I truly love Him by whom I am so greatly beloved!  
I wish, Brothers and Sisters, that the portrait of the happiest man in the world that I tried to draw a few minutes ago might prove to be your own likeness. Some of you are sad and despondent, yet you are the “beloved of the Lord.” Then why are you so dispirited? You are heavy of heart tonight, but since you are the “beloved of the Lord,” you should rejoice in Him whatever there may be to cause you present heaviness of spirit! You have been struggling with inbred sin and the fight has been so fierce that you have feared that you would be defeated—but as you are the “beloved of the Lord,” you must be more than conquerors through Him who has loved you!  
Some of you have come here tonight from the workshop where you have been laughed at and mocked—you have most painful recollections of the scorn with which you were assailed this very afternoon—but since you are the “beloved of the Lord,” the day will come when these things will be reckoned among your highest honors. “Take that, John Bunyan,” said one to a certain Christian as he pushed him into the gutter. “Oh,” said the other, “you may push me into the gutter again if you can only prove my right to bear that noble name!” So may you say to those who persecute you for Christ’s sake, “You may do it again if it pleases you, for it would be an honor to me to be spit upon because I belong to Christ.” Cultivate that spirit, Brothers and Sisters in Christ, and let the thought that that you are the “beloved of the Lord” make amends for every cruel act or word on the part of His enemies. When the last trumpet sounds, and the innumerable hosts of the redeemed are gathered together unto Christ—and you whom God has from the beginning chosen to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth, you whom He has called by our Gospel—when you obtain, I say, the Glory of our Lord Jesus Christ, you will forget the little suffering that you have ever borne on His account and rejoice with unspeakable joy and full of Glory that you are forever to be numbered among the “beloved of the Lord”!

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:**Rom 8:1-14***.***

This wonderful Chapter is the very cream of the cream of Holy Scripture! What a grand keynote the Apostle strikes in the first verse!  
**Verse 1.***There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.* [See Sermon

#1917, Volume 32—IN CHRIST NO CONDEMNATION—Read/download the entire sermon, free of

charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.] “No condemnation”—that is the first note of the Chapter. In the last verse it is “no separation.” What glorious music there is here—no condemnation to those who are in Christ, no separation of them from Christ! Happy are the people who have a share in this double blessing—but unhappy are the men and women who know nothing of it! We will read it again—“There is therefore now no condemnation.” There is a great deal of accusation, and a great deal more of tribulation, but there is no condemnation—not the least hint of it! Some condemnation we might have expected, but “there is therefore now *no*condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.”

**2.***For the Law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the Law of sin and death.*I have broken away from its thralldom! The new Law, the Law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, the Law of Grace has set me free from the domination of the Law of sin and death! Happy is the free man who is thus liberated by the Grace of God.

**3.***For what the Law could not do—*God has done by His Grace. “What the Law could not do”—  
**3.***In that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin—*Or, as the marginal reading renders it, “by a sacrifice for sin”—  
**3-5.***Condemned sin in the flesh: that the righteousness of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For they that are after the flesh mind the things of the flesh.*Unregenerate men, the men who remain in the state in which they were born. The men who allow their lower nature to have the predominance. “They that are after the flesh mind the things of the flesh.” That is all that they care about, all that they think about, all that they toil for, all that they really “mind.”  
**5.***But they that are after the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.* Those in whom there is a new life begotten by the Holy Spirit**—**these mind the things of the Spirit. Each nature seeks its own things—the flesh seeks the things of the flesh, the spirit seeks the things of the Spirit. Judge you, my Hearers, to which case you belong by this test—for what are you living for? That which you live for is the true index of your nature. Do you mind spiritual things or the things of the flesh?  
**6, 7.***For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the Law of God, neither indeed can be.*[See Sermons #20, Volume 1—

THE CARNAL MIND ENMITY AGAINST GOD and #1878, Volume 32—A TRAITOR SUSPECTED AND CONVICTED—Read/download both sermons, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.] The

old nature never will obey the Law of God—it can never do so. What, then, is to be done with it? Improve it? No, my Hearers, the only thing to be done with it is to let it die and then to bury it. In Baptism you have a most significant symbol of what is to be done with the flesh—you are to treat it as a dead thing and, therefore, to bury it. Let the old life be crucified and put to death with Christ and let the new life take its place!

**8.***So then they that are in the flesh****—***Those who are still in the old nature, living for it, living to it—  
**8.***Cannot please God.* Men may wash this old nature, they may clothe it, they may decorate it, they may educate it, but there is no evolution which can produce Grace out of Nature. The child of Nature may be finely dressed, but it is a dead child however gaudily it is attired. There is a vital eternal difference between the old nature and the new.  
**9.***But you are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwells in you.*You saints of Rome to whom Paul was writing, and you who believe in Christ now—“You are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwells in you.”  
**9.***Now if any man has not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His.* If Christ’s Spirit has not quickened you, you do not belong to Christ. Some ministers preach a very general sort of gospel in which everybody has a share, but the Bible knows nothing of that sort of gospel! “If any man has not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His.” Do you know what it is to have the Spirit of Christ? If not, my Hearer, do not deceive yourself—you are none of His. “If any man”—be he prince or magistrate, a member of Parliament or a doctor of divinity—“if any man has not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His.”  
**10.***And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.* Hence the body suffers, the body is sick, the body decays, the body is under the dominion of death because of sin—but the Spirit is full of life because of righteousness.  
**11.***But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwells in you.*You Believers may have a good hope concerning your bodies! “He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies.” Wait a while, therefore—what God has done for your souls He will, in due time, also do for your bodies! This should make you long for the day of Christ’s appearing, as Paul says in the 23rd verse of this Chapter, “waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body,” when Christ shall appear, and we shall be raised**—  
*“From beds of dust and silent clay”—***  
the body itself born a second time, regenerate like the soul!  
**12.***Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the*

*flesh.* [See Sermon #96, Volume 2—THE CHRISTIAN—A DEBTOR—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.] We owe the flesh nothing! I mean

the law of sin in our members—we owe nothing to that. It has been a curse and a plague to us. We are not debtors to the flesh, so we must not “live after the flesh.”

**13.***For if you live after the flesh, you shall die.* If you live simply to gratify your ambition. If you live for avarice. If you live to please yourself—if you live for any earthly object which can be comprised under the term “after the flesh”—you will certainly be disappointed, for you will die and your hope will die with you!

**13.***But if you, through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, you shall live.*If you seek, by the Holy Spirit’s power, to kill sin. If you try to crush all sinful desires. If you keep evil with a rope about its neck—if you mortify it—put it to death, then you shall live! Holiness is the mode of the Christian’s life—sin is the way of the sinner’s death.

**14.***For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of  
God.*[See Sermon #1220, Volume 21—THE LEADING OF THE SPIRIT, THE SECRET TOKEN OF THE SONS OF GOD—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.]  
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**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.** Sermons #41, 42 New Park Street Pulpit 1

UNCONDITIONAL ELECTION  
NOS. 41, 42

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, SEPTEMBER 2, 1855, *BY THE REV. C H. SPURGEON,*  
AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.**

***“But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God has from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: Whereunto He called you by our Gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.”*** 2Th 2:13-14***.***

IF there were no other text in the Sacred Word except this one, I think we would all be bound to receive and acknowledge the truthfulness of the great and glorious Doctrine of God’s ancient choice of His family. But there seems to be an inveterate prejudice in the human mind against this Doctrine—and although most other Doctrines will be received by professing Christians, some with caution, others with pleasure—this one seems to be most frequently disregarded and discarded! In many of our pulpits it would be reckoned a high sin and treason to preach a sermon upon *Election*because they could not make it what they call a, “practical” discourse! I believe they have erred from the Truth of God. Whatever God has revealed, He has revealed for a purpose. There is nothing in Scripture which may not, under the influence of God’s Spirit, be turned into a practical discourse—“for all Scripture is given by Inspiration of God and is profitable” for some purpose of spiritual usefulness. It is true, it may not be turned into a free will discourse—that we know right well— but it *can* be turned into a practical Free *Grace* discourse. And Free Grace practice is the best practice when the true Doctrines of God’s Immutable Love are brought to bear upon the hearts of saints and sinners! Now I trust, this morning, some of you who are startled at the very sound of this word will say, “I will give it a fair hearing. I will lay aside my prejudices. I will hear what this man has to say.” Do not shut your ears and say at once, “It is high Doctrine.” Who has authorized you to call it high or low? Why should you oppose yourself to God’s Doctrine? Remember what became of the children who found fault with God’s Prophet and exclaimed, “Go up, you bald-head! Go up, you bald-head!” Say nothing against God’s Doctrines, lest haply some evil beast should come out of the forest and devour you, also! There are other woes beside the open judgment of Heaven—take heed that these fall not on your head. Lay aside your prejudices—listen calmly, listen dispassionately— hear what Scripture says! And when you receive the Truth, if God should be pleased to reveal and manifest it to your souls, do not be ashamed to confess it! To confess you were wrong, yesterday, is only to acknowledge that you are a little wiser today. Instead of being a reflection on yourself, it is an honor to your judgment and shows that you are improving in the knowledge of the Truth of God! Do not be ashamed to learn and to cast aside your old doctrines and views. But take up that which you may more plainly see to be in the Word of God. And if you do not see it to be here in the Bible—whatever I may say, or whatever authorities I may plead—I beseech you, as you love your souls, reject it! And if from this pulpit you ever hear things contrary to this Sacred Word, remember that the Bible must be first—and God’s minister must lie underneath it!

We must not stand on the Bible to preach—we must preach with the Bible above our heads. After all we have preached, we are well aware that the mountain of Truth is higher than our eyes can discern—clouds and darkness are round about its summit and we cannot discern its topmost pinnacle. Yet we will try to preach it as well as we can. But since we are mortal and liable to err, exercise your judgment—“Try the spirits, whether they are of God”—and if on mature reflection on your bended knees, you are led to disregard Election—a thing which I consider to be utterly impossible—then forsake it! Do not hear it preached, but believe and confess whatever you see to be God’s Word. I can say no more than that by way of introduction.

Now, first. I shall speak a little concerning the *truthfulness* of this Doctrine—“God has from the beginning chosen you to salvation.” Secondly, I shall try to prove that this Election is *absolute—*“He has from the beginning chosen you to salvation,” not for sanctification, but, “*through sanctification*of the Spirit and belief of the truth.” Thirdly, this Election is *eternal*because the text says, “God has from *the beginning*chosen you.” Fourthly, it is *personal—*“*He* has chosen *you*.” Then we will look at the *effects* of the Doctrine—see what it does. And lastly, as God may enable us, we will try and look at its *tendencies and* see whether it is, indeed, a terrible and licentious Doctrine. We will take the flower and, like true bees, see whether there is any honey whatever in it—whether any good can come *of* it—or whether it is an unmixed, undiluted evil.

**I.** First, I must try and prove that the Doctrine is TRUE. And let me begin with an *argumentum ad hominen—*I will speak to you according to your different positions and stations. There are some of you who belong to the Church of England and I am happy to see so many of you here. Though now and then I certainly say some very hard things about Church and State, yet I love the old Church, for she has in her communion many godly ministers and eminent saints. Now I know you are great Believers in what the Articles declare to be sound Doctrine. I will give you a specimen of what they utter concerning Election*,*so that if you believe them, you cannot avoid receiving Election. I will read a portion of the 17th Article upon Predestination and Election—

“Predestination to life is the everlasting purpose of God, whereby (before the foundations of the world were laid) He has continually decreed by His counsel, secret to us, to deliver from curse and damnation those whom He has chosen in Christ out of mankind and to bring them by Christ to everlasting salvation, as vessels made to honor. Therefore, they which are endued with so excellent a benefit of God, are called according to God’s purpose by His Spirit working in due season: they, through Divine Grace, obey the calling: they are justified freely: they are made sons of God by adoption: they are made like the image of His only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ: they walk religiously in good works and at length, by God’s mercy, they attain to everlasting felicity.”

Now, I think any Churchman, if he is a sincere and honest believer in Mother Church, must be a thorough believer in Election. True, if he turns to certain other portions of the Prayer Book, he will find things contrary to the Doctrines of Free Grace and altogether apart from Scriptural teaching. But if he looks at the Articles, he must see that God has chosen His people unto eternal life! I am not so desperately enamored, however, of that book as you may be—and I have only used this Article to show you that if you belong to the Establishment of England, you should at least offer no objection to this Doctrine of Predestination.

Another human authority whereby I would confirm the Doctrine of Election is the old Waldensian Creed. If you read the creed of the old Waldenses—emanating from them in the midst of the burning heat of persecution—you will see that these renowned professors and confessors of the Christian faith did most firmly receive and embrace this Doctrine as being a portion of the Truth of God. I have copied from an old book, one of the Articles of their faith—“That God saves from corruption and damnation those whom He has chosen from the foundations of the world, not for any disposition, faith, or holiness that He before saw in them, but of His mere mercy in Christ Jesus, His Son, passing by all the rest according to the irreprehensible reason of His own free will and justice.”

It is no novelty, then, that I am preaching no new Doctrine! I love to proclaim these strong old Doctrines which are called by nickname, Calvinism, but which are surely and verily the revealed Truth of God as it is in Christ Jesus! By this Truth of God, I make a pilgrimage into the past and as I go, I see father after father, confessor after confessor, martyr after martyr, standing up to shake hands with me! Were I a Pelagian, or a believer in the Doctrine of free will, I would have to walk for centuries all alone. Here and there a heretic of no very honorable character might rise up and call me, Brother. But taking these things to be the standard of my faith, I see the land of the ancients peopled with my Brothers and Sisters—I behold multitudes who confess the same as I do and acknowledge that this is the religion of God’s own Church!

I also give you an extract from the old Baptist Confession. We are Baptists in this congregation—the greater part of us, at any rate—and we like to see what our own forefathers wrote. Some 200 years ago the Baptists assembled together and published their articles of faith to put an end to certain reports against their orthodoxy which had gone forth to the world. I turn to this old book—which I have just published—Baptist Confession of Faith—and I find the following as the 3rd Article—“By the decree of God for the manifestation of His Glory, some men and angels are predestinated, or foreordained to eternal life through Jesus Christ to the praise of His glorious Grace. Others being left to act in their sin to their just condemnation to the praise of His glorious Justice. These angels and men, thus predestinated and foreordained, are particularly and unchangeably designed, and their number so certain and definite that it cannot be either increased or diminished. Those of mankind who are predestinated to life, God, before the foundation of the world was laid, according to His eternal and Immutable purpose and the secret counsel and good pleasure of His will, has chosen in Christ unto everlasting glory out of His mere Free Grace and love, without any other thing in the creature as condition or cause moving Him hereunto.”

As for these human authorities, I care not one rush for all three of them! I care not what they say, pro or *con,*as to this Doctrine. I have only used them as a kind of confirmation to *your* faith, to show you that while I may be railed upon as a heretic and as a hyper-Calvinist, after all I am backed up by antiquity! All the past stands by me. I do not care for the present. Give me the past and I will hope for the future. Let the present rise up in my teeth, I will not care. What though a host of the Churches of London may have forsaken the great cardinal Doctrines of God, it matters not. If a handful of us stand alone in an unflinching maintenance of the Sovereignty of our God. If we are beset by enemies, yes, and even by our own Brothers and Sisters who ought to be our friends and helpers, it matters not—if we can but count upon the past— the noble army of martyrs, the glorious host of confessors! They are our friends. They are the witnesses of the Truth of God and they stand by us! With these for us, we will not say that we stand alone, but we may exclaim, “Lo, God has reserved unto Himself seven thousand that have not bowed the knee unto Baal.” But the best of all is—*God* is with us!

The great Truth of God is always the Bible and the Bible, alone. My Hearers, you do not believe in any other book than the Bible, do you? If I could prove this from all the books in Christendom—if I could fetch back the Alexandrian library and prove it, there—you would not believe it any more! But you surely will believe what is in God’s Word!

I have selected a few texts to read to you. I love to give you a whole volley of texts when I am afraid you will distrust a Truth of God so that you may be too astonished to doubt, if you do not, in reality, believe! Just let me run through a catalog of passages where the people of God are called elect. Of course if the people are called *elect,*there must be *Election.*If Jesus Christ and His Apostles were accustomed to call Believers by the title of, elect, we must certainly believe that they were so, otherwise the term does not mean anything! Jesus Christ says, “Except that the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh should be saved; but for the *elect’s* sake, whom He has chosen, He has shortened the days.” “False Christs and false Prophets shall rise and shall show signs and wonders, to seduce, if it were possible, even the *elect.*” “Then shall He send His angels and shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from the uttermost parts of the earth to the uttermost part of Heaven.”—Mar 13:20; Mar 13:22; Mar 13:27. “Shall not God avenge His own *elect* who cry day and night unto Him, though He bears long with them?”—Luk 18:7. Together with many other passages which might be selected, wherein either the word, “elect,” or, “chosen,” or, “foreordained,” or “appointed,” is mentioned—or the phrase, “My sheep,” or some similar designation, showing that Christ’s people are distinguished from the rest of mankind!

But you have concordances and I will not trouble you with texts. Throughout the Epistles the saints are constantly called, “the elect.” In Colossians we find Paul saying, “Put on, therefore, as the *elect* of God, holy and beloved, hearts of mercies.” When he writes to Titus, he calls himself, “Paul, a servant of God and an Apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God’s *elect.*” Peter says, “*Elect* according to the foreknowledge of God the Father.” Then if you turn to John, you will find he is very fond of the word! He says, “The elder to the *elect* lady.” And he speaks of our “*elect* sister.” And we know where it is written, “The church that is at Babylon, *elected*together with you.” They were not ashamed of the word in *those* days. They were not afraid to talk about it. Nowadays the word has been dressed up with diversities of meaning and persons have mutilated and marred the Doctrine so that they have made it a very Doctrine of devils! I do confess that many who call themselves Believers have gone to rank Antinomianism! But not withstanding this, why should I be ashamed of it, if men wrest it? We love God’s Truth on the rack as well as when it is walking upright. If there were a martyr whom we loved before he went on the rack, we would love him still more when he was stretched there! When God’s Truth is stretched on the rack, we do not call it a lie! We love not to see it racked, but we love it even when racked because we can discern what its proper proportions ought to have been if it had not been racked and tortured by the cruelty and inventions of men! If you will read many of the Epistles of the ancient fathers, you will find them always writing to the people of God as the, “elect.” Indeed, the common conversational term used among many of the Churches by the primitive Christians to one another was that of the, “elect.” They would often use the term to one another, showing that it was generally believed that all God’s people were manifestly “elect.”

But now for the verses that will positively prove the Doctrine. Open your Bibles and turn to Joh 15:16, and there you will see that Jesus Christ has chosen His people, for He says, “You have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you and ordained you, that you should go and bring forth fruit and that your fruit should remain: that whatever you shall ask of the Father in My name, He may give it you.” Then in the 19th verse, “If you were of the world, the world would love his own, but because you are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.” Then in the 17th Chapter and the 8th and 9th verses, “For I have given unto them the words which You gave Me; and they have received them and have known surely that I came out from You and they have believed that You did send Me. I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which You have given Me for they are Yours.” Turn to Act 13:48—“And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and glorified the Word of the Lord; and as many as were ordained to eternal life, believed.” They may try to split that passage into hairs if they like— but it says, “ordained to eternal life” in the original as plainly as it possibly can! And we do not care about all the different commentaries thereupon. You scarcely need to be reminded of Romans 8, because I trust you are all well-acquainted with that Chapter and understand it by this time. In the 29th and following verses, it says, “For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many Brethren. Moreover, whom He did predestinate, them He also called: and whom He called, them He also justified and whom He justified, them He also glorified. What shall we then say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not, with Him, also freely give us all things? Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect?” It would also be unnecessary to repeat the whole of the 9th Chapter of Romans. As long as that remains in the Bible, no man shall be able to prove Arminianism! So long as that is written there, not the most violent contortions of the passage will ever be able to exterminate the Doctrine of Election from the Scriptures! Let us read such verses as these—“For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to Election might stand, not of works, but of Him that calls; it was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger.” Then read the 22nd verse, “What if God, willing to show His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction? And that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had afore prepared unto glory?”

Then go on to Rom 11:7—“What then? Israel has not obtained that which he seeks for, but the Election has obtained it and the rest were blinded.” In the 6th verse of the same Chapter, we read—“Even so, then, at this present time also there is a remnant according to the Election of Grace.” You, no doubt, all remember the passage in 1Co 1:26-29—“For you see your calling, Brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called: but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God has chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world and things which are despised, has God chosen, yes and things which are not, to bring to nothing things which are: that no flesh should glory in His Presence.” Again, remember the passage in 1Th 5:9—“God has not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ,” and then you have my text, which I think would be quite enough. But if you need any more, you can find them at your leisure if we have not quite removed your suspicions as to the Doctrine not being true.

I think, my Friends, that this overwhelming mass of Scripture testimony must stagger those who dare to laugh at this Doctrine! What shall we say of those who have so often despised it and denied its Divinity? What shall we say to those who have railed at its justice and dared to defy God and call Him an Almighty tyrant, when they have heard of His having elected so many to eternal life? Can you, O Rejecter, cast it out of the Bible? Can you take the penknife of Jehudi and cut it out of the Word of God? Would you be like the women at the feet of Solomon and have the child cut in halves that you might have your half? Is it not here in Scripture? And is it not your duty to bow before it and meekly acknowledge what you understand not—to receive it as the Truth even though you could not understand its meaning? I will not attempt to prove the justice of God in having thus elected some and left others. It is not for me to vindicate my Master! He will speak for Himself and He does so—“But, O man, who are you that replies against God? Shall the thing formed say to Him that formed it, Why have you made me thus? Has not the potter power over the clay of the same lump to make one vessel unto honor and another unto dishonor?” Who is he that shall say unto his father, “What have you begotten?...or unto his mother, “What have you brought forth?” “I am the Lord—I form the light and create darkness. I, the Lord, do all these things. Who are you that replies against God? Tremble and kiss His rod; bow down and submit to His scepter; impugn not His justice and arraign not His acts before your bar, O man!”

But there are some who say, “It is hard for God to choose some and leave others.” Now, I will ask you one question. Is there any of you here, this morning, who wishes to be holy, who wishes to be regenerate, to leave off sin and walk in holiness? “Yes, there is,” someone says, “I do.” Then God has elected you! But another says, “No. I don’t want to be holy. I don’t want to give up my lusts and my vices.” Why should you grumble, then, that God has not elected *you*? For if you were elected, you would not like it, according to your own confession! If God, this morning, had chosen you to holiness, you say you would not care for it. Do you not acknowledge that you prefer drunkenness to sobriety, dishonesty to honesty? You love this world’s pleasures better than religion—then why should you grumble that God has not chosen you to religion? If you love religion, He has chosen you to it! If you desire it, He has chosen you to it! If you do not, what right have you to say that God ought to have given you what you do not wish for? Supposing I had in my hand something which you do not value, and I said I shall give it to such-and-such a person—you would have no right to grumble that I did not give it to you! You could not be so foolish as to grumble that the other has got what you do not care about! According to your own confession, many of you do not want religion—do not want a new heart and a right spirit—do not want the forgiveness of sins! You do not want sanctification. You do not want to be elected to these things—then why should you grumble? You count these things but as husks, so why should you complain of God who has given them to those whom He has chosen? If you believe them to be good and desire them, they are there for you! God gives liberally to all those who desire—but first of all, *He* makes them desire—otherwise they never would. If you love these things, He has elected you to them and you may have them. But if you do not, who are you that you should find fault with God when it is your own desperate will that keeps you from loving these things? Suppose a man in the street should say, “What a shame it is I cannot have a seat in the Chapel to hear what this man has to say.” And suppose he says, “I hate the preacher—I can’t bear his Doctrine—but still, it’s a shame I have not a seat”? Would you expect a man to say so? No—you would at once say, “That man does not care for it. Why should he trouble himself about other people having what they value and he despises?” You do not like holiness, you do not like righteousness. If God has elected me to these things, has He hurt you by it? “Ah, but,” some say, “I thought it meant that God elected some to Heaven and some to Hell.” That is a very different matter from the Gospel Doctrine! He has elected men to holiness and to righteousness—and through that to Heaven. You must not say that He has elected these simply to Heaven and others only to Hell. He has elected you to *holiness* if you love holiness. If any of you love to be saved by Jesus Christ—Jesus Christ elected you to be saved! If any of you desire to have salvation, you are elected to have it—if you desire it sincerely and earnestly! But, if you don’t desire it, why on earth would you be so preposterously foolish as to grumble because God gives that which you do not like, to other people?

**II.** Thus I have tried to say something with regard to the Truth of the Doctrine of Election. And now, briefly, let me say that Election is absolute, that is, it does not depend upon what we are. The text says, “God has from the beginning chosen us unto salvation.” But our opponents say that God chooses people because they are good—that He chooses them on account of sundry works which they have done. Now, we ask in reply to this, what works are those on account of which God elects His people? Are they what we commonly call, “works of Law”?— works of obedience which the creature can render? If so, we reply to you—If men cannot be *justified* by the works of the Law, it seems to us pretty clear that they cannot be *elected* by the works of the Law! If they cannot be justified by their good deeds, they cannot be saved by them. Then the decree of Election could not have been formed upon good works. “But,” say others, “God elected them on the foresight of their faith.” Now God *gives* faith, therefore He could not have elected them on *account* of faith which He foresaw. There shall be 20 beggars in the street and I determine to give one of them a shilling. Will anyone say that I determined to give that one a shilling—that I elected him to have the shilling—because I foresaw that he would have it? That would be talking nonsense! In like manner, to say that God elected men because He foresaw they would have faith—which is salvation in the germ—would be too absurd for us to listen to for a moment! Faith is the gift of God. Every virtue comes from Him. Therefore it cannot have caused Him to elect men, because it is His gift! Election, we are sure, is absolute and altogether apart from the virtues which the saints have afterwards. What if a saint should be as holy and devout as Paul? What if he should be as bold as Peter, or as loving as John? Still, he could claim nothing but what he received from his Maker! I never knew a saint, yet, of any denomination who thought that God saved him because He foresaw that he would have these virtues and merits. Now, my Brothers and Sisters, the best jewels that the saint ever wears, if they are jewels of our own fashioning, are not of the first water! There is something of earth mixed with them. The highest Grace we ever possess has something of earthliness about it. We feel this when we are most refined, when we are most sanctified and our language must always be—

***“I the chief of sinners am;***

***Jesus died for me.”***  
Our only hope, our only plea, still hangs on Grace as exhibited in the Person of Jesus Christ. And I am sure we must utterly reject and disregard all thought that our Graces, which are gifts of our Lord, which are His right-hand planting, could have ever caused His love. And we always must sing—

***“What was there in us that could merit esteem Or give the Creator delight?  
It was even so, Father, we always must sing, Because it seemed good in Your sight”***

“He will have mercy on whom He will have mercy.” He saves because He will save. And if you ask me why He saves me, I can only say because He would do it. Is there anything in me that should recommend me to God? No. I lay aside everything. I had nothing to recommend me. When God saved me, I was the most abject, lost and ruined of the race. I lay before Him as an infant in my blood. Verily, I had no power to help myself. O how wretched did I feel and know myself to be! It you had something to recommend you to God, I never had. I will be content to be saved by Grace, unalloyed, pure Grace. I can boast of no merits. If you can do so, still I cannot. I must sing—

***“Free Grace alone from the first to the last Has won my affection and held my soul fast.”***

**III.** Then, thirdly, this Election is ETERNAL. “God has from the beginning chosen you unto eternal life.” Can any man tell me when the beginning was? Years ago we thought the beginning of this world was when Adam came upon it. But we have discovered that thousands of years before that, God was preparing chaotic matter to make it a fit abode for man, putting races of creatures upon it who might die and leave behind the marks of His handiwork and marvelous skill before He tried His hand on man. But that was not the beginning, for Revelation points us to a period long before this world was fashioned—to the days when the morning stars were begotten—when, like drops of dew from the fingers of the morning, stars and constellations fell trickling from the hand of God. When, by His own lips, He launched forth ponderous orbs. When with His own hands He sent comets, like thunderbolts, wandering through the sky to find, one day, their proper sphere. We go back to years gone by, when worlds were made and systems fashioned, but we have not even approached the beginning! Until we go to the time when all the universe slept in the mind of God as yet unborn—until we enter the eternity where God the Creator lived alone, everything sleeping within Him, all creation resting in His mighty gigantic thought—we have not guessed the beginning. We may go back, back, back, ages upon ages. We may go back, if we might use such strange words, whole eternities and yet never arrive at the beginning! Our wings might be tired, our imagination would die away. Could it outstrip the lightnings flashing in majesty, power and rapidity, it would soon weary itself before it could get to the beginning! But God from the *beginning* chose His people. When the unnavigated ether was yet unfanned by the wing of a single angel. When space was shoreless, or else unborn. When universal silence reigned and not a voice or whisper shocked the solemnity of silence. When there was no being and no motion, no time and nothing but God, Himself, alone in His eternity— when without the song of an angel, without the attendance of even the cherubim—long before the living creatures were born, or the wheels of the chariot of Jehovah were fashioned—even then, “in the beginning was the Word,” and in the beginning God’s people were one with the Word and “in the beginning He chose them unto eternal life.” Our Election, then, is eternal. I will not stop to prove it. I only just run over these thoughts for the benefit of young beginners, that they may understand what we mean by eternal, absolute Election.

IV. And, next, the Election is PERSONAL. Here again, our opponents have tried to overthrow Election by telling us that it is an Election of *nations*—and not of people. But here the Apostle says, “God has from the beginning chosen *you*” It is the most miserable shift on earth to make out that God has not chosen persons, but nations, because the very same objection that lies against the choice of persons, lies against the choice of a nation! If it were not just to choose a *person*it would be far more unjust to choose a nation, since nations are but the union of multitudes of persons! To choose a nation seems to be a more gigantic crime—if Election is a crime—than to choose one person. Surely to choose ten thousand would be reckoned to be worse than choosing one—to distinguish a whole nation from the rest of mankind seems to be a greater extravaganza in the acts of Divine Sovereignty than the Election of one poor mortal and leaving out another. But what are nations but men? What are whole peoples but combinations of different units? A nation is made up of that individual, and that, and that. And if you tell me that God chose the Jews, I say, then, He chose that Jew and that Jew and that Jew. And if you say He chooses Britain, then I say He chooses that British person and that British person and that British person. So that it is the same thing, after all. Election, then, is personal—it must be so! Everyone who reads this text and others like it, will see that Scripture continually speaks of God’s people one by one and speaks of them as having been the special subjects of Election—

***“*** *Sons we are through God s Election,   
Who in Jesus Christ believe;   
By eternal destination   
Sovereign Grace we here receive.*

We know it is personal Election

V. The other thought is —for my time flies too swiftly to enable me to dwell at length upon these points—that Election produces GOOD RESULTS. “He has from the beginning chosen you unto sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the Truth.” How many men mistake the Doctrine of Election altogether! And how my soul burns and boils at the recollection of the terrible evils that have accrued from the spoiling and the wresting of that glorious portion of God’s glorious Truth! How many are there who have said to themselves, “I am elect,” and have sat down in sloth and worse than that! They have said, “I am the elect of God,” and with both hands they have done wickedness. They have swiftly run to every unclean thing because they have said, “I am the chosen child of God, irrespective of my works—therefore I may live as I like and do what I like.” O, Beloved! Let me solemnly warn everyone of you not to carry the Truth of God too far— or, rather not to turn the Truth of God into error, for we cannot carry it too far! We may overstep the Truth—we can make that which was meant to be sweet for our comfort a terrible mixture for our destruction. I tell you there have been thousands of men who have been ruined by misunderstanding Election—who have said, “God has elected me to Heaven and to eternal life”—but they have forgotten that it is written, God has elected them, “through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the Truth.” This is God’s Election—Election to *sanctification*and to *faith*. God chooses His people to be holy and to be Believers! How many of you here, then, are Believers? How many of my congregation can put their hands upon their hearts and say, “I trust in God that I am sanctified”? Is there one of you who says, “I am elect”?

One of you says, “I trust I am elect”—but I jog your memory about some vicious act that you committed during the last six days. Another of you says, “I am elect”—but I would look you in the face and say, “ *Elect*? You are a most cursed hypocrite and that is all you are!” Others would say, “I am elect”—but I would remind them that they neglect the Mercy Seat and do not pray. Oh, Beloved, never think you are elect unless you are *holy*. You may come to Christ as a sinner but you may not come to Christ as an elect person until you can see your holiness! Do not misconstrue what I say—do not say, “I am elect,” and yet think you can be living in sin! That is impossible. The elect of God are holy. They are not pure, they are not perfect, they are not spotless—but taking their life as a whole, they are holy persons. They are marked and distinct from others—and no man has a right to conclude himself elect except in his holiness. He may be elect and yet lying in darkness, but he has no right to believe it. No one can say it, if there is no evidence of it. The man may live one day, but he is dead at present. If you are walking in the fear of God, trying to please Him and to obey His Commandments, doubt not that your name has been written in the Lamb’s Book of Life from before the foundation of the world!

And, lest this should be too high for you, note the other mark of Election, which is faith —belief of the Truth of God. Whoever believes God’s Truth and believes on Jesus Christ, is elect. I frequently meet with poor souls who are fretting and worrying themselves about this thought—“What if I should not be elect!” “Oh, Sir,” they say, “I know I put my trust in Jesus. I know I believe in His name and trust in His blood. But what if I should not be elect?” Poor dear creature! You do not know much about the Gospel or you would never talk so, for *he that believes is elect*. Those who are elect, are elect unto sanctification and unto faith. If you have faith, you are one of God’s elect! You may know it and ought to know it, for it is an absolute certainty! If you, as a sinner, look to Jesus Christ this morning and say—

***“*** *Nothing in my hands I bring,*

*Simply to Your Cross I cling,*you are elect! I am not afraid of Election frightening poor saints or sinners. There are many Divines who tell the enquirer, “Election has nothing to do with you.” That is very bad, because the poor soul is not to be silenced like that. If you could silence him so, it might be well—but he will think of it, he can’t help it. Say to him, then, if you believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, you are elect. If you will cast yourself on Jesus, you are elect. I tell you—the chief of sinners—this morning—I tell you in His name—if you will come to God without any works of your own, cast yourself on the blood and righteousness of Jesus Christ—if you will come, now,. and trust in Him, you are elect—you were loved of God from before the foundation of the world, for you could not do that unless God had given you the power and had chosen you to do it! Now you are safe and secure if you do but come and cast yourself on Jesus Christ and wish to be saved and to be loved by Him. But think not that any man will be saved without faith and without holiness. Do not conceive, my Hearers, that some decree, passed in the dark ages of eternity, will save your souls, unless you believe in Christ! Do not sit down and fancy that you are to be saved without faith and holiness! That is a most abominable and accursed heresy and has ruined thousands.

Lay not Election as a pillow for you to sleep on, or you may be ruined. God forbid that I should be sewing pillows under armholes that you may rest comfortably in your sins. Sinner, there is nothing in the Bible to lighten your sins! But if you are condemned, O Man! If you are lost, O Woman! You will not find in this Bible one drop to cool your tongue, or one Doctrine to lessen your guilt. Your damnation will be entirely your own fault and your sin will richly merit it— because you believe you are not condemned. “You believe not because you are not of My sheep. You will not come to Me that you might have life.” Do not fancy that Election excuses sin—do not dream of it—do not rock yourself in sweet complacency in the thought of your irresponsibility! You are responsible. We must give you both things. We must have Divine Sovereignty and we must have man’s responsibility. We must have Election, but we must ply your hearts—we must send God’s Truth at you. We must speak to you and remind you of this, that while it is written, “In Me is your help,” yet it is also written, “O Israel, you have destroyed yourself.”

VI. Now, lastly, what are the true and legitimate tendencies of right conceptions concerning the Doctrine of Election? First, I will tell you what the Doctrine of Election will make saints do under the blessing of God. And, secondly what it will do for sinners if God blesses it to them.

First, I think Election, to a saint, is one of the most *stripping D*octrines in all the world—to take away all trust in the flesh or all reliance upon anything except Jesus Christ. How often do we wrap ourselves up in our own righteousness and array ourselves with the false pearls and gems of our own works and doings? We begin to say, “Now I shall be saved, because I have this and that evidence.” Instead of that, it is naked faith that saves—that faith and that, alone, unites to the Lamb—irrespective of works, although it is productive of them. How often do we lean on some work other than that of our own Beloved Jesus and trust in some might, other than that which comes from on High? Now if we would have this might taken from us, we must consider Election. Pause, my Soul, and consider this. God loved you before you had a being! He loved you when you were dead in trespasses and sins and sent His Son to die for you! He purchased you with His precious blood before you could say His name! Can you, then, be *proud*

I know nothing, nothing again, that is more *humbling* for us than this Doctrine of Election. I have sometimes fallen prostrate before it when endeavoring to understand it. I have stretched my wings and, eagle-like, I have soared towards the sun. Steady has been my eye and true my wing for a season. But, when I came near it and the one thought possessed me—“God has from the beginning chosen you unto salvation,” I was lost in its luster! I was staggered with the mighty thought—and from the dizzy elevation down came my soul, prostrate and broken, saying, “Lord, I am nothing, I am less than nothing! Why me? Why me?”

Friends, if you want to be humbled, study Election, for it will make you humble under the influence of God ’s Spirit. He who is proud of his election is not elect—and he who is humbled under a sense of it may believe that he is. He has every reason to believe that he is, for it is one of the most blessed effects of Election—that it helps us to humble ourselves before God.

Once again —Election in the Christian should make him very *fearless* and very *bold.* No man will be so bold as he who believes that he is elect of God. What cares he for man if he is chosen of his Maker? What will he care for the pitiful chirpings of some tiny sparrows when he knows that he is an eagle of a royal race? Will he care when the beggar points at him, when the blood royal of heaven runs in his veins? Will he fear if all the world stand against him? If earth is all in arms abroad, he dwells in perfect peace—for he is in the secret place of the tabernacle of the Most High, in the great pavilion of the Almighty! “I am God’s,” he says, “I am distinct from other men. They are of an inferior race. Am I not noble? Am I not one of the aristocrats of Heaven? Is not my name written in God’s Book?” Does he care for the world? No—like the lion that cares not for the barking of the dog, he smiles at all his enemies—and when they come too near him, he moves himself and dashes them to pieces. What cares he for them? He walks about them like a colossus—while little men walk under him and understand him not. His brow is made of iron, his heart is of flint—what does he care for man? No—if one universal hiss came up from the wide world, he would smile at it, for he would say—

***“*** *He that has made his refuge God,*

*Shall find a most secure abode.*I am one of His elect. I am chosen of God and precious—and though the world cast me out, I fear not. Ah, you timeserving professors, some of you will bend like the willows! There are few oaken-Christians, nowadays, that can stand the storm—and I will tell you the reason. It is because you do not believe yourselves to be elect! The man who knows he is elect will be too proud to sin—he will not humble himself to commit the acts of common people. The believer in God’s Truth will say, “ *I* compromise my principles? *I* change my Doctrines? *I* lay aside my views? *I* hide what I believe to be true? No! Since I know I am one of God’s elect, in the very teeth of all men I shall speak God’s Truth, whatever man may say.” Nothing makes a man so truly bold as to feel that he is God’s elect! He shall not quiver, he shall not shake—who knows that God has chosen him!

Moreover, Election will make us *holy*. Nothing under the gracious influence of the Holy Spirit can make a Christian more holy than the thought that he is chosen! “Shall I sin,” he says, “after God has chosen me? Shall I transgress after such love? Shall I go astray after so much loving kindness and tender mercy? No, my God, since You have chosen me, I will love You. I will live to You—

***“*** *Since You, the everlasting God,*

*My Father have become.*I will give myself to You to be Yours forever, by Election and by Redemption, casting myself on You and solemnly consecrating myself to Your service.

And now, lastly, to the ungodly. What says Election to you? First, you ungodly ones, I will excuse you for a moment. There are many of you who do not like Election and I cannot blame you for it, for I have heard those preach Election who have sat down and said, “I have not one word to say to the sinner.” Now, I say you *ought* to dislike such preaching as that, and I do not blame you for it! But I say, take courage, take hope, O you Sinner, that there is Election! So far from dispiriting and discouraging you, it is a very hopeful and joyous thing that there is an Election. What if I told you, perhaps, none can be saved, none are ordained to eternal life? Would you not tremble and fold your hands in hopelessness and say, “Then how can I be saved, since none are elect?” But, I say there is a multitude of elect, beyond all counting—a host that no mortal can number! Therefore, take heart, poor Sinner! Cast away your despondency—may you not be elect as well as any other?—for there is chosen an innumerable host! There is joy and comfort for you! Then, not only take heart, but go and try the Master! Remember, if you were not elect, you would lose nothing by it. What did the four lepers say? “Let us fall unto the host of the Syrians, for if we stay here, we must die, and if we go to them, we can but die.” O Sinner! Come to the Throne of electing mercy! You may die where you are. Go to God—and, even supposing He should spurn you, suppose His uplifted hand should drive you away—a thing impossible—yet you will not lose anything! You will not be more damned for that. Besides, supposing you are damned, you would at lease have the satisfaction of being able to lift up your eyes in Hell and say, “God, I asked mercy of You and You would not grant it. I sought it, but You did refuse it.” That you shall never say, O Sinner! If you go to Him and ask Him, you shall receive— for He never has spurned one yet! Is not that hope for you? Though there is an allotted number, yet it is true that all who seek belong to that number! Go and seek—and if you should be the first one to go to Hell, tell the devils that you did perish thus—tell the demons that you are a castaway after having come as a guilty sinner to Jesus. I tell you it would disgrace the Eternal—with reverence to His name—and He would not allow such a thing! He is jealous of His honor and He could not allow a sinner to say that!

But ah, poor Soul! Do not think thus, that you can lose anything by coming! There is yet one more thought —do you love the thought of Election this morning? Are you willing to admit its justice? Do you say, “I feel that I am lost. I deserve it and if my brother is saved, I cannot murmur. If God destroys me, I deserve it, but if He saves the person sitting beside me, He has a right to do what He will with His own and I have lost nothing by it.” Can you say that honestly from your heart? If so, then the Doctrine of Election has had its right effect on your spirit and you are not far from the Kingdom of Heaven! You are brought where you ought to be, where the Spirit wants you to be—and being so this morning, depart in peace! God has forgiven your sins! You would not feel that if you were not pardoned—you would not feel that if the Spirit of God were not working in you! Rejoice, then, in this! Let your hope rest on the Cross of Christ. Think not on Election, but on Christ Jesus. Rest on Jesus—Jesus first, last and without end!

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PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #43 New Park Street Pulpit 1

÷2Th 2.16

DIVINE LOVE AND ITS GIFTS  
NO. 1096

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, FEBRUARY 16, 1873, *BY REV. C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and God, even our Father, which has loved us, and has given us everlasting consolation and good hope through Grace, comfort your hearts, and establish you in every good word and work.”*** 2Th 2:16-17***.***

THE Thessalonians had been much disturbed by the predictions of different persons that the day of Christ was at hand. There always have been pretenders to prophetic knowledge who have fixed dates for the end of the world and, by their fanaticism, have driven many into lunatic asylums and disturbed the peace of others. Some of this band had worried the saints at Thessalonica. The Apostle, after beseeching them not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled by such follies, went on to beg them not to be deceived by forged letters or pretended prophets and then prayed for them that they might possess abiding consolation which would keep them calmly persevering in holiness.

His prayer is singularly emphatic. He cries to the Lord Jesus Christ, Himself, and to God, even our Father, to comfort their hearts, that by such consolations they may be so confirmed that nothing may cause them to decline from any holy enterprise or testimony. Perhaps, during their fright, some of them had ceased from service, reckoning it vain to go on with anything when the world was so near its end. Therefore Paul would have them calmed in spirit that they might diligently persevere in their Christian course. That which frightens us from duty cannot be a good thing—true comfort establishes us in every good word and work.

It is an ill wind which blows no one any good. We owe to the needless alarms of the Thessalonians this prayer, which, while it was useful for them, is also instructive for us. And I pray that while we look into it we may be led into deep thoughts of the love of God and not into *thoughts* only, but into a personal enjoyment of that love, so that this morning the love of God may be shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which is given unto us. To hear of the love of God is sweet—to believe it most precious—but to *enjoy* it is Paradise below the skies! May God grant us a taste this morning.

I shall first call your earnest attention to the blessed fact recorded in our text, that “our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and God, even our Father, loved us.” Then we will dwell upon the past manifestations of that love— “He has given us everlasting consolation and good hope through Grace.”

And then we shall dwell for a while upon the prayer which Paul based upon this love and its manifestation, “that God would comfort your hearts, and establish you in every good word and work.”

**I.** First, then, dear Brethren, let me ask your hearts, as well as your minds, to consider THIS GLORIOUS FACT—“Our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and God, even our Father, has loved us.” I cannot help repeating my frequent remark that the love of God is a theme more fit for the solitary contemplation of each person than for public utterance or explanation. It is to be felt, but it never can be uttered. Who can speak of love? In what language shall we sing its sweetness? No other word, nor set of words, can utter its meaning. You may go round about and make a long definitions, but you have not defined it—and he who never felt his heart glow with it will remain an utter stranger to it—depict it as you may.

Love must be felt in the *heart*. It cannot be learned from a dictionary. “God has loved us.” I want you not so much to follow what I shall have to say upon that wonderful fact as to try and think over this thought for yourselves. God has loved us! Drink into that Truth of God! Take the Word, lay it under your tongue and let it dissolve like a wafer made with honey till it sweetens all your soul. God has loved us! Let me remark that it does not say, “He pitied us.” That would be true, for, “like as a father pities his children, so the Lord pities them that fear Him.” Pity is one degree below love and often leads to it, but it is not love—you may pity a person whom, apart from his sufferings, you would heartily dislike. You cannot endure the man, yet you are sorrowful that he should be so pained.

Nor does the text declare that God has had mercy upon us. I could comprehend that, yes, and bless God forever, because His mercy endures forever. It is, to my mind, quite understandable that the good and gracious God should be merciful towards His creatures—but it is a far greater thing that He should *love* them. Love is a feeling vastly more to be valued than mere mercy. Merciful is a man to his beast, but he does not love it. Merciful has many a man been to his enemies for whom he has had no degree of affection. But God does not merely pity us and have mercy upon us, He loves us! Neither can this word be bartered for that of benevolence. There is an aspect under which God is love to all His creatures because He is benevolent and wishes well towards all things that He has made, but Paul was not thinking of *that* when he said, “God has loved us, and given us everlasting consolation.”

A mother is not said to be *benevolent* towards her child, nor a husband coldly benevolent towards his bride—benevolence would be a poor, poor, substitute for love. Love is as infinitely beyond benevolence as the gold of kings in value exceeds the stone of the quarry. We have frequently heard theologians declare that the love of God towards His elect is the love of complacency and the statement, though perhaps true, is most frosty. One would not like to strike out the word, “love,” and put in its place the word, “complacency.” It would be like setting up a globe of ice in the place of the sun. Love glows with sunlight—complacency has, at best, but cold moonlike beams.

No, we must hold to the words, “has loved us.” Truly, the Lord has a complacency in His people as He sees them in Christ, but He has much more than that. He is benevolent towards His people and towards *all* creatures, but He is much more than that towards *us*. He is merciful, He is pitiful, He is everything that is good, but He is more than that—He “has loved us.” You know, Mother, how you look upon that dear child of yours as you hold it in your arms. Why, it seems a part of yourself! You love it as you love yourself and your thoughts of it do not differ from your thoughts about your own welfare—the child is intertwisted with your very being.

Now God also has united us to Himself by cords of love and bonds of affection. And He thinks of us as He thinks of Himself. I can express this, but I cannot explain it. Even now I feel much more inclined to sit down and weep for joy of heart that God could ever love me than to try and speak to you. He made the heavens and I am less than the smallest speck—yet He loves me! It is His eternal arm that has held up the universe in all ages and I am as a leaf of the forest, green awhile, but soon to grow yellow and to be buried with my fellows, yet the Eternal loves me and always will love me! With His great Infinite heart He loves me! As a God He loves me! Eternal loves me! It is a conquering thought, it utterly overcomes us and crushes us with its weight of joy. It bows us to the ground and casts us into a swoon of ecstasy when it is realized by the mind, “God, even our Father, has loved us.”

Now, permit the other side of the thought to shine upon your minds. The marvel is not merely that God has loved, but that he has loved *us!*And we are so insignificant, so frail, so foolish, let us add—for this increases the marvel—so *sinful* and therefore so uncomely, so ungrateful. We are so provoking, so willfully obstinate in returning to old sins again and so deserve to be abhorred and rejected! I can imagine the Lord’s love to the Apostles. We can sometimes think of His love to the early saints without any great wonder, and of His love to the Patriarchs and to the confessors and the martyrs, and to some eminently holy men whose biographies have charmed us—but that our Lord Jesus Christ, Himself God, even our Father, should have loved us is a world of wonders! And if I put it into the singular number and say, “Who loved *me* and gave Himself for *me*,” it shall ever stand first of all miracles to my soul’s apprehension that I should be the object of Divine affection! Dear Brothers and Sisters, I leave this meditation with you. I cannot speak of it anymore. I beseech you to baptize your souls into it and to let this one thought overwhelm you this day—“God, even our Father, has loved us.”

Let me carry your minds onward a little further. Remember that the eternal love of God is the great Fountain and Source from which proceed all the spiritual blessings which we enjoy. If you stand at the source of a

great river like the Thames you see nothing there but a tiny rivulet—the fact being that we do but by courtesy speak of that little brook as the source of the river—it is only a very partial source. A great river derives its volume of water from a thousand streams and is sustained by the whole of the watershed along which it flows. The imaginary fountainhead of a river is therefore but a small affair. But suppose the Thames had never borrowed from a single stream in all its course, but welled up at once a full-grown river from some one fountainhead—what a sight it would be!

Now the mercy of God to us in Christ Jesus owes nothing to any other stream. It leaps in all its fullness from the infinite depths of the love of God to us and if in contemplation you can travel to that great deep, profound and unfathomable, and see welling up all the floods of Covenant Grace which afterwards flow on forever to all the chosen seed, you have before you that which angels wonder at! If it would be marvelous to see one river leap up from the earth full-grown, what would it be to gaze upon a vast spring from which all the rivers of the earth should at once come bubbling up, a thousand of them born at a birth? What a vision it would be! Who can conceive it? And yet the love of God is that Fountain from which all the rivers of mercy which have ever gladdened our race—all the rivers of Grace in time and of glory hereafter—take their rise! My Soul, stand at that sacred Fountainhead and adore and magnify forever and ever, “God, even our Father, who has loved us.”

Now please notice the words of the text, for they are full of instruction. When speaking of this love, the Apostle joins our Lord Jesus Christ Himself with, “God, even our Father.” He honored the Deity of Jesus by speaking of Him side by side, and on terms of equality, with God the Father. But there is more here than this, for the words remind us that our Lord Jesus Christ and God, even our Father, act in holy concert in the matters which concern our welfare. Jesus Christ is the Gift of the Father’s love to us, but Jesus Himself loved His own and laid down His life for His flock. It is true that the Son loves us, but the Father Himself loves us, too. The love of God does not come to us from one Person of the blessed Trinity alone, but from all.

We ought to make no distinctions by way of preference in the love of either Father, Son, or Holy Spirit. One love dwells in the breast of the one undivided Three. We must adore and bless our Lord Jesus Christ and God, even our Father, with equal gratitude. Still notice that Jesus Christ is here put first and if the reason is requested, we find it in His mediatorial office. He is first to us in our *experience*. We began our dealings with Heaven, not by going to the Father, but to His Son, Jesus Christ. Our Lord has truly said, “No man comes unto the Father but by Me.” All attempts to get to commune with the Father, unless through the Son, will be futile. Election by the Father is not first to us, though it stands forth in order of time—redemption by the Son is our starting point.

Not at the Throne of Sovereignty, but at the Cross of dying Love our spiritual life must date its birth. Look to Jesus first, even our Lord Jesus Christ, and then follow after the Father. I am sure every converted soul here knows that this is the truth and I would exhort everyone who is seeking salvation to take care to observe God’s order. You must remember that the love of the Father will never be perceived by us, nor felt in our hearts, till first of all we go to Jesus Christ, who is the one Mediator between God and man.

Note the words of the text again—The love of God to us gives to us the Lord Jesus to be our own Savior, Friend, Husband and Lord. By Grace we obtain possession of Jesus Christ—Christ is ours. Observe the Lord, “*Our* Lord Jesus Christ.” The Apostle might have written, “*The* Lord Jesus Christ,” but when he was testifying of the great love of God, the article would not have sufficed—he must use a word of *possession*. Faith looks to Jesus and finds salvation in that look. Then she grows into Assurance and having used her eyes to look with, she next employs her hands to grasp with. She takes hold of Jesus and says: “He is all my salvation, He is all my desire, He is my Christ.” And from then on Assurance speaks not of *the* Lord Jesus Christ, but of *our* Lord Jesus Christ!

I want you to drink into the love of God this morning from the silver pipe of this thought—Jesus Christ the Son of the eternal God, who is also a Man like yourself, is yours, altogether yours. If you are believers in Him He is from head to foot entirely yours! In all His offices, in all His attributes, in all that He is, in all that He has done, in all that He is doing, in all that He *shall* do, He is your Savior! Though you cannot take Him up in your arms as Simeon did, yet your faith can embrace Him with the same ecstasy and feel that you have seen God’s salvation! Behold what manner of love is revealed in this, that God should give His only Son to us. God commends His love to us by this unspeakable Gift. Here love has reached its climax. Blessed be the love of God this morning and forevermore!

Observe that this love displays itself in another shape, for the text goes on to say, “And God, even our Father.” He might have said, “God, even *the* Father.” I have no doubt the text does refer to the Father as one Person of the blessed Trinity, but it runs thus—“even*our* Father.” A father! There is music in that word but not to a fatherless child—to him it is full of sorrowful memories. Those who have never lost a father can scarcely know how precious a relation a father is. A father, who is a father, indeed, is very dear! Do we not remember how we climbed his knee? Do we not remember the kisses we imprinted on his cheeks? Do we not recall, today, with gratitude the chidings of his wisdom and the gentle encouragements of his affection? We owe, ah, who shall tell how much we owe to our fathers according to the flesh—and when they are taken from us we lament their loss—and feel that a great gap is made in our family circle.

Listen, then, to these words, “Our Father, who is in Heaven.” Consider the Grace contained in the Lord’s deigning to take us into the relationship of children and giving us, with the relationship, the nature and the spirit

of children, so that we say, “Abba, Father.” Did you ever lie in bed with your limbs vexed with sore pains and cry, “Father, pity Your child?” Did you ever look into the face of death and as you thought you were about to depart, cry, “My Father, help me! Uphold me with Your gracious hand and bear me through the stream of death”? It is at such times that we realize the glory of the Fatherhood of God and in our feebleness learn to cling to the Divine strength and catch at the Divine love. It is most precious to think that God is our own Father!

There, now, I cannot talk about it. Upon some themes it would be hard to be silent, but here it is hard to speak. I can but exclaim, “Behold, what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us that we should be called the children of God!” And, having said that, what more remains? Before I turn from this gracious and fruitful topic of the love of God, I beg you to notice that it is no new thing, no affair of yesterday. “Our Lord Jesus Christ Himself and God, even our Father, has loved us.” He does not tell us when this began and he could not have done so had he tried! He has loved us. Loved us when first we came to Him repenting. Loved us when we were spending our living with harlots. Loved us when we were at the swine trough. Loved us when from head to foot we were one mass of defilement.

O God, did You love me when I played the rebel? Did You love me when I could blaspheme Your name? What manner of love is this? Yes, and He loved us before we had a being! Loved us and redeemed us long before we existed! Loved us before this world had sprung out of nothingness! Loved us before the daystar first proclaimed the morning! Loved us before any of the angels had begun to cover their faces with their wings in reverent adoration! From everlasting, the Lord loved His people!

Now, again I say, drink into this Truth of God—feed on it. Expect us not to speak at length about it, but contemplate the fact—“Jesus Christ Himself, and God, even our Father, has loved us.”

**II.** Now we shall turn to the second point which is THE MANIFESTATIONS OF THIS LOVE. They divide under two heads—“everlasting consolation” and, “good hope through Grace.” First, God’s love has given us everlasting consolation. The Lord found us wretched. When the arrows of conviction were sticking in our hearts we were bleeding to death and what we needed, first of all, was to have these wounds staunched. Therefore the Lord came to us with consolations. Do you remember the time when the blood of Jesus Christ flowed warm over your wounds and made them cease to bleed? Have you forgotten the hour when you heard the voice of the Lord saying in the Word, “Whoever believes in Him is not condemned,” and you were enabled to see Jesus Christ as your Substitute suffering in your place—and you knew that your sins were forgiven for His name’s sake? You have not forgotten that, have you?

Well, that was one of the everlasting consolations which He gave you in the time of your distress. Since that day you have had your sorrows— perhaps you have seldom been long without them—but consolation has always followed on the heels of tribulation and your main consolation has continued to be where it was at the first—you still find the sweetest joy on earth to be looking unto Jesus! When sin rebels you put it down by the same Grace which overthrew it at the first. Conscience starts and accuses you and you answer its accusations with that sweet word, “Jesus died for our transgressions, and rose again for our justification.”

The greatest delight of all is that this consolation is an *everlasting* one—other sources of comfort dry up—friends have called to visit you in times of distress and have suggested pleasant thoughts that have whiled away a mournful hour. But your griefs have returned again and the passing comfort has been of no further service to you. When a man sees that Jesus Christ took all his sins and was punished for them so that the man, himself, can never be punished again—when he understands that wondrous mystery of Substitution—then he gets a consolation which serves him at all times and in all weathers! Whatever may occur to him he flies to this Refuge—and even though he may have fallen into great sin, he knows that the Atonement was not made for sham sin, but for real sin—and he resorts again to that same Fountain filled with blood where he was once washed, resting fully assured that it will be equal to the washing of him as long as he shall be capable of sin. “Everlasting consolation!”

There are some here present who have tried this consolation for 40 or 50 years—dear Brothers and Sisters, I am sure you do not find it is any the weaker, but, on the contrary, you understand more of its strength! You are more happy today in falling back upon the love of God than you were. And at this moment you feel that in the absence of all other comforts it would suffice you to know that everlasting consolation which is given you in Christ Jesus. Let us run over, for a moment, some of our consolations. The first one is, as I have already said, that God has forgiven us all our transgressions because Jesus died in our place. The next consolation is that God loves us and can never change in His love—“Whom once He loves He never leaves, but loves them to the end.”

Then we have the grand consolation that the promises of God do not depend upon our faithfulness for their fulfillment, but are all established and made yes and amen in Christ Jesus. We have this consolation—that our salvation does not depend upon ourselves! As we fell and were lost by the first Adam’s unrighteousness, so we have risen and are saved through the second Adam’s righteousness, beyond all risk and fear of perishing. We stand upon a firm Foundation, not on the shifting sand of creature obedience and faithfulness, but upon the eternal Rock of a world which Christ has completed and over which He sang that joyous paean—“It is finished”—before He entered into His rest.

We have, also, this consolation, that all things work together for good for us who love God and are the called according to His purpose. And again, this other consolation, that as long as Christ exists we are as safe, for He has said, “Because I live, you shall live also.” We also have this consolation, that even though we shall sleep in the dust for awhile, yet He has said it, “I will that they, also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am that they may behold My Glory.” In fact, to tell you all the consolations which God has given us would need many an hour! And fully to enjoy them will occupy your entire lives, for *everlasting* consolation is not to be spread out before you and done with in the short space of a discourse. Thus much upon one of the first manifestations of Divine love.

The next is, He has given us “good hope.” Consolation for the present, hope for the future. “Good hope,” the hope when days and years are past we all shall meet in Heaven. The hope that whatever the future may be, it is full of bliss for us. The hope of immortality for our souls and of resurrection for our bodies, for when Christ shall come, we, also, that sleep in Jesus, shall come with Him. The hope of reigning with Jesus Christ on earth in the days of His triumph and reigning with Him forever and ever in endless felicity. This is our hope, a good hope, for it is based and founded on a good foundation. A fanatic’s hope will pass away with the vapors which produced it, but the hope of the true Believer is good because it is founded in Truth and in Divine Grace.

“A good hope in Grace,” is the Greek. If I believed in my own merit and based my hopes on them, I should be only self-deceived and blinded, for what merit have I? But if my hope is fixed, alone, in Grace and that is the sphere in which my consolation and hope are found, then, since God is assuredly gracious, since He has made a Covenant of Grace with all Believers. Since He has ratified the Covenant by the gift of His own Son and since He has sworn by His holiness, ours is a good hope. Since God will be as good as His Word, our hope in Grace is good. Here stands the fact— it is written, “he that believes in the Lord Jesus has everlasting life.” God has covenanted with that man that He shall be saved *eternally*, and since God cannot lie, the believing man must and shall be saved.

Why is it, do you think, that some Believer’s hopes flicker? Because they get away from a hope in Grace and look towards themselves and their own merits. “Oh,” they say, “I have not prayed as I did. I do not feel as I did, therefore, my hope declines.” Friend, was your hope founded on your prayers? Was your hope grounded in part upon your feelings? If so, it may well quiver and tremble! One of these days it will go down altogether, for the foundation is not able to bear its weight. But if my hope is fixed on this—that God has promised and cannot change His promise—I have a good foundation to build on. He will not alter the thing that has gone forth out of His lips. He has said, “he that believes and is baptized shall be saved,” and He cannot change His own Word! Therefore every Believer has the promise of eternal life.

“But,” says one, “it surprises me to hear you talk so,” Does it? It much more surprises me that I may so speak! It is marvelous to the last degree that God, even our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ should have given us such a hope as this! I never feel at all astonished at some people’s hope when I find that it is this—the hope that if they behave themselves they will get to Heaven—the hope that if they are faithful, God will be faithful. Why! Any simpleton might have imagined such a hope as that! But a Divine Revelation was needed to set before us the great hope of the Gospel and it needs Grace-given faith to believe that God will not change nor lie and, therefore, must save all those who have believed in His Son Jesus Christ. He cannot suffer one of the sheep of Christ to perish, or His promise will be of no effect.

“If I believed that,” says one, “it would cause me to lead a careless life.” Perhaps it would, but it does not lead true Believers to do so. On the contrary, we feel that if God loves us so and deals so generously with us, and takes us right away from the whips of Sinai and the Covenant of the Law, and places us entirely under Grace, we love Him as we never loved before! And because of that love, sin is hateful to us and we shun it as a deadly thing! The Law which *you* think would drive men to holiness has never done it, while the Grace which you imagine would lead us to licentiousness binds us with solemn bonds of consecration to serve our God 10 times more than before!

Suppose some one were to tell my children that the continuance of my love to them will depend entirely upon their good behavior. My children would repel the suggestion with indignation. They would answer, “we know better! You speak falsely! Our father will always love us.” Even so, the Lord’s children know that their Father’s love is Immutable. For our transgressions, our heavenly Father will visit us with the rod, but never with the sword. He will be angry with us and chide us, but He will love us just as much when He is angry as He did before. And as long as ever we are His sons—and that we always must be, for sonship is not a relationship which will ever change—so long will He love us.

Do you think that children become disobedient because their relationship is unchangeable? I never heard of such a thing! They have many reasons for being disobedient within their own little wayward hearts, but no child disobeys his father because he always must be his father’s child, or because his father loves him! I have heard of one child who said to another, “Come with me, John, and rob such an orchard. Your father is so kind he will not beat you if you are found out.” The little lad drew himself up and said, “Do you think because my father is kind to me that, therefore, I will go and vex him?” This is the holy reasoning of love—it draws no license from Grace, but rather feels the strong constraints of gratitude leading it to holiness.

It may be that in unregenerate hearts the love of God, if it could come there, would be turned into an excuse for sin, but it is not so to us, my

Brothers and Sisters. Since the Grace of God has made us new creatures in Christ Jesus, the love of God constrains us not to sin but to walk in holiness all our days. Blessed be His name, then! We are not ashamed to rejoice that God, even our Father, has loved us, and given us everlasting consolation and good hope in Grace.

**III.** The last thing is THE PRAYER flowing out of all this. The Apostle prays, and we pray this morning, that God would comfort your hearts. This is not spoken of everybody, but of such as believe in the Lord Jesus. It is of the utmost importance that your hearts should be comforted. Cheerfulness, habitual calm, peace of mind, content of spirit—these ought to be the very atmosphere you breathe—and Paul thinks it so important that he prays that God Himself, and Christ Himself, may comfort your hearts.

I know you have many troubles—how very few are altogether without them! Some of you are very poor, others suffer heavy losses in business and exercises of soul, with much trial in the world and in the Church. I pray the good Lord comfort your hearts, speaking not to your ears only, but to your innermost nature. “Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.” Why, surely, if you believe that God loves you, it ought to make your heart glad! And if He gives you everlasting consolation you cannot be otherwise than happy!

I remember well when I was under a sense of sin looking at a dog and wishing I were such as he, that I might die without fear of judgment hereafter, for it seemed so awful a thing to live on forever as a sinner. But now, on the other hand, I have sometimes looked at the happiest animals and I have said to myself, “Ah, but yonder poor creature does not know the love of God and how thankful I am to God that He has given me the capacity to know Him. Why, if I could hear of an angel in Heaven who did not know the love of God I should pity him! There are kings and mighty emperors who know not the Lord’s love and what poor, pitiable creatures they are! But as for you who rejoice in Divine love, I would have you go into the darkest alley, if you are forced to live there, and undergo the most wearisome toil if that is your lot—yes, and go home to a persecuting husband, or a churlish father and yet hear melodious music ringing in your hearts for—“God, even our Father, which has loved us, has given us everlasting consolation and good hope through Grace.” This is enough to make the wilderness rejoice and blossom as the rose.

The next part of the prayer is that the “Lord would establish us in every good word and work.” I see that the most approved editions of the original have it, “in every good work and word,” putting the best first, and the thought is this, that God would make His people so happy that they would never have an inclination to leave off any good work or word. Depression of spirit often leads to slackness of hand. No doubt many, through sad hearts, have ceased to labor for Christ. A lack of gladness has restrained their activity.

Now, the Apostle would not have any one of us cease from serving God in good works or in good words through a lack of consolation. Does God love you? Do you know it? How, then, can you cease from any good work? Did enemies abuse you for speaking the Truth of God? Did you say it because you felt you loved God? Say it again, Man! Say it again! Did you work in your class without success? Did you do it because God loved you and you wanted to show that you loved Him? Go on, Brother! Go on, Sister! Success or no success! God loves you and He has given you everlasting consolation, therefore be established in your good work.

Have you been accustomed to sing His praises and has the devil said, “Leave off! Leave off!” Have you been accustomed to rebuke sin and to tell others about the Savior in your own poor way, and are you getting low in spirit? Do you doubt your own interest in Christ? Have you lost the comfort you once enjoyed? O, dear Brother, come back to the old original source of happiness—“Jesus Christ Himself, and God, even our Father, which has loved us, and given us everlasting consolation and good hope through Grace.” After refreshing yourself with this blessed Truth of God, you will return with renewed energy to good words and works and continue in them steadfast, unmovable—till life’s allotted service shall come to a close.

Now and then we become greatly disheartened about the condition of the Church. I know I do, I see everywhere Popery spreading, or else rationalism—these rival evils are devouring our country. There is far too little prayerfulness and too little Gospel preaching. And at times one is apt to cry out, like Elijah, that no one is left who is faithful to Jehovah—all knees are bowed to Baal! We must not give way to this feeling, dear Friends, for, “God, even the Father, has loved us.” When the disciples were too much elated with their success and came back to Jesus and said, “Lord, even the devils are subject unto us,” Jesus said, “Notwithstanding, in this rejoice not, but rather rejoice because your names are written in Heaven.”

And today, when we are depressed with great anxieties and come back to our Master, and say, “Lord, the devil is getting the upper hand over us,” He repeats to us the same admonition, “Nevertheless do not be depressed about this, but rather rejoice because your names are written in Heaven and your Father has given you everlasting consolation and good hope through Grace.” Establish your hearts, then, beloved Brothers and Sisters! Be “steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.” Things are not what they seem. Dark nights are but the prelude to bright days. The rain shall be followed by the clear shining. When the Truth of God retreats, she only retires to leap to a greater victory! Though each wave, as it comes up upon the shore, may die and you may think that there is no progress, yet the tide is coming in—even Jehovah’s tide of everlasting Truth which shall cover all the earth!

Be not discouraged! Go to your God. Get away, every man, from your circumstances and from your selves and get to your Savior and your Shepherd! And there, like sheep in the pasture, lie down to feed. And then, like sheep obedient to the Shepherd, rise up and follow Him where ever He goes. God bless you in this. Perhaps while I have been preaching, some unconverted person here has been saying—“There is nothing for me.” Do you remember, dear Friend, what the Syro-Phoenician woman said? She was called a dog by the Savior and that is what you think you are, but she said, “The dogs eat the crumbs that fall from the Master’s table.”

Now, if I called myself a dog, would there be anything in this subject that I might dare to lay hold upon, because, like a crumb, it fell from the table? Yes. It seems to me there is. Evidently God deals with His own people in a way of Grace, for it is said, He has “given” us—it is altogether of His free love and it is added—“through Grace,” or absolute favor. The consolations of the Lord are the gifts of mercy and love. Well, then, if He is gracious to one, why should He not be gracious to another? And if those who sit at His table were once unclean, filthy and depraved, and yet the Sovereign Grace of God called them and brought them into the banquet of love, why should it not light on me also?

If it is not of him that wills nor of him that runs, but of God that shows mercy—why should He not show mercy to me, whoever I may be? Why not to me? But is there a door through which I can come to the gracious Lord? Yes, there is, and it is the other crumb in the text, for it begins with, “our Lord Jesus Christ.” My Soul, that is where you must begin this morning! There is the Lord Jesus Christ! I see Him hanging on the Cross bleeding for the sins of others, with hands stretched wide that He may receive sinners to His heart. And that heart has a channel made down to it by the spear, that prayers and tears may find an easy way into His sympathies.

Come, my Soul, come now and tell your case to Jesus. Fellow Sinner, come and confess your sins to Jesus and then throw yourself at His feet with this upon your heart and lips—“If I must perish, I will perish clinging to the Cross, declaring to all men that my hope is stayed on Him whom God has set forth to be the propitiation for the sins of man.” You will never perish there, Sinner! Go there at once and be safe! God help you for Christ’s sake. Amen.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—2 Thessalonians 2, 3.**Adapted from*The C.H. Spurgeon Collection*, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307.  
Sermon #1542 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

FREE GRACE A MOTIVE FOR FREE GIVING  
NO. 1542

**DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, JUNE 13, 1880, *BY C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

**ON BEHALF OF THE FREE HOSPITALS OF LONDON.**

***“Now our Lord Jesus Christ Himself and God, even our Father, which has loved us and has given us everlasting consolation and good hope through Grace,  
comfort your hearts and establish you in  
every good word and work.”***2Th 2:16-17***.***

THE Thessalonian saints had been much persecuted and afflicted and they had exhibited great faith, so much so that Paul says, “We ourselves glory in you in the Church of God for your patience and faith.” As if they had not enough trouble coming from the outside, there sprang up in their midst certain hot-headed teachers who declared that the Day of Christ was immediately at hand. The coming of the Lord is the most grand hope of the Church and it is an evidence of the extreme power of error to poison and pervert the Truth of God that a hope which is our brightest consolation can be so twisted as to cause the saints to be “shaken in mind” and troubled.

But so it appears to have been with the Thessalonians. They were perplexed with mysterious rumors which the zealots probably supported by a misinterpretation of the Apostle’s own language in his former letter to them. It would appear that they were tempted to leave their regular habits of life—some of them even neglected their business upon the theory that there was no need to attend to it because the world was so speedily to be at an end. This gave an occasion for “busybodies” to cease from working and create great disquietude among the more sober members and, therefore, Paul wrote them this second letter with the earnest intent that they might be established in the Truth of God, kept from evil and that disorderly walking might be repressed and that the Church might be at peace. Paul felt that it was of the utmost importance that this honorable Church should be at rest and should not lack consolation either as to its bitter persecutions or its internal difficulties.

My subject, this morning, leads me to make this the first point to be dwelt upon—it is most important that Believers should enjoy consolation. When I have, for a while, spoken upon that, I would with delight expatiate upon the fact that this consolation is most freely provided and bestowed in the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ—and it is from this subject that I purpose to draw a practical inference which may help the collection for the hospitals, namely, that the freeness with which these consolations are given to us should lead us to a holy benevolence towards others who need consolation.

**I.**First, then, IT IS OF THE UTMOST IMPORTANCE THAT BELIEVERS SHOULD ENJOY CONSOLATION. We must not say that it does not matter whether we are doubting or believing, whether we are sighing or rejoicing—it *does* matter a great deal. Every commander knows that if he has not his soldiers in good heart, there may be a great many of them and they may be well trained for war, but the battle is not likely to be won. Courage is essential to valor. Much depends upon the case in which a man finds himself upon the eve of conflict. If the soldier has no stomach for the fight, as our forefathers were known to say, he will make a sorry display when the tug of war comes on.

The Lord delights not to see His people with their heads hanging down like bulrushes, depressed and dismayed. His Word to them is, “Be strong; fear not.” He is “the blessed God” and He would have those who know His glorious Gospel to live a life of blessedness, that they may the better serve Him. Does not His Spirit say, “Rejoice in the Lord always and again I say, Rejoice”? Has He not given the Comforter, that He may continually console us? Believers will far better answer the Lord’s purpose and bring more glory to His name if they are filled with peace and joy in believing, than they will if they yield to despondency, for the Scripture says, “the joy of the Lord is your strength.”

I am sure that the Lord would have us be of good courage, for its importance is implied in the very existence of our text. It is the prayer of an Inspired man. Paul wrote not only at the dictate of brotherly love, but under the guidance of the Holy Spirit when he penned this prayer, “Now our Lord Jesus Christ Himself and God, even our Father, comfort your hearts and establish you in every good word and work.” The Holy Spirit moved the man of God to breathe this desire and to put it on record that it might be the desire of all good men as long as ever the Epistle should be read and that all Christian men should value consolation, even as it was valued by one who was a tender lover of the flock of Christ.

It would be great presumption on our part to lightly esteem that which was a prime matter of concern with so instructed and experienced a teacher as the Apostle to the Gentiles. Paul puts this prayer into a very remarkable shape. To my mind it is expressed in a deeply solemn form, for he writes, “Now our Lord Jesus Christ Himself.” Was there need for that word, “Himself”? Does it not make it very emphatic that he seems to call upon the Lord Jesus to give them comfort, not by any intermediate agency, but in His own Person and by His own power? It is so essential that we should be comforted that Jesus, even our own Lord Jesus Christ, is entreated, Himself, to become the Consolation of His people. Is not that a weighty matter which leads the reverent heart of Paul thus to plead?

Nor is this all, for he goes on to say, “and God, even our Father,” as if God the Father, Himself, must undertake the work of cheering His people, so necessary was it that they should be at rest. No one else could give them such comfort as they required. But God could do it and, therefore, “God, even our Father,” must be specially invoked. The prayer is that the Lord Jesus and the Father who are One may join in the most necessary work of comforting the hearts of the tried Thessalonian saints. It reminds me of Paul’s solemn benediction in the opening of the Epistle, “Grace unto you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.”

This prayer of Inspiration, couched in such solemn terms and directed so earnestly to the Lord Jesus Christ, Himself, and to God, even our Father, proves the importance and necessity of saints being filled with comfort. Nor is this the only instance in the Epistle where this desire is expressed, for a little farther on, in the third chapter, at the 16th verse, we have it in other words but with equal forcefulness—“Now the Lord of Peace, Himself, give you peace always by all means.” I do not know that in one single sentence there could be compressed a more intense desire that they may be at peace. “The Lord” is invoked and He is styled, “the Lord of Peace,” that all His Divine Majesty may be seen and His peace-making power may be displayed.

“The Lord of Peace” is entreated to give peace, not by His angels nor by His ministers, nor by His Providence, but, “Himself,” to give peace—and this is asked for “always”—“give you peace *always*.” Peace in the cool of the evening is not enough—it is needed at all parts of the day, in all the days of the year, in every period of life, in every place and under all circumstances! The wish is expressed with great breadth in the words, “Give you peace always by all means”—if it cannot be brought by one means, let it be by another, but somehow or other may you enjoy the peace which the Lord, alone, can create!

I cannot imagine that such a prayer as this would have been placed among the Scriptures of Truth, which are to be our guide till the Lord comes, unless it had been of the utmost importance that we should enjoy peace of mind. The Apostle almost hints at one reason for this strong necessity, for in one word he lets us see that it is a vital blessing because it affects the Christian’s heart. His expression is, “Comfort your hearts.” It is well to have strong hands—how else shall we labor? It is well to have a firm feet, how else shall we stand? Yet these are secondary matters as compared with a healthy*heart*. A disease of the heart is an injury to the whole man. If anything goes amiss at the fountain, the streams of life soon feel it. The entire manhood depends upon the heart—hence the need of comfort for the heart and the value of the promise, “He shall strengthen your heart.”

It is a calamity when the springs of action are weakened and the spirit is made to sink. “The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity, but a wounded spirit who can bear?” Touch the flesh where you will, but spare the brain and the heart, for these are the man so nearly that he is wounded to the quick when these are hurt. When the spirits begin to sink, then the waters have come in, even into the soul. Hence our Lord said to His disciples, “Let not your heart be troubled.” However your house may be troubled, however your bodily frame may be troubled, “let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me.” Faith upholds the heart and enables the man to bear up under pressure—*faith*, I say and nothing else.

I am sure, dear Friends, you will clearly see the need that we should be comforted, because the lack of comfort will grievously affect the action of the heart and mar the entire life force of our being. See you to it, then, that you lift up the hands that hang down and confirm the feeble knees by saying to them that are of a feeble heart, “Be strong, fear not.” Ask that the heart may rejoice in God, for then the roughness of the way and the stress of the weather will be matters of small concern. Beloved Brethren, this confidence is necessary to prevent impatience and other evils. Possibly it was the lack of comfort which led certain of the Thessalonians to preach the immediate coming of the Lord—their impatience excited the wish and the wish led on to the assertion.

When men lose the present comfort of plain Gospel Doctrines they are very apt to begin speculating and in carnal heat foretelling the coming of the Lord. They left that patient waiting which is our *duty*, for a fevered prophesying which is nowhere encouraged in the Word of God. Hence the Apostle said to them in the fifth verse of the third chapter, “The Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the patient waiting for Christ.” A man does not wait patiently when he is low in spirit and weary at heart. Let a man feel his own heart right with God and be at peace and he can quietly wait until Christ comes, even though the Lord shall delay His coming for many a day. But when everything is tossed about and our hope grows dim and our fellowship is broken and our zeal is burning low, we jump at anything which will end the struggle and enable us to avoid further effort.

Laziness and despondency lead many to cry, “Why are His chariots so long in coming?” just as idle workmen long for Saturday night. You think time too long and life too long, for you are not happy where your Lord has placed you and you are eager to rush out of the field of service into the chamber of rest. This will not do, my Brothers and Sisters, either for you or for me. We must be braced up to further labor. We must receive comfort in our spirit that we may be able, patiently, to toil on, however long life may be and however long our Lord may delay. For if not—if we grow impatient—we may resort to rash fanatical action as I have already shown you that certain Thessalonians did. Under the idea that the Lord was coming, they neglected their daily calling and became busybodies, gadding about from house to house and loafing upon others who did not pretend to be quite so spiritual.

They were mere star-gazers, looking for the Advent with their mouths open and their eyes turned up, being evermore in grievous danger of falling into a ditch! Paul bade them get to work and eat their own bread, quoting himself as an example, for he had worked with labor and travail night and day that he might not be chargeable to them. My Friend, if you are growing impatient for the Day of the Lord, I pray that comfort of heart may cool you. Tomorrow morning take down the shop shutters and sell your goods as if Christ were not coming at all, for should He come, you will be all the more fit to meet Him for being engaged in your calling.

If I knew that the Lord would come tomorrow I should attend to my regular Monday duties and on no account leave one of them to go and stand at the window, looking for wonders! Whether the Master comes tomorrow or in a thousand years, your wisest course is to follow your calling in His fear and for His sake. We ought to do our work better under the impression that perhaps He may come and find us at it! We may not neglect our duty under pretense of His appearing. Of this, however, be sure, you will not patiently wait if you are not happy. You will not go on conscientiously plodding, doing the same work, walking in the same regular way unless your heart is stayed upon God! You will run after this novelty or that if your mind is not resting in Jesus. Hence the devout prayer of our text that God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ, Himself, may comfort our hearts and establish us in every good word and work.

Once more, I am sure this comfort is eminently desirable because it promotes fruitfulness. The Apostle more than hints at this—“Comfort your hearts and establish you in every good word and work.” When we are not happy in the Lord we do not give ourselves heartily to His service. We grow impatient and then we need the exhortation of the 13th verse of the third chapter, “But you, Brethren, be not weary in well doing.” If we feel that Jesus is ours, that all things are working for our good and that eternal Glory is secured to us by a sure Covenant, we are moved by gratitude to complete consecration, for the love of Christ constrains us. Doubts and disquietudes take us off from our Master’s work, but when He gives us rest, we take His yoke upon us cheerfully and find in it yet further rest unto our souls.

When our hearts sing, our hands toil and we cannot do enough for our Redeeming Lord! Right gladly do we present ourselves as living sacrifices to Him who “loved us and gave Himself for us.” Thus, too, we are established in our work and bound with fresh bonds to it, so that we delight to labor on till He shall come who shall say, “Well done, good and faithful servant: enter you into the joy of your Lord.” So it all comes to this—we who are constitutionally despondent must not give way to depression—we must cry to God to help us by the Divine Comforter. We must aim at being cheerful Christians. We have abundant reasons for being cheerful, for the Father Himself loves us and has given us everlasting consolation in Christ Jesus. Do not let us be so unwise and so ungrateful as to neglect these consolations of the Spirit.

If the table is sumptuously spread, why should we be hungry? It the fountain flows so freely, why should we be thirsty? Moreover, if we wear of a dark countenance, we may distress the weak ones in the family of God. It may be that we shall spread the infection of depression among our fellow Believers and this must not be. Let us wear our sackcloth on our loins if we must wear it, but let us not wave it in everybody’s face lest we offend against the generation of the Lord’s people! Is it not clear from the Word, Brethren, that we shall be damaged if we give way to apprehension and dismay? Is it not apparent that we are invigorated, equipped and prepared for our Lord’s use when we are strong in the Lord and the power of His might? Therefore let us breathe earnestly to God the desire that His everlasting consolation may be laid home to our spirits and that our hearts may be comforted at this moment.

**II.**We shall now turn to the second point of our meditation which is this—GOSPEL CONSOLATION IS MOST FREELY BESTOWED. I want, in the chief place, to call your attention to the manner in which all the way through, the freeness of Divine Consolation is set before us by the Apostle. First, observe that the consolations bestowed upon Believers are most free because they are described as a gift. “Now our Lord Jesus Christ Himself and God, even our Father, which has loved us and has given us everlasting consolation.” The old proverb has it, “Nothing is freer than a gift.” Every blessing that we receive from God comes as a gift.

We have purchased nothing—what have we to purchase it with? We have earned nothing—what work did we ever do that could deserve everlasting consolation from the hand of the great Lord? Comfort in Christ is an absolutely free, spontaneous gift of Sovereign Grace, given not on account of anything we have done, or ever shall do, but because the Lord has a right to do as He wills with His own—therefore does He select unto Himself a people to whom the free gift of His consolation shall be given! If you have any comfort at this time, my Brothers and Sisters, it is God’s gift to you. If you triumph in God, it is God who has given you your holy joy, therefore bless and praise Him from whom such a gift has come.

The freeness of this gift is seen in every part of it. The consolation given us of God is very complete, but it is as manifestly free as it is evidently perfect. Notice its completeness, I pray you. It covers the past with these golden words, “which has loved us.” As for the present, it is enriched with this Truth of God, “has given us everlasting consolation.” And as for the future, it is glorified with this blessing, “and good hope through Grace.” Here is a *triple* comfort, a consolation in three worlds and under each aspect it is a free favor! He “has loved us”—why is this? Come, you wise men, pry into the ancient past and tell me why God loved His chosen!

Stand and gaze as long as you will into the eternal mind and say to yourself, why did God make this choice of love? The sole reply out of the excellent Glory falls from Jesus’ lips—“Even so Father, for so it seemed good in Your sight.” Shall not the bridegroom elect his own bride? Shall not the King of kings dispense His favors as He wills? He has loved us “from before the foundation of the world”—a love so ancient cannot have been born of any*human* cause. Eternal love is a flame enfolding itself—it borrows no fuel from without, but lives upon itself! He says, “I have loved you with an everlasting love, therefore with loving kindness have I drawn you.” But why that everlasting love, we cannot tell. Beloved, by Divine Love the mysterious past is made to glow with the Glory of God—its light is like a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal.

Once, when we looked back into the past, we saw the blackness of our guilt and the hole of the pit from which we were lifted. But now we behold a silver stream of mercy flowing from the Throne of God and of the Lamb and we track it to the eternal purpose of love and the Covenant of Grace. Gaze as you can into light ineffable, but even with the eye of faith all that you can discern in the ages which are past is this word which has a splendor about it beyond compare—the word, “LOVE.” In eternity the Lord loved us! Oh, how free is this! How much we owe for it! The past is bright with love, with love most free!

As for the present, “He has given us everlasting consolation.” We have it *now*. Christ is His people’s Christ *today*—the consolation of Israel even now. The pardon of sin is ours; the perfect righteousness of Christ is ours; life in Christ is ours; union to Christ is ours; marriage to Christ is ours. Glory with Christ shall be ours by-and-by, but even now we have the earnest of it in the Spirit which dwells within us and shall be with us forever. All this is assuredly a gift—how could it be otherwise? We could never have enjoyed this everlasting consolation today if Free Grace and dying love had not brought it to us. Bless, then, the Giver!

As for the future, what of that? Darkness lowers the clouds and the storm mutters from afar and we tremble lest in the end of life, when physical force decays, we may be overtaken with a storm in the article of death—but this covers all—we have “good hope through Grace.” The Scriptures of Truth have assured us that the great Shepherd will be with us in the valley of death shade and that after death there is a resurrection and with our risen body we shall behold the King in His beauty when He shall stand, in the latter days, upon the earth and we shall, in our perfect manhood, dwell forever in His Glory. This is so good a hope that it fills all the future with music. This, too, is a gift. There is not a trace of legal claim in it—it comes not by way of reward, but of Divine favor.

Thus the past, the present, the future are all rich with the Lord’s own generous gifts and in nothing can we trace a single consolation to anything but Free Grace. Lest we should make any mistake about these consolations coming to us most freely, the Apostle mentions One from whose hand they come, from whom nothing has ever come in other manner but that of manifest Grace. He mentions, “our Lord Jesus Christ Himself.” Oh it charms me to think that He should comfort me! When Jesus Christ begins to draw near a man’s soul, his joy begins. But when the Lord sets Himself down steadily to console His Brethren, I guarantee you it is done in heavenly style, for He will not fail nor be discouraged! He will wash our feet if the weariness is there. He will give His bosom for a pillow for our head if the pain is there.

He has said, “I will make all his bed in his sickness,” so that if the woe comes from disease, He will cheer us there. He will anoint our eyes with salve if the eyes are failing and bind up the broken heart if that is bleeding. Lest we fall, He will put underneath us the everlasting arms and lest we are wounded, He will spread over us the shadow of His wings. He will be all to us that He is in Himself—judge you what that is. His whole being—His Godhead in its grandeur, His Humanity in its tenderness He has given to us. He lays Himself out for us and be sure of this—He will not leave us comfortless! He will come to us. He is such a blessed Sympathizer in all grief, such a mighty Helper in all distress that if He comes to our rescue, we may be sure that our deliverance will be accomplished.

But, Brothers and Sisters, at the sight of our loving Lord we feel that it would be treason to impute His benefits to any motive but that of Grace. Is He not full of Grace and Truth? The Law came by Moses, not by Jesus. His coming was not to judge and to censure—“God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world,” much less did He send His Son to condemn His people! There *will* come a Day of Judgment, but just now the Son of God sits upon His Throne to grant pardons and to give Grace to help in times of need. His Throne is a Throne of Grace and His scepter is that of love. We know that the comforts of the Gospel must be graciously free since they are brought to us by Jesus Christ Himself.

Then the Apostle solemnly adds, “and God our Father.” There seems to me to be a peculiar touch of sweetness about this. It is not, “God *the* Father”—which notes His relation to Jesus, but *our* Father, which sets forth His relation to *us*. We love God the Father! Unto the Father be Glory forever and ever! But as “*our* Father” He comes nearer to us and gladdens our hearts. Now, a father does not pay wages to his children. His gifts to them are freely bestowed out of the love of his fatherly heart. What father expects to be paid for what he does for his sons and daughters?

Thus we see that the everlasting consolations of the Gospel—coming to us because we are the children of God—are quite free from anything which makes them a hire or a debt. And they come to us in the freest possible manner as spontaneous donations of our great Father, whose delight it is to give good gifts to them that ask Him. Cannot you look up, you desponding ones, at this moment and cry, “Our Father”? Our first hymn greatly refreshed *my* spirit just now, for I felt very heavy till the Holy Spirit comforted me with it—

***“If in my Father’s love I share a filial part, Send down Your Spirit, like a dove,  
To rest upon my heart.”***

And I felt that I could urge that argument and in my inmost heart I pleaded it before the Lord—Oh, if I am, indeed, Your child and You are a Father to me, then deal with me as with a son and let me feel Your Spirit resting within my bosom, that I may know myself to be Yours beyond a doubt! O how sweet to feel the Spirit’s witness and to cry, “Abba, Father”!

Now, Beloved, the spirit of adoption is never a spirit of bondage or legality. It never boasts of human merit, but its one song is, “Free Grace and dying love.” May our Father’s free favor make your hearts sing concerning this and I know that this will be your tune***—***

***“Behold what wondrous Grace  
The Father has bestowed  
On sinners of a mortal race  
To call them sons of God!”***

Look at the text again and you will see how explicit Paul is upon one point. To make us see the freeness of those consolations which come to God’s troubled people, he writes it, “Our Lord Jesus Christ Himself and God, even our Father, which has loved us.” Divine Love is the foundation of our consolation! No everlasting consolation could have visited our hearts if the Father and the Son had not loved us! I always feel inclined to sit down when my ministry causes me to come across the great Truth of God’s love to His people because it is not so much a Truth of God to *speak* upon with the tongue as to enjoy in silence in the heart.

I can fully understand that God should pity my misery. I can comprehend God’s caring for my weakness. But I am filled with sacred amazement when I am told that He loves me! Loves me? What can there be in me for the Holy Spirit to love! Brothers and Sisters, what can there be in you that Jesus should set His heart on you? He has made us and not we ourselves—does the potter fall in love with his own clay? Will he die to save a broken vessel? There were other creatures far fairer. Why were angels passed by? Wonder of wonders that the Lord should love us poor nobodies, defiled with sin, with such evil tempers and such strange natures! Ah me, with such *estranged* natures, which is far worse!

That the Lord our God should love us. That Christ should love us so as actually to have died for us! Jesus so loved us that He espoused our nature, occupied our dwelling place, the world! He took our burden of sin, carried our cross and laid in our grave! They say that love is blind—I will not say that our Redeemer’s love is of that sort—far rather will I say that it must have been wonderfully quick-sighted love to have been able to perceive anything lovable in us! Yet is His love the source and fountain of all our mercies. He has loved us! There can be no question that this is free, for love is unpurchaseable!

If a man should give all the substance of his house for love, it would be utterly despised. Love goes not in the market, it knows nothing of price, or barter—it must go forth unbribed, unhired, or not at all—in all cases but far more in the instance of the Eternal Love of the great Father and His only-begotten Son! Price and purchase for Divine Love? Wherein would such an insinuation fall short of blackest blasphemy? Yet again, observe that as if the Apostle feared that we should get away from this Doctrine of Grace, he added, “He has given us everlasting consolation and good hope through Grace.”

Some people do not like the sound of that word, “Grace.” It is too Calvinistic. We do not care what you call it, but it is the very best word in the Bible next to the name of God our Savior! It is from the Grace of God that all our hope begins. Man as a rebel can never earn anything but damnation through his own merits—Grace must reign or man must die. Every blessing that can ever come to condemned sinners such as we are must come because God’s great love wills it to come because, “He is gracious and full of compassion.” All other roads are broken up! Grace alone bridges the chasm and makes a way for traffic between Heaven and earth! Grace reigns in our spiritual comfort and only Grace! Let us glorify God for it.

Everlasting consolation is not a blessing given to us as the result of our own works. This is most clear from the last part of our text, for there it is asked that the Lord may comfort our hearts, not because we are established in every good word and work, but that we may *be* so. All the good works which adorn the Christian character are the *result* of God’s Grace and not the cause of it. Grace is given us in order that we may serve God, not because we *do* serve God. To make us holy is the object of Divine Grace, but Grace did not wait until it *found* us holy, or it would never have visited us. To close this part of the subject I would remark that this is the reason why the consolations which God gives us are everlasting. Dwell on that word, “everlasting.” Do not suffer anyone to fritter away its meaning. You may safely forget that there are certain folks alive who declare that everlasting has not the meaning of endless duration, for it means that or nothing! We have too much personal interest involved in this word to allow it to be toned down into age-lasting or any other miserable sense.

We should as soon think that the Bible meant the opposite of what it seems to do as believe that everlasting means something temporary. He has given us *everlasting* consolation and the reason why it is everlasting is because it is founded on the Grace of God! If it were built upon*our* merits it would stand upon a foundation of ice or mist—it would rest on a shadow buttressed by a *dream*. But if God loved us out of pure Grace and if Jesus Christ has given us consolation out of pure love and if our whole comfort rests upon the Sovereign Grace of God in Christ Jesus, then there is no reason why it should ever pass away unless God’s Grace can evaporate, which cannot be, since God changes not, but must be forevermore the same! Our Lord Jesus changes not, for He is the “same yesterday, today and forever.”

Ah, you high-fliers who derive a lofty comfort from your *feelings*, your happy *sensations*, your holy *works* and your belief that sin is dead in *you*, fly away as much as you can—you will be brought down one of these days! Like Icarus in the Grecian fable who flew so high that he melted the wax of his wings and fell, so will it be with all who venture aloft on wings of self-confidence. He who lies humbly at God’s feet, conscious of his sin and mourning over it and resting for everything upon Sovereign Grace and free mercy in Christ Jesus, he may stay where he is with safety, for his hope shall never fail him. Let the Lord be magnified for this! He is our Rock and there is no unfaithfulness in Him and he that rests in Him shall not be ashamed or confused world without end.

**III.**So far have we come—now for our closing point which is a practical one. SINCE THESE CONSOLATIONS OF GOD’S LOVE HAVE BEEN SO FREELY BESTOWED UPON US, THEY SHOULD LEAD US TO A LIFE OF HOLY BENEVOLENCE. We ought to be free in our giving to others since God has been so free in His giving to us. As He has abounded toward us in infinite liberality, we ought to abound towards all with whom we come in contact up to the full measure of our ability in all love and kindness and mercy. In every benevolent enterprise Christian men should take a hearty interest. Read that 17th verse—“Comfort your hearts and establish you in every good word and work.”

I am a man and being a man everything that concerns men concerns me. I am a Christian man and as a follower of Christ, the Son of Man, everything that can do good to my fellow men is a matter in which I delight to take my share. This should be done in direct actions as well as in words. Read—“Establish you in every good word and work.” Certain of the oldest manuscripts run, “In every good *work* and word” and I suppose in our new translation we shall have it so and very properly, too. In this case *work* is probably first and *word* next.

Some Christian people think that “word” should be everything and work nothing, but the Scriptures are not of their mind. These professors speak a great deal about what they *will* do; talk a great deal about what other people *ought* to do and a great deal more about what others *fail* to do—and so they go on with word, word, word and nothing else but word. They do not get as far as “work”—but the Apostle put work first in this case, as much as to say, “whether you talk about it or not, *do* it. Be established in every good work even if you do not get so far as being capable of a multiplicity of words.”

Brethren, let us yoke word and work together—every good thing should command our advocacy and secure our aid to the fullest of our ability. Direct practical assistance should be rendered by us all, since our Lord loves not in word, only, but in deed and in truth. This should be done without pressure. No one could lay constraint upon God to bless His people. No pressure was put upon Christ to redeem us! Everything, as we have shown, was spontaneous, sovereign, free. Even so should men give to God out of an overflowing heart. Give to Him as a king gives to a king! How does a king give? Why, as he likes and that is the way to give—to give because you are delighted to give—not because you feel obliged to do it by being observed by others, but out of a royal heart which delights in liberal giving!

Shall you not do as you will with your own? How can a gracious heart better please itself than by doing good? Give as you would give to a king, for we never give our meaner possessions to royal personages—we give the best we have if we give them anything. Let it be so in all the services that we render to God! Let Him have our best, our noblest, our dearest possessions. The particular case before us this morning is, to my mind, a very important one and one which should greatly move all generous spirits. In this great city of near upon four millions inhabitants, the provision of hospital accommodation is, to a painful degree, small.

In those hospitals which will be helped by the collections of today, I think there are only 5,531 beds, or about one for every 723 persons. Considering the liability of working men to disease and accident and the great number of the poorer classes, this is a fearfully small preparation for possible necessity. But this is not the worst, for out of these 5,000 beds, as I gather from an admirable paper in The Lancet, there are never more than 3,232 in daily use, thus diminishing the supply to an appalling extent!

These empty beds are very largely made so by the lamentable fact that the hospitals have not the means of using them. The depression in trade has been felt by our free hospitals to such an extent that they live from hand to mouth in a manner which is not honorable to one of the wealthiest cities in the world.

The Hospital Sunday Collection has not yet come up to the proper mark and it is time for ministers to say so and instruct their people, who, if they knew the need, would promptly supply it. The Lancet wisely says that if the sermons of today could be preached in the hospitals, themselves, the collections would be doubled. There are many objections to carrying out the suggestion, but I have no doubt the result would be as anticipated. Suppose me, then, to be preaching in one of the great wards and yourselves to be standing among the beds. I know those poor creatures lying near you writhing in pain and those others grateful for the relief they have received would plead much more forcibly than I can! The sight of suffering is the best argument with benevolence.

Look at the rows of sick folk and let your heart be touched. As the service could not well be held in the hospital, The Lancet suggests that the ministers should spend Saturday in visiting a hospital. I could not very well do that, but I have tried in my mind, vividly, to realize the scene and I think most of you are quite as able to draw the picture as I am, for you have been there to see for yourselves—and some of you have been there as patients to partake, for yourselves, in hospital benefits. Picture the wards of mercy and let every sick person there entreat you to help the funds of these admirable institutions.

An exceedingly powerful plea to my mind arises from those empty beds. There they are, 2,000 of them! Waiting to be couches of hope to the suffering! Alas, they cannot be filled because there is not the means for providing the people with food and nourishment while they are there. Sorrowful necessity! I cannot endure to think of it. A bed for a sick man rendered useless by some one’s meanness! Where is the tightwad? Surely he is not here! It would be even more painful to go to the homes where those persons who ought to occupy those empty beds are pining for the need of hospital help, waiting the next turn—which turn may find them in the grave—but which turn would come tomorrow morning if funds were forthcoming. Must they lie there till they are beyond the reach of surgical help because the wealthy of this so-called Christian city cannot spare a little from their luxuries to furnish poor sick humans with nutriment?

O that one with a trumpet tongue could speak to our nobles, our merchants, our traders, our gentlemen of leisure and bid them consider the sick poor! O that they all knew the exquisite luxury of doing good! I would say to employers, will you let these people lie and pine away for lack of medical help, many of them your workmen whose strength has been spent in your trades and handicrafts? Pain is crushing them and provision is made for their help and cure, as far as it can be made, but it is rendered useless by the need of money to bear the expenses of the patients! Is this to be always so? Is this to remain so for another year? Surely it shall not be!

I ask you, dear Friends, according as God has entrusted you with this world’s wealth, to help the hospitals! I do this with all the greater confidence because you are Believers in the Doctrines of Free Grace. Give freely, for you have *received* freely! Remember that yesterday and today Jews, Catholics, Protestants, people of all sects have heartily joined in this common effort for suffering humanity and if those who believe in the Free Grace of God are behind-hand—no—if they are not among the foremost in the race, it will be to the dishonor of the glorious Gospel which they profess! The Lord accept your offerings as you now present them!

I hear the sound of your gold and silver already, for you are eager in the work of mercy. The collectors are a little too rapid in their work, but I will not restrain them, for it is a fit ending to my discourse that you should hasten to pass from word to work. In so doing may God bless you. Amen.

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COMFORT AND CONSTANCY  
NO. 2363

**A SERMON INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S DAY JUNE 3, 1894. *DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON THURSDAY EVENING, MARCH 15, 1888.**

***“Now our Lord Jesus Christ, Himself, and God, even our Father, which has loved us, and has given us everlasting consolation and good hope through Grace, comfort your hearts***

***and establish you in every good Word and work.”*** 2Th 2:16-17***.***

THE Thessalonians had been a good deal confused by certain persons who had said that the coming of the Lord was immediately at hand. Paul, therefore, bade them to be steadfast and not be worried and perplexed by any such teaching. And then he presented this prayer to God for them, that they might have these two things, comfort and constancy—that God would comfort their hearts and establish them—“in every good Word and work.” It is a very blessed and comprehensive prayer and, while we are thinking of it, let us be praying it for ourselves and for one another, that the Lord may comfort our hearts and establish us “in every good Word and work.”

**I.**The first enquiry to be answered is this, WHY IS THERE THE CONJUNCTION OF THESE TWO THINGS IN THIS REMARKABLE PRAYER? Why is it put thus, “Our Lord Jesus Christ, Himself, and God, even our Father... comfort your hearts and establish you in every good Word and work”?

I answer, first, the two things, comfort and constancy, are put together *because comfort by itself is not enough.*We do not desire, first and above all things, that Christians should have comfort. It is a very great privilege to be comforted, especially by the Comforter, for such comfort is sound, safe and holy, but, at the same time, they err who think that the first and chief reason for knowing God is that you may feel comforted and happy! I fear that there are many who are under that notion. They expect every sermon to comfort them—otherwise they think it is a wasted opportunity. Even when they are alone in prayer, their chief thought is that they need to be comforted by their own devotion. But, sometimes, *rebuke* is better than comfort, and spiritual quickening and especially true sanctification, are more greatly to be valued than any measure of comfort whatever! If we were to confine ourselves to prayer for the Lord only to comfort His people, we would have a very imperfect form of intercession. No, it needs that we should not only be comforted by our religion, but that we should be led by it into holy activity so as to abound in every good Word and work, and be established therein.

I give another answer to the question, Why is there this conjunction between comfort and constancy?*Because establishment in every good Word and work is not enough if it is alone.*We need to be comforted as well as to *serve the Lord*. Our God is not like Pharaoh who would not give to the children of Israel even a day in which they might have rest and worship God. Pharaoh said, “Why do you, Moses and Aaron, let (or hinder) the people from their works? Get you unto your burdens.” But God does not speak so to us. The service which His children render to Him is quite compatible with rest. We are like certain birds that are said to rest on the wing—we never have a better rest than when every faculty is occupied in the service of our Lord!

But work by itself, establishment in every good Word and work, alone, might tend to weariness. We might be jaded if God did not minister Divine consolation to us while we served Him. Moreover, I am sure that we would never do the work well if God did not comfort us, for unhappy workers, those who do not love their work and are not at home in it, those who feel no comfort of religion, themselves, are generally very poor and unsuccessful workers. The second blessing mentioned in our text is certainly a very necessary one, this establishing in every good Word and work, but you also need the first one, that God may, “comfort your hearts.” When you get the two together—when you are up to your necks in holy service and up to your hearts in Divine comfort—then these two things cause you not to be barren or unfruitful and, at the same time, they help you not to be weary in well-doing. You are made to be “steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord,” because you are comforted with the belief that, “your labor is not in vain in the Lord.” I see those two reasons for the conjunction of comfort and constancy in the text. First, because comfort, alone, is not sufficient and, secondly, because constancy without comfort will not suffice us.

And next, dear Friends, it is *because the comfort of the heart aids in the establishment of the soul in service.* They are put together because the one helps the other. May the Lord “comfort your hearts and establish you in every good Word and work!” He that is happy in the Lord will persevere in the service of the Lord. He that derives real support and comfort from his religion is the man who will not backslide from it. I notice that it is usually thus with those who decline—they first of all lose the comfort and joy of religion—they have not the brightness and delight that they once had in the things of God. And then, of course, they drop, first, this particular service, and then the other—they begin to absent themselves from the means of Grace, Prayer Meetings and so forth, because they miss what is so material a stay to the establishment of their minds, that is, the comfort, joy and peace that true religion used to bring them.

Whenever you are not happy in the Lord, I urge you not to rest until you become so. It is no small evil to get out of the sunlight of God’s Countenance. A dear child will not say, “If my father is angry with me, it does not matter; he will not kill me; I shall always be his child.” No, just in proportion as he enjoys his father’s love, it will be painful to him to come in the least degree under his father’s displeasure and he will cry out to be fully restored and to have, again, from those dear lips the kiss of forgiveness that will put away all his offenses. So, dear Friends, believe that your lack of comfort is an evil thing which may lead to your loss of industry and perseverance in the cause of your Lord. If your heart is not comforted by God, you are not likely to be “established in every good Word and work.”

Now let me turn the text around the other way. I think that these two things are put together *because establishment in Word and work is so necessary for our comfort.* I said we must be comforted that we might be constant in the service of God. Now I put it that we must be *constant in the service of God* that we may be comforted! God does not give His dainties to idlers. He has choice secrets into which He does not admit everybody, nor even all of His own family. When we are diligent in His service and all our powers are fully consecrated to Him,*then* He gives us gracious rewards—not of debt, but according to the discipline of His own house, wherein He honors the faithful and chastises those who are negligent.

Now, Beloved, you will miss your comfort when you begin to neglect your work. I know how it used to be with the boys at home. In cold weather they huddled round the fire—almost *sat* on the fire! It was so cold that they could not tell how they would live through the bitter winter. But when Father came in, he said, “Now, you boys, set to work and clear away that snow. Don’t sit here idle, go and do something!” And they came in with ruddy cheeks and, somehow or other, the temperature seemed to have altered considerably, for they were quite warm from their exercise. I think the best thing that could happen to some men would be that they might have something to do. I do not find much about depression of spirit in the journals of Mr. Wesley or Mr. Whitefield and men of that sort who spent themselves in the Lord’s service.

The fact is, the Lord seemed to carry them on from one work to another and from strength to strength in their service—and they were comforted as to their hearts because they were established in every good Word and work. These things act and react, one upon another—the comfort makes us work—the work brings to us a fresh measure of comfort! See how even the Savior puts it. He says, “Come unto Me, all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” That is the first rest, *pardon of sin*. What next? “Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and you shall find rest unto your souls.” That is another rest over and above what Jesus gives. “Through bearing My yoke, you shall find in My service *rest unto your souls*.” God grant us Grace to seek that rest which we are to find, now that we have received the rest which Jesus gives to those who come to Him!

I have not yet fully answered this question—Why is there the conjunction of these two things, comfort and constancy? I think it is *because the two blended together serve a very useful purpose.*We are in this world to bear witness and by our bearing witness we are to bring others to faith in Christ through the operation of the Holy Spirit. Now, there are some people who are only to be won for Christ by the holy confidence and comfort of Believers. I am sure that if a Christian woman, in the time of affliction at home, is calm, patient, resigned and happy, she is more likely to see her husband converted by the comfort that religion brings to her own heart than by taking him to hear a sermon. By her Christian character she will preach to him and supply him with evidence of the power of Grace which he will not be able to deny.

I have known persons, in a storm at sea, exercise great influence over all in the vessel by the way in which they have been able to live above the storm, resting patiently in God. And in times of personal sickness, what a wonderful influence there is about holy patience! Some members of the family, who never have been moved by the external services of religion, have been deeply impressed by the patience of great sufferers—and especially by the serenity of dying saints. They have said to themselves, “There is something in this religion, after all. There is no mistake about it—the Grace which could support and calm the heart at such a time as this *must* be the gift of God.” Now, if this were accompanied by idleness, it would lose much or all of its force, but when this holy calm comes over one who, in days of health, was full of active service for the Master, then the two things, together, become powerful arguments which gainsayers are not able to resist! Seek to have this blessed blending, this comfort, like a light that burns within the lamp, and then this establishment in Word and work, like the rays of light that stream from the lantern at the head of the lighthouse, that all may see, both far and near.

And I should like to give one other answer to this query, which is this. Paul in his prayer puts the two things together, *because there is great need for both.*There is great need to pray that our Father would comfort the hearts of His people, for there is trouble enough in the land! There is trouble enough in every *house*—there is trouble enough for each one of us—we need you to often pray for us, that God would comfort our hearts. It may be that we have to play the man in public and yet, when we get away by ourselves, our heart is very heavy and we have to cry mightily to God for supporting Grace. Some of the strongest of God’s servants, those who carry a smiling countenance, who, if they fast, anoint their head and wash their face, that they appear not unto men to fast, yet have need to pray very earnestly to the Comforter that He would come and sustain their spirit.

And there is equal need that we should have Grace given us to be constant and instant in every good Word and work, for there is a tendency in us to think that we have done enough. The feeling creeps over men of a certain age that it is time for the young people to do the Lord’s work. One says, “I am now at such an age that as much cannot be expected of me as used to be.” Oh, yes, if you have much serving, Martha is not the only woman that gets cumbered with it, and being cumbered is not confined to women! Oh, how many there are who are not women, who are cumbered as much as Martha was! We need to have the Mary-spirit to keep the heart bright and cheerful, or else we shall quarrel with our work, or with our sister, or possibly with our Master, as we say to Him, “Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to serve alone?” We need both comfort and constancy and, therefore, I commend to you this piece of heavenly plaiting—let the two things be twisted together in your life! May the Lord “comfort your hearts, and establish you in every good Word and work”!

**II.**As I look at my text, a second question comes to my mind. WHY DOES THE APOSTLE SO SPECIALLY ADDRESS THIS PRAYER? Notice to whom he addresses it—“Now our Lord Jesus Christ, Himself, and God, even our Father... comfort your hearts, and establish you in every good Word and work.” Why is this?

It seems to me that in the first place, in this prayer *the whole Trinity is supplicated.*When the Apostle is desiring comfort to be given, he does not mention the Comforter, for that is needless. It would occur to every Christian mind that the Holy Spirit was necessary, since in comforting and quickening He is only exercising His special office. But the Apostle does mention, “Our Lord Jesus Christ, Himself, and God, even our Father,” so that, to the mind of the thoughtful reader, the prayer for comfort and establishment is directed to the ever-blessed Three-in-One. Oh, that we more often remembered the distinction of the Divine Persons without dividing the Divine Substance! It becomes instructed Believers to remember that one blessing comes from the Father, another blessing from the Son and a third blessing through the Holy Spirit. There are times when it would seem as if the one blessing must come through the three Divine Persons, that there must be a manifestation of the whole Trinity to produce the result. I cannot help noticing that Truth of God and reminding you how the Savior is especially placed, here, side by side with, “God, even our Father,” that we may see that equal reverence is to be paid to Him *with* the Father, and equal prayer to be offered to Him with that presented to the great Father of spirits.

But then, I think next, that mention is here made of, “Our Lord Jesus Christ, Himself” because, as the prayer is for consolation, He is “the Consolation of Israel.” The Holy Spirit is the Comforter, but *Christ, Himself, is the Comfort—*the Holy Spirit gives the consolation, but Jesus Christ *is* the Consolation. Beloved, we are never so comforted as when we turn to our blessed Lord, Himself! His Humanity, His sympathy with us, His griefs, His bearing our infirmities, His putting away of our sins, His pleading for us at the right hand of God, His everlasting union with His people—all this makes us turn our eyes to Him! He is the Sun that makes our day. From Him flows that “river of the Water of Life” which quenches our thirst. So you see why the “Lord Jesus Christ, Himself,” is mentioned in this prayer for comfort, since He is the every *essence* of the Believer’s consolation!

But then we are reminded of “God, even our Father,” and is not this expression brought to our mind that we may derive comfort from *the relation which God bears to His people?*O you children of God, does not the recollection that He is your Father comfort you? Children of the heavenly King, is not the fact of your relationship to Him a well of unceasing consolation? What more do you require to lift your spirits out of the dust than to know that this manner of love has been bestowed upon you, that you should be called the children of God! “And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ”? I believe that if the Holy Spirit only lays home to the heart the fact of our new birth and our adoption into the family of God, we have enough comfort to make us swim through seas of trouble without fear! And also enough motive for the most constant, diligent *service*, when we know that it is for our Father who is in Heaven that we are spending the strength that He, Himself, gives us! Do you not see, therefore, why the Apostle thus addresses His prayer to “God, even our Father,” and to “our Lord Jesus Christ, Himself”?

And is not this another reason why Paul thus prayed, because he would remind us that *it requires the direct action of the Godhead upon our hearts to produce comfort and constancy?*This is especially evident at certain times. Very frequently, when I have to comfort mourners—cases where, perhaps, a young husband has been taken away, leaving a large family of little children unprovided for—or, perhaps, where two persons who have been together for many years, till their lives have grown into one and, all of a sudden, the wife or the husband has been taken away, I have said and I cannot help saying it often, “My dear Friend, I cannot comfort you as I should like to. I have never been exactly in your circumstances and, therefore, I cannot enter into your peculiar grief. But I would remind you that one Person of the Divine Trinity has undertaken the office of Comforter and He can do what nobody else can.”

You must, sometimes, have felt the power of a single text of Scripture laid upon a wound in your heart—it will staunch the bleeding and heal by a sort of heavenly magic! Have you not, at times, felt in a flutter of distress so that you could not rest? Christian friends have spoken kindly to you, but they only seemed to mock you. Then, in a moment, a soft, calming influence has stolen over your spirit and you have felt that you could bear 10 times the weight which had almost crushed you an hour before! God can comfort to purpose—therefore the Apostle did not say—“I hope you will enjoy the comfort I have given you, or that, perhaps, your minister, next Lord’s-Day may give you.” No, this was his prayer at this particular juncture—“Now our Lord Jesus Christ, Himself, and God, even our Father, which has loved us, and has given us everlasting consolation and good hope through Grace, comfort your hearts, and establish you in every good Word and work.” It is grand in your prayers to fall back upon your God and upon a God whom you know as your Lord Jesus Christ, and your Father, and to feel, “The case is beyond me, but it is not beyond my God! The trial overwhelms me even in my sympathy with the tried one, how much more does it overwhelm the actual bearer of it? But I put you and your sorrow into hands quite equal to the emergency and leave you there.”

There is much more to be learned than I can tell you, because time fails me, as to how it was that the Apostle presented this remarkable prayer in this remarkable manner.

**III.**The third point, with which I close, is this. WHAT DOES PAUL MENTION IN HIS PRAYER AS PLEAS? He mentioned several facts for the strengthening of the faith of those for whom he prayed and gave arguments which they should use while pleading with God for others. Let us speak of these arguments very briefly. There are six of them.

First, Paul says that *Jesus is ours.* He is asking for comfort and establishment and he begins his prayer, “Now, our Lord Jesus Christ, Himself.” Do, if you can, get the sweetness of this expression, “Our Lord Jesus Christ.” Why did not Paul say, “*The* Lord Jesus Christ”? Why did he not say, “*My*Lord Jesus Christ”? No, here is a plural possessive pronoun—“*Our*Lord Jesus Christ.” Is it so, then, that God has given us the Lord Jesus Christ, Himself, to be *ours*? Can we not only call His blood ours, and His Resurrection ours, and His Kingdom ours, but is He, Himself, *ours*? Oh, can we get a grip of Him as, “My Beloved”? Is He my Husband, my Covenant Head, my Jesus and my All? Come, then, Beloved—I was going to say that you hardly need pray for comfort because you have it, already—you have it in Jesus!

Here is a solid mass of the pure gold of comfort in the fact that Jesus Christ, Himself, is yours. You are Christ’s, but Christ is also yours! As the husband belongs to the wife, and the wife belongs to the husband, so there is a mutual possession between Christ and you who are believers in Him. Are you poor? What? And yet Christ is yours? Do you say that you are helpless and friendless? How is that when you can say, “Our Lord Jesus Christ, Himself”? No, here is a well opened in the desert for you—come and say to it—“Spring up, O well!” Sing unto it, drink of its Living Water and fill your earthen vessels to the fullest! There is comfort enough for all saints in “Our Lord Jesus Christ, Himself.”

The second plea in Paul’s prayer is that *God is our Father—*“Now our Lord Jesus Christ, Himself, and God, even our Father.” I have already shown you what a mine and mountain of delightful consolation lies in the fact that the God who made the heavens and the earth, the Omnipotent and Unchangeable Jehovah is “*our* Father.” Do not think that this is a mere metaphor—that God is only set forth to us under the *image* of a father. There is no doubt that He *is* our Father—it is a matter of fact if we are trusting His Son. “Doubtless You are our Father, though Abraham is ignorant of us and Israel acknowledge us not: You, O Lord, are our Father, our Redeemer; Your name is from everlasting.” We have been begotten again by God—our new birth is from His power and His Divine energy! We belong to His family and shall never be cast out of it. Dear Friends, what a plea this is in prayer! “My Father, will You not comfort my heart? My Father, will You let Your child despond? My Father, will You not relieve me in the hour of my distress? Jesus Christ, my Lord Jesus Christ, do this for me, and great God, my Father, fail not to cheer my heart!”

Then the Apostle goes on to remind us that *God has loved us.* Kindly look at the text and remember it—“God, even our Father, which has loved us.” You do not expect me to preach from those words, do you? “Which has loved us.” I cannot comprehend this Truth! I can very well understand God *pitying* us, as we pity a beggar in the streets—but God’s *loving* us always deprives me of the power to explain it! There was nothing in us to love! There was everything in us loathsome and nothing lovable, yet the Lord loved us before the world began! He has loved us without bound, so as to give His only-begotten Son to die for us! Is not that a powerful plea in prayer? “Lord, comfort my heart, establish me in every good Word and work, for You have loved me, therefore continue to love me. If You have given me Your love, surely You will not deny me the comforts of Your face and the consolations of Your Word.”

Then Paul adds, “Who has loved us, and has given us.” *God has given us much* and all His past gifts are pleas for more gifts. Men do not plead so. The beggar in the street cannot say, “Give me a penny, today, because you gave me one yesterday,” else we might reply, “That is the reason why I will *not* give you anymore!” But when dealing with God, this is a good plea. “O flowing Fountain, You have long been flowing, Flow on still! O blessed Sun, You did shine yesterday, shine today!” God loves us to make His past mercies arguments for obtaining future blessings, so the Apostle says, “God, even our Father, which has loved us, and has given us.”

But what has God given us? *God has given us “everlasting consolation.”* Catch at that expression, for it reminds us of everlasting love, the Everlasting Covenant, the everlasting promises, everlasting redemption and the everlasting Heaven. Men, nowadays, clip this word, “everlasting,” round the edges. We do not—we take it as we find it. That which is everlasting lasts forever—you can be assured of that! And God has given us consolation which will last us in life and last us in death—and last us throughout eternity! Well, if He has given us “everlasting consolation,” we may well plead that He would graciously enable us to lay hold upon it, that our hearts may be comforted and cheered and that we may be established in every good Word and work!

There is only one more expression upon which I will say a sentence or so. *God has given us “good hope through Grace.”*It is of Grace and, therefore, it is a gift! And He has given it to us through the operation of His Grace upon our hearts. It is a hope, a good hope, a “good hope through Grace.” We have a good hope that God’s love will never fail us and that, when life dies out on earth, we shall enter into His rest forever and behold His face with joy. We have a good hope that when days and years are past, we shall meet in Heaven! We have a good hope of dwelling throughout eternity with our God—“forever with the Lord.” O Father, after You have done so much for us and given so much to us, it is but little we ask of You, now, when we pray You to comfort our hearts and to establish us in every good Word and work!

I cannot understand what those do who have no God. I cannot comprehend the condition of those who have no “good hope through Grace.” What can they do? They have to work very hard from Monday morning to Saturday night. On Sunday they have no day of rest, no thought of a world to come, no rising to a purer atmosphere. They lie in bed, perhaps, in the morning, and then get up and lounge about in their shirtsleeves. There is nothing for them to get but what is found beneath the moon and very little of that. It is better to be a dog than a man if there is no hope of a hereafter! It is better not to live at all than to live such a dead, good-fornothing life as that man lives who lives without God and without hope!

Surely, you who are without God and without Christ, have your sinking, your mourning, your dull times, have you not? What do you do, then? Perhaps you try to drug yourself with strong drink. Alas, some do that and this is mischievous, indeed—to try to poison conscience and silence the best friend you have within you! Do not so, but think about God, and about “our Lord Jesus Christ.” This way lies hope, where stands that Cross, and He pleads, who received, there, those five wounds for sinners! This way lies your only hope! Oh, that you would think of it and consider it! If God Himself comes down from Heaven to save men, it must be worthwhile for man to look and understand what God did for him in that wondrous Sacrifice. Look, for—

***“There is life for a look at the Crucified One”—***look now, for—  
***“There is life at this moment for you.”***  
Especially is there life for you who came in here troubled, downcast, almost wishing you were not alive at all, but fearing that when life came to an end, it might be worse for you than ever, for you have “the dread of something after death.” Oh, that you were reconciled to God through the death of Jesus Christ! That being done, He would comfort your hearts and you would be led into every good Word and work through gratitude to the Lord Jesus Christ, our Savior, and His Grace would save you and preserve you to the end! May this be the very moment when you shall seek and find the Lord!” “If you seek Him, He will be found of you.” God grant it, for His dear son’s sake! Amen.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: *2 Thessalonians 2;*** 2Th 3:1-5***.***

2Th 2:1-2**.***Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto Him, that you be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the Day of Christ is at hand.*Paul believed in the Second Coming of Christ, for he beseeches the Brothers and Sisters, “by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.” He felt the power of this great Truth. He often exhorts us to be watchful because of the uncertainty of the time of that coming as far as we are concerned. But there were some who sprang up in his day, as in ours, who professed that they knew a great deal about the Second Advent—when it was to happen, and so on—and they began to foretell and to prophesy beyond what was really revealed of God. By this means, some persons were terrified and others driven to a very foolish course of action. It would seem, from this Epistle, that some people forsook their daily calling and, on pretence of the near return of Christ, endeavored to live upon the alms of Christian people instead of themselves working. Many, however, were shaken in mind, so Paul wrote to reassure and strengthen them—“That you be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the Day of Christ is at hand.”

**3, 4.***Let no man deceive you, by any means: for that Day shall not come, except there comes a falling away, first, and that man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition; who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he, as God, sits in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.* It has been usually thought that this passage alludes to the great apostasy of the Church of Rome and, certainly, if there were a hue and cry raised for the culprit here described, one might well arrest that apostasy upon suspicion! It may not, however, be the man of sin, or the son of perdition—it may be that general spirit which springs up again and again, one of the many antiChrists that were already in the world even in John’s day. There are many such spirits that are constantly rising up, not outside the Church—there, we could deal with them—but *inside* the Church, using the Words of Truth, and the signs of Truth to signify something far other than the Truth of God! This is the great rook that threatens destruction! Oh, that God’s Church might always be kept from striking upon it! But there is this rook which would, if it were possible, wreck the very elect ship of Christ, itself!

**5-7.***Remember you not, that when I was yet with you, I told you these things? And now you know what withholds that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity does already work: only He who now lets will let, until He is taken out of the way.* There was something that hindered the full development of anti-Christ in Paul’s day. When that is taken out of the way, then will there be a fuller revelation of this sinful system.

**8-12.***And then shall that wicked one be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming. Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness, in them that perish, because they received not the love of the Truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the Truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.* We will not attempt to explain all this in detail. It would be too much of a task for a mere exposition, but the Church has always to be on her guard against that which comes as an angel of light, but is really a spirit of darkness.

**13.***But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren, beloved of the Lord, because God has, from the beginning, chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the Truth.*How the saints praise one another! How sweet is Christian fellowship! How we rejoice in the blessed love of God to His people when we are assailed by those who battle against His Truth! Then is the love of the Brethren stronger than ever and our faithfulness to God is largely increased. The Apostle falls back upon the doctrine of electing love—“God has, from the beginning, chosen you to salvation.” And he admires the methods by which that love effects its purpose—“Salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the Truth.” Men are made holy by the Spirit of God—the holiness is that of life and of the understanding. They attain to a belief of the Truth of God, as well as to a practice of the Divine Commands. Oh, happy people who are ordained, from the beginning, unto salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the Truth!

**14.***To which He called you by our Gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.* How the Apostle loved the Gospel! It was Christ’s Gospel, but Paul calls it, “*Our* Gospel.” He and his Brethren had made it so completely their own and it had become so much their own in contradistinction to “another gospel, which is not another,” that he speaks of it with unction and joy! “He called you by our Gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

**15.***Therefore, brethren, stand fast and hold the traditions which you have been taught, whether by word, or our Epistle.*“The things which we have handed out to you, which you have been taught, whether by word, or our Epistle.” They had heard Paul preach. He had not only written to them, but he had also spoken to them. And he bade them treasure up what he had said and what he had written, and hold it fast as for dear life. The Apostle did not preach that which he, afterwards, left, as the ostrich leaves its eggs, but he watched over it and he watched over the people who had heard it, anxious that the Truth of God to which they had listened should prove in them to be the message of everlasting life! Oh, my dear Hearers, are there not still some of you who have heard our Gospel, to whom we have often and long spoken and yet, notwithstanding, it has not yet been the message of eternal life to you though it has been to many others? God have mercy upon you and yet bring you to the feet of Jesus! As for others who come to listen to the Word for the first time—may it be the power of God unto salvation on the very first occasion of their hearing it, to the praise of God and the Glory of His Son!

**16, 17.***Now our Lord Jesus Christ, Himself, and God, even our Father, which has loved us, and has given us everlasting consolation and good hope through Grace, comfort your hearts and establish you in every good Word and work.*I believe in an established Church—not established by acts of Parliament—but established by the purpose and by the Presence of God in the midst of it. Oh, to be a member of a Church established in every good Word and work! Do you know God’s Word? Seek to know it better, still! Try to strike your roots down deeply into this fruitful soil! Suck out the Divine nutriment of it, that you may grow so strong that none shall be able to tear you away from it!

Have you begun to work for Jesus? May you be established in that good work! Go on working more and more, with both your hands and all your heart, that somehow you may glorify His blessed name! Let me read these sweet verses again—“Now our Lord Jesus Christ, Himself, and God, even our Father, which has loved us, and has given us everlasting consolation and good hope through Grace, comfort your hearts, and establish you in every good Word and work.”

2Th 3:1**.***Finally, brethren, pray for us.*“Pray for us,” says the Apostle. “Pray for myself and the Brothers who are with me. Pray for all the Apostles and preachers of the Word.” “Finally, Brethren.” If this were the last word we had to say to you, we would make just this request, “Finally, Brothers and Sisters, pray for us.” You cannot tell how much God’s servants are helped by the prayers of His people! The strongest man in Israel will be the better for the prayers of the weakest saint in Zion! If you can do nothing else, you can pray for us—therefore, day and night, be at the Mercy Seat on our behalf. “Finally, Brethren, pray for us.”

**1.***That the Word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified, even as it is with you.*“You Thessalonians enjoy the power of the Word. Pray that it may be so everywhere else.” Paul is said to have written this Epistle from Corinth or Athens, and he longed that, there, the Word of God might prevail as it had done at Thessalonica. Pray just now that in every part of the world, God’s Word may have free course! There are many who stand in the way of it. Pray God that they may be swept out of the way, that the Word of the Lord may have free course. We need the Gospel to run and spread till the whole earth shall know its blessed message!

**2.***And that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men: for all men have not faith.* All men are not candid, or true. “All men have not faith.”

**3.***But the Lord is faithful.*What a wonderful contrast this is and how suggestive of comfort! “All men have not faith. But the Lord is full of faith, faith-ful.” True, He keeps all His promises. “The Lord is faithful.”

**3-5.***Who shall establish you, and keep you from evil. And we have confidence in the Lord touching you, that you both do and will do the things which we command you. And the Lord direct your hearts.* You see, Paul does not command the Thessalonians to do anything but what he can pray God to work in them. The command of a man, by itself, is nothing, but when he only asks that to be done which he can pray God to do, then there is power about his message! “We have confidence in the Lord touching you, that you both do and will do the things which we command you. And the Lord direct your hearts.”

**5.***Into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ.*May the Lord hear that prayer for all of us, for Christ Jesus’ sake! Amen. **HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—708, 691, 692.**  
Adapted from*The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #2991 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

WHAT WE HAVE, AND ARE TO HAVE  
NO. 2991

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, JUNE 7, 1906.

***DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON THURSDAY EVENING, OCTOBER 28, 1876.**

***“Now our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and God, our Father, who has loved us, and has given us everlasting consolation and good hope through Grace, comfort your hearts and establish***

***you in every good word and work.”***2Th 2:16-17***.***

EVERY man who is engaged in a good work desires that it may be lasting. “Establish You the work of our hands upon us; yes, the work of our hands establish You it,” was not only a very appropriate prayer from the mouth of Moses, who had led the children of Israel through the wilderness, but it is also a very appropriate prayer to be presented by every minister of Jesus Christ. We desire to build that which will endure the fire of the great testing day—not wood, hay and stubble, but gold, silver and precious stones.

The Apostle Paul, like all true servants of Christ, was very anxious about those who had been converted and formed into churches by him. He desired that all the professed converts should be real converts and that the members of the churches in the various countries where the Gospel had been preached might be well trained and instructed—and might know the Truth of God and be firmly rooted in it. It somewhat saddened him that the Christians at Thessalonica had been disturbed by a rumor about the speedy coming of Christ. He was grieved that they had been troubled concerning this matter and he was still more sorry that they had not men among them able to guide them at such a crisis, for they were like children carried away by novelties. The Apostle wanted them to be firmly established in the faith, to know the Truth of God and to have it abiding in their hearts so that they would be able to stand fast in the evil day, whatever error might be raging round about them.

I think, Brothers and Sisters, that the prayer of the Apostle is very suitable for this present period. We have rejoiced to see a large number of persons coming out as professed followers of Christ, but what is needed is that they should be so enlisted in the army of Christ that they will remain faithful even unto death. We do not want our work to be shallow and superficial—we want it to be like that “city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God.” It is heart-breaking service to sow the good Seed of the Kingdom upon the rocky ground, for it springs up so rapidly simply because it has no depth of earth and then, when the burning heat of the sun shines upon it, it withers away because it has neither moisture nor root. It would be far better to have half a dozen souls really brought to Jesus Christ and enduring to the end, than to have half a dozen thousand blazing away with a false profession for a time—and then returning like the dog to his vomit, or like the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire. Our Lord’s own declaration is, “He that endures to the end shall be saved.” It is that endurance, that holding out to the end, which is the point to which we would direct all our endeavors on behalf of our hearers and our converts—and the point about which we would most earnestly pray to our God.

Because these Thessalonians had been somewhat fluttered and disturbed, the Apostle was distressed concerning them and he, therefore, exhorted them to steadfastness. “Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which you have been taught, whether by word, or our Epistle.” But after exhorting them to stand fast, he did not feel that this was sufficient. So he stopped writing, laid down his pen, fell on his knees and prayed to God to make them stand fast. And when we realize how feeble our utmost exertions are, we may well join fervent prayer to them! And when we remember that the flesh is so weak and that even when men resolve to stand fast, their feet are very soon caused to slip, we may well cry to the great Holder-Up of His saints to keep them from falling, or even from stumbling. The preacher’s work is only half done when he has exhorted his hearers to stand fast—he must then fall upon his knees and pray for them. And you who teach others in the Sunday school and elsewhere, must remember that whatever you exhort your scholars to do, you should always pray to God to lead them to do it. This is a blessed compound of preaching and praying—it makes a rich amalgam of Christian ministry when there is, first, the testimony of the Truth of God to men and next, the pleading with God on the behalf of men. Regard, then, our text as the Apostle’s prayer for the Thessalonians, and for all of us who believe in Jesus, that we may stand tall, in this evil day, and that, having done all, we may still stand steadfast whoever and whatever may oppose.

Paul’s prayer is instructive, for it directs our attention to two things. First, to *what we have already—*“Our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and God, our Father, who has loved us, and has given us everlasting consolation and good hope through Grace.” And then it tells us *what we are to have*, what is the natural result of what we already have—“Comfort your hearts and establish you in every good word and work.”

**I.** First, then, Brothers and Sisters, we are to consider WHAT WE ALREADY HAVE.  
The Apostle mentions, first, the source of all our blessings and then the streams. “Our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and God, our Father.” There is*the source of all our blessings* and, to my mind, it is exceedingly suggestive to notice that word, “our,” put in twice in the early part of the text. Paul does not write, “Now *the* Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and God, our Father.” But it is, “*Our* Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and God, our Father.”  
The source of our present comfort and of our future perseverance is the fact that Jesus Christ is ours. Look at Him now with the adoring eyes of your reverent contemplation, in His glorious Deity and His perfect Manhood. Look at Him in the manger. Behold Him on the Cross. Regard His perfect life and His redeeming death. Behold Him in His Resurrection, His triumphant Ascension and His perpetual intercession. And look forward to His promised return from Heaven. Beloved Believer, He is yours—all yours. In all those positions and conditions He has given Himself to you and to me, and we may together say, “*Our* Lord Jesus Christ!” Oh, how precious is this Truth of God to our soul! Being Divine, He is Omnipotent and that almighty power He wields for us! Being Divine, He is Omniscient and those sleepless eyes of His are always on the watch for us! Being Divine, He is Immutable and that eternal love of His which knows no shadow of a change, is fixed upon us! All His attributes and Himself, also, He places at our disposal—so let each one of us gratefully respond, “You are my portion, says my soul.” Enlarge your thoughts concerning the Lord Jesus! Think most highly of Him! Extol Him with your heart and with your tongue! But remember that when you have reached the utmost heights that you can attain in your estimation of Him, He is yours, altogether yours, and you can say with Paul, “*Our* Lord Jesus Christ Himself”—  
***“Our Lord is risen from the dead  
Our Jesus is gone up on high!  
The powers of Hell are captives led—  
Dragged to the portals of the sky.  
There His triumphal chariot waits  
And angels chant the solemn lay—  
Lift up your heads, you heavenly gates!  
You everlasting dove, give way!’”***  
And then the Apostle adds, “And God,*our* Father.” We sometimes tremble at the thought of God our Father, as well we may. How could we ever approach Him were it not for God in human flesh, our Lord Jesus Christ? But when we have once really trusted in Christ, it is an easy matter for us to look by faith to God and to rejoice in Him! And, with the deepest reverence of soul, let us know that God—the ever-blessed God— the terrible God—the Omnipotent God who shakes both Heaven and earth with His voice, who touches the hills and they smoke—this God is *our* God! And all His attributes of power, as well as those which we usually consider to be more full of Grace, are exerted on our behalf! I do not know anything that is more comforting in times of trouble than this great Truth. I met, yesterday, a gentleman who told me that he was converted some 30 years ago, through the instrumentality of a greatuncle of mine with whom he lived as an apprentice. He said, “There was a terrible thunderstorms and the old gentleman was sitting by the fireside and we youngsters were afraid. The flashes of lightning were so vivid and the thunder pealed out so terribly, but,” he added, “the old gentleman rose from the fireside, went to the window, and as he looked out, he began to sing—  
***‘The God that rules on high  
And thunders when He pleases,  
That rides upon the stormy sky,  
And manages the seas—  
This awful God is ours,  
Our Father and our love!  
He shall send down His heavenly powers  
To carry us above.’”***  
The gentleman said to me, “I never forgot the impression I then received of that good man’s quietude of mind, and of the evident delight which he took in that display of the Divine Omnipotence. There seemed to him a sweetness in the eloquence of his Father’s voice, though it made every timber in the old house shake.”  
Yes, Brothers and Sisters, the Apostle brings these things to our minds so that we may realize that in having “*our* Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and God, *our* Father,” we have on our side those who will be true to us forever and, therefore, we ought to continue to be comforted in heart and established in every good word and work. If you had trusted only to a dead Savior, you might well go and weep over His tomb—if you had such gods as the heathen have, then might all consolation be withheld from you. But with an almighty Savior who always lives to make intercession for you and with an Omnipotent and Omniscient Father who always lives to watch over you as His dear children, you must not so much as think of being disquieted in spirit, nor even *dream* of being moved from the firm foundation of your faith and hope, and love!  
While still thinking of this source of our consolation, it will help us if we notice, next, that the Apostle specially mentions the Person of Christ. “Our Lord Jesus Christ *Himself*.” Why did he put in that word, “Himself,” just there? It would have sounded all right if he had written, “Now our Lord Jesus Christ, and God, our Father, who has loved us.” Ah, but he wanted to call our very particular attention to the real Personality of our Lord Jesus Christ and to make us feel that, in Him—not merely in what He does and what He bestows, but in “Himself” is the source of our comfort! “Now our Lord Jesus Christ *Himself*.” O Brothers and Sisters, is there any surer source of joy to a Christian than Jesus Christ, the Incarnate God? John writes, “The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of Grace and truth.” And from the inspired Word I know that God has taken Humanity into union with Divinity, and that He who stands at the right hand of God, even the Father, is the Son of Mary, bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh! Why, there is comfort in the knowledge that He is there as the Representative Man who has taken redeemed human nature right up to the Throne of God—picked up human nature as it lay, all bruised and mangled, outside the gate of the earthly Paradise—and taken it up into the heavenly Paradise from which it can never be expelled!  
There must be thoughts of love to man in the heart of God since His only-begotten and well-beloved Son is a Man! When you think of your Savior, you are not to think exclusively of Him as God, but also to think of Him as Man, for He was born into this world and lived in it. He ate and drank, and slept and walked as we do—and He also died as we do! And in His Humanity, as well as in His Divinity, He has gone into Glory. Leaving out, for the moment, what He has done for us, we may well rejoice in what He is, Himself, as Immanuel, God With Us! Here is music in the very sound of that sweet name—and there is the very essence of music in “our Lord Jesus Christ Himself.”  
But look at His Person, not merely as Man, but as the God-Man who has offered a complete Atonement for His people’s guilt. Up yonder, enthroned in Glory, is your Savior, not merely as Man, but as the Mediator between God and men, who has completed His great Sacrifice, accomplished all His Father’s purposes and fulfilled His Father’s will so that He could truly say, “It is finished.” Look at Him, by faith, as the glorified Man—glorified because, having descended into the grave bearing His people’s sin, He came up out of the grave without sin. He “was delivered for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification.” And His Resurrection was the proof that He had—  
***“To the utmost farthing paid  
Whatever His people owed.”***  
Surely it should bring the sweetest consolation to you to think of Jesus Christ as the Representative of His people, gone up into Glory and soon to come to this earth again to reign “before His ancients gloriously,” when the bodies of all His saints shall be fashioned like unto His glorious body, and so shall be “forever with the Lord.” Brothers and Sisters, may “our Lord Jesus Christ *Himself”* manifest Himself unto you with those dear upraised hands of His, with the scars still visible! And as you gaze upon Him, may you realize that He is giving to you “everlasting consolation and good hope through Grace” and, therefore, may your hearts be comforted and may you be established in every good word and work! How can you be moved from your steadfastness so long as you can see Him? How can you ever depart from Him who has won your affection and holds your soul fast with cords of a man, and bands of love? Surely you must cling to Him forever and ever! I feel that I must say with the poet— ***“A very wretch, Lord! I should prove,  
Had I no love for Thee—  
Rather than not my Savior love,  
Oh, may I cease to be!”***  
The Apostle, however, does not let us forget that in union with our dear Redeemer, at one with Him in every purpose of Divine Grace, is “God, our Father, who has loved us.” And he bids us think not so much of His Person which we cannot comprehend, as of His love. So, Beloved, let us try to view God our Father in the attitude of loving us. Truly, this is a boundless and unfathomable sea! We can neither fly across it, nor dive into its depths. Remember, Believer, that the Lord loved you long before the foundation of the world. You are so insignificant in the scale of being that if He had quite forgotten you, you might not have wondered. And yet, before the mountains were created, or He had kindled the morning star, in the glass of His decrees He beheld you and even then He loved you! Recollect how Jeremiah was inspired to write, “The Lord has appeared of old unto me, saying, Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love: therefore with loving kindness have I drawn you.” Dwell on that wondrous Truth of God, that God has loved you with an everlasting love. Suck the honey of consolation out of that glorious fact! Surely if your faith is at all in exercise, you will find much sacred sweetness there.  
God loved us, as Paul wrote to the Ephesians, “even when we were dead in sins.” God loved you when you resisted His Spirit. He loved you when you despised His Son. He loved you out of the horrible pit and the miry clay. He loved you into a state of Grace and so loved you into loving Him. And He has loved you ever since with a constant love though He has sometimes chastened you for your profit—for His love is wise and discriminating. He has never deserted you and His love for you has been constant and true. He has often been grieved with you when you have sinned against Him, for His love is a holy love which cannot endure iniquity—yet He has forgiven you, for His love is a gracious love! He has always loved you and is loving you at this moment. Surely this fact ought both to comfort the Believer’s heart and to hold it fast! And this is what the Apostle was aiming at when he wrote our text. What can bind a Christian to his God so well as a sense of Divine Love? If it is but shed abroad in your heart by the Holy Spirit, you will not be tempted away from your Heavenly Father’s house, neither will you be weary of your Heavenly Father’s work, nor tired of your Heavenly Father’s words. That which comes to us perfumed with love is always sweet and precious, so let us rejoice to remember “God, our Father, who has loved us.”  
And, Beloved, do not forget that having once loved you, He will always love you. When this great world has passed away and, like a dream, has vanished into nothingness, you will still live because Jesus will still live— and you will still be loved by “God, our Father,” because Jesus will still be loved by Him. As you are in Him, you shall be forever in Him and forever be the object of the Father’s love. These are simple matters to speak of, but they are sublime Truths of God to live upon. Bread is a common thing, but a hungry man thinks it very precious. O you hungry children of God, cut large slices from the loaf that is set before you, now, and gratefully feed upon it! Here is “our Lord Jesus Christ Himself,” in His complex Person as God and Man, as a fountain of comfort to His people and He is “God, our Father,” in His everlasting love to us, as the same fountain under another aspect.  
Then the Apostle, having pointed out to us the Divine Source of all our blessings, bids us survey*the streams which flow from that Source—*“who has loved us, and has given us everlasting consolation and good hope through Grace.” Beloved, the consolation which God gives to us is not temporary, but eternal! Such consolation is worth having and when we get it, we may well rejoice over it.  
What are the consolations which God gives to His people? I need not mention all the forms of consolation, for, to meet each separate case of distress, there is a special message of comfort—and every promise that God gives you is part of the everlasting consolation with which He has enriched all His chosen people. The potent “shalls” and “wills” of Jehovah stand fast like His Throne and can never be changed. Has He given you a promise and shall He not fulfill it? Yes, and fulfill it again, and again, and again, as long as you shall need to have it fulfilled, for His promises are inexhaustible and full of manifold riches of blessedness to the believing soul! God’s promise of consolation is based upon the “Everlasting Covenant, ordered in all things, and sure.” God has entered into a Covenant with Christ on the behalf of all His people. And from the provisions of that Covenant He will never depart, for He has “confirmed it by an oath: that by two Immutable things in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge, to lay hold upon the hope set before us.”—  
***“His oath, His Covenant, and His blood,  
Support me in the sinking flood.  
When all around my soul gives way,  
He then is all my hope and stay—  
On Christ the solid Rock I stand,  
All other ground is sinking sand.”***  
Pardoned sin is, to my mind, one phase of the “everlasting consolation” which God has given us, for, be it known unto you that God does not forgive your sin today and then lay it to your charge again tomorrow. Little children give presents and them want to have them back again—and fickle men often play fast and loose with one another. But when God forgives, He forgives forever, “for the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.” That is to say, He never changes His mind and takes back the gift which He has bestowed. Have you received absolution from the lips of your God? Then your sins shall never again rise up against you in judgment, for they have been cast into the depths of the sea! “In those days, and in that time, says the Lord, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none. And the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found, for I will pardon them, whom I reserve.”  
What “everlasting consolation” there is, also, in the great Doctrine of Adoption! We become the children of God when we are born-again. “And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ.” A man’s child is always his child and God’s child is always His child. A man cannot “unchild” his own son or daughter! And if you are a child of God, you shall be a child of God throughout eternity! The life that God has put into you is not transient! As Jesus said concerning His sheep, “I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of My hand.” What rich consolation there is for you in this blessed Truth of God

The very life which becomes yours by your adoption into the family of God is an everlasting life—it must, therefore, yield you “everlasting consolation.”  
Time would fail me to remind you of all the various forms of consolation which the Spirit of God applies to the heart of the Believer— and every phase of it is everlasting! Therefore, Brothers and Sisters, let us not be moved away from the hope of the Gospel. Let us not cast away our confidence, “which has great recompense of reward.” Let us not be disturbed or disquieted—let not our hearts be troubled. If we have everlasting consolation, let our joy also be perpetual.  
And then the Apostle, still further to comfort our hearts and establish us in every good word and work, tells us that God has given us “good hope through Grace.” You know what that good hope is—the hope that He will preserve us unto the end—the hope that we shall be raised from the dead in God’s good time—the hope that we shall be accepted in the day of Christ’s appearing—the hope that we shall be with Him where He is and shall behold His Glory and share it with Him forever and ever! This is a good hope because it has a good basis to rest upon. God has given this hope to all who believe in His Son, Jesus Christ. And as God is true, the hope is a good hope. A hope that is founded upon a lie is a vain hope, but a hope that is founded upon a promise of God is a good hope. It is a good hope because it is a hope of good things—so good, my dear Friend, that you cannot find anything to match them in the whole world. It may well be called a good hope, for it is the hope of perfection, the hope of being transformed into the image of Christ, the hope of everlasting delight. It is the best of all hopes and we cannot say more of it than that. It is a good hope because of its operation on the heart. “Every man that has this hope in him, purifies himself, even as Christ is pure.” For the man who has a good hope through Divine Grace longs to be purged from sin, to be waiting and watching for his Lord’s appearing and to have an abundant entrance into the Kingdom of God!  
Now, Brothers and Sisters, since so much of what God has given to you is at present the subject of hope, do you not see how bound you are to remain in the posture of waiting and hoping—and to be neither discouraged, nor yet to turn deserters? May the Lord “comfort your hearts, and establish you in every good word and work,” because you are saved by hope and the realization of that hope is not visible at present, for, if you saw it, you would not continue to hope for it. You are expecting greater things than you have ever realized! It is better than before, for your faces are toward the rising sun. We were told, some time ago, by a philosopher, that our nation had been shooting Niagara and taking a leap in the dark. Well, that may be, or may not be, but this I know, Believers in Christ are not descending Niagara, for they are ascending! And their leap, whenever they leap, is not into the dark, but into the Light of God—a Light that is brighter, and brighter still! Our progress is away from evil up to good, from good to better, and from the better to the best of all—an infinite progression, by the Divine impulse of the Grace of God—for it is by Grace! “Good hope through Grace.” We do not get this good hope through nature, or through our own free will—we get it through Divine Grace. Grace has given us what we have already received and Grace also gives us the hope of what we have not yet received. Grace lets us see the things that are ours at present and Grace enables us to realize the things that shall be ours in the future!  
I hope you understand what the Apostle meant in setting all this before you. If I had the tongues of men and of angels, I could not tell you the heights, deaths, lengths and breadths of these gracious words. Let me read them to you again—“Now our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and God, our Father, who has loved us, and has given us everlasting consolation and good hope through Grace.” That is what we already have!  
**II.** Now I want to clinch the nail by speaking of WHAT WE ARE TO HAVE as the result of what we already have.  
Paul prayed for the Thessalonians, first, *that the Lord would comfort their hearts* and, Brothers and Sisters in Christ, may the Lord comfort *your* hearts! God does not wish you to be sad. A certain Persian king would allow no one to wait upon him if he had a sad countenance. It is not so with our Lord, for He looks with a tender eye upon those who are heavy of heart and He does not forbid them to come into His Presence. At the same time—  
***“Why should the children of a king  
Go mourning all their days?”***  
If you have everlasting consolation, my dear Sister, what reason have you for such constant fretting? If you have a good hope through Grace, my dear Brother, why did you say, the other day, that you were tempted almost to give up all hope? May the Lord comfort your hearts! Perhaps you think it is a small thing for the Lord’s people to be comforted, but God does not think so. He said to His servants, the Prophets, “Comfort you, comfort you My people, says your God.” It was not one alone whom He told to do this, but He said, “Comfort you My people,” as though He summoned all His servants and said to them, “Whatever you do in denouncing sinners and in stirring up My people to work for Me, never forget this part of your duty—‘Comfort you, comfort you My people, says your God. Speak you comfortably to Jerusalem.’” Our Lord Jesus Christ did not think that it was a small thing for His people to be happy, for, on the very night in which He went forth to His passion, among the last words that He uttered were those blessed ones which have cheered millions of mourners—“Let not your heart be troubled: you believe in God, believe also in Me.”  
The normal condition of a child of God—I mean, his healthy condition—is one of repose, rest, comfort and delight. Certainly, the Lord has given special promises to those who reach this state of mind—such as this, “Delight yourself also in the Lord; and He shall give you the desires of your heart.” He means, then, to give great things to those who honor Him by trusting Him so that they cease to be troubled and are comforted, whatever happens. What ails you, daughter of sorrow? Are you poor? So was your Lord! Yet I never read that He complained at what His Father willed. Why should you complain of the dispensations of Providence? Are you sick, my dear Brother or Sister? You will not be the first child of God who has pined away into Heaven if that should be your lot. Perhaps the Lord means thus gradually and gently to take down your earthly tabernacle, but, if so, remember what Paul wrote to the Corinthians, “We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.” “Ah,” you say, “but it is one who is very dear to me who is dying.” Yes, but when the Lord lent you your husband, or your wife, or your child, He did not tell you that any of them would live forever! Be thankful that you have had these loans so long. After all, they are not really yours and if the Lord takes back what He lent to you for a while, why should you be so cast down? “I have lost all,” cries one. Have you lost your God? “No.” Then you have not lost your all. May the Lord comfort your heart, my dear Friends, because if you are unhappy, you dishonor your God by your doubts and fears, and you often hinder those who would enter into the Kingdom. They see your sad face and they say, “Christ’s yoke must be a heavy one, and His burden must be intolerable! Look at the face of that Christian man or woman.” I would rather that they should say to you, “we would gladly go with you, for there is a brightness about your face that we would like to have. We perceive that your Master is a good Master and that He cheers and comforts your hearts.”  
I believe that thoroughly happy Christians—those who really enjoy the things of God—are also among the most stable Christians. I think that is why Paul was guided to put the truth as it is in our text. You cannot get a man to give up that which is his daily delight. I never wonder when I hear of some professors giving up Christianity, for they have never experienced the joy of it—it was only a burden to them. When a poor fellow has a load on his back that does not belong to him and does not yield him any comfort, but only galls his shoulders, you are not surprised if he gets to one of those rests for porters in the city, he lays down his load and walks away and forgets it—and is very glad to forget it! But if it were his own property, his own treasure—you would not find him forgetting it, or going away and leaving it behind! The thing out of which you get the most joy will, in the long run, be the dearest thing to you! And if you continually rejoice in the Lord, your joy will greatly help you in resisting the many temptations to skepticism and superstition to which others will yield. You will stand fast in the Lord because you will be held there by the golden rivets of joy which God has given you in communion with Himself!  
Then the Apostle adds, “and establish you in every good word and work.” *He wants God’s people to be established in every good word*. I suppose he mean that he would have us firmly fixed in our belief of the Doctrines of the Gospel and, Beloved, you may very well say that you will keep to them till somebody shows you something better, just as I have read that when the people of the State of Massachusetts wanted a set of laws, and they had not time to make them just then, they passed a resolution that they would be governed by the Laws of God until they had time to make better ones. We may believe the Doctrines revealed in the Word of God until we find better ones—and that we shall never do! Have those Doctrines converted you? Then, be established in them! Does your experience confirm the truth of them? Then, cling to them! It is one of the characteristics of the Doctrines of the Gospel that the older a man gets, the more he loves them. I always find that the older saints become more Calvinistic as they ripen in age—that is to say, they get to believe more and more that salvation is all of Grace. And whereas at first they might have had some rather loose idea concerning free will and the power of the creature, the lapse of years and fuller experiences gradually blow all that kind of chaff away. Old saints get what is called “a sweet tooth.” They love the sweet things of the Covenant. They like their meat to have a rich savor. I am not old yet, but I confess that I get more and more fond of the sweet things of the Gospel of Grace and cannot endure the novelties that are so current and so exceedingly popular nowadays. Oh, no! Tell me of my Father’s eternal love, tell me of my Savior’s precious blood, tell me of the Spirit’s sacred indwelling and my heart is glad! But tell me anything short of this and my soul is not fed. I pray that you, Brothers and Sisters, who are members of this Christian Church, may know what you know and hold fast to it. May you drive your roots down into the rich soil of the Infallible Truths of God! May you not be as leaves of the forest, driven here and there by the winds because there is no life in you, but may you be “like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season,” whose “leaf also shall not wither.” God make you to be thus “established in every good word.”  
The Apostle would also have those to whom He wrote *established in every good work*. Sometimes an attack of this kind is made upon us—“It is no use trying to teach the Gospel to children. We cannot suppose that they can understand its deep mysteries.” I heard that said only the other day. Well, I can say that we have tried it and we have found that whether you choose to call them great mysteries or not, children do understand the Gospel and seem, sometimes, to comprehend it better than their fathers do just because they are so childlike! This qualification for entering the Kingdom of Heaven is not fully-developed manhood, but rather that we should become as little children. And unless we do become childlike, we cannot enter the Kingdom. Dear Friend, do not be turned aside from your work by anything that is said concerning it. If people say that it is no use to go down to the lodging houses and talk to the poorest of the poor, be established in doing it because your Master did it and because the everlasting consolation which comes to you through the Grace of God makes you feel that to the most unworthy are the fittest objects for the Gospel of Jesus. Since you received consolation from God’s mercy, you may well be established in the belief that there is consolation in the mercy of God for the vilest of the vile!  
Do not be turned aside from any part of your work, and especially from the blessed work of prayer. Some people tell us that prayer is useless, but what do they know about it? They have never tried it! But those of us who have tried and proved it, and who still practice it from day to day, know that prayer is heard. We may send a telegraphic message, yet it may never get where we want it to go. We may mail a letter, yet it may never reach its proper destination. But when we pray, we are sure that we are heard, for we have distinct answers to our petitions and our heart is filled with delight as we recollect the hundreds and thousands of times in which the right hand of the Lord has been stretched out to help us when we have cried unto Him in our time of need! Be established in every form of good work, you who are part of the Lord’s great army, meeting here for drill and for battle with the forces of evil. I beseech you, Brothers and Sisters, let not your hearts grow faint, and do not so much as think of retreating in the day of conflict. Lo, our victorious Leader, “our Lord Jesus Christ Himself,” is coming! Therefore let everyone of us play the man for our coming King. The fight will not be long and woe be to the man who turns his back in the day of battle—but blessed shall he be who is found faithful even unto death. I speak thus to you, Beloved, though I am fully persuaded that He who has begun the good work in you will perfect it until the day of Jesus Christ.  
I wish that my sermon had a great deal more to do with some of you than it has, for I fear that there are many here to whom I have not been speaking. Therefore, my closing message shall be to the unsaved. My dear Friend, I cannot bid you be steadfast, and I cannot talk to you of everlasting consolation, for you have not yet believed in Jesus Christ to the saving of your soul. There is an awful text of Scripture which at present applies to you. The Apostle Paul, a cool-headed and warmhearted man who loved sinners, once wrote this—“If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha.” That is, accursed at the coming of Christ! O my dear Friend, that is what you will be if you love not our Lord Jesus Christ! And that is what you ought to be and what the warm-hearted lover of his race, who also loves his God, feels must be and ought to be your doom if you love not the Lord Jesus Christ. Think of that and I pray that the Holy Spirit may lead you first to trust in Jesus, and then to love Him, and so you shall be saved and shall bless Him forever!—  
***“You sinners, seek His Grace, Whose wrath you cannot bear! Fly to the shelter of His Cross And find salvation there.”***

—Adapted from *The C. H. Spurgeon Collection,* Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307  
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A COMPREHENSIVE BENEDICTION  
NO. 3179

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, JANUARY 6, 1910. *DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

***“Now our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and God, even our Father, who has loved us, and has given us everlasting  
consolation and good hope through Grace, comfort your hearts, and establish you in every good word and work.***2Th 2:16-17***.***

[Other Sermons by Mr. Spurgeon, upon the same text, are Sermons, #1542, Volume 26—FREE GRACE A MOTIVE FOR FREE GIVING; #2363, Volume 40—COMFORT AND CONSTANCY and #2991, Volume 52—WHAT WE HAVE, AND ARE TO HAVE—— Read/download all the sermons, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.]

ALL through his Epistles, Paul is continually expressing his best wishes for the friends to whom he writes. The Christian should be a wellwisher to all men. No cursing should ever come out of his mouth, but his lips should always distil blessings even upon his enemies—and much more upon his friends. Brothers and Sisters in Christ Jesus, it should be a part of our religion to be desiring the best of blessings for our fellow men. As the high priest of old blessed the people, so should those whom God has made to be priests and kings unto Himself—a privilege that pertains to all saints—exercise the function of blessing the people by desiring good things for them!

The blessing invoked in the text is very comprehensive, but although there is much to crave, there is much more to acknowledge with gratitude. Blessings already secured in the Covenant are the foundation of a rich expectancy for the supply of all our present needs. We may reasonably hope that God will do in the future what He has done in the past. Hence the Apostle speaks very plainly of what God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ have already bestowed—and then he couples therewith the kindest wishes as to the future of his friends at Thessalonica.

With as much brevity as possible, I shall first speak *on that part of the text which contains two positive facts.* And then*upon that part of it which expresses two holy desires*.

**I.**The 16th verse contains A VERY CLEAR STATEMENT OF THE TWO POSITIVE FACTS.  
Paul, writing concerning believers in Christ at Thessalonica and everywhere else, says, “Now our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and God, even our Father, who has loved us and has given us everlasting consolation and good hope through Grace.” From this we gather that every true Believer—everyone who rests upon Christ and is saved through the effectual working of the Holy Spirit—is, at the present moment, first of all, the object of the love of God—“who has loved us.” So, my Friends, Paul does not speak of God as though we were strangers to Him and He is a stranger to us, but he says, “who has loved us.” Concerning this matter, he does not speak as one who was in doubt—with mingled hope and fear— but he says positively, “Our Lord Jesus Christ, Himself, and God, even our Father, who *has* loved us.” He is quite sure of it! He is certain that these people to whom he is writing, and all believers in Jesus, are the objects of Divine Love!  
Will you turn that Truth of God over in your minds, dear Friends, making a personal application of it at this moment? If you are now trusting in Jesus Christ, God loves you! That He should think of you is something! That He should pity you is more. That He should bear with you and have patience with you is no small thing—but think of God *loving* you! That Infinite Being whom the Heaven of heavens cannot contain, whose years are eternal, whose existence knows no limit nor shadow of a change—He loves you and yet you are, compared with Him, *nothing—*yes, *less than nothing* and vanity! Could you conceive of an angel loving an ant? Could you imagine one of the seraphs being in love with the gnat which dances in the sunbeam? It would be wonderful condescension for the august spirits to love such insignificant creatures, yet it would be only one creature loving another creature! And between one creature and another, the distance cannot be as great as between the Creator and the created one! That God, the Eternal, Infinite, Almighty I AM, should actually condescend to love *us*, who are but as *worms* compared with Him and who are but as things of yesterday, soon gone, oh, ‘tis strange, ‘tis passing strange, ‘tis amazing! Yet though it exceeds marvel, it does not, thank God, exceed belief! But were it not that God has, Himself, revealed it, we might have cause enough to suppose it to be impossible that the Lord Jesus Christ and God, even our Father, should have loved us!  
Being spoken of in the past tense, I infer that *the love which God has for Believers is no novelty*. He did not commence to love them yesterday. Brothers and Sisters, we believe that as many as have been called by Grace have been the objects of a love that never knew a beginning! Long before the stars were lit, or the sun’s refulgent ray had pierced through primeval shade, the heart of Deity had fixed itself upon the chosen! The prescient eyes of God had seen them when as yet they were not—and in His book all their names were written, which in continuance were fashioned when as yet there were none of them! They were not merely foreknown, but they were foreloved! They were the favorites of His heart, the dear ones of His choice. He “has loved us.” Fly back as far as you will—till time has not begun, the work of Creation is not accomplished and God dwells alone—it was still true of all Believers, even then, that “God, even our Father, has loved us.”  
Is it not marvelous that we should have been the objects of *a love that has been so constant*? For, as there never was any beginning to it, so there never has been a period in which that love has grown dim towards those who were the objects of it! The river of God’s Love has gone flowing on in one undiminished stream even until now! He “has loved us.” He loved us when our father Adam plunged us into the ruins of the Fall. He loved us when He spoke the first promise in the Garden of Eden, that the Seed of the woman would bruise the serpent’s head. He loved us all through the prophetic days when He was writing the Book of Love upon which our delighted eyes were afterwards to gaze. He loved us when He sent His Son, His only Son, to live our life and to die our death! He loved us when He exalted that Son of His to His own right hand—and in His Person exalted us there, too, and made us to sit in heavenly places together with Him. He loved us when we were little children, in the weakness of infancy hanging upon our mother’s breasts. He loved us when, in the follies of our youth, we seemed determined to destroy ourselves while He was determined that we should be saved. He loved us when we loved not Him. He drew us with the cords of a man and with the bands of love—and now, even at this day—we can, each one of us, look up to Him and say, “Abba! Father! You are mine and I am Yours by the Spirit of adoption.” Yes, we can say this! We can look back all along our past lives and right beyond our birth into eternity past, and we can thank Him that we can truly say, “God, even our Father, has loved us.”  
Now, my dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ, you must not be satisfied unless you can speak about God’s love to you in the same positive terms as those which were used by the Apostle Paul. Never rest contented if you do not know that God loves you! Give no sleep to your eyes, nor slumber to your eyelids until, by a living faith, you have been able to read your title clear to this love of God! It may be that you have lost the sensible presence of that love—then ask for Divine Grace to search until you find it again. You may be saved and yet you may not be happy, but you ought never be content unless you are certain that you are saved— and then such certainty will infallibly bring you peace and joy. If now your full assurance has departed and your faith is under a cloud, come and knock again at Mercy’s door and cling to the posts thereof, looking up at the Crucified One. Turn your tearful eyes to Calvary, trusting afresh to Him whose wounds will give you healing and in the crimson lines of whose agonies you must read your acceptance. Go there, I say, and be not content till you can say with Paul, “Our Lord Jesus Christ, Himself, and God, even our Father, has loved us.” This is the first positive fact which is here mentioned.  
There is another fact which is equally positive—*“and has given us everlasting consolation and good hope through Grace*.” It is absolutely certain that God has given His people this double blessing. What a delightful blessing this is, “everlasting consolation”! There is music in the word, “consolation.” Barnabas was called “the son of consolation.” No, more than that, it is the name of One who is far greater than Barnabas, for the Lord Jesus is called “the Consolation of Israel.” But God is here said to have given this blessing to His people in a very special form— *“everlasting consolation.”*A man goes to work to make money and, after toiling hard for it, he gets it and it is a consolation to him. But it is not an *everlasting* consolation, for he may spend or he may lose all his money. He may invest it in some company (limited or unlimited), and very soon find it vanish! Or he may be compelled by death to leave it. It cannot be, at the best, more than a temporary consolation. A man toils hard for knowledge. He acquires it. He becomes eminent, his name is famous. This is a consolation to him for all his toil, but it cannot last long, for when he comes to feel the headache or the heartache, his degrees and his fame cannot cheer him. Or when his soul becomes a prey to despondency, he may turn over many a learned tome before he will find a cure for melancholy. His consolation is but frail and fickle—it will only serve to cheer him at intermittent seasons—it is not “everlasting consolation.” But I venture to say that through the consolation which God gives to His people, they are unsurpassed for their endurance! They can stand all tests—the shock of trial, the bursting out of passion, the lapse of years— no, more—they can even endure the passage to eternity, for God has given to His people “everlasting consolation.”  
What is this “everlasting consolation”? It includes a sense of pardoned sin. A Christian, when his heart is right, knows that God has pardoned his sins, that He has cast them behind His back, and that they will never be mentioned against him again. He has received in his heart the witness of the Spirit that God has blotted out, as a thick cloud, his transgressions and, as a cloud, his sins. Well, if sin is pardoned, is not that a consolation? Yes, and an everlasting consolation, too—one that will do to live with and that will do to die with—and that will do to rise again with! Oh, joy! My sins are pardoned! Now do what You will with me, my God! As my sins are put away, You have given me “everlasting consolation.”  
This “everlasting consolation” also gives an abiding sense of acceptance in Christ. The Christian knows that God looks upon him as he is in Christ and, inasmuch as God put Christ into his place, and punished Christ for his sin, He now puts the Believer into Christ’s place and rewards that Believer with His love just as if he had been obedient unto death, as Christ was! It is a blessed thing to know that God accepts us and to be able to sing, with Hart—  
***“With my Savior’s garments on,  
Holy as the Holy One”—***  
and this is a consolation which is abiding. It is, in fact, everlasting! Now let sickness come—the consolation still abides. Have we not seen hundreds of Believers as happy in the weakness of disease as they would have been in the strength of hale and vigorous health? Let death come— the consolation still remains. Have not these ears often heard the songs of dying saints as they have rejoiced because the love of God was shed abroad in their hearts by the Holy Spirit? Yes, a sense of acceptance in the Beloved is an “everlasting consolation.”  
Moreover, the Christian has a conviction of his security in Christ. God has promised to save all those who trust in Jesus. The Christian does trust in Him and he believes that God will be as good as His word and will save him. He feels, therefore, that whatever may occur in Providence, whatever onslaughts there may be of inward corruption, or of outward temptation, he is safe by virtue of his union to Christ—is not this a source of consolation? Why, some of you might freely give your eyes to know that you are saved! It would be a good bargain for men even to be lame or maimed if they did but enter into life. The Christian knows that he is secure—beneath the shield of the Divine Omnipotence he laughs at the rage of Hell, feeling that no fiery dart can ever pierce that sacred protection! Are you rejoicing in this everlasting consolation? If not, you should seriously question whether you know what true religion means. Do you find that your losses make you wretched? Do bereavements in your family make you murmur and complain? Are you never happy? Does not joy ever come into your spirit? Do you always hang your head like a bulrush? Have you no peace of mind, no sacred mirth? Do the bells of your heart never ring? Do the heart-strings of your soul never sound out the music of grateful praise? Then gravely question whether you can be a child of God, for concerning the children of God it is written, “God, even our Father, has given us everlasting consolation.”  
I am sure there are many here who, if they were to speak from experience, would say, “Well, we are very poor, but we are rich in faith, and faith makes us rich toward God. We have not anything to spare, yet surely goodness and mercy have followed us all the days of our life. We are sick in body, yet our afflictions are so sanctified that we rejoice in deep distress. We are ridiculed and slandered by the ungodly, but we rejoice that we are counted worthy to suffer anything for Christ’s sake. Yes, God has given us everlasting consolation!” John Bunyan said that the man who wears the flower, “heart’s ease,” in his bosom need not envy a king! And that is a flower which the Christian always wears in his buttonhole—or if he does not always wear it there, it is his own fault, for God has given it to him—He has given unto us everlasting, unchanging, unfading, inexhaustible fountains of consolation!  
Another thing which God has given us is “*good hope through Grace*”—a hope, a good hope—a “good hope through Grace.” What is the Christian’s hope? It is a hope that he shall be preserved in this life by God’s love and kindness. A hope that when he comes to die—for die he must unless the Lord shall come first—he shall have all-sufficient Grace to be able to play the man in the last solemn article. He has the hope that, after death, his soul, out-soaring sun, moon and stars, shall enter into the realm of spirits and be with Christ! He believes that the day shall come when his very body, though it has become food for worms, shall be quickened and called by the voice of the archangel from its bed of dust and its silent sleeping place. He believes that those bones of his shall live again and that his soul and body shall be re-united and that, when the Lord Jesus shall stand at the Last Day upon the earth, in his flesh he shall see God! So he sings with Toplady—  
***“These eyes shall see Him in that Day,  
The God that died for me!  
And all my rising bones shall say,  
Lord, who is like unto Thee?”***  
This is the Christian’s hope, that he shall then live, world without end, in the perfection of enjoyment! That he shall have all spiritual joys in communion with Christ—and all joys that shall be suitable to his new and spiritual body as he shall walk the golden streets and forever praise the love which brought him into an existence of perfect bliss! This is the Christian’s hope and, consequently, the thought of death does not alarm him—rather, he looks forward to it with joy! As the toil-worn laborer does not dread the eventide when he shall put off his dusty robes, but longs for the night that he may rest in his bed, so the Christian, when he is in his right mind—  
***“Longs for evening, to undress,  
That he may rest with God.”***  
He is willing to put off the cumbrous clay of his body and commit it to the purifying earth, that he may, as a disembodied spirit, depart to be “with Christ, which is far better,” expecting that, afterwards, body and soul together shall be forever gratified with Christ!  
This is the Christian’s hope and it is a *good*hope. It is good for what it brings us, but it is especially good for that upon which it is grounded. The reason why the Christian expects this eternal happiness is because God has promised it to him and has given him an earnest of it. He has Heaven in his heart even now. That is to say, he has within him the beginning of that life which shall, in due time, become the heavenly life. In olden times, when men bought an estate, it was customary for the seller to give to the purchaser a tuft of grass and a leaf from one of the trees on the land, signifying that the purchaser then had what was called *seizin* of the property, and they were proofs that it belonged to him. And when God gives true faith in Christ and enables a soul to have peace with God through the precious blood, this is the earnest of Heaven, a foretaste of its bliss and sure evidence that Heaven is, indeed, ours. I trust that there are many of us who have this earnest and feel comforted by it. We have a good hope because it is founded upon God’s promise in His Word and upon the witness of the Spirit within our heart that we are born of God!  
And it is said to be a good hope *through Grace*.” Ah, Friends, there is no good hope except “through Grace.” You cannot have a good hope through merit. If anybody expects to have a good hope through baptism, he is very much mistaken! Baptism is simply the *testimony* of a good conscience toward God—it cannot give any hope of Heaven. If we were to build upon such a foundation as baptism, confirmation, the Lord’s Supper, or anything of the kind, we should be sad losers, for there is nothing in all these things put together to make a Christian’s hope! Nor must we build our hopes on our prayers or our tears, or on anything that we can do, for if so, it will be a sandy foundation and when the time of trial comes, it will give way under us. But to have a good hope through Divine Grace—such a hope as this—that I, a poor unworthy sinner, have been invited by God to put my trust in His dear Son, and that He has promised that if I do, I shall be saved! I do trust in Jesus and, therefore, if God has promised truly, I shall be saved—this is indeed a foundation on which I may build without fear! Is not this, my Brothers and Sisters, the top and bottom of the Christian’s hope, that “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners,” and that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have everlasting life? You do believe in Him and, therefore, you can say that you do possess eternal life! I do solemnly declare that if I have ever at any time begun to say in my own mind, “I shall be saved, for I have preached the Gospel, I have experienced such-and-such enjoyments, I have drawn near to God in secret prayer”—if ever I have talked to myself like that, I have soon been led to see that if I had not something infinitely better than all that to trust to, I would be resting on a broken reed. But, oh, to come to Jesus just as one came, at the first, saying— ***“Nothing in my hands I bring—  
Simply to Your Cross I cling.  
Naked, come to You for dress.  
Helpless, look to You for Grace.  
Foul, I to the Fountain fly—  
Wash me, Savior, or I die!”***  
This is, indeed, to have a “good hope through Grace.”  
Now let us take these two statements, look at them again, and then lay them up among our choicest treasures. The one statement is that God has loved us. O Christian Friends, do try to drink in that great Truth of God! Do not be satisfied simply to hear the words repeated, but get them right into your very spirits—“Our Lord Jesus Christ, Himself, and God, even our Father, has loved us.” O you angels, you have not even in Heaven a greater joy than this—to know that God has loved us! The other statement is that God “has given us everlasting consolation and good hope through Grace.” So we cannot be without consolation. Whatever your trouble may be, my dear Christian Friend, though you may have lost your dearest one, though your property may have melted as the snowflake melts into the sea, yet God has given you eternal consolation— and whatever you may have to fear concerning the future, you have a hope that is broader than your fears!—

***“This is the hope, the blissful hope,  
The hope by Jesus given!  
The hope when days and years are past, We all shall meet in Heaven!”***

As I turned this text over, I could not help pitying those who have no hope, no good hope through Divine Grace. When I opened my letters this afternoon, on coming back from Liverpool, the first one I opened was to tell me of the death of one with whom I spent a very happy day about a fortnight ago. He seemed to me to be in perfect health when I spoke to him, then, but now he is gone to his eternal rest. The next letter I opened came from the deacon of a Church in Devonshire, to say that one of our students, who was settled there as a minister, had been suddenly taken ill and had just died. I did not care to open any more letters, just then, for fear that I would read of somebody else being gone. But I thought, “Well, both of these dear Brothers have served their generation by the will of God, and they have fallen asleep, and it is well.” I could only look forward with hope to the day when somebody would read just such a letter about me—and could only trust that they would be there to say of me what I could say of these Brothers—“Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord.”

But what a sad thing it is to live in this world and to have no hope! It would have been better not to have lived at all than to live without a “good hope through Grace.” I do not really know how some of you manage to live. I know you have your troubles—troubles at home and troubles in business—and I cannot make out how you manage to put up with this poor existence without the hope of a better one! Knowing what we do about a future state, if we had not a good hope concerning it, we really might wish that we had never been born. And we sometimes wonder how some of you can be so easy and so careless about the unknown state when you, perhaps, know that you will soon be in that state and also know that if it is not a better state than this one, it will be a very sad thing for you to have had an existence at all! Oh, “seek you the Lord while He may be found! Call upon Him while He is near.” A good hope can be had through Divine Grace and that Grace is free even to the chief of sinners! If we come to God on the footing of Divine Grace, He will never cast us out. Oh, that we might all have this infinite treasure of a “good hope through Grace”!

**II.**Now I can spend only a few minutes upon the second part of the subject in which we have TWO GOOD WISHES, TWO HOLY DESIRES. The first part of the text has told us what God has given us. The second part tells us what we ought to desire God to give us—“Comfort your hearts, and establish you in every good word and work.”

I pray God for those who are about to be baptized and also for you who have long made a profession of your faith, that you may get the first blessing, namely, *Divine comfort*. May God comfort you! It is a bad case when a Christian is not happy, when he is not full of comfort. I know it is treated by some people as though it were a very insignificant matter whether a Christian is happy or not, but I am sure it is an exceedingly important matter that he should have comfort. A wretched, miserable Christian is, to a great extent, an injury to the Church, and a dishonor to the Cross of Christ, for worldly people will pick out such an one and say, “That is what your religion does for a man!” Now, genuine godliness gives peace and joy. In its first beginning, when a man is under a sense of sin, it does make him wretched to feel his sin, but when the soul is obedient to the command of Christ and trusts in Him, it gives him joy and peace. “The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace”—and for a Christian not to have this fruit of the Spirit is to libel Christianity!

When one’s heart is sad, it is not always best to show it. “When you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, that you appear not unto men to fast.” Even if you have some sorrow of heart, tell it not at once to your neighbor, who may have quite enough trouble of his own to bear without having yours added to it! Do, Christian, seek to get the comfort of which the Apostle here speaks. Is there ever a position into which you and I can be cast where there is no comfort for us in the Divine promises? There is, in God’s Word, a key to open all the locks of trouble in Doubting Castle! If we will but turn over the sacred pages, we shall find there a promise exactly suited to our case. Do you lack comfort, Christian? How can you while there is a Mercy Seat to go to and One there whose ears are always open to hear your petition and to relieve your trouble? Do you lack comfort while you can pray? Surely it must be neglect of prayer that makes your burdens so heavy. How can you be without comfort while your Savior lives? If Jesus Christ still bears your name upon His heart, that should be enough for you! Is it not really a comfort to think that the Father, Himself, loves you? My Father, who is in Heaven, knows my needs—ought not that to cheer me? Midst darkest shades, if I feel that He is with me—yes, even in the Valley of the Shadow of Death—if His rod and His staff comfort me, what have I to fear? Yes, Christian Friends, you have abundant ground for comfort, so be not content unless you enjoy that comfort! May God, even your Father, put you and keep you in a comfortable frame of mind!

I would say especially to young Christians—Do not imagine that as soon as you become believers in Christ, you are to cast away those cheerful looks and those bright eyes of yours. God forbid! If you were happy, before, be far happier now! You need not have levity—that is to be avoided—and the pleasure which consists in sin should be no pleasure to you, but now your joy should be deeper as it is purer, more lively as it is more sound!

“ *And establish you in every good word and work*.” These are the two forms of establishment in good Doctrine and in good practice. When a Christian receives good words, the devil would like to drive them from him and to drive him from them. It is one of the masterpieces of Satan to try to spoil our faith. If he can lead us to believe falsely, he will the more easily lead us to *act* falsely. So may God “establish you in every good *word.”* You cannot help noticing, if you look upon the spiritual firmament just now, how like it is to what the natural firmament was the other night. It is said that there were thousands of shooting stars visible within an hour! And I might almost say that if you look out into the Christian world, you can see thousands of shooting stars within a minute! I do not know what new error we shall have within the next 24 hours. There are some people who are so fond of novelties that they have advanced pretty nearly every form of error that our poor imagination can conceive of, yet they seem to be studious to make fresh ones! We have new “isms” and “ites” of all sorts, but old-fashioned Truths of God, which we thought would never have been doubted, are, nowadays, contested! An age of great religious activity is pretty sure to be also an age in which error is active and, therefore, it is the more necessary that we should pray for Believers that they may be established in every good word!

I should like you who are members of this Church not only to believe the Truth, but to know *why you believe it* and to be so sure and certain of it that you cannot be shaken from it! I would have you be not like the dry leaves in autumn, which are carried away by the first wind because they have lost their vitality, but like the green leaves in spring which will bear the March winds and cannot be torn off because their sap is flowing in them and they are fresh and vigorous. I would that you were always able to give a reason for the hope that is in you with meekness and fear. The faith which we have has been handed down to us by martyrs’ hands all along the ages—not through the corrupt Church of Rome—but down along the line of martyrs and confessors who have sealed their testimony with their blood! And that testimony is still with us this day! Search God’s Word and if we teach you anything that is inconsistent with it, then reject us as we would have you reject all false teachers! If we set before you anything which is of *our* making, and not of God’s making, cast it to the dogs and have none of it! But if it is God’s Truth, be established in it. Garner it in your soul. Hold it fast as for dear life and never let it go! Believe that the Truth of God as it is in Jesus, is worth the blood which martyrs have shed in its defense—and will be worth all that it can possibly cost you in holding it! May you be established in every good word— not merely in *some* good words—but in *every* good word! Believe all the Truths of God. Many Christians, alas, believe only one Truth or so. One man gets a hold of the Doctrine of Predestination and he is like a child with a doll—it is all the world to him! Another man gets a hold of the Doctrine of Human Responsibility and he looks at it, as Luther says, “like a cow at a new gate.” He stands staring at that and can see nothing beyond it! But I would have you see all the Truth and be always ready to receive anything that God has revealed! Be you steadfast “in every good word.”

But the blessing invoked by the Apostle is that you may be established in every good *work* as well as in every good word. Alas, there are some Christians who like the Word of God very well, though they do not like the work—but unless our godliness extends to our daily work, it is not godliness at all! May you, Brothers and Sisters in Christ, be established in every good work! May there be the good work of holiness in all the relationships of life! May you be the best of sons, the best of daughters, the best of parents, the best of husbands, the best of wives, the best of employers, the best of employees! Wherever your lot may be cast, may you be established in every good work in all the relationships of life!

Then, in this Christian Church, may you work in prayer, may you work in teaching, may you work according to the ability which God has given you—and may you be established in it! If there is any good work which you have not yet attempted, but to which you are called of God, may you have Grace to enter upon it and, once engaged in it, may you never take your hands from the plow till you have finished the task that God has sent you! O Beloved, I can pray this prayer from my heart for everyone of you! May you who have served the Master for years, still be kept serving Him! Oh, may none of you turn your backs in the day of battle! May you be faithful unto death and so obtain the great reward! May the Grace which has helped you forward up to now, impel you forward till your hairs are gray and until you throw yourselves back upon the couch of death to sleep with God! So may you be established in every good word and work! Every Christian ought to be a member of the established Church—I do not mean the church which is established by the English law—but the Church which is established by God! Oh, to be established by Divine Grace—to be established by knowing what we believe, by practicing it—and by being established in that practice! These Apostolic good wishes I leave with you—may you inherit them!

But remember that we must first come to Christ, or these good wishes will be only wishes. We must first trust the Savior, or else these blessings can never be ours! May Divine Grace bring us to Jesus and keep us at His feet—and Divine Grace shall have the praise forever and ever!

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: *2 Thessalonians 2.***

**Verses 1, 2.***Now we beseech you, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together unto Him, that you be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand.*In the Church of Christ, the teaching has always been that Christ is coming quickly and that teaching must never be withdrawn, for He *is* coming quickly, as He said to John in the Revelation. At the same time, this teaching has given an opportunity to certain presumptuous people to prophesy that at suchand-such a time, Christ will come. They know nothing about it and their prophecies are not worth the breath they spend in uttering them! And we have, today, what the Apostle wrote to the Thessalonians—

**3.***Let no man deceive you by any means: for that Day shall not come, except there comes a falling away, first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition.*I believe that to a large extent this has already happened and that the “man of sin” has been revealed. This “son of perdition” has had a long, dark and terrible reign over myriads of men, and he still sits on the seven hills of Rome, and rules over multitudes of his fellow sinners. Paul held that it was consistent to expect the Lord to come quickly and yet to know that certain events must occur before He did come. That is just the condition, I think, to which a man’s mind will come if he diligently and impartially reads the Scriptures—especially the prophetic parts of them. The Lord will come in such an hour as we think not, yet there are clear indications of certain things which are to happen before He does come.

**4.***Who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sits in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.* It has been said that the Pope of Rome is infallible, that his interpretation of Scripture, whatever it may be, is as valid as the Scripture, itself, and that whatever he chooses to decree must be obeyed by the faithful. Such are some of the pretensions, even at this day, of the “man of sin.”

**5-7.***Do you not remember that when I was yet with you, I told you these things? And now you know what is restraining, that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity is already at work.*There were certain reasons why that gigantic iniquity should begin to be developed, even while the Roman Empire was in power to keep it in check. And when that passed away, there was the opportunity for “the mystery of iniquity” to become the despot of the world!

**7-10.***Only He who now restrains will do so until He is taken out of the way. And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the breath of His mouth and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming. The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.*This is the last sin of all—that ungodly men do not receive “the love of the truth.” If they were, themselves, true, they would love the Truth of God. If the Grace of God was in them, His own precious Truth would be prized by them above everything else! But when men finally reject the Truth by which they might be saved, God visits them with terrible judgments!

**11-17.***And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasured in unrighteousness. But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren, beloved of the Lord, because God has, from the beginning, chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: whereunto He called you by our Gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, brethren, stand fast and hold the traditions which you have been taught, whether by word or our epistle. Now our Lord Jesus Christ, Himself, and God, even our Father, which has loved us, and has given us everlasting consolation and good hope through Grace, comfort your hearts, and establish you in every good word and work.*So may it be, for Jesus’ sake! Amen.

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**÷2Th 3.5**

THE LOVE OF GOD AND THE PATIENCE OF CHRIST  
NO. 2028

**INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S DAY, JUNE 17, 1888, *BY C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ.”***2Th 3:5***.***

FOR the moment, Paul in spirit is coasting the purple shores of the celestial country. With his Thessalonian friends he is making a joyful voyage within hail of Immanuel’s land. The sail is bright with the sunlight and the keel is marking a silver track behind it. The Apostle’s happy soul has left far in the stern the deceivableness of unrighteousness and the rocks of error. It comes into his heart that he would gladly steer his friends into certain of those lovely creeks which run up far into the inner recesses of the sacred fatherland. Shall he turn the helm that way? He pauses, for the navigation is difficult. One must be greatly expert to thread the streams which descend from the sunny fountains.

It is not given to all saints to follow safely all the windings of the rivers of delight. Paul had been with his Brethren at sea in the place where the Lord sank all their transgressions in the depths and he had been with them in sore affliction when neither sun nor moon appeared—and in all such seafaring he was in his element. But, brave pilot as he was, he could not pretend to penetrate all the richer and rarer experiences which bring elect souls nearest to the heart of the great Father. Therefore, instead of offering to be their pilot, he bowed his head and prayed, “The Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the patient waiting for Christ.”

The special entrance into the goodly land, which the Apostle desired for his friends, was one which mere insight, wit, knowledge, or instruction could never give them. If so, he would have directed their minds that way at once. But the perception of the heavenlies is only given to heavenly faculties. The attainments which Paul desired for his friends were not beliefs of the head but indwelling of the heart. To return to our figure of sailing up the creeks and rivers into the center of the glorious country—that delicious voyage was only possible to the more refined and spiritual powers of the soul. Those sweet waters could only be navigated by the heart and the heart itself would need Divine direction before it could find the entrance to them.

There is a path which the vulture’s eye has not seen and the lion’s whelp has not trod—only God sees and knows it. The Beulah country of spiritual wisdom, especially in its higher reaches, is a matter for personal Revelation from God to each one of His own. We are here hopelessly in the dark if we have no light from above. And even with that light we do but

see the difficult nature of our way and fail to enter upon it until the light becomes a force and He whom we desire to know directs our hearts into communion with Himself. Yes, yonder are the radiant coasts and the rivers of life up which our boat might sail into the center of “the island of the innocent.” Yet our great Apostle does not rush into the office of pilot but humbly acts as intercessor, crying, “The Lord direct your hearts into the love of God.”

All this whets our desires! Who would not wish to go where only choice spirits can enter and where these can only come as the Lord directs their hearts? Paul could give his converts external directions, he could guide his more advanced Brethren in the work, walk and warfare of life. And he did so with all simplicity and earnestness. He urged them to abound in this grace and to avoid that folly. But he felt that his exhortation would be inefficient unless their hearts were touched. Here he felt his own powerlessness and so he cast the grand matter of heart-work upon the Lord Himself. As the heart naturally baffles all physicians so spiritually it is far beyond our knowledge. Who among ministers can guide you? Therefore, may “the Lord direct your hearts.”

God alone knows the heart and God alone can rule it—for this ruling Paul makes request. “The Lord direct your hearts.” Let us borrow his prayer and turn it to our own personal use—“Domine dirige nos.” The place for God in reference to the heart is that of supreme director. When the Lord lays His hand on the heart, which is the helm of the ship, then the whole vessel is rightly directed—this, therefore, is what we beseech Him to do. When the Holy Spirit comes into the heart and takes supreme control of the affections, the whole life and conversation are after a godly sort, Oh, that He may prove this fact to each one of us! Some think much of liberty—I long far more to be in perfect subjection to the Lord my God. Oh, how I wish for a Master, a Dictator, a Director! Oh, that my Lord would take the reins and bring my every thought into captivity to His own will, henceforth and forever!

What a heavenly content I feel in yielding myself to the sacred Trinity! The God who made us may most fitly be called upon to govern us. When we recognize the glory of the whole Godhead we perceive the perfect suitability of such direction as will come from the Three in One God. Albeit that the Holy Spirit is not mentioned in this verse by name, He is mentioned by His operations, for it is the Spirit of God that deals with the hearts of Believers. I take rare pleasure in our text, because we have the blessed Trinity in unity in these few words, “The Lord”—that is, the Holy Spirit who dwells within Believers—“direct your hearts into the love of God (by whom I understand the Father) and into the patient waiting for Christ.”

May the Trinity in Unity work with us and fulfill in each of us this prayer of the Apostle that our hearts may be directed into the love of God and into the patient waiting for Christ! Paul would have his Thessalonian friends advance in a straight line. Our heart is to be as a vessel that is not left to beat about, nor to come into harbor by a circuitous route, but is steered directly into the fair haven. May the Spirit of God take us and give us a straight tendency towards the holiest things and then at once bring us into the love of God and into the patient waiting for Christ.

But here we must do a little translating or interpreting. Observe in the Revised Version a difference of translation. There we read “into the patience of Christ.” This is a great improvement upon our former translation. But, although it is accurate, it is not complete—it does not take up the whole of the meaning. In our Authorized Version we have “the patient waiting for Christ,” but in its margin we find “into the patience of Christ”—showing that the earlier translators felt that “the patience of Christ” would be a good translation. And yet, after considering it in all its bearings, they thought that Paul did not quite mean the patience of Christ, but that he meant a patience which we exert towards Christ.

Is there not weight in this? Does not the context support it? As the love into which we are to be directed is love to God, so the patience into which we are to be directed must be a patience towards Christ. Our grand old translators expressed this Truth by language which may be inaccurate as mere wordings, but it is deeply correct as to its sense. Surely Paul did mean “the patience towards Christ which manifests itself in the patient waiting for Christ.” If you consider all this you will see that we have no infant-class lesson in the text before us! Here are nuts for young men who have cut their wisdom-teeth. May the good Spirit help us to reach the kernels.

Having turned the text over many times, I thought that we might be able to gather up a considerable amount of its real meaning if we thought of it thus—first, here are two precious things for us to enter into—the love of God and the patience of Christ. And, secondly, here are two eminent virtues to be acquired by us—the love of God, that is, love to God and the patience of Christ—the patient waiting for Christ.

**I.**To begin, then, here are TWO PRECIOUS THINGS FOR US TO ENTER INTO. We cannot enter into them except as the Lord directs our hearts. There is a straight entrance into them but we do not readily find it. It needs the Holy Spirit to direct our feet along the narrow way which leads to this great blessedness.

The first precious thing which we are to enter is the love of God. Beloved, we know the love of God in various ways. Many know it by having heard of it, even as a blind man may thus know the charms of an Alpine landscape. Poor knowledge this! Others of us have tasted of the love of God, have talked about the love of God, have prayed and have sung concerning the love of God. All very well, but Paul meant a dove of a brighter feather. To be directed into the love of God is quite another thing from all that we can be told of it. A fair garden is before us. We look over the wall and are even allowed to stand at the door while one hands out to us baskets of golden apples. This is very delightful. Who would not be glad to come so near as this to the garden of heavenly delights?

Yet it is something more to be shown the door, to have the latch lifted, to see the gateway opened and to be gently directed into the Paradise of God. This is what is wanted—that we may be directed *into* the love of God. Oh, that we may feel something of it while we meditate upon it! Beloved, we come, when we are taught of the Spirit of God, to enter into the love of God by seeing its central importance. We see that the love of God is the source and center, fountain and foundation of all our salvation, and of all else that we receive from God.

At first we are much taken up with pardoning Grace. We are largely engrossed with those royal robes of righteousness with which our nakedness is covered. We are delighted with the viands of the marriage banquet—we eat the fat and we drink the sweet. What else would you expect from starving souls admitted to the abundant supplies of heavenly Grace? Afterwards we begin more distinctly to think of the love that spread the feast, the love that provided the raiment, the love that invited us to the banquet and gently led us to take our place in it. This does not always come at first.

But I pray that none of us may be long receiving the gifts of love without kissing the hand of love. That none of us may be content to have had much forgiven without coming and washing the feet of our forgiving Lord with our tears and declaring our deep and true love to Him. O saved soul, may the Lord fill you with personal love to that personal Savior through whom all blessings come to you! Remember, you have all good things because God loves you! Remember that every cake of the heavenly manna, every cup of the living water comes to you because of His great love wherewith He loved you. This will put a sweetness into what you receive even greater than that which is there intrinsically, sweet though God’s mercies are in their own nature and quality. Oh, to enter into God’s love by perceiving it to be the wellhead of every stream of mercy by which we are refreshed!

If we further enter into the love of God, we see its immeasurable greatness. There is a little word which you have often heard, which I beg to bring before you again—that little word “so.” “God *so* loved the world that He gave His only Begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.” Come, you surveyors, bring your chains and try to make a survey of this word “so.” No, that is not enough. Come here, you that make our national surveys and lay down charts for all nations. Come, you who map the sea and land and make a chart of this word “so.”

No, I must go further. Come here, you astronomers, that with your optic glasses spy out spaces before which imagination staggers, come here and encounter calculations worthy of all your powers! When you have measured between the horns of space, here is a task that will defy you— “God *so* loved the world.” If you enter into that you will know that all this love is to you—that while Jehovah loves the world, yet He loves you as much as if there were nobody else in all the world to love. God can pour the infinite love of His heart upon one object and yet, for all that, can love ten thousand times ten thousand of His creatures just as much. O Heir of God, your store of love is not diminished because the innumerable company of your Brethren share it with you! Your Father loves each child as if He had no other. Peer into this abyss of love. Plunge into this sea. Dive into this depth unsearchable. Oh, that God might direct you into the immeasurable greatness of this love!

Neither be you afraid to enter into this love by remembering its antiquity. Some fight the great Truth of the eternal electing love of God. But to me it is as wafers made with honey. What music lies in that sentence— “Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love”! When this great world, the sun, and moon and stars, had not yet flashed the morning of their little day, the Lord Jehovah loved His people with an everlasting love. In the Divine purposes, which were not of yesterday, nor even of that date of which Scripture speaks as “In the beginning”—when the Lord created the heavens and the earth—God loved His own people.

He had chosen you, thought of you, provided for you and made ten thousand forecasts of loving kindness towards you before the earth was. Beloved Believer, you were engraved on the hands of Christ even then. Oh that the Lord would direct you into the antiquity of His love. It shall make you greatly prize that love to think that it had no beginning and shall never, never have an end.

Again—I pray that we may be directed into the love of God as to its infallible constancy. The unchangeable Jehovah never ceases to love His people. It would be a wretched business to be directed into the love of God only to find it a thing of the past. O believing Soul, you have not to deal with things which once were gems of the mine but now are dreams of the night. Oh, no! The love of God abides forever the same. When you are in darkness the Lord still sees you with an eye of love—

***“He saw you ruined in the Fall,  
Yet loved you notwithstanding all.”***

When you were without strength, “in due time Christ died for the ungodly.” Since you have known Him He has never varied in His love. When you have grown cold He has loved you. When you have grown cruel He has loved you. You have grievously provoked Him till He has taken down His rod and made you smart. But He has loved you in the smiting. With God there is as much love in chastening as in caressing. He never abates in fervor towards His ancient friends. Has He not said, “I am the Lord. I change not. Therefore you sons of Jacob are not consumed”? I pray the Lord to direct us into the immutability of His Divine love, for this is a great medicine in the day of soul-trouble.

When conscious of imperfection, when darkened by the shadow of a great fault, when trembling under apprehension of wrath it draws you back again if you can feel, “Still my Father is my Father, still will He receive His wandering child and press His prodigal to His bosom and rejoice over me and say, ‘This My son was dead and is alive again.’ ” O Child of God, your questionings of Divine love are grievous to your God. But if you can learn this Truth and be led into it—that He loves you evermore the

same—it will help you right graciously.

This love we ought to know and if the Lord will lead us into it we shall know that it is omnipresent. I mean by this, that whatever condition we may be in, the Lord is still active in love towards us. You are going across the sea to a far country but your Father’s love will be as near you on the blue wave as on the greensward of Old England. You have come out tonight alone—time was when you did come to the House of God in company. But it may be that graves and desertions furnish sad reasons for your present solitude. Still, you are not alone, your Father’s love is with you.

You are tonight, perhaps, in a very strange part of your spiritual experience—you have not gone this way before. But the road is not new to eternal love. Go where you may, the air is still about you—go where you may, your Father’s love is all around you. Higher than your soaring, deeper than your sinking is all-surrounding love. You are going home, perhaps, to a bed from which you shall not rise for months. You have no apprehension just now of what lies before you in the immediate future. It is as well you should not know. I should be slow to lift the curtain of merciful concealment even if it were in my power to do so. There is no necessity to know details when one or two grand facts provide for all contingencies.

Trouble not yourself about the morrow. If you are to be sick or if you are to die, your Father’s love will be with you still. Therefore go on and fear not. He cannot, will not, turn away from you. An omnipresent God means omnipresent love and omnipotence goes hand-in-hand with omnipresence. The Lord will show Himself strong on the behalf of them that trust Him. His love, which never fails, is attended by a power that faints not, nor is weary. Oh, may the Lord lead you into such love as this! May the Holy Spirit lead you into the innermost secret of this joy of joys, this bliss unspeakable.

And I would also wish that you may be directed into the love of God as to its entire agreement with His justice, His holiness, His spotless purity. I firmly believe that God loves sinners but I am equally sure that He hates sin. I do believe that He delights in mercy but I am equally clear that He never dishonors His justice, nor frustrates the sternest threat of His Law. It is our joy that a holy God loves us and does not find it needful to stain His holiness to save the unclean. We are loved by one so just, so righteous that He could not pardon us without atonement. Even today He will never spare our sins but He will drive the love of them out of us by chastisement, even as He has washed the guilt of them away by the precious blood of His dear Son.

O Beloved, we have a holy God who is determined to make us holy. He would have us love our wives. And he sets before us a holy model—“Even as Christ also loved the Church and gave Himself for it; that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word.” All true love goes towards purification. And the true love of God goes that way with an invincible current that can never be turned aside. O Believer, your God loves you so well that He will not let a darling sin stay in your heart. He loves you so strongly that He will not spare any iniquity in you. “You only have I known of all the families of the earth. Therefore I will punish you for your iniquities.” Out of His pure love He will chasten and refine till He has made us pure and able to abide in fellowship with His perfect nature.

I have thus spoken a little upon a vast theme. I fear it will seem to you mere surface-work. And yet I pray that it may lead you to deep knowledge of Divine things so that you may apprehend God’s love as yours. And that you may feel the power, the unction, the savor which come out of His love. I pray this knowledge, by His Grace, will make your heart as sweet and aromatic as a chamber in which a box of precious ointment has been broken. Oh, that you might be led into the innermost secret of the Lord’s love till it shall saturate you, influence you, take possession of you, carry you away! The Lord direct you into the love of God.

The second part of the prayer upon which we shall have to dwell is, “The Lord direct your hearts into the patience of Christ.” Now, Beloved, I have another great sea before me, and who am I that I should act as your convoy over this main ocean? Here I am lost. I cannot take my bearings. I am a lone speck upon the infinite. I will imitate the wise Apostle and pray, “The Lord direct your hearts into the patience of Christ.”

What a patience that was which Jesus exhibited for us in our redemption! To come from Heaven to earth, to dwell in poverty and neglect and find no room even in the inn! Admire the patience of Bethlehem. To hold His tongue for thirty years—who shall estimate the wonderful patience of Nazareth and the carpenter’s shop! When He spoke, to be despised and rejected of men. What patience for Him whom Cherubim obey! Oh, the patience of the Christ to be tempted of the devil! One can hardly tell what patience Christ must have had to let the devil come within ten thousand miles of him, for He was able to keep him far down in the abyss below His feet.

There is not much in a patience which cannot help itself. But you well know that all the while Christ could have conquered all foes, chased away all suffering and kept off all temptation. But for our sakes, as Captain of our salvation, that He might be made perfect through suffering, His patience had its perfect work, right on to Gethsemane. Do you need that I tell you this? Golgotha, with all its woes, its “lama Sabachthani,” its abysmal griefs—do I need remind you of the patience of Christ for us when the Lord laid on Him the iniquity of us all? Patient as a lamb, He opened not His mouth but stood in omnipotence of patience, all-sufficient to endure. You have heard of the patience of Job but you have need to enter into the patience of Jesus.

Oh, the patience within Christ Himself! God never seems so like a God as when He divinely rules Himself. I can understand His shaking earth and Heaven with His Word. But that He should possess His own soul in patience is far more incomprehensible. Marvel that omnipotent love should restrain omnipotence itself. In the life and death of our Lord Jesus

we see almighty patience. He was very sensitive—very sensitive of sin, very sensitive of unkindness, and yet, with all that sensitiveness He showed no petulance but bore Himself in all the calm grandeur of Godhead. He was not quick to resent an ill but He was patient to the uttermost. As I have said before, there went with His sensitiveness the power at any time to avenge Himself and deliver Himself but He would not use it.

Legions of angels would have been glad to come to His rescue but He bowed alone in the garden and gave Himself up to the betrayer without a word. And all the while He was most tender and graciously considerate of everybody but Himself. He spoke burning words sometimes—His mouth could be like the red lips of a volcano as He poured out the burning lava of denunciation upon “scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites.” But the resentment was never aroused by any injury done to Himself. When He looked that way it was always gentleness—He cried, “Father, forgive them. For they know not what they do.” Oh, the wondrous patience of Heaven’s own Christ!

Enter into His patience *with* us as well as *for* us. How He put up with each one of us when we would not come to Him! How He wept over us when we neglected Him! How He drew us with constancy of love when we tugged against the cords! And when we came to Him and since we have been with Him, what patience He has had with our ill manners! If I had been Christ, I would have discharged such a servant as I have been long ago. Often have I gone to His feet and cried, “Dismiss me not Your service, Lord.” I know how justly He might have stripped His livery from my back. But He has not done so. Have you not often wondered that He should still love you? He is affianced to you and He hates divorce.

But is it not marvelous that He keeps His betrothal with you and will do so, though you have often defiled yourself and forgotten Him? Blessed fact, the ring is on His finger rather than on yours and the marriage is as sure as His love. He will present you unto Himself, “without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing,” one of these days. But oh, His patience with each one of us! How He has put up with our unbelief, our mistrust, our hard hearts, our indifference, our strange ways! Never lover so kind as He! On our part never return so unworthy. Blessed be the patience of our Best Beloved!

Now, Beloved, what is wanted is that we be directed into this patience of Christ. The choicest saints in different ages of the world have studied most the passion of our Lord. And although nowadays we hear from the wise men that it is sensuous to talk about the Cross and the five wounds and so forth, for my part I feel that no contemplation ever does me so much real benefit as that which brings me very near my bleeding Lord. The Cross for me! The Cross for me! Here is doctrine humbling, softening, melting, elevating, sanctifying. Here is Truth that is of Heaven and yet comes down to earth—love that lifts me away from earth even to the seventh Heaven.

Have you ever read the words of holy Bernard, when his soul was all on fire with love of that dear name of which he so sweetly sang— ***“Jesus the very thought of You  
With sweetness fills my breast”?***

Why, Bernard is poet, philosopher and Divine, and yet a child in love. Have you studied Rutherford’s letters and the wondrous things which he says about his own dear Lord? For an hour at Glory’s gate commend me to heavenly Master Rutherford. Have you ever held fellowship with George Herbert, that saintly songster? Hear him as he cries—

***“How sweetly does my Master sound! My Master! As ambergris leaves a rich scent  
Unto the taster,  
So do these words a sweet content,  
An oriental fragrance, my Master!”***

O Friends, I can wish you no greater blessing than to be directed into these two things—the love of God and the patience of your Savior. Enter both at the same time. You cannot divide them—why should you? The love of God shines best in the patience of the Savior. And what is the patience of Christ but the love of the Father? “What God has joined together, let no man put asunder.” May the Lord lead us into both of them at this hour and continue upon us the heavenly process all the rest of our lives, in all experiences of sorrow and of rapture and in all moods and growths of our spirit!

**II.**But now I must ask your attention for the few minutes that remain to me to what is, perhaps, still the real gist of the text—HERE ARE TWO EMINENT VIRTUES TO BE ACQUIRED.

“The Lord direct your hearts into the love of God.” Beloved, let the love of God to you flow into your hearts and abide there till it settles down and bears on its surface the cream of love to God, yielded by your own heart. The only way to love God is to let God’s love to you dwell in your soul till it transforms your soul into itself. Love *to* God grows out of the love *of* God.

Well, now, concerning love *to* God—if you receive it fully into your souls it will nourish the contemplative life. You will want to be alone. You will prefer to sit silently at Jesus’ feet while others wrangle over the little politics of the house. You will give up being busy-bodies, talking in six peoples’ houses in an hour—quietude will charm you. You will love no company so much as the society of Him who is the Best and the Most. To be with God in quiet will be your highest enjoyment. You will not say, as some do, “I must have recreation.”

Contemplation of God is recreation to the child of God. It creates the soul anew. And is not this the truest recreation? Whenever God’s creation in us seems to have grown a little dim, love to God will gender and nourish the contemplative life and so make us come forth as new creatures, fresh from our Maker’s holy hand.

It will also animate the active life if you love God. You will feel that you must yield fruit unto your Lord. Your soul, when full of the love of God, will cry, “I must go after the wanderer. I must care for the poor. I must teach the ignorant.” You cannot love God and be lazy. Love to God will stir you up. Contemplation teaches you to sit still and this is no trifling lesson. But after sitting still, you rise with greater energy to go about the one thing needful, namely, the service of your Lord’s love.

Love to God will also arouse enthusiasm. We want more persons in the Church who will be a little daring—rash men and women who will do things which nobody else would think of doing, such as will make their prudent friends hold up their hands and say, “How could you? If you had consulted with me, I could have given you many a wise hint as to how it ought to have been done.” This has been my lot of late. I have been surfeited with notions as to how I should have acted. Yes, my Friend, I know you of old. You have wisdom at your fingers’ ends. But let me quietly whisper that you would have done nothing at all. You would have been too anxious to save yourself from trouble.

It is an easy thing to tell a man how he ought to have done it. And yet that man, perhaps, may be suffering intensely for having done bravely a well-meant deed. Instead of your showing sympathy with him, you treat him to the remark, “It might have been done better in another way.” There was never a child that was near drowning but what the man that plunged in and drew him out of the river ought to have done it in a better way. He wetted himself too much. He waited too long. Or he handled the drowning one too roughly. Alas, for silly criticisms of gracious deeds!

If you come to love God with all consuming zeal you will not be hindered by criticisms. You will testify for Jesus freely, because you cannot help yourself. It has to be done—somebody has to sacrifice himself to do it and you say to yourself, “Here am I, Lord, send me. At every risk or hazard, send me. For Your dear love’s sake I count it joy to suffer shame or loss. I count it life to suffer death that I may honor You.” Love to God will arouse enthusiasm.

It will also stimulate holy desire. They that love God can never have enough of Him—certainly never too much. Sometimes they are found pining after Him. When we love the Lord, we chide the laggard hours which keep us from His coming. Time has not wings enough—

***“My heart is with Him on His Throne,  
And ill can brook delay,  
Each moment listening for the voice,  
‘Rise up and come away.’ ”***

A heavenly love-sickness sometimes makes God’s handmaids swoon. For they long to see the Beloved face to face and to be like Him and to be with Him where He is. The Lord direct your hearts into the love of God in some such fashion as this. For it will make you sit loose by all things here below.

Do you ever feel that your wings are growing? Do you ever sigh, “Oh, that I had wings like a dove! For then would I fly away and be at rest”? And this love, better still, will transform the character. It is wonderful what a difference love makes in the person that is possessed with it. A poor timid hen that will fly away from every passerby loves its offspring and when it has its chicks about it, it will fight like a very lion for its young. And when the love of Christ comes into a timid Believer, how it changes him! It takes the love of sin away and implants a sublime nature.

Only God knows what a mortal man can yet become. Of women sunken in sin, what saints the Lord has made when He has filled them with His love! When the sun shines on a bit of glass bottle far away it flashes like a diamond. A little fleecy vapor in the sky rivals an angel’s wing when the sun pours itself upon it. Our Lord can put so much of Himself, by means of His love, into the hearts of His people that they may be mistaken for Himself. John made a blunder in Heaven and fell at the feet of one of his Brethren, the Prophets—for he had come to be so much like His Lord that John could hardly tell the one from the other. Had he forgotten that word, “We shall be like He. For we shall see Him as He is”? It does not yet appear what we shall be but love is the transfiguring power in the hand of the Holy Spirit. If the heart is directed into the love of Christ, it is on the highway to holiness.

Lastly—I am sorry that time will fly so fast just now—we want our hearts to be directed into patience towards Christ. What a subject is this! Beloved, if our heart is directed into patience towards Christ we shall suffer in patience for our Lord’s sake and we shall not complain. Those about us will say, “It is wonderful how resigned he seems.” Or, “How gladly she bears grief for love of Christ!” And if it is the suffering of reproach and scorn for Jesus’ sake, if we are directed into the patience of Christ, it will not seem to be any trouble at all. We shall bear it calmly and in our hearts we shall laugh at those who laugh at us for Jesus’ sake.

Yet it is not all patience of suffering that we want. We want the patience of *forbearing*. We must learn not to answer those who blaspheme. “Bear and forbear and be silent.” Chew the cud in peace. Put up with much. When reviled, revile not again. The Lord direct your hearts into the patience of Christ.

We shall also want the patience of working—working on when nothing comes of it—pleading on with souls that are not converted. Preaching when preaching seems to have no effect—teaching when the children do not care to learn. We need the patience of Christ who set His face like a flint and would accomplish His work, cost what it may. He never turned aside from it for a moment. The Lord direct our hearts into patient working.

Then there is the patience of watching in prayer—not giving it up because you have not received an answer. What? Did a friend say she had prayed for seventeen years for a certain mercy and now meant to ask it no more? Sister, make it eighteen years and when you have got to the end of eighteen make it nineteen. May the Lord direct our hearts into the patience of Christ in prayer! We long kept Him waiting—we need not complain if He makes us tarry at His leisure. Still believe. Still hope. Still wrestle, until the break of day.

Pray for the patience of waiting His will, saying, “Let Him do what seems Him good.” Though it be for months, for years, wait on. Christ is glorified by our patience. Depend on it, the best way in which certain of us can extol Him is by letting Him have His way with us. Even though He

plunge me into seven boiling caldrons one after the other, I will say—Let Him do what He wills with His own and I am His own. I am sure that He does not make the furnace one degree too hot. If He means to give His servant ten troubles, let His heavy hand fall even to the tenth, if so He pleases.

We want to be directed into patience towards Christ and especially in patience in waiting for His coming. That, no doubt, is very justly inferred and so it is put in our translation very prominently—“Patient waiting for Christ.” He will come, Brothers. He will come, Sisters. It is true the interpreters of the Book of Revelation told us that He was to come three hundred years ago and there are thousands upon thousands of books in the British Museum which were very dogmatic upon this point and yet they have all been disproved by the lapse of time.

Men were as sure as sure could be that Christ would come just then. And He did not, for He is bound by His Word—not by their interpretation of it. He will come at the appointed hour. To the jots and tittles, God’s Word will stand. He will come to the tick of the clock. We know not when. We need not ask. But let us wait.

Just now some of you may be, as I am, troubled because the Lord does not yet appear to vindicate His cause. And there is noise and triumph among the priests of Baal. The Lord direct our hearts into the patience of Christ. It is all right. Clouds gather. The darkness becomes more dense. The thunder rolls, friends flee in confusion. What next? Well, perhaps before we have hardly time for dread, silver drops of gracious rain may fall and the sun may break through the clouds and we may say to ourselves, “Who would have thought it?”—

***“You fearful saints, fresh courage take,  
The clouds you so much dread  
Are big with mercy and shall break  
In blessings on your head.”***

May the Lord direct each one of us into the patient waiting for Christ! I am sorry, very sorry, that there are persons here to whom all this must seem a strange lot of talk. They know nothing about it. Dear Souls, you cannot at present know anything about it. You must first be born again. A total change of heart must come over you before you can enter into the love of God or the patience of Christ. May that change take place tonight, before you go to sleep!

If the Lord shall lead you to seek His face, this is the way to seek it— trust His dear Son. Lifted on the Cross is Jesus Christ, the great Propitiation for sin. Look to Him and looking alone to Him, you shall be saved. He will give you the new heart and the right spirit with which you shall be enabled to enter into the love of God and the patience of Christ. The Lord direct you at this very hour, for Jesus’ sake! Amen.

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÷2Th 3.13

FACING THE WIND  
NO. 2918

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, JANUARY 12, 1905.

***DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON THURSDAY EVENING, SEPTEMBER 28, 1876.**

***“But you, brethren, be not weary in doing good,”***2Th 3:13

THE Christian church ought to be an assembly of holy men. Its members should, all of them, be eminently peaceable, honest, upright, gracious and Christlike. In the main and in spite of all our failures I trust these characteristics may be seen in the churches of our Lord Jesus Christ. But, still, from the beginning there has been a mixture. Judas in the sacred college of the 12 Apostles seemed to be a prophecy to us that there would always be troubles in Israel. It was so in the Church at Thessalonica to which Paul wrote two Epistles, part of the last of which we have just now been reading. There was evidently, then, a class of people who because the charity of the church was very large, imposed upon it and, under pretense of great spirituality, refused to work, busying themselves instead in doing mischief according to the old adage that—

***“Satan finds some mischief still***

***For idle hands to do.”***  
We sometimes complain of our churches now. I very greatly question whether an average church of Christ in modern times is not considerably superior to any church that we have read of in the New Testament— certainly very superior to some of them. In the Church at Corinth they tolerated a brother who lived in incest. I trust there is no Christian church, at least in our own denomination, that would endure such a thing for an hour! And when this man had been put out by Paul’s command and proved penitent, then the Church at Corinth, which was a church that did not believe in ministry, you know, (there is a class of Christians of that sort, now, which resembles greatly these Corinthians), because they had once put him out, refused to receive him again though he was penitent and wanted to return.

I scarcely know a Christian church that would refuse to receive into its membership again, a brother who had erred if he showed signs of true repentance. The churches of today, compared with the early churches of Christ, can say that the Grace of God has been extended to us, even as unto them—and we now have no right to be continually crying down the operations of the Holy Spirit in the churches by making unfair comparisons between them and the churches of old. They had their faults, as we have ours. They came short in many respects, even as we do. Instead of bringing a railing accusation against churches as they are, the best thing is for everyone of us to do his best in the sight of God to make them what they should be, by seeking our own personal sanctification and endeavoring that the influence of a holy life shall, in our case, help to leaven the rest of the mass.

Paul turns from the consideration of those who had grieved him in the church to speak to the rest of the brethren and says to them, “But you, brethren, be not weary in doing good.” In expounding these words we shall, first, notice that our text contains a summary of Christian life—it is called, “doing good.” Secondly, we shall see it gives out a very distinct warning against weariness and it hints at some of the causes of weariness in the Christian life. In the third place, I shall close the discourse by giving some arguments to meet the reasoning of our soul when, at times, it seems to plead its own weariness as an excuse.

**I.**First, then, Brothers and Sisters, our text contains A SUMMARY OF CHRISTIAN LIFE. It is “doing good.” This is all you have to do—you that have been redeemed by the blood of Jesus and renewed in the spirit of your minds. You have to spend your lives in doing good!

Now this is a very comprehensive term and we are certain that it includes *the common acts of daily life*. You perceive the Apostle had been speaking of some who would not work—“working not at all,” he says, and he commands them that they should labor and should eat their own bread. It is clear, then, from the connection, that the work by which a man earns his daily bread is a part of the doing good to which he is called. It is not only preaching and praying and going to meetings that are to be commended. These are useful in their place. But doing good consists in taking down the shutters and selling your goods, tucking up your shirt sleeves and doing a good day’s work—sweeping the carpets and dusting the chairs if you happen to be a domestic servant. Doing good is attending to the duties that arise out of our relationships in life— attending carefully to them and seeing that in nothing we are eye-servers and men-pleasers—but in everything are seeking to serve God. I know it is difficult to make people feel that such simple and ordinary things as these are doing good. Sometimes stopping at home and mending the children’s clothes does not seem to a mother quite so much “doing good” as going to a Prayer Meeting. And yet it may be that the going to a Prayer Meeting would be doing ill if the other duty had to be neglected. It is still a sort of superstition among men that the cobbler’s lap stone and the carpenter’s adze are not sacred things and that you cannot serve God with them—you must get a Bible and break its back at a revival meeting, or give out a hymn and sing it lustily in order to serve God.

Now, far am I from speaking even half a word against all the zeal and earnestness that can be expended in religious engagements. These things you ought to have done, but the other things are not to be left undone, or to be depreciated in any way whatever. When Peter saw the sheet come down from Heaven, you remember it contained all manner of beasts and creeping things. God said even of the creeping things that He had cleansed them and they were not to be counted common—from which I gather, among a great many other things, that even the most menial of the forms of service—even the most common actions of life—if they are done as unto the Lord, are cleansed and become holy things and are by no means to be despised. Do not cry down your church, but make your house also your church! Find fault as you like with vestments, but make your ordinary smock-frock your vestment and be a priest in it to the living God! Away with superstition! Kill it by counting every place to be holy, every day to be holy and every action that you perform to be a part of the high priesthood to which the Lord Jesus Christ has called every soul that He has washed in His precious blood!

That these common things are doing good is very evident if you will only think of the result of their being left undone. There is a father and he thinks that to go to his work—such common work as his—cannot be especially pleasing in God’s sight. He means to serve God and so he stays home! He is upstairs in prayer when the factory bell is ringing and he ought to be there. He hears that there is a conference in the morning, so he attends that—and then he has another period of prayer—he spends all the week like that and then on Saturday night there is nothing for his wife. Now, you see, directly, that he has been doing ill because it was his duty to provide for his own household. And if a man, being a husband and a father, neglects to find daily food for his wife and little children, all the world cries shame on him! Does not Nature, itself, say, “This man cannot be engaged in doing good”? It cannot possibly be so. Though at first sight the ordinary toil for daily bread looks to be a very commonplace thing, yet if you only suppose it to be neglected, the leaving of it out is no commonplace thing, but brings all manner of mischief.

Suppose, on the other hand, that the Christian woman were to become so very devout—so ashamed to be like Martha—so certain not to be cumbered with much serving that she would not serve at all in Martha’s direction, but always sat still and read and prayed, and meditated leaving the children unwashed and nothing done for the household? The husband—perhaps a worldly man—may be driven away from the house by the lack of comfort in it and sent into ill company. He may, indeed, he ruined. You can all see that whatever pretence there might be of doing good about the wife’s conduct, it would not, *it could not really be doing good*, for the first business of the Christian woman placed in that position is to see to it that her household is ordered aright, even as Jesus Christ would have it. Oh, dear Friends, it is an art to balance duties so as never to sacrifice to God one duty stained red with the blood of another duty that you have destroyed in getting this one ready for the sacrifice! Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar’s and unto God the things that are God’s. Give to husband and child and to the household the share that is due and then—I will not say give God the rest—but give God that service and all besides! He would not have you bring robbery for burnt offering and He will accept that as done to Him which you have, as a matter of duty, done to others. So then, common life is included in the term, “doing good.”

I think, also, from the connection, that anyone would conclude that *attending to the poor and doing good to all that are in need* is included in the term, “doing good.” The connection seems to say that there were certain persons in the Thessalonian Church who had abused Christian charity—living upon it instead of working and eating their own bread. The Apostle says, “But you, brethren be not weary in doing good.” Do not say, as some do, “There are really so many imposters that I shall give nothing at all. I have been deceived so many times and have given to persons who have only put my gift to bad use, that I do not intend to open my wallet any more, but shall keep what I have or lay it out in some other way.” “No,” says the Apostle, “you must not do that—be not weary in doing good.” It is the part of a Christian to seek as much as lies in him to do good unto all men—and especially to those of the household of faith. It is one of Christ’s precepts to “Give to him that asks of you and turn him not away who would borrow from you.” A general spirit of generosity to those in need is synonymous with the Gospel—the reverse may be suitable to the Law with its rigor—but not to the Gospel with its noble-hearted love! Christian Brothers and Sisters, you must remember those who are in need as being, as yourself, a part of the body of Christ! As much as lies in you, “comfort the feeble-minded, support the weak, be patient towards all men.”

So we see that within the range of “doing good” is included a kind and tender consideration of all those who are in need.  
But, Brothers and Sisters, the circle of “doing good” which is to be the Christian’s life, though it makes a wide sweep, includes *the things that are nearer the center.*“Doing good” means that I love the Lord, my God, with all my heart—that I commune with Him—that I dedicate myself to Him and give all that I have to the extension of His Kingdom and to the honoring of His glorious name!  
If you want to know what doing good is, I will give you a few hints and tests. *Everything is doing good that is done in obedience to a Divine command.* If you have God’s Word for it, it is doing good. Some may call you imprudent, but it is doing good if you do what God bids—and it is prudent, too. In the long run you shall find it so. When God says, “Do this,” let it be done at once—that is doing good. And if He says, “You shall not,” the doing good is fleeing from the accursed thing! Let not your own wisdom and prudence ever fly in the teeth of a positive command of God! When you are doing what God bids you, you are doing well—and you need have no difficulty in defending yourself. God will not allow that man ever to be confounded who makes the will of God to be the law of his life. So may it always be with us.  
Taking the first condition for granted, in the next place *everything is doing good that is done in faith.*“Whatever is not of faith is sin.” That is to say, even though the thing you do is right, if you do not believe it to be right it is not right for you. There are many things that I may do that you must not do because you do not think it would be right to do them. Therefore you must refrain. Even, I say again, if the thing is not in itself a wrong thing, yet if it *seem* wrong to you, it *will*be wrong to you— therefore do it not. Paul could eat the meat that had been offered to idols without being troubled in his conscience, but there were some who thought that if they ate it, they would be partakers with the idol. Paul did not think so and, moreover, he said, “An idol is nothing in the world. Whatever is sold in the shambles, I eat asking no question for conscience sake.” Still, “he that doubts is condemned if he eats.” If he has his doubts about it and thinks he should not do it, he must not do it. He will not be practicing the art of doing good if he does that concerning which his conscience raises any scruple. If you can say with Scripture warrant, “God permits this and I can do it, feeling that He permits it,” you are doing well in so doing.  
Again, *everything that is done out of love to God is doing good*. Ah, this is a motive that sways no man till he is born-again. But when God, who is Love, has begotten us into His own likeness, then we love God and love becomes the motive of all our actions. I hope, Beloved, this is the mainspring of our doings and goings—that you would be God’s servants or God’s ministers because you love God—that you seek to bear up under poverty or to use with discretion and liberality the riches with which you are entrusted because you love God. If a man loves not God, how little there can be of doing good about him! Yes, he lacks the very root of it all if he has not love to God.  
*Doing good includes doing what we do in the name of the Lord Jesus*. How this should stop some professors in a great many actions. Have we not the exhortation, “Whatever you do, in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus”? If there is anything you cannot do in the name of the Lord Jesus, do it not, for to do it will not be doing good! In the name of the Lord Jesus you may go to your daily labor, for He went to His for 30 years and worked in the carpenter’s shop. In the name of the Lord Jesus you may undertake all the duties of your calling if that calling is a right one. But if it is not, you have no right to be in it at all, but should get out of it at once! You may do in the name of the Lord Jesus all that men would do if you are a saved soul and your heart is right towards Him.  
Still further, *doing good includes that which we do in Divine strength*. There is no doing good except we get power to do it from the Holy One of Israel. The Spirit of God is the Author of all true fruit in the Christian life. Except we abide in Christ and receive the sap of the Sacred Spirit from Him, we cannot bring forth fruit, for, “without Me,” He says, “you can do nothing.” But to work in the Divine strength is doing good. Poor and feeble though it is, if I do it out of love to Christ and with the little strength I have, acknowledging that I would not even have that but for His Grace, my act is an act of doing good. Even though I have to mourn my failures and mistakes, nevertheless I may feel that with a true heart I am striving to glorify God and that I am surrendering myself to the Divine impulses so as to be ready to do everything as unto my Master. Then am I living as a Christian should live in doing good.  
Brothers and Sisters, we are very great at wishing well and “if wishes were horses, beggars might ride.” If wishing well meant anything, there would be some very great saints about! But the practice of a Christian should be to do what he knows should be done—doing good. Resolving well is a very common habit. Suggesting well and criticizing well are tempers of mind familiar to most of us. Some of you could take a high degree in admirably criticizing everybody else that does anything—and putting your own hands into your pockets and keeping them there! Talking well is also a great deal more common than doing good. But the Christian life lies in none of these things. If God has given you the life of the Spirit, you will not bring forth only buds and blossoms and flowers, but there will be fruit—the fruit of doing good!  
So much concerning the first point.  
**II.**Now let us turn to the second point which is this—there is A WARNING AGAINST WEARINESS IN DOING GOOD. Is it possible, you say, “that a child of God can ever grow weary of doing good?” I suppose so, for I remember another text which says, “Let us not be weary in doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we faint not.” And the marginal reading of this text, itself, is, “Faint not.” I suppose that blessed as it is to be doing good and to be living unto God, yet while the spirit is willing, the flesh is weak and there is a danger of our getting weary in the most happy exercise.  
The first danger is mentioned in the context. There is a tendency to cease from doing good *because of the unworthy receivers of our good deeds*. As I have already said, there were those in the Thessalonian Church who received the gifts of the faithful and who sat still and did nothing that was of any good. They became a pest and nuisance to their neighbors. Now, the natural tendency of others in the Church would be to say, “Well, I do not know what others think about it, but I shall give no more.” “No,” says the Apostle, “be not weary in doing good.” It is bad that that man should make a bad use of your gifts, but it will be worse, still, if he should induce you to harden your heart! It is a loss, perhaps, to give to a man who wastes, but it will be a greater loss not to give at all! I remember one who spoke on the missionary question one day saying, “The great question is not, ‘Will not the heathen be saved if we do not send them the Gospel?’ but, ‘Are we saved, ourselves, if we do not send them the Gospel?’” And so it is with regard to Christian gifts. It is not so much a question how far this or that man is benefitted or hurt by what we give, but what about ourselves if we have no heart of compassion for a Brother or Sister who is in need? What about the hardening influence on our own soul if we get, at last, into a condition that we say, “I am weary in having done what I have done because I see to what an ill use it is turned”? I believe that to be a common temptation of the present age and I see that all the political economists and the newspaper men almost as good as tell us that it is one of the most wicked things we can ever do, to help the poor at all—it is indeed a dreadful thing unless we do it through that blessed machinery of the poor Law which seems to be the next thing to the Kingdom of Heaven in their estimation! There seems to me to be, however, a very long distance between them and I trust that Christians will continually, by their actions, bear their protest against the steeling of the believing Christian’s renewed heart against their fellow men because they seem to pervert the doing good into evil.  
We have need of warning *because idle examples tempt others to idleness*. If there were in the Church at Thessalonica some who did not work, there would no doubt be others who would say, “We will do the same. Since that fellow never does a hand’s-turn, but only goes about and talks and makes a good thing of it, why should not I do likewise?” “No,” says the Apostle, “be not weary in doing good. Do not give up your daily work. Do not give up any form of service because others have done so, for you can see, if you look at them, that they turn out to be busybodies. You do not need to become mischief-makers such as they are! Therefore shun their conduct—avoid it with all your might—and do not weary in doing good even if you see others who apparently prosper by doing nothing at all.”  
Again, I think the Apostle would say to us, “Be not weary in doing good *because of unreasonable and wicked men.*” We read about them just now and I made a remark about them. [In the *Exposition* printed at the end of the sermon.] Whenever anybody gets very earnest for Christ and lays himself out for God’s Glory, there is sure to be a little lot of unreasonable and wicked men who get round him. The birds go flying through the orchard and they do not say a word to one another till they come to a cherry tree where the cherries are very sweet and ripe. Then they all fall at once and begin to peck away with all their might! So of an ordinary Christian who is doing little for his Master—nobody says much, except, perhaps, “He is a very good respectable man. Never bothers anybody with his religion.” But let him become earnest—let his fruit be ripe and sweet before the Lord and, believe me, more birds than you ever thought were about will come—and they will peck at the ripe fruit. That which God approves most will be just that which they most violently condemn! If you get into such a case as that, my Brothers and Sisters, be not weary of doing good because of your critics. Does it matter, after all, what men think of us? Are we *their* servants? Do we live on the breath of *their* nostrils? Do they think that their praises inflate and exalt us? Do they dream that their censures can make us sleep a wink less or even ruffle our spirits? I trust, if we know the Lord aright, we are of the mind of Ann Askew, who, after she had been racked, sat up with every bone out of joint and, as full of pain as she could live, said to her tormentors— ***“I am not she that lists  
My anchor to let fall  
For every drizzling mist.  
My ship’s substantial.”***

And she bore out the storm and did not intend to cast anchor because of her persecutors! Glory be to God when He shall have delivered you altogether from the bleating of the sheep and from the howling of the wolves, too, and make you willing to let your enemies say their say—and say it over again as long as it pleases them—but as for you, your heart is fixed to go on in what you know to be doing good till your Master, Himself, shall say to you, “Well done!”

Once more. There is a temptation to cease from doing good not only because of unreasonable and wicked men outside the church, but, according to the context—and I am keeping to that—*because of busybodies inside the church.*Some of these are men—some of them are not. There are busybodies about everywhere. They do not speak out very distinctly—they whisper and they do it with a sigh! Perhaps nothing is said, but there is a shrug of the shoulders. “So-and-So is an excellent woman.” “What a wonderful work she is doing for Christ!” “Well—yes, but—such-and-such a man! How greatly God honors him in the winning of souls.” “Yes—ah, yes—I *suppose* it is so.” That is the style. And then straightway there are ambiguous voices sounding abroad and depreciating things said! I have known some of tender heart that have suffered—I dare not think how much—from the insinuations of idle people who, I hope, did not know the suffering they were causing or they would have run to give help instead. But there is so much of this thoughtless babbling of innuendos even among those who, we trust, are God’s people, that if any such are here I would earnestly entreat them to give up that bad business! And if any Brother or Sister here has suffered from such people, do not suffer more than you can help it, for this idle chatter is not worth a thought!

Do not let it prey upon your mind because, well, there is nothing in it! All the dirt that people can fling will brush off when it is dry. You do not expect, do you, to go to Heaven on a grassy path that is mowed and rolled for you every morning with all the dew swept off? If you expect that, you will be mistaken. You may even learn something from what these busybodies say about you. It is not true, of course, but, Brother, if they had known you better, they might have said something worse that *was true*! They picked a fault where there was none. Well, but you know there *are* some faults that they do not know and had not you better amend them lest they should pick those next time? The eagle eyes of envy and malice should even be sanctified to our good to keep us the more watchful—and to make us more earnestly seek to be diligent in doing good. Courage, faint heart—it will all be over, by-and-by, and we shall be before that Judgment Seat where the talk of friends and the threat of foes will go for nothing! We are being examined here by this and that, but what matters the result of the examination? The Lord weighs the spirits and if in those great scales we shall, at last by Divine Grace, escape from having the sentence pronounced, “You are weighed in the balance and found wanting,” it will be a theme for everlasting joy! Let us look to that verdict and not care for the praise or blame of men.

**III.**Now I am going to close by bringing up A FEW ARGUMENTS TO KEEP MY DEAR BRETHREN WITH THEIR FACES TO THE WIND. I want you that are going uphill for Christ and find the wind blowing very sharp, to set a hard face against a strong wind and to go right straight on all the same. If you have to fight your way to Heaven through every inch of your life, I would encourage you to keep on. May God’s Spirit give you strength to do so!

And first, you say, “Oh, but this service—keeping your garments always white—is hard work. *Doing good needs so much effort.*I am afraid I shall be weary.” Now, I would ask you to remember that when you had just begun business and you needed to make a little money, how early you rose in the morning, how many hours you worked in the day! Why, you that are getting gray now knew that in those days everybody wondered at you because you threw such strength into everything—you did the work of two or three men! What was all that effort for? For yourself, was it not? My dear Brother, can you put all those exertions forth for yourself and cannot you put out as much effort for Christ? That was only for the worldly things—shall there not be something like that in the spiritual things? It is enough to shame some people—the way they toil to get on in business and then the little energy they show in the things of Christ!

I used to tell a story of a Brother I once knew who, at the Prayer Meeting, was accustomed to pray in such a way that I was always sorry when he got up, for nobody could hear him. And I always thought that he had a very feeble voice. I had indistinctly heard the Brother mutter something to God and I felt that we had better not ask him again, for his voice was so thin. But I stepped into his shop one day—he did not know that I was there and I heard him say, “John, bring that half-hundred weight.” “Oh,” I thought, “there is a very different tone in the business from what there is in the Prayer Meeting!” It is symbolical of a great many people. They have one voice for the world and another voice for Christ. What weight they throw into the ordinary engagements, but what little force and weight there is when they come to the things of God! If that should touch any Brother here, I hope he will carefully take it to himself. I am afraid it has to do with a great many of us and I put it thus—if for the poor things of this world we have often manifested so much vigor, what ought to be expected of us—of us who are under such obligations to Divine Grace—in the service of such a Master in reference to eternal things?

“But,” says one, “such *doing good requires so much self-denial*. I trust I am a Christian, but I sometimes hesitate because to deny one’s self again and again and again and to lead a life of constant self-denial is, I am afraid, too much for me.” Yes, but, dear Brother, recollect what Paul bids you remember. He was thinking of the men that went to the boxing matches and the men that went to the races among the Greeks—how they had to contend for a crown that was only of parsley or laurel. Weeks and months before they ran, they kept under their body, brought it into subjection and denied themselves all sorts of things they would have rejoiced in, till they got the muscles well out and by degrees pulled the flesh off their bones to get them into condition to enter into the arena. Now, says the Apostle, they do it for a corruptible crown, but we for an incorruptible! I am sure the hardships to which some of those champions in the public games put themselves were enough to make the cheek of professors mantle with crimson when they think that the little selfdenials of their life are often too severe for them! May God in Infinite Mercy help us not to be weary in doing good since these stand before us as examples!

“Yes,” says one, “but I grow weary because, though I could deny myself, continued *doing good brings such persecution*. I am surrounded by people who have no sympathy with me. On the contrary, if they could stamp out the little spark of spiritual religion that I have in me, they would be glad to do it.” Now, my dear Brother, be not weary in doing good because of this, but look up yonder! I can see in vision a whiterobed throng. Each one bears a palm branch and together they sing an exultant song of triumph. Who are these that thus wear a ruby crown?—

***“These are they who bore the cross,  
Faithful to their Master died,  
Suffered in His righteous cause,  
Followers of the Crucified!”***

Take down Master Fox’s *Book of Martyrs* and read a dozen pages—and after that see whether you are able to put yourselves on a par with the saints of old. “You have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin.” Your persecution is only a silly joke or two against you, a bit of frivolous jesting—that is all. These things break no bones! O Sirs, ask Divine Grace to enable you to rejoice and to be exceedingly glad when they say all manner of evil against you falsely for Christ’s sake! For so they prosecuted the Prophets that were before you—therefore be not dismayed.

But another says, “No, Sir, I could bear anything for Christ, but do you know I have been trying to do good to my neighbors, to the children of my class, and to the others—and I really think that the more I try to do good to people, the worse they are—*doing good is followed by so little result.*I have labored in vain and spent my strength for nothing and, you know, Sir, that hope deferred makes the heart sick. They seem to refuse and reject my message though I put it very kindly.” Now listen to me, if ever you listened in your life! You must not—you *dare not* complain of this because—and I know you well, there once came to your door one who loved you better than you love these people—He knocked with a hand that had been pierced for you and you refused Him admission! He knocked and knocked again, and said, “Open to Me, for My head is filled with the dew and My locks with the drops of the night.” But you would not open to Him. Then He went His way and you were much worse than before. Sometimes you said you would open, but you did not. And by the month together—ah, perhaps I do not exaggerate when I say, by the *year* together—“that Man of Love, the Crucified,” came to you again and again and again and pleaded His wounds and blood with you and yet you refused Him! You have now admitted Him, but no thanks to you—you would never have done it if He had not put in His hand by the hole of the door and then your heart was moved for Him. Then He came into your soul and He is still supping with you. Now, after that, you must never say a word when they shut the door against you! You must, say, “This is how I treated my Master. It has come back to me and in good measure, but not pressed down or running over. And so I am well content to bear rebuffs for His sake since He bore them from me, even from me.”

“Still,” says one, “I have gone on and on, trying to do good in my sphere. I have given much and I still desire to do the same, but I do not appear to get much return—*doing good does not earn much gratitude.*If I had some thanks I would not so much mind. Indeed, I do not seem to be doing any good, either. If I saw some results I would not be weary.” Once more I speak and then I am done. Do you not know that there is One who thus every day bade the showers descend upon the earth? And when they fell, He did not say to the raindrops, “Fall on the crops of the grateful farmers and let the Christian men have all the benefit of the shower.” No, He sent the clouds and they poured out the rain that fell on the churl’s land and watered his property! Tomorrow morning when the sun rises, it will light the blasphemer’s bed as well as the chamber of the saint. And tonight God lends His moon to those that break His Laws with a high hand and defile themselves as well as to those who go forth on ministries of mercy. He stops neither rain nor sun nor moon, nor makes a star the to shine less, nor sends less oxygen into the atmosphere, or less health in the winds because man sins!

And there are whole nations where, when God gives His bounties, idols and images are thanked and not the gracious Giver! There are other nations where, when God makes the vine to produce its fruit, the people turn it into drunkenness. And when He bids the corn be multiplied, they turn it into gluttony and surfeit and pride. Yet He does not restrain His gifts. Therefore you keep on even as the great God continues to work unweariedly. He has done good to you and to thousands like you. If you were to skip doing good to men, what would you be saying to God? “Lord, this race does not deserve that You should do it any good. Do not do any more good.” Your conduct in saying that your fellow creatures do not deserve that you should do them any good says, in the most emphatic manner, that you do not think God ought to do them any good, either, for if God should do them good, much more should you who are so much less than He. And if you stop your hand and say, “It is no use doing any more good,” you, in effect, pray God never to do any more good to your fellow men! That is an inhuman prayer and tempts God. I pray you let not the action which incarnates such a prayer ever spring from us again!

Come, Brothers and Sisters, the Lord Jesus Christ has blotted out our sins. He has bought us with His blood! We belong to Him and whatever service He gives us to do, He will give us the strength to do it! So let us go back to our work with joy. If we have been grumbling—if we have complained at all—let us ask His forgiveness and buckle our harness on anew, saying, “Master, You shall not find me skulking, but as long as the day lasts and You give me strength, I will reap in Your fields, or work in Your vineyards according to Your bidding, thankful for the great honor of being permitted to do anything for You and even for having to put up with inconvenience for Your sake. Seeing that You did endure so much for me, why should I not bear something for You?”

You may have to face a gale of wind, but you may face it gaily in the strength of your Lord! Keep on and keep on keeping on! You shall be more than conquerors through Him that loved you, over all the oppositions of men. Why, be comforted, beloved fellow laborers, and let no Brother’s heart fail him because of anything that has happened to him. Let no Sister’s hands hang down, but, “be you steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as you know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.” I pray God to lead many others to enlist in this service, but they must first believe in Jesus Christ. When they have done so, then they may also come and share in the blessed warfare—and they shall have their reward! The Lord bless you, for Christ’s sake.

—Adapted from *The C. H. Spurgeon Collection,* Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307  
**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.** Sermon #1343 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

**÷2Th 3.16**

THE JEWEL OF PEACE  
NO. 1343

**DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, MARCH 18, 1877, *BY C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“Now the Lord of Peace Himself give you peace always by all means. The Lord be with you all.”***2Th 3:16***.***

WHEN the heart is full of love it finds the hand too feeble for its desires. Therefore it seeks relief in intercession and benediction—wishing, praying and blessing where it cannot actually effect its loving purpose. The Apostle would have done for the Thessalonians all the good that was conceivable had it been in his power, but his wishes far outstripped his abilities and, therefore, he betook himself to interceding for them and to invoking upon them the blessing of the Lord and Master whom he served. Here is a lesson for us in the art of doing good—as we lengthen the eyesight with the telescope, as we send our words afar by the telegraph—so let us extend our ability to do good by the constant use of intercessory prayer.

Parents, when you have done all you can for your children, be thankful that you may introduce them to a further and greater blessing by commending them to the care of the great Father in Heaven! Friends, do your friends the best possible deed of friendship by asking for them the friendship of God. You who love the souls of men, when you have poured out all your strength on their behalf, bless God that there is still something *more* which you can do, for by entreaties and supplications you may bring down from on high the earnest and the effectual energy of the Holy Spirit who can work in their hearts that which it is not in *your* power to accomplish!

The Apostle saw that the Thessalonians were much troubled and he wrote the most encouraging words to cheer them. But he knew that he could not take the burden from off their hearts and, therefore, he turned to the God of all consolation and prayed *Him* to give them peace always by all means. The slenderness of our power to bless others will be no detriment to them if it leads us to lay hold upon the eternal strength, for that will bring into the field a superior power to bless—and our infirmity will only make space for the display of Divine Grace. Let us look, first, at the many-sided blessing which the Apostle invokes—peace. And then let us note the special desirableness of it. Thirdly, let us observe from whom, alone, it comes. And fourthly, note the wide sweep of the Apostolic prayer.

**I.**First, then, let us look at THE MANY-SIDED BLESSING—“The Lord of Peace Himself give you peace.” Some have thought to restrict the expression to peace within the Church since disorderly members were evidently increasing among the Thessalonians. But that is a very straitened and cowardly interpretation and it is never wise to narrow the meaning of God’s Word. Indeed, such a contracted explanation cannot be borne, for it does not appear that the disorderly persons mentioned in the chapter

had, as yet, created any special disturbance—they had been quietly fattening at the expense of their generous Brethren and would not be very eager to quarrel with the rack from which they fed.

Although, no doubt, Church quiet is included as one variety of peace, yet it would be a sad dwarfing of the meaning of the Spirit to consider one phase of the blessing to the neglect of the rest. No, the peace here meant is “the deep tranquility of a soul resting on God”—the quiet restfulness of spirit which is the peculiar gift of God and the choice privilege of the Believer. “Great peace have all they that love Your Law, and nothing shall offend them.” The peace of the text is a gem with many facets, but in considering its many-sidedness we must remember that its main bearing is toward God. The deepest, best, and most worthy peace of the soul is its rest towards the Lord God, Himself.

I trust we know this and are enjoying it at this moment. We are no longer afraid of God—the sin which divided us from Him is blotted out and the distance which it created has ceased to be. The Atonement has worked perfect reconciliation and established everlasting peace. The terrors of God’s Law are effectually removed from us and, instead thereof, we feel the drawings of His love. We are brought near by the atoning Sacrifice and have peace with God through Jesus Christ our Lord. We know that all His thoughts to us are thoughts of love and we bless His name that our thoughts toward Him are no longer those of the slave towards a taskmaster, or of a criminal towards a judge, but those of a beloved child towards a kind and tender father.

Fervent love reigns in our hearts, casting out all fear and causing us to joy in God by our Lord Jesus Christ. This is a great blessing! It is surely a choice delight for a man to know that whether he prospers or is afflicted, whether he lives or dies, there is nothing between God and him but perfect amity, for all that offends has been effectually put away. Beloved, when the Apostle wishes us peace in the words of our text, he no doubt means that our hearts should be at *perfect* peace by being placed fully in accord with the will of God. But, alas, we have known some who we hope are forgiven and are God’s children, who, nevertheless, quarrel with God.

They are not pleased with what He does and even complain that He deals harshly with them—they are naughty children and carry on a sort of sullen contention with their heavenly Father because He does not indulge them in all their whims and fancies. Now, may the Lord of Peace put an end to all such grievous warfare of heart in His people! May you love the Lord so well and trust Him so fully that you could not pick a quarrel with Him even if He smote you and bruised you and broke your bones! Whatever He does is not only to be accepted with submission, but to be rejoiced in. That which pleases Him should please us. We have perfect peace when we can magnify and praise the Lord even for the sharp cuts of His rod and the fierce fires of His furnace! May the Lord bring us into this state, for there is no joy like it—perfect peace with God is Heaven below!

Yes, Brothers and Sisters, we reach a little further than reconciliation and submission, for we come into the enjoyment of conscious *complacency*. There are men who are at peace with God as to the forgiveness of sin and, in a measure, are in accord with His will, but they are not walking carefully in the path of obedience and so they are missing the sense of Divine Love. God is their Father and He loves them—but He hides His face from them. They walk contrary to Him and so He walks contrary to them. We cannot consider such a condition to be one of fullest peace. The truly restful state of mind is enjoyed when the heart and life are daily cleansed by Grace so that there is nothing to grieve the Spirit of God and, therefore, the Lord feels it right to favor His child with the light of His Countenance in full meridian splendor!

O how blessed to bask in the sunlight of Jehovah’s love, free from all doubt and being no more conscious of sin! In that sense of conscious favor lies the rest of Heaven. May the Lord of Peace Himself give us this peace! This peace, because sin is forgiven, is the sweet fruit of justification—“therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God.” This peace, because the heart is renewed and made to agree with the will of God, is the blessed result of sanctification, for “to be spiritually-minded is life and peace.” This peace, because the soul is conscious of being the object of Divine Love, is a precious attendant upon the spirit of adoption which is the very essence of peace! Brothers and Sisters in Christ, may this threefold peace with God be with you always!

Now we look further and note that this peace spreads itself abroad and covers all things with its soft light. God is great and fills all things. He who becomes at peace with Him is at peace with all things. Being reconciled to God, the Believer says—“All things are mine, whether things present or things to come. All are mine, for I am Christ’s and Christ is God’s.” Behold, the Lord has made us to be in league with the stones of the field and the beasts of the field are at peace with us! Providence is our pavilion and angels are our attendants. All things work together for our good, now that we love God and are the called according to His purpose. No longer are we afraid of the terror by night, nor of the arrow that flies by day, nor of the pestilence that walks in darkness, nor of the destruction which wastes at noonday!

Behold the Lord God covers us with His feathers and under His wings do we trust! His Truth is our shield and buckler. Because we have set our love upon Him, He delivers us and He sets us on high because we have known His name. At peace with the Lord of Hosts we are at peace with all the armies of the universe, in alliance with all the forces which muster at Jehovah’s bidding! Though we must be at war with Satan, yet even *he* is chained and made as a slave to accomplish purposes of good contrary to his own will. There is neither in Heaven nor earth nor Hell, anything that we need fear when we are once right with God! Settle the center and the circumference is secure—peace with God is universal peace.

This practically shows itself in the Christian’s inward peace with regard to his present circumstances, be they what they may. Being at peace with God, he sees the Lord’s hand in everything around him and is content. Is he poor? The Lord makes him rich in faith and he asks not for gold. Is he sick? The Lord endows him with patience and he glories in his afflictions.

Is he laid aside from the holy service which he so much loves? He feels that the Lord knows best. If he might be actively engaged in doing God’s will, he would be very thankful and run with diligence the race set before him.

But if he must lie in the hospital and suffer rather than serve, he does not wish to put his own wishes before the will of his Master—he leaves himself in the Lord’s hands, saying—“Lord, do as You will with me. I am so at peace with You that if You use me, I will bless You. And if You lay me aside, I will bless You. If You spare my life, I will bless You, and if You bring me down to the grave I will bless You. If You honor me among men, I will bless You, and if You make me to be trod under foot like straw for the dunghill, I will still bless You—for You are everything and I am nothing— You are all goodness and I am sin and emptiness.”

The soul which thus has perfect peace as to all its personal surroundings is, indeed, happy! It is lying down in green pastures beside the still waters. Blessed be God, this peace is mainly to be found in the soul, itself, as to its own thoughts, beliefs, hopes, expectations and desires. We have not only peace towards the outer world, but peace within! After all, happiness and peace lie more *within* the man than in anything around him. Heaven lies more in the heart than in golden streets—and Hell’s flame consists rather in man’s tortured conscience than in the Tophet fire which the breath of God has kindled. So the peace which Jesus gives is within us—“the good man is satisfied with himself.”

Some minds are strangers to peace. How can they have peace, for they have no faith? They are as a rolling thing before the whirlwind, having no fixed basis, no abiding foundation of belief. These are the darlings of the school of modern thought, whose disciples set themselves as industriously to breed doubt as if salvation came by it. “Doubt and be saved,” is their gospel and who does not see that this is *not* the Gospel of peace? Indeed, they are receptive and are peering about for fresh light, though long ago the Sun of Righteousness has arisen! Such uncertainty suits me not! I must know something or I cannot live—I must be sure of *something* or I have no motive from which to act!

God never meant us to live in perpetual questioning. His Revelation is not and cannot be that shapeless cloud which philosophical divines make it out to be! There must be something true and Christ must have come into the world to teach us something saving and reliable! He cannot mean that we should be always rushing through bogs and into morasses after the will-of-the-wisp of intellectual religion. There is assuredly some ascertainable, Infallible, revealed Truth for common people! There must be something sure to rest upon. I know it is so and declare unto you what I have heard and seen! There are great Truths of God which the Lord has engraved upon my very soul, concerning which all the men on earth and all the devils in Hell cannot shake me!

As to these vital doctrines, an immovable and unconquerable dogmatism has laid hold upon my soul and, therefore, my mind has peace! A man’s mind must come to a settlement upon eternal Truths by the teaching of the Holy Spirit, or else he cannot know what peace is. I would pray for every one of my Brothers and Sisters that they may find an anchor of mind and heart and never leave it! We have been often spoken of as an old-fashioned Church and your minister is said to be Ultimus Puritanorum, the, “Last of the Puritans,” a man incapable of any thought beyond the limit of the old-fashioned theology. I bless the Lord that it is so! I am, indeed, incapable of forsaking the Gospel for these new-fangled theories! Down went my anchor years ago! It was a great relief to me when I first felt it grip and it is a growing joy to me that I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed to Him.

Pretensions to original thought I have never made! I invent nothing! I only tell the old, old story as God enables me. “Ah,” said a certain Divine to me one day, “it must be very easy for you to preach because you know what you are going to say—your views are fixed and stereotyped. As for me,” he said, “I am always seeking after truth and I do not know one week what I may preach the next.” Thus speak the teachers—do you wonder if the disciples wander into skepticism?! Has the Lord taught the man nothing of the sure Truths of God? Then let him wait till he has received His message. Till he knows the Gospel in his own heart, experimentally, as the power of God unto salvation, let him sit on the penitent form and ask to be prayed for, but never enter a pulpit!

What are Churches doing to tolerate these sowers of infidelity? Time was when the fathers in our Israel would have chased from their pulpits those who glory in the unbelief which is their shame! May the Lord of Peace, Himself, give you peace as to your personal beliefs and convictions—and then when you get into deep waters of trial and sorrow you will say, “Ah, I did believe the right doctrine after all! I can feel the grip of my anchor on the things unseen. I have not been deceived. I have not followed cunningly devised fables, for the promise is true and I feel the power of it! It sustains and cheers and comforts me under all my trials and I know that it will do so even to my dying hour.” May every troubled thinker find the peace of faith and never lose it!

Many minds are forever restless as to their fears. It is a great thing to know why you tremble, for when you know what you fear, your fear is half gone! The indefinable shape, the mysterious hand which has no arm but writes upon the wall in strange characters—the cloudiness of all things dreaded makes the mind more restless. But blessed is the man to whom the Lord has taught His fear—so that he knows what he fears and does not permit his hopes to be in perpetual eclipse. Of this many-sided peace we must say something more. The Thessalonian Church had been troubled three ways. They had been persecuted from without. That is not a pleasant thing, but the Apostle says, “You that are troubled rest with us.”

Now, when the Lord Jesus Christ says to a persecuted saint, “I am with you: all the evil which is done unto you is done unto Me, and you are bearing it for My name’s sake,” then, Beloved, *no* persecution can break the peace of the soul! But rather, the sufferer rejoices and is exceedingly glad that he is counted worthy, not only to believe in Christ, but to suffer for His sake!  
Next, the Thessalonian Church was annoyed by certain false teachers.

They did not absolutely teach novel doctrine, but upon a basis of the Truth of God they erected an edifice of error. They exaggerated one special Truth and carried its teaching to extravagance. They said, “Christ is coming, therefore the day of the Lord is immediately at hand.” They belonged to that order of fanatics who are always raving about “the signs of the times” and pretending to know what will happen within the next 20 years. There were impostors of that sort in Paul’s day and there are such impostors now. Believe them not! They can see no more of the future than blind horses! I put them all together as impostors, whether they are preachers or literary hacks, for no man knows the future and no man can tell his fellows about it.

I care no more for their explanations of prophecy than for the pretended winking of the eyes of the Madonna—yet they will continue the scam and will be saying one thing this time and another that—that this and that wonder shall happen—and that terrible judgments shall overwhelm our nation. The Apostle would not have the Thessalonians disturbed in their minds by fears about the future. Brethren in Christ, the most terrible fact of the future can be no just cause of alarm to a true Believer! The Lord comforts His people and there is nothing in His plans or purposes which is intended to disquiet them. You may rest assured that if any doctrine in the Bible prevents a godly man from enjoying peace it must be because he has not yet understood it fully, or else has mistaken its bearing towards himself.

The Truths of God must minister peace to true men. All Truths of God, whether doctrinal or prophetic, are on the side of the children of God! How can it be otherwise? The Apostle tells the Thessalonians not to be disturbed about the coming of Christ. “The Lord be with you all,” he says, and if the Lord is with us, what does it matter to us whether He personally comes at once or chooses to delay? We should be looking for His coming, but not with alarm, for the fact that He has come, already, is a wellspring of delight! We glory in His first advent and do not dread the second. Since we are already raised up into the heavenly places to sit with Him by faith, what does it matter to us whether He is up there or down here—or whether we are in Heaven or on earth—so long as we abide in Him?

There may arise, possibly there *will* arise, wild fanatics who will again spread alarming news about wars and rumors of wars and select some fatal year as the end of all things. Well, if such things should be, if crowds should go into the wilderness or into the city to look for the coming of Christ, believe them not, but sit still in peace and tranquility of spirit and say, “My soul loves Him and He loves me. He cannot mean ill to me whether He destroys the earth or spares it. Though the heavens pass away and the earth, itself, melts with fervent heat, my heart is resting in her Lord and knows herself to be secure.” Thus the Lord saves His people from the disturbance caused by false teaching.

There were, also, in the Church, disorderly characters—people that went about spreading idle tales and gossiping. They would not do anything for a living and so they set people by the ears. But when the Lord gives a Christian deep spiritual peace within, he soon puts aside the small nuisances of idle tongues and disorderly deeds. He refuses to be worried. Mosquitoes buzz around every Christian Church and blessed is the man who does not feel their bite or heed their buzzing! His soul shall dwell at ease.

Peace from Church troublers is a great blessing and we ought to praise God for it when we are in the enjoyment of it, for strife within the Church, like civil war, is the worst of warfare. O to live in holy love and unbroken concord in reference to all our fellow Christians! May the Lord of Peace grant us this! Thus, you see, the peace which is here spoken of has many sides to it. May you possess it in all its forms, modes, and phases—and may your spirit enter into the peace of God which passes all understanding!

**II.**Now, secondly, let us note THE SPECIAL DESIRABLENESS OF PEACE. It is a very great thing for a soul to realize perfect peace, for if it does not do so, it must miss the joy, comfort and blessedness of the Christian life. God never meant His children to be like thistledown, blown about with every breath, nor as a football, hurled to and fro by every foot. He meant us to be a happy, restful, established people. The cattle eat the grass, but they are not fattened till they lie down and ruminate in peace— the Lord makes His people to feed and to lie down in quietness.

You do not know the Gospel, dear Friends, if you have not obtained peace through it! Peace is the juice, the essence, the *soul* of the Gospel! Doctrines are clusters, but you have never trod them in the winepress— you have never quaffed the flowing juice of their grapes if you have not peacefully considered Divine Truth in the quiet of your heart. Without peace you cannot grow! A shepherd may find good pasture for his flock, but if his sheep are hunted about by wild dogs, so that they cannot rest, they will become mere skin and bones. The Lord’s lambs cannot grow if they are worried and harried—they must enjoy the rest wherewith the Lord makes the weary to rest.

If your soul is always sighing, moaning and questioning its interest in Christ. If you are always in suspense as to what doctrine is true and what is false. If there is nothing established and settled about you, you will never come to the fullness of the stature of a man in Christ Jesus. Neither without peace can you bear much fruit, if any. If a tree is frequently transplanted you cannot reasonably look for many golden apples upon its boughs. The man who has no root-hold—who neither believes, nor grasps, nor enjoys the Gospel—can never know what it is to be steadfast and unmovable. And neither will he be always abounding in the work of the Lord.

We know, too, some who, because they have no conscious peace with God, lack all stability and are the prey of error. That doctrine can soon be driven out of a man’s head which affords no light and comfort to his heart. If you derive no sweetness from what you believe, I should not marvel if you soon begin to doubt it. The power of the Gospel is its best evidence to the soul—a man always believes in that which he enjoys. Only make a Truth of God to be a man’s spiritual food—let it be marrow and fatness to him—and I guarantee you he will believe it. When the Truth of God becomes to a proud carnal mind what the manna became to murmuring Israel, namely, light bread that his soul abhors, then the puffed up intellect cries after something more pleasing to the flesh!

But to the mind which hungers and thirsts after righteousness, the Gospel is so soul-satisfying that it never wearies of it. Brothers and Sisters, you must have peace for your soul’s health! What a difference there is between a soul at peace and a soul continually tossed about! I have seen one man’s heart like a country whose hedges are broken down, whose walls are laid level with the ground, where irrigation is neglected, where tilling has ceased, where the vines are untrimmed, where the fields are unplowed—and all because there is a perpetual sound of war in the soul—the song of peace is never heard! Such a soul may be likened to the Holy Land beneath Turkish rule where no man has rest and, consequently, the highways lie waste and the gardens are a desert.

But I have seen another man’s life which has grown up under the influence of holy peace, from whom God has kept back the wandering Arabs of doubt and fear—and to whom He has given a settled government of Grace and an establishment in steadfastness and quiet assurance and, lo, that man has been as the land which flows with milk and honey! As war spends and peace gathers the riches of nations, so does inward strife devour us, while spiritual peace makes the soul fat. Even as Palestine, when it abounded in corn and wine and oil, could nourish Tyre and Sidon, which it borders, even so does the man who is rich towards God, through internal peace, become a feeder of other souls till even they who are but borderers upon Immanuel’s land obtain a blessing!

Beloved, I would that every Christian knew this soul-enriching peace to the fullest! I am sorry to meet with so many who “hope” they are Believers, and “trust” they are saved, but they are not sure. Ah, Brothers and Sisters, in these matters we must get beyond mere hopes! We must reach to certainties. “Ifs” and “buts” are terrible in the things which concern the soul and eternity! We must have plain and unquestionable security here— Divine security applied to the soul, itself, by the Holy Spirit. Friend, you are either saved this morning or you are not saved! Either you are in the love of God, or you are not! Either you are secure of Heaven, or you are not—one of the two! I beseech you, do not let these things be in jeopardy—chance *anything* rather than your soul! Cry mightily to God that you may have these things fixed, certain, positive, beyond all dispute—for then shall your soul enjoy peace with God—and so shall you become strong, useful and happy.

**III.**Now, thirdly, we shall get into the very heart of our text while we consider for a minute or two THE ONLY PERSON FROM WHOM THIS PEACE MUST COME—“Now the Lord of Peace Himself give you peace.” Who is this “Lord of Peace” but the Lord Jesus, the Prince of Peace, born into the world when there was peace all over the world? It was but a little interval in which the gates of the temple of war were closed, and lo, Jesus came to Bethlehem and angels sang, “Peace on earth.” He came to establish an empire of peace which shall be universal and under whose influence they shall hang the useless helmet high and study war no more.

“The Prince of Peace!” How blessed is the title! So was it written of old by Isaiah, and Paul, the true successor of Isaiah, changing but a word, now speaks of, “the Lord of Peace.” This is He who, being in Himself essential peace, undertook to be the Father’s great Ambassador. And having made peace by the blood of His Cross, ended the strife between man and his offended Maker. This is He who is our Peace—who has made Jew and Gentile one—and has broken down the middle wall of partition which stood between us. This is the Lord who, when He stood in the midst of His disciples, gave them peace by saying, “Peace be unto you.” And this is He, who, in His departure, made His last will and testament and wrote therein this grand legacy—“Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you; not as the world gives give I unto you.” This is that Lord of Peace to whom it is part of His Nature and office to give peace!

I want to call particular attention to the Apostle’s words in this place. He does not say, “May the Lord of Peace send His angel to give you peace.” It were a great mercy if He did and we might be as glad as Jacob was at Mahanaim, when the angels of God met him. He does not even say, “May the Lord of Peace send His minister to give you peace.” If He did we might be as happy as Abraham when Melchizedek refreshed him with bread and wine. He does not even say, “May the Lord of Peace at the communion table, or in reading the Word, or in prayer, or in some other sacred exercise give you peace.” In all these we might well be as refreshed as Israel was at Elim where wells and palm trees gladdened the tribes. But, no, he says, “the Lord of Peace Himself give you peace,” as if He, alone, in His own Person, could give peace, and as if His Presence were the sole means of such a Divine Peace as he desires. “The Lord of Peace Himself give you peace.”

The words are inexpressibly sweet to me. If you will think, for a minute, you will see that we never obtain peace except from the Lord, Himself. What, after all, in your worst times will bring you peace? I will tell you. “This Man shall be the peace.” To me it has often afforded great peace to think of His mysterious Person. He is a Man tempted in all points like as I am, a Man who knows every grief of the soul and every pain of the body— therefore His tender sympathy and power to succor. Have you not often derived peace from that sweet reflection? You know you have! His Person, then, is a source of peace.

And have you not been rested in your soul by meditating upon His death? You have viewed Him wounded, bleeding, dying on the tree—and, insensibly to yourself—a wondrous calm has stolen over your heart and you have felt pacified concerning all things. Yes, Jesus is, Himself, that bundle of myrrh and spice from which peace flows like a sweet perfume! When He comes very near your heart and lays bare His wounds, and speaks His love home to you, making you feel its Divine fervency. When He assures you that you are one with Him, united to Him in an everlasting wedlock which knows of no divorce—*then* it is that your soul is steeped in peace! This is an experimental business and no mere words can express it. “The Lord of Peace Himself give you peace”—this, I say, He does mainly by manifesting Himself to the heart of His servants.

Then notice that the text says, “give you peace,” not merely *offer* it to you, or argue with you that you ought to have peace, or show you the grounds of peace, but, “give you peace.” He has the power to breathe peace into the heart, to create peace in the soul and lull the spirit into that sweet sleep of the beloved which is the peculiar gift of Heaven. “I will give you rest,” He said, and He can and will do it. “The Lord be with you all”—as much as to say, “That is what I mean.” I pray that Jesus may be with you, for if He is present, you must enjoy peace! Let the sea rage and let every timber of the ship be strained—yes, let her leak till between each timber there yawns a hungry mouth to swallow you up—yet when Jesus arises He will rebuke the winds and the waves, and there will be a great calm! “It is I, be not afraid,” is enough to create peace at once. May you always know this peace which Jesus, alone, can give.

**IV.**Now I must conclude with the fourth head which is a consideration of THE SWEEP OF THE PRAYER—“The Lord of Peace Himself give you peace always.” What? Always at peace? Yes, that is what the Apostle desires for you. May you have peace given you always. “Well, Sir, I feel very happy on the Sabbath. I have such peace that I wish I could have a week of Sundays.” May the Lord Himself give you peace always, on all the weekdays as well as on Sundays. “Truly, I have been very happy of late,” says one, “God has prospered us and everyone has been very loving in the family. But I do not know how I should be if I had an awkward husband and unruly children.”

Sister, I will tell you what I want you to be—I would have you restful under *all* circumstances—“The Lord of Peace give you peace always.” “I enjoy such peace in the Prayer Meeting,” says one. I want you to have peace in the workshop, also. “I have peace when I get alone with my Bible,” cries another. We pray that you may have equal peace when you are troubled with the ledger, tired with those unpaid bills, dull trade and all the crosscurrents of business. You need peace always. Our Friends who are commonly called Quakers have, as a rule, set us a fine example of calm, dignified quietness and peace. How undisturbed they generally appear! Whatever they fail in, they certainly excel in a certain peacefulness of manner which I hope is the index of calm enjoyed within.

Numbers of professors are very fretful, excitable, agitated, hasty and fickle. It should not be so, Brothers and Sisters—you ought to have more weight about you, more Grace, more solidity. Your *soul’s* affairs are all right, are they not? All is right *forever*—everything is signed, sealed, and delivered—the Covenant is ordered in all things and sure, and everything is in Divine hands for our good. Well, then, why not let us be as happy as the angels are? Why are we troubled? Is there anything worth shedding a tear for, now that all is well for eternity? Our lack of peace arises from the fact that we have not realized the fullness of our text. “The Lord of Peace Himself give you peace always.” He can always give you peace, for He never changes! There is always the same reason for peace. You may always go to Him for peace and He is always ready to bestow it. Oh that we might always possess it!

Notice, again, it is written—“May the Lord of Peace Himself give you peace always by all means.” Can He give us peace by all means? I know He can give us peace by *some* means, but can *all* means be made subservient to this end? Some agencies evidently work towards peace, but can He give us peace by opposing forces? Yes, certainly! He can give peace by the bitter as well as by the sweet! He can give peace by the storm as well as by the calm! He can give peace by loss as well as by gain, by death as well as by life!

Notice there are two grand ways of giving us peace—one is by taking away all that disquiets us. Here is a man who frets because he does not make money, or because he has lost much of his wealth. Suppose the Lord takes away from him all covetousness, all greed of gain, all love of the world—is he not, at once, filled with peace? He is at peace not because he has more money, but because he has less of grasping desires. Another man is very ambitious. He wants to be somebody. He must be great and yet he never will be and, therefore, he is restless. Suppose the Grace of God should humble him and take away his lofty aspirations so that he only wishes to be and to do what the Lord wills? Do you not see how readily he rests?

Another man has an angry temper and is soon put out—the Lord does not alter the people that are round about him, but He changes the man, himself—makes him quiet, ready to forgive and of a gentle spirit. What peace the man now feels! Another person has had an envious eye—he did not like to see others prosper—and if others were better off than he, he always thought badly of them. The Lord wrings that bitter drop of envy out of his heart and now see how peaceful he is—he is glad to see others advanced and if he is tried, himself, it helps to make him happy to think that others are more favored. It is a great blessing when the Lord removes the disturbing elements from the heart!

Even curiosity may be a source of unrest. Many are a great deal worried by curiosity. I have sometimes wanted to know why the Lord does this and that with me. Blessed be His name, I am resolved not to question Him any more in that fashion! Somebody prayed the other day that I might see the reason why the Lord has lately afflicted me. I hope the Brother will not pray that any more, for I do not want to know the Lord’s reasons—why should I? I know He has done right and I will not dishonor Him by catechizing Him and wanting Him to explain Himself to a poor worm. This is where the mischief has been with most of us—that we have needed to see how this and that can be right. Why should we? If God conceals a thing, let us be anxious to keep it concealed.

A servant was passing through a street with a dish that was curiously covered. There met him a fellow who said, “I am most anxious to know what your lord has put in that dish, for he has so carefully covered it.” But the servant said, “Therefore should you not desire to know, for seeing my lord has so carefully covered it, it is clear that it is no business of yours.” So whenever a Providence puzzles you, take it as a sign that the Lord does not mean you to understand it—and be content to take it upon faith. When curiosity and other restless things are gone, peace is enjoyed. Then the Lord has ways of giving us peace by making discoveries of

Himself. Some of you do not know, as yet, the things which would give you peace. For instance, if you did but know that He loved you from before the foundation of the world and that whom once He loves, He never leaves, you who are now afraid that you have fallen from Grace would obtain strong consolation! Yes, and if you understood the grand doctrine of the Divine Predestination and saw that the Lord will not fail nor be discouraged, nor turn aside from one jot or tittle of His purpose, then you would see how you, poor insignificant Believers though you are, are one stitch in the great fabric that must not be suffered to drop or else the whole fabric would be marred! You would understand how the eternal purpose ordered in wisdom and backed up with Sovereign power guarantees your salvation as much as it does the Glory of God—and so you would have peace.

Many a soul has not the peace it might have because it does not fully understand the atoning blood. The great doctrine of Substitution is not seen in all its length and breadth by some minds. But when they come to see Christ standing in the place of His chosen, made *sin* for them and the chosen standing in Christ’s place, “the righteousness of God in Him,” then will their peace be like a river! The grand Truth of the union of the saints with Christ, if it is once understood, what a means of peace it is! He that believes in Christ is one with Him, a member of His body, of His flesh and of His bones! He is one with Christ by eternal and indissoluble union, even as the Father is One with the Son! If this is known, together with the doctrine of the Covenant, the attribute of immutability, the eternal purpose and the marriage union between Christ and His elect, deep peace must be enjoyed, like the calm of Heaven, like the bliss of immortality!

But there are some to whom this peace cannot come, some concerning whom the Lord says “What have you to do with peace?” “There is no peace, says my God, unto the wicked.” Your works, your prayers, your repentances—none of these can bring you peace! As for the world and the pleasures thereof, they are destructive to all hope of peace. Come this day and believe in the great Sacrifice which God, Himself, has prepared in the Person of His crucified Son! Come look into Emanuel’s face and read where peace is to be found! Come to the great gash in Jesus’ side and see the cleft of the rock where God’s elect abide in peace! Trust in Jesus and you shall begin a peace which shall widen and deepen into the peace of God which passes all understanding, which shall keep your hearts and minds by Christ Jesus. Amen.

÷1Ti 1.11

THE GLORIOUS GOSPEL OF THE BLESSED GOD

NO. 758

**DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, JUNE 30, 1867, *BY C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT CAMDEN ROAD CHAPEL.**

***“According to the glorious Gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust.”***1Ti 1:11***.***

THIS verse occurs just after a long list of sins which the Apostle declares to be contrary to sound doctrine, from which we gather that one test of sound doctrine is its opposition to every form of sin. That doctrine which in any way palliates sin may be popular, but is not sound doctrine. Those who talk much of their soundness but yet, by their lives, betray the rottenness of their hearts, need far rather to be ashamed of their hypocrisy than to be proud of their orthodoxy.

The Apostle offers, in the verse before us, another standard by which to test the doctrines which we hear. He tells us that sound doctrine is always evangelical—“sound doctrine according to the glorious Gospel.” Any doctrine which sets up the will or the merit of man, any doctrine which exalts priest-craft and ceremonies, any doctrine, in fact, which does not put salvation upon the sole footing of free Grace, is unsound.

These two points are absolutely necessary in every teaching which professes to come from God. It must commend and foster holiness of life and, at the same time, it must, beyond all question, be a declaration of Divine Grace and mercy through the Mediator. Our Apostle was, by the drift of his letter, led incidentally to make mention of the Gospel. And then, in a moment, taking to himself wings of fire, he mounts into a transport of praise, and calls it “the glorious Gospel of the blessed God.” Such is his mode of writing generally, that if he comes across a favorite thought, he is away at a tangent from the subject that he was aiming, and does not return until his ardent spirit cools again!

In this case, before he was aware, his soul made him like the chariots of Amminadab! His glowing heart poured forth the warmest eulogy upon that hidden treasure, that pearl of immense price which he prized beyond all price and guarded with a sacred jealousy of care. I think I see the radiant countenance of the Apostle of the Lord, as with flashing eyes he dictates the words, “The glorious Gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust.”

Our subject affords us a fine ocean but our time is short, our boat is small, and the atmosphere is so hot and heavy that scarcely a breath of air is to be had, and therefore I will keep to one straightforward track and not distract you with many topics. To open up the text in all its length and breadth would be fit exercise for the loftiest intellect, but we must be content with a few experimental and practical remarks, and may the Lord enable us to weave them into a heart-searching discourse.

**I.**In the first place, then, Paul praises the Gospel to the utmost by calling it “the glorious Gospel of the blessed God.” HAVE WE EXPERIENCED ITS EXCELLENCE? It is necessary to ask the question even in this congregation, for even to great multitudes who attend our Houses of Prayer, the Gospel is a dry, uninteresting subject. They hear the Word because it is their duty. They sit in the pew because custom requires an outward respect to religion—but they never *dream* of the Gospel having anything glorious in it—anything that can stir the heart or make the pulse beat at a faster rate. The sermon is slow, the service is dull, the whole affair is a weariness to which nothing but propriety makes men submit.

Some people do their religion as a matter of necessity—as a horse drags a wagon—but if that necessity of respectability did not exist they would be as glad to escape from it as the horse is to leave the shafts and to miss the rumbling of the wheels. It is necessary, then, to ask the question, and I shall put it before you in three or four ways. Paul calls the sacred message of mercy the Gospel. Has it been the Gospel to us?

The word is plain and I hardly need remind you that it means—“good news.” Now, has the Gospel been “good news” to us? Has it ever been “news” to you? “We have heard it so often,” says one, “that we cannot expect it to be news to*us*. We were trained by godly parents. We were taken to Sunday school. We have learned the Gospel from our youth up—it cannot be news to us.” Let me say to you, then, that you *do not know* the Word of Reconciliation unless it has been, and still is, news to you.

To every man who is ever saved by the Gospel, it comes as a piece of news as novel, fresh, and startling as if he had never heard it before. The letter may be old, but the inward meaning is as new as though the ink were not yet dry in the pen of Revelation. I confess to have been tutored in piety, put into my cradle by prayerful hands, and lulled to sleep by songs concerning Jesus.

But after having heard the Gospel continually, precept upon precept, here much and there much, yet when the Word of the Lord came to me with power, it was as new as if I had lived among the unvisited tribes of central Africa, and had never heard the tidings of the cleansing fountain filled with blood from the Savior’s veins! The Gospel in its spirit and power always wears the dew of its youth—it glitters with morning’s freshness— its strength and its glory abide forever!

Ah, my dear Hearer, if you have ever felt your guilt, if you have been burdened under a sense of it, if you have looked into your own heart to find some good thing and been bitterly disappointed. If you have gone up and down through the world to try this and that scheme of getting relief and found them all fail you like dry wells in the desert which mock the traveler—the Gospel will be a sweet piece of news to your heart that there is here present salvation in the Savior! It is a most refreshing novelty to hear the voice of Jesus say, “Come unto Me and rest.”

Though you have heard the invitation outwardly thousands of times, yet Jesus’ own voice, when He speaks to your *heart*, will be as surprisingly fresh to you as if these dumb walls should suddenly find a tongue and reveal the mysteries which have been hidden from the foundation of the world. To every Believer the Gospel comes as news from the land beyond the river—God’s mind revealed by God’s Spirit to His chosen. It is *good* news, too.

Now, has the Gospel ever been experimentally good to you, my Hearer? Good in the best sense? Good emphatically? Good without any mixture of evil? The Gospel is just that to those who know it—is it so to you? Have you ever been deeply sensible of your overwhelming debt to the justice of God and then gladly received the gracious information that your debts are all discharged? Have you trembled beneath the thunder-charged cloud of Jehovah’s wrath which was ready to pour forth its tempest upon you, and have you heard the gentle voice of Mercy saying, “I have blotted out, as a cloud, your transgressions, and, as a cloud, your sins”?

Have you ever known what it is to be fully absolved, to stand before God without fear, accepted in the Beloved, received as a dear child, covered with the righteousness of Christ? If so, the Gospel has been “good,” indeed, to you. Grasping it by the hand of faith and feeling the power of it in your soul, you count it to be the best tidings that ever came from God to man! I shall now ask you earnestly to answer my question as in the sight of God. Let no man escape from this most vital enquiry! Has that which Paul calls the Gospel, proved itself to be Gospel to *you*?

Did it ever make your heart leap, just as some highly gratifying information excites and charms you? Has it ever seemed to you an allimportant thing? If not, you know not what the Gospel means. O let my anxious questions tenderly quicken you to be concerned about your soul’s affairs and to seek unto the Lord Jesus for eternal life! Paul, having called the message of mercy “the Gospel,” then adds an adjective—“the glorious Gospel”—and a glorious Gospel it is for a thousand reasons! It is glorious in its antiquity, for before the beams of the first morning drove away primeval shades, this Gospel of our salvation was ordained in the mind of the Eternal!

It is glorious because it is everlasting—when all things shall have passed away as the hoarfrost of the morning dissolves before the rising sun, this Gospel shall still exist in all its power and Grace! It is glorious because it reveals the glory of God more fully than all the universe beside. Not all the innumerable worlds that God has ever fashioned, though they speak to us in loftiest eloquence from their celestial spheres, can proclaim to us the Character of our heavenly Father as the Gospel does. “The heavens are telling the glory of God!”

But the Gospel which tells of *Jesus* has a sweeter and a clearer speech! The poet talks of the great and wide sea where the almighty form mirrors itself in tempest. So, indeed, the finger of God may mirror itself, but a thousand oceans could not mirror the Infinite Himself—the Gospel of Jesus Christ is the only molten lookingglass in which Jehovah can be seen! In Jesus we see not only God’s train, such as Moses saw when he beheld the skirts of Jehovah’s robe in the cleft of the rock, but the *whole* of God is revealed in the Gospel of Jesus so that our Lord could say, “He that has seen Me, has seen the Father.”

If the Lord is glorious in holiness, the Gospel reveals Him. Is His right hand glorious in power? So the Gospel speaks of Him. Is the Lord the God of love? Is not this the genius of the Gospel? The Gospel is glorious because every attribute of Deity is manifested in it with unrivalled splendor. But I desire to come home to your consciences by asking, Is the Gospel to you a *glorious* Gospel? Beloved Friends, we may know our state very much by what answer we shall give to that question.

The Gospel, seen with these eyes and heard with these external ears, will be like the Lord Himself, “A root out of a dry ground, having no form nor comeliness.” But the Gospel *understood* by the renewed *heart*, will be quite a different thing. Oh, it will be a glorious Gospel, indeed, if you are raised up in newness of life to enjoy the blessings which it brings to you!

So, I beseech you, answer the question! And to help you, let me remind the people of God how glorious the Gospel has been to them. Do you remember the day when the Gospel carried your heart by storm? Can you ever forget when the great battering ram of the Truth of God began to beat against the gates of Mansoul? Do you remember how you strengthened the posts and bars, and stood out against the Gospel, resolving not to yield? You were at times compelled to weep under impressions, but you wiped away your transient tears—your emotion was “as the morning cloud, and as the early dew.”

But eternal Love would not relinquish its gracious assaults, for it was determined to save. Providence and Grace together besieged the city of your soul and brought Divine artillery to bear upon it. You were straightaway shut up till—as it was with Samaria, so it was with you—there was a great famine in your soul. Do you remember how, Sunday after Sunday every sermon was a fresh assault from the hosts of Heaven—a new blow from the celestial battering ram?

How often, when the gates of your prejudice were dashed to shivers, did you set up fresh barricades! Your heart trembled beneath the terrible strokes of justice, but, by the help of Satan, your depraved heart managed to secure the gates a little longer with iron clamps of *pride*, and bronze bars of *insensibility—*till at last, one blessed day—do you remember it?— one blessed day the Gospel battering ram gave the effectual blow of Divine Grace, the gates flew wide open, and in rode the Prince of Peace, Immanuel, like a conqueror, riding in the chariots of salvation!

Our will was subdued, our affections were overcome, our whole soul was brought into subjection to the sway of Mercy. Jesus was *glorious* in our eyes that day, “the chief among ten thousand, and the altogether lovely.” That day of days we have registered upon the tablets of our heart! It was the true coronation day of Jesus in us, and our birthday for eternity!

When our glorious Lord entered into our souls wearing His vesture dipped in blood, pardoning and blessing in the plenitude of His Grace, then the bells of our heart rang merry peals! The streamers of our joy floated in the fragrant air! The streets of our soul were strewn with roses! The fountains of our love ran with rich red wine, and our soul was as full of bliss as a heart could be this side of Heaven! For salvation had come to our house, and Mercy’s ring had deigned to visit us!

Oh, the sweet perfume of the spikenard, when, for the first time, the King sat at our table to sup with us! How the savor of His Presence filled every chamber of our inner man! That day when Grace redeemed us from our fears, the Gospel was a glorious Gospel, indeed! Ah, dear Hearer, you stood in the crowded aisle to hear the sermon, but you did not grow weary! The lips of the preacher refreshed you, for the Truth of God dropped like sweet smelling myrrh. You could have gone over hedge and ditch to hear the Gospel at that season of first love! No matter how roughly it might have been served up by the preacher, you rolled the bread of Heaven under your tongue as a sweet morsel, for it was the Gospel of your salvation!

Christian, I will refresh your memory further. Do not forget the after conquests of that Gospel. If you have made any advance in the Divine life, it has been by the power of the Gospel of Jesus Christ applied by the Holy Spirit. We make mistakes sometimes, for, having begun in the Spirit we hope to be made perfect in the flesh. I mean that frequently we try to battle with our inbred sins by smiting them with *legal* reasoning. No Believer ever conquered sin by being afraid of the punishment of it—this is a weapon fit only for sons of the bondwoman.

It is the blood of Jesus which is the conquering weapon in the holy war against natural corruption. “They overcame by the blood of the Lamb.” Knowing that I am dead to sin and risen with Christ, it is in the power of resurrection life that I wrestle against the old man and overcome him. Beloved, remember that you are always weak when you get away from the Cross. Remember that it is only as a sinner saved by blood that you can hope to make any advance in sanctification. Do not attempt to flog yourself into Divine Grace—the new life must not be touched with the whip of bondage. Go to the Cross for motive and energy as to holiness.

Look to Jesus in the Gospel as you did in the beginning of your new life. Know yourself to be saved in Him and then go forth to battle temptation with the Gospel as the standard of your lifelong warfare. If any of you have tried to make war with sin apart from the Captain of your salvation, you have either been wounded to your hurt already, or you *will* be. But if Judah’s Lion shall go up before you, and you follow with the Gospel as your war cry, your victory is sure and you shall have another wreath to lay at the feet of Jesus and His glorious Gospel!

Beloved, let me say that all true saints have found it to be a glorious Gospel from its comforting us in our darkest hours. We are not without our troubles, for which we should be *grateful*—they are flinty rocks which flow with oil. The roots of our soul might take too firm a hold upon this poor clay soil if they were not toughened by affliction. This is not our rest. It is polluted and our sorrows are useful because they remind us of this.

But what has such power to calm the troubled spirit as the Gospel? Go to the Lord Jesus, you daughters of grief! Know and understand once more your union with Him, and your acceptance in Him, and you will repine no more! You will bow your shoulder and cheerfully take up your cross when you have found out in your hour of need that the Gospel has a glorious power to sustain those who are ready to sink.

Did you ever perceive the glory of the Gospel in its power to resist the attacks of the great enemy? The soul has been beleaguered by a thousand temptations. Satan has howled, and all the fiends of Hell have joined in horrible chorus, and your own poor distracted thoughts have said, “I shall perish notwithstanding all my high enjoyments and confidence.” Have you never gathered, as John Bunyan would picture it, all your forces to the top of the wall to sling the great stones against the enemy? Have you not felt that the castle would be taken, till, as a last resort, you ran up the blood-red flag of the Cross, seized the sword of the Spirit, and went to the rampart determined to hold the wall against the enemy?

Then when the scaling ladder touched the wall and the foe leaped on the bulwarks, you dashed him down again, in the name of Jesus by the power of the Cross, and as often as he came up, so often did you hurl him down again, always overcoming in the power of the Gospel! You kept your ground against temptation from without, and corruption from within by the energy which the Gospel of Jesus Christ alone could give you!

One point may help us to see the glory of the Gospel, namely, that it has saved us from tremendous ills. The ills which are to come upon the unbeliever—who shall describe them? If a spirit could cross the bridgeless gulf which parts us from the land of darkness and the shadow of death, if he could tell us what are the pangs unutterable which are endured by guilty souls, then might we say, “Glorious, indeed, is that Gospel which can lift us from the gates of Hell, and preserve us from going down to the pit.”

Think, my Brothers and Sisters, of what the joys are for which the Gospel is preparing us! It is by the Holy Spirit, through the preaching of the Word, that we are ripening for those joys which “eye has not seen,” and which “ear has not heard.” Meetness for Heaven will not come to us by the Law, but by the Gospel. Not so much as one of the celestials came there by the deeds of the flesh, but altogether by the Sovereign Grace of God revealed to them in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. A glorious Gospel it is, for it brings its disciples to Glory!

Let me ask you whether it is glorious to you at this hour? I think I can say it is to me. I wish it were in my power to make it more glorious in my ministry, but it is glorious to my own heart. After some years of experience the Christian comes to know better than he did at first how much the Gospel suits him. He finds that its simplicity suits his bewilderment. Its Grace suits his sinfulness. Its power is suitable to his weakness. Its comfort is suitable to his despondency. And the older he grows the more he loves the Gospel of the Grace of God. Give it up? Ah, never! We will hold Christ the more firmly because men despise Him. To whom or where should we go if we should turn aside from our Lord Jesus?

Now, dear Hearers, before I leave this point, I want to put it to you again with much loving solicitude. Is the Gospel glorious to you? Remember, if it is not, there can be no hope for you. There is no way of salvation except by the good news that, “Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners.” And if that news should sound in your ears as a dry, dull thing, rest assured you are *not* on the way to Heaven, for the Gospel to every saved soul is sweeter than the sound of the best earthly music. Is it so to you?

God is pleased today to put up before your eyes the white flag of mercy, calling you to come to Jesus and live. But remember, if you do not yield to it He will run up the red flag of threatening, and then the black flag of execution will not be far off! Perhaps some of you have been suffering under bodily disease—take that as a warning. When our vessels of war would stop a suspicious vessel, they fire a shot over her bow as a warning. If she does not haul to, perhaps they give another. And if no notice is taken of this, the gunners go to their business in real earnest, and woe to the offender! Your affliction is the Gospel’s warning gun. Pause awhile, I beseech you. Ask the Lord in mercy to look upon you that you may be saved!

As I think upon some of you here who are not saved, I feel something like the boy I read of yesterday in the newspapers. Last week there were two lads on the great rocks of Lundy Island, in the Bristol Channel, looking for seagull eggs. One of them went far down the cliff and lost his footing, and when his brother, hearing a faint voice, looked down, he saw him clinging to a jutting crag and striving in vain to find a place for his feet.

There stood the anxious brother, alarmed and paralyzed with dread, quite unable to help the younger one in so much peril below—who soon relaxed his hold and was dashed to pieces far beneath. I feel somewhat like that alarmed brother. Only there is this happy difference—I can hope for you, and bid you hope for yourselves! You are clinging now, perhaps, to some false hope and striving to find a rest where rest is not to be found. But the strong-winged Angel of the everlasting Gospel is just underneath you this morning, crying, “Drop now! Simply drop into My arms. I will take you and bear you aloft in safety.” That angel is the Angel of the Covenant, the Lord Jesus Christ. You must be dashed to pieces forever unless you rest in Him! Cast yourself upon Him, I pray you, and then, as you are carried in safety far off from every fear, you will magnify the Grace of God and extol the glorious Gospel!

I must leave that point and observe that Paul recognized the Gospel as being the Gospel of *God*. Here arises another enquiry by which we may know whether we are saved or not. Has the Gospel been the Gospel of God to you, my Friends? It is easy to receive the Gospel as the Gospel of “my minister.” I am afraid there is a good deal of that sort of thing among us. We have great faith in our religious teachers, and very properly so, if we have received benefit from them.

But if the Gospel only comes to us as the Gospel of such-and-such a preacher, it will not save us! It must come distinctly and directly as *God’s* Gospel, and we must receive it as such. It is in solemn silence of the mind our privilege to hear the voice of God speaking to us and to receive the Truth of God in the love of it as coming with Divine authority directly from God. Remember that all religion which is not the work of the Holy Spirit in the *heart* will have to be unraveled, let it be woven ever so cunningly.

We may build, as our little children do, on the seashore, our sand houses, and we may pile them up very quickly, too. And we may be very pleased with them—but they will all come down as the tide of time advances! Only that which God the Holy Spirit builds upon the foundation of Christ’s finished work will stand the test of time and eternity. How is it with you? If the Spirit of Christ is not in you, you are dead.

If the Gospel, itself, should come to you in a sort of power, but only because of the pathos of the preacher, or the eloquent manner of his speech—it has not brought eternal life to you! If the Gospel is, indeed, the Gospel of God to us, it will exalt God in our estimation. The Father we shall love and adore, having chosen us to eternal life. The Son we shall love with warmest affection, having redeemed us with His precious blood. The Holy Spirit we shall constantly reverence, and we shall cherish Him as dwelling a welcome guest within these bodies of ours.

By this we may tell whether we have received the Truth of God, by its bringing us consciously into connection with God. Does God dwell in you, my Hearer? If not, you will not dwell where God is. You must know the Holy Spirit—not as an *influence* to be poured out as some pray—but as *dwelling within you*, resting in your *heart*. I put that as a very important question, but I will not pause over it, for I have to close our first head by noticing that the Gospel was to Paul the “Gospel of the blessed God.” I believe William Knibb used to read this passage, “The Gospel of the *happy* God,” and it was not a mistake—it is the very gist of the matter.

“The Gospel of the happy God.” Have you ever considered how happy

God must be? How supremely happy? No care, no sorrow can ever pass across His infinite mind! He is serenely blessed evermore. Now, when a man is miserable, and of a miserable turn of mind, he as naturally makes people miserable as a foul fountain pours out foul water. But when a good man is superlatively happy, he imparts happiness. A happy face attracts many of us, and a happy temperament, a quiet mind, a serene disposition—why, a man who has these—inevitably tries to make others happy!

And it is, I suppose, because God is infinitely happy that He delights in the happiness of His creatures. The fabled gods of the heathen were vexed with all sorts of ambition, longing, and craving which they could not gratify, or which, when gratified, only made them crave more. Consequently they are pictured as revengeful and cruel, delighting in the miseries of men. But our God is so perfectly blessed that He has no motive for causing needless sorrow to His creatures! He has all perfection within Himself, and, consequently He delights to make us happy.

How much satisfaction does God find in the happiness of creatures that are devoid of intellect? You may have seen, sometimes, when the sea is going down, a little fringe at the edge of the wave which looks like mist. But if you were to examine it carefully, you would find that there were countless multitudes of very tiny shrimp, all leaping up and casting themselves into all manner of forms of intense delight! Look again at the gnats, as you walk in your gardens in the summer’s evenings—how they dance up and down—these little mirthful beings are all exhibiting to us the perfect blessedness that God would have to be manifested by *all* His creatures!

He would have His people supremely blest. He would have every vessel of mercy full to the brim with the oil of joy. And the way to make us so is to give us the Gospel! The Gospel is sent, to use our Savior’s words, “that His joy may be in us, and that our joy may be full.” We enjoy Heaven upon earth as we sit at the feast of fat things on earth. Just imagine what will be our glory when the Gospel of the blessed God shall have turned out all our sin! When we shall swim in the Gospel as the fish swims in the sea! When the Gospel shall become our element in the next world! Oh, the happiness of the creatures that are full of the Gospel spirit before the Throne of God!

Dear Hearer, did the Gospel ever come to you in that shape? I am afraid that to most people the Gospel is a bondage because they do not know it in very deed. I am afraid that to many, Gospel emotion is a sort of spasm—they are satisfied with the Truth of God sometimes, but at other times, when they feel they must have a treat, they go into the world for it. Where you get your treats, there your heart is! Whatever it is that gives you the most happiness,*that* is the master of your spirit. The Christian feels that he can sing with old Mason***—***

***“I need not go abroad for joys,  
I have a feast at home.  
My sighs are tamed into songs,  
My heart has ceased to roam.  
Down from above the blessed Dove  
Is come into my breast,  
To witness God’s eternal love,  
And give my spirit rest.  
My God, I’ll praise You while I live,  
And praise You when I die;  
And praise You when I rise again,  
And to eternity.”***

The religion of the genuine Christian is calculated to impart perfect delight. The truly regenerated man desires to have more and more of it so that his soul may be baptized in heavenly joy. “The Gospel of the happy God,” also means the Gospel of the God whom we must bless in return. As being happy, He makes us happy. So we, being happy, desire to ascribe to Him all the glory of our happiness.

Now, is the Gospel to you, my dear young Friend over there, the Gospel of a God whom you bless with all your heart because He has sent it to you, and made you willing to receive it? If so, you are saved. But if now no emotions of sincere gratitude stir the depths of your soul, then the Gospel has been to you no more than a sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal.

**II.**The Apostle says, “The glorious Gospel of the blessed God, which is committed to my trust.” DO YOU RECOGNIZE YOUR RESPONSIBILITY? Paul speaks not here of himself, alone. He might have said, “which is committed to the trust of every Believer in Christ.” The Gospel is a priceless treasure and the Believers are the bankers of it. It is committed to our trust as men commit business to their agents.

First, we are bound to believe it *all*. Take heed of receiving a divided and maimed Gospel! It has been said that “only half the truth is a lie” and so it is. Most of the ill reports which distress the world have truth at the foundation of them, but they become false through the exaggeration of one part and the omission of the next. It should be the duty of every enlightened Christian to labor to master the whole compass of Truth so far as possible.

I suppose none but the Infinite mind can know all the lengths and breadths of the Truth of God, but still we should not be warped by education, nor be kept from receiving it by prejudice. We should strive against all partiality. And it should be, whenever we open this Book, one of our prayers, “Open my eyes that I may behold wondrous things out of Your Law.” We must pray to have a mind like molten metal, ready to be run into the mold of the Truth. To have a soul like the photographer’s sensitive plate, ready to receive the light-writing of God at once, so that His Truth may be there in its entirety.

We must plead with the Holy Spirit for Grace to be willing to give up the most cherished dogma, the most flesh-pleasing form of teaching when we find it to be contrary to Scripture. To sit at Jesus’ feet and learn of Him is the life-business of the Christian in this house of his pilgrimage. The Gospel is, in this sense, committed to our trust for we are to lay it up in our hearts. But someone demands, “How am I to know *which* is the Gospel?” You may know it by searching the Scriptures. “But one sect says this, and another sect says the reverse!”

What have *you* to do with the*sects*? Read the Book of God for yourself! “But some men do read it and arrive at one opinion, and some maintain the opposite, and thus they contradict themselves, and yet are equally right.” Who told you that? That is impossible! Men cannot be equally*right* when they *contradict* each other! There is a Truth of God and there is a falsehood. If yes is true, no is false. It may be true that good men have held different opinions. But are you responsible for what *they* may have held, or are you to gather that because they were good, personally, therefore everything they believed was true?

No! This Book is plain enough. It is no nose of wax that everybody may shape to what form he likes. There is something taught here plainly and positively, and if a man will but give his mind to it, by God’s Grace he may find it out. I do not believe that this Book is so dark and mysterious as some suppose. And even if it is, the Holy Spirit who wrote it still *lives*, and the Author always knows His own meaning—you have only to go to Him in prayer, and He will tell you what it means.

*You* will not become infallible! I trust you will not think yourself to be so, but you will learn doctrines which are *infallibly true*, and upon which you may put down your foot and say, “Now I know this, and am not to be duped out of it.” It is a grand thing to have the Truth of God burnt into you, as with a hot iron, so that there is no getting it out of you.

The priest, when he took away the Testament from the boy, thought he had done the work. “But,” said the boy, “Sir, what will you do with the 26 chapters which I learned by heart? You cannot take them away.” Yet memory might fail, and, as the lad grew into an old man, he might forget the 26 chapters. But suppose they changed his *heart* and made him a new creature in Christ—there would be no getting *that* away—even though Satan himself should attempt the task! Seek to carry out the sacred trust committed to you by believing it, and believing it *all*. Search the Word to find out what the Gospel is, and endeavor to receive it into your inmost heart that it may be in your heart’s core forever.

Next, as good stewards we must maintain the cause of Truth against all comers. “Never get into religious controversies,” says one. That is to say, being interpreted, be a Christian soldier but let your sword rust in its scabbard and sneak into Heaven like a coward! Such advice I cannot endorse! If God has called you by His Truth, maintain the Truth which has been the means of your salvation. We are not to be pugnacious—always contending for every notion of our own—but where we have learned the Truth of the Holy Spirit, we are not tamely to see that standard torn down which our fathers upheld at peril of their blood.

This is an age in which the Truth of God must be maintained zealously, vehemently, continually. Playing fast and loose as many do, believing *this* today and *that* tomorrow, is the sure mark of children of wrath. And having received the Truth, to hold fast to the very form of it, as Paul bids Timothy to do, is one of the duties of heirs of Heaven. Stand fast for Truth, and may God give the victory to the faithful. We must believe the Gospel and maintain it, for it is committed to our trust.

It seems to me, however, that the most of us may best fulfill our responsibility to the Gospel by adorning it in our lives, Men give jewels to those whom they love, and so, if we love the Gospel, let our virtues be the jewels which shall display our love. A servant girl may adorn the Gospel. She goes to a place of worship and perhaps her irreligious mistress may object to her going. I remember Mr. Jay telling a story of such a case, where the master and mistress had forbidden the girl to attend a Dissenting place of worship.

She pleaded very hard, and at last determined to leave the house. The master said to his wife, “Well, you see our servant is a very excellent servant. We never had such an industrious girl as she is. Everything in the house is kept so orderly, and she is so obedient, and so on. Now, she does not interfere with our consciences, it is a pity we should interfere with hers. Wherever she goes, it certainly does her no hurt—why not let her go?” In the next conversation the wife said, “I really think, Husband, that our servant gets so much good where she goes, that we had better go and hear for ourselves.” And they were soon members of the very same Church which they had thought so lightly of at the first!

Now we can each of us, in our station, do that. We are not all called to preach in these boxes called pulpits, but we may preach more conveniently and much more powerfully behind the counter or in the drawing room, or in the parlor, or in the field, or wherever else Providence may have placed us. Let us endeavor to make men mark what kind of Gospel we believe. Only a few weeks ago a missionary in China took his gun to go up one of the rivers of the interior to shoot wild ducks, and, as he went along in the boat he shot at some ducks, and down they fell.

Unfortunately they did not happen to be wild fowl, but tame ducks belonging to some of the neighbors. The owner was miles away but the boat was drawn up to the side of the river and the missionary went about, carefully endeavoring to find out the owner of the ducks, for he could not rest until he had paid for the damage he had ignorantly done. The owner was much surprised. He had been so accustomed to having people shoot his ducks and never saying a word about it that he could not understand the honesty of the man of God.

And he told others until crowds of Chinese gathered round and stared at the missionary as if he had dropped from the moon—a man so extremely honest as not to be willing to take away ducks when he had killed them! They listened to the Gospel with attention and observed that the teaching must be good which made people so conscientious as the missionary had been. I should not wonder but what that little incident did more for the Gospel than the preaching of twenty sermons might have done without it! So let it be with us! Let us so act in every position that we shall adorn the Gospel which is committed to our trust.

Lastly, it is committed to our trust, if we have received it, that we may spread it—spread it personally by telling it abroad. If more could preach the Gospel it would be well. We have in all our congregations young men who are hard at work—at this very moment I do not doubt but what we have a hundred preaching in the street—perhaps more. But I have sometimes regretted that so few of the wealthier men enter into such labor. We could wish to see the men of ten talents preaching—the men of large abilities consecrating themselves to Christ.

Many of our young members are more useful at literary institutions than in the Church. Other useful occupations are all very well in their way, but I wish we could get the strength of our men spent more in the preaching of the Gospel. The first business of a Christian is his Christianity. All the rest, his patriotism even, must be kept subservient to that, for Heaven is more his country than England is, and Jesus Christ is rather his King than any of the kings of earth. “Seek you first the kingdom of God and His righteousness.”

I would ask young men now present, who love the Lord, whether they really are doing for the cause of God what they ought to do. Whether they could not do something more by way of making manifest in every place the savor of Jesus Christ’s name. My Sisters, your voices are exceedingly sweet, but we like to hear them better *anywhere* than from a pulpit. But still you have your sphere—do you occupy it for Christ? The Christian woman’s first call is to serve Jesus in the family. Next to that to serve Christ in her neighborhood. Are you doing so? The “glorious Gospel of the blessed God” is as much committed to your trust, Christian woman, as if there were not another Christian under Heaven—how would it fare if it were so? If all other Christians died, would you have done by the Gospel what it might demand of you? All the zeal and industry of 10,000 others cannot touch your personal responsibility as a Christian.

I have to ask you, this morning, to help me to spread the glorious Gospel. Some years ago, having done my utmost to preach the Word with my own mouth, I found that running up and down throughout the country preaching 10 or 12 times a week, I was still able to do but very little. I thought if I found other tongues and set them talking, found other brains and set them thinking, I might, perhaps, do more for the cause of my blessed Master. One young man was thrown in my way who was educated for me by an esteemed brother for the Christian ministry. And when he was greatly owned of God as preacher, the desire to assist students grew within my heart,

The Pastor’s College, for which I ask your contributions this morning, has grown to be a power for good. We have had for some successive years between 80 and 90 Brothers in training for the ministry. The whole of the support for them is found by the gifts of God’s people which they voluntarily send, without being waited upon by any collector, or asked for annual subscriptions. I have nothing to depend upon but the Providence of God which directs the generosity of His people. Sometimes my funds run rather short, but never so short that I am really in need, for when the treasury is scantily furnished, we call the young men together and pray about it, and many a time we have had as distinct answers to prayer as though God had stretched his hand out of Heaven to give the needed money!

Some 5,000 pounds a year are spent in this way, which God always sends when it is needed. We have built several places of worship. We have formed and founded several fresh Churches. We have evangelized the darkest districts of London and the country—and our men are now to be found in Australia, on the rock of St. Helena, in Southern Africa, in America—and all quarters of the earth. God has been pleased to bless them and has given them souls for their hire, and we shall be glad if you feel moved to give towards their maintenance.

Before I dismiss you, I would like to press home to each one the question, “Do you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ? Has the Gospel become a glorious Gospel to you?” I do not know you as I know my own people, but when I look along my galleries I mourn over those who have been hearing the word 10 years and are the same as if they never heard it. I suppose there are some of you in the same case, and my esteemed brother, Mr. Tucker, must cast his eye around the gallery, and the area, and see many who have grown Gospel-hardened.

It is a horrible thing to think of! The same sun that melts wax hardens clay, and to some hearts the Gospel becomes the savor of death unto death. If nothing comes of this morning’s service but making everyone enquire how it is with his own soul. If it shall only constrain you to go to your solitary chamber and shut the door and pray, “O Lord, let me know this glorious Gospel! I have not understood it up till now, for it has not been glorious to me. Do make it so to me this day, that I may be saved,” my heart will be very glad if such shall be the case.

Adapted from*The C.H. Spurgeon Collection,*Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #1574 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

I WAS BEFORE  
NO. 1574

*DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.  
*“Who was before a blasphemer and a persecutor and injurious.”* **1Ti 1:13***.*

I AM not going to dwell, at this time, upon the special items of the text as to what Paul was before his conversion because none of us have been exactly as he was. We have all gone astray like lost sheep, but each one of us has taken a distinct course from all the rest. You might have to describe your transgressions in very different words from those used by the Apostle because yours have been a different form of guilt from his. Paul said of himself that he, “was before a blasphemer and a persecutor and injurious.” Saul of Tarsus was a blasphemer. He does not say that he was an unbeliever and an objector, but he uses a very strong word, though not too strong, and says that he was a blasphemer.

He was a down-right, thorough-going blasphemer who also caused others to blaspheme. From blasphemy, which is a sin of the lips, Saul proceeded to persecution, which is a sin of the hands. Hating Christ, he hated His people, too. He was also injurious, which I think Bengel considers to mean that he was a despiser. That eminent critic says, “blasphemy was his sin towards God, persecution was his sin towards the Church and despising was his sin in his own heart.” He was injurious—that is, he did all he could to damage the cause of Christ and, thereby, injured himself. He kicked against the pricks and by doing so injured his own conscience. Having sinned thus grievously, Paul makes a full confession of his guilt in order that he may magnify the Divine Grace which saved, even, the chief of sinners.

Note here, before we come to the special purpose we have in view, that godly men never think or speak lightly of their sins. When they know that they are forgiven, they repent of their iniquities even more heartily than before. They never infer the lightness of sin from the freeness of Grace, but quite the contrary—and you shall find it as one trait in the character of every true penitent that he is rather inclined to blacken himself than to whitewash his transgressions. He sometimes speaks of himself in terms which others think must be exaggerated, though to him and, indeed, to God, they are simply true.

You have probably read biographies of John Bunyan in which the biographer says that Bunyan labored under a morbid conscientiousness and accused himself of a degree of sin of which he was not guilty. Exactly so, in the view of the *biographer*, but not so in the view of John Bunyan, who, startled into sensitiveness of conscience, could not find words strong enough to express all his reprobation of himself. Job once said, “I abhor myself.” That is a very strong expression but, when he saw his own sin in the Presence of God, the man of whom the Lord said unto Satan, “There is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that fears God and eschews evil,” the man against whom the devil, himself, could not bring an accusation, yet says that when he saw God, the brightness of the Divine Holiness made him so conscious of his sin that he exclaimed, “Now my eye sees You, I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes.”

Those who have seen the exceeding sinfulness of sin by the light of the Holy Spirit and who have been made truly penitent are the last persons to speak lightly of evil! They dwell upon their own criminality with many terms to set forth how greatly they have felt it. We will consider the case of Paul for just a minute or two because it is a type and pattern of the work of God’s Grace in other Believers. He tells us in the 16th verse of this chapter, “For this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all long-suffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on Him to life everlasting.” He was a model convert, a typical instance of Divine long-suffering, a pattern and specimen of all who believe on Christ and all conversions are, to a large extent, similar to that which transformed the blaspheming, persecuting, despising Saul of Tarsus into the great Apostle of the Gentiles!

Now, notice when he is describing his own past life how he dwells upon it with painful minuteness. He is not speaking before God in private, as Job was in the words we have quoted, else I can conceive that he would paint his sin in still darker colors. But he is answering for himself before king Agrippa, touching the things of which he had been accused by the Jews and you will see that he puts his offense against Christ and His Church in as strong a light as he very well could. His enemies have no such accusation to bring against him as that which he voluntarily makes against himself! First, he says in the 10th verse of the 26th chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, which we read just now, “Many of the saints did I shut up in prison.”

Those whom he shut up in prison were *saints*. To imprison the guilty is no fault, but to maltreat and shut up holy men was, indeed, blameworthy. He confessed that they were saints, saintly persons, but he committed them to prison for that very reason, because they were Christians and, therefore, their saintly lives did not protect them from his malice, but made them so much the more objects of his cruel hatred. He says that he hunted the saints—and not merely a few of them, but, “Many of the saints did I shut up in prison.” He lays stress upon the word, “many”—not halfa-dozen here and there—but scores and hundreds suffered through him and his persecuting band. He crowded the prisons with the followers of Jesus Christ! “He that touches you touches the apple of His eye,” says the Lord of Hosts when addressing captive Zion.

One touch of a saint of God injuriously given will be painful to the Lord—how much more, then, when there are many such touches and when he whose hand has done the evil deed has to confess—“Many of the saints did I shut up in prison”? We may be quite sure that he did this because they were Christians, for the 9th verse puts it thus, “I verily thought with myself that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth.” It was Jesus of Nazareth he was aiming at, though his blows were directed against His followers. It was because the name of Jesus was named upon these people that they were put in prison!

Now, this is no small sin—to persecute holy men, to imprison many of them and to do so simply because they believed in Jesus Christ. The Apostle felt that this put exceeding bitterness into the gall of his transgression—that he had lifted up unholy hands against the members of Christ’s body and through them had wounded their ever-glorious Head. More than this, he did not merely put them in prison, but, he says, “Many of the saints did I shut up in prison.” Some persons in prison have had a measure of liberty, as Joseph had, but Saul took care that these Believers should be *shut up—*that they should have no liberty at all! He put them into the common jails, locked them up and made their feet fast in the stocks, causing them to suffer even as he and his companion, Silas, afterwards did in the prison at Philippi.

Continuing the summary of his evil against the servants of the Lord, he says, “I was not content with their imprisonment, but I was eager for their death. When they were put to death, I gave my voice against them. When the Sanhedrim wanted a vote I, young Saul, was there to give my maiden vote against Stephen or any other saint. If the chief priests wanted a knife to cut the Christians’ throats with, there was I ready to do the deed. If they needed one who would drag them away to prison and to death, there stood I, the eager messenger, only too glad if I might lay hands upon them, believing that I was, thereby, doing God service.”

“No,” he says, “that is not all. I often punished them in every synagogue and compelled them to blaspheme.” This, indeed, was a very horrible part of Saul’s sinfulness. To destroy their bodies was bad enough, but to destroy their souls if that were possible—to compel them to blaspheme, to speak evil of that name which they confessed to be their joy and their hope—surely that was the worst form that persecution could assume! He forced them under torture to renounce the Christ whom their hearts loved! As it were, he was not content to kill them, but he must damn them, if it were possible, too. “I compelled them to blaspheme.” This was a dreadful sin and Paul mentions it as such. He does not extenuate his crime, nor attempt to find excuses for his conduct.

And then he adds, once more, that he did all this wickedness with the greatest possible enthusiasm—“And being exceedingly mad against them,” like a raging madman in his fits, like a violent maniac who cannot be held in—seized with frenzy, tearing right and left, finding no rest unless he could be harrying and worrying the sheep like a bloody wolf, as he was to the sheep of Christ’s flock. “Being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities.” He scattered them far and wide and then sought to get authority that even when they were in exile they might not be beyond his reach!

Saul seems to have grown proficient in the science of persecution and to have become a very master in the cruel art of crushing the people of God. We do not learn this from James, or John, or any of the other Apostles. Who tells us of all this? Who makes out this long, black catalog of crimes of which the man who committed them might well be ashamed? Why, Paul himself! It is Paul himself that puts it so and I would that, in like manner, the worst character you could have, my Brother, might come from your own lips. “Let another man praise you and not your own mouth; a stranger and not your own lips.” But, when there is an accusation that must be made against you, be you the first to make it with tears of repentance before the living God!

I think I have thus, from the example of Paul before Agrippa, justified the expression with which I started—that true penitents do not seek to extenuate or diminish the sin which has been forgiven them, but they acknowledge how great it is and set it forth in all its enormity as it appears before their enlightened eyes. Now, I want you, dear Friends, who know the Lord, to follow me in a very simple way, rather by your emotions than by anything else. I want the text of my sermon to be, “I was.” The Apostle tells us what he was—what he was before conversion. Now, I want you to think what *you* were before the Grace of God met with you and changed you.

I do not know that I shall help you much to remember the details of your sin, for pretty near the last time I stood here, I did that when we spoke of Peter from the words—“When he thought thereon, he wept,” [*Fountain of Repentant Tears—*Sermon #2735, Volume 47—Read July 14, 1901—Preached October 24, 1880.] but I want you to see seven very profitable inferences which will arise out of an impartial retrospect of your life before conversion.

**I.**The first, I think, will be that IF WE THINK OF WHAT WE WERE, IT WILL EXCITE IN US ADORING GRATITUDE. Paul was full of gratitude, for he thanked Christ Jesus that He counted him faithful, putting him into the ministry. He is so glad of the favor of God that when he comes to the 17th verse he must put down his pen while he sings, “Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.” If, then, you and I look back upon what we were before the Lord saved us, we, too, shall be full of adoring gratitude as we think of even the *least* of all the favors that He has bestowed upon us!

“I am not worthy,” said the Patriarch, Jacob, when he was returning to his country at the command of God—“I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies and of all the truth which You have shown unto Your servant.” And we can, each one, say the same. Is it not a wonderful thing that you who were—I will not say what—you know what you were and God knows! Isn’t it wonderful, I say, that you should be a teacher of others? That you should be permitted to stand up and speak of pardon bought with blood? That you should be allowed to talk of holiness though your lips used to speak of any other theme but that?

Isn’t it wonderful that you should be allowed to extol the Christ for whom you had no words of praise a little while ago, for whom, indeed, you had only words of contempt and scorn? Paul was astonished to think that he was put into the ministry! And when I look back upon my own life before I knew the Lord, I am amazed that I should ever stand here, seeing that for so long I refused my Lord’s love and put aside His favors and would have none of them! Ah, I did not know what would happen to me one day. Little did I think then that I should ever stand here to—

***“Tell to sinners round,  
What a dear Savior  
I have found.”***

But it does fill me with gratitude which makes me bow before God in thankful adoration to think that He should have looked on me and to know that, “unto me,” as well as unto Paul, “is this Grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.”

I ask you, dear Friends, to remember this gratitude in the reception of every blessing. When you enjoy Church privileges; when you come to the Communion Table, think, “Here comes one to sit with the children of God who once was like a dog outside the house.” When you stand up and praise the Lord, think, “And I, too, am permitted to offer the sacrifice of praise—I, who once sang the praises of Bacchus or of Venus—rather than of Christ Jesus!” When you draw near to God in prayer and know that He hears you, too—when you have power in prayer and prevail with the Most High and come back with your hands full of blessings that have been obtained at the Throne of Grace, you may well say, “What shameful things these hands once did when I rendered my members instruments of unrighteousness—and now they are loaded down with the bounties of a gracious God!”

Oh, do bless His name! If you do not, the stones in the street will begin to cry out against some of you! Oh, if your heart does not leap at the very sound of the name of Jesus, surely you cannot possess a heart at all! Such a change, such a wondrous, matchless change has passed upon you that if you do not praise the Lord today and tomorrow and as long as you have any being, what shall be said of your ungrateful silence? “I was”—I was before—all that I ought not to have been, but Grace has changed me and unto the God of Grace be all the glory! Do not all of you who love the Lord unite with me in this utterance of adoring gratitude?

**II.**A second very blessed inference (we can only speak briefly upon each one) is that A SENSE OF WHAT WE WERE SHOULD SUSTAIN IN US VERY DEEP HUMILITY. It did so in the case of the Apostle Paul and I would refer you to his expression of it in the First Epistle to the Corinthians, the 15th chapter and the 9th verse, where he says, “I am the least of the Apostles, that am not meet to be called an Apostle because I persecuted the church of God.” When He was compelled to glory in what he was through the Grace given to him, he said that he supposed he was not a whit behind the very chief Apostles, yet he here says of himself that he was not worthy to be called an Apostle because before his conversion he persecuted the saints of God!

Now, dear Brothers and Sisters, if we have been a little while converted and have united with the Church of God and the Lord has given us a little work to do, we may be tempted to think, “Now, I am somebody! Really, I am not now quite the humble dependent that I used to be. I am getting to be of some service to my Lord and Master and I am of some importance in His Church.” Ah, that is the way many Christians get into sad mischief. “Pride goes before destruction and a haughty spirit before a fall.” You must always strive *against* that kind of spirit and one way to avoid it is to remember what you *were in your unregenerate state*. There are some who might say, “I am a minister of the Gospel, but I am not worthy to be called a minister because of the sins that I committed before my conversion. I am a member of the Church of Christ, but I am scarcely worthy to be called a member because I was a blasphemer, or a Sabbath-breaker, or profane, unchaste, or dishonest.”

Remember what you were and let your spiritual advancements never lead you to unspiritual pride and self-conceit for, “everyone that is proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord.” I have heard of a good man in Germany who used to rescue poor, destitute boys from the streets and he always had them photographed in their rags and filth just as he found them. And then, years afterwards, when they were clothed and washed and educated and their characters began to develop, if they grew proud he would show them what they were and try to teach them what they would have likely been it had not been for his charity. If you are inclined to lift up your head and boast what a great man you are, now—just look at the likeness of what you were before the Lord made you a new creature in Christ Jesus!

Oh, who can tell what that likeness would have been but for the interpositions of Divine Grace? I think you would say what the Scotsman said to Rowland Hill when he called to see the good man in his study. He sat and looked at him. And Rowland Hill’s face, you know, if you have seen his portrait, is one to be remembered—there is a peculiar comic look about it. So the Scotsman said, in answer to the question, “What are you looking at?” “I have been studying the lines of your face.” “And what do you make out of them?” said Mr. Hill. “Why, that if the Grace of God had not made you a Christian, you would have been one of the worst fellows that ever lived.” “Ah!” said Mr. Hill, “you have hit the mark this time!”

I should not wonder, too, if some of us, when we look in the mirror, were to see somebody there that would have been a very deep-dyed sinner if it had not been for the change of heart which Sovereign Grace has worked. This ought to keep us very humble and very lowly before God. I invite you, Friends, to think this over and when you feel yourselves beginning to swell a little, let the bladder of your foolish and wicked pride be pricked with the needle of conscience as you remember what you used to be and you will be all the better for letting some of the gas escape! Come back as speedily as you can to your fine shape, for what are you, after all? If you are anything that is good, or right, or pleasing in the eyes of the Lord, you must still say, “By the Grace of God I am what I am.”—

***“All that I was, my sin, my guilt,  
My death, was all my own.  
All that I am, I owe to You,  
My gracious God, alone.  
The evil of my former state  
Was mine and only mine.  
The good in which I now rejoice***

***Is Thine and only Thine.”*  
Well, those are two of the inferences which result from looking back at what you were—the retrospect excites gratitude and sustains humility.**

**III.**The next is this—THE REMEMBRANCE OF OUR FORMER CONDITION SHOULD RENEW IN US GENUINE REPENTANCE. When we look back upon what we used to be before the Lord met with us, it should breed in us a perpetual repentance. There are some who seem to think that we only repent of sin when we are first converted. Do not be deluded by any such false notion! When you leave off repenting, you have left off living! You are not living for God as you ought to do unless you daily repent. Remember that we are not saved by a single act of faith which terminates the moment we receive the assurance of the Divine forgiveness, but by a faith which *continues* as long as we live and, therefore, as long as we have any faith we must have repentance, too, for these are twin Graces—faith with a bright eye, like Rachel, who was beautiful and wellfavored—and repentance, tender-eyed, like Leah, but with a lovely eye for all that.

“Repentance,” says one, “why, I thought that was a bitter thing that was taken away when we believed!” No, it is a sweet thing—I could wish to repent in Heaven, though I suppose I shall not. We cannot carry the tear of penitence in our eyes into Heaven—it will be the only thing we might regret to leave behind. Surely we shall be sorry, even there, for having grieved our God. Even there, I think, we shall repent, but certainly as long as we are here we must *daily* repent of sin! Yes, and repent of the sin that is forgiven—repent *more* because it is forgiven than we did when we had any doubts about its being pardoned—

***“My sins, my sins, my Savior!  
How sad on You they fall,  
Seen through Your gentle patience,  
I tenfold feel them all.  
I know they are forgiven,  
But still their pain to me***

***Is all the grief and anguish  
They laid, my Lord, on Thee.”***

Smite on your breasts while you think that it was necessary that Christ should *die* that you might be delivered from sin and its penalty and power—and as your love increases, let your sorrow abound that such a Lord should have needed to be *crucified* for you.

Oh, Sin, as Christ becomes more lovely, you become more hateful and as our soul learns more of the beauty of holiness, it perceives more of your ugliness and so continually loathes you more and more! If you want to draw up the sluices of repentance, sit down and remember what you were by nature and would have remained if Grace had not intervened! So, then, it shall be good for you to say, “I was before a blasphemer and a persecutor and injurious,” or to use any other expression that shall accurately describe you, if it leads you, like Peter, to go out and weep bitterly true tears of repentance.

**IV.**And now, fourthly, (we have but a word on each inference, you see)—THE RETROSPECT OF OUR PAST LIVES SHOULD KINDLE IN US FERVENT LOVE to the Lord who has redeemed us. You remember Christ went into the house of one of the Pharisees who had a measure of respect for Him—this was Simon who desired Him to eat with him. But when He entered in, Simon treated Him as a common guest and offered Him none of the delicate attentions which men give to choice friends or to superiors. Christ took no note of this, nor had He need to do so, for there was another who stole into that room who did for Him all that Simon *ought* to have done and more than Simon *could* have done!

“A woman in the city, which was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee’s house, brought an alabaster box of ointment and stood at His feet behind Him weeping.” She stood behind the couch upon which He was reclining and let her tears fall down upon His blessed flesh till she had washed His feet with them and then, unbraiding the luxurious tresses of her hair, she wiped those holy feet with them! Her love, her humility, her adoration and her penitence were all mingling as she kissed His feet and anointed them with the ointment which she had brought. Our Lord explained why this woman had performed this extraordinary action. He said it was because she had been forgiven much.

Now, rest assured that there is no exception to this rule—that those who are conscious of having had much forgiven are those who will love Christ much! I do not say—I almost wish I could—that love is always in proportion to the *amount* of sin forgiven, but I do say that it is in proportion to the *consciousness* of sin forgiven. A man may be a less sinner than another, but he may be more conscious of his sin and he will be the man who will love Christ more. Oh, do not forget what you were, lest you should become unmindful of your obligation to Jesus! You are saints, now, but you were not always so. You can talk to others of Christ, now, but you could not once have done it. You can wrestle with the Angel of God in prayer and prevail, now, but once you were more familiar with the devil than you were with the Angel!

At this moment your heart bears witness to the indwelling of the Holy Spirit—it is not long ago that the Prince of the power of the air worked within you and the Holy Spirit was not there at all! I beseech you, therefore, forget not this, lest you forget to love Him who has worked this wondrous change in you! I think there is nothing better than to retain a vivid sense of conversion in order to retain a vivid sense of love. Do not be afraid of loving Christ too much. I see the cold carping criticism of this age objects to any expressions of love to Christ which we use in our hymns because it says that they are sensuous. My only answer to such talk is— God give us more of such blessed sensuousness!

I think that instead of diminishing these utterances it will be a token of growth in Grace when they are more abundant—not if they become so common as to be hypocritical. Then they would be sickening, but as long as they are true and honest, I, for one, would say to you who love the Lord, go on and sing***—***

***“Safe in the arms of Jesus,  
Safe on His gentle breast.”***

Go on and sing—  
Hesitate not to say***—  
“You, dear Redeemer, dying Lamb,  
We love to hear of You”***

***“Jesus, I love Your charming name, ‘Tis music to my ear.”***

and if it shall please you and the Spirit shall move you, even say, like the spouse in the song, “Let Him kiss me with the kisses of His mouth: for Your love is better than wine.” The starveling religion of the present day, not content with tearing away the doctrinal flesh from the spiritual body, is now seeking to drag out the very heart of religion and to reduce Christian experience to nothing but a chilly doubting of everything! Let this be far from you! Believe something and love something, for to believe is to live, and to love is to be in health.

Oh for more love arising out of a deep, intense sense of what we once were and of the change which Christ has worked in us! “But,” says one, “I do not know that any great change has been worked in *me*.” No and there are some who tell us that we do not need any. There are certain Paedobaptists preaching, nowadays, that most children of pious parents do not need conversion. We have long had the Church of England teaching us baptismal regeneration—now we have some Nonconformists trying to persuade us that no regeneration at all is needed! This a new kind of doctrine that I know nothing of and that the Word of God knows nothing of and it will not do for us! It will eat out the very life of Christianity if it is believed.

Pious ancestors could not save one of you—even if your fathers and mothers and grandfathers and grandmothers and great-grandfathers and great-grandmothers and great-great-great-great-grandfathers and greatgreat-great-great-grandmothers—as far back as ever you like—had been all saints, nevertheless, *their* faith could not be of any use to you! You must be born, “not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” “You must be born again” is as true of one child as of another—as true of you as it was of me and as true of me as of the thief confined in prison today.

But some of us *have* been changed—we are washed, we are sanctified, we are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God. It has been a real work of Divine Grace—the turning of us upside down, the reversing of the course of Nature, a turning of night into day, a turning of the powers of our spirit from the dominion of Satan to the dominion of Christ—and we must and will, therefore, love Him who has worked in us such a wondrous transformation!

**V.**Well now, fifthly, REMEMBERING WHAT WE WERE, ARDENT ZEAL SHOULD BE AWAKENED IN US. Look at Paul. He says, “I was before a blasphemer and a persecutor and injurious.” What then? Why, now that he has become a follower of Christ, he cannot do too much! He put many saints in prison—now he goes into many prisons, himself. He hunted them even to strange cities—and now he goes into all manner of strange cities, himself. He dragged them before tribunals and now he, himself goes and stands before Roman proconsuls and before the Roman emperor, himself! Paul can never do too much for Christ because he had done so much for Satan!  
I remember one who lived four or five miles away from a place of worship who used to say, “You old legs, it is no use being tired, for you have got to carry me. You used to take me to the place of amusement when I served the devil and you shall carry me, now, to the House of God that I may worship and serve Him.” When sometimes he had an uneasy seat, he used to say, “It is no use grumbling, old bones, you will have to sit here, or else you will have to stand. Years ago you put up with all kinds of inconveniences when I went to the theater, or some other evil place when I served Satan—and you must now be content to do the same now for a better Master and a nobler service.”

I think some of us might take a lesson from that old man and say to ourselves, “Come, Covetousness, you are not going to hinder me from serving the Lord. I used to be liberal to the devil and I do not intend, now, to be stingy with God.” If ever I am tempted in that fashion, I will give twice as much as I had thought of doing, so as to spite the devil, for he shall not have his way with me! Some, when they serve Satan, go as if they rode a racehorse and whip and spur to get in first. How they will destroy body and soul in the service of the Evil One! But if a Christian gets a little lively they say, “Oh, dear me, dear me, he is excited! He is fanatical! He has grown enthusiastic!”

Why should he not be in earnest? The devil’s servants are enthusiastic and why should not the servants of Christ be the same? Black Prince, Black Prince, are you served by heroes and shall Christ be served by dolts? Oh, let it not be so, my Brothers and Sisters! Surely if anything can wake up all the powers of our nature; if anything can make a lame man leap as a hart; if anything can make a palpitating, trembling heart to be bold and brave for Christ, it should be the love which Christ has shown in looking upon such as we were and changing us by His Grace! “Ah, but you must not do too much,” says one. Did you ever know anybody who did?

If anybody ever does too much for Christ, let us rail off a piece in the cemetery that we may bury him in it. That grave will never be needed—it will be empty till Christ comes! “Ah, but you may have too many irons in the fire.” It depends upon the size of the fire! Get your fire well hot—I mean get your heart well hot and your nature in a blaze—then put all the irons you can ever get, into it! Keep them all at a white heat if possible. Blow away and let the flames be very vehement. Oh, to live for God a life of ecstatic zeal even if it were only for a short space of time! It were better than to have a hundred years of bare existence in which one went crawling along like a snail, leaving slime behind and nothing else. It were better far than driveling out, as oftentimes we do—

***“Our souls can neither fly nor go  
To reach eternal joys.”***

The love of Christ to us, then, suggests great zeal in His service. **VI.**Now, sixthly, I am sure that another inference that should be drawn from it is this—If we remember what we were and how Divine Grace has changed us, IT OUGHT TO MAKE US VERY HOPEFUL ABOUT OTHER PEOPLE. Paul was, for he says, “This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief. Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all long-suffering for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on Him to life everlasting.” Well, Friend, are *you* saved? Then *anybody* can be! You never ought to despair of the salvation of anyone, for you know yourself and feel yourself to have been the most undeserving of men—and yet God’s Grace has made you love Him. Well, then, that Grace can light on anybody. Already it has fallen on the most unlikely spot possible!

Now, from this moment on, never indulge the idea that it is useless to attempt to benefit any of your fellow men. I remember—indeed, I have often met with persons who tell me of being asked, “Why did you not ask So-and-So to attend a place of worship?” “Ask him? Oh, I never thought of *him*.” “Why not?” “I did not think it was any use.” It is a very amazing thing that those are the kind of people who, if you get them to hear the Word of God, are generally converted—the people you think it is no use to bring! Men who have been accustomed to speak very disrespectfully of religious things, when once brought under the sound of the Truth of God, are often the first to receive a blessing! Those are the kind of fellows to seek, for there is some hope of reaching men who are in such need of the Gospel we have to proclaim. You know there is virgin soil there, so it is the very place to sow the good Seed of the kingdom.

There is good fishing in a pond that never was fished before and here is a man who, at any rate, is not Gospel-hardened—he has not got used to the sound of the Word so as to take no notice of anything that is said. Bring him in! He is the very man we want—bring him in! “But he is a swearer.” Well, but if you were a swearer before your conversion, you ought never to say anything about *that*. “Oh, but he is a very hardened man.” Yes, but if you were converted, notwithstanding what you were, you ought never to make*that* objection against anyone. “Oh, but he is such a low-bred man.” Well, there are plenty of us who cannot boast much about our aristocratic descent! “Oh, but,” says one, “he is such a proud man, such a haughty man.” Or, “He is a rich man. He is a purse-proud man.” Yes, but there are others like he who have been brought in and while that man has sinned in one way, *you* have sinned in another—and if the Grace of God met your six, it can meet his half-dozen!

Depend upon it, God meant us to be hopeful about other people when He saved us. See that man coming out of the hospital? He has had pretty nearly all the diseases you ever heard of and yet he has been cured. He is not the man to say, “It is no use going in *there*. You will get no good by putting yourself under the treatment of *that* doctor.” On the contrary, whenever he meets with anybody who is suffering, he says, “You go and try the physician that healed me. If you can get a bed under his care; if you can come under his notice, you are almost certain to get cured—your maladies cannot be worse than mine and he met my case exactly and he can meet yours.” He is the man who will advertise Christ and will proclaim His fame the whole world over—who has tasted that He is gracious and has proven, in his own case, the converting power of the Holy Spirit!

Oh, I pray you, dear Friend, despair of nobody! You who go with your tracts, go into the worst houses! You who talk in the workhouses to those who are, perhaps, as gladly gone as any—who find them dying in the infirmary and rejecting the Word of God as you speak it, yet keep on! Keep on! “Never say die” concerning anyone! Since the Lord has saved you, the Grace of God can save anybody, however far he may have sunk in sin! It can reach even to the very vilest of the sons of men.

**VII.**The last inference is that WHAT GOD HAS DONE FOR US SHOULD CONFIRM OUR CONFIDENCE FOR OURSELVES—our confidence, not *in ourselves*, but in God who will perfect that which He has begun in us. There is not half as much Grace necessary to bring you to Heaven if you are a Believer as you have had, already, to bring you where you are! You have got to be perfected, but remember that it was the very first step that had the difficulty in it. It always reminds me of the legend of St. Denis who picked up his head after it was cut off and walked, I think, 40 leagues with it. But a wit said that there was no trouble about walking 40 leagues—the difficulty all lay in the first step!

So it did and so all the difficulty of the walk of faith lies in the first step—that first coming of a *dead heart* to life! That first bringing of a reprobate soul—a carnal mind that is enmity against God—into friendship with God. Well, that has been done! That first great work has been worked in you by God the Holy Spirit and now you can say with the Apostle, “If, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.”

Do you think the Lord ever converts a man with a view of showing him His Light that he may go back, again, into the thick darkness, forever? Does He drop a spark of heavenly light into our souls that it may go out, never to be rekindled? Does He come and teach us to eat heavenly bread and drink the Water of Life and then leave us to starve or die of thirst? Does He make us members of Christ’s body and then allow us to rot and decay? Has He brought us thus far to put us to shame? Has He given me a heart that cries after Him and pines for Him! Has He given me a sighing after perfection, an inward hunger after everything that is holy and true and does He mean, after all, to desert me? It cannot be—

***“His love in time past forbids me to think  
He’ll leave me at last in trouble to sink.  
That gracious conversion I have in review, Confirms His good pleasure to help me quite through.”***

So let us go on our way rejoicing that it shall be even so with each one of us. Amen.  
***PORTIONS OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON —Acts 26;*** 1Ti 1:11-17***.*  
HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—30, 233, 235.**

END OF VOLUME 26

Adapted from***The C. H. Spurgeon Collection***, Ages Software, 1.800.297.430  
Sermon #1345 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

÷1Ti 1.15

FOR WHOM IS THE GOSPEL MEANT?  
NO. 1345

**DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, MARCH 25, 1877, *BY C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.”*** Mar 2:17***.***

***“Christ died for the ungodly.”***Rom 5:6***.***

***“God commends His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”***Rom 5:8***.***

***“This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.”*** 1Ti 1:15***.***

LAST Thursday evening, with considerable difficulty, I stood here to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and I handled one of the simplest imaginable texts, full of nothing but the very plainest elements of the Gospel. Within a very few minutes I had a harvest for the sermon. The congregation was slender, for you know how ill a night it was, and how little you expected that your pastor would be able to preach, but three souls came forward uninvited to acknowledge that they had found peace with God. How many more there were I do not know, but these three sought out the Brethren and bore a good and hearty confession to the blessed fact that, for the first time in their lives they, had understood the plan of salvation.

Now, it seemed to me that if a plain Gospel theme was so promptly profitable, I had better keep to the same subject. If a farmer finds that a certain seed has paid him so well that he never had a better crop, then he will keep to that seed and sow more of it. Those processes of farming which have been successful should be persevered in and even used upon a larger scale. So this morning I shall just preach the A B C of the Gospel, the first rudiments of the art of salvation. And I thank God this will be no new thing to me. May God the Holy Spirit, in answer to your prayers, grant us a reward this morning after the same proportion as last Thursday and, if so, our heart will be exceedingly glad.

Out of a very great number I have selected the four texts which I have just read to set forth the Truth of God that the mission of our Lord related to sinners. What did Christ come into the world for? For whom did He come? These are questions of the greatest importance and they are clearly answered in Scripture. When the children of Israel first found manna outside the camp, they said to one another, “Manna?” or, “what is it?” for they knew not what it was. There it lay, a small round thing, as small as the hoar frost upon the ground. No doubt they looked at it and rubbed it in their hands and smelled it. And how glad they were when Moses said,

“This is the bread which the Lord has given you to eat.” It was not long before they put the good news to the test, for each man gathered his arms full and took it home and prepared it according to his liking.

Now, concerning the Gospel, there are many who might call out, “Manna?” for they know not what it is. Very frequently, too, they make a mistake as to its bearings and its objectives, dreaming that it is a kind of improved Law, or an easier system of salvation by works and, therefore they err, also, in their idea of the persons for whom it is designed. They imagine that surely the blessings of salvation must be meant for *deserving* persons and Christ must be the Redeemer of the meritorious! On the principle of, “good for the good,” they infer that Grace is for the excellent and Christ for the virtuous. Therefore it is a most useful thing for us continually to be reminding men what the Gospel is and for whom it is sent into the world, for, though the great mass of you know full well and do not need to be told, yet there are multitudes around us who persist in grave mistakes and need to be instructed over and over again in the very simplest of the Doctrines of Grace.

There is less need for laborious explanations of profound mysteries than for simple explanations of plain Truths of God. Many men need only a simple latchkey to lift the latch and open the door of faith—and such a key, I hope God’s infinite mercy may put into their hands this morning! Our business is to show that the Gospel is intended for *sinners—*that it has an eye to *guilty* persons—that it is not sent into the world as a reward for the good and for the excellent or for those who think they have any measure of fitness or preparation for the Divine favor. We need to show that it is intended for law breakers, for the undeserving, for the ungodly, for those who have gone astray like lost sheep, or left their father’s house like the prodigal.

Christ died to save SINNERS and He justifies the ungodly. This Truth of God is plain enough in the Word, but since the human heart kicks against it, we will the more earnestly insist upon it.

**I.** First, EVEN A SUPERFICIAL GLANCE AT OUR LORD’S MISSION SUFFICES TO SHOW THAT HIS WORK WAS FOR THE SINFUL. For, dear Brothers and Sisters, the descent of the Son of God into this world as a Savior implied that men needed to be delivered from a great evil by a Divine hand! The coming of a Savior who would, by His death, provide pardon for human sin, supposed men to be greatly guilty and to be incapable of procuring pardon by any works of their own. You would never have seen a Savior if there had not been the Fall. Eden’s withering was a necessary preface to Gethsemane’s groaning.

You would never have heard of a Cross and a bleeding Savior on it if you had not first heard of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil and of a disobedient hand which plucked the forbidden fruit. If the mission of our Lord did not refer to the *guilty*, it was an altogether unnecessary errand as far as we can see. What justifies the Incarnation except man’s ruin? What explains our Lord’s suffering life but man’s guilt? Above all, what explains His death and the cloud under which He died but human sin? “All we like sheep have gone astray, and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all”—that is the answer to an otherwise unanswerable riddle. If we give a glance at the Covenant under which our Lord came, we soon perceive that its bearing is towards guilty men.

The blessing of the Covenant of Works has to do with men who are innocent. And to them it promises great blessings. If there had been *salvation* by works, it would have been by the Law, for the Law is upright and just and good. But the new Covenant evidently deals with sinners, for it does not speak of the reward of merit, but it freely promises, “ I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.” If there had been no sins and iniquities, and no unrighteousness, then there had been no need of the Covenant of Grace of which Christ is the Messenger and the Ambassador.

The slightest glimpse at our Lord’s official Character as the Adam of a new Covenant should suffice to convince us that His errand is to guilty men. Moses comes to show how the holy should behave, but Jesus comes to reveal how the unholy may be cleansed! Whenever we hear the mission of Christ spoken of, it is described as one of mercy and of Grace. In the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, it is always the mercy of God that is extolled—according to His mercy He saved us. He, for Christ’s sake, according to His abundant mercy, forgives us our trespasses. “The Law was given by Moses, but Grace and Truth by Jesus Christ.” “The Grace of God, and the gift by Grace, which is by one Man, Jesus Christ, has abounded unto many.”

The Apostle Paul, who most fully expounds the Gospel, makes Grace to be the one word upon which he rings the changes—“Where sin abounded Grace did much more abound.” “By Grace are you saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God.” “Grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord.” But, Brothers and Sisters, mercy implies sinfulness—there can be no mercy extended to the just, for Justice, itself, secures every good thing to them. Grace, too, can only be for offenders. What Grace is needed by those who have kept the Law and deserved well at Jehovah’s hands? To them eternal life would be a matter of debt, a fairly earned reward! But when you talk of Grace, you at once shut out merit and introduce another principle. Mercy can only be exercised where there is sin and Grace cannot be manifested except to the undeserving.

This is plain enough, and yet the whole tenor of some men’s religion is based on another theory. The fact is, when we begin to study the Gospel of the Grace of God we see that it turns its face always towards sin, even as a physician looks towards disease, or as charity looks towards distress. The Gospel issues its invitations, but what are the invitations? Are they not addressed to those who are burdened with a load of sin and laboring to escape from its consequences? It invites every creature because every creature has its needs, but it especially says, “Let the wicked forsake his ways and the unrighteous man his thoughts.” It invites the man who has no money, or, in other words, no merit. It calls to those who are needy, thirsty, poor, naked—and all these are but used as figures of states produced by sin!

The very gifts of the Gospel imply sin—life is for the dead, sight is for the blind, liberty is for the captives, cleansing is for the filthy, absolution is for the sinful. No Gospel blessing is proposed as a *reward* and no invitation is issued to those who claim the blessings of Grace as a matter of *right*—men are invited to come and receive them freely according to the Grace of God. And what are the commands of the Gospel? Repent. But who repents unless a sinner? Believe. But believing is not according to the Law—the Law speaks only of *doing*. Believing has to do with sinners and with the method of salvation by Grace. The Gospel representations of itself usually look sinner-ward. The great king who makes a feast finds not a guest to sit at the table among those who were naturally expected to come—so from the highways and hedges men are *compelled* to come in.

If the Gospel describes itself as a feast it is a great feast for the blind, the crippled and the lame. If it describes itself as a fountain, it is a fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness. Everywhere, in all that it does and says and provides to men, the Gospel proves itself to be the *sinner’s* friend. The motto of its Founder and Lord still is, “this Man receives sinners.” The Gospel is an hospital for the sick—none but the guilty will ever accept its benefits. It is medicine for the diseased—the whole and the selfrighteous will never relish its saving draughts. Those who imagine that they have some excellence before God will never care to be saved by Sovereign Grace. The Gospel, I say, looks *sinner-ward*. That way, and that way only, does it cast its blessings.

And Brothers and Sisters, you know that the Gospel has always found its greatest trophies among the most sinful. It enlists its best soldiers not only from among the guilty but from among the most guilty. “Simon,” said our Lord, “I have something to say unto you—A certain man had two debtors, the one owed him 500 pence and the other fifty. And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me, therefore, which of them will love him more?” The Gospel goes upon the principle that he who has had much forgiven loves much. And so its gracious Lord delights to seek out the most guilty and to manifest Himself to them with abundant and overflowing love, saying “I have blotted out your sins like a cloud, and like a thick cloud your transgressions.”

Among great transgressors it finds its warmest lovers. When once it has saved them, it receives from them the heartiest welcome and in them it obtains the most enthusiastic adherents. Great sinners, when saved, crown free Grace with its most illustrious diadems. Well may we be sure that it has its eye towards sinners since it is among the chief of sinners that it finds its highest glory. There is one other reflection which, also, lies very near the surface, namely, that if the Gospel does not look towards sinners, to whom else could it look? There seems to have been a revival, lately, of the old quibbling spirit, so that proud Pharisees constantly tell us that the preaching of justification by faith is overdone and that we are leading people to think less of morality by preaching up the Grace of God.

This often refuted objection is coming forth again because Protestantism is losing its sap and soul. The very force and backbone of the Reformers’ teaching was that great Doctrine of Grace, that salvation is not of works but of the Grace of God, alone! And because men are getting away from the Reformation and drifting into Romanism, they are casting into the background this grand Truth of God of Justification by Faith, alone, and pretending to be afraid of it. Most men are knaves and fools upon this matter! I put to all such, this one question—To whom, Sirs, would the Gospel look, if not towards sinners, for what are *you* but sinners? You who talk about morality being injured, about holiness being ignored— what have *you* to do with either?

The people who usually urge these objections, as a rule, had better be quiet on such topics. In general these fierce defenders of morality and holiness are exceedingly lax, while believers in the Grace of God are frequently charged with Puritanism and rigidity. He who stands out most to speak against the Doctrines of Grace is frequently the man or woman who needs Grace most, while the very man who cries down good works as a ground of trust is just the person whose life is carefully directed by the statutes of the Lord! Know you, O men, that there lives not on the face of the earth a man upon whom God can look with pleasure if He considers that man on the ground of His Law. “They are all gone out of the way, they are altogether become unprofitable; there is none that does good, no not one.”

Not one heart is sound and right before God by nature! Not one life is pure and clean when the Lord comes to examine it with His all-searching eyes! We are all shut up in the same prison as the guilty—if not alike guilty, yet guilty according to the proportion of our light and knowledge— and each one justly condemned! We have all erred in heart and have not loved the Lord! To whom, then, could the Gospel look if it did not cast its eyes sinner-ward? For whom else could the Savior have died? Who is there in the world for whom the benefits of Grace could be designed?

**II.**Secondly, THE MORE CLOSELY WE LOOK, THE MORE CLEAR THIS FACT BECOMES, for, Brothers and Sisters, the work of salvation was certainly not performed for any of us, who are saved, on account of any goodness in us! If there is any goodness in us, it was put there by the Grace of God and it certainly was not there when first the heart of Jehovah’s love began to move towards us.

If you take the first sign of salvation that was actually *visible* on earth, namely, the coming of Christ, we are told, concerning it, that, “when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet perhaps for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commends His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” So that our redemption, my Brothers and Sisters, was effected before we were born! This was the fruit of the Father’s great love, “wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins.”

There was nothing in us going before which could have merited that redemption, indeed the very idea of meriting the death of Jesus is absurd and blasphemous! Yes, and when we were living in sin and loving it, there were preparations made for our salvation—Divine love was busy on our behalf when we were busy in rebellion. The Gospel was brought near to us. Earnest hearts were set praying for us. The text was written which would convert us and, as I have already said, the blood was spilt which cleanses us and the Spirit of God was given who should renew us. All this

was done while as yet we had no breathings of soul after God!

Is not that a wonderful passage in Ezekiel where the Lord passed by and saw the helpless infant cast out in the open field while it was yet unswaddled and unwashed and was foul and polluted in its own blood? He says that it was a time of love and yet it was a time of pollution and loathing. He did not love the chosen baby because it was well-washed and fitly clad—He loved it when it was foul and naked. Let every believing heart admire the freeness and compassion of Divine love—

***“He saw me ruined in the Fall,  
Yet loved me, notwithstanding all.  
He saved me from my lost estate,  
His loving kindness, oh, how great!”***

When your heart was hard. When your neck was obstinate. When you would not repent nor yield to Him but rebelled yet more and more, He loved you—even *you*—with supreme affection!

Why such Grace? Why, indeed, but because His Nature is full of goodness and He delights in mercy? Is not mercy seen to be evidently extended towards the sinful and not exerted because of some goodness moving thereto? Look a little closer, still. What did our Lord come into the world to do? Here is the answer. “He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed.” He came that He might be a Sin-Bearer—and do you think He came to bear only the little, trifling sins of the best sort of men, if such sins there are? Do you suppose that He is a little Savior who came to save us from little offenses?

Beloved, it is Jehovah’s darling Son that comes to earth and bears the load of sin, a load which, when He bears it, He finds to be no fictitious burden, for it forces from Him bloody sweat! So heavy is that load that He bows His head to the grave and even unto death beneath it. That stupendous load which lay on Christ was the heap of our sins—and, therefore, as we look into the subject, we perceive that the Gospel must have to do with sinners. No sin? Then the Cross is a mistake! No sin? Then the “Lama Sabachthani” was a just complaint against unnecessary cruelty!

No sin? Then, O Redeemer, what are those glories which we have so eagerly ascribed to You? How can You put away sin which does not exist? The existence of great sin is implied in the coming of Christ and that coming was occasioned and rendered necessary by SIN, against which Jesus comes as our Deliverer! He declares that He has opened a fountain, filled with the blood of His own veins. But what for? A cleansing fountain implies *filth*. It must be, Sinner, that somewhere or other there are filthy people, or else there had not been such an amazing fountain as this, filled from the heart of Christ! If you are guilty, you are one who needs the fountain, and it is opened for you! Come with all your sin and foulness about you and wash this morning, and be clean!—

***“‘Twas for sinners that He suffered  
Agonies unspeakable!  
Can you doubt you are a sinner?  
If you can—then hope farewell.  
But, believing what is written—  
‘All are guilty’—‘dead in sin,’  
Looking to the Crucified One  
Hope shall rise your soul within.”***

Brothers and Sisters, all the gifts which Jesus Christ came to give, or at least most of them, imply that there is sin! What is His first gift but pardon? How can He pardon a man who has not transgressed? With all reverence do I speak—there can be no such thing as pardon where there is no offense committed. Propitiation for sin and blotting out of iniquity both require that there must be sin to be blotted out, or what is there real about them? Christ comes to bring justification and this shows that there must be a lack of natural holiness in men, for if not, they would be justified by themselves and by their own works. And why all this outcry about justification by the righteousness of the Son of God if men are already justified by a righteousness of their own? Those two blessings, and others of the same kind, are clearly applicable only to sinful men. To no other men can they be of any use.

Our Lord Jesus Christ came girded, also, with Divine power. He says, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me.” To what end was He girded with Divine power unless it was because sin had taken all power and strength from man, and man was in a condition out of which he could not be lifted except by the energy of the eternal Spirit? And what does this imply but that Christ’s errand bears upon those who, through sin, are without strength and without merit before God? The Holy Spirit is given because man’s spirit has failed—because sin has taken the life out of man and made him dead in trespasses and sins—therefore the Holy Spirit comes to quicken him into newness of life, and that Spirit comes by Jesus Christ. Therefore the errand of Jesus Christ is manifestly to the *guilty*.

I will not omit to say that the great deeds of our Lord, if you look at them carefully, all bear upon sinners. Jesus lives—it is that He may seek and save that which is lost. Jesus dies—it is that He may make a propitiation for the sins of guilty men. Jesus rises—He rises again for our justification and, as I have shown, we would not need justification unless we had been naturally guilty. Jesus ascends on high and He receives gifts for men—but note that special word—“Yes, for the rebellious, also, that the Lord God may dwell among them.” Jesus lives in Heaven, but He lives there to intercede. “Therefore He is able, also, to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever lives to make intercession for them.”

So take whatever part of His glorious achievements you please and you will find that there is a distinct bearing towards those who are immersed in guilt. And Beloved, all the gifts and blessings that Jesus Christ has brought to us derive much of their radiance from their bearing upon sinners. It is in Christ Jesus that we are elect and, to my mind, the glory of electing love lies in this—that it pitched upon such undeserving objects. How had there been any election had it been according to *merit*? Then men would have taken rank by right according to their own deeds! But election’s glories are brilliant with Grace and Grace always has for its foil and background the unworthiness of the objects towards whom it is manifested. The election of God is not according to our works, but it is a gracious election of sinners! Adore and wonder!

Turn to effectual calling and see how delightful it is to view that calling as a calling from among the dead, as a calling of the things that are not as though they were, as a calling of condemned ones into forgiveness and favor! Turn next to adoption. What is the glory of adoption, but that God has adopted those who were strangers and rebels to make them His children? What is the peculiar beauty of regeneration but that He has been able to raise up children, from these stones, unto Abraham? What is the beauty of sanctification, but that He has taken such unholy creatures as we are to make us kings and priests unto God and to sanctify us wholly— spirit, soul, and body?

To my mind it is the glory of Heaven to think that yonder white-robed choristers were once foully deified—those happy worshippers were once rebels against God! It is a happy sight to see the unfallen angels who have kept their first estate perfectly pure and forever praising God. But the vision of fallen *men* divinely restored is more full of the Glory of God! Lift, as they may, their joyful voices in perpetual chorales, the angels can never reach the special sweetness of that song—“We have washed our robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.” They cannot experimentally enter into that Truth of God which is of Jehovah’s name its crowning glory—“You were slain and have redeemed us to God by Your blood.”

Thus I have abundantly shown that the further we look, the more clear it is that the Gospel is aimed at sinners and especially intended for their benefit.

**III.**Now, thirdly, it is evident that IT IS OUR WISDOM TO ACCEPT THE SITUATION. I know that, to many, this is a very unpalatable doctrine. Well, Friend, you had better have your palate altered, for you will never be able to alter the doctrine! It is the Truth of the everlasting God and cannot be changed. The very best thing you can do, since the Gospel looks towards sinners, is to get where the Gospel looks—and I can recommend this to you, not merely on the ground of policy, but on the ground of honesty—because you will be only in your right place when you get there.

I think I hear you raising objections. “I do not admire this system. Am I to be saved in the same way as the dying thief?” Precisely so, Sir, unless there should happen to be even more Grace shown towards you than to him. “But you do not mean to assert that in the matter of salvation I am to be put on a level with the woman that was a sinner? I have been pure and chaste and am I to owe my salvation just as much to the absolute mercy of God as*she* did?” Yes, Sir, I do say that, exactly as it stands. There is but *one* principle upon which the Lord saves men and it is that of pure Grace. I want you to understand this.

Even if it grinds like grit between your teeth and makes you angry, I shall not regret it so long as you know what I mean, for the Truth of God may yet find entrance into your soul and you may yet bow before its power. Oh, you children of godly parents, you young people of excellent morals and delicate consciences, to you I speak, even to you! Rejoice in your privileges, but do not *boast* in them, for you, too, have sinned! You have sinned against light and knowledge. You know you have! If you have not plunged into the grosser sins in act and deed, yet in desire and in imagination you have gone far enough astray—and in many things you have offended grievously against God. If, with these considerations before you, you take your place as a sinner, you will not be disgraced but be merely standing where you certainly are!

And then, remember, if you get the blessing this way, you will have obtained it in the safest possible way. Suppose there are a number of guest chambers and I have my seat in one of the best of them. I may have no right to be there. I am eating and drinking of what is provided for superior guests, but my ticket does not mark me out as one of these and, therefore, I am ill at ease. Every mouthful that I eat I think to myself, “I do not know whether I shall be allowed to remain here. Perhaps the Lord of the feast will come in and say to me, ‘Friend, how came you in here?’ and I must begin, with shame, to take the lowest room.” Brothers and Sisters, when we begin at the bottom and sit in the lowest room, we feel safe. We are satisfied that what we do get is meant for us and will not be taken away from us.

Perhaps, also, when the king comes, he may take us up to a higher room. There is nothing like beginning in the lowest place. When I lay hold of the promise as a saint, I have my doubts about it. But when I grasp it as a *sinner*, I can have no question! If the Lord bids me feed on His mercy as His child, I do it! The devil may whisper that I am presuming, that I never was really adopted by Grace—but when I come to Jesus as a guilty, undeserving sinner, and take what the Lord freely presents to me upon believing—the devil himself cannot tell me that I am not a sinner, or if he does, the lie is too transparent and causes me no distress! There is nothing like having an indefeasible title—and if the description given to you in the title is that you are a sinner, it is an indisputable one—for depend upon it, you are a sinner! So the sinner’s place is your true place and your safest place.

Another blessing is it is a place into which you can get directly, even at this very moment. If the Gospel looks towards men in a certain state of heart in which there are commendable virtues, then how long will it take me to raise my heart to that state? If Jesus Christ comes into the world to save men who have a certain measure of excellence, then how long will it take me to obtain that excellence? I may be taken sick and die within the next 30 minutes and hear the sentence of eternal judgment—it would be poor Gospel to tell me that I might possibly obtain salvation if I attained a state which would take me several months to reach! At this hour I, a dying man, know that I may be gone out of this world and beyond the reach of mercy within an hour—what a comfort it is that the Gospel comes to me and gives itself to me just now, even as it finds me! I am already in that position in which Grace begins with men, for I am a sinner, and I have only to admit that I am so.

Now then, poor Soul, just sit down before the Lord and say, “Lord, does Your Son come to save the guilty? I am such and I trust Him to save me. Did He die for the ungodly? I am such, Lord, I trust in His blood to cleanse me. Was His death for sinners? Lord, I take up the position! I plead guilty! I accept the sentence of Your Law as being just, but save me, Lord, for Jesus died.” It is done! You are saved! Go in peace, my Son. Your sins, which are many, are forgiven you! Go, my Daughter, go your way and rejoice! The Lord has put away your sin—you shall not die, for he

that believes is justified from all sin. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputes not iniquity and in whose spirit there is no guile! Get, then, into your true position—accept the situation in which Grace considers you to be. Do not talk of justice and merit, but appeal to pity and love.

A certain man had, several times, plotted against the first Napoleon and eventually, being entirely in the emperor’s hands, the sentence of death was pronounced upon him. His daughter earnestly pleaded for his life and at last, having obtained an audience with the Emperor, she fell upon her knees before him. “My girl,” said the Emperor, “it is of no use to plead for your father, for I have the clearest evidence of his repeated crimes, and it is but justice that he should die.” The girl replied, “Sire, I do not ask for justice, I beg for *mercy*. It is upon the mercifulness of your heart and not upon the justice of the case that I rely.” She was heard patiently and her father’s life was spared at her request.

Imitate this appeal, and cry, “Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Your loving kindness.” Justice owes you nothing but death—mercy alone can spare you. Have done with every idea of making out a good case— admit it to be a bad one and plead guilty! Cast yourself upon the mercy of the court and ask for mercy, free mercy, undeserved mercy, gratuitous favor! This is what you *must* ask for and as in law they have a form of suing called in *forma pauperis*, that is, in the form of a pauper, adopt the method and as a man full of necessities beg for favor at the hands of God, in forma pauperis, and it shall be bestowed upon you.

**IV.**Now I close this discourse with the next point, which is, THIS DOCTRINE HAS A GREAT SANCTIFYING INFLUENCE. “There,” says one, “I do not believe that. Surely you have been holding out a premium to sin by saying that Christ came to save nobody but sinners and does not call anybody to repentance but the sinful.” My dear Sirs, I have heard all that sort of talk so many times that I know it by heart—the same objections were raised against this doctrine in Luther’s day by the Papists and, since then, by workmongers of all classes! There is nothing substantial in their notion that free Grace is opposed to morality—it is only their fancy.

They dream that the doctrine of justification by faith will lead to sin, but it can be proved by history that whenever this doctrine has been best preached, men have become most holy! And whenever this Truth of God has been darkened, all manner of corruption has abounded. Gracious doctrine and gracious living fitly go together—and legal teaching and unlawful living are generally found associated. Let us show you the sanctifying power of this Gospel. Its first operation in that direction is this— when the Holy Spirit brings the truth of free pardon home to a man, it completely changes his thoughts concerning God.

“What?” he asks, “Has God freely forgiven me all my offenses for Christ’s sake? And does He love me notwithstanding all my sin? I did not know He was such an One as this, so gracious and kind! I thought He was hard! I called Him a tyrant, gathering where He had not strewed—but does He feel towards me like this? Then,” says the soul, “I love Him in return.” There is a complete reversal of feeling—the man is turned right round as soon as he understands redeeming Grace and dying love. Conversion follows on a sight of Grace. Moreover, this grand Truth of God does more than turn a man, it inspires, melts, enlivens and inflames him. This is a Truth which stirs the deeps of the heart and fills the man with lively emotions.

Before, you talked to him about doing good, about right, justice, reward and punishment—he heard it all and it may have had a measure of influence over him—but he did not deeply feel it. Such teaching is too cold to warm the heart. Then the Truth comes home to the man and appears to him to be new and exciting. It runs like this—God, out of His free mercy, forgives the guilty and He has forgiven me! Why, this awakens him, stirs him up, touches the fountain of his tears and moves his whole being! Perhaps at the first hearing of the Gospel, he does not care for it, and even hates it. But when it comes with power, it obtains a wonderful mastery over him! When he really receives its message as his own, then his cold heart of stone is turned to flesh! Warm emotion, tender love, humble desire and a sacred longing after the Lord are all excited in his bosom.

The quickening power of this Divine Truth, as well as the converting power of it, can never be too much admired. Besides, this Truth, when it enters the heart, deals a deadly blow at the man’s self-conceit. Many a man would have become wise, only he thought he was already! And many a man would have been virtuous, only he concluded that he had already attained that, too! Behold, this doctrine smites upon the skull all confidence in your own goodness and makes you feel your guilt! And in so doing, it removes the great evil of pride. A sense of sin is the very threshold of mercy! A consciousness of shortcoming, a grief because of past offenses are necessary preparations for a higher and a nobler life. The Gospel digs out the foundation, makes a great vacuum and so makes room to lay in their places the glorious stones of a noble spiritual character.

Moreover, where this Truth of God is received, there is sure to spring up in the soul a sense of*gratitude*. The man who has had much forgiven will be sure to love much in return. Gratitude to God is a grand mainspring for holy action. Those who do right in order to be rewarded for it are acting selfishly. Selfishness is at the bottom of their character—they abstain from sin only lest self should suffer—and they obey only that self may be safe and happy. The man who does right, not because of Heaven or Hell, but because God has saved him and he loves the God who saved him, is the truly right-loving man. He who loves right because God loves right, has risen out of the fog of selfishness and is capable of the loftiest virtue, yes, he has in him a living spring which will well up and flow forth in holy living so long as he exists.

And, dear Brothers and Sisters, I think you will all see that free forgiveness to sinners is very conducive towards one part of a true character, namely, readiness to forgive others, for he who has been forgiven much himself is the very man who finds it easy to pass by the transgressions of others. If he does not, he may well doubt whether he has been forgiven! If the Lord has blotted out his debt of a thousand talents, he will, readily enough, forgive the hundred pence which his brother owes him.

Last of all, some of us know and we wish that all knew by personal experience, that a sense of undeserved favor and free forgiveness is the very soul of enthusiasm—and enthusiasm is to Christianity what the lifeblood

is to the body! Were you ever made enthusiastic by a cold discourse upon the excellence of morality? Did you ever feel your soul stirred within you by listening to a sermon upon the rewards of virtue? Were you ever made enthusiastic by being told of the punishments of the Law? No, Sirs—but preach up the Doctrines of Grace—let the free favor of God be extolled and mark the consequences! There are people who will walk for many miles and stand without weariness by the hour together to hear this! I have known them labor many a weary mile to listen to this doctrine!

Why? Because the preacher was eloquent, or because he put it well? Not so! It has sometimes been badly spoken and in uncouth language— and yet this doctrine has always awakened the people. There is something in the soul of man that is looking out for the Gospel of Grace! And when it comes, there is a hungering to hear about it! Look at the Reformation times, when death was the penalty of listening to a sermon—how the people crowded at midnight! How they journeyed into the deserts and the caves to listen to the teaching of these grand old Truths of God! There is sweetness about mercy, Divine Mercy freely given, which holds the ear of man and stirs his heart!

When this Truth of God enters the soul, it breeds zealots, martyrs, confessors, missionaries, saints. If any Christians are in earnest and full of love to God and man, they are those who know what Grace has done for them. If any remain faithful under reproaches, joyful under losses and crosses—they are those who are conscious of their indebtedness to Divine Love. If any delight in God while they live and rest in Him as they die— they are the men who know that they are justified by faith in Jesus Christ who justifies the ungodly.

All glory be to the Lord who lifts the beggar from the dunghill and sets him among princes, even the princes of His people! He takes the very castoffs of the world and adopts them into His family and makes them heirs of God by Jesus Christ! The Lord grant us all to know the power of the Gospel upon our sinful selves! The Lord endear to us the name, work and Person of the Sinner’s Friend! May we never forget the hole of the pit from where we were drawn, nor the hand which rescued us, nor the undeserved kindness which moved that hand! From now on let us have more and more to say of Infinite Grace. “Free Grace and dying love.” Well does the old song say, “Ring those charming bells.” Free Grace and dying love— the sinner’s windows of hope! Our hearts exult in the very words! Glory be unto You, O Lord Jesus, ever full of compassion. Amen.

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THE FAITHFUL SAYING  
NO. 1416

**DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, MAY 26, 1878, *BY C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.”*** 1Ti 1:15***.***

IT is worthy of notice that Paul, in the passage before us, as, indeed, in all his writings, exhibits great sensitiveness with regard to sin. The sin which he had, himself, committed against the Lord Jesus, looked at from some points of view, might have been greatly extenuated on account of the honest, although mistaken, motive which lay at the bottom of it. But Paul, after allowing for his ignorance, declares that of sinners he had been chief and that he obtained mercy that in him, first, Jesus Christ might show forth all long-suffering for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on Him to life everlasting. He describes himself as having been “a blasphemer, a persecutor and injurious” and, he is evidently lost in grateful astonishment that he should have been saved.

This godly sensitiveness with regard to sin was associated in the Apostle’s mind with an equally vivid sense of the freeness and richness of Divine Grace. That Christ died, not for the righteous, but for the *guilty*, is the great thought which is upon his mind and he has no hesitancy whatever in declaring it—and in speaking most boldly concerning the exceedingly abundant Grace of God in forgiving sin. The union of these two feelings in Paul is, by no means, an unusual occurrence among human minds, for you will generally find that the preacher who is most clear in his witness that salvation is by Grace, is also the man to whom sin is exceedingly sinful! Indeed, all those who prize Grace most are men who feel most sorrow concerning their transgressions.

All systems of theology, except that which is founded upon Free Grace, in some way or other take off the edge of guilt. If they try to compromise the business and make salvation to be partly a matter of human effort and human merit—and partly a work of Divine Grace—they are sure, in the process, to conceal the exceeding iniquity of sin. Man is made out to be a poor, weak creature *victimized* by a Law too rigid for his frailty. It is represented that he has a *right* to mercy and a great uproar is made if we deny him any such right! And much anger is felt if we declare that mercy is the Sovereign prerogative of God which may be exercised at His own absolute discretion.

Rebellion against Divine Election is often founded on the idea that the sinner has a sort of *right* to be saved and this is to deny the full guilt of sin. You will find that he who sets forth Free Grace as the only fountain and source of human salvation—and declares that sin is pardoned and put away freely by the mercy of God in Christ Jesus—is most plain and severe in denouncing sin with all his might and most tender in sorrowing over his own personal iniquities. I shall preach Grace to the chief of sinners at this time without reserve and without guarding my words in any respect whatever! I shall fling the big net of the Gospel right into the sea, let it go where it may! But do not, therefore, conclude that we think little of sin. Far from it! It is to us the sum of all abominations and the fire of Hell! And this, I trust, shall be apparent all along, though for the present we shall confine our thoughts to the greatness of the Grace of God, since to that subject our text summons us.

The Apostle Paul had been describing himself and his sin. He confessed that he was, before, a blasphemer and a persecutor, “But,” he says, “I obtained mercy.” His was an instance of a sinner saved and he now declares that his case was a type of *all others*, for Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners! The tendency is to set up the Apostle as an *exceptional* convert, but he corrects the idea by asserting the grand doctrine that the Savior’s errand was to those who are guilty and undeserving—among whom he counted himself to be the chief. This coming of Christ to save sinners as sinners he regards as a Truth of God so well known in the Christian Church that it had come to be a saying, “familiar in their mouths as household words.” It had become a sort of proverb with Christians that Christ Jesus came to save sinners and Paul says that it might justly be received as a proverb among all nations, for it was worthy of universal acceptance from the weight of its meaning, the importance of its subject and the Divine authority with which it was sealed.

Moreover, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners is so true that it is not merely a saying, but a *faithful* saying, worthy of all confidence, being as sure as the Truth of God, Himself! Pass it round, you Christians! Repeat it among yourselves without the slightest hesitancy or question! Let it be a proverb among you, an undoubted fact, an unquestionable Truth of God— Jesus came into the world for the salvation of sinners! He contemplated the saving of no other sort of persons but those who are *sinful*.

**I.**Our first observation from this statement will be THAT SINNERS ARE IN AN AWFUL CONDITION. A man who needs saving is evidently in a very undesirable state. Now, every man and woman among you this day who has not been saved by Christ Jesus needs saving. You have kept the Law, you say, from your youth up, so what do you lack? My answer is that you need saving, notwithstanding your fine ideas about yourselves. But you have also been religious from your earliest recollection and you do not know that you have ever committed anything very wrong, you say!

Dear Friend, despite your morality and outward religiousness, we are compelled to tell you that you need saving just as surely as the unchaste or the profane! Despite all that you say in your own favor, you have broken the Law of God and you are a sinner. And as a sinner you are in a terrible position from which nothing can save you but the hand of God. For, first, it is a grave peril to be a sinner. You have broken your Maker’s commandments—is not that a calamity? You have neglected His will, which is holy and just and good—is not that a crying evil? To have a heart which does not choose the right, but which leans to evil—is not that ruinous? To have a mind which does not love God, but cares for itself more than for its Maker and Lord—is not that to be in a diseased state of soul? The polluting influence of sin upon the soul is the direst of all mischief, the worst of all destructions—it is spiritual death! From the defiling presence of sin every man needs to be saved.

Moreover, the thrice holy God hates sin with a hatred scarcely to be conceived by any of us since we have lost the sensitiveness of perfect purity. Whatever things are impure, unchaste, untrue, unloving, unrighteous, God loathes with all the infinity of His perfect Nature. Doubtless, sin is a grief to godly men, but it is far more obnoxious to the Lord our God. “The wicked and him that loves violence, His soul hates.” “The thoughts of the wicked are an abomination unto the Lord.” The Lord has fierce indignation against everything that is evil—this is no arbitrary trait of His Character—He does not choose to be angry with this or angry with that without a cause! No, from the very necessity of His Divine Nature He must delight in everything that is good and He must abhor everything that is evil.

O Sinner, what a plight you are in since there is *in* you and *upon* you the sin which God cannot endure! What must your position be, for it is written concerning the Lord, “You hate all workers of iniquity,” and such are *you*! Can you bear the thought? Furthermore, you are condemned and before long this will be made evident to all intelligent beings. There comes upon the swift wings of time a Day in which the Judge of all the earth will lay judgment to the line and righteousness to the plummet—and every transgression and iniquity shall receive its just recompense of reward. It is not possible that it should be otherwise, for there must come a reaping to every sowing! Idle thoughts, idle words and evil deeds must bear their fruit and, therefore, every sinner is in danger of eternal fire! As surely as the righteous through Christ shall go into everlasting happiness, so shall the ungodly depart into everlasting punishment where there shall be weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth!

And this may happen to any unpardoned sinner before he has heard the next word which I am about to utter! He may find himself shut out from all hope, eternally shut out from God before yonder clock shall strike! This is a perilous condition for an immortal soul! Yet every sinner not saved by Christ is in this condition! To this may be added the further reflection that the sinner is quite unable, of himself, to escape either from sin itself, or from the wrath which he has awakened, or from the punishment which is appointed for his transgressions. What can you do, O Ethiopian, to change your skin? O leopard, how can you remove your spots? And if, being evil, you could learn to do good, how could you put away the sin of the *past*? By what process could you take out the stains of *former* years? Do not the sins of your youth lie in your bones even to this day? And they must be there forever unless the strong hand of Christ shall take them away.

One of old cried, “O generation of vipers, how shall you escape the damnation of Hell?” And the question may well be asked of the most cunning and crafty of sinners. If you neglect the great salvation, which it shall be our joy to preach to you today, how shall you escape from the wrath to come? Chained up, then, as within a wall of fire, with that fire already burning within his soul in the form of evil lusts and drawing nearer to

him from without every day he lives, the sinner is in a terrible position, indeed! O unforgiven Sinner, what do you think of this? Perhaps that position may be all the better defined if I remind you of the way by which a sinner has to be rescued from it. There is no hope for *any* sinner unless the Son of God, Himself, saves Him!

You may safely measure the depth of the danger by the Glory of the Person who undertook to deliver us from it. It is the Son of God whom angels worship who has come to save sinners! It must be a deep destruction from which only God Himself can rescue man. And though He were the Son of God, yet when He came, observe how He had to be equipped. And from His equipment learn the sternness of the task. He must be Jesus—a Savior and then He must also be Christ—anointed for the work! He must come with a commission from God with Divine authority—and the Spirit of God must rest upon Him to qualify Him for the great undertaking. For the text says not that Jesus came into the world, but Christ Jesus, the anointed Savior, came that He might save. If this equipment was needed, then surely the state of man was a grievous one.

Note also that even Christ Jesus could not save men had He stayed in Heaven. He came into the *world* to save sinners. The Fall was so grievous that He must come right down into the place of our ruin! He must come to the dunghill that He might lift us out of it! God sat in Heaven and said, “Let there be light,” and the darkness fled before Him. But He could not sit in Heaven and save sinners—He must needs come into the world to do so—down into this polluted creation the eternal Creator must, Himself, descend! Look, there in Bethlehem’s manger He sleeps and on a woman’s breast He hangs! He cannot save sinners, so great is their ruin, unless He becomes Incarnate and takes upon Himself our nature! And being here, think how dreadful must be the ruin when we see that He cannot return, saying, “It is finished,” until, first of all, He dies!

That sacred head must be crowned with thorns! Those eyes must be closed in the darkness of the tomb! That body must be pierced even to its heart and then must lie a chill, cold corpse in the grave before man can be redeemed! And all that shame, suffering and death were but the outer shell of what the Savior suffered, for He passed under Divine wrath and bore a load such as would have crushed the whole race of men had they been left to bear it! O Sinner, you are awfully lost, you are *infinitely* lost, since it needs an infinite Savior to present the Atonement of His own body in order to save sinners from their sin! This is the first Truth of God, then, which is included in this faithful saying—may the Holy Spirit write it on our hearts.

**II.**The second observation which clearly contains the very heart of the text is THAT CHRIST JESUS CAME TO SAVE MEN AS SINNERS. His salvation is meant for men who are sinners and for none else. Somebody says, “But is not that a plain matter of fact?” It is, but it is a fact scarcely realized—indeed, its real meaning is not known until God the Holy Spirit reveals it! A great many persons have a notion that Christ Jesus came into the world to save *respectable* people who, if they have done any wrong, have repented of it and have made things square. He came, according to them, to save persons who do their very best by attendance at worship, taking the sacrament, giving to the poor, paying their way and saying their prayers.

These are doing all they can to get right and keep right—and surely they will be saved—so men talk. Their theory of salvation is very mixed, but it comes to this—the Gospel is for *good* people. They do not quite do without Jesus Christ—He comes in somewhere or other. But their religion is a kind of mingle-mangle—partly they save themselves and partly Christ saves them—and between the two they are not saved at all! Their vain fancy is that though they cannot do quite as much as they ought, Jesus comes in as an excellent make-weight and turns the scale in their favor. That is the notion of the bulk of mankind and in many places of worship you may hear something very much like it. Too much of the preaching of the present day mingles the Old Covenant with the New—you do not know whether, after all, you are going to be saved by merit or mercy, whether Christ came to save sinners or the righteous.

The trumpet gives an uncertain sound. It is far too generally supposed that there must be *something* to recommend the sinner to God and that God could not send His Son to save men whom He views in the base and horrible character of sinners. “Surely,” say the enemies of Free Grace, “He must have regard to their repentance or to something which He either sees or foresees in them.” That He should see man to be evil and only evil and yet visit Him in mercy for mercy’s sake seems hard for the carnal heart to believe! Therefore, lest we should be misunderstood, we lay down this straight line that Christ *did not* come into the world to save anybody but SINNERS—and He viewed those sinners as sinners and nothing more! He did not view them as repenting sinners, nor as believing sinners, nor as humble sinners, nor as sanctified sinners, nor anything else but sinners—and under that character He contemplated their salvation!

The text says nothing more and nothing less than this, “Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners.” There is not a qualifying word. It is clear that only sinners are the objects of salvation, for none but sinners need saving! And if there had been no sinners there would certainly have been no saving and no Savior. Who needs saving but a lost man? Who needs a Savior but a man who, through his sin, has ruined himself? The very term, “Savior,” and the very name, “Jesus,” imply that salvation work is for *sinners*. We have some sinecure offices in our Government—I have heard of a Master of the Buckhounds who never mastered a buckhound in his life—but my Lord Jesus holds no sinecure in His office of Savior, for there are plenty of sinners and He is always saving them!

If sinners are not contemplated by the plan of Grace, then the office of Savior is obsolete! But this can never be, since He is Jesus Christ, the anointed Savior, the same yesterday, today and forever! Nor would the Gospel be required for any *but* sinners, since none but the guilty need glad tidings of pardon and Grace. If man can be secure under the Law, let him stay under the Law. If the Law can justify, let the Law justify. What need of a second system to take away the first unless through the weakness of man the first system shall be found to be of no effect? No, verily the Law is glorious! Mount Sinai shines resplendently and verily perfection would have been by the Law if it could have been kept by mankind!

No need for another glory or excellence, for the first would have sufficed if men had not been sinners—for the Law is holy, just and good!

The very sound of that word, “Gospel,” is lost and its sweetness dissipated in the midnight air unless there are sinners, for they, above all men, need glad tidings of a Savior born among men! Salvation *must* be for sinners, for to them, only, can mercy ever come. If I am brought before a court of justice and I plead, “Not guilty,” and the magistrate replies that he will have mercy upon me, I repel his observation with indignation—I need no mercy of him—I am innocent. Let him give me *justice—*that is all I ask! It is an insult to the innocent to offer him mercy and, therefore, unless man is *guilty* God cannot show him mercy! Mercy has no room to bestow her blessings of amnesty and pardon till, first of all, guilt is admitted. To the sinner, forgiveness can come, but to none else!

Moreover, the characters whom Jesus came to save are always so described that they must be sinners. Sometimes we read of them as being, “dead in trespasses and sins.” And it is written, “And you has He quickened.” Sometimes they are represented as enemies—“If when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son.” They are called aliens, strangers, wandering sheep, prodigal sons and so forth—and all these imply distance from God by sin. Sometimes they are represented as debtors—and when they have nothing to pay, He freely forgives them all their debt. All the descriptions of persons for whom the mercy of God is intended bear upon their forefront the notion of their being sinners and our Lord, Himself, says, “I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.”

The coming of Christ has no bearing towards the 99 that went not astray, except that they are left where they were. The Good Shepherd comes after the lost sheep and only after the lost sheep and if you can prove that you are *not* a lost sheep, then you have proved that Christ never came to save you. The whole of His errand looks this way—He came to save sinners and only sinners. Look now at what He did when He was here. I will only ask you to consider the crowning act of His work when He hung upon the Cross. What do those bruises from the scourge mean? What do those deep furrows on His blessed back mean? What do those pierced hands and feet mean? They mean this, that He is suffering on account of human sin! “The chastisement of our peace was upon Him and with His stripes we are healed.” “All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.”

Self-righteous men and women, what has the Cross to do with you? You carry it on your bosoms and make an ornament and a plaything of it, but that is all it is to you! None but the guilty can know the true meaning of the Cross and derive benefit from it. For them the dreadful tree bears the precious fruit of substitutionary Sacrifice and peace and pardon through the atoning blood! But to those who are not sinners the Cross is a barren tree! O Christ of God, only a sinner can know Your worth! A saint may admire You in Your Glory, but a sinner *trusts* You in Your shameful death, for You are meant for sinners! “He gave Himself for our sins”—for what else could He give Himself and yield Himself unto death?

Besides that, where is Jesus gone, now, but to Heaven? And what is He doing? When He went to Heaven He received gifts for men and, listen to this Word of God—“Yes, for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them.” He pleads today, but for whom is He an Advocate? He makes intercession for the transgressors! Prove that you are not rebellious nor transgressors and there are neither gifts nor pleadings for you, for the whole drift of what He is now doing is towards the sinful! Look, Sirs, at the legacy which our Lord has left us! He has left us the Holy Spirit and what for? The Holy Spirit is here to convict of sin! Of what use would He be to those who have no sin? He is here to *regenerate*, but of what use would He be to those who are so good by nature that they do not need a change of heart? He is here that He may work in us repentance and faith, but of what use would those be to persons who have no sin to repent of and no need to believe in a Savior?

The whole plan and scheme of redemption contains in it marks and evidences clear and palpable that it is meant for sinners, for guilty men, for such and such alone! All else that there is in man beside his sinnership is not truly his. If I were to preach, today, to sinners with some qualification, I should not be preaching the Gospel in its fullest reach. If, for instance, I were to say that Christ Jesus came into the world to save *humble* sinners, that would be a clipping of the truth—for if any sinner is humble, that humility is not natural to him, but already the work of salvation commenced in his being has made him humble! Jesus Christ died to give humility to sinners as well as to save them when they are humble. But surely we must believe in Christ? Yes, and there is salvation for believing sinners—but no man believes in Christ until that faith is *given* to Him from above—and Christ came not to save sinners who make *themselves* believe, but to save sinners by giving them faith.

He not only saves sinners when they repent but He goes lower down, for He is exalted on high to *give* repentance as well as remission of sins. But did He not die for penitent sinners? Assuredly! But He died for them when they were *impenitent* and, therefore, that is why they come to repentance! He who would come to Jesus must come as a sinner and never think of pleading any sort of goodness or qualification, for, “this is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.” SINNERS—write that in capitals and set it by itself, for it is the whole of the description and no one may dare to add to it! Away with your human addition of *sensible* sinners and so on—the text is not cumbered and spoiled by any such qualifying words!

**III.**This leads me, in the third place, to say THAT UPON THIS POINT SPECIAL CLEARNESS IS REQUIRED. That Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners as sinners must always be kept clearly before the human mind because, as I have said, man does not like the notion and if you put it baldly and boldly he cavils at it and waxes wrathful. Hear him mutter about immoral doctrine and encouraging sin! Hear it and marvel at the audacity which makes a guilty rebel express anxiety about the morals of his God! A set of criminals are shut up in a condemned cell to be hanged and a message comes that the king freely forgives them—and

they exclaim that they will not accept mercy because it might encourage immorality!

Morality! What have these lawbreakers to do with that? Surely they are repeating the devil’s hypocrisy when he rebuked sin! They are living in sin and yet pretend to be the guardians of universal justice! Vile hypocrisy! When I have known the pens which have written against the Gospel under the pretense of advancing morality, I have pitied the paper which they defiled with their black words. Pleaders for morality! Why, men known to be debauched and drunken are often the very loudest talkers against Free Grace and the greatest sticklers for morality! Let them go and wash in Jordan seven times and be clean, themselves, before coming out in that fashion. It is for you and me, being guilty, to get mercy, first, and *then* talk of what we will do in the matter of morality!

Know you not that the man who believes not in Christ is condemned already? Shall a condemned man cavil at mercy’s freeness? On your knees, Sir, and plead guilty before the Most High, for only so shall you find Grace! How often are we told in sermons that we are in a state of probation—as if we had to *do something* by which we should prove our worthiness and were still in a position in which we might or might not be condemned? My Hearers, you are NOT in a state of probation! No, not one of you! If you are saved, you are saved—and if you are not saved you are lost! You are forgiven, or else you are “condemned already!” And, unless Jesus Christ saves you, you will abide in condemnation forever and ever! The die is cast and cast against you! You are condemned and in the Book of God so it stands. Christ Jesus came to save the condemned—and blessed shall you be if you are willing to take up the condemned position at this moment and accept the Grace which He has brought for sinners.

I say, then, let the Truth of God be made clear, because man will muddle it if he can. Mark you, if this doctrine is not made clear, you will not lead sinners to look to Christ. If I preach that Jesus Christ died to save men of tender heart, what will be the result of the sermon? Every thoughtful hearer will look to see whether he has a tender heart. Is that a desirable result?—

***“There is life for a look at the Crucified One,”***but there is no life by looking into our own hearts! Suppose I preach certain marks and evidences as tokens of the men whom Christ came to save? Then each man will look to see whether he has those tokens within himself—and that is precisely the thing which we do *not* want men to do, for we desire them to look right away from themselves to Christ alone! If they should imagine that they find some good thing within themselves, they will make it the basis of their hope and that will be an error of the gravest kind. Sinner, all the hope you can ever have lies in Him who died upon the tree! As for yourself, settle it in your mind that you are as bad as bad can be. Give over all hope from your own doings, willings, feelings and resolves!

Do not expect to obtain comfort from your own nature any more than to find fire in the midst of a rock of ice! Look right away from self to Christ, and Christ alone, for this is the way of salvation! When a man comes to Christ as a sinner, he has taken the safest way. If I say to myself, “Jesus came to save me because I am a *believing* sinner, or a *repenting* sinner, or a *humbled* sinner,” then I have to ask the question, “How about my repentance, my humility—are they genuine?” My foundation shakes and my trust fails me because it rests on myself! But when I trust in Jesus because He is the sinner’s Savior and because I am a sinner, then I am beyond doubtful questions. This, also, is a constant ground to go upon. Imagine a man who is deeply in debt saying to his creditors, “I am in a terrible fix, but I can promise you 10 shillings in the pound.” Very well. They accept it.

Is he not at ease? Let me whisper in your ear—he is not worth two pence in all the world! Is he clear? Oh no. He tries a little trading and puts off the hour of payment, but again he has to call his creditors together and confess—“I am sorry. I cannot manage the 10 shillings, but I will try to scrape together two-and-sixpence—will you take that?” Yes, they will take the half-crown. Is he out of his difficulties, now? No, he is not one inch nearer, for he is not worth a penny! Again he summons his creditors and tells them that he has made another mistake, but he could arrange to pay sixpence. Is he at rest now? Not a bit, because he has not a penny and he can no more pay sixpence in the pound than the whole 20 shillings! He is absolutely a pauper.

What is the best thing for him to do? Why, to admit the truth and say, “Here I am. I have no assets whatever. I am in debt over head and ears and I have not a single penny to pay with. Do whatever you like with me. Put me in prison if you like. Sell these bones and the rags which cover them, but there is the truth, you cannot get anything out of me because I have nothing.” Now, if the creditors give him a clear discharge, he is safe and at rest—which he never was while he had even a sixpence to pay! Now, you needy sinners, be wise and go to the Lord in that penniless style and you shall have your debt forgiven. Remember the parable of the two debtors and the Truth of God which it teaches—

***“But let our debts be what they may,  
However great or small,  
As soon as we have nothing to pay,  
Our Lord forgives us all.”***

Assuredly, there is nothing like going to the bottom of a thing and knowing the worst of your case.

I have a friend who had a bad knee. Something ailed it, he could not tell what. The doctors blistered, applied poultices and did a great deal to it—and showed their skill by making bad, worse, but they assured him that the knee was not out of joint but would come all right by outward applications. Under such professional treatment the patient became quite lame. At last he went to a renowned bone-setter and as soon as he saw the joint, he said, “I tell you, Sir, your bone is out.” “Impossible,” he said, “the doctors have never hinted at that.” “Yes, it is, or if it is not so, we will make it so, and then set it right.” With a terrible pull the operator seemed to drag the bone out of its place and then it flew back, again, into its socket and my friend felt that all was right.

“Now,” said the bone-setter, “walk across the room.” And he did so at once. There is nothing like knowing that the bone is out, for then it can be set. But while we understate the mischief, we shall not find an effectual cure. Reckon on the worst and you will not be deceived! If there is something good about you and you begin trusting in it, that something good will grow less and less, like the 20 shillings which came down to sixpence and ended with nothing! But if you throw up all legal hope and say, “I am a sinner. If I am saved it must be entirely through the mercy of God in Jesus Christ. I accept Christ to save me as a sinner”—that is a sure and constant foundation to rest upon! Beware of the slippery belief that Christ died for you as long as you are humble, or as long as you are this or that, for, if you talk in that fashion, instead of trusting in Christ you are trusting in your own humility, your own feelings—and there is no soundness in your faith.

Often, Beloved, I feel that this way of coming to Christ, as a sinner, is the only available one for me. I have preached the Gospel, not without zeal for the Truth of God and have tried to consecrate my whole being to my Lord’s service, but times out of mind I would not give a brass farthing for all that I have done or felt or been! I am glad to sink the whole in oblivion and come to Christ and say, “Save me, for I have sinned.” What I rejoice to do, I feel sure that my Brethren have to do, also, and it will be your safety to be so doing continually. Why, Brothers and Sisters, this doctrine must be true because it glorifies Christ! If Christ comes to save men who meet Him half way with their prayers and tears and beliefs and doings—and He only saves them because of these things—then salvation is half of man and half of Christ! But if it is that Jesus comes to save *sinners* and begins a work in them when they are in their nakedness and filthiness and spiritual death, oh, then, Free Grace does the more abound and the crown sits securely on the royal head of Him who is anointed to be both a Prince and a Savior—to give repentance as well as remission of sins!

I need to say, also, that the recognition of the Truth that Christ came into the world to save men as sinners is essential to salvation. You ask me, “How so?” I reply, “When a man comes before God simply as a sinner, he is then upon the line of truth.” All the while he was claiming to be this and that, which was good, he was on a false tack. But when he says, “Lord, I have broken Your Law. I have done the things I ought not to have done and have left undone the things that I ought to have done. And if I am saved it must be by your Grace alone”—he is now speaking according to truth. It is something to bring a sinner round to the truth. When he has come to that, he will go further in the right direction. Do you not see that line is doing homage to the Law of God, for he confesses that he has broken it and deserves punishment? Thus the man is already honoring the Law of God in his heart—his salvation has begun!

Now he does honor to God, Himself, for he bows before the Most High and begs for mercy. He is already saved from presumption! God must be King and the man is willing that He should be, even though he, himself, should be condemned! And now he reads that God’s salvation “comes to the guilty,” and he cries, “I am guilty! I accept Your mercy.” That done, he loves the Lord God for mercy received. Why, the man is being saved before our eyes! He was the enemy of God, before, but now a sense of free mercy causes him to love and fear the Lord! The next thing he says is, “Have I been so freely forgiven all my transgressions, not because of anything I was or felt or did, but out of free mercy? Then, Lord, I will strive to avoid every sin if You will help me.”

See, his mind is becoming pure and by the operation of the same blessed Truth of God upon him, he will ultimately be perfected and stand complete before the Truth of God—and what do you think will be his song? He will join with all the saints and sing, “We have washed our robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.” There is nothing like Free Grace to change the human heart! You may tell a man what he is and what he ought to be, and he will remain unmoved. But tell him that God meets him as a lost, guilty and condemned sinner and that simply because He will have mercy on whom He will have mercy, He blots out all His sins and transgressions and accepts Him through Christ Jesus—why, that makes the man’s heart leap within him for joy! And then he begins to say, “Cleanse me, O God, from this hateful sin, for I love You because of Your wondrous love to me.”

Thus Jesus Christ’s coming to save sinners makes the point of our being sinners a very essential one in the matter of our being saved from the power of sin.

**IV.**I close by saying, let us, dear Friends, feel THAT IT WILL BE WISE TO ACCEPT AT ONCE THE TEACHING OF THE TEXT. Let us, on the spot, confess we are sinners! Whether you have been saved or not, come over, again, to Jesus. Take with you words and say unto Him, “We have sinned.” Confess your sinnership! Does it trouble you to do so? Have not you abundant evidence of it? Do not confess it with your mouth, only, but with your *heart*. Let me say sinners are very rare things—you cannot find them dead or alive. If you go into a cemetery with an intelligent child, the first question it will ask will be, “Papa, where do they bury the sinners? These are all good people who are buried here.”

Living sinners are equally scarce. We are all surprisingly good and though we say we are sinners, that is a part of our goodness, for it shows how very humble we are. If we come to details and are questioned as to our sins, how many turn out to be no more sinners than the beggars in the street are really lame, or blind, or sick, or sore? Many who say, “Lord, have mercy upon us miserable sinners,” do but sham their sinnership before God! Now, mark, there is nothing but sham salvation for sham sinners! But you *real* sinners, you who have broken God’s Law and know it! You who are ready to stand upon the drop of confession beneath the fatal tree of Justice feeling that you could not say a word against Divine Justice if you were now executed—come and welcome, for Jesus Christ came to save such as you are! Confess your sins and when you have done so, rest on the salvation provided in Christ Jesus!

At this moment I think I speak the language of every child of God when I say the top and bottom, the beginning and the ending of all my hope lies in this—that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners. I trust myself as a sinner with Him. The devil often tells me, “You are not this, and you are not that,” and I feel bound to acknowledge that the accuser of the Brethren makes terrible work with my spiritual finery so that I have to abandon one ground of glorying after another. But I never knew the devil, himself, dare to say, “You are not a sinner.” He knows I am and I know it, too! And as in due time Christ died for the ungodly, I rest in Him and I

am saved! If I can perish resting in Christ I must do so. But I will tell it throughout the realms of Hell that I did trust in Christ and was lost. I will publish it in the infernal dens that I trusted in Jesus with all my soul and was confounded.

Will it ever be? No, never! For He has said, “Him that comes unto Me I will in no wise cast out.” Poor Sinner, whoever you may be, surely this is a very simple matter! But do not reject it because it*is* so simple. It is your life! You shall find it your life at this very instant if you will trust my Lord. Have you any doubt about your being a sinner? Then bid farewell to hope, for Christ did not come to save *you*! But if you *know* you are a sinner, cast yourself on Jesus right now, even now, just as you are! “Will He save me?” Try it, Brother! Try it, Sister! Sink or swim, fling yourself upon Christ! Are you still holding to your prayers or your tears, or somewhat of your own? You will perish if you do! You must be disconnected with all grounds of self-hope and self-trust or they will prove your ruin!

Now cut the cable! Let every rope go! Break the last thread and commit yourself to the tide of Free Grace. You will never be a wreck if you do so. Well does Dr. Watts put it—

***“A guilty, weak, and helpless worm,  
On Christ’s kind arms I fall!  
Be You my strength and righteousness,  
My Jesus and my All.”***

“You have taken away from us, Sir, every hope we ever had, and you make us out to be nothing but sinners.” Yes, that is what I want to do! I long to make all things rock and reel under you till you feel that you have no place for the sole of your feet—and so fall before my Master’s Cross! This old house of yours which you have been patching up so often will fall upon you before long. Its walls bulge, its roof drops, its timbers are rotten! However much you try to prop it up, it will come down and destroy you!

I, as an architect, advise you to tear it all down! Clear every wall away, stick and stone. Yes, and take out the very foundations, for every stone is ruinous! Clear the ground of the whole concern. You complain that there is a deep and ugly trench where the foundations used to be and I am glad of it, for, behold, the Lord lays in Zion, for a foundation, a stone, elect, precious, even Christ Jesus! And he that believes in Him shall never be confounded. You must remove all the wood, hay and stubble, and build with precious stones! None but Jesus, none but Jesus! Neither beam, nor stone, nor pin, nor nail must be our own. We may not take from a thread to a shoelace of self, but Christ must be first, last, midst and everywhere!

What do you say, fellow Sinners? Will you and I have Christ? I will, whether you will or not! Come along. Do not draw back. Take what God freely presents to you and from this day trust Jesus to be your Savior and we will meet in Heaven! Amen.

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THE GLORIOUS GOSPEL  
NO. 184

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, MARCH 21, 1858, *BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT THE MUSIC HALL, ROYAL SURREY GARDENS.**

***“This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.”*** 1Ti 1:15***.***

I SUPPOSE that the message delivered by God’s servants to the people must always be called “the burden of the Lord.” When the old Prophets came forth from their Master they had such dooms and threats and lamentations and woe to preach that their countenances were sorrowful and their hearts heavy within them. They usually commenced their discourses by announcing, “The burden of the Lord, the burden of the Lord.” But now, our message is no heavy one. No threat and no thunders compose the theme of the Gospel minister. All is mercy! Love is the sum and substance of our Gospel—love undeserved—love to the very chief of sinners.

But it is still a burden to us. So far as the matter of our preaching is concerned it is our joy and our delight to preach it. But if others feel as I feel now they will all acknowledge it to be a hard matter to preach the Gospel. For now I am sore vexed and my heart is troubled, not concerning what I have to preach, but how I shall preach it. What if so good a message should fail because of so ill an ambassador? What if my hearers should reject this saying which is worthy of all acceptation because I may announce it with lack of earnestness? Surely—surely such a supposition is enough to draw the tears to the eyes of any man! But may God in His mercy prevent a consummation so fearfully to be dreaded. And, however I may now preach, may this Word of God commend itself to every man’s conscience. And may many of you now gathered together who have never as yet found Jesus for refuge, by the simple preaching of the Word now be persuaded to come in, that you may taste and see that the Lord is good.

Our text is one that pride would never prompt a man to select. It is quite impossible to flourish about it, it is so simple. Human nature is apt to cry, “Well I cannot preach upon that text—it is too plain. There is no mystery in it. I cannot show my learning—it is just a plain, common-sense announcement—I scarcely would wish to take it, for it lowers the man, however much it may exalt the Master.” So, expect nothing but the text from me this morning and the simplest possible explanation of it.

We shall have two heads—first there is *the text*. Then there is a *double commendation*appended to the text—“This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation.”

**I.** First, there is THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE TEXT—“Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners.” In that there are three things very prominent. There is *the Savior*, there is *the sinner* and there is *the salvation*.

**1.**There is first of all, *the Savior*. And in explaining the Christian religion, this is where we must begin. The Person of the Savior is the foundation-stone of our hope. Upon that Person depends the usefulness of our Gospel. Should someone arise and preach a Savior who was man, he would be unworthy of our hopes and the salvation preached would be inadequate to what we need. Should another preach salvation by an angel, our sins are so heavy that an angelic atonement would have been insufficient. And therefore his Gospel totters to the ground. I repeat it—upon the Person of the Savior rests the whole of the salvation. If he is not able, if he is not commissioned to perform the work, then indeed, the work itself is worthless to us and falls short of its design.

But, Brothers and Sisters, when we preach the Gospel, we need not stop and stammer. We have to show you this day such a Savior that earth and Heaven could not show his fellow. He is one so loving, so great, so mighty and so well adapted to all our needs that it is evident enough that He was prepared of old to meet our deepest wants. We know that Jesus Christ who came into the world to save sinners was God. And that long before His descent to this lower world He was adored by angels as the Son of the Highest. When we preach the Savior to you, we tell you that although Jesus Christ was the Son of Man, bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh, yet was He eternally the Son of God and has in Himself all the attributes which constitute perfect Godhead.

What more of a Savior can any man want than God? Is not He who made the heavens able to purge the soul? If He of old stretched the curtains of the skies and made the earth that man should dwell upon it, is He not able to rescue a sinner from the destruction that is to come? When we tell you He is God, we have at once declared His omnipotence and His infinity. And when these two things work together, what can be impossible? Let God undertake a work, it cannot meet with failure. Let Him enter into an enterprise and it is sure of its accomplishment. Because Christ Jesus the Man was also Christ Jesus the God, in announcing the Savior we have the fullest confidence that we are offering you something that is worthy of all acceptation.

The name given to Christ suggests something concerning His Person. He is called in our text, “Christ Jesus.” The two words mean, the “Anointed Savior.” The Anointed Savior “came into the world to save sinners.”

Pause here, my Soul and read this over again—He is the anointed Savior. God the Father from before all worlds anointed Christ to the office of a Savior of men. And, therefore, when I behold my Redeemer coming from Heaven to redeem man from sin, I note that He does not come unsent, or not commissioned. He has His Father’s authority to back Him in His work. Hence, there are two immutable things whereon our soul may rest—there is the Person of Christ, Divine in itself. There is the anointing from on high, giving to Him the stamp of a commission received from Jehovah, His Father. O Sinner, what greater Savior do you want than He whom God anointed? What more can you require than the eternal Son of God to be your Ransom and the anointing of the Father to be the ratification of the treaty?

Yet we have not fully described the Person of the Redeemer until we have noted that He was man. We read that He came into the world—by which coming into the world we do not understand His usual coming for He often came into the world before. We read in Scripture, “I will go down now and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto Me. And if not, I will know.” In fact, He is always here. The goings of God are to be seen in the sanctuary—both in Providence and in nature they are to be seen most visibly. Does not God visit the earth when He makes the tempest His chariot and rides upon the wings of the wind?

But this visitation was different from all these. Christ came into the world in the sense of the fullest and most complete union with human nature. Oh, Sinner, when we preach a Divine Savior, perhaps the name of God is so terrible to you that you can scarcely think the Savior is adapted to you. But hear you again the old story. Although Christ was the Son of God He left His highest Throne in Glory and stooped to the manger. There He is, an infant of a span long. See, He grows from boyhood up to manhood and He comes forth into the world to preach and suffer! See Him as He groans under the yoke of oppression. He is mocked and despised. His visage is more marred than that of any other man and His form more than the sons of men! See Him in the garden as He sweats drops of blood! See Him in Pilate’s chamber in which He is scourged and His shoulders run with gore!

On the bloody tree behold Him! See Him dying with agony too exquisite to be imagined, much less to be described! Behold Him in the silent tomb! See Him at last bursting the bonds of death and rising the third day and afterwards ascending up on high, “leading captivity captive”! Sinner, you have now the Savior before you, plainly manifested. He who was called Jesus of Nazareth, who died upon the Cross, who had His superscription written, “Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews”—this man was the Son of God, the brightness of His Father’s glory and the express image of His Father, “begotten by His Father before all worlds, begotten not made, being of one substance with the Father.” He “thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation and took upon Him the form of a servant and was made in the likeness of men and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross.”

Oh, could I bring Him before you, could I now bring Him here to show you His hands and His side! If you could now, like Thomas, put your fingers in the holes of the nails and thrust your hand into His side, me

thinks you would not be faithless, but believing. This much I know, if there is anything that can make men believe under the hand of God’s most Holy Spirit, it is a true picture of the Person of Christ. Seeing is believing in His case. A true view of Christ, a right-looking at Him will most assuredly beget faith in the soul. Oh, I doubt not if you knew our Master, some of you who are now doubting and fearing and trembling, would say, “Oh, I can trust Him. A Person so Divine and yet so human, ordained and anointed of God must be worthy of my faith. I can trust Him. No, more—if I had a hundred souls I could trust Him with them all. Or, if I stood accountable for all the sins of all mankind and were myself the very reservoir and sink of this world’s infamy, I could trust Him even then—for such a Savior must be able to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by Him.” This, then, is the Person of the Savior.

**2.**Now, the second point is *the sinner*. If we had never heard this passage before, or any of similar import, I can suppose that the most breathless silence would reign over this place, if, for the first time, I should commence to read them in your hearing, “This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save .” I know how you would thrust forward your heads. I know how you would put your hand against your ear and look as if you would hear with the eye as well as with the ear to know for whom the Savior died. Every heart would say, “whom did He come to save?” And if we had never heard the message before, how would our hearts palpitate with fear lest the character described should be one unto which it would be impossible for us to attain!

Oh, how pleasant it is to hear again that one word which describes the character of those Christ came to save—“He came into the world to save *sinners*.” Monarch, there is here no distinction. Princes, He has not singled you out to be the objects of His love—but beggars and the poor shall taste His Grace. You learned men, you masters of Israel, Christ does not say He came specially to save you. The unlearned and illiterate peasant is equally welcome to His Grace. Jew, with all your pedigree of honor, you are not justified more than the Gentile. Men of Britain, with all your civilization and your freedom, Christ does not say He came to save you—He names not you as the distinguishing class who are the objects of His love—no, and you that have good works and reckon yourselves saints among men, He does not distinguish you, either.

The one simple title, large and broad as humanity itself, is simply this—“Jesus Christ came into the world to save *SINNERS*.” Now, mark, we are to understand this in a general sense when we read it—that all whom Jesus came to save are *sinners*. But if any man asks, may I infer from this that I am saved—we must then put another question to him. To begin then, with the general sense—“Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners.” The men whom Christ came to save were by *nature* sinners, nothing less and nothing more than sinners. I have often said that Christ came into the world to save awakened sinners. It is quite true—so He did. But those sinners were *not awakened sinners* when He came to save them—they were nothing but “sinners dead in trespasses and sins” when He came to them.

It is a common notion that we are to preach that Christ died to save what are called *sensible* sinners. Now that is true—but they were not sensible sinners when Christ died to save them. He makes them sensible or feeling sinners as the *effect* of His death. Those He died for are described without any adjective to diminish the breadth of it, as being sinners and simply sinners, without any badge of merit or mark of goodness which could distinguish them above their fellows. SINNERS! Now, the term includes some of all kinds of sinners. There are some men whose sins appear but little. Trained up religiously and educated in a moral way, they do not dash into the deeps of sin. They are content to coast along the shores of vice—they do not launch out into the depths. Now, Christ has died for such as these, for many of these have been brought to know and love Him. Let no man think, because he is a less sinner than others, that therefore there is less hope for him.

Strange it is that some have often thought that! “If I had been a blasphemer,” says one, “or injurious, I could have had more hope. Though I know I have sinned greatly in my own eyes yet so little have I erred in the eye of the world that I can scarcely think myself included.” Oh, say not so! It says, “Sinners.” If you can put yourself in that catalog, whether it is at the top or at the bottom, you are still within it. And the truth still holds good that those Jesus came to save were originally sinners and you being such, you have no reason to believe that you are shut out.

Again—Christ died to save sinners of an opposite sort. We have some men whom we dare not describe. It would be a shame to speak of the things which are done by them in private. There have been men who have invented vices of which the devil himself was ignorant until they invented them. There have been men so bestial that the very dog was a more honorable creature than they. We have heard of beings whose crimes have been more diabolical, more detestable than any action ascribed even to the devil himself. Yet my text does not shut out these. Have we not met with blasphemers so profane that they could not speak without an oath? Blasphemy, which at first was something terrible to them, has now become so common that they would curse themselves before they said their prayers and swear when they were singing God’s praises.

It has come to be part of their meat and drink, a thing so natural to them that the very sinfulness of it does not shock them, they so continually do it. As for God’s Laws, they delight to know them for the mere sake of breaking them. Tell them of a new vice and you will please them. They have become like that Roman emperor whose parasites could never please him better than by inventing some new crime—men who have gone head over heels in the Stygian gulf of hellish sin—men who not content with fouling their feet while walking through the mire have lifted up the trapdoor with which we seal down depravity and have dived into the very kennel—rebelling in the very filth of human iniquity. But there is nothing in my text which can exclude even these. Many of these shall yet be washed in the Savior’s blood and be made partakers of the Savior’s love.

Nor does this text make a distinction as to the age of sinners. I see many among you here whose hairs if they were the color of your character would be the very reverse of what they are. You have become white without, but you are blackened all within with sin. You have added layer to layer of crime. And now, if one were to dig down through the various deposits of numerous years he would discover stony relics of youthful sins hidden down in the depths of your rocky hearts. Where once all was tender, everything has become dry and hardened. You have gone far into sin. If you were to be converted now, would it not, indeed, be a wonder of Grace? For the old oak to be bent, oh, how difficult! Now that it has grown so rugged and tough, can it be bent? Can the Great Husbandman train it? Can He graft on so old and so rough a stem something that shall bring forth heavenly fruit?

Ah, He can, for age is not mentioned in the text and many of the most ancient of men have proved the love of Jesus in their latest years. “But,” says one, “my sin has had peculiar aggravations connected with it. I have sinned against light and against knowledge. I have trampled on a mother’s prayers. I have despised a father’s tears. Warnings given to me have been neglected. On my sick bed God Himself has rebuked me. My resolves have been frequent and as frequently forgotten. As for my guilt, it is not to be measured by any ordinary standard. My little crimes are greater than other men’s deepest iniquities, for I have sinned against the light, against the pricks of conscience and against everything that should have taught me better.” Well, my Friend, I do not see that you are shut out here. My text makes no distinction but just this—“SINNERS”!

And as far as my text is concerned there is no limit whatever—I must deal with the text as it stands. And even for you I cannot consent to limit it. It says, “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.” There have been men of your sort saved—why then, should you not be? There have been the grossest blackguards and the vilest thieves and the most debauched harlots saved. Then, why not you, even if you are such as they? Sinners a hundred years old have been saved. We have instance on record of such cases—then why not you? If from one of God’s instances we may generally infer a rule and, moreover, we have His own Word to back us— where lives the man who is so wickedly arrogant as to shut himself out— and close the door of mercy in his own face? No, Beloved, the text says “SINNERS.” And why should it not include you and me within its list? “Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners.”

But I said, and I must return to it, if anyone wishes to make a particular application of the text to his own case—it is necessary he should read this text in another way. Every man in this place must not infer that Christ came to save *him*. Those whom Christ came to save were sinners. But Christ will not save all sinners. There are some sinners who undoubtedly will be lost because they reject Christ. They despise Him. They will not repent. They choose their own self-righteousness. They do not turn to Christ, they will have none of His ways and none of His love. For such sinners, there is no promise of mercy, for there remains no other way of salvation. Despise Christ and you despise your own mercy. Turn away from Him and you have proved that in His blood there is no efficacy for you. Despise Him and die doing so, die without giving your soul into His hands and you have given a most awful proof that though the blood of Christ was mighty, yet never was it applied to you, never was it sprinkled on your heart to the taking away of your sins.

If, then, I want to know did Christ so die for me that I may now believe in Him and feel myself to be a saved man, I must answer this question— do I *feel*today that I am a sinner? Not, do I *say*so, as a compliment, but do I feel it? In my inmost soul is that a Truth of God printed in great capitals of burning fire—I am a sinner? Then, if it is so, Christ died for me. I am included in His special purpose. The Covenant of Grace includes my name in the ancient roll of eternal election. There my person is recorded and I shall, without a doubt, be saved if now, feeling myself to be a sinner, I cast myself upon that simple Truth of God, believing it and trusting in it to be my sheet anchor in every time of trouble. Come, Brother and Sister, are you not prepared to trust in Him? Are not many of you able to say that you feel yourself sinners? Oh, I beseech you, whoever you are, believe this great Truth of God which is worthy of all acceptation—Christ Jesus came to save you. I know your doubts. I know your fears—for I have suffered them myself. And the only way whereby I can keep my hopes alive is just this—I am brought every day to the Cross. I believe that to my dying hour I shall never have any hope but this—

***“Nothing in my hands I bring;  
Simply to Your Cross I cling.”***

And my only reason at this hour for believing Jesus Christ is my Redeemer is just this—I know that I am a *sinner.* This I feel and over this I mourn. And though I mourn it much, when Satan tells me that I cannot be the Lord’s, I draw from my very mourning the comfortable inference that inasmuch as He has made me feel I am lost, He would not have done this if He had not intended to save me. And inasmuch as He has given me to see that I belong to that great class of characters whom He came to save, I infer from that, beyond a doubt, that He will save me. Oh, can you do the same, you sin-stricken, weary, sad and disappointed souls to whom the world has become an empty thing? You weary spirits who have gone your round of pleasure, now exhausted with satiety, or even with disease, are longing to be rid of it—oh, you spirits that are looking for something better than this mad world can ever give you here, I preach to you the blessed Gospel of the blessed God—Jesus Christ the Son of God, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified— dead and buried and raised again the third day to save you—even you, for He came into the world to save sinners!

**3.** And, now, very briefly, the third point: What is meant by *saving* sinners? “Christ came to save sinners.” Brethren, if you want a picture to show you what is meant by being saved, let me give it to you here. There is a poor wretch who has lived many a year in the grossest sin; so inured to sin has he become, that the Ethiopian might sooner change his skin than he could learn to do well. Drunkenness, and vice, and folly have cast their iron net about him, and he has become loathsome and unable to escape from his loathsomeness. Do you see him? He is tottering onwards to his ruin. From childhood to youth, from youth to manhood, he has sinned right on, and now he is going towards his last days. The pit of hell is flaring across his path, flinging its frightful rays immediately before his face, and yet he sees it not: he still goes on in his wickedness, despising God and hating his own salvation. Leave him there. A few years have and now hear another story. Do you see that spirit yonder — foremost among the ranks most sweetly singing the praises of God? Do you mark it robed in white, an emblem of its purity? Do you see it as it casts its crown before the feet of Jesus, and acknowledges him the Lord of all? Hark! do you hear it as it sings the sweetest song that ever charmed Paradise itself? Listen to it, its song is this: —

***“I, the chief of sinners am,  
But Jesus died for me.”***

“Unto him that loved me, and washed me from my sins in his blood, unto him be glory and honor, and majesty, and power, and dominion, world without end.” And who is that whose song thus emulates the seraph’s strains The same person who a little while ago was so frightfully depraved, the selfsame man! But he has been washed, he has been sanctified, he has been justified. If you ask me, then, what is meant by salvation, I tell you that it reaches all the way from that poor, desperately fallen piece of humanity, to that high-soaring spirit up yonder, praising God. That is to be saved — to have our old thoughts made into new ones, to have our old habits broken off, and to have new habits given; to have our old sins pardoned, and to have righteousness imputed; to have peace in the conscience, peace to man, and peace with God; to have the spotless robe of imputed righteousness cast about our loins, and ourselves healed and cleansed. To be saved is to be rescued from the gulf of perdition; to be raised to the throne of heaven; to be delivered from the wrath and curse! and the thunders of an angry God, and brought to feel and taste the love, the approval, and applause of Jehovah, our Father and our Friend. And all this Christ gives to sinners. When I preach this simple gospel, I have nothing to do with those who will not call themselves sinners. If you must be canonized, if you claim a saintly perfection of your own, I have nothing to do with you. My gospel is to sinners, and sinners alone; and the whole of this salvation, so broad and brilliant, and unspeakably precious, and everlastingly secure, is addressed this day to the outcast, to the offscouring — in one word, it is addressed to sinners.

Now, I think I have announced the truth of the text. Certainly, no man can misunderstand me unless he does so intentionally: — “Christ Jesus came to save sinners.”

**II. And, now, I have but little to do, but yet I have the hardest work —**

T HE DOUBLE COMMENDATION of the text. First, “it is a faithful saying; that is a commendation to the *doubter*: secondly, it is worthy of all acceptation; “that is a commendation to the *careless* — nay, to the *anxious*, too.

**1.** First, “it is a faithful saying;” that is a commendation to the *doubter*. Oh, the devil, as soon as he finds men under the sound of the word of God, slips along through the crowd, and he whispers in one heart, “Don’t believe it!” and in another, “Laugh at it!” and in another, “Away with it!” And when he finds a person for whom the message was intended — one who feels himself a sinner, he is generally doubly in earnest, that he may not believe it at all. I know what Satan said to you, poor friend, over there. He said, “Don’t believe it — it’s too good to be true.” Let me answer the devil by God’s own words: “This is a faithful saying.” It is good, and it is as true as it is good. *It is* too good to be true if God had not himself said it; but, inasmuch as he said it, it is not too good to be true. I will tell thee why thou thickest it to too good to be true, it is because thou measurest God’s corn by thine own bushel. Please to remember, that his ways are not as thy ways, nor his thoughts as thy thoughts; for as the heavens are high above the earth, so are his ways high above thy ways, and his thoughts above thy thoughts. Why, thou thinkest that if any man had offended thee, thou couldst not have forgiven him. Ay, but God is not a man: he can forgive where thou canst not; and where thou wouldst take thy brother by the throat, God would forgive him seventy times seven. Thou dost not know Jesus, or else thou wouldest believe him. We think that we are honoring God when we think great thoughts of our sin. Let us recollect, that while we ought to think very greatly of our own sin, we dishonor God if we think our sin greater than his grace. God’s grace is infinitely greater than the greatest of our crimes. There is but one exception that he has ever made, and a penitent cannot be included in that. I beseech you, therefore, get better thoughts of him. Think how good he is, and how great he is; and when you know this to be a true saying, I hope you will thrust Satan away from you, and not think it too good to be true I know what he will say to you next; — “Well, if it is true, it is not true to you: it is true to all the world, but not to you. Christ died to save sinners; it is true you are a sinner, but you are not included in it.” Tell the devil he is a liar to his face. There is no way of answering him except by straightforward language. We do not believe in the individuality of the existence of the devil, as Martin Luther did. When the devil came to him, he served him as he did other impostors; he turned him out of doors, with a good hard saying. Tell him on the authority of Christ himself, that he is a liar. Christ says, he came to save sinners; the devil says he did not. He says, virtually, he did not, for he declares that he did not come to save you, and you feel that you are a sinner. Tell him he is a liar, and send him about his business. At any rate, never put his testimony in comparison with that of Christ. He looks today on thee from Calvary’s cross with those same dear tearful eyes that once wept over Jerusalem. He looks on thee my brother, my sister, and says through these lips of mine, “I came into the world to save sinners.” Sinner! wilt thou not believe on him, and trust thy soul in his hands? Wilt thou not say, — “Sweet Lord Jesus, thou shalt be our confidence henceforth! ‘For thee all other hopes I resign, thou art, thou ever shalt be mine.’ “ Come, poor timid one, I must endeavor to re-assure you, by repeating again this text: — “Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners.” It is a true saying, I cannot have you reject it You say you cannot believe it. Let me ask you, “Do you not believe the Bible ?” “Yes,” you say, “every word of it.” Then, this is one word of it — “Jesus came into the world to save sinners.” I charge thee by thy honesty — as thou sayest, “I believe the Bible,” believe this. There it stands. Dost thou believe Jesus Christ? Come, answer me Dost thou think he lieth? Would a God of Truth stoop to deceit? “No,” thou sayest, “whatever God says, I believe.” It is God that says it to thee, then, in his own book. He died to save sinners. - Come, once again. Dost thou not believe facts? Did not Jesus Christ rise from the dead? Does not that prove his gospel to be authentic? If, then, the gospel be authentic, the whole of what Christ declares to be the gospel must be true. I charge thee, as thou believest his resurrection, believe that he died for sinners, and cast thyself upon this truth. Once again. Wilt thou deny the testimony of all the saints in heaven and of all the saints on earth? Ask every one of them, and they will tell you this is true — he died to save *sinners*. I, as one of the least of his servants, must bear my testimony. When Jesus came to save me, I protest he found nothing good in me. I know of a surety, that there was nothing in me to recommend me to Christ; and if he loved me, he loved me because he would do so; for there was nothing loveable, nothing that he could desire in me. What I am, I am by his grace; he made me what I am. But a sinner he found me at first, and his own sovereign love was the only reason for his choice. Ask all the people of God, and they will all say the same.

But you say you are too great a sinner. Why. you are not greater than some in heaven already. You say that you are the greatest sinner that ever lived. I say you are mistaken. The greatest sinner died some years ago and went to heaven. My text says so: — “Of whom I am chief” So, you see, the chief one has been saved before you; and if the chief one has been saved, why should you not be? There are the sinners standing in a line, and I see one starting out from the ranks, and he says, “Make way, make way; I stand at the head of you, I am the chief of sinners. give me the lowest place; let me take the lowest room.” “No,” cries another, “not you; I am a greater sinner than you.” Then the apostle Paul comes, and says: “I challenge you all, Manasseh and Magdalene, I challenge you. I will have the lowest place. I was a blasphemer, a persecutor, and injurious, but I have obtained mercy, that in me first God might show his long-suffering.” Now, if Christ has saved the greatest sinner that ever lived, oh, sinner, great as you may be, you cannot be greater than the greatest, and he is able to save you. Oh, I beseech you by the myriads of witnesses around the throne, and by the thousands of witnesses on earth, by Jesus Christ, the witness on Calvary, by the blood of sprinkling that is a witness even now, by God himself, and by his Word which is faithful, I beseech you believe this faithful saying, that “Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners.”

**2.** And, now, to close. The second commendation of the text is to the *careless* and to the *anxious* too To the careless one this text is worthy of all acceptation. Oh, man, thou scornest it. I saw thee curl thy lip in derision. The story was badly told, and therefore thou didst scorn it. Thou saidst in thine heart, “What is that to me? If this be what the man preaches, I care not to hear it: if this be the gospel it is nothing.” Ah, sir, it is something, though thou knowest it not. It is worthy of thy acceptation: the thing I have preached, however poor the way in which it is preached, is well worthy of thy attention I care not what orator may lecture to you, he can never have a subject greater than mine. Damosthenes himself, might stand here, or Cicero, his later compeer, they could never have a weightier subject. Though a child should tell you of it, the subject might well excuse him, for it is so important. Man it is not your house that is in danger, it is not your body only, it is your soul I beseech you, by eternity, by its dreadful terrors, by the horrors of hell, by that fearful word, “Eternity — Eternity,” I beseech thee as a man, thy brother, one who loves thee, and who would fain snatch thee from the burning, I beseech thee do not despise thine own mercies; for this is worthy of thee, man, worthy of all thy attention, and worthy of thy heartiest acceptation. Art thou wise? This is more worthy than thy wisdom. Art thou rich? This is worthier than all thy wealth. Art thou famous? This is worthier than all thy honor. Art thou princely? This is worthier than thine ancestry, or than all thy goodly heritage. The thing I preach is the worthiest thing under heaven, because it will last thee when an things else fade away. It will stand by thee when thou hast to stand alone. In the hour of death it will plead for thee when thou hast to answer the summons of justice at God’s bar. And it shall be thine eternal consolation through never ending ages. It is worthy of thy acceptation.

And, now, dost thou feel anxious? Is thy heart sad? Dost thou say, “I desire to be saved. Can I trust to this gospel? Is it strong enough to bear me? I am an elephantine sinner; will not its pillars crumble like leaves beneath my weight of sin ?” “I the chief of sinners am ;” will its portals be wide enough to receive me? My spirit is diseased with sin; can this medicine cure it? Yes, it is worthy of you: it is equal to your disease, it is equal to your wants, it is all-sufficient for your demands. If I had a halfgospel to preach, or a defective one, I would not preach it earnestly; but I have one that is worthy of all acceptation. “But, sir I have been a thief, a whoremonger, a drunkard.” It is worthy of thee, for he came to save sinners, and thou art one. “But, sir, I have been a blasphemer.” It does not exclude even thee; it is worthy of thy acceptation. But, mark, it is worthy of all the acceptation you can give it. You may not only accept it in your head but in your heart; you may press it to your soul and call it all in an, you may feed on it, and live on it. And if you live for it, and suffer for it, and die for it, it is worthy of all.

I must let you go now; but my spirit feels as if it would linger here. Strange it should be that many men should not care for their own souls, when your minister this day cares for you. What matters it to me whether men be lost or saved? Shall I be any the better for your salvation? Assuredly there is little gain there. And yet I feel more for you, many of you, than you feel for yourselves. Oh, strange hardening of the heart, that a man should not care for his men salvation, that he should, without a thought, reject the most precious truth. Stay, sinner stay, ere thou turnest from thine own mercy — stay, once more — perhaps this shall be thy last warning, or worse, it may be the last warning thou shalt ever feel. Thou feelest it now. Oh I beseech thee quench not the Spirit. Go not forth from this place to talk with idle gossip on thy way home. Go not forth to forget what manner of man thou art. But hasten to thy home; seek thy chamber; shut to the door; fall on thy face by thy bedside; confess thy sin; cry unto Jesus, tell him thou art a wretch undone without his sovereign grace, tell him thou has heard this morning that he came to save sinners, and that the thought of such a love as that hath made thee lay down the weapons of thy rebellion, and that thou art desirous to be his. There on thy face plead with him, and say unto him, “Lord save me, or I perish.”

The Lord bless you all for Jesus’ sake. Amen.

Adapted from*The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #2300 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

THE WHOLE GOSPEL IN A SINGLE VERSE  
NO. 2300

**INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S-DAY, MARCH 19, 1893. *DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON THURSDAY EVENING, FEBRUARY 28, 1889.**

***“This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.”*** 1Ti 1:15***.***

I SPOKE, yesterday, with a brother minister who had been a pastor in America, and I asked him why he was so anxious to go back again where the climate had so greatly tried him. He answered, “I love the people to whom I preach.” “What sort of people are they?” I enquired. “Well,” he replied, “they are a people who come together anxious to get good. They do not try to find fault with me, but they seek to get all the good they can out of the Gospel I preach.” “Well,” I said, “it is worth while crossing the ocean to go to a congregation of that sort of people.” You know, dear Friends, how it is with some people, as it was with one friend to whom I spoke last Tuesday. God had blessed the Word to his soul and he was converted, but he had been hearing me some time before and I said to him, “How was it, do you think, that during those other years that you came here, you did not find the Savior?” “Oh, Sir!” he answered, “I am afraid it was because I came to hear *you*, and when I had been here and heard you, I was quite satisfied. But when God taught me to come here to look for Christ, and to seek eternal life, then I obtained the blessing.” Now, will you who are here, tonight, especially you who are not saved, try to hear me in that fashion, not noticing how I preach, because I do not care much about that, myself—and you need to care about it far less—but only to think what good can be got out of it? Let each hearer ask himself, “Is there anything of saving benefit to my soul in what the preacher will say tonight?”

Now, this text contains the Gospel in brief, and yet I may say that it contains the Gospel in full. If you get condensed notes of a sermon or a speech, you often miss the very soul and marrow of it, but here you get all the condensation possible, as if the great Truths of the Gospel were pressed together by a hydraulic ram, and yet there is not a particle of it left out. It is one of the “little Bibles,” as Luther used to call them—the Gospel in a verse. The essence of the whole Bible is here— “This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.”

**I.**Now I am going to be short upon each point and, therefore, I shall at once speak upon this first head. Here is OUR NAME, OR A BROAD WORD OF DESCRIPTION—“Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.” One of the most important questions that can be asked by any man is this, For whom is salvation meant? The answer we have is given by the Holy Spirit in the Inspired Word of God—“Christ Jesus came into the world to save *sinners*.”

Jesus Christ came to save *sinners of all sorts.* So long as you can come under the general description, “sinners,” it matters not what shape your sin has taken. All men have, alike, sinned, and yet all have not sinned in the same way. They have all wandered the downward road and yet each one has gone a different way from all the rest. Christ Jesus came into the world to save respectable sinners and disreputable sinners! He came into the world to save proud sinners and despairing sinners! He came into the world to save drunks, thieves, liars, whoremongers, adulterers, murderers and such! Whatever sort of sin there is, this Word of God is wonderfully comprehensive and sweeping—“Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.”

A black lot, a horrible crew, they are, and Hell is their due reward, but these are the people Jesus came to save. If there are any people in the world who are *not* sinners, Jesus did not come to save them because such people do not want a Savior. If there are any of you who venture to say that you have never sinned, well then, you need not listen to me, for I have nothing to say to you, nor has this Book of God, except to tell you that you are under a grievous error and a great delusion! There can be no mercy to a man who has committed no fault. Some time ago there was a man incarcerated for life for an offense he never committed and, when it was found out that he was not guilty, Her Majesty insulted him, I think, by giving him “a free pardon.” Why, he had never committed the crime for which he had suffered, poor Soul, and he had been a year, at least, in confinement as a felon, though he was innocent! I think Her Majesty should have begged *his* pardon and given him large compensation. Pardon and mercy are not for innocent people—they are for the guilty! And the Lord Jesus Christ, therefore, came into the world, not to save the innocent, the righteous and the good—but to save sinners!

Notice, next, that Jesus came to save sinners without any other qualification. There is a habit which some have of qualifying the word, sinner, as we have it in the hymn—

**“Come, *humble* sinner, in whose breast*,*”**  
and so on. I think the writer of that hymn put it—  
**“Come, *trembling* sinner, in whose breast  
A thousand thoughts revolve.”**  
But when Jesus Christ invites sinners, He does it after this fashion, “Come, sinners.” “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.” There is no adjective before the noun! There is no sort of qualification except that they are sinners.  
Christ Jesus came to save *hardened* sinners, for He softens the heart. He came to save *aggravated* sinners, for He breaks the iron sinew of the neck and subdues the stubborn will. He came to save sinners who have no good thing in them. “If you have any merit,” said one to another, “if you have any good thing about you, it is like a drop of rose water in a sea of filth.” But, truly, there is not even that *one drop* of rose water in *our* nature—nor need there be in order that Christ may save us! He came to save sinners—that is all Paul says. I dare not limit what is left unlimited. I dare not qualify what is left unqualified. “Sinners”—that is all the Apostle says. What? If they have no trace of goodness, no mark of anything excellent? Yes. “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.”  
This means, also, that Christ Jesus came to *save sinners in their pollution*. Remember that sin is a very offensive thing. When conscience is really awakened to discover the pollution of sin, it is seen to be exceedingly sinful, a thing that is truly horrible. We are taught, in the Scriptures, even to hate the garments spotted by the flesh—and there is such a thing as a righteous indignation against sin. But the Lord Jesus Christ has come into the world to save the polluted, to save those against whom virtue gives her vote, to save those whom society expels! What a wonderful thing “society” is, itself rotten to the core very often and yet, if there happens to be a poor woman who has gone astray, “society” cries, “Put her out! Drive the wretched creature away from us.” I have known one such turned out of hotel after hotel. They could not bear their righteous selves to come anywhere near to one who had in the least degree broken the laws of society!  
But it was not so with Christ. Notwithstanding all His sense of the horror of sin—and it is much greater than our sense of it, for His mind is sensitive because of its supreme purity—yet, notwithstanding that, He came into the world to save sinners! And with sinners He mixed, even with publicans and harlots! With sinners He sat at meat. With sinners He lived. With sinners He died! He made His grave with the wicked. He entered Paradise with a thief! And today, those who sing the new song in Heaven confess that they were sinners, for they say, “You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.” Yes, notwithstanding the pollution of sin, Christ came to save sinners!  
He came, also, to*save sinners under the curse*. Sin is a cursed thing. God has never blessed sin and He never will do so. Though sin may seem to flourish, for a time, the blight of the Almighty is upon it—the breath of the great Judge of All will wither up everything that grows of evil. He cannot bear it—His fire shall burn, even to the lowest Hell, against all iniquity! And yet, though you are under the curse, Jesus Christ came into the world to save the accursed sinner by taking the curse upon Himself, and Himself hanging on the tree of the curse, and bearing the curse for us, that we might be saved! Do you feel the curse of God in your spirit, tonight? Does it seem to dry up all the springs of your life? Then remember, notwithstanding that, “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.” Once more, Christ came to save *sinners without strength*. Sin brings death. Wherever sin reigns, the power to do good dies out. “Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? Then may you, also, do good that are accustomed to do evil.” But when you are without strength, ah, even without strength to *believe* on Him—without strength to feel your sin, without strength to feel even a desire to be better—even then it is true that “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.” I know He did, for the first good desires are His gift. The first prayers are His own breath. The first sigh under the burden of sin is His own work. Jesus does it all! He came into the world to save us. “When we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly,” those in whom there could not be any trace of goodness—“the ungodly”—those who were without God and without hope in the world. It is for such that Jesus Christ came into the world. I do not know how to set this gate open wider. I will take it right off its hinges and I will pull up post and bar and all and defy the very devils of Hell to come and shut this City of Refuge against any soul, here, that is a sinner! If you have sinned, behold, the voice of Everlasting Love speaks aloud to you, tonight, these words, “This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.”  
**II.**I must not dwell long on any one word in our text, so I pass to another. In the second place, here is OUR NEED, OR A WIDE WORD OF SALVATION. We poor sinners need saving and, “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.”  
Jesus came to save. *He did not come to condemn us*. When God came down upon earth, it might have been thought that He must have come to condemn, for when He came down to look at the tower of Babel, and saw the sin of the world, He scattered the sinners upon the face of all the earth. Now, it might be thought that if He came on earth, He would be shocked and horrified by a personal investigation of sin and then would say, “I will destroy the world.” But Jesus said, “The Son of Man is not come to destroy men’s lives, but to save them.” “God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world, through Him, might be saved.” If you get condemnation out of the Gospel, you put the condemnation into it yourselves! It is not the Gospel, but your rejection of it, that will condemn you. Therefore, I pray God that you may never put from you the Word of God and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, as they did to whom Paul and Barnabas preached at Antioch.  
But, next, Christ did NOT come into the world *to help us to save ourselves*. He came to save us—not to set us on our legs and say, “Now you do so much, and I will do the rest.” No, He came to save us! From top to bottom salvation is all of Grace, and all the gift of God by Jesus Christ. He did not come into the world, I say, to make us salvable, but to save us— nor to put us in the way of somehow or other meriting salvation! He came, Himself, to be the Savior and to save sinners. Cannot you see that you, who have been trying to spin a robe of righteousness, got all that you did in the day unraveled before night? You who have been knitting part of a garment to cover your nakedness, put your knitting needles down, and take what Christ has finished! Come, you who have been working hard, like prisoners on a treadmill, trying to get to Heaven that way, you will never do it! See another ladder, like that which Jacob saw of old, that reaches from Heaven to earth, and from earth to Heaven, and may God enable you to climb to Him that way, but not by a way of your own! Jesus did not come to help us to save ourselves.  
And He did not come *to save us in part*, that we might do the rest. It takes a long time to make some men know this. I know numbers of Christian people who still have one foot on the rock, and the other foot on the sand. There is a certain, or rather, *uncertain* doctrine that always makes people feel unsafe. It is that you must not say that you are saved, but that if you hold on your way, and keep on the right road, then, *perhaps*, when you come to die, you may begin to *hope* that you are saved. I would not give two pence for such a Gospel as that! We need salvation given to us outright and given to us forever—and this is what Christ does give us when we come and trust in Him. “He that believes on Him is not condemned.” He is saved, then and there, by the act of God. “He who has begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.” He did not come to save us in part.  
And the Lord Jesus Christ has not come *to make us content to be unsaved*. I have sometimes heard people talk to the unconverted like this, “Now, you must wait. You must wait. *You* cannot do anything, therefore, sit still and wait until something happens to you.” That is *not* the Gospel! The Gospel is, “*Believe* on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved.” Read the Bible through and learn what God has revealed there. Lay aside your own system and notion. You will not find that the Lord Jesus Christ said to the man at Bethesda, “Now, lie at the pool till the angel comes and stirs it.” That is old Judaism that does that! But Jesus said, “Rise, take up your bed, and walk.” When Jesus speaks to sinners like that, they will rise and take up their beds and walk!  
Somebody says, “But *you*, poor minister that you are, cannot tell men to take up their beds and walk—and make them do it.” Yes, we can, when our Master speaks through us, and when we deliver the Lord’s message in faith, resting on the power of the Holy Spirit! We can still be *used by the Lord* to work miracles. The dry bones are made to hear the voice of the Lord’s servant when the Holy Spirit goes with the voice and they are quickened by Divine power—  
***“The Gospel bids the dead revive,  
Sinners obey the voice and live!  
Dry bones are raised, and clothed afresh,  
And hearts of stone are turned to flesh!”***  
Again, I say, Jesus did not come to make sinners contented to be lost, or to sit down and wait as if salvation did not concern them. No, He came to *save* sinners.  
Well, what does it mean, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners? It means that He came *to save them from the punishment of their sin*. Their sin shall not be laid to their charge so that they shall be condemned for it. That is one thing. He came, also, to save them from the *pollution of their sin*, so that, though their mind has been debased, and their taste degraded, and their conscience deadened by sin, He came to take that evil away and give them a tender heart, a hatred of sin, a love for holiness and a desire for purity. But Jesus came to do more than that. He came *to take away our tendencies to sin*, tendencies which are born in us and grow with us. He came, by His Spirit, to eradicate them, to pluck them up by the roots, to put within us another principle which shall fight with the old principle of sin and overcome it—till Christ, alone, shall reign, and every thought shall be brought into captivity to Him. He came to save His people from *apostasy*. He came into the world to save sinners by keeping them faithful to the end so that they shall not go back unto perdition—  
***“Yes, I to the end shall endure,  
As sure as the earnest is given.  
More happy, but not more secure,  
The glorified spirits in Heaven.”***  
A very important part of the work of Grace is this. To start a man right is but little, but to keep that man holding on, even to the end—this is a triumph of Almighty Grace, and this is what Christ has come to do! Jesus came into the world, not to half save you, not to save you in this direction or that, and in this light or that, but to save you from your sin, to save you from an angry temper, to save you from pride, to save you from strong drink, to save you from covetousness, to save you from every evil thing— and to present you faultless before the Presence of His Glory with exceeding joy! This is a grand word, “Christ Jesus came into the word to save sinners.” Oh, that you might believe it! I pray God that out of this congregation, which is wonderfully large for such a night, and yet small compared with our usual number on a Thursday evening, there may be very many who will say, “Yes, I believe that Jesus came to save sinners and I trust Him to save me.” You will be saved the moment that you do that, for faith is the mark of His salvation, the proof that He has saved you! **III.**But now, thirdly, there is a name here. We have had our own name, sinners. Now here is HIS NAME, OR A GLORIOUS WORD OF HONOR— “*Christ Jesus* came into the world to save sinners.” Christ Jesus! Not an angel, not the best of men, but Christ Jesus!  
“Christ” means, as you know, *Anointed*, that is, God sent Him, anointed by His own Spirit, prepared, fitted, qualified and endowed for the work of saving. Jesus comes not without an anointing from God! He is not an amateur Savior, come on His own account, without any commission or authority, but God has anointed Him in order that He may save sinners. When He went into the synagogue at Nazareth on the Sabbath, He applied to Himself the words

of the Prophet Elijah, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the Gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord.”  
The other part of His name is “Jesus,” that is, *Savior*. He has come, therefore, to be the Anointed Savior, commissioned to be a Savior, and if He is not a Savior, (I say it with all reverence), He is nothing! He came into the world to save and if He does not save, He has missed His mark! He laid His heavenly Glories down to take this still higher Glory, that He might be the Savior of sinners. The angels sang concerning Him, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.” And the angel of the Lord said to Joseph—“You shall call His name, Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins.” Beloved, notice this—the Savior of sinners is not the Virgin Mary—saints are not saviors, but, “God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten *Son*, that whoever believes in *Him* should not perish, but have everlasting life.” Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, “very God of very God,” the Creator of all things, sustaining all things by the word of His power. He came into the world, to Bethlehem’s manger and afterwards to Calvary’s Cross, with this as His one business—that He might save sinners! Is He not able to save? Is He not just the Savior that we need? God and yet Man in one Person! He is able to sympathize because He is Man, and He is able to save because He is God! Blessed God-Man, Jesus Christ, only You are able to save me! I cannot dwell longer on that part of my theme, but I wish that you who are seeking salvation would let your thoughts dwell upon it until you have truly trusted Him as your Savior.  
**IV.**The fourth thing in the text is HIS DEED, OR A SURE WORD OF FACT. “Christ Jesus *came* into the world.” We have not to look to what He *will* do to save sinners, for He has done it!  
He came into the world. *He existed long before* He came out of Heaven into this world. He was in the beginning with God and He came here. You and I began our existence here, but He existed from the beginning! In the Glory of the Father and in the fullness of time He came into the world. He came willingly. It is put so in our text—“Christ Jesus came into the world.” There is a kind of voluntariness evident in the words. He was sent, for He is the Christ, the Messiah, but He came of His own free will—  
***“Down from the shining seats above,  
With joyful haste He fled.”***  
He came into the world. I say, again, the salvation of sinners is *not* a thing to be accomplished in the future. If God had promised it, we might trust as Abraham did, when He saw Christ’s day afar off and was glad, but Jesus *has come—*He has been here—God Almighty has been here in human form, dwelling among men! He came into the world to save sinners. He came into the world so far that He knew the world’s griefs and bore them, the world’s penalty, the world’s shame and reproach, the world’s sickness and the world’s death. He came into the world, into the very center and heart of this ungodly world, and there He dwelt, “holy, harmless, and undefiled.”  
Christ Jesus came into the world and when He came here, it was such a wonderful coming that *He stayed here*. Some 33 years He was here and all that while He was still seeking to save sinners. During the last three years He went about doing good, always hunting up sinners—and at the end of His service for sinners He stretched out His hands and feet, and yielded up Himself to die for sinners. He breathed out His very soul for sinners. “Who His own Self bore our sins in His own body on the tree.” I do not feel that I have any need to find any words of mine to try to garnish this Gospel of the Glory of the Blessed God. It is the greatest theme on which a man ever spoke! It needs no oratory to set it forth! The story, itself, is marvelous, “the old, old story of Jesus and His love.” God could not in justice pass over human sin without an atonement, but He made the Atonement, Himself! Jesus, who is One with the Father, came here and offered Himself as a Sacrifice that He might save sinners. Now, *if He does not save sinners, His coming here is a failure*. Do you believe, can you imagine, that Christ’s coming into the world could be a failure? In my very soul I believe that all He meant to accomplish by His coming here He will accomplish—that no man shall ever be able to point to any failure in this grandest of Divine enterprises! There is no failure in Creation—there will be no failure in Providence! And when the whole story is ended, there will be no failure in this great work of Redemption! “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners,” and sinners shall be saved. Will you be among them, my dear Hearer? Why should you *not* be among them?  
**V.**Once more. We have here, in the fifth place, OUR ACCEPTANCE, OR A WORD OF PERSONALITY. The Apostle says, “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, *of whom I am chief*.” I am not going to dispute with the Apostle and yet, if he were here, I should be a little dubious as to his right to the title of, “chief of sinners,” and I would ask him whether, if he were chief, I was not the next. I suppose that there are many here who would say, “Paul sinned no more grievously than we did before our conversion.” I remember, in preaching once, I said that if I ever got to Heaven, those lines would be true of me—  
***“Then loudest of the crowd I’ll sing,  
While Heaven’s resounding mansions ring,  
With shouts of Sovereign Grace.”***  
When I had done preaching, a lady met me in the aisle and she said, “You made one mistake in your sermon.” “Oh, dear Heart!” I replied, “I daresay I made twenty.” She said, “But the one you made was this. You said that you would sing the loudest when you got to Heaven—but you will not. When I get there, I shall owe more to the Grace of God than you will—you have not been such a sinner as I have been.” Well, I found all the other saints around us were of a mind to contest about which should praise God most because of the great things He had done for them in saving their souls! Ralph Erskine wrote a hymn about the contention among the birds of paradise as to which should praise God best, and he describes the different kinds of people in Heaven all vying with each other in magnifying the name of the Lord who had redeemed them! But that is not my theme just now.  
When we come and appropriate this sinner’s Savior, we do it, first, by a *confession*. “Lord, I am a sinner. I know it. I mourn over it. I confess to You that I have broken Your righteous Law.” Then there follows, on that confession, a sense of humiliation. Did Jesus come into the world to save *me*? Then I am a greater sinner than I thought I was, first, that I should need the Son of God to save me and, next, that I should sin against love so amazing, so surprising, as to rebel against One who would come into the world to save me! The more we appreciate Christ’s saving sinners, the more we depreciate ourselves. He who has a great Savior will feel himself to be a great sinner. And he who has the best and clearest view of Christ is the man who will say, “Of whom—namely, of the saved sinners—I am chief.”  
Now, this appropriation of Christ, which began with confession and went on to deep self-humiliation, flowers into *faith*, because, notice, the Apostle says, “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.” Though he says that he is chief of them, yet he means, also, “I am *one of those* He came to save.” “Of whom I am chief.” “Oh, yes, I am one of those he came to save!” Faith enables the soul to say that. My dear Friends, I do trust that, by the Grace of God, many of you will say that, tonight. “Lord Jesus, I trust in You. Of the multitude that You did come to save, who are described as sinners, I am one.”  
This appropriation of Christ by faith will go on to *open confession of Him*. The Apostle confesses that, while he was the chief of sinners, yet Christ died for him, and you will be led to make that confession. I hope that you will do it as our friends are going to do it tonight—by *obedience* to Christ’s Law in Baptism, as He bids you, “He that believes and is baptized, shall be saved.”  
One thing I notice about my text which greatly delights me. Paul says, “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, *of whom I am chief*.” No, no, Paul, that expression will not do! Why, my dear Man, you are a scholar, and yet you have made a mistake in the tense of the verb! It is not *sum*, “I am,” but *fui*, “I was.” “No, no,” says Paul, “never bring your Latin in here. My Greek expression is, ‘*I am chief*.’” “What? After being saved, after being forgiven, still are you chief of sinners?” “Yes,” he says, “it is so.” And it is possible for a man to be not a whit behind the very chief of the Apostles and yet to feel that, in putting his whole life together, he has to take his place among the sinners, yes, at the head of them, as the chief of sinners!  
I think I told you that I once tried the plan, which some of our Brothers and Sisters try, of praying to God as a *saint*. Why, I have seen some of our Brethren, when they have had a Sunday out, with their best go-to-meeting clothes on, talk about their being*perfect*, and they looked exactly like the peacock I saw with his tail spread out, strutting along so grandly! Well, I rather liked the look of that fine show—there was something very beautiful in it—so I tried it, myself, once. I went to God in prayer boasting about my virtues, my attainments, my growth in His Grace and my service for Him. I think that I have as good a right to do that as anybody else has. I have served God with all my might and I have laid everything at His feet. But when I tried to pray that way, I knocked at the gate and nobody came! I knocked again, but nobody came. There is a little wicket, you know, that they open, just to look out to see who is there. So they asked, “Who is that knocking?” I answered, “Oh, it is a saint! It is one who has grown in Grace until he is perfectly sanctified, one who has preached the Gospel for many years.”  
They just shut the gate at once—they did not know anything about me in that capacity! So I stood there and got nothing. At last, broken-hearted and full of grief, I knocked again with all my might, and when they asked, “Who is there?” I said, “Here is a poor sinner who has often come to Christ in that capacity, and has taken Him to be his whole righteousness and salvation, and he has come, again, just as he used to come.” “Ah!” they said, “it is you, is it? We have known you for many years! You are always welcome.” I found that I had access to my God when I said, “I am the chief of sinners. I am *still* a sinner.”  
Well, now, putting myself in that position where I always must be and always hope to be, I would say to any sinner here, whoever yon may be, come, Friend, come along with me to the Cross! One says, “But I cannot go with *you*. You have been a minister of the Gospel these 30 years and more.” My dear Friend, I am *still* a poor sinner and I have to look to Christ every day as I did at the very first. Come along with me! Come along with me! It is many, many years since, on a snowy morning, I looked to Him and was lightened. I wish that, this snowy night, some soul here would look to Him and live!  
I had much more to say, but the time has gone, so I just leave you with my text, “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.” It is a blessed proverb, an Apostolic proverbial saying—but it is a true saying—“It is a faithful saying.” Everybody who has tried it has found it true! It is worthy of the acceptation of you all, and it is worthy of all the acceptation that any one of you can give to it. You may come and trust your soul on it for time and for eternity! You may come with all your burden of sin upon your shoulders. You may come with all your need of feeling, with all your hardness of heart and just take as your Savior this Jesus Christ who came into the world to save sinners! Only trust Him and when you have trusted Him, you have done much more than you dream. Some people think that there is nothing in faith, but God is pleased with it and, “without faith it is impossible to please God.” If God is pleased with it, there is a great deal more in it than some imagine! That faith contains within itself a future life of holiness! It is the one acorn out of which countless forests will yet grow! Believe! May the Lord help you to believe in Jesus immediately! Ere you leave this place, trust Him! Trust Him wholly. He came to save sinners. Let Him save you! It is His business—it is not yours. Leave yourself in His hands and He will save you, to the praise of the glory of His Grace.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON.**1Ti 1:1-17***.***

**Verse 1.** *Paul, an Apostle of Jesus Christ by the commandment of God our Savior and Lord Jesus Christ, which is our hope.*Christ is our hope. We have not a shadow of a hope apart from Him. I remember, when on the Continent, seeing on a cross the words, “Spes unica,” the unique, the only hope of man—and that is true of the Cross of Christ, and of Christ who suffered on it. He is our hope!

**2.***Unto Timothy, my own son in the faith: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord.* Notice the Apostle’s *triple* salutation, “Grace, mercy, and peace.” Whenever Paul writes to a Church, he wishes “Grace and peace.” But to a minister he wishes, “grace, *mercy*, and peace.” Ah, we need mercy more than the average of Christians! We have greater responsibilities and, consequently, might more readily fall into greater sin—so to a minister Paul’s salutation is, “Grace, *mercy*, and peace.”

**3, 4.***As I besought you to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that you might charge some that they teach no other doctrine, neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith: so do.* You see, the Apostle, in his day, had to contend against those who ran away from the simplicity of the Gospel into all manner of fables and inventions. Such, in our day, are the doctrine of evolution, the doctrine of the universal fatherhood of God, the doctrine of post-mortem salvation, the doctrine of the final restitution of all men, and all sorts of fables and falsehoods which men have invented!

**5-7.***Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned: from, which some having swerved have turned aside unto vain jangling; desiring to be teachers of the Law; understanding neither what they say, nor of which they affirm.*There were some who put the Law of God into its wrong place. They made it a way of salvation—which it never was meant to be, and never can be. It is a way of conviction! It is an instrument of humbling! It shows us the evil of sin, but it never takes sin away.

**8.***But we know that the Law is good, if a man uses it lawfully.*In its own place it has its own uses, and these are most important.  
**9-13.***Knowing this, that the Law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, for whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for men-stealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there is any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine; according to the glorious Gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust. And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has enabled me, for that He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry; who was before a blasphemer.* Paul must have written this verse with many tears. What a wonder of Divine Grace it was that he should be put into the sacred ministry, to bear testimony for Christ, when he had been, before, a blasphemer!  
**13.***And a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly in unbelief.*He almost thought that if he had done all this *willfully*, he might not have been forgiven, but he felt that, here, God spied out the only extenuating circumstance, namely, that he was mistaken—“I did it ignorantly, in unbelief.”  
**14, 15.***And the Grace of our Lord was exceedingly abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am, chief.* He spoke from his heart, from deep experience. This, indeed, was, to him, the glorious Gospel of the blessed God that had saved him, the very chief of sinners! He could, therefore, with confidence commend it to others as worthy of all acceptation.  
**16.***Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all long-suffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on Him to life everlasting.*The case of Paul is not a singular one—it is the pattern one. If there are any here who feel that they have sinned like Saul of Tarsus, they may be forgiven like Paul the Apostle! He is a pattern to all who should thereafter believe in Christ to life everlasting! Just as we often see things cut out in brown paper and sold as patterns, so is the Apostle Paul the pattern convert! What God did for him, He can do for thousands of others.  
**17.***Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.*Paul could not help this outburst of praise! He must put in a doxology. When he remembered his own conversion and pardon, and his being entrusted with the ministry of the Gospel, he was obliged to put down his pen and lift up his voice in grateful thanksgiving to God. So may it be with us as we remember what great things the Lord has done for us!

Adapted from*The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #3089 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

A SERMON ON A GRAND OLD TEXT  
NO. 3089

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, APRIL 23, 1908.  
*DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

***“This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.”*** 1Ti 1:15***.***

**[Other Sermons by Mr. Spurgeon, upon the same text, are as follows—Sermon #184, Volume 4—THE GLORIOUS GOSPEL; #1345, Volume 23—FOR WHOM IS**

THE GOSPEL MEANT?; #1416, Volume 24—THE FAITHFUL SAYING; #1837, Volume 31—A GREAT GOSPEL FOR GREAT SINNERS and #2300, Volume 39—THE WHOLE GOSPEL IN A SINGLE VERSE—  
Read/download the entire sermons, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.]

YOU will observe that Paul wrote this verse immediately after he had given a little outline of his own personal history. He had, he said, been “a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious.” And then he added this priceless Gospel verse, as if he inferred it from God’s Grace to him, as well as received it by Inspiration, “This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.” It was an experimental text, then, one which the Apostle fetched out of the deeps of his own soul, as divers bring pearls from the ocean bed. He dipped his pen into his own heart when he wrote these words. No preaching or teaching can equal that which is experimental. If we would impress the Gospel upon others, we must have first received it ourselves. Vainly do you attempt to guide a child in the pathway which you have never trodden, or to speak to adults of benefits of Divine Grace which you have never enjoyed. Happy is that preacher who can truly say he speaks what he does know and testifies what he has seen.

The testimony of Paul is peculiarly forcible because he was a very straightforward man. Before his conversion, he was second to none in opposing the Gospel. He was a downright man who never did anything by halves. As the old Saxon proverb puts it, “It was neck or nothing with him.” He threw his whole nature into anything which he espoused and it must have been indeed a mighty inward force which led him to speed forward so eagerly in the directly opposite way to that which he had pursued with enthusiasm throughout the early part of his life! He was an honest man, a man to whom it was impossible either to lie or to be neutral. He was truthful, sincere, outspoken, wearing his heart upon his sleeve and carrying his soul in his open hand. When we hear him say, at the outcome of his own personal experience, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, we may be sure that he believed it with his whole being—and we may receive his testimony as one which he lived to prove and died to seal with his blood! Never had a fact a better witness— he lost all for its sake and counted that loss his greatest gain! Hear his words, for he speaks to you from the ground which received his blood— his blood speaks better things than that of Abel, and it cries with a voice no less loud and clear!

The text, as we find it, is like a picture surrounded with a goodly border. We sometimes see paintings of the old masters in which the bordering is as full of art as the picture itself. We might safely say as much of our text. We will look at *its framework* first. Here it is—“This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation.” When we have carefully considered that, we will study *the great masterpiece itself,*meditating upon the matchless saying, “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.” When we have noticed the preface and the saying, you will then allow me to preach *a short sermon upon it.*

**I.**First, then, THE FRAMEWORK. Paul says, *“it is a saying.”*When we declare a sentence to be a saying, we mean that it is commonly spoken and usually said, so that everybody knows it—it is town talk—“familiar in our mouths as household words.” Those who like harder words, explain that this is an axiom, a Christian axiom—a selfevident Truth of God, a thing which nobody who is a Christian doubts at all. But I will keep to our own version and add that I greatly wish that our text were more truly a saying among all Christian people at this day. That Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners is a Truth of God which we all believe, but do we all talk about it so frequently as to make it, in very deed, a saying? Do you think that our servants, who have lived for months in our houses, would in their gossips say, “It was one of my master’s sayings, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners”? I will even ask—Do you think that if a person attended our places of worship for years, he would be able to say conscientiously, “Why, it was our minister’s ordinary saying! It was quite a proverb with him—he was always repeating that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners”? Yet a sentence cannot he called “a saying” until it is often said. It does not get into the category of sayings and is not called by that name unless it is a matter of ordinary common talk!  
I gather, then, from this, that Christian people ought to talk more about the Gospel than they do, and a great deal more about that primary and elementary Truth of the Gospel, the coming of Jesus Christ into the world to save the guilty. Believers ought so often to speak of it that it should be currently reported, among even ungodly people, as one of our common phrases and stock speeches. I would like them to be able to taunt us with it as a main part of our conversation. It would even be a good sign if they complained that we wearied them with it! Let them say, Why, they are always harping on that string! Even their children lisp it! Their young men boast of it, and their matrons and their sires affirm it and add their solemn seal thereunto, as if it were the sheet-anchor of their lives!” O you who know the wondrous story, talk of the Gospel by the way! Talk of it when you sit in your houses! Speak of it at your work! Tell it to those who pass you in the street or in the fields! Make the world hear it! Make society ring with it! If there is a new saying, though it is but a jest, men report it and every newspaper finds a corner for it. Are we to be silent about this oldest and yet newest saying? Men rejoice in*bon mots,* and yet this is the best of words! We have the really good news—let us publish it, let us popularize the Gospel and compel men to know what it is! If before some men we are less communicative upon the more mysterious Truths of God because we fear to cast pearls before swine, yet let this simple Truth, since Scripture calls it “a saying,” be spoken again and again and again till it shall be confessed to be a common word among us!  
Now Paul did not merely write “it is a saying,” but, *“it is a faithful saying,”*a saying worthy of faith, a saying full of the Truth of God, a saying about which no doubts may be entertained, a sure and certain saying, “that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.” Many sayings in the world had been much better left unsaid. There are proverbs which pass current among us as gold, which are spurious metal and no man can tell the mischief which an untruthful proverb may work. But this is a saying fraught with unmingled benefit—it is pure Truth of God, a leaf of the Tree of Life sent for the healing of the nations! Some matters which were important years ago are now worn out. Times have changed and circumstances have altered—and things are not now what they were to our forefathers. But this is a faithful saying because it is as practically true today as when, 1800 years ago the Apostle wrote it to the beloved Timothy. This is still a saying full of blessing to the nations, “that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.” Like the sun, it shines with the same golden light as in the ages past and, blessed be God, it will still shine when you and I have gone to our rest! And if this crazy world holds out another thousand years, or even fifty thousand, the Light of the Gospel will not have grown dim! This coin of Heaven will not have lost its image or its superscription when time shall be no more—it is of God’s minting and will outlast the world—“Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.” Ah, you heard it when you were a boy and you did not think much of it. Your years are now many and your life has almost run its course and you are still unsaved! But thank God that now, in your old age, we have the same Truth of God to tell to you, though you rejected it in your boyhood, and it is quite as certain now as then that “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.” To the eleventh hour this precious sentence abides sure. May none of you despise it or doubt it, but each one of you prove it to be God’s own word of salvation!  
Our Apostle, however, adds yet another word—this saying *“is worthy of all acceptation.”* I think he meant two things. It is worthy of all the acceptation anyone can give it and it is worthy of the acceptation of all men. Some sayings are not worth accepting—the sooner you have done with them and forgotten them, the better for you. But this saying you may receive as the Word of God and, having received it as Truth to other men, it will be a happy circumstance if you receive it as Truth to yourself, for it will be a blessed day to you when you appropriate it as your own! “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.” If I, feeling myself a sinner, infer that Jesus came to save *me*, I may without any fear rest assured that I am accepting a Truth of God, for, believing in Jesus, I may safely rejoice that He came to save *me.* You may receive this Truth not only into your ear—it is worthy of that acceptation, or into the memory—it is worthy of that acceptation, but you may receive it into your inmost heart—it is worthiest of all of that acceptation! And receiving it, you may lay upon it all the stress of your soul’s interests for the past, the present and the future, for time and for eternity! You may accept it as being the mainstay, the prop and pillar of your confidence, for it is worthy of all the acceptation that you or any other man can possibly give to it!  
It is worthy, we have said, of the acceptation of all mankind. The richest, the greatest, the most learned, the most innocent, the most pure—speaking after the manner of men—these may accept it—it is worthy of their acceptation. In the sight of God they are still guilty and need that Christ should save them. And, on the other hand, the lowest, the most ignorant, the most groveling, depraved, debauched, abandoned, helpless, hopeless, lost castaways may receive it, for it is true to them— emphatically to them—for Jesus Christ came into the world to save just such offenders as they are! If I stood in Cheapside tomorrow and any man out of the crowd should come to me and ask, “Is that sentence, ‘Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners,’ worth my believing and accepting?” I would not hesitate, but, without knowing who spoke to me, I would reply, “Yes.” If he stopped his carriage and came to me, or if he took his hand off the costermonger’s barrow, or left his shoe-blacking box, or came with his rags about him, or if he had escaped from the prison omnibus—it would not matter who he was—I might safely assure him that this saying is worthy of his acceptation! It is not a stoop for a king or a saint to receive it, and yet it meets the level of the poorest and the worst of characters. It is worthy of everybody’s acceptance!  
Beloved Friends, no one can ever rightly accuse us of making too much of the Gospel. However earnest we may be, we can never be too earnest—and however diligent to spread it, we can never be too diligent— for it is a Gospel worthy of every man’s acceptance and, therefore, worthy of every Christian’s publication! Spread it! Let the winds bear it, let every wave proclaim it! Write it everywhere, that every eye may see it! Sound it in all places, that every ear may hear it! Simple are the words and to some men their meaning is despised as almost childish, but it is the great Power of God! “A mere platitude,” they say, yet it is a platitude which has made Heaven ring with sacred mirth, a platitude which will make earth’s deserts blossom like a rose, a platitude which has turned many a man’s Hell into Heaven and his densest darkness into the brightness of Glory! Ring out that note again, “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners”! It is worthy of angelic trumpets, it is worthy of the orator’s loftiest speech and of the philosopher’s most profound thought! It is worthy of every Christian’s publication, as surely as it is of the acceptance of every human being. God help us never to undervalue it, but to prize it beyond all price! There is the frame of the picture—the basket of silver which holds the apples of gold!  
**II.**Our meditation now turns to THE SAYING ITSELF—“Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.” Very briefly and simply I will open up this passage as if none of us had, up to now, understood it. May the Holy Spirit instruct us!  
Here is, first, *a Person coming—*a Divine Person—Christ Jesus the anointed Savior. The Son of God, the Second Person of the ever-blessed Trinity, became the Savior of sinners. “Very God of very God” was He. He created the earth and upon His shoulders the pillars thereof still lean. Yes, He who was personally offended by human sin—He, Himself, deigned to become the Savior of men. Weigh this and marvel and adore!  
Next, you have *the deed He did—*He “came into the world.” He was born a Baby in Bethlehem. It was thus He came into the world. “The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.” Thirty years and more He lived in the world, sharing to the full its poverty and toil. He was a working Man, He wore the common garb of labor. He worked, He hungered, He thirsted, He was sick, He was weary. He, in all these senses, came into the world and became Man among men—bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh. As it was a sinful world, He was vexed with the transgressions of those about Him. As it was a suffering world, He bore our sickness. As it was a dying world, He died—and as it was a guilty world, He died the death of the guilty, suffering in their place the wrath of God!  
Mark well *the objective for which He came—*He came “to save.” He came into this world because men were lost, that He might find them and save them. They were guilty and He saved them by putting Himself into their place, and bearing the consequences of their guilt. They were foul and He saved them by coming into the world and giving His Holy Spirit, through whose agency they might be made new creatures and so might have pure and holy desires, and escape the corruption which is in the world through lust. He came to sinners to take them just where they are at Hell’s dark door, to cleanse them in His precious blood and fit them to dwell with Himself in eternal Glory, as saved souls forever!  
This is all wonderful. Angels marvel at it, so may we! But the most wonderful fact of all is that He came into the world to save *sinners—*not the righteous, but the ungodly! Remember His own words, “I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.” The physician comes to heal the sick—the Savior comes to save the lost! The attempt to save those who are not lost would be a ridiculous superfluity. To die to pardon those who are not guilty would be a gross absurdity. It is a work of supererogation to set free those who are not in bonds. Christ came not to perform an unnecessary deed. If you are not guilty, the Savior will not save you! If you are not a sinner, you have no part in Christ. If you can say, “I have kept the Law from my youth up and am not a transgressor,”

hen we have no Gospel blessings to set before you. If you were blind, the Lord Jesus would open your eyes, but as you say, “We see,” your sin remains. If you are guilty, the text is full of comfort for you—it drops with honey like a honeycomb—“Christ Jesus came into the world to save *sinners.”*  
Lest there should be any mistake, Paul added these words, “of whom I am chief,” or, “of whom I am first.” And Calvin warns us against supposing that the Apostle labored under a mistake or uttered an exaggeration. Paul was an Inspired man writing Inspired Scripture and he spoke the Truth of God. He was, in some respects, the chief of sinners. He went very, very far into sin. It is true that he did it ignorantly in unbelief, but then, unbelief is, in itself, the greatest of all sins. It is an atrocious thing for a man to be an unbeliever—it is a damning sin, what if I say *the* damning sin? We have heard of a man who had committed a violent assault, who, before the magistrate, pleaded that he was drunk. Now, it is sometimes the case that magistrates admit this as an extenuating circumstance, but the magistrate on that occasion was a sensible man and, therefore, he said, “Very well, then, I give you a month for the assault, and I fine you forty shillings for being drunk. That is another offense and it cannot diminish your guilt.” So is it with unbelief. Though, from one point of view, it might be looked upon as a mitigating circumstance yet, from another, it is really an increase of sin and Paul regarded it as such. And, therefore, he believed himself to be the chief of sinners. Yet he declares that Christ Jesus came to save him! Now, if a great creature can pass through a certain door, a smaller creature can. If a bridge is strong enough to bear an elephant, it will certainly bear a mouse. If the greatest sinner who ever lived has entered into Heaven by the bridge of the atoning Sacrifice of Christ, no man who has ever lived may say, “My sin is beyond forgiveness.” Today no mortal has a just pretence to perish in despair. Some of you continue to despair, but you have no grounds for such a feeling, for this is the good news which is preached to you, that Jesus Christ has come to call the guilty, the lost and the ruined to Himself—and to save the vilest of them with a great salvation!  
**III.**Thus we have looked at the setting of the text and at the text itself. Now for A BRIEF SERMON upon it.  
Our short homily shall begin with *the doctrine of the text—*and we will handle it negatively. Notice that our text does not say that Jesus Christ has come to compliment, to encourage or to foster the independent spirit of righteous men. It is not written that He has come to tell us that human nature is not so bad as some think it to be, or that He has come to commend those who are self-reliant and intend to fight their own way to Heaven. There is not a word of the kind and, what is more, there is not a word like it in the entire Book of God! There is no encouragement in Holy Scripture to the man who depends upon himself for salvation, or who imagines or conceives that eternal life can spring out of his own loins, or can be worked out by anything that he can do—and yet our human nature loves to do something to save itself.  
I do not know that I ever felt my blood boil so with indignation, nor my heart melt so much with pity, as when I went to see the Santa Scala, at Rome—the holy staircase up which our Lord is said to have been brought by Pilate. On those very stairs, Martin Luther was crawling on his knees, trying to find pardon for his sins, when the text came to him, “The just shall live by faith.” I stood at the foot of those marble stairs. They are very high and they are covered with wood, lest the knees of the faithful should wear them out—and this wood has been worn away three different times by the kneelers. I saw men, women and children—little children, too, and aged women—going up from step to step upon their knees to find their way to Heaven. On the first step there is a little hole in the wood so that the worshippers may kiss the marble—and they all kissed it and touched it with their foreheads. The middle and top step are favored in the same manner. It was an awful reflection to me to think that those poor creatures really believed that every step their knees knelt on there were so many days less of “purgatory” for them—that every time they went up the stairs there were so many hundreds of days of deliverance from the punishment of their sins! Oh, if they could but have understood this text, “This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners”—that men are not saved by crawling on their hands and knees, or by penances and self-inflicted misery—what a blessing it would have been to them! And how they would have turned with scorn from these infamous impostures with which priests seek to mislead and destroy the souls of men! No, the Scripture does not say that Jesus came to encourage the righteous and to help those who are their own saviors.  
Note, again, that it does not say in the text that Jesus Christ came to help sinners to save themselves. There is a Gospel preached which is very much like that—but it is not the Gospel of Christ. The poor man who was wounded on the road to Jericho was found by the Samaritan half-dead. Now the Samaritan did not say to him, “I want you to come part of the way to me in this business.” But he went where he was lying wounded and half-dead and poured the oil and wine into his wounds, bound up the gashes, took him and set him on his own beast, carried him to the inn and did not even ask him to pay the reckoning, but said to the host, “If there is anything more, I will pay you.” If there were anything more to be done for sinners, Jesus would do it, for He would never let them have a share of the work of salvation! The sinner’s business is to take the finished work of Christ, to give up all his own doings and let Him who came from Heaven to save, do the saving which He came to do! It is not ours to interfere, but to let Jesus do His own work!  
Another thought demands expression. The text does not say that Christ came to half-save sinners, intending, when He had completed half the work, to leave them to themselves. There is a motion abroad that men may be saved and yet may fall from Grace—that they may have eternal life, but it is eternal life of an odd kind, for it may die out! They may be pardoned and yet punished! They may be children of God and yet become children of the devil! Members of Christ’s body and yet be cut off and joined to Satan! Blessed be God, it is not so written in this precious Book! Jesus does not begin the saving work and leave it unfinished! When He once puts His hand to it, He will go through with it! His wonderful salvation shall be completed—none shall say that He began, but was not able to finish. Glory be to His name, Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners from top to bottom! He will be the Alpha and the Omega, He will be the beginning and the end to all who trust Him!  
One other reflection here. Christ, the real Savior, came into the world to save real sinners. When Luther was under a bitter sense of sin, he said, “Oh, but my guilt is so great I cannot believe that Christ can save me!” But one who was helping him much said to him, “If you were only the semblance of a sinner, then Christ would only be the semblance of a Savior. But if you are a real sinner, then you should rejoice that a real Savior has come to save you.” If we meet with a man who says, “Yes, I am a sinner, I know I am a sinner, but I do not know that I ever did much amiss. I have always been honest and correct,” such a person has a name to be a sinner and no more. He is a sham sinner and a sham savior would suit him well. But for another who confesses that he has been a grievous transgressor, there is a real Savior. Rejoice, O you guilty ones, that the Christ of God, Himself, really came, with real blood and presented a real Atonement to take away real sins, such as theft, drunkenness, swearing, uncleanness, Sabbath-breaking, lying, murder and things I need not mention lest the cheek of modesty should blush! Even these can be blotted out by the real Savior who has come to save the chief of sinners from suffering what is due to their sins! Oh, that we could ring this great Gospel bell till the hills and valleys were filled with its music! May the Lord open men’s ears and hearts that those who hear the glad tidings may accept the Savior who has come to save them!  
My little sermon has dealt with the doctrine of the text, now it must treat of *the differences from the text* which are these. First, it is a great and a difficult thing to save a sinner, for the Son of God must come into the world to do it. It could not have been accomplished by any other except Jesus Christ—He Himself must leave the Throne of Heaven for the manger of earth and lay aside His Glories to suffer, bleed and die. If soulsaving is so great and difficult a work, let the Lord Jesus have all the Glory of it now that it is accomplished! Let us never put the crown on the wrong head, or neglect to honor the Lord who bought us so dearly. Unto the Lamb of God be honor and Glory, forever and ever! Amen.  
And next, it must be a good thing to save a sinner, since Jesus would not have come from Heaven to earth on an ill errand. It must be a great blessing to a sinner to be saved. Dear Brothers and Sisters, this ought to lead all of us to consecrate ourselves to be willing instruments in the hand of Christ in endeavoring to rescue the fallen. That work which filled the Savior’s heart and hands is noble work for us. It were worth living for and worth dying for to be the instruments in the Spirit’s hands of bringing souls into a state of Grace! Think much of the blessed service which Jesus allots you, though it is but to teach an infant class in the Sunday school, or a few poor men and women whom you visit from house to house, or a group of sorry idlers at a local lodging house—mind not the degradation of the people, for to save them from sin is a work which God, Himself, did not disdain to undertake.  
Another inference I draw is that if Jesus came from Heaven to earth to save sinners, depend upon it, He can do it. If He has come into the world and bled and died to be a Savior, He can do it. The price He paid is enough to redeem us—the blood He shed suffices to cleanse us. If there is any man here who feels himself very foul and filthy, let him look up to Christ at the right hand of the Father and dare to say in his soul, “He can save even me. He is exalted on high to give repentance and remission of sins and He is able to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by Him. He must be able to save me.” O Soul, if you can say that, and venture your soul on it, there is no risk in it. Your faith shall save you and you may go in peace, for he who can rely upon Christ shall not find the Savior fail the faith which He, Himself, has worked in the soul!  
These are the inferences, then, which I gather from the text. And I shall close by *an enquiry*, which my text very naturally raises in my mind, and suggests to you. If Jesus came to save sinners, has He saved *me?* Has He saved*you?*  
Has He saved *me?*I dare not speak with any hesitation here—I *know* He has! Many years ago, I understood by faith the plan of salvation. Hearing it simply preached, I looked to Jesus and lived, and I am looking to Him now. I *know* His Word is true and I *am* saved! My evidence that I am saved does not lie in the fact that I preach, or that I do this or that. All my hope lies in this—that Jesus Christ came to save sinners. I am a sinner, I trust Him, He came to save me, I am saved. I live habitually in the enjoyment of this blessed fact and it is long since I have doubted the truth of it, for I have His own Word to sustain my faith.  
Now, Beloved, can *you*say, if not positively, yet with some measure of confidence, “Yes”—  
***“All my trust on Him is stayed,  
All my help from Him I bring”?***

Ah, then, you are favored, you are very favored. Be happy, for God has highly blessed you. You ought to be as merry as the days are long in June! A man who can say, “Christ has saved me,” has bells enough inside his heart to ring marriage peals forever! Oh, be glad, be very glad, for you have the best inheritance in the world and if temporal matters are not quite as you would wish them to be, do not become discontented, but solace yourself with the fact that the Lord has saved you with a great salvation!

But are you compelled to answer, “No, I do not think that Christ has saved me”? Then I will ask you another question—May it not be, before this day is finished, that you shall be able to say, “He has saved me”? Look at the matter. It is written that He came to save sinners. Is that your name or not? Spell it over. Are you a sinner? I have distinguished between a sham sinner and a real sinner. Do you confess that you are guilty? Then Jesus came to save such as you are. There is a passage of Scripture which says, “He that believes on Him is not condemned.” You know what to believe is—it is to trust, to rely upon. Now Soul, if you rely upon Christ Jesus, sinner as you are, you are a saved sinner. If you do lean on Him, you are this moment saved, at this instant forgiven!

“Oh, but I, I ” ah, you want to crawl up that Roman staircase, do you? That is what you want, you are anxious to go up and down those steps. “No,” you say, “I am not quite as foolish as that.” But, indeed, if you are trying to be saved by your own works, you are quite as foolish! You make a Pilate’s staircase for yourself and toil up and down its steps. “Oh but, Sir,” you say, “I must *be*something, I must *feel*something.” Yes, yes, it is that staircase again, always that staircase! Now the Gospel is not that staircase, nor yet your feelings, nor yet your works—its voice is, “He that believes on Him is not condemned.” “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved!” You smile at the folly of Romanists and yet Popery, in some form or other, is the natural religion of every unconverted man! We all want to do the crawling and penance in some shape or another. We are so proud that we will not accept Heaven for nothing. We want to pay, or do something or other, forgetting that, “if a man would give all the substance of his house for love, it would utterly be contemned.” The one only plan of salvation is “Believe and live”— trust, rest, depend upon, rely upon Jesus!

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:**2Ch 33:1-19***.***

**Verses 1, 2.***Manasseh*[Manasseh is the subject of the following sermons by Mr. Spurgeon—#105, Volume 2—MANASSEH; #2378, Volume 40—PARDON FOR THE GREATEST GUILT and #2385, Volume 40—ANOTHER LESSON FROM MANASSEH’S LIFE—Read/download the entire sermons, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.]*was twelve years old when he*

*began to reign, and he reigned fifty and five years in Jerusalem: but did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord.*Yet who could have had a better father than Manasseh had? He was given to Hezekiah during those 15 years which God graciously added to that good king’s life. Manasseh was, therefore, doubtless carefully trained and looked upon as being one who would maintain God’s worship and the honor of his father’s name. But Grace does not run in the blood—and the best of parents may have the worst of children. Thus Manasseh, though he was the son of Hezekiah, “did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord.”

**2.***Like unto the abominations of the heathen, whom the LORD had cast out before the children of Israel.*It often happens that when the sons of good men become bad, they are among the worst of men. They who pervert a good example generally run headlong to destruction.

**3.***For he built again the high places which Hezekiah, his father, had broken down, and he reared up altars for Baalim, and made groves, and worshipped all the hosts of heaven, and served them.*One form of idolatry was not enough for him—he must have all forms of it, even rearing altars to Baal and making the stars also to be his gods!

**4.***Also he built altars in the house of the LORD, whereof the LORD had said, In Jerusalem shall My name be forever.*Manasseh was worse than an ordinary idolater, for he polluted the very place which was dedicated to the service of the only living and true God!

**5, 6.***And he built altars for all the hosts of heaven in the two courts of the house of the LORD. And he caused his children to pass through the fire in the valley of the son of Hinnom.* Perhaps he gave some of them actually to be burned in honor of his false gods. But if not, some of his children were made to pass through the fire and were thus dedicated to the idol deities.

**6.***Also he observed times, and used enchantments, and used witchcraft, and dealt with a familiar spirit, and with wizards: he worked much evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke Him to anger.*You cannot imagine, I think, a worse character than this Manasseh was! He seems to have raked the foulest kennels of superstition to find all manner of abominations. Like false-hearted Saul, he had dealings with a familiar spirit. He had entered into a covenant with Satan himself, and made a league with Hell, and yet, marvel of Grace, this very Manasseh was saved and is now singing the new song before the Throne of God in Glory!

**7-9.***And he set a carved image, the idol which he had made, in the house of God, of which God had said to David and to Solomon, his son, In this house, and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen before all the tribes of Israel, will I put My name forever: neither will I anymore remove the foot of Israel from out of the land which I have appointed for your fathers; so that they will take heed to do all that I have commanded them, according to the whole Law and the statutes and the ordinances by the hand of Moses. So Manasseh made Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to err, and to do worse than the heathen, whom the LORD had destroyed before the children of Israel.*You see, dear Friends, that he was not only a monster in iniquity, himself, but he led a whole nation astray! Some people who, under the gracious rule of his father, Hezekiah, had kept the Passover in so joyous a manner, now, under this false son of so good a father, turned aside.

**10.***And the LORD spoke to Manasseh, and to his people: but they would not hearken.*This was all that was necessary to fill up the measure of his guilt. He and his people were warned of God, but they would not listen.

**11.***Therefore—*Since words were not sufficient, and God intended to save him, he came to blows! “Therefore”—  
**11.***The LORD brought upon them the captains of the host of the king of Assyria, which took Manasseh among the thorns, and bound him with fetters, and carried him to Babylon.* They very likely chastened him with thorns, for the kings of Babylon were very cruel. And it may be that when his back was lacerated by thorny scourges, he was put in prison with heavy fetters upon him.  
**12, 13.***And when he was in affliction, he besought the LORD his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers, and prayed unto Him: and He was entreated of him, and heard his supplication, and brought him again to Jerusalem into his kingdom. Then Manasseh knew that the LORD, He was God.* There surely can be no person in this assembly who can say that he has sinned worse than Manasseh did. He seems to have gone as far as any human being could go and yet, you see, when he humbled himself before the Lord and lifted up his heart in supplication, God forgave his sin, and restored him to his former position in Jerusalem.  
**14.***Now after this he built a wall outside the city of David, on the west side of Gihon in the valley, even to the entering in at the fish gate, and compassed about Ophel, and raised it up a very great height, and put captains of war in all the fenced cities of Judah.* This is not of very much importance, but what else did he do?

**16.***And he took away the strange gods.* When Divine Grace comes into any man’s heart, there is sure to be a change in his actions. Manasseh “took away the strange gods.”

**16.***And the idol out of the house of the LORD, and all the altars that he had built in the mount of the house of the LORD, and in Jerusalem, and cast them out of the city.* Sins which were before so pleasing to him, are now abominations in his sight—and he flings them over the city wall like unclean things! In the very valley of the Son of Hinnom where he had dedicated his sons to idols, he now consumes his idol gods as foul and offensive things, to be cast away with all the refuse of the city!

**16.***And he repaired the altar of the LORD, and sacrificed thereon peace offerings and thank offerings, and commanded Judah to serve the LORD God of Israel.*It was not possible for him to undo all the evil which he had worked, as he soon found out.

**17.***Nevertheless the people did sacrifice still in the high places, yet unto the lord their God only.* The work of reformation is slow—you can lead men to sin as rapidly as you like, that is downhill work—but to get them to toil with you uphill toward the right is not so easy.

**18, 19.***Now the rest of the acts of Manasseh, and his prayer unto his God and the words of the Seers that spoke to him in the name of the LORD God of Israel, behold, they are written in the book of the kings of Israel. His prayer also, and how God was entreated of him, and all his sins, and his trespass, and the places wherein he built high places, and set up groves and engraved images before he was humbled; behold, they are written among the sayings of the Seers.*So we must remember that all the deeds that we have done, both good and evil, are written in God’s Book of Remembrance.

—Adapted from *The C. H. Spurgeon Collection,* Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307  
**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.** Sermon #530 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

THE CHIEF OF SINNERS  
NO. 530

**A SERMON DELIVERED  
*BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“Sinners; of whom I am chief.”***1Ti 1:15***.***

WHO among all the Scriptural writers can compare with Paul in the fullness of his testimony to the Grace of God? Upon the Doctrines of Grace, upon the experience of Divine Grace, upon everything that has to do with the exceeding abundant Grace of God through our Lord Jesus Christ, Paul is the mighty master and the great teacher. If it were right to look at him from an exclusively human point of view and speak of his genius rather than his inspiration, I might say of him that so mighty, so clear, so eloquent a teacher of the Truth of God has never existed since the days of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Though Augustine was a particularly bright star and Calvin in after generations rivaled, if he did not even excel Augustine, Paul far excels both in the brilliance with which he exhibits every quality of Grace and Grace in everything that has a good quality. Or, to use another figure, Paul towers aloft above them all in the great mountain range, lofty though full many of their summits are. One reason for his clearness about Divine Grace was that he was himself a very pattern and model of its power. In him God had expressly, as much as in any other man, and perhaps more, shown forth the super-abundant power of His love in passing by transgression, iniquity and sin—and in making the very man who had been a ringleader of mischief, to become the leader of the hosts of the Lord.

Paul calls himself in our text the chief of sinners. It is possible that he literally exceeded every other sinner, dared more and sunk deeper in crime than any of his fellows among the sons of men. If so, let no man that lives despair of mercy. If the gate of Heaven is wide enough for the chief of sinners to go through, then there must in that respect be room enough for those who must be less than the chief, who, though very great, yet cannot be quite so great as he. I say, though I hardly think so, that it is just possible that, taking certain circumstances into consideration, Paul really *was* in such sense the very chief of sinners. And yet I hardly think so, because he himself, in another place, calls himself less than the least of all saints, which was the modest apprehension of one who in another place affirmed that he was not a whit behind the very chief of the Apostles.

Might it not, then, rather have been that his deep view of his own sinfulness and his clear sense of his guilt made him consider himself to be the chief of sinners, though, probably, there have been tens of thousands even greater than he? Tonight my business is *to find out the chiefs of sinners and endeavor to describe them*. And then, *to enquire how it is that so often the very chiefs of sinners are saved*.

**I.** First, dear Friends, as Saul hunted out Believers, I have, tonight, TO TRY AND HUNT OUT THE CHIEFS OF SINNERS. Now who are they? They come under various characters and may be classified in different lists. We will begin with *those who directly oppose themselves to God and to His Christ*. These are chiefs among sinners. Paul did join their ranks. He set himself determinately against the name of Christ and thought with himself that he ought to do very much against that name.

Now those who directly attack the Person of God come, first, under the head of *blasphemers*. Paul says he was such. He had, no doubt, used expressions quite as strong as those sometimes used by unbelieving Jews when they are much irritated by Christians. He had said some foul things about the *Impostor crucified* upon Mount Calvary—things, perhaps, more vile than he ever cared to remember—much less to repeat. He had been exceedingly mad, and when men are mad they say exceedingly mad things. He had been a blasphemer, and a blasphemer challenges the vengeance of the Almighty with no common effrontery.

Have I one here whose mouth is foul with oaths? Has there strayed into this House of Prayer tonight one who has cursed God and dared in his angry moments to lift his puny hand of rebellion and curse the Most High God? Have I the misfortune—no, I will not call it so—have I the hopeful *privilege* of talking to one who has spoken against Jesus of Nazareth and who is determined to quench His religion, or to oppose it to the utmost of his power? Is it so?

Then indeed, Friend, you are one of the chief of sinners, and I am glad that you are here, that I may tell you that there is mercy even for such as you are. For “all manner of sin *and blasphemy* shall be forgiven unto men.” No matter how often or how foully you have cursed the Most High and damned yourself, He will not damn you if you will turn from the error of your ways and seek mercy through the blood of Him whom you have despised.

Others come under the same class. For instance, we must here put the *infidel*, for although his words may not take the form of blasphemy, yet the very thought that there is no God is blasphemy. And he that dares to vent that thought is not only a fool, but one of the chief of sinners. And so you have tried to stultify your conscience and to silence its monitions by pretending to believe that there is no God! You have tried to rake up the stale arguments of Tom Paine and of Voltaire and you have chuckled when one who called himself a bishop of God’s heritage dared to vent some strong things against the Book of His Divine inspiration.

You know in your heart that there is a God! Your conscience tells you that He is a just God. You expect to be punished for your sins. That start the other night when you were alone, that cold shiver when someone spoke of death—all these prove that your infidelity is not so stout and brave a thing as you have dreamed it was. A poor, craven, cowardly thing it is, that turns pale at a sickbed and flies, with coward paleness on its cheek, when once it thinks of judgment to come.

Oh, if you are here, you Atheist, you Deist, you disbeliever in Christ Jesus, you are one of the chief of sinners and I am glad you are here!—That I may tell you that a God of Love waits to embrace you and that He still declares this to be true—that He is able to save to the uttermost all them that come unto God by Him! Fling down your weapons, Man! You cannot fight the Most High! End this unequal quarrel. Have neither truce nor parley, but consider how you may be at peace with Him. The hand of His love is stretched out to accept the hand of your submission. Oh, be you reconciled to God through the death of His Son!

And here I ought to include *those who hold views derogatory of the Deity and the Person of Chris*t. Faithfulness to you, my Hearers, compels me to put down the *Socinia*n. I will not call him Unitarian, for we all hold the unity of the Godhead. Trinitarians, but Unitarians are we still. Far otherwise the Socinian and the Arian—I put them down here—the men who say that Christ is not God, that the Redeemer of the world was but the son of Mary, that He who walked the waters of the deep, chained the winds, cast out evil spirits and made even Hades startle with His voice when the soul of Lazarus came back—that He was but a Prophet, a creature, a mere man!

Surely, Sir, you are one of the chief of sinners to have talked thus of Him who is “very God of very God,” the express image of His Father’s Person! But even to you is Jesus gracious, and He bids you still believe in Him. You shall bow the knee to Him one day and worship Him, for, “at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that He is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” Bow your knee, NOW, and kiss the Son lest He be angry and you perish from the way when His wrath is kindled but a little. He bids you come to Him, then will He blot out your sins like a cloud and like a thick cloud your iniquities. The chiefs of sinners, we are sure, are found among those who directly attack the Person of Jehovah’s Christ, yet even to these is the Gospel of salvation sent.

Another group of princes and peers in the realm of evil may be described as *those who attack Christ’s people and who seek to pervert them from the right way.* This sin pressed heavily upon the conscience of Paul. He had not only put them in prison, which was bad enough, but he had taken the saints into the synagogue and probably they had been beaten before the assembly and compelled to blaspheme. You, perhaps, know what that means—compel them to blaspheme. The Roman way of doing it was to say, “Curse Christ.” Often did the Roman Emperor command the martyrs to curse Christ.

And you remember Polycarp’s answer?—“How can I curse Him? Sixty years have I known Him. He never did me a displeasure and I cannot and I will not curse Him.” Then the whip was applied, or the hand was held over burning coals, or the flesh was pinched with hot irons. And then the question was put again—“Will you curse Christ now?” Paul says that he, though probably using milder means, compelled the professors of Christ’s faith to blaspheme. And there may be some such here—the husband who persecutes his wife for Christ’s sake. The father who charges his child, upon his obedience, never to go to the sanctuary of the Lord again.

The master who plagues his servant, mocks and jeers and can never be content except when he is saying hard things against him. Have I not many here who still practice the device of cruel mocking? You abhor Christ and His people. You fight against God in His little ones. Beware! Beware! For this is a high sin! Nothing puts a man on his mettle like meddling with his children, “Touch me, if you will,” the father says, “if you are a man, smite me if you dare.” But touch his children, and the blood is in his cheeks and the mettle is up and there is no knowing what a man will do when he sees the offspring of his own heart ill-treated.

So God will avenge His own elect that cry day and night unto Him, though He bears long with them. To you who thus rank with the chiefs of sinners, I say that Paul the persecutor “obtained mercy,” and so may you! “This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom” *persecutors* rank among the chief.

There is another group whom you will all allow to be of the chiefs of sinners— *those who have sinned foully in the world’s esteem—*violating the instincts of nature and outraging the common sense of morality and decency. It scarcely needs that I should mention the harlot that infests the streets and pollutes society. Or that worse wretch, the whoremonger, who first leads her astray. I speak plain words, such as I find in Scripture. Such God shall judge when He comes at the last day, for this temptation is a deep ditch and the abhorred of the Lord shall fall into it. This crying sin of our land needs to be sternly rebuked. Other sins are without the body, but this pollutes both body and soul and often sends down to generations yet unborn a horrid curse—at the very thought of which the soul is sick!

Of all sins, young man, young woman, take care that you stand aloof from this! Pass not by the house of the strange woman if you love your life, for her gates lead down to death, even to the chambers of the damned! Yet, glory be to Divine Grace! There is mercy, mercy for such—and multitudes of these chiefs of sinners have become as the very brightest stars in Heaven—snatched by the strong arm of Jesus from the miry clay and out of that horrible pit. They are now clothed and in their right mind, they have gone to sit at the feet of Jesus, to sing of redeeming love.

There was that Mary, that Mary whom Jesus had forgiven. Well might she love much! And many a loving spirit do I know, and there are some very dear to God’s Church here, who love their Lord, and often shame some of us who stand more prominent than they who once drank deep of that bitter cup and once went to the very depths of that sin. Publish it in your streets! Tell it wherever you meet with the most loathsome and most defiled! Jesus is able to save to the uttermost! He was the friend of publicans and sinners. “This man receives sinners,” is Jesus Christ’s motto. Other men reject the sinner. They turn aside from her—woe unto her if she come between the wind and their nobility. But “*this Man* receives sinners”—receives them to His heart and to His bosom—to His Kingdom and to His Throne. You chiefs of sinners, rejoice that if you believe in Jesus there is mercy for you!

And surely I may find another class of the chiefs of sinners among *those who have become not only adepts themselves, but the tutors to others in the school of evil*. Satan has a university and there are many who have fairly won their diplomas as first-class professors there. They have learned to sin with a high hand and with an outstretched arm—until they not only sin themselves—but delight in the sins of others. Have we not seen the old drunkard and how he gloats when he sees another man won to the army of the bestial! Have you not seen the eyes of some base old demon in a country village twinkle when he sees that fair-haired boy for the first time pander to the infamous customs in which he has long reveled?

Have we not known some of those foul-mouthed masters of all baseness whose very talk is enough to make a whole parish sick with the pestilence of vice—men that you had better go over hedge and ditch seventy miles than meet! There are such. You have seen them, I dare say. And, mark you, *when that being is a* woman, if anything, it is then worse! The softer sex, usually by far more apt to teach, instills the secret vice of evil and wraps it up in insidious enchantments, by reason of which many a strong man has fallen when Delilah has been his charmed tutor in sin! I may not, oh, I hope I may not have one such being within earshot now.

Yet , it is possible, amidst the thousands that this house now contains, but what there must be some of you who roll sin under your tongue as a sweet morsel and talk of it with a gusto till you tickle the fancies of others—and lead them into defilements which otherwise they never might have touched. You artfully conceal the book while putting the bait in the young man’s way and thrusting the knowledge of new vices upon those who should have shunned them! Oh, you are the chief of sinners with a vengeance, and you shall be hung up like Haman upon the lofty gallows forever if you repent not!

Yet, O Sovereign Grace! How can I tell Your heights? O sea of Love, how can I ever fathom Your depths! There is even mercy proclaimed for such. Turn, turn, why will you die, O house of Israel? Why will you perish?— ***“While the lamp holds out to burn***

***The vilest sinner may return.”***I find no exception in the offer of mercy. All are included in the invitation of welcome, “Whosoever will, let him come and take of the water of life freely.” “Though your sins are as scarlet they shall be as wool, though they are red like crimson they shall be whiter than snow.” Here is a full, a free, a perfect and a complete pardon for all your past offenses.

Though I have not yet finished the list, I would rather change the note for a minute. I have another class of the chiefs of sinners to find out. I, myself, belong to them, and I therefore speak with feeling. In this section we include *those who have had much light and yet have sinned against it. They who have been taught better, who have had a knowledge of the way of the Truth of God and yet have turned aside to crooked paths*. To have been nursed upon the lap of piety and dandled upon the knee of Christian affection is no small privilege. To be lighted to one’s cradle by the lamps of the sanctuary, and to be hushed to sleep with a lullaby in which the name of Jesus comes as a sweet refrain—this involves an awful responsibility.

No man can go to Hell over a mother’s tears without accumulated vengeance. No son can rebel against a father’s affectionate and tearful admonitions without perishing ten times more frightfully than as if he had never been thus privileged. Ah, my Hearers, alas, alas, for the hardness of your hearts—there are many such here now. I would charitably suppose that very few of you belong to the other classes I have been speaking of, but the great mass of you who are unconverted belong to this class. Do you remember young Man, how your mother put her arms around your neck and wooed you to turn to Christ?

Do you remember that little Bible when you first went to school and that verse she inscribed as a motto—she watered it with her tears as she wrote it. Do you recollect those letters she addressed to you? She is now in Heaven, is she? Then let them be the more sacred to your recollection. And do you remember that Sunday school teacher? Was he not a father to you? Was not that excellent woman who used to entreat you to turn from the error of your ways a very mother to you in Israel? Do you not remember, young Woman, some of you, the earnest exhortations that my beloved Sister, Mrs. Bartlett, has addressed to you?

If ever there was a woman that could, under God, move the heart and soul, she is that woman. And yet, there are some of you that listen to her voice and yet you are unconverted! You have the light shining upon your eyes and yet they are sightless still! You live in the land of mercy, where its bell summons you to come to its assembly of Divine Grace, but you will still not come! You have the light, but you shut your eyes against it! Remember, young Man, young Woman, when you sin you sin with seven-fold atrocity, because you know better! No—seventy sins are rolled into one in your sin of daring deliberate willfulness.

Within that egg of sin there sleeps the seed of your greater damnation because you know the right and yet you choose the evil. Have I not now the privilege of speaking to some whose old familiar associations are awakened up by these feeble glances at your life story? Do you not feel just now as if you were kneeling down again in that little room and heard the native accents of your mother’s prayer, while your lips hardly refrain from repeating afresh the words of your own prayer which she taught your lips to frame before she put you to your rest? Do you not remember it? And do you not remember sometimes when your conscience was awakened and your heart was almost broken, and your soul said, “I could almost be a Christian,” but you excused yourself with a frivolous delay—“Go your way for this time. When I have a more convenient season I will send for you”?

But, alas, that *convenient season* has never yet come. And your conscience grows seared. Drugged with the opiates of sin, you grow less and less tender of the affectionate appeal. Woe will be the day of your visitation, for it shall be cloudy indeed, unless you turn at the voice of reproof. But even to you, O chief of sinners, is the word of this salvation sent.

*There are those, too, who sit under an earnest ministry and yet go on in sin—* they surely belong to the class of chief sinners. O, my Hearers, how I would to God that I could be as earnest with you as I want to be! The Lord knows there are times when I am not in the pulpit, when I feel that I could weep you to a Savior. But sometimes when standing here, the influence of this mighty throng seems rather to distract me than to bring my whole soul into play. And yet, the Lord knows how earnestly I long for you in the heart of the Lord Jesus Christ. I have not shunned to declare unto you the whole counsel of God as far as I have known it. I know I have failed in knowledge, but never in honesty.

Yet I know there are some of you who come here and yet you live in sin. The world says, “So-and-So goes to Spurgeon’s Tabernacle,” and they expect you to be better for going there. And yet they say, “Ah, how they drink!” or, “Hear how they will swear!” Where are you? You used to have your shop open on the Sunday morning, but it is shut now. I am glad you have got as far as that. Still, let me tell you, you only compound your sin and make a covenant with Hell, if you outwardly pay respect to the Sabbath and secretly indulge in other profanities. Drunkenness may destroy you without Sabbath-breaking. It is not giving up *one* sin, it is giving up the *whole*.

It is not the barter of one sin for another to quiet your conscience, which will satisfy justice or rescue you from destruction. Man, there must be a divorce between you and your sins! Not a mere separation for a season, but a clear divorce. Cut off the right arm! Pluck out the right eye and cast them from you, or else you cannot enter into eternal life. Are there not some of you who have for years listened to my ministry and yet you are none the better? And some of you are rather the worse, I fear. You are getting Gospel-hardened by it all.

Well, by God’s Grace, there is mercy for you, too! You are the chief of sinners, but the red flag is not run up yet— the white flag still floats mast-high—the flag of invitation—the flag of love—the flag of mercy. Come to it! Come to Jesus now. You may never have another invitation. Soon may this tongue be cold in death, or your ears may be deaf forever, like clay-cold marble. Turn you, at this rebuke, for if after being often reproved, you harden your necks, you shall suddenly be destroyed and that without remedy. To you, even to the chief of sinners, is the word of this salvation sent!

Drawing the bow at a venture, there is another class I would single out— *those who are gifted from their childhood with a tender conscience*. There are men who seem to be born without a conscience. So hard and dull of impression are they that if they have any faculty of distinguishing between good and evil, it is as though they had eyes and saw not, and ears but they hear not. And does it ever speak, the voice is so weak, you can never hear it. But there are those, on the other hand, who have naturally a quick understanding, a delicate sensitiveness, a ready perception of right and wrong, a strong and vigorous conscience. They never do sin without being aware of what they are doing and they are troubled and pestered, as they say, about it.

They cannot sleep at night after they have been committing any serious breach of propriety. Even when they are walking the streets, or when they are busy, they are quickly startled at the recoil of their own transgressions. Oftentimes there is a certain uneasiness and fretfulness which comes over them because they are conscious that they are not pursuing the right course. Now, if you are gifted with this tender conscience and yet you constantly violate it and directly act in the face of your own convictions, you are the chief of sinners. But still, still Paul, the chief of sinners, found mercy—and so may you!

And again—if you have had warning in sickness and especially if on your sick bed you have vowed unto the Lord that you would turn to Him, then you are covenant-breakers, *you that violate vows made to the Most High—*you must also be put among the first and foremost of transgressors. When the cholera was here some nine years ago, you vowed that if God would spare you, things should be different. He did spare you, but things are no better now than they were before. When the fever prostrated you, what promises you made and where are they now? You have lied unto the Eternal God! Is it little for you that you should have promised and not have paid—have vowed unto Him and not performed? Now, Sinner, you are a liar, as well as anything besides. You are a rogue, a dishonest one against God, with Whom the compact was made. But the invitation is still freely tendered unto you—come unto the Lord Jesus Christ and believe in Him—and you shall be made whole.

The chiefs of sinners comprises so numerous a body. I believe everyone of us must be included in the list in some shape or other. I know this—if ever you and I are saved—if God shall give us very great mercy, we shall feel that we were the greatest sinners. When Paul saw how kindly his Master treated him, it seemed to break his heart—“What? Did I ever curse that Christ who has blessed me? He that is so rich in loving kindness, did I ever spurn Him?” Verily, now, I think I have had the blackest sight of sin when I have had the brightest sight of mercy. When my dear Lord and Master has privileged me, by allowing me to come near Him in prayer, and I have felt His love shed abroad in my heart—then it is that I have felt as if I could bring imprecations upon myself for ever having been a traitor to Him.

What? Could I spit in Your face, my Redeemer and my Lord? Could I ever crown Your head with thorns, which now it shall be my life’s task to crown with jewels? What? Did You love me so? Did You forgive me so and could I ever speak against You? It is great mercy that sets forth our great sin, for we only come to reckon ourselves the chief of sinners when we see the great love of God. So then, without amplifying any longer, I will put the invitation thus—whoever among you have sinned against the Most High, you are all on a level, and the invitation of mercy is put to you, each and all, and this is the Gospel—“He that believes and is baptized shall be saved, he that believes not shall be damned.” May you be led to believe and to profess your faith according to God’s way.

II. Well, now, but a few minutes remain to me and I will endeavor to be brief while I try to answer the question, WHY ARE THESE WHO ARE PROVERBIALLY THE CHIEF OF SINNERS ARE VERY FREQUENTLY SAVED?   
One reason is *to illustrate Divine Sovereignty*. There is no jewel of His crown of which God is more jealous than His Sovereignty. “I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.” Now, when He saves the harlot, when He calls the persecutor by Sovereign Grace, then all men see that this is the finger of God and that He dispenses His love and kindness according to the purposes of His own absolute and uncontrollable will. He chooses the chief of sinners that He may show to all men that He will take the base things of the world and the things which are not, and things which are despised, to bring to nothing the things that are—that no flesh may glory in His Presence.  
Another reason is *that He may show His great power*. Oh, how Hell is made angry when some great champion falls! When their Goliaths are brought down, how the Philistines take to their heels! How Heaven rings with songs when some chief of sinners becomes a trophy of the Divine power! And how men talk, with glib tongues, of the great and mighty deeds of God, when the drunkard and the swearer and the prostitute are washed and made saints! What a noise it made at Elstow, when they said at the public-house on the green—“You know John Bunyan?” “Oh, yes, we know him! You mean the fellow that was always first at a game of tip-cat—he that could always drink the longest! Oh, yes, we know *him*.”   
“Well, do you know, he was preaching over at Bedford yesterday.” “What?” says one, “preaching at Bedford? I would as soon have thought of the devil preaching as John Bunyan! What a wonderful thing the Gospel must be, to change such a man as that!” And yet it was true! John Bunyan, who frequented the ale-house, who knew more about the county jail and more about the Celestial City that is on the other side the flood than most men of his times. It shows the power and the Sovereignty of God when such men are saved.   
And next, *how it shows His Grace!* When I have sometimes sat to see enquirers I have seen a number come in one after the other that have been born and brought up in the midst of piety and I have blessed God for them. But, by-and-by there has come in one whose tale has been terrible to tell and it was not easily told—except with many sighs and sobs and tears. But when it was disclosed, there have sat *two* weeping together—I scarcely know which wept more—he who wept because of Divine Grace illustrated *in* him or the other because he saw in another the Divine Grace which he had tasted for *himself*.   
Oh, when great sinners tell out their tales, they are so straightforward, so explicit! There is no muddle about it, no questions about when they were converted, or how, but there they are. They say—“Ah, Sir, it must be Divine! Such a change has been worked in me that nothing could have thus turned the lion to a lamb, the raven to a dove, but the Grace of God.” In great sinners, then, the Grace of God is made conspicuous.   
Again—great sinners are very frequently called by God *for the purpose of attracting others*. You know that when some great transgressor finds mercy, straightway many hearts say—“Ah, then there is mercy for *me*.” I am glad, I am very glad that there was a Manasseh, that there was David, that there was a Saul of Tarsus, and I am glad they are in the Bible. The wicked cut the stories out and they laugh at us and say, “*These* are your saints?” Ah, we can bear that, while we can say—“No, this is what they were by nature, but they were saved, for all that, by the distinguishing Grace of God, who saves men through faith and not by their works.”   
Now, I believe that that case of David has been a solace to thousands, if not to millions. The hurt he did in his lifetime was certainly very great—but the incalculable benefit which has flown to the universal Church from the penitential Psalms—puts altogether into the shade the damage which the fall of David did to the Church in his own time. Not that there is less shame to the sinner, but that there is more glory to the Savior where sin abounded in the first instance and Divine Grace did much more abound in the sequel. We can well bear this spot, for the sake of the light which comes from the sun.   
Sinners! All of you! If you would put yourselves among the little ones, if your lives have never been grossly vile (I am glad if they have not)—let the fact that the great sinner enters and is washed, attract you. I have heard it said of the elephant, that sometimes before he crosses a bridge he puts his trunk and perhaps one foot, upon it. He wants to know if it is quite safe, for he is not going to trust his bulky body to things that were built only for horses and men. Well, after he has tried it, if he finds it strong enough, away he goes and his great carcass is carried right across the stream.   
Now, suppose you and I sat on the other side and said we were afraid the bridge would not bear us! Why, how absurd our unbelief would be! So when you see a great elephantine sinner, like the Apostle Paul, go lumbering over the bridge of mercy and not a timber creaks and the bridge does not even strain under the load—why then, methinks you may come rushing in a crowd and say—“It will bear us, if it will bear *him*—it will carry us across, if it can take the chief of sinners to Heaven!”   
And then, dear Friends, the saving of the chiefs of sinners is useful, *because, when they are saved they generally make the most fiery zealots against sin*. Have we not a proverb that, “The burnt child dreads the fire”? I noticed my host, on one preaching excursion, particularly anxious about my candle. Now, as everybody ought to know how careful I am, I was a little surprised and I put the question to him why he should be so wonderfully particular. “I had my house burned down once, Sir,” said he. That explained it all. No man is so much afraid of fire as he, and they who have been in sin and know the mischief of it, protest against it the most loudly.   
They can speak experimentally. They talk of what they have tasted and handled to their own smart and ruin! Oh, what revenge there seems to be in the Apostle’s heart against his sin! He seems to bring out the great battle-axes and weapons of war against it—and wherever he can see sin he smites right and left—anywhere. Persecution, death, martyrdom—all these are nothing to him if he can but get a blow at sin. He always seems to have the gun charged to the muzzle and no devil comes in his way but what he has a shot at him. There are no ramparts or hellish bulwarks but what Paul thinks he must take them, whether they are in Asia, or Italy, or Spain. This great knight-errant of the Cross is everywhere the great antagonist of sin, and so must those always be who are saved out of great iniquity.   
And then, again, *they always make the most zealous saints*. I have said and it will come true, though I am no prophet nor the son of a prophet—I have said that the Lord will deliver this city and deliver this age, not by ministers from colleges—not by the sons of gentlemen or the inheritors of titles. But He will yet shake London and bring about a religious revival with the men who will come from St. Giles’s and from White Chapel—from the slums, and from the dens and kens of infamy. God will take such men by-and-by, and He is beginning to work it already.   
There are one or two names that will come to your recollection—illustrious names in connection with the preaching in theatres—God will raise up more such and you shall see that when human wisdom and creature devices have done their utmost to make the Church of God the dull lethargic thing it now is, God, in the plenitude of His might will raise up some who have tasted that He is gracious and have drunk deeply of the cup of His love that will turn the world upside down. It is all an idle and a wicked tale that our places of worship in the City of London cannot be supported. I see them building new places in the suburbs and leaving the City itself destitute of the means of Divine Grace.   
Were the right men found, the Churches in the City of London might be as crowded as those in the suburbs. Only put into their pulpits men who know the guilt of sin and who know that Gospel in which is revealed the righteousness of God—men who know and preach Christ—then the effect would be palpable. Give us the men who do not talk as botanists might do upon botany, when they had not seen a flower, or as some might speak of various lands who have never traveled a league. But give us men who know experimentally those things that they labor to teach and let their tongues be set on fire of the Holy Spirit, and you shall then see London as full of the glory of the Lord as was Jerusalem of old.   
May this come to pass! May it begin to come to pass *tonight*! May the Lord find out, as He moves among this mass, some stray, strange being that has given himself up to desperation, to work mischief with both his hands—and may He say to him tonight, “I have need of you and I will have you.” Oh, mighty Grace, do it tonight! He will have you, Man! Your will must be subdued. Your pride must come down. That proud temper of yours shall yield. “I am your Master. I made you. I bought you with My blood, and do you think I will lose you? I am mighty to save, do you think that you can overcome Me? I came forth on purpose to redeem you! Saul, Saul, why do you persecute Me?” O that the Lord would speak thus personally to some individual now!   
And now I have done when I have just put this before you. My Hearers, here is life and death. If you despise Christ, there is death for you. If you turn aside from the love and mercy which streams from the wounds of Jesus, the angry God shall find you in your sin and cut you in pieces and there is none that can deliver you. If you go on in your sin, you will soon meet with death. But a few Sundays ago we had to mark how sudden death thinned our ranks. Sometimes it is a working man. There was one, you know, some weeks ago, who lost his life in building the great bridge at Blackfriars, who was often a hearer here.   
There is scarcely a day passes but we hear of someone gone out of this great assembly. We are going one after another. The pastor may go soon, but perhaps before he goes he may see many of you carried to your graves—he cannot tell. But, oh, why will you remain without God and without Christ? If you had a lease of your lives you might go on in sin until the lease was out. But even then you would be foolish to be enemies to God and enemies to yourselves so long. But as you may die today, God help you to repent tonight.   
On the other hand, I set mercy before you—no man can say he has not been invited—no soul can say that I did not set the gate open wide enough! You are without excuse in the Day of Judgment. When the trumpet peals through Heaven and earth and awakes the slumbering dead—when Christ shall come in the clouds to judge the earth, I must give an account of the Gospel I have preached to you tonight. I would to God I could preach it better, but I cannot. You know what it is. You are without excuse. You have been invited. You have been entreated.   
You have been bid to come to the marriage supper. All things are ready. The oxen and the fatlings are killed—come to the supper. You that are in the highways and hedges, we would compel you to come in, that God’s House may be filled. Come. “The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that hears say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whoever will, let him take the water of life freely.”   
But if you come not, I must be a swift witness against you at the last. I am clear of your blood. I am clear of the blood of you all. God save you, for Christ’s sake. Amen.

A GREAT GOSPEL FOR GREAT SINNERS  
NO. 1837

**A SERMON INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S-DAY, MAY 3, 1885, *DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON JUNE 2, 1884.**

***“This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief. However, for this reason I obtained mercy, that in me, first, Jesus Christ might show forth all long-suffering, as a pattern to those who are going to believe on Him to life everlasting. Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.”*** 1Ti 1:15-17***.***

WHEN Paul wrote this ever-memorable text, “This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners,” he placed it in connection with himself. I would have you carefully notice the context. Twelfth verse—“I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has enabled me, for that He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry; who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. And the Grace of our Lord was exceedingly abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.” You see, the Apostle had spoken of himself and then it was that the Holy Spirit put it into his mind to write of the glorious salvation of which he was so notable a subject! Truly it was a seasonable and suggestive connection in which to place this glorious Gospel text. What he preached to others was to be seen in himself.

When I read to you the story of Saul’s conversion, suppose I had finished it by making the remark, “This is a faithful saying, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners”? You would all have said, “That is true and it is a natural inference from the narrative.” Such a remark would have served as the moral of the whole story! It is an easy and a simple inference, from such a conversion, that Christ Jesus must have come into the world to save sinners. See, then, why Paul uttered it in this particular place. He could not help bringing his own case forward, but when he *did* bring it forward, it was to add emphasis to this declaration that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners. It is my conviction that our Lord, in infinite wisdom, intends that His ministers should, themselves, be proofs of the doctrines which they teach. If a young man, a very young man, stands up to tell you of the experience of an aged Christian, you say at once, “That may be very true, but *you* cannot prove it, for you are not an aged person yourself.”

If one who has been privileged, in the Providence of God, to enjoy the comforts of life, stands up to preach upon the consolations of the Spirit in poverty, you say, “Yes, that is very true, but *you* cannot speak from experience yourself.” Hence the Lord likes His servants to have such an experience that their testimony shall have a man at the back of it. He would have their lives sustain and explain their testimonies. When Paul said that Christ came into the world to save *sinners*, his own conversion and his own joy in the Lord were proof positive of it! He was a witness who had tasted and handled the good Word of Life to which he witnessed.

Paul went to Heaven years ago, but his evidence is not lessened by that fact, for a truthful statement is not affected by the lapse of time. If a statement was made yesterday, it is just as truthful as if you were hearing it today. And if it were made, as this was, 1,800 years ago, yet, if true, then, (and nobody disputed it in Paul’s day), it is true now! The facts recorded in the gospels are as much facts now, as ever, and they ought to have the same influence upon our minds as they had upon the minds of the Apostles. At this moment, the statement that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners has Paul still at the back of it. “He being dead yet speaks.” Oh, you who are burdened with your sins, I want you to see Saul of Tarsus before you, at this moment, and to hear him say, with penitent voice, in your presence, “The Lord Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.” Doubt not the statement, for the man is the evidence of it! He who saved Paul can save you! Yes, He is willing, now, to display His power upon you! Be not disobedient to the heavenly message!

But, Beloved, if we have not Paul in our midst to bear his personal witness, we have still many living proofs—we have indisputable evidence in those that are still about us, that it “is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.” I could summon to this pulpit scores who were literally the blackest of transgressors, but they are washed, sanctified—and so they are living arguments of the Lord’s power to save! Many, also, are now present who could *not* be numbered by their fellow men among the chief of sinners in certain aspects of the case, yet they most willingly put themselves down as the chief of sinners under some other way of viewing it—and they bear their testimony, as I do, tonight—that Jesus is able to save unto the uttermost! I, who now stand before you, am a living witness that Christ Jesus can save sinners and does still save them!

The Lord has forgiven and justified me and I have found Grace in His sight. In my case, also, it is proven that it “is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.” Oh, how I wish that my Hearers would believe me! Many of you would accept any statement which I should make—why do you not accept *this*? You do not think of me as a liar—why, then, do you not believe my testimony concerning Jesus? He is as ready to save, today, as He was of old! He is ready to save *you*if you will trust Him!

The run of thought at this time will be, first, concerning those *who are the chief of sinners.* Secondly, we will enquire *why God has saved them*. And thirdly, *what they say when they are saved.*

**I.**First, then, WHO ARE THE CHIEF OF SINNERS? Paul says that he was the chief. I think, however, that he was only one of a regiment! There are different classes of sinners and some are greater and some less. All men are *truly* sinners, but all men are not *equally* sinners. They are all in the mire, but they have not all sunk to an equal depth in it. It is true they have all fallen deep enough to perish in sin unless the Grace of God prevents it, yet there are differences in the degrees of guilt and there will doubtless be differences in the degrees of punishment.

Some are the chief of sinners in the same way as the Apostle Paul, for *they have persecuted the Church of God*. Paul, who was then called Saul, had given his vote against Stephen. And when Stephen was stoned, he held the clothes of them that murdered him. He felt that blood lying upon his soul long afterward and he bemoaned it. Would not you, if you had been a helper at the murder of some child of God, feel that you were among the chief of sinners? If you had been willingly and willfully, maliciously and eagerly, a helper in putting a man of God like Stephen to death, you would write yourself down as a sinner of crimson dye! Why, I think that I would say, “God may forgive me, but I will never forgive myself.” It would seem such a horrid crime to lie upon one’s soul.

Yet this was merely the beginning. Saul was like a leopard who, having once tasted blood, must always have his tongue in it. His very breath was threatening and his delight was slaughter. He harassed the people of God. He made great havoc of the saints. He compelled them, he says, to blaspheme. He had them beaten in the synagogues, driven from city to city and even put to death. This must have remained upon his heart as a dark memory, even after the Lord Jesus Christ had fully forgiven him. Though he knew, as Paul did know, that he was a justified man through the righteousness of Jesus Christ, yet he must always have felt a smiting at his heart to think that these innocent lambs had been worried by him—that for no other reason but that they were lovers of the Crucified—he had panted for their blood. This matter of deadly persecution placed Saul head and shoulders above other sinners. This was the top stone of the pyramid of his sin, “because I persecuted the Church of Christ.”

I thank God that there is no man here who has that particular form of sin upon his conscience in having actually put to death or joined in the slaughter of any child of God. The laws of our country have happily prevented your being stained with that foul offense and I bless the Lord that it is so. Yet if there should be such among those who are hearing these words, or among those who shall, one day, read them, I must confess that they are, indeed, numbered among the chief of sinners and I pray God to grant that they may obtain mercy as Saul did.

But you can go very near to this—in all probability certain of you have done so. That husband who has threatened his wife so bitterly if she obeys her conscience; that man who has discharged his servant for no other reason but his fidelity to Christ; that landlord who has turned out his cottager from his home because he held a religious service beneath his roof; that man who has willfully and maliciously slandered a servant of God, not because he did him any harm, but because he cannot bear to hear of any truly following after Christ—these are the people who must be reckoned among the chief of sinners. They have done no murder, but they have gone as far as they dare to go and their heart is full of venom against the people of God—this is a grievous crime! Though it may seem a very small thing to grieve a pious child, or to vex a poor godly woman, God does not think so. He remembers jests and scoffs leveled at His little ones and He bids those who indulge in them to take heed! You had better offend a *king,* than one of the Lord’s little ones! That poor man in the workshop who has so hard a time of it with your jests and chaff, has a Friend in the heavens. That other man who, seeking the Lord, has found the cold shoulder in society, has an Advocate on high who will not see him despised without espousing his cause.

It may appear a trifle to make a saint the target of ridicule, but his Father in Heaven does not think so. I know this, that many patient men will bear a great deal, but if you strike their children, their blood is up and they will not have it. A father will not stand by to see his child abused— and the Great Father above is as tender and fond of His children as any other father! You have seen, among birds and beasts, that they will put forth all their strength for their young. A hen, naturally very timid, will fight for her little chicks with all the courage of a lion. Some of the smallest of animals and the least powerful, nevertheless become perfectly terrible when they are taking care of their offspring! And do you think that the Everlasting God will bear to see His children maligned, slandered and abused for their following of Him? Is the God of Nature without natural affection? I know not! You shall rue the day, Sir, in which you took up arms against the people of God! Humble yourself before God on account of it, otherwise you will be numbered among the chief of sinners, and the chief of punishments shall be meted out to you.

I have no doubt that there may be some of that kind here and, if there are, I can only pray that the story of Saul of Tarsus may be repeated in them by boundless Grace. May they even yet come to preach the Gospel which now they despise! It is no new thing for the priest to be converted to Christ. It is no new thing for the opposer to become the advocate and to be all the better and more powerful a pleader because of the mischief which he formerly did. Oh that the Lord would turn His foes into friends! God send it! For Christ’s sake may He send it now!

Further, among the chief of sinners we must, of course, include *those who are guilty of the coarser and grosser sin*s. I will not occupy a moment in mentioning what they are, for it is a shame even to speak of them. God keep us from unchastity and dishonesty—from any one of those sins which are censurable, even, under the head of common morality, for, if not—if we indulge in these—we shall certainly come, by them, to be numbered among the chief of sinners! I must, however, mention blasphemy and lewd speaking, because these are unhappily far too common. Does a man think that he can go on damning his own body and soul in so many words and never provoke the Lord to anger? Does he *dream* that he can use foul and filthy words, and wicked oaths without incurring sin? I believe that these things bring the blackest guilt on the conscience, for God has expressly said that He will, by no means, hold him guiltless that takes His name in vain!

It is true of *every* sin that God will not hold a man guiltless who does it, but it is especially said about this sin because men are apt to fancy that words are of no great importance, or that God takes no notice of them. Even the thoughtless, or trifling repetition of the name of the Lord involves great sin, for thus a man takes the sacred name in vain. Yet men trifle with that name in common conversation—and that with fearful frequency. There is no excuse for this wanton wickedness because it brings neither profit nor pleasure to the person who so offends! What practical end can it serve? As George Herbert said long ago—

***“Lust and wine plead a pleasure, avarice gain, But the cheap swearer through his open sluice Lets his soul run for nothing, fearing little. Were I a gourmet, I could lessen swearing.”***

I am unable to frame an excuse for profane language—it is needless, willful wickedness! Men talk so as to horrify us. They chill our blood with fear lest God should take them at their word—and all for nothing at all. I would to God that every blasphemer here, (if such there are, and I have no doubt that there are), would abandon that vile, inexcusable, useless habit which lowers men in society, defiles them before God and ensures their condemnation!

Filthy speech puts those who are guilty of it among the chief of sinners and to them will certainly be meted out a terrible vengeance in that day when God shall solemnly curse those who have so glibly cursed themselves! It will be an awful thing for the man who used profane imprecations to find out, at last, that his prayers were heard and that they will be answered! O Swearer, beware lest the Lord God hear your prayers at once to your everlasting confusion! Sit down at this moment in deep contrition and *weep* to think of the many times in which you have defied the God of Heaven and uttered words of provocation against the God in whose hand your breath is! Not yet has He cut you down. Oh, wonder of mercy! Take heed to yourself! Above all, marvel that there should be mention of mercy for such a one as you are!

Now, dear Friends, there are other chiefs among sinners who do not go in for these grosser sins at all. Let me mention them, for in this line I shall have to place myself and many of you. Those are among the chief of sinners *who have sinned against great light* and against the influences of holy instruction and gracious example. Children of godly parents, who have been brought up and instructed in the fear of God from their youth, are among the chief of sinners if they turn aside from the Way of Life. When they transgress, there is a heavy weight about their fault which is not to be found in the common sin of the children of the slums, or the Arabs of the gutter. The offspring of the degraded know no better, poor souls, and hence their transgressions are sins of ignorance. But those who know better, when they transgress, transgress with an emphasis. Their sin is as a talent of lead and it shall hang about their necks like a millstone!

I remember how this came home to my heart when I was convinced of my sin. I had not engaged in any of the grosser vices, but then I had not been tempted to do so, but had been carefully guarded from vicious influences. But I lamented that I had been disobedient to my parents, proud in spirit, forgetful of God’s commands—I knew better—knew better from the very first and this put me, in my own estimation, among the chief of sinners! It had cost me much to do evil, for I had sinned against the clearest Light of God. Especially is this the case when the possession of knowledge is accompanied by much tenderness of conscience.

There are some of you unconverted people, who, when you do wrong, *feel* that you have done wrong and feel it keenly, too, even though no one rebukes you for it. You cannot be unjust, or hasty in temper, or faulty in speech, or break the Sabbath, or do anything that is forbidden, without your conscience troubling you! You know what it is to go to bed and lie awake in misery after some questionable amusement, or after having spoken too frivolously. Yours is a tender conscience—do not violate it, or you will be doubly guilty! When God puts the bit into your mouth, if you try to get it between your teeth and it does not check you at all, you must mind what you are doing, for you may be left to dash onward to destruction. “He that being often reproved hardens his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.” It puts men among the chief of sinners when, against the Light of God and against conscience, they deliberately choose the way of evil and leave the Commandments of the Lord.

Especially is it a grievous offense *to sin against the gentle checking of the Holy Spirit*. Have you not been sad offenders upon this point? You felt, the other Sunday night, that if you could once get out of the Chapel and get home, you would bow the knee in prayer—but you did not. You have felt like that many times and you have shaken off the feeling—and now a sermon scarcely moves you—it had need be full of thunder and lightning to make you turn a hair! Truths which used to make you shake from head to foot scarcely affect you now! Take care, I pray you, for he that sins against the Holy Spirit may find himself waterlogged by sin, so as to be no longer able to move his vessel towards the shores of salvation! Nothing hardens like the Gospel when it is long trifled with. To lie soaking in the Truth of God without receiving it into the heart is sure destruction! To die on holy ground is to die, indeed! God grant that it may not be so with any here!

Yet if you are, this day, the chief of sinners, do not despair! Do not turn away in sullen anger, for we are going to say to you, at this hour, in the name of the merciful God, that His Son, Jesus Christ, has come into the world to save sinners, even the very chief!

I think that I must put down those among the chief of sinners *who have led others into sin*. Ah, this is a sad, sad, sad, sad subject! If you have led others astray—if you, yourself, seek the Lord, and are saved—yet you cannot save them. If it is young persons whom you have polluted with evil, you cannot take the wretched stain out of their minds. You can leave off sowing the devil’s seed, but you cannot gather up what you have sown, nor prevent its growing and ripening! Fire is easily kindled, but not so soon extinguished when it has taken hold upon the fuel. It is an awful fact that there may be souls in Hell whom you have sent there! It was a wise penitential prayer of a converted man who had exercised influence for evil—“Lord, forgive me my other men’s sins.”

When you lead others to sin, their sins are, to a large extent, your sins. They do not cease to be the sins of those who commit them, but they are also the sins of those who promoted or suggested them by precept or example. A bad example, a lewd expression, an unholy life may be the means of drawing others down to Hell—and those that destroy others and so are soul-murderers, are among the chief of sinners. He who uses dagger or pistol to the body is abhorred. What shall we say of those who poison human minds and stab at the heart of piety? These are guiltiest of the guilty! Woe unto them!

Especially must I rank him among the chief of sinners who has preached falsehood—who has denied the Deity of Christ—who has undermined the Inspiration of Scripture—who has struggled against the faith, fought against the Atonement and done evil, even as he could, in the scattering of skepticism. He must take his place among the ringleaders in diabolical mischief—he is a master destroyer, a chosen apostle of the Prince of Darkness! Oh, that he might be brought, by Sovereign Grace, to be among the foremost teachers of that faith which, before, he has destroyed! I think that we should do well as Christian people if we prayed more for any who make themselves notorious by their infidelity. If we talked less bitterly against them and prayed more sweetly for them, good would come of it. Of political argument against atheists we have had enough—let us carry the case into a higher court and plead with God about them. If we use the grand artillery of Heaven by importunate prayer, we would be using much better weapons than are commonly employed. God help us to pray for all false teachers, that they may be converted to God and so display the Omnipotence of His love.

I shall not say more upon this mournful matter, for, indeed, I have only mentioned these examples in the hope that some here present may confess, “I am sorry to say that the preacher means me. Under some aspect or other I must take my place among the chief of sinners.”

**II.**Now, secondly, WHY ARE THE CHIEF OF SINNERS SO OFTEN SAVED? The Lord Jesus Christ, when He went into Heaven, took with Him one of the chief of sinners as a companion—the dying thief entered Paradise the same day as our Lord! *After* our Lord Jesus had gone to Heaven, so far as I know, He never saved more than one person by His own immediate instrumentality—and that one person was this very Apostle Paul who has given us our text! To him our Lord spoke personally from Heaven, saying, “Saul, Saul, why do you persecute Me?” To him He revealed Himself by the way and called Him to be His Apostle, even to this man who truthfully called himself the chief of sinners! It is wonderful to think that it should be so, but Grace delights in dealing with great and glaring sin and putting away the crying crimes of great offenders!

The Lord Jesus not only saved the chief of sinners, but He was related to some of them by blood. Look through the long line of our Lord’s genealogy. You know that doctrine, the last invention of Rome, concerning the immaculate conception of the Virgin Mary? I am going to tell you a doctrine which is about as far apart from that as the east is from the west! In the genealogy of our blessed Lord, we find the names of certain of the chief of sinners. Three women, especially, hold a position in it, who were each notorious for sin. Not many women are mentioned, but among the first is Tamar, guilty of incest. The next is Rahab the harlot, and a third is Bathsheba the adulteress. This is a crooked pedigree, an ancestral tree whose branches are more than a little gnarled and twisted!

Admire the condescension of our Lord in coming of such a stock! He came *of* sinners because He came *for* sinners. According to the flesh He comes of sinners that sinners may come to Him! There was mixed, in the veins through which flowed His ancestry, the blood of Ruth the Moabitess, a heathen, brought in *on purpose* that we Gentiles might see how truly He was bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh. I say not that there was any defilement in His *humanity*, God forbid, for He was not born after the manner of men, so as to be polluted in that fashion! But still, I say that His genealogy includes many great sinners in order that we may see how closely He allied Himself with them, how thoroughly He undertook their cause.

Read the roll of His ancestry and you will see that David is there, who cried, “Against You, You only, have I sinned,” and Solomon, who loved strange women, and Rehoboam, his foolish son. And Manasseh, “who shed innocent blood very much,” and worse men than they, if worse could be! Such sinners as these are in the genealogy of the Savior of sinners. “He was numbered with the transgressors.” He was called “The friend of publicans and sinners.” It was said of Him, “This Man receives sinners and eats with them.” He still delights to save great sinners! O my Hearer, it will delight Him to save you!

Why does He do it? The Apostle says, in the 16th verse, “For this cause I obtained mercy, that in me, first, Jesus Christ might show forth all longsuffering.” What? Is that His reason for saving a sinner? It is that He may show, in that sinner, His long-suffering, revealing His patience and forgiveness! In a great sinner like Paul, He shows all His long-suffering, not little grains of it, nor portions of it, but *all* His long-suffering. Is Jesus Christ willing to show forth *all* His long-suffering? Does He delight to unveil *all* His love? Yes, for remember that He calls His mercy, His riches— “He is rich in mercy.” I do not find that He calls His *power* His riches, but He calls His *Grace* His riches, “in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His Grace.”

Oh, dear Friends, the Lord, who is rich in mercy, seeks a treasury in which to put His riches! He wants a case for the sacred jewelery of His love and these atrocious criminals, these great offenders, these who think themselves black as Hell—these are the very men in whom there is space for His rare jewels of goodness! Where sin has abounded, there is elbowroom for the infinite mercy of the living God! Ought you not to be encouraged, if you feel yourself greatly guilty, that God delights to show forth all His patience by saving great sinners? Will you not, at once, seek Him, that all long-suffering may be shown in *your* case? *Believe* on the Lord Jesus and it shall be so!

And what does Paul say next? He says that the Lord saved him *for a pattern* to those who are going to believe on Him to life everlasting. For a pattern. It means for a type or specimen. Paul was a “proof before letters.” The first prints of an engraving are sharp and clear and, therefore, they are very valuable—they exhibit the productive power of the plate at its highest point, before the surface is worn down in the least degree. Paul was one of the proof-engravings taken off the plate in the earliest days and under the most favorable circumstances for bringing out every line of Grace. All God’s long-suffering was seen in him for a pattern. I would to God that we could put some of *you* under that same engraved plate and issue more impressions at this very hour, for the plate is not worn out— the type that God uses is as new as ever!

When a printer sets his type, he sends the author a sheet to let him see what the type is and he calls it his *proof*. So also Paul was God’s proof— one of the first taken off by the glorious machinery of Grace to let us all see what God has to say to us concerning long-suffering love! That printing machine is at work at this very moment—it is making impressions at this hour—most clear, sharp and readable! I would to God that some great sinner here would be like the paper laid under the type to take the impression of almighty Grace! But a grand edition of the Work of Love was issued before Paul was printed off and published. I refer to the time when Peter preached at Pentecost. Many large and splendid editions have been issued from that press since! I see before me a whole library that God has printed in this house—the proofs that God has taken, of late, from the old standing type! But Paul stands at the head of the list as a fine first proof of what God can do.

Then God can save *me*. I came to that conclusion a year ago, and putting it to the test, I found it true. Dear fellow sinners, come to the same conclusion! Who are you? No, I do not ask you to tell me. I do not want to know! God knows. But I want you to come to this conclusion—“If Paul is a specimen of saved ones, then why should not I be saved? If Paul had been unique, a production quite by himself, then we might justly have doubted as to ourselves. But since he is a *pattern*, we may all hope to see the Lord’s long-suffering repeated in ourselves.” Nowadays, by the Parcels’ Post, people are sending you patterns of all sorts of things and many articles are bought according to sample. When you buy from a pattern, you expect the goods to be like the pattern. So God sends us Paul as a pattern of His great mercy to great sinners! He thus says, in effect—“That is the kind of thing I do. I take this rough, bad material of the chief of sinners, and I renew it, and show forth all My mercy in it. This is what I am prepared to do with you.”

Poor soul, will you not accept the mercy of God? Enter into this salvation business with the Lord, that you, too, like the Apostle, being a sinner, may become like he in obtaining the glorious salvation which is in Christ Jesus, who came into the world to save sinners! I am talking very plainly and simply to you, but if you love your own souls, you will be all the better pleased to listen. I do not want to amuse you, but to see you saved. Do, I pray you, bend your minds to this subject and learn that there is good hope for the worst of you if you will cry unto the Lord. That is why Jesus saves those who have most grievously erred, that He may display them as specimens of what His Grace can do.

“But I belong to such a wicked family,” cries one. Oh, yes, and many have been saved who belonged to the most depraved and degraded of families. They have entered into relationship with Christ and their own base condition has been swallowed up in His Glory! The children of criminals, when converted, belong to the family of God. “To as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name.” “Oh, but I have indulged in such horrible vices.” This is a sad confession, but it does not doom you to despair, for the blood of Jesus washes away the worst of filth! Blasphemers, adulterers, drunkards, thieves—“such,” O you saints—“such were some of you, but you are washed, but you are sanctified!” And why should not others of like character be washed and sanctified, too?

**III.**I must close by dwelling a moment on the third head, which is this—WHAT THE CHIEF OF SINNERS SAY WHEN THEY ARE SAVED. What they say is recorded in the text. It reads like a hymn—“Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.” Look, the first word is, “Now.” As soon as ever they are saved, they begin praising the Lord! They cannot endure to put off glorifying God! Someone might whisper to them, “You will praise God when you get to Heaven.” “No,” replies the gracious soul, “I am going to praise Him now.*Now* unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, be glory forever and ever!” Grateful love cannot be restrained—it is like fire in the bones! Our heart would break for love if it could not find a means of expressing itself at once.

Does another person whisper, “When you praise God, do not be too long about it. Leave off as soon as you have moderately praised and adored. Do not be forever engaged in the work of praise.” “No,” says the saved man, “I cannot stop as long as I am alive—‘To Him be honor and glory *forever and eve*r!’” Not only forever—that might seem to be long enough—but, “forever and ever.” It is a redundant expression, such as enthusiasm delights to use. It indicates a sort of double eternity. The saved sinner can never have enough of glorifying the Lord! He will praise Him throughout eternity! As soon as a man is cleansed from sin, he is clothed with praise. A new song is put into his mouth and he must sing it—he cannot help it! There is no stopping him.

Notice what titles Paul, here, heaps together. First, he calls the Lord Jesus Christ *a King*. “Now unto the King eternal.” Or apply it to God the Ever-Blessed, in His sacred Unity, if you will. He calls the Lord, King, for he would give Him the loftiest name and pay Him the lowliest homage. He calls Him a King, for he had found Him so, for it is a king that distributes life and death, a king that pardons rebels, a king that reigns and rules over men. Jesus was all this to Paul and much more—and so he must give Him the royal title—he cannot speak of Him as less than majestic! If Jesus is not King to all the world, at least He is King to the man whose sins have been forgiven him. “Now,” he says, “unto the King eternal be honor and glory forever and ever.”

See how he puts it, “the King *eternal*.” Not a king who will lose his kingdom; not a king who will cease to reign, or abdicate, or die. Oh, dear Brothers and Sisters, the King that pardoned Paul is a King, *today*, equally mighty to save! Eighteen hundred years after His great deed of Grace to the chief of sinners He is still a King!—

***“Jesus sits on Zion’s hill:***

***He can save poor sinners still.”***  
He sits upon the Throne of Mercy in the sovereignty of His Grace, in the splendor of His love, in the majesty of His power, passing by iniquity, transgression and sin! Will you not bow before Him? Here, at this moment, I pause to do Him reverence—Glory be to the Lord Jesus, for He is the King eternal!

Then he calls Him the King *immortal*. He is the King that always lives by His own power and is, therefore, able to give life to dead souls! Blessed be the name of the Savior that He died for sinners, but equally blessed be His name that He always lives to make intercession for sinners and is, therefore, able to save unto the uttermost them that come unto God by Him. The quickened, raised-up spirit cries aloud, “Glory be unto the King immortal, for He has made me immortal by the touch of His life-giving hand!” Because He lives, we shall live, also. Our life is hidden in Him and, throughout eternity, we shall reign with Him!

Then Paul styles Him the King *invisible,* for, as yet, we see not all things put under Him and His reign is perceived rather by faith than by sight. The Lord Jesus is, to mortal eyes, invisible and, therefore, our service must be rendered by the spirit rather than through the senses. He must be *trusted* if we are to draw near to Him and we must say of Him, “whom having not seen, we love.” An unseen Lord, who can only be known to our faith, has saved us, and will save us, world without end! We have not a King that we have seen or touched, or whose voice we have audibly heard, but ours is a King who is invisible and yet moves to and fro among us, mighty to save! Thanks be unto the Holy Spirit for giving us eyes of faith to *see* Him that is invisible, and hearts to *trust* and to*rest* upon an invisible Lord!

“Now, now, now, now, now, now, now,” that is the word for every saved soul! NOW unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, be endless glory! Do you not respond to the call by immediate praise? Do you not say, “Awake my glory! Awake, psaltery and harp”? Oh, for a seraph’s coal to touch these stammering lips! As a sinner saved by my Lord and King, I would gladly pour out my life in a continual stream of praise to my redeeming Lord!

Furthermore, our Apostle speaks of *the only wise God*. He is so wise that He saves great sinners to make them patterns of His mercy! He is so wise that He takes bigots and persecutors to make them into Apostles! He is so wise that He makes the wrath of man to praise Him and the very wickedness of man, He uses as a foil to set forth the brightness of the Glory of His Grace! Unto the only wise God, wise enough to turn a lion into a lamb, wise enough to make a sinner a saint, a persecutor a preacher, an enemy a friend—to Him be GLORY! Oh, the wisdom of God in the plan of redemption! It is a deep unfathomable! Compared with it, there is no wisdom anywhere and only God is seen to be, “only wise.”

To Him *be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen*. Unto Him be glory on earth and glory in Heaven, honor from all of us poor imperfect beings— and glory from us when He shall have made us perfectly meet to behold His face! Come, lift up your hearts, you saved ones! Begin, at once, the songs which shall never cease! The saints shall never have done singing, for they remember that they were sinners. Come, poor Sinner, out of the depths extol Him who descended into the depths for you! Chief of sinners, adore Him who is to you the Chief among 10,000 and the Altogether Lovely! You black sinners who have gone to the very brink of damnation by your abominable sins, rise to the utmost heights of enthusiastic joy in Jesus your Lord! Put your trust in the Lord Jesus Christ and all manner of sin and of blasphemy shall be forgiven you—and at the receipt of such a pardon—you shall burst out into new-made doxologies to God your Savior!

“Come now, and let us reason together, says the Lord: though your sins are as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool.” O you guiltiest of the guilty, the Apostle Paul speaks to you and stands before you as the bearer of God’s white flag of mercy! Surrender to the King eternal and there is pardon for you, and deliverance from the wrath to come! Thirty-five years Paul lived in sin. Twenty years after that, when he was older than I am, he wrote these words, “This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.” Is there not some 35 years old fellow here, tonight, who had better turn over a new leaf? Is there not some woman here of that age who has had more than enough of sin? Is it not time that you turned unto the Lord and found a new and better life?

Turn them! Lord—turn them, and they shall be turned! Make them live and they shall live unto You, world without end. Amen and Amen! ***PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—***Act 9:1-31***.*HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—546, 588, 551.**  
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**÷1Ti 1.16**

PAUL AS A PATTERN CONVERT  
NO. 3367

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, AUGUST 14, 1913.  
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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

***“However for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me, first, Jesus Christ might show forth all long-suffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on Him to life everlasting.”*** 1Ti 1:16***.***

IT is a vulgar error that the conversion of the Apostle Paul was an uncommon and exceptional event and that we cannot expect men to be saved now-a-days after the same fashion. It is said that the incident was an exception to all rules, a wonder altogether by itself. Now, my text is a flat contradiction to that notion, for it assures us that, instead of the Apostle as a receiver of the long-suffering and mercy of God being at all an exception to the rule, he was a model convert, and is to be regarded as a type and pattern of God’s Grace in other Believers. The Apostle’s language in the text, “for a pattern,” may mean that he was what printers call a first proof, an early impression from the engraving, a specimen of those to follow. He was the typical instance of Divine long-suffering, the model after which others are fashioned. To use a metaphor from the artist’s studio, Paul was the ideal sketch of a convert, an outline of the work of Jesus on mankind, a picture of Divine long-suffering. Just as artists make sketches in charcoal as the basis of their work—which outlines they paint out as the picture proceeds—so did the Lord, in the Apostle’s case, make, as it were, a picture or outline sketch of His usual work of Grace. That outline, in the case of each future Believer, He works out with infinite variety of skill and produces the individual Christian, but the guiding lines are really there. All conversions are, in a high degree, similar to this pattern conversion. The transformation of persecuting Saul of Tarsus into the Apostle Paul is a typical instance of the work of Grace in the heart.

We will have no other preface, but proceed at once to two or three considerations. The first is that—  
**I.**IN THE CONVERSION OF PAUL, THE LORD HAD AN EYE TO OTHERS, AND IN THIS PAUL IS A PATTERN.  
In every case the individual is saved, not for himself, alone, but with a view to the good of others. Those who think the Doctrine of Election to be harsh should not deny it, for it is Scriptural—but they may to their own minds soften some of its hardness by remembering that elect men bear a marked connection with the race. The Jews, as an elect people, were chosen in order to preserve the oracles of God for all nations and for all times. Men personally elected unto eternal life by Divine Grace are also elected that they may become chosen vessels to bear the name of Jesus unto others. While our Lord is said to be the Savior especially of them that believe, He is also called the Savior of all men—and while He has a special eye to the good of the one person whom He has chosen—yet *through that person* He has designs of love to others—perhaps even to thousands yet unborn!  
The Apostle Paul says, “I obtained mercy, that in me, first, Jesus Christ might show forth all long-suffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe.” Now, I think I see very clearly that *Paul’s conversion had an immediate relation to the conversion of many others.*It had a tendency, had it not, to excite an interest in the minds of his brother Pharisees? Men of his class, men of culture, who were equally at home with the Greek philosophers and with the Jewish rabbis, men of influence, men of rank, would be sure to enquire, “What is this new religion which has fascinated Saul of Tarsus? That zealot for Judaism has now become a zealot for Christianity—what can there be in it?” I say that the natural tendency of his conversion was to awaken inquiry and thought and so to lead others of his rank to become Believers. And, my dear Friend, if you have been saved, you ought to regard it as a token of God’s mercy to your class. If you are a working man, let your salvation be a blessing to the men with whom you labor. If you are a person of rank and station, consider that God intends to bless you to some with whom you are on familiar terms. If you are young, hope that God will bless the youth around you. And if you have come to older years, hope that your conversion, even at the eleventh hour, may be the means of encouraging other aged pilgrims to seek and find rest unto their souls. The Lord, by calling one out of any society of men, finds for Himself a recruiting officer who will enlist his fellows beneath the banner of the Cross! May not this fact encourage some seeking soul to hope that the Lord may save him, though he is the only thoughtful person in all his family—and then make him to be the means of salvation to all his kindred?  
We notice that *Paul often used the narrative of his conversion as an encouragement to others.*He was not ashamed to tell his own life story. Eminent soul-winners, such as Whitefield and Bunyan, frequently pleaded God’s mercy to themselves as an argument with their fellow men. Though great preachers of another school, such as Robert Hall and Chalmers, do not mention themselves at all, and I can admire their abstinence, yet I am persuaded that if some of us were to follow their example, we would be throwing away one of the most powerful weapons of our warfare! What can be more affecting, more convincing, more overwhelming, than the story of Divine Grace told by the very man who has experienced it? It is better than a dozen tales of converted Africans and infinitely more likely to win men’s hearts than the most elaborate essays upon moral excellence! Again and again, Paul gave a long narrative of his conversion, for he felt it to be one of the most telling things that he could relate.  
Whether he stood before Felix or Agrippa, this was his plea for the Gospel. All through his Epistles there are continual mentions of the Grace of God towards himself—and we may be sure that the Apostle did right to argue thus from his own case—it is fair and forcible reasoning and ought by no means to be left unused because of a selfish dread of being called egotistical! God intends that we should use our conversion as an encouragement to others and say to them, “Come and hear, all you that fear God, and I will tell you what He has done for my soul.” We point to our own forgiveness and say, “Do but trust in the living Redeemer and you shall find, as we have done, that Jesus blots out the transgressions of Believers.”  
*Paul’s conversion was an encouragement to him all his life long to have hope for others.*Have you ever read the first Chapter of the Epistle to the Romans? Well, the man who penned those terrible verses might very naturally have written at the end of them, “Can these monsters be reclaimed? It can be of no use whatever to preach the Gospel to people so sunken in vice.” That one Chapter gives as daring an outline as delicacy would permit of the nameless, shameful vices into which the heathen world had plunged! And yet, after all, Paul went forth to declare the Gospel to that filthy and corrupt generation, believing that God meant to save a people out of it! Surely one element of his hope for humanity must have been found in the fact of his own salvation—he considered himself to be, in some respects, as bad as the heathen, and in other respects even worse! He calls himself the *foremost* of sinners (that is the word) and he speaks of God having saved him foremost, that in him He might show forth all long-suffering. Paul never doubted the possibility of the conversion of a person, however infamous, after he had himself been converted! This strengthened him in battling with the fiercest opponents—He who overcame such a wild beast as I was can also tame others and bring them into willing captivity to His love!  
There was yet another relation between Paul’s conversion and the salvation of others, and it was this—*It served as an impulse,*driving him forward in his lifework of bringing sinners to Christ. “I obtained mercy,” he said, “and that same Voice which spoke peace to me said, “I have made you a chosen vessel unto Me to bear My name among the Gentiles.” And he did bear it, my Brothers and Sisters! Going into regions beyond that he might not build on another man’s foundation, he became a master bui1der for the Church of God. How indefatigably did he labor! With what vehemence did he pray! With what energy did he preach! Slander and contempt he bore with the utmost patience. Scourging or stoning had no terrors for him. Imprisonment, yes, death itself, he defied—nothing could daunt him! Because the Lord had saved *him*, he felt that he must, by all means, save some. He could not be quiet. Divine love was in him like a fire and if he had been silent, he would, before long, have had to cry with the Prophet of old, “I am weary with restraining.” He is the man who said, “Necessity is laid upon me, yes, woe is unto me if I preach not the Gospel.” Paul, the extraordinary sinner, was saved that he might be full of extraordinary zeal and bring multitudes to eternal life! Well could he say—  
***“The love of Christ does me constrain  
To seek the wandering souls of men!  
With cries, entreaties, tears to save,  
To snatch them from the fiery wave.  
My life, my blood, I here present,  
If for Your Truth they may be spent!  
Fulfill Your Sovereign counsel, Lord!  
Your will be done, Your name adored!”***  
Now, I will pause here a minute to ask a question. You profess to be converted, my dear Friend. What relation has your conversion already had to other people? It ought to have a very apparent one. Has it had such? Mr. Whitefield said that when his heart was renewed, his first desire was that his companions with whom he had previously wasted his time might be brought to Christ. It was natural and commendable that he should begin with them. Remember how one of the Apostles, when he discovered the Savior, went immediately to tell his brother? It is most fitting that young people should spend their first religious enthusiasm upon their brothers and sisters. As to converted parents, their first responsibility is in reference to their sons and daughters. Upon each renewed man, his natural affinities, or the bonds of friendship or the looser ties of neighborhood should begin to operate at once, and each one should feel, “No man lives unto himself.”  
If Divine Grace has kindled a fire in you, it is that your fellow men may burn with the same flame! If the eternal fount has filled you with Living Water, it is that out of the midst of you should flow rivers of Living Water! You are blessed that you may bless—whom have you blessed? Let the question go round. Do not avoid it. This is the best return that you can make to God—that when He saves you, you should seek to be the instruments in His hands of saving others! What have you done? Did you ever speak with the friend who shares your pew? He has been sitting there for a long time and may, perhaps, be an unconverted person—have you pointed him to the Lamb of God? Have you ever spoken to your servants about their souls? Have you broken the ice sufficiently to speak to your own sister, or your own brother? Do begin, dear Friend.  
You cannot tell what mysterious threads connect you with your fellow men and their destiny. There was a cobbler once, as you know, in Northamptonshire. Who could see any connection between him and the millions of India? But the love of God was in his bosom and Carey could not rest till, at Serampore, he had commenced to translate the Word of God and preach to his fellow men! We must not confine our thoughts to the few whom Carey brought to Christ, though to save one soul is worthy of a life of sacrifice—but Carey became the forerunner and leader of a missionary band which will never cease to labor till India bows before Immanuel! That man mysteriously *drew*, *is drawing* and *will draw* India to the Lord Jesus Christ! Brother, you do not know what your power is! Awake and try it!  
Did you never read this passage—“You have given Him power over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him”? Now, the Lord has given to His Son power over all flesh, and with a part of that power Jesus clothes His servants. Through you, He will give eternal life to certain of His chosen—by you and by no other means will they be brought to Himself! Look about you, regenerate man! Your life may be made sublime. Awaken yourself! Begin to think of what God may do by you! Calculate the possibilities which lie before you with the eternal God as your helper! Shake yourself from the dust and put on the beautiful garments of disinterested love to others and it shall yet be seen how grandly gracious God has been to hundreds of men by having converted you!  
So far, then, Paul’s salvation, because it had so clear a reference to others, was a pattern of all conversions. Now, secondly—  
**II.**PAUL’S FOREMOST POSITION AS A SINNER DID NOT PREVENT HIS BECOMING FOREMOST IN GRACE AND, HEREIN, AGAIN, HE IS A PATTERN TO US.  
Foremost in sin, he became also foremost in service! Saul of Tarsus was a *blasphemer* and he is to be commended because he has not recorded any of those blasphemies. We can never object to converted burglars and chimney-sweepers of whom we hear so much, telling the story of their conversion. But when they go into dirty details, they had better hold their tongues! Paul tells us that he was a blasphemer, but he never repeats one of the blasphemies. We invent enough evil in our own hearts without being told of other men’s stale profanities. If, however, any of you are so curious as to want to know what kind of blasphemies Paul could utter, you have only to converse with a converted Jew and he will tell you what horrible words some of his nation will speak against our Lord! I have no doubt that Paul, in his evil state, thought as wickedly of Christ as he could—considered Him to be an imposter, called Him so, and added many an opprobrious epithet. He does not say of himself that he was an unbeliever and an objector, but he says that he was a blasphemer, which is a very strong word, but not too strong, for the Apostle never went beyond the truth. He was a downright, thorough-going blasphemer who also caused others to blaspheme. Will these lines meet the eye of a profane person who feels the greatness of his sin? May God grant that he may be encouraged to seek mercy as Saul of Tarsus did, for “all manner of sin and blasphemy” does He forgive unto men!  
From blasphemy, which was the sin of the lips, Saul proceeded *to persecution,*which is a sin of the hands. Hating Christ, he hated His people, too. He was delighted to give his vote for the death of Stephen—and he took care of the clothes of those who stoned that martyr. He hauled men and women to prison and compelled them to blaspheme. When he had hunted all Judea as closely as he could, he obtained letters to go to Damascus, that he might do the same in that place. His prey had been compelled to quit Jerusalem and flee to more remote places, but “being exceedingly mad against them, he persecuted them unto strange cities.” He was foremost in blasphemy and persecution! Will a persecutor read or hear these words? If so, may he be led to see that even for*him,* pardon is possible! Jesus, who said, “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do,” is still an intercessor for the most violent of His enemies!  
He adds, next, that he was *injurious,* which, I think, Bengel considers to mean that he was a despiser. That eminent critic says—blasphemy was his sin towards God, persecution was his sin towards the Church, and despising was his sin in his own heart. He was injurious—that is, he did all he could to damage the cause of Christ and he thereby injured himself. He kicked against the pricks and injured his own conscience. He was so determined against Christ that he counted no cost too great by which he might hinder the spread of the faith! And he did hinder it terribly—he was a ringleader in resisting the Spirit of God which was then working with the Church of Christ. He was foremost in opposition to the Cross of Christ!  
Now, notice that he was saved as a pattern, which is to show you that if you also have been foremost in sin, you also may obtain mercy as Paul did! And to show you yet again that if you have not been foremost, the Grace of God, which is able to save the chief of sinners, can assuredly save those who are of less degree! If the bridge of Grace will carry the elephant, it will certainly carry the mouse! If the mercy of God could bear with the greatest sinners, it can have patience with you! If a gate is wide enough for a giant to pass through, any ordinary-sized mortal will find space enough. Despair’s head is cut off and stuck on a pole by the salvation of “the chief of sinners.” No man can now say that he is too great a sinner to be saved—because the chief of sinners was saved 1,800 years ago! If the ringleader, the chief of the gang, has been washed in the precious blood and is now in Heaven, why not I? Why not *you?*  
After Paul was saved, he became a foremost saint. The Lord did not allot him a second-class place in the Church. He had been the leading sinner, but his Lord did not, therefore, say, “I save you, but I shall always remember your wickedness to your disadvantage.” Not so! He counted him faithful, putting him into the ministry and into the Apostleship, so that he was not a whit behind the very chief of the Apostles! Brother, there is no reason why, if you have gone very far in sin, you should not go equally far in usefulness! On the contrary, there is a reason why you *should do so*, for it is a rule of Grace that to whom much is forgiven, the same loves much—and much love leads to much service. What man was more clear in his knowledge of Doctrine than Paul?  
What man more earnest in the defense of the Truth of God? What man more self-sacrificing? What man more heroic? The name of Paul in the Christian Church stands, in some respects, very next to the Lord Jesus! Turn to the New Testament and see how large a space is occupied by the Holy Spirit speaking through His

servant Paul! And then look over Christendom and see how greatly the man’s influence is still felt—and must be felt till his Master shall come! Oh, great sinner, if you are even now ready to scoff at Christ, my prayer is that He may strike you down at this very moment and turn you into one of His children—and make you to be just as ardent for the Truth as you are now earnest against it, as desperately set on good as now you are on evil! None make such mighty Christians and such fervent preachers as those who are lifted up from the lowest depths of sin and washed and purified through the blood of Jesus Christ! May Grace do this with you, my dear Friend, whoever you may be.  
Thus we gather from our text that the Lord showed mercy to Paul. That in him, first, it might be seen that prominence in sin is no barrier to eminence in Grace, but the very reverse! Now I come to where the stress of the text lies.  
**III.**PAUL’S CASE WAS A PATTERN OF OTHER CONVERSIONS AS AN INSTANCE OF LONG-SUFFERING.  
“That in me, first, Jesus Christ might show forth all long-suffering for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe.” Thoughtfully observe the great long-suffering of God to Paul. He says, “He showed forth all long-suffering.” Not only all the long-suffering of God that ever was shown to anybody else, but all that could be supposed to exist*—*all longsuffering—  
***“All Your mercy’s height I prove,  
All its depth is found in me,”***  
as if he had gone to the utmost stretch of his tether in sin—and the Lord had strained His long-suffering to its utmost!  
That long-suffering was seen, first, *in sparing his life* when he was rushing headlong in sin, breathing out threats, foaming at the mouth with denunciations of the Nazarene and His people. If the Lord had but lifted His finger, Saul would have been crushed like a moth! But Almighty Wrath forbore and the rebel lived on. Nor was this all—after all his sin, the Lord allowed mercy to be possible to him. He blasphemed and persecuted at a red-hot rate—and is it not a marvel that the Lord did not say, “Now, at last, you have gone beyond all bearing, and you shall die like Herod, eaten of worms”? It would not have been at all amazing if God had so sentenced him. But He allowed him to live within the reach of mercy and, better still, He in due time actually sent the Gospel to him and laid it home to his heart. In the very midst of his rebellion the Lord saved him! He had not prayed to be converted, far from it! No doubt he had that very day along the road to Damascus profaned the Savior’s name and yet mighty mercy burst in and saved him purely by its own spontaneous native energy! Oh mighty Grace, Free Grace, victorious Grace ! This was long-suffering indeed!  
When Divine Mercy had called Paul, *it swept all his sin away,*every particle of it—his blood shedding and his blasphemy, all at once, so that never man was more assured of his own perfect cleansing than was the Apostle! “There is therefore now,” he says, “no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.” “Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God.” “Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect?” You know how clear he was about that—and he spoke out of his own experience! Long-suffering had washed all his sins away. Then that longsuffering, reaching from the depths of sin, lifted him right up to the Apostleship, so that he began to prove God’s long-suffering in its heights of favor. What a privilege it must have been to him to be permitted to preach the Gospel! I should think sometimes when he was preaching most earnestly, he would half stop himself and say, “Paul, is this you?” Especially when he went down to Tarsus, he must have been surprised at himself and at the mighty mercy of God. He preached the faith which once he had destroyed! He must have said many a time after a sermon, when he went home to his bedchamber, “Marvel of marvels! Wonder of wonders, that I who once could curse have now been made to preach— that I, who was full of threats and even breathed out slaughter, should now be so Inspired by the Spirit of God that I weep at the very sound of Jesus’ name and count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, my Lord!”  
Oh, Brothers and Sisters, you do not measure long-suffering unless you take it in all its length from one end to the other and see God in mercy not remembering His servant’s sin, but lifting him into eminent service in His Church. Now, this was for a pattern, to show you that He will show forth the same long-suffering to those who believe! If you have been a swearer, He will cleanse your blackened mouth and put His praises into it! Have you had a black, cruel heart, full of enmity to Jesus? He will remove it and give you a new heart and a right spirit! Have you dived into all sorts of sins? Are they so shameful that you dare not think of them? Think of the precious blood which removes every stain! Are your sins so many that you cannot count them? Do you feel as if you were almost damned already in the very memory of your life? I do not wonder at it, but He is able to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by Him! You have not gone farther than Saul had gone and, therefore, all long-suffering can come to you and there are great possibilities of future holiness and usefulness before you! Even though you may have been a street-walker or a thief, yet if the Grace of God cleanses you, it can make something wonderful out of you! Full many a lustrous jewel of Immanuel’s crown has been taken from the dunghill! You are a rough block of stone, but Jesus can fashion and polish you and set you as a pillar in His Temple!  
Brother, do not despair! See what Saul was and what Paul became— and learn what you may be! Though you deserve the depths of Hell, yet Grace can lift you up to the heights of Heaven! Though now you feel as if the fiends of Hell would be fit companions for such a lost spirit as yourself, yet believe in the Lord Jesus and you shall one day walk among the angels as pure and white as they! Paul’s experience of long-suffering Grace was meant to be a pattern of what God will do for you— ***“Scripture says, ‘Where sin abounded,  
There did Grace much more abound.’  
Thus has Satan been confounded,  
And his own discomfit found.  
Christ has triumphed!  
Spread the glorious news around!  
Sin is strong, but Grace is stronger!  
Christ than Satan more supreme!  
Yield, oh, yield to sin no longer,  
Turn to Jesus, yield to Him—  
He has triumphed!  
Sinners, henceforth Him esteem.”***  
Again—  
**V.**THE MODE OF PAUL’S CONVERSION WAS ALSO MEANT TO BE A PATTERN. And with this I shall finish. I do not say that we may expect to receive the miraculous Revelation which was given to Paul, but yet it is a sketch upon which any conversion can be painted. The filling up is not the same in any two cases, but the outline sketch. Paul’s conversion would serve for an outline sketch of the conversion of any one of us. How was that conversion worked? Well, it is clear that there was nothing at all in Paul to contribute to his salvation. You might have sifted him in a sieve without finding anything upon which you could rest a hope that he would be converted to the faith of Jesus! His natural bent, his early training, his whole surroundings and his life’s pursuits all lettered him to Judaism and made it most unlikely that he would ever become a Christian. The first Elder of the Church that ever talked to him about Divine things could hardly believe in his conversion. “Lord,” he said, “I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he has done to Your saints at Jerusalem.” He could hardly think it possible that the ravening wolf could have changed into a lamb! Nothing favorable to faith in Jesus could have been found in Saul—the soil of his heart was very rocky, the plow could not touch it and the good Seed found no root-hold. Yet the Lord converted Saul and He can do the same by other sinner, but it must be a work of pure Grace and of Divine power, for there is not in any man’s fallen nature a holy spot the size of a pin’s point on which Grace can light! Transforming Grace can find no natural lodging in our hearts— it must create its own soil and, blessed be God, it can do it, for with God all things are possible! Nature contributes nothing to Grace and yet Grace wins the day! Humbled Soul, let this cheer you! Though there is nothing good in you, yet Grace can work wonders and save you by its own might!  
Paul’s conversion was an instance of Divine power and of that alone, and so is every true conversion. If your conversion is an instance of the preacher’s power, you need to be converted again! If your salvation is the result of your own power, it is a miserable deception from which may you be delivered! Every man who is saved must be operated upon by the might of God the Holy Spirit—every jot and tittle of true regeneration is the Spirit’s work! As for our strength, it wars against salvation rather than for it. Blessed is that promise, “Your people shall be willing in the day of Your power.” Conversion is as much a work of God’s Omnipotence as the Resurrection—and as the dead do not raise themselves, so neither do men convert themselves!  
*But Saul was changed immediately.*His conversion was once done and done at once. There was a little interval before he found peace, but even during those three days, he was a changed man, though he was in sadness. He was under the power of Satan at one moment and in the next he was under the reign of Grace! This is also true in every conversion. However gradual the breaking of the day, there is a time when the sun is below the horizon and a moment when it is no longer so. You may not know the exact time in which you passed from death to life, but there was such a time, if you are, indeed, a Believer! A man may not know how old he is, but there was a moment in which he was born. In every conversion there is a distinct change from darkness to light, from death to life, just as certainly as there was in Paul’s. And what a delightful hope does the rapidity of regeneration present to us! It is by no long and laborious process that we escape from sin! We are not compelled to remain in sin for a single moment. Grace brings instantaneous liberty to those who sit in bondage. He who trusts Jesus is saved on the spot! Why, then, abide in death? Why not lift up your eyes to immediate life and light?  
*Paul proved his regeneration by his faith.* He believed unto eternal life. He tells us over and over again in his Epistles that he was saved by faith, and not by works. So is it with every man! If saved at all, it is by simply believing in the Lord Jesus. Paul esteemed his own works to be less than nothing and called them dross and dung, that he might win Christ, and so every converted man renounces his own works that he may be saved by Grace alone. Whether he has been moral or immoral. Whether he has lived an amiable and excellent life, or whether he has raked in the kennels of sin, every regenerate man has only one hope—and that is centered and fixed in Jesus alone! Faith in Jesus Christ is the mark of salvation, even as the heaving of the lungs or the coming of breath from the nostrils is the test of life. Faith is the Grace which saves the soul and its absence is a fatal sign. How does this fact affect you, dear Friend? Have you faith or no?  
*Paul was very positively and evidently saved.*You did not need to ask the question, “Is that man a Christian or not?” for the transformation was most apparent! If Saul of Tarsus had appeared as he used to be, and Paul the Apostle could also have come in, and you could have seen the one man as two men, you would have thought them no relation to one another. Paul the Apostle would have said that he was dead to Saul of Tarsus, and Saul of Tarsus would have gnashed his teeth at Paul the Apostle! The change was evident to all who knew him, whether they sympathizes in it or not. They could not mistake the remarkable difference which Grace had made, for it was as great as when midnight brightens into noon. So it is when a man is truly saved—there is a change which those around him must perceive. Do not tell me that you can be a child at home and become a Christian, and yet your father and mother will not perceive a difference in you! They will be sure to see it. Would a leopard in a menagerie lose his spots and no one notice it? Would an Ethiopian be turned white and no one hear of it? You, masters and mistresses, will not go in and out among your servants and children without their perceiving a change in you if you are born-again! At least, dear Brother or Sister, strive with all your might to let the change be very apparent in your language, in your actions and in your whole conduct. Let your conversation be such as becomes the Gospel of Christ, that men may see that you, as well as the Apostle, are decidedly changed by the renewal of your minds!  
May all of us be the subjects of Divine Grace as Paul was—stopped in our mad career, blinded by the glory of the heavenly Light of God, called by a mysterious Voice, conscious of natural blindness, relieved of blinding scales and made to see Jesus as one All-in-All. May we prove in our own persons how speedily conviction may melt into conversion, conversion into confession and confession into consecration!  
I have done when I have enquired how far we are conformed to the pattern which God has set before us. I know we are like Paul as to our sin, for if we have neither blasphemed nor persecuted, yet have we sinned as far as we have had opportunity. We are also conformed to Paul’s pattern in the great long-suffering of God which we have experienced. And I am not sure that we cannot carry the parallel farther—we have had much the same Revelation that Paul received on the way to Damascus, for we, too, have learned that Jesus is the Christ! If any of us sin against Christ, it will not be because we do not know Him to be the Son of God, for we all believe in His Deity because our Bibles tell us so. The pattern goes so far—I would that the Grace of God would operate upon you, unconverted Friend, and complete the picture by giving you like faith with Paul. Then will you be saved as Paul was! Then, also, will you love Christ above all things, as Paul did, and you will say, “But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yes, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, my Lord.” He rested upon what Christ had done in His death and Resurrection, and he found pardon and eternal life at once and became, therefore, a devoted Christian!  
What do you say, dear Friend? Are you moved to follow Paul’s example? Does the Spirit of God prompt you to trust Paul’s Savior and give up every other ground of trust and rely upon Him? Then do so and live! Does there seem to be a hand holding you back and do you hear an evil whisper saying, “You are too great a sinner”? Turn round and bid the fiend depart, for the text gives him the lie. “In me, *first,* has Jesus Christ showed forth all long-suffering for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on His name.” God has saved Paul. Back, then, O devil! The Lord can save any man, woman or child and He can save me! Jesus Christ of Nazareth is mighty to save and I will rely on Him. If any poor heart shall reason thus, its logic will be sound and unanswerable. Mercy to one is an argument for mercy to another, for there is no difference, but the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon Him!  
Now I have set the case before you and I cannot do more. It remains with each individual to accept or refuse. One man can bring a horse to the trough, but a hundred cannot make him drink. There is the Gospel— if you want it, take it—but if you will not have it, then I must discharge my soul by reminding you that even the gentle Gospel —the Gospel of love and mercy has nothing to say to you but this, “He that believes not shall be damned.”—  
***“How they deserve the deepest Hell,  
That slight the joys above!  
What chains of vengeance must they feel Who break the bonds of love!”***  
God grant that you may yield to Almighty Love and find peace in Christ Jesus!

—Adapted from *The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307  
**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.** Sermon #1516 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

**÷1Ti 2.3**

SALVATION BY KNOWING THE TRUTH  
NO. 1516

*DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

***“God our Savior; who will have all men to be saved and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.”***1Ti 2:3-4***.***

MAY God the Holy Spirit guide our meditations to the best practical result this evening, that sinners may be saved and saints stirred up to diligence. I do not intend to treat my text controversially. It is like the stone which makes the corner of a building and it looks towards a different side of the Gospel from that which is mostly before us. Two sides of the building of the Truth of God meet here. In many a village there is a corner where the idle and the quarrelsome gather together and theology has such corners. It would be very easy, indeed, to set ourselves in battle array and during the next half-hour to carry on a very fierce attack against those who differ from us in opinion upon points which could be raised from this text. I do not see that any good would come of it and, as we have very little time to spare and life is short, we had better spend it upon something that may better tend to our edification. May the good Spirit preserve us from a contentious spirit and help us to really profit by His Word.

It is quite certain that when we read that God will have all men to be saved it does not mean that He *wills* it with the force of a decree or a Divine purpose, for, if He did, then all men *would* be saved! He willed to make the world and the world was made—He does not so will the salvation of all men, for we know that all men will not be saved. Terrible as the Truth of God is, yet is it certain from Holy Writ that there are men who, in consequence of their sin and their rejection of the Savior, will go away into everlasting punishment where there shall be weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth. There will, at the last, be goats upon the left hand as well as sheep on the right. There will be tares to be burned as well as wheat to be garnered, chaff to be blown away as well as corn to be preserved. There will be a dreadful Hell as well as a glorious Heaven and there is no decree to the contrary.

What then? Shall we try to put another meaning into the text than that which it fairly bears? I think not. You must, most of you, be acquainted with the general method in which our older Calvinistic friends deal with this text. “All men,” they say—“that is, *some* men”—as if the Holy Spirit could not have said, “some men,” if He had meant some men! “All men,” they say—“that is, some of all *sorts* of men”—as if the Lord could not have said, “all sorts of men,” if He had meant that. The Holy Spirit, by the Apostle, has written, “*all men*” and unquestionably He means ALL men. I know how to get rid of the force of the “alls” according to that critical method which, some time ago, was very current, but I do not see how it can be applied, here, with due regard to the Truth of God.  
I was reading, just now, the exposition of a very able doctor who explains the text so as to explain it away. He applies grammatical gunpowder to it and explodes it by way of expounding it. I thought, when I read his exposition, that it would have been a very capital comment upon the text if it had read, “Who will *not* have all men to be saved, nor come to a knowledge of the truth.” Had such been the Inspired language, every remark of the learned doctor would have been exactly in keeping, but as it happens to say, “Who will have all men to be saved,” his observations are more than a little out of place. My love of consistency with my own doctrinal views is not great enough to allow me knowingly to alter a single text of Scripture.

I have great respect for orthodoxy, but my reverence for Inspiration is far greater. I would sooner a hundred times over appear to be inconsistent with *myself* than be inconsistent with the Word of God. I never thought it to be any very great crime to seem to be inconsistent with myself, for who am I that I should everlastingly be consistent? But I do think it a great crime to be so inconsistent with the Word of God that I should need to lop away a bough or even a twig from so much as a single tree of the forest of Scripture. God forbid that I should cut or shape, even in the least degree, any Divine expression. So runs the text and so we must read it, “God our Savior; who will have all men to be saved and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.”

Does not the text mean that it is the *wish* of God that men should be saved? The word, “wish,” gives as much force to the original as it really requires and the passage should run thus—“Whose wish it is that all men should be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth.” As it is my wish that it should be so; as it is *your* wish that it might be so, so it is God’s wish that all men should be saved, for, assuredly, He is not less benevolent than we are! Then comes the question, “But if *He* wishes it to be so, why does He not*make* it so? “Beloved Friend, have you never heard that a fool may ask a question which a wise man cannot answer and, if that is so, I am sure a wise person like yourself can ask me a great many questions which, fool as I am, I am yet not foolish enough to try to answer.

Your question is only one form of the great debate of all the ages—“If God is infinitely good and powerful, why does not His power carry out to the fullest all His beneficence?” It is God’s wish that the oppressed should go free, yet there are many oppressed who are not free. It is God’s wish that the sick should not suffer. Do you doubt it? Is it not your own wish? And yet the Lord does not work a miracle to heal every sick person. It is God’s wish that His creatures should be happy. Do you deny that? He does not interpose by any miraculous agency to make us all happy and yet it would be wicked to suppose that He does not wish the happiness of all the creatures that He has made. He has an infinite benevolence which, nevertheless, is not in all points worked out by His infinite Omnipotence and if anybody asked me why it is not, I cannot tell.

I have never set up to be an explainer of all difficulties and I have no desire to do so. It is the same old question as that of the American slave who said, “Sir, you say the devil makes sin in the world.” “Yes, the devil makes a deal of sin.” “And you say that God hates sin.” “Yes.” “Then why does not He kill the devil and put an end to it?” Just so. Why doesn’t He? Ah, my black Friend, you will grow white before that question is answered! I cannot tell you why God permits moral evil, neither can the ablest philosopher on earth, nor the highest angel in Heaven! This is one of those things which we do not *need* to know. Have you never noticed that some people who are ill and are ordered to take pills are foolish enough to chew them? That is a very nauseous thing to do, though I have done it myself. The right way to take medicine of such a kind is to swallow it at once.

In the same way there are some things in the Word of God which are undoubtedly true which must be swallowed at once by an effort of faith and must not be chewed by perpetual questioning. You will soon have I know not what of doubt and difficulty and bitterness upon your soul if you must know the unknowable and have reasons and explanations for the sublime and the mysterious! Let the difficult doctrines go down whole into your very soul by a grand exercise of confidence in God! I thank God for a thousand things I cannot understand. When I cannot get to know the reason why, I say to myself, “Why should *I*know the reason why? Who am I and what am I, that I should demand explanations of my God?” I am a most unreasonable being when I am most reasonable and when my judgment is most accurate I dare not trust it. I had rather trust my God.

I am a poor silly child at my very best—my Father must know better than I. An old parable maker tells us that he shut himself up in his study because he had to work out a difficult problem. His little child came knocking at the door and he said, “Go away, John—you cannot understand what Father is doing. Let Father alone.” Master Johnny, for that very reason, felt that he must get in and see what Father was doing—a true symbol of our proud intellects! We must pry into forbidden things and uncover that which is concealed. In a little while, there, upon the sill, outside the window, stood Master Johnny looking in through the window at his father! And if his father had not, with most tender care, taken Master Johnny away from that very dangerous position, there would have been no Master Johnny left on the face of the earth to exercise his curiosity in dangerous elevations!

Now, God sometimes shuts the door and says, “My child, it is so. Be content to believe.” “But,” we foolishly cry, “Lord, *why* is it so?” “It is so, My child,” He says. “But why, Father, is it so?” “It is so, My child. Believe Me.” Then we go speculating, climbing the ladders of reasoning, guessing, to reach the lofty windows of eternal Truth. Once up there we do not know where we are! Our heads reel and we are in all kinds of uncertainty and spiritual peril. If we mind things too high for us we shall run great risks. I do not intend meddling with such lofty matters. There stands the text and I believe that it is my Father’s *wish* that “all men should be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth.”

But I know, also, that He does not *will* it, so that He will not save any of them unless they believe in His dear Son, for He has told us over and over that He will not. He will not save any man unless he forsakes his sins and turns to Him with full purpose of heart—that I also know. And I know, too, that He has a people whom He will save, whom by His eternal love He has chosen and whom, by His eternal power, He will deliver. I do not know how that squares with this—that is another of the things I do not know. If I go on telling you of all that I do not know and of all that I do know, I will guarantee you that the things that I do not know will be a hundred to one of the things that I do know!

And so we will say no more about the matter, but just go on to the more practical part of the text. God’s wish about man’s salvation is this— that men should be saved and come to the knowledge of the Truth of God. Men are saved and the same men that are saved come to a knowledge of the Truth. The two things happen together and the two facts very much depend upon each other. God’s way of saving men is not by leaving them in ignorance. It is by a *knowledge* of the Truth of God that men are saved. This will make up the main body of our discourse and, in closing, we shall see how this Truth gives instruction to those who wish to be saved and also to those who desire to save others. May the Holy Spirit make these closing inferences to be practically useful.

Here is our proposition—IT IS BY A KNOWLEDGE OF THE TRUTH THAT MEN ARE SAVED. Observe that stress is laid upon the article—it is *the* truth (Truth of God) and not every truth. Though it is a good thing to know the truth about anything and we ought not to be satisfied to take up with a falsehood upon any point, yet it is not *every* truth that will save us. We are not saved by knowing any one theological truth we may choose to think of, for there are some theological truths which are comparatively of inferior value. They are not vital or essential and a man may know them and yet may not be saved. It is the Truth which saves. Jesus Christ is the Truth! The whole testimony of God about Christ is the Truth of God!

The work of the Holy Spirit in the heart is to work in us the Truth of God. The knowledge of the Truth is a large knowledge. It is not always so at the first. It may begin with but a little knowledge, but it is a large knowledge when it is further developed and the soul is fully instructed in the whole range of the Truth of God. This knowledge of the grand facts which are here called, the Truth, saves men and we will notice its mode of operation. Very often it begins its work in a man by awakening him and thus it saves him from carelessness. He did not know anything about the Truth which God has revealed and so he lived like a brute beast. If he had enough to eat and to drink, he was satisfied. If he laid by a little money he was delighted. So long as the days passed pretty merrily and he was free from aches and pains, he was satisfied.

He heard about religion, but he thought it did not concern him. He supposed that there were some people who might be the better for thinking about it, but as far as *he* was concerned, he thought no more about God or godliness than the ox of the stall or the ostrich of the desert. Well, the Truth of God came to him and he received a knowledge of it. He knew only a part and that a very dark and gloomy part of it, but it stirred him out of his carelessness, for he suddenly discovered that he was under the wrath of God. Perhaps he heard a sermon, or read a tract, or had a practical word addressed to him by some Christian friend and he found out enough to know that, “He that believes not is condemned already, because he has not believed on the Son of God.”

That startled him. “God is angry with the wicked every day”—that amazed him. He had not thought of it; perhaps had not known it—but when he did know it—he could rest no longer. Then he came to a knowledge of this farther Truth of God, that after death there would be a judgment—that he would rise again and that, being risen, he would have to stand before the Judgment Seat of God to give an account of the things which he had done in his body. This came home very strikingly to him. Perhaps, also, such a text as this flamed forth before him—“For every idle word that man shall speak he must give an account in the Day of Judgment.” His mind began to foresee that last tremendous day when on the clouds of Heaven Christ will come and summon the quick and the dead to answer at His Judgment Seat for the whole of their lives.

He did not know that before, but, knowing it, it startled and awakened him! I have known men, when they have first come to a knowledge of this Truth of God, become unable to sleep. They have started up in the night. They have asked those who were with them to help them to pray. The next day they have been scarcely able to mind their business, for a dreadful sound has been in their ears. They feared lest they should stumble into the grave and into Hell! Thus they were saved from carelessness. They could not go back to be the mere brute beasts they were before. Their eyes had been opened to futurity and eternity. Their spirits had been quickened—at least so much that they could not rest in that dull, dead carelessness in which they had formerly been found. They were shaken out of their deadly lethargy by a knowledge of the Truth of God!

The Truth is useful to a man in another way—it saves him from prejudice. Often when men are awakened to know something about the wrath of God they begin to plunge about to discover methods by which they may escape from that wrath. Consulting, first of all, with themselves, they think that if they can reform—give up their grosser sins—and if they can join with religious people, they will make it all right. And there are some who go and listen to a kind of religious teacher who says, “You must do good works. You must *earn* a good character. You must add to all this the ceremonies of our church. You must be particular and precise in receiving blessings only through the appointed channel of the Apostolic succession.”

Of the aforesaid mystical succession, this teacher has the effrontery to assure his dupe that he is a legitimate instrument and that sacraments received at his hands are means of Grace. Under such untruthful notions we have known people who were somewhat awakened, sit down, again, in a false peace. They have done all that they judged right and attended to all that they were told. Suddenly, by God’s Grace, they come to a knowledge of another Truth of God and that is that by the deeds of the Law there shall no flesh be justified in the sight of God! They discover that salvation is *not* by works of the Law or by ceremonies and that if any man is under the Law, he is also under the curse. Such a text as the following comes home, “Not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.”

And such another text as this, “You must be born again.” And then this at the back of it—“That which is born of the flesh is flesh and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.” When they also find out that there is a righteousness better than their own which is necessary—a *perfect* righteousness to justify them before God—and when they discover that they must be made new creatures in Christ Jesus, or else they will utterly perish, *then* they are saved from false confidences, saved from crying, “Peace, peace,” when there is no peace! It is a grand thing when a knowledge of the Truth of God stops us from trusting in a lie!

I am addressing some who remember when they were saved in that way. What an opening of the eyes it was to you! You had a great prejudice against the Gospel of Grace and the plan of salvation by faith. But when the Lord took you in hand and made you see your beautiful righteousness to be a moth-eaten mass of rags and when the gold that you had accumulated suddenly turned into so much brass, cankered and good for nothing—when you stood stripped naked before God and the poor cobwebs of ceremonies suddenly dropped off you, oh, then the Lord was working His salvation in your soul and you were being saved from false confidences by a knowledge of the Truth of God!

Moreover, it often happens that a knowledge of the Truth stands a man in good stead for another purpose—it saves him from despair. Unable to be careless and unable to find comfort in false confidences, some poor agitated minds are driven into a wide and stormy sea without rudder or compass, with nothing but wreck before them. “There is no hope for me,” says the man. “I perceive I cannot save myself. I see that I am lost. I am dead in trespasses and sins and cannot stir hand or foot. Surely, I may as well go on in sin and even multiply my transgressions. The gate of Mercy is shut against me—what is the use of fear where there is no room for hope?”

At such a time, if the Lord leads the man to a knowledge of His Truth, he perceives that though his sins are as scarlet, they shall be as wool and though they are red like crimson they shall be as white as snow! That precious doctrine of Substitution comes in—that Christ stood in the place of the sinner; that the transgression of His people was laid upon Him and that God, by thus avenging sin in the Person of His dear Son and honoring His Law by the suffering of the Savior, is now able to declare pardon to the penitent and Grace to the believing!

Now, when the soul comes to know that sin is put away by the atoning blood—when the heart discovers that it is not *our* life that saves us, but the life of God that comes to *dwell in us*—that we are not to be regenerated by our own actions, but are regenerated by the Holy Spirit who comes to us through the precious death of Jesus, then despair flies away and the soul cries exultingly, “There *is* hope! There is hope! Christ died for sinners—why should I not have a part in that precious death? He came like a physician to heal the sick—why should He not heal me? Now I perceive that He does not want my goodness, but my badness! He does not need my righteousness, but my unrighteousness, for He came to save the ungodly and to redeem His people from their sins!” I say, when the heart comes to a knowledge of *this* Truth of God, then it is saved from despair and this is no small part of the salvation of Jesus Christ!

A saving knowledge of the Truth, to take another line of things, works in this way. A knowledge of the Truth shows a man his personal *need* of being saved. O you that are not saved and who dream you do not need to be, you only require to know the Truth of God and you will perceive that you must be saved or lost forever! A knowledge of the Truth reveals the Atonement by which we are saved! A knowledge of the Truth shows us what that faith is by which the Atonement becomes available for us. A knowledge of the Truth teaches us that faith is the simple act of trusting, that it is not an action of which man may boast—it is not an action of the nature of a *work*, so as to be a fruit of the Law—but faith is a self-denying Grace which finds all its strength in Him upon whom it lives and lays all its honor upon Him.

Faith is not self in action but self *forsaken*, self *abhorred*, self put away that the soul may trust in Christ and trust in Christ alone! There are persons now present who are puzzled about what faith is. We have tried to explain it a great many times to you, but we have explained it so that you did not understand it any the better. And yet the same explanation has savingly instructed others! May God the Holy Spirit open *your* understandings that you may practically know what faith is and at once exercise it. I suppose that it is a very hard thing to understand because it is so plain. When a man wishes the way of salvation to be difficult, he naturally kicks at it because it is easy. And, when his pride wants it to be hard to be understood, he is pretty sure to say that he does not understand it because it is so plain.

Don’t you know that the unlettered often receive Christ when philosophers refuse Him and that He who has not called many of the great and many of the mighty, has chosen poor, foolish and despised things? That is because poor foolish men, you know, are willing to believe a plain thing, but men wise in their own conceits desire to be, if they can, a little confounded and puzzled that they may please themselves with the idea that their own superior intellect has made a discovery and, because the way of salvation is just so easy that almost an idiot boy may lay hold of it, therefore they pretend that they do not understand it!

Some people cannot see a thing because it is too high up. But there are others who cannot see it because it is too low down. Now, it so happens that the way of salvation by faith is so simple that it seems beneath the dignity of exceedingly clever men. May God bring them to a knowledge of this Truth! May they see that they cannot be saved except by giving up all idea of saving themselves! May they see that they cannot be saved except they step right into Christ, for, until they get to the end of the *creature*, they will never get to the beginning of the Creator! Till they empty out their pockets of every moldy crust and have not a crumb left, they cannot come and take the rich mercy which is stored up in Christ Jesus for every empty, needy sinner! May the Lord be pleased to give you that knowledge of His Truth!

When a man comes, in very deed, to a knowledge of the Truth of God about faith in Christ, he trusts Christ and he is then and there saved from the guilt of sin and he begins to be saved altogether from sin. God cuts the root of the power of sin that very day, but yet it has such life within itself that at the scent of water it will bud again. Sin in our members struggles to live. It has as many lives as a cat—there is no killing it. Now, when we come to a knowledge of the Truth, we begin to learn how sin is to be killed in us—how the same Christ that justifies, sanctifies and works in us according to His working—works in us mightily that we may be conformed to His image and made meet to dwell with perfect saints above.

Beloved, many of you that are saved from the guilt of sin have a very hard struggle with the power of sin and have much more conflict, perhaps, than you need to have, because you have not come to a knowledge of all the Truth about indwelling sin. I therefore beg you to study much the Word of God upon that point and especially to see the adaptation of Christ to rule over your nature and to conquer all your corrupt desires and learn how, by faith, to bring each sin before Him that, like Agag, it may be hewed in pieces before His eyes. You will never overcome sin except by the blood of the Lamb! There is no sanctification except by faith. The same instrument which destroys sin as to its guilt must slay sin as to its power. “They overcame by the blood of the Lamb,” and so must you. Learn this Truth well, and you shall find salvation worked in you from day to day.

Now, I think I hear somebody say, “I think I know all about this.” Yes, you may think you know it and may not know anything at all about it! “Oh, but,” says one, “I do know it. I learned the ‘Assembly’s Catechism’ when I was a child. I have read the Bible ever since and I am well acquainted with all the commonplaces of orthodoxy.” That may be, dear Friend, and yet you may not know the Truth of God. I have heard of a man who knew how to swim, but, as he had never been in the water, I do not think much of his knowledge of swimming. In fact, he did not really know the art. I have heard of a botanist who understood all about flowers, but as he lived in London and scarcely ever saw above one poor withered thing in a flowerpot, I do not think much of his botany.

I have heard of a man who was a very great astronomer, but he had not a telescope and I never thought much of his astronomy. So there are many persons who *think* they know and yet do *not* know because they have never had any personal acquaintance with the thing. A mere notional knowledge or a dry doctrinal knowledge is of no use. We must know the Truth of God in a very different way from that. How are we to know it, then? Well, we are to know it, first, by a *believing* knowledge. You do not know a thing unless you believe it to be really so. If you doubt it, you do not know it. If you say, “I really am not sure it is true,” then you cannot say that you know it. That which the Lord has revealed in Holy Scripture you must devoutly believe to be true.

In addition to this, your knowledge, if it becomes believing knowledge, must be *personal* knowledge—a persuasion that it is true in reference to *yourself*. It is true about your neighbor, about your brother, but you must believe it about yourself, or your knowledge is vain! For instance, you must know that *you* are lost—that you are in danger of eternal exclusion from the Presence of God. You must *know* that, for you, there is no hope but in Christ—that for you there is hope if you rest in Christ—that resting in Christ you are saved. Yes, you! *You* must know that because you have trusted in Christ you are saved and that now you are free from condemnation and that now, in you, the new life has begun which will fight against the old life of sin until it overcomes and you, even you, are safely landed on the golden shore! There must be a *personal* appropriation of what you believe to be true. That is the kind of knowledge which saves the soul.

And this must be a *powerful* knowledge, by which I mean that it must operate in and upon your *mind*. A man is told that his house is on fire. I will suppose that standing here, I held up a telegram and said, “My Friend, is your name So-and-So?” “Yes.” “Well, your house is on fire.” He knows the fact, does he not? Yes, but he sits quite still. Now, my impression about that good Brother is that he does *not* know, for he does not believe it. He cannot believe it! Surely he may believe that *somebody’s* house is on fire, but not his own. If it is his house which is burning and he knows it, what does he do? Why he gets up and goes off to see what he can do towards saving his goods! That is the kind of knowledge which saves the soul—when a man knows the Truth of God about himself and, therefore, his whole nature is moved and affected by the knowledge!

Do I know that I am in danger of Hell fire? And am I in my senses? Then I shall never rest till I have escaped from that danger! Do I know that there is salvation for me in Christ? Then I never shall be content until I have obtained that salvation by the faith to which that salvation is promised—that is to say, if I really am in my senses and if my sin has not made me beside myself as sin does. For sin works a moral madness upon the mind of man so that he puts bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter and dances on the jaws of Hell and sits down and scoffs at Almighty mercy. He despises the precious blood of Christ and will have none of it, although then and there, only, is His salvation to be found! This knowledge, when it really comes to save the soul, is what we call experimental knowledge— knowledge acquired, according to the exhortation of the Psalmist, “Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good”—acquired by tasting.

Now, at this present moment, I, speaking for myself, know that I am originally lost by nature. Do I believe it? Believe it? I am as sure of it as I am of my own existence! I know that I am lost by nature. It would not be possible for anybody to make me doubt that. I have felt it. How many weary days I spent under the pressure of that knowledge! Does a soldier know that there is such a thing as a cat when he has had a hundred lashes? It would take a deal of argument to make him believe there is not such a thing, or that backs do not smart when they feel the lash. Oh, how my soul smarted under the lash of conscience when I suffered under a sense of sin!

Do I know that I couldn’t save myself? Know it? Why, my poor, struggling heart labored this way and that, even as in the very fire with bitter disappointment, for I labored to climb to the stars on a tread wheel and I was trying and trying and trying with all my might but never rose an inch higher! I tried to fill a bottomless tub with leaking buckets and worked on and toiled and slaved but never accomplished even the beginning of my unhappy task! I*know*, for I have tried it, that salvation is *not* in man, or in all the feelings and weeping and prayers and Bible reading and Church goings and Chapel goings which zeal could crowd together! Nothing whatever that man does can do any good for him towards his own salvation. This I know by sad trial of it and failure in it.

But I do know that there is real salvation by believing in Christ. Know it? I have never preached to you concerning that subject what I do not know by experience! In a moment, when I believed in Christ, I leaped from despair to fullness of delight! Since I have believed in Jesus I have found myself totally changed altogether from what I was and I find, now, that in proportion as I trust in Jesus, I love God and try to serve Him! But if at any time I begin to trust in myself, I forget my God and I become selfish and sinful. Just as I keep on being *nothing* and taking Christ to be *everything*, so am I led in the paths of righteousness!

I am talking of myself because a man cannot bear witness about other people so thoroughly us he can about himself. I am sure that all of you who have tried my Master can bear the same witness. You have been saved and you have come to a knowledge of the Truth of God *experimentally*. And every soul here that would be saved must, in the same way, believe the Truth, appropriate the Truth, act upon the Truth and experimentally know the Truth which is summed up in few words—“Man lost— Christ His Savior. Man nothing—God All in All. The heart depraved—the Spirit working the new life by faith.” The Lord grant that these Truths of God may come home to your hearts with power! I am now going to draw two inferences which are to be practical.

The first one is this—in regard TO YOU THAT ARE SEEKING SALVATION. Does not the text show you that it is very possible that the reason why you have not found salvation is because you do not know the Truth of God? Therefore, I do most earnestly entreat the many of you young people who cannot get rest to be very diligent searchers of your Bibles. The first thing and the main thing is to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, but if you say, “I do not understand it,” or, “I cannot believe,” or if there is any such doubt rising in your mind, then it may be because you have not gained complete knowledge of the Truth of God.

It is very possible that somebody will say to you, “Believe, believe, believe.” I would say the same to you, but I should like you to act upon the commonsense principle of knowing *what* is to be believed and in *whom* you are to believe. I explained this to one who came to me a few evenings ago. She said that she could not believe. “Well,” I said, “now suppose, as you sit in that chair, I say to you, ‘Young Friend, I cannot believe in you.’ You would say to me, ‘I think you should.’ Suppose I then replied, ‘I wish I could.’ What would you bid me do? Should I sit still and look at you till I said, ‘I think I can believe in you’? That would be ridiculous! No, I should go and inquire, ‘Who is this young person? What kind of character does she bear? What are her connections?’ And when I knew all about you, then I have no doubt that I would say, ‘I have made examination into this young woman’s character and I cannot help believing her.’”

Now, it is just so with Jesus Christ. If you say, “I cannot believe in Him,” read those four blessed testimonies of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John and especially linger much over those parts where they tell you of His death. Do you know that many, while they have been sitting, as it were, at the foot of the Cross viewing the Son of God dying for men, have cried out, “I cannot help believing! I cannot help believing! When I see my sin, it seems too great, but when I see my Savior, my iniquity vanishes away”?

I think I have put it to you, sometimes, like this—if you take a ride through London, from end to end, it will take you many days to get an idea of its vastness, for probably none of us know the size of London. After your long ride of inspection you will say,” I wonder how those people can all be fed. I cannot make it out. Where does all the bread come from and all the butter and all the cheese and all the meat and everything else? Why, these people will be starved! It is not possible that Lebanon with all its beasts and the vast plains of Europe and America should ever supply sufficient food for all this multitude.”

That is your feeling. And then, tomorrow morning you get up and you go to Covent Garden. You go to the great meat markets and to other sources of supply and when you come home you say, “I feel quite different now, for now I cannot make out where all the people will come from to eat all these provisions—I never saw so much food in all my life! Why, if there were two Londons, surely there is enough, here, to feed them.” Just so— when you think about your sins and your needs, you get to saying, “How can I be saved?” Now, turn your thoughts the other way! Think that Christ is the Son of God! Think of what the merit must be of the Incarnate God’s bearing human guilt! And instead of saying, “My sin is too great,” you will almost think the atoning Sacrifice too great! Therefore I urge you to try and know more of Christ and I am only giving you the advice of Isaiah, “Incline your ear and come unto Me; hear and your soul shall live.”

Know, hear, read and believe more about these precious things, always with this wish—“I am not hearing for hearing’s sake and I am not wishing to know for knowing’s sake, but I am wanting to hear and to know that I may be saved.” I want you to be like the woman that lost her piece of silver. She did not light a candle and then say, “Bravo, I have lit a candle, that is enough!” She did not take her broom and then sit down content, crying, “What a splendid broom!” When she raised a dust she did not exclaim, “What a dust I am making! I am surely making progress now!”

Some poor sinners, when they have been seeking, get into a dust of soul-trouble and think it to be a comfortable sign. No, I’ll guarantee you, the woman wanted her coin—she did not mind the broom, or the dust, or the candle—she looked for the silver! So it must be with you. Never content yourself with the reading, the hearing, or the feeling. It is Christ you need! It is the precious piece of money that you must find! And you must sweep until you find it. Why, there it is! There is Jesus! Take Him! Take Him! Believe Him now, even now, and you are saved!

The last inference is for YOU WHO DESIRE TO SAVE SINNERS. You must, dear Friends, bring the Truth before them when you want to bring them to Jesus Christ. I believe that exciting meetings do good to some. Men are so dead and careless that almost *anything* is to be tolerated that wakes them up. But for real solid soul-work before God, telling men the Truth of God is the main thing. What Truth of God? It is Gospel Truth— Truth about Christ that they need. Tell it in a loving, earnest, affectionate way, for God wills that they should be saved, not in any other way, but in this way—by a knowledge of the Truth of God.

He wills that all men should be saved in this way—not by keeping them in ignorance, but by bringing the Truth of God before them. That is God’s way of saving them. Have your Bible handy when you are reasoning with a soul. Just say, “Let me call your attention to this passage.” It has a wonderful power over a poor staggering soul to point to the Book, itself. Say, “Did you notice this promise, my dear Friend? And have you seen that passage?” Have the Scriptures handy. There is a dear Brother of mine here whom God blesses to many souls and I have seen him talking to some and turning to the texts very handily. I wondered how he did it so quickly, till I looked in his Bible and found that he had the choice texts printed on two leaves and inserted into the Bible so that he could always open to them.

That is a capital plan, to get the cheering words ready to hand, the very ones that you know have comforted you and have comforted others! It sometimes happens that one single verse of God’s Word will make the light to break into a soul when 50 days of reasoning would not do it. I notice that when souls are saved, it is by our *texts* rather than by our sermons. God the Holy Spirit loves to use His own Sword! It is God’s Word, not man’s comment on God’s Word, that God usually blesses. Therefore, stick to the quotation of the Scripture, itself, and rely upon the Truth of God. If a man could be saved by a lie it would be a lying salvation. Only the Truth of God can work results that are true. Therefore, keep on teaching the Truth! God help you to proclaim His precious Truths about the bleeding, dying, risen, exalted, coming Savior and God will bless it.

**LETTER FROM MR. SPURGEON**  
DEAR FRIENDS—Accept, again, my heartiest salutations. I hope soon to issue sermons preached at home on the previous Sabbaths, for I purpose, if the Lord wills, to leave this shelter on February 2, or thereabouts. Six weeks of continuous fine weather have, by God’s blessing, delivered me from my pains and enabled me to regain a large measure of strength. And the daily good tidings from home have also helped to quiet my mind and revive my spirit. O that I may be the better for this affliction! As after heavy showers the fountains and brooks run with new force and fullness, so may it be with these sermons, now that, with me, “the rain is over and gone.” If you, dear Readers, are the more refreshed I shall count pain and weakness to be a small cost for so blessed a result.

Yours most heartily, ***C. H. SPURGEON*** Mentone, January 16, 1880 Adapted from*The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307.  
**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.**  
Sermon #1436 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

**÷1Ti 3.15**

WHAT THE CHURCH SHOULD BE  
NO. 1436

**DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, SEPTEMBER 29, 1878, *BY C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“That you may know how you ought to behave yourself in the house of God, which is the Church of the living God, the pillar and basement of the Truth.”*** 1Ti 3:15***.***

PAUL’S design in this Epistle was to instruct young Timothy how he should behave himself in the Church of God, so as to discharge his office as minister, evangelist and pastor with honor to himself and profit to the people. He reminds him that the Church is the house of God and in God’s own house a man ought to be upon his best behavior, for it is no light thing to draw near unto the Lord. A poor man who is called to visit a prince or king will anxiously enquire how he ought to act. We, poor creatures that we are, when we are admitted into the Church which is the house of God, should enquire what conduct will be decorous and comely in those who are admitted into the Presence of the great King and permitted to dwell within His palace gates.

Especially should each of us endeavor to behave himself aright in the house of God if we know that we are looked up to and imitated. All who teach the young, all who are parents, all who are persons of age and experience, all who occupy influential positions and especially all deacons, elders and preachers should pray the Lord that they may know how they may behave themselves in the house of God, lest inadvertently their misbehavior should be injurious to the weaker sort. Such need to learn how they should behave to their brethren, to the Elder Brother and to the great Father of all. We need to learn the ways of the house, the customs of the palace.

Part of the objective of the sermon this morning will be that those of us who are in the house of God may learn how we should behave in it—but special prominence will be given to steadfastness in the faith which makes a man not only a dweller in the Church but a pillar of it. I am not going to trouble you, this morning, with the various interpretations which have been given to the passage before us. It has been a sort of Plain of Esdraelon, where battles have been fought from time immemorial. Many suggestions have been made as to its interpretation, so as to avoid the sense given in our version because that sense has been perverted into a defense of the Romish church. It seems to me, however, looking at it as carefully as I am able to do, that our translation is about the best possible one and I feel sure that it has in it the mind of God.

Probably the sense would never have been disputed if it had not been for the controversies which have arisen in which this verse has been misused and misrepresented. I am rather suspicious of interpretations which arise out of controversies. What have we to do with giving either a Protestant or a Catholic sense to Scripture? Is it not our duty to give the *true* sense, be it what it may? There can never be any justification for twisting

Scripture in order to wrench it out of an enemy’s hand. Nor is there any need in this case, even if it were allowable! In vain has the Romish church tried to gather from this verse that she is the great source of truth, for the passage can never apply to her, since she has utterly gone aside from the Truth of God and is described by the Apostle in the verses which follow the text as departing from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, forbidding to marry and so forth.

Popery or no popery, let us take the Word of God in its natural and evident meaning, and we shall be instructed thereby. May God the Holy Spirit enable us to understand His own word.

**I.** First, I shall at some length expound the text, and then try to enforce the lesson from it. In expounding it, I see three things to note, and the first is THE GLORIOUS NAME OF THE CHURCH—“The Church of the living God.” First, it is called the Church. What is a church? It is an assembly—and a Christian Church is an assembly of faithful men—of men who know the Truth of God, believe it, acknowledge it boldly and adhere to it.

The Greek word signifies an assembly summoned out of the whole population to exercise the right of citizenship. An ecclesia, or church, is not a mob, nor a disorderly gathering rushing together without end or purpose, but a regular assembly of persons called out by Grace and gathered together by the Holy Spirit. Those persons make up the assembly of the living God! In order to be a Christian Church, there must be a selection and a calling out—and that calling must come from God who alone can call effectually. Touching all the members of this select assembly there is an eternal purpose which is the original reason of their being called—and to each of them there is an effectual calling whereby they actually gather into the Church.

Then, also, there is a hedging and fencing about of this Church, by which it is maintained as a separate body, distinct from all the rest of mankind. The command which calls them away from the world is very clear—“Come out from among them and be you separate, says the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and you shall be My sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty.” The Church is not a number of unregenerate people coming together entirely of their own notion to defend such-and-such dogmas. Such persons may form a *club*, but they cannot make a Church! There must be a coming together of renewed men, in the name of Jesus, by the power of the Holy Spirit—and these must meet for purposes which God Himself ordains—and be joined together after His own fashion.

Jesus must be the uniting cornerstone and His Spirit the indwelling power, as it is written, “In whom you also are built together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.” But the title grows upon us when we read it as “the Church of God.” There is a Synagogue of Satan and there is a Church of God. There are churches so-called which are not of God, though they take upon themselves His name. But what an honor it is to be one of the assembly of God, to be one of those whom God has chosen, whom God has called, whom God has quickened, whom God has sanctified, whom God loves and calls His own! How honored is that assembly in which He resides! The text speaks not of the church of a country, or of a city, nor of the church of king or prelate, but of the Church of God!

Blessed be God, since Jesus Christ ascended up on high there has never ceased to be a Church of God in the earth, generally hidden and concealed, often persecuted and always despised, yet still living! This Church, like its Lord, has been more often found among the poor than among the rich, more frequently confessing at the stake than honored in the palace. Still has she been present bearing witness for the Truth of God even in the darkest times. There has been left to us a remnant, according to the election of Grace, in every age—I speak not, now, of this denomination nor of that—but of the truly spiritual people who have witnessed faithfully in the life and power of God to the Truth of God as it is in Jesus. This is the Church of God!

The title is enhanced in its excellency by the word which is applied to God. It is, “The Church of the living God”—not *your* congregation, O Diana, though they said of you that you did fall from Heaven, for you are a lifeless image! What was Diana of the Ephesians? What life or power was in that senseless block? Timothy knew that the assembly which gathered in the name of Diana was not called out by a living god. Brethren, it is a glorious fact that our God, the God of the Church, lives and reigns, and that He shows His life all around us! We see Him sustaining Nature, ruling Providence and reigning in the midst of His Church! And while we see Him we adore Him. Jehovah is the living God and the Divine Life is seen in each of the adorable Persons of the Godhead. Our Lord Jesus Christ is not to us a dead Christ—we love and bless Him because He once died upon the Cross—and we adore Him because He always lives to make intercession for us!

We are bold to preach the Gospel because of His living power and we are earnest to observe His commands because we acknowledge His living government in the midst of the Church. The living God proves His life among us by the Holy Spirit, by the conversion of sinners, by comforting and instructing saints and by edifying the faithful into a building fitly framed together. Since, then, the Church belongs to the living God, what is a dead church? Is that the church of the living God? How can it be? Only as you and I possess the Spirit of God quickening us to a life of godliness may we dare to think ourselves a part of the Church of the living God! If you have never been quickened by the Spirit of God; if you are dead in trespasses and sins, what have you to do with the Church of the living God?

O you dead and corrupt, how can you have communion with the living in Zion?! Only when you live unto God may you be built up as living stones into the living Temple of the living God! The thing most to be dreaded in any one Church is the decay of life. We may soon fall into formalism and even hold the Truth in the cold grip of spiritual death! Prayer may be neglected and the other offices of spiritual life may be disregarded and then all will languish. “You have the name that you live and are dead” is the dreadful sentence which must be written across the brow of a merely nominal church! Brethren, if we would be the Church of the living God, we must be thoroughly alive unto God!

What an august body is this Church of the living God! Where do I see it? I say not that I see the whole of it, for as yet this bride of Christ is in the making. As Adam saw not Eve until she was perfected and, therefore, we cannot suppose that she saw herself, so we see no visible embodiment of the entire Church of Christ nor shall we see it until Christ shall come a second time and shall present her unto Himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing. Today we must walk very much by faith as to the Church of Christ, for her members are yet being fashioned and are best discerned by spiritual men. Happy are we if we are members of that Church, yes, members of Christ Himself by the living faith which unites us to the living God!

Never let us speak disrespectfully of the Church of God, nor think of her with other than love and with intense devotion to her interests, for she belongs to God! Let us pray for her peace and prosperity, since she is the City of the great King. Let us ask the Lord daily to make His own Church more and more visible and powerful in the midst of mankind, that she may come forth “fair as the moon, clear as the sun and terrible as an army with banners.”

**II.** Now, secondly we will consider HER DESIGN IN REFERENCE TO GOD. The Apostle speaks of the Church of the living God as the house of God. This is a very beautiful and instructive figure. “The Most High dwells not in temples made with hands,” whether they are called cathedrals, churches, or meeting houses. Today there is no consecrated shrine, no appointed building where we must resort if we would meet with God, for behold the Lord is to be found everywhere by those who worship Him in spirit and in truth! True hearts view the entire universe as a temple wherein everyone speaks of the Glory of God. Yet there *is* a shrine and a temple, but it is living and spiritual—the called-out assembly—the Church of the living God is the special abode of Deity.

I suppose we are to understand, first, by the Church being God’s house, that it is the place of His worship. As of old the temple was the holy place to which the children of Israel went up in pilgrimage, the point towards which they opened their windows when they prayed and the place of the one altar and the one sacrifice. So now the Church of God is the only place of God’s true worship. He is spiritually worshipped nowhere else. They who were never called and never quickened by Him may *pretend* to worship Him, but what is dead worship to the *living* God? They may profess to serve Him with gorgeous ceremonies, smoking incense and harmonious music—but what is this to Him who is a Spirit and must be worshipped in spirit and in truth?

It is only where men are spiritual that there can be spiritual worship! It is only with their love, their trust and joy in the name of Jesus and with their prayers and praises presented by the power of the Holy Spirit that God is to be worshipped at all! Do not dream, you ungodly, that you can worship the living God! The first essential to your acceptance is that you accept His salvation. Be first reconciled to Him by the death of His Son— for how shall His enemies present to Him acceptable praises? You must become a part of the living Church by being born again, or else you cannot worship the Lord at all!

But I like better, still, to get away from the somewhat ceremonious idea of a *temple* to the more familiar thought of a house or home. The Lord makes the Church the place of His indwelling. The thought, itself, is charming. It is that old prophecy fulfilled, “I will dwell in them and walk in them.” God calls His Church a house in the sense of His residing there! He is everywhere, but His special resort, the place of His feet, the home of His heart, is His called-out congregation, His elect, redeemed, regenerated, sanctified Church! Does not this invest Believers with a wondrous dignity, that God should dwell in them? “Know you not that your bodies are the temples of the Holy Spirit?” God dwells in you! If you are, indeed, quickened of the Spirit, the Spirit abides in you and shall be with you forever!

Of the Church we read, “God is in the midst of her, she shall not be moved.” In his own house, a man not only dwells, for he might do that in any inn—but there he feels himself to be at home and, therefore, it is the place of his manifestation. You do not see the real man on the bench, for there you see a judge—nor on business, for there you see a trader—but at home with the children! As one of them, you see the man, the father, the husband! You see his heart and soul. And God is not seen in all the universe with anything like the degree of clearness that He is beheld in the midst of His people! The Lord God is more gloriously manifested in His people than in all the works of creation.

First, in the Person of His Son He has revealed Himself right gloriously! And then in all those who are united to His Son, He manifests Himself to us as He does not unto the world. Oh, what unbending of Divine majesty have we seen! What unveilings of the incomprehensible! What revelations of the infinite has the Lord caused to pass before His Church! “I sat down under His shadow with great delight, and His fruit was sweet unto my taste.” “He brought me into the banqueting house and His banner over me was love.” It is in the midst of His Church that we see our Lord and are glad! A man’s house is, also, the place of his paternal rule. In the Church we are under the present rule of our heavenly Father.

In the Church of God you will sometimes see this very remarkably. I believe that when Paul said, concerning certain offenses in the Church, “For this cause some are sickly among you and many sleep,” he gave us a hint of the remarkable discipline which the great Head of the house exerts over Church members. I do not say over members of all churches, but I say that among members of pure churches there is a solemn discipline going on, for the Lord is jealous over His house and He will be sanctified in them that come near unto Him. Therefore “be you clean that bear the vessels of the Lord.”

If a man is a father, he expects that his word should rule his household. In the blessed household of God our Father, our Lord is the only ruler! In God’s house we know no Law but God’s Law and we acknowledge no legislator but Jesus, who said, “One is your Master, even Christ, and all you are brethren.” Blessed is that rule and blessed are they who submit to it, obeying His commandments, listening to the voice of His Word! God grant us Grace to stand up for the crown rights of King Jesus and the paternal authority of God in His own Church! And never may we idolize any merely human authority in the Church, however long the usurpation

may have continued. If any come among us and speak not according to His Word, let us judge that they have no light in them and let us give no place for subjection to them—no, not for an hour!

Once again, it is for his own house that a man works and spends his strength. It is the object of his choicest purposes. If a man shall compass sea and land to gain gold, it is for his house. If he rises up early and sits up late and eats the bread of carefulness, it is still for his house. And so the great Householder rules all things for His chosen family and the end and the design of all Providence, if we were to trace it to its ultimate objective, is the good of them that love God and are the called according to His purpose! The Lord’s people are His portion and His inheritance. Dwelling in them, He regards them as His palace—He looks upon the Church as the eye of the universe, the joy of the earth, the crown of all His works! Towards her His thoughts of love go forth and for her are His Words of Truth and acts of power!

We will not leave this point without observing how holy, then, should all members of Christian Churches be! “Holiness becomes your house.” An unholy member of a Church of the living God?! What shall I say? Let that black stone be wet with tears of penitence this very day and then may it be washed in the blood of Jesus! O members of the Church, is your conduct inconsistent with your profession? Judge yourself and be zealous and repent! All of us may well humble ourselves in the sight of God and ask Him to cleanse us that we may be fit for Him to dwell in. How obedient, also, should we be—for if we are a part of the house of God, let it be our joy to submit ourselves to the Master.

When we were children in the home of a loving father, his rule was not irksome to us—and with such a Father as our God we admit that His Commandments are not grievous. Let us obey carefully and joyfully, each one of us. How struck with awe ought every Church member to be to think that he is built into God’s house! Truly, as I enter among the people of God, I feel bound to cry with Jacob, “How dreadful is this place! It is none other than the house of God!” Take not lightly upon yourselves a profession of Christianity! And when you have been baptized into the name of Christ and are united with His Church, see that you walk circumspectly and that you adorn the doctrines of God, your Savior, in all things.

At the same time, how full of love ought we to be, for God *is* Love! A house is no home if love is absent and a Church of the living God is unchurchly if there is division among the Brethren. Is it not written, “The Father Himself loves you”? “Little children, love one another”? “God is love and he that dwells in love dwells in God, and God in Him”? Thus have we spoken upon the design of the Church in reference to God—the tug of war comes in the third place.

**III.** THE DESIGN OF THE CHURCH IN REFERENCE TO THE TRUTH. Paul compares it to a pillar and its pedestal or *basement*, for that, I think, would be a fair translation. The temple of Diana, at Ephesus, was adorned with more than a hundred columns of stupendous size. They were mostly of Parian marble and were either furnished by the various cities of Asia as offerings to the goddess, or were contributed by wealthy men and princes. These pillars are said to have been immense monoliths—single stones of 60 feet in height—and they were set upon a basement which was elevated ten steps above the surrounding area.   
Diana had her pillar and her basement, but she had no pillar or basement of the Truth of God—hers was all imposture throughout. Now, Paul calls the Church of God the basement and pillar of the Truth. What does He mean? Notice, that she is not the *creator* of the Truth, nor the inventor and fashioner of *doctrine*. You would think from the talk of certain divines, nowadays, that the Church of God must surely be a manufactory of notions, a school of inventions where clever men think out new gospels for new times, or, like spiders, spin out of themselves fresh webs as the old ones are broken!   
Our admiration is solicited for those who are “abreast of the times” and who keep pace with the wonderful advance of the 19th Century. Now, the Church of God is not the inventor of the Truth of God—she is the pillar and basement of it! Let it be remembered, also, that the figure must not be pushed beyond what it was meant to teach. In a certain sense the Church *cannot* be the pillar and basement of the Truth. Truth is true of itself and owes its origin to God Himself and the nature of things. The Church is not here described as the deepest foundation of the Truth, for the basement of the pillar of the Truth of God rests on a Rock and the Church rests on God, the Rock of Ages.   
But the Truth of God, in itself, is one thing, as truth as existing in the world is another thing! You often hear it said at public meetings that truth is mighty and will prevail. I dare say the proverb is true, but if you put a truth away on the shelf and no man mentions it for ages, it will *not* prevail! Truth never prevails till some living mind believes it, vindicates it and proclaims it abroad. The person who thus takes up a grand Truth of God, declares it, fights for it and makes it known, may be very properly called the pillar and the basis of the cause, for the spread of the principle depends upon him. We may say of the Reformation, Luther was its pillar and basement—or of Methodism the same might be said of Wesley.   
Note how, in another place, Paul says that James and Cephas and John seemed to be pillars—that is to say, they held up the good cause. There are men alive at this day of whom we may say, “They are the pillars of the cause,” and in the same sense the Church of God is the pillar and the basement of the Truth of God among mankind. Notice that the text speaks of, “The Church of God,” meaning all the people of God and not the clergy, alone. There is a very grave lesson here. We frequently hear it said, “So-and-So is gone into the church.” Now remember that everybody who has gone into Christ Jesus has gone into the Church, but no one else! The clergy are not the Church! It would be a great pity if they were.   
In all Churches of the living God it is a great fault if the whole of the people are not recognized in the work of the Lord, in the affairs of His house and especially in the maintenance of His Truth. As fish are said to stink first at the head, so will you find that the first people to depart from the Truth are those who ought to be the very last, namely, the professed teachers of it! If the people could but speak so as to be heard, we should not have one-half the heresy which now defiles the house of God! The people are very often put on one side, as if they were not at all to be considered, but were to be managed and catered to by their spiritual lords! Then, alas, these great ones betray the cause and sell Christ as cheaply as Judas did! They mix up the teaching of the Spirit with the conceit of the flesh and become so wise that they refuse to know Christ and Him crucified.   
They will not keep to the Scriptures, but dive down into their own thoughts and imaginations till they stir the mud at the bottom of their subjects and do not, themselves, know where they are, nor can any man tell them! Most of the false doctrine in the world has been suggested by those whose very office it is to preach the Truth! Hence the Truth of God is not trusted to the ministry—it is based and pillared upon the whole Church! The poor old bed-ridden Sister who sings of Jesus’ everlasting love is quite as much a defender of the faith as an archbishop—perhaps more! The unlettered peasant who knows the doctrines of Grace by deep experience and, therefore, will never let them go, is as true a guardian of the Gospel treasure as the most profound scholar! And perhaps far more so. The whole of you who really love God are set for the maintenance of the Truth of God in the world! Under God the Holy Spirit, the cause of Truth depends upon you— you are its pillar and its basement!   
What does the expression mean—the pillar and basement? I think it means, first, that in the Church, the Truth should abide. In the Church of the living God it always *does* abide, even as a pillar stirs not from its place. In the confession of the Church, made by each one of her members; in the teaching of her ministers and in the witness of the whole body, the Truth of God will be found at all times. The Church of God is not the quicksand of the Truth, but the pillar and pedestal of it—she is not the floating island of the Truth, but the eternal column of it. The Church stands steadfast and unmovable as a pillar of Truth fixed on its base. If you find not the Truth of God anywhere else, you will find it in the Church of the living God, which is Truth’s castle and stronghold.   
“In which church?” you ask. I said in the Church of the living God! I did not say in the Church of England, nor in the Church of Scotland, nor in the Wesleyan Church, nor in the Baptist Church, nor even in the assembly of Exclusive Brethren! But I did say that the Truth of God is as a treasure in the Church of the living God and it is never removed from her keeping! Therefore, if the Truth of God is not maintained by any so-called church, it is not the Church of God! When the Truth of God is given up, everything is given up! The very idea of a Church involves the retaining of the Truth with constant steadfastness and if this is neglected, the so-called church has nothing left in it but the name! As a pillar and its base are always in one place, so will the Church be a fixed, permanent and unalterable column of Gospel Truth— and woe to her if she is not!   
Secondly, “the pillar and basement,” means that in the true Church the Truth of God is lifted up as upon a pillar. Truth not only rests there as on a pedestal, but it stands upright as a pillar! It is the duty and the privilege of the Church of God to exalt the Truth into the open view of all mankind. Possibly you may have seen the column of Trajan, or the column in the Place Vendome in Paris—these may serve as illustrations. Around these shafts you see the victories of the conqueror pictured in relief and lifted into the air, that all may see them.   
Now, the Church of God is a pillar which lifts up and publishes, far and wide, the achievements of our conquering Lord! It says to all mankind, “God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into Glory.” I may give an illustration of a pillar being said to speak from our own column commemorating the great fire of London which is popularly called the Monument. It used to bear an inscription to the effect that the papists burned the city, a charge which no one now believes. The poet Pope said of it ***— “Where London’s column, pointing to the skies,   
Like a tall bully, lifts its head and lies.”***Now I shall venture to alter the lines, and say ***—   
“See Christ’s own Church, still pointing to the sky,   
Like a tall champion, lifts His Truth on high.”***Our Lord never taught us to hide the Gospel in little rooms down back alleys—He would have us come to the front as much as we can! The Church is not a cellar to conceal the Truth of God, but a pillar to display it! “A city set on a hill cannot be hid.” What is there to be ashamed of? We may, ourselves, remain unknown, but we must make the Truth known at all costs. The Church should be like a lighthouse, which is often built as a tall pillar to bear the light at its summit and, like a memorial column which bears a statue upon the top of it, she should lift up the Truth of God before the gaze of all men!   
Again, a Church is intended by God to set forth the Truth with beauty, for in a temple, pillars and columns are meant for ornaments as well as for service. The fluted and richly carved pillars of Diana’s temple were the admiration of all who saw them and, in later days they were so esteemed that they were carried to other lands to adorn other edifices— the dome of Santa Sophia, in Constantinople, now rises from columns of green jasper originally placed in the temple of Diana! The Church should adorn the doctrine of God her Savior in all things. His Truth should be emblazoned upon her like an inscription upon a column, so stately as to secure attention and command respect. A living Christian is the best ornament of Christianity—God’s service should be performed in the beauty of holiness.   
Once more, it is the Church’s business to maintain the Truth of God with all her might. She is set as a bronze wall and an iron pillar against all error. However men may cringe or bow, there stands the column fast and firm, fixed on its pedestal, set on its base. So should the Church in all ages stand fast to Truth and yield to no error, nor concealment of doctrine, nor change of ordinance! The Church of the Apostles is the model of the Church of today. The pattern of the Church of Christ is not to be found in the popish synagogues of the middle ages, but in the first age when Jesus Christ spoke and said, “Go you, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit: teaching them to observe all things whatever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.”   
The business of the Church is to uphold, defend, maintain, and propagate the pure doctrines of Christ and His Apostles—and if she fails in this—if in her midst the Truth is not prized, if it is not adorned, if it is not vindicated and proclaimed, the church, so-called, is no longer the pillar of the Truth, but a bowing wall and a tottering fence! Now, I must occupy your time a little longer while I try to enforce a Truth which lies very near my own heart. And I pray God it may lie near the hearts of all His people at this perilous hour.   
The Truths of God which may be derived from the text are of one order. The first is that the *whole* Church is to maintain the Truth. Dear Brothers and Sisters, be very zealous for the Gospel, the old, old Gospel of the Grace of God! Be very zealous of the doctrine of Justification by Faith and forgiveness by the Atonement. I speak to you who know the Truth, for you, alone, make up the Church of God. Do not, I beseech you, allow in yourselves an ignorance of God’s Word, but study it and seek to know more and more of it. And what you do know, by the teachings of God’s Spirit, bind about yourselves as a belt never to be loosened!   
There are seducing spirits abroad that would deceive, if it were possible, the very elect! Therefore I entreat you to not be beguiled by their exceeding craftiness. Turn not aside from your steadfastness, but abide in the faith! They will tell you that you are bigoted. Never mind them, for in their mouths bigotry is another name for decision of character! The Gospel of salvation is the hope of men, therefore do all you can to make it known! Do not cast in your lot with those who are given to change, but stand in the old paths. It may happen that the wealthier people of the town are in error and it may be for your temporal advantage to join their community—but make no confederacy with false doctrine! Better go to the meanest conventicle and help to maintain the Truth of God than attend the wealthiest congregation where the Gospel is thrown into the background!   
I charge you by the living God, in these evil days, to keep yourselves pure from error! A true Church is appointed of God for the conservation of His Truth—and before the Lord, at the foot of the Cross, in the power of the eternal Spirit—we would pray that even unto *death* we may be faithful to our charge! Next, remember that a church is unchurched which is not faithful to the Truth of God. The church of Rome, when she forbade to marry and commanded to abstain from meats, set up also the “mass” in the place of the Sacrifice of Christ and her priests in the place of the one Great High Priest. Then she taught and encouraged idolatry in the worship of images, relics and the like. By all this she unchurched herself and is now described in Scripture, not as the bride of Christ, but as the harlot of Babylon!   
She is not the pillar of the Truth, but the grave of it! She was moved by error. She fell from her uprightness. She lies prone in utter ruin, never to be restored. Alas, any church may thus perish! The apostasy of Rome should be a warning to all other Churches of the living God, lest they, also, by little and little become defiled and cease to answer to the Divine design and are cast away forever! Next, remember that any Church fails in her design as being the pillar and basement of the Truth of God in proportion as she departs from the Truth of God. I therefore do, with all my soul, condemn what I see around me everywhere of disregard to the Truth of God!   
It is not merely that men change their views, but that they are becoming indifferent to Truth altogether and seem to think they do God a service when they unsettle the youthful minds of our day! First, we deplore all tampering with Inspiration. The Sacred Volume is scarcely admitted to be Inspired at all, or at best it is said to be inspired in some such moderated sense as Milton or Shakespeare may have been inspired! Then this Book is torn away from Scripture and then the other—and some who ought to know better say, “That portion of the Bible is written for the Jews, but not for us.” And so, by degrees, all the precious Volume is torn from us.   
Could the saints in Heaven, who used to feed on the Word of God, return to this lower world, they would be surprised to find that our wise men have questioned almost every Prophet, Evangelist, Psalm and Epistle! Every portion of the Word of God is challenged and the whole of Scripture is assailed—and that by men who continue in what professes to be a Church of the living God! We still hold that the Bible, and the Bible, alone, is the religion of the Christian—and we intend to hold to it all the more because others fall from their steadfastness! Alas, the grand old doctrines of the Gospel are also despoiled! Do you notice, nowadays, how all the great Truths of God are being spirited away? Men use the words, but they mock the ears, for they reject the sense—they hand us nuts—we crack them and we find that the worm of modern thought has eaten out the meat!   
The doctrine of the Atonement has, in some cases, been the chief object of assault. Take that away and what is left?! For what purpose is there a Church at all if the Atonement of Jesus Christ is not to be proclaimed by it? Let her die! Why should she live if she has no testimony to bear! If she has no Divine, Infallible message of pardon for the guilty and rest for the weary, let her perish! Listen to the detestable talk of modern ecclesiastics and you will hear them say, “Brethren, your own thoughts are your best guide! The enlightened consciousness of this age will best instruct you. The Bible is our sacred book, but cut out whatever you like, alter whatever you please.   
“We will yield anything sooner than be in opposition to the philosophers! Our illiterate predecessors, the fishermen, together with Paul and others, were raw hands at teaching and very unwisely thrust themselves into conflict with the best thought and culture of the period—so that their teaching was to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness—but we know a great deal better! We adapt ourselves to the times and entertain great sympathy for honest doubt. We also know on which side our bread is buttered and we are ready to alter and amend to please the fashion of the hour!” Where this is the talk, there remains no longer a Church of the living God! It is nothing but the name of a church when the doctrines of God’s Infallible Word are trod in the dust!   
A church ceases to be a Church of Christ in proportion, also, as she alters the ordinances of God. These must be practiced as they were delivered. When a church rejects the ancient ordinances of Believers’ Baptism and the Lord’s Supper, her next step is to make new ones! Thus forbidding to marry and commanding to abstain from meat are brought in. The first is much vaunted as a means for the production of purity, but how much the priests and monks and nuns have done for purity I leave history to record! Believers’ Baptism was thrown to the winds and then baptismal regeneration must be brought in. The Lord’s Supper was by far too common and so the “unbloody sacrifice of the ‘mass’” was devised! O Church of God, when will you come back to the Law and to the Testimony and follow the mind of Christ and the doings of His Apostles?   
Churches also get wrong when they neglect discipline; when they admit into their membership persons who do not even profess to be converted and, I add, when, because of pleasing men, they tolerate in their midst ministers whose teaching is corrupt and full of infidelity! There are preachers, nowadays, who are studiously undermining the faith once delivered to the saints! The Church should separate itself both from wicked persons and from false teachers. She should no more tolerate evil teachers in her pulpits than you would allow a poisoner in your nursery, or a wolf in your sheepfold. God grant that our Churches may rise to their duty, however painful it may be! Yes, may they keep close to the faith, for otherwise they cannot be the pillar and basement of the Truth of God! An unholy, unregenerated church can never be the pillar of the Truth of God. If there is a failure in vital godliness; if humble walking with God is neglected, the Church cannot long remain a healthy Church of God.   
Now, Brothers and Sisters, you see how each one of you ought to behave in the Church of God. One part of your behavior is that you abide firm as a pillar. Stand fast! Be strong! You ought to be pillars, especially you who have known the Lord 30 or 40 years. You should stand fast to the Truth of God and I pray that you may. May the Church in Scotland, which of old witnessed to the Gospel, be kept steadfast. Her Covenanting fathers loved the Truth of God and shed their blood for it. May the Lord help their sons to be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. May the Churches of our own England also be recovered from their declension and then maintained by the Spirit of God in stern fidelity to the Gospel.   
I cannot finish my sermon better than by commending to you the verse which was sung just now by your 5,000 voices—   
***“Should all the forms that men devise Assault my faith with treacherous art, I’ll call them vanity and lies,   
And bind the Gospel to my heart.”***

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THE CHURCH OF GOD AND THE TRUTH OF GOD  
NO. 3093

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, MAY 21, 1908.

***DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK, ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, SEPTEMBER 14, 1856.**

***“The house of God, which is the Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the Truth.”***1Ti 3:15***.***

[This sermon was preached during “The Rivulet Controversy,” of which an account is given in Volume II of C. H. Spurgeon’s Autobiography, in the chapter entitled, “The ‘Down-Grade’ Controversy Foreshadowed.” It was a very long discourse—nearly one-third longer than the twelve pages here

given—and although it was delivered more than half a century ago, its message is as timely, now, as it was then.]

WE live in very singular times just now. The professing Church has been flattering itself that, notwithstanding all our divisions with regard to Doctrine, we are all right in the main. A false and spurious liberality has been growing up which has covered us all, so that we have dreamed that all who bear the name of ministers are, indeed, God’s servants—that all who occupy pulpits, of whatever denomination they might be, are entitled to our respect as being stewards of the mystery of Christ. But, lately, the weeds upon the surface of the stagnant pool have been a little stirred and we have been enabled to look down into the depths. This is a day of strife—a day of division—a time of war and fighting between professing Christians! God be thanked for it! Far better that it should be so than that the false calm shall any longer exert its fatal spell over us! The day is come when we must know who are for the Lord and for His Truth—and who are on the side of error! The time is now come when some men, once distinguished among us for the attractiveness of their preaching, must be ranked among those who are opponents of the Truth of God! We did once imagine, in the blindness of our charity, that we all preached one Gospel, but now the enmity of the carnal mind has appeared. Carnal churches have chosen to themselves cruel teachers who have begun to teach strange doctrines which they mystify by their words, garnish with their eloquence and try to support by deceptive logic apart from simple Scripture.

The time is coming when it shall be openly proved who is on the Lord’s side. At this very hour separations are taking place everywhere. We weep for the cause—we do not weep for the effect. We weep that there should have been such heresies growing up in the midst of the Church, but we do not weep when we see those heresies brought out to the day and slaughtered with what some think remorseless cruelty, but what we believe unflinching justice! We desire that God may spare to us the men who are still faithful and who will never cease, at the risk of being called bigots, to drag out to the light those who lie against God’s Gospel—to bring them publicly before the world as opponents of the faith which is in Christ Jesus, whereby we hope to be saved. May God give us courage to stand up for the right! It is with this view that I have selected my text—to urge upon you, at this time, the great duty of standing fast at your post for the Truth of God and the equally great duty of endeavoring, wherever you are, to maintain them right. Be you not carried about by every wind of doctrine. Give not heed to every schismatic who would lead you aside. Hold fast by the oracles of the Most High! You know what you have been taught and whereunto you have been called—and you know the foundation whereupon you have been built up. “Be you steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.” Whatever may happen to denominations, whatever divisions we may live to see, let it still be known that for God and His Truth we are prepared to hold our ground at any expense or at any risk!

Now, first, we have *two things mentioned in one text.* And then, secondly, we have *the relationship which exists between them.* The two things are *“the Church of the living God”*and *“the Truth.”*The relationship that exists between them is that *“the Church of the living God”*is *“the pillar and ground of the Truth.”*

**I.**First, then, we have TWO THINGS MENTIONED IN OUR TEXT. The first is *“the Church of the living God.”*Note well its *unity.*It is not said *the churches* of the living God, but *the Church.*God has not two churches, He has but one. We may be called by different names and, according to Scripture, we are to be separated, like sheep, into different folds, yet there is still only one flock and one Shepherd. The independence of Scripture is still to be practiced. Each Church is to be separate, having its bishop and its elders governing in the fear of the Lord, without respect of persons and without being disturbed by the opinion of any other Church. But though we are separate churches as to our organization, we are really but one Church, under one Head, the Lord and Bishop of our souls. There are not two churches any more than there are two Gods. There are not two Lords. There, are not two faiths. There are not two baptisms—there is one Lord, there is one faith, there is one Baptism—and there is one Church holding the one Lord, the one faith and the one Baptism. If any hold not the Truth of God, we cannot allow that they belong to “the Church of the living God.” It is not for us to adopt the cant phraseology of the present day and say that men may be of the Church, and yet differ from the Truth of God. No, by no means! They are either initiated by the Holy Spirit into God’s Church, or they are not. If they are not one with Christ, if they are not washed with Jesus’ blood, if they have not received His Spirit, if they have not been humbled to know and believe Him to be King in the midst of His own assemblies, if they have not put their trust under the shadow of His wings—whatever they may profess or believe, or however they may stand before men—if they do not so stand before God, they do not belong to the one Church! And not belonging to that, they cannot belong to Christ! Though our Lord Jesus Christ has only one Church, a part of its members, I believe, may be found in every denomination—but they owe not their standing to the fellowship they hold with denominations. There is one great denomination, “the Church of the living God,” to which every true Believer must belong. Some persons allege that the children of God may act on different principles, may believe different doctrines, may be the recipients of different kinds of Divine Grace and that their apprehensions of God and of Christ may be thoroughly diverse—we hold no such opinion! If there is not the vital principle in a man’s heart, teaching him the Truth of God as it is in Jesus, he does not belong to the one “Church of the living God.” Thus, there is but one Church, however divided it may be.  
You will further observe that the Church is called *“the house of God.”* Why? Because, first, *it had God for its Architect—*it is not built after man’s plan. The Tabernacle in the wilderness was framed after the pattern which God gave to Moses in the mount and, verily, Christ’s Church is built after God’s own model—it is not molded according to man’s idea, it is not shaped according to his option—the will of God and His will, alone, has been followed in the construction of His own house, which is the Church. God has ordained every stone and He has marked where each is to be placed. He planned her walls and her pillars, her foundations and her pinnacles. He has not left anything in the Church to the mere impulse of man, but He has comprised every tittle in His own statutes and decrees. He has not given a vague idea for man to develop, but He has made known His mind in His own words. There is no designer of the spiritual temple save the Infinite Jehovah! There is no architect of the house of the living God save the living God Himself.  
And not only is He its Architect, but He is its *Builder.*He has not left it for us to dig the stones out of the quarry, or to lay them one upon another. He does the whole work Himself. The foundation upon which each living stone is based has been laid of old, Jesus Christ, Himself, being the chief Cornerstone. In His obedience and His Sacrifice no creature rendered help. Nor less, as “the building fitly framed together grows unto a holy temple,” is every portion of the structure the work of God and not the work of man. To the Sacred Trinity we look for the gradual construction of the edifice. In Christ we “are built together for a habitation of God through the Spirit.” There is never a child of God brought into the Church by man’s contrivance or man’s persuasions— each precious stone is brought there by God, and by God alone! No child of God is sanctified by man—he is sanctified by the living God. No heir of Heaven is fitted into the Church by man—God alone puts him into his proper position. Men at times try to build with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, and stubble upon the one foundation, but God consumes them all, for He will have no building in His Church but His

own— ***“The vast materials all He forms,***

***Nor power nor love He spares.  
He guards the building from all harms,  
And all the Glory bears.”***

I have often remarked that when men have been adopting a patent process of building up a church by the revivalist sermons of some crazybrained preachers, after the first excitement has subsided that church has became sickly and fallen into a very sad and grievous state. Those revivalists have often been like locusts in our churches, devouring every green thing! And the revivals they have stimulated have well-near brought us to destruction! God will not have men usurp His prerogative in the building! And though they may with their own hands speedily pile up a mighty structure, yet, like the baseless fabric of a vision, it soon disappears and is gone. In His building, He allows no man to use tool or hammer—He will use men *for* trowels and hammers, but He will not allow them to make use of themselves or of others. His own hands shall perform it!

Again, it is God’s house because *God resides there.*Wherever the Church is, there is God. God is pleased, in His mercy and condescension, to stoop from the highest heavens to dwell in this lower Heaven—the Heaven of His Church. It is here, among the household of faith, He deigns—let me say it with sacred reverence—to unbend Himself and hold familiar fellowship with those round about Him whom He has adopted into His family. He may be a consuming fire abroad, but when He comes into His own house, He is all mercy, mildness and love. Abroad He does great works of power, but at home, in His own house, He does great works of Grace. Into this house we have been brought—we trust we live there and He has manifested Himself unto us as He does not unto the world. A father will reveal himself to his children as he will not to his servants, or to those with whom he mingles in his business. So, in the Church, God is pleased to manifest all the greatness of His love, all the marvelous depth of His compassion and show Himself to His people as He never did to angels—and as He never will to the unregenerate! It is the house of God because all who live there have access to their Father and because they can always find Him there— a very present help in time of trouble.

Again, the Church is God’s house because *He provides for it.* The household of the Church would be starved if God did not provide for it. Does the Church need pastors? God gives us pastors after His own heart. Does it need teachers? Then the teachers shall be taught of God. Does it need supplies? He makes for it a feast of fat things, full of marrow. Are comforts and luxuries needed? There are the wines on the lees well refined and at our gates are all manner of pleasant fruits, new and old, which, He says, “I have laid up for you, O my Beloved.” God always provides for His Church because He is the Husband—the *houseband* of it! Blessed be God, He never leaves the Church to be provided for by man! We tell you that in dependence upon God we will seek to bring you a portion of meat in due season, but we never undertake to provide the meal. The Lord will provide! We are but His servants, to bring unto His people food for their spiritual sustenance. Beloved, the Church is God’s own house and since His Word has taught us that “if any provide not for his own, and for those of his own house, he has denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel,” we can never believe that God will leave His house destitute of supplies! No, while He is Infinite in goodness, while Heaven and earth cannot measure the riches of His estates, while He is the Lord of all flesh and the Monarch of all worlds, we may rely upon it that His house will always be abundantly provided for and His table bountifully spread!

One more remark here. The Church is God’s house because *therein God is honored, and therein He rules.* Among men it is justly said that “without hearts, there is no home.” In the circle of a man’s household, he expects to find those “eager to please,” and if he has children, surely the affection of the little prattlers shall call forth his fond paternal love. However he may be belied abroad, it is meet that he should be honored at home—that is the place where he deserves and commands obedience! There he is master and lord, and every beck of his should be obeyed. So, the Church is God’s house, the abode of His household and His family. Therefore, though the world may disobey Him, yet His Church always welcomes His Presence, rejoices to do His bidding and listens to His words. In the Church, God must always be honored. Let Him speak and our ears shall at once give attention, and our feet shall run with swift obedience. “As the eyes of servants look unto the hand of their masters, and as the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her mistress; so our eyes wait upon the Lord our God,” to learn His mind and to do His bidding. May He grant unto you, Beloved, this distinguishing sign that you belong to this Church which is the house of God, because by your profession and your practice He is continually honored!

The second thing mentioned in the text is *“the Truth.”*What do these words mean, “the Truth”? Depend upon it, they mean nothing more nor less than is wrapped up with the two covers of this Bible! What is the Truth? I might tell you that it is the counsels of Heaven revealed on earth, the mind of God made known to men, all the precepts, statues, and testimonies of the Most High. I might point you to the Person of Christ, His obedience to the Law, His death, His Resurrection and His Ascension, and tell you that the Gospel contained in the writings of the four Evangelists is the Truth of God! Or, once more, I might tell you of the witness of the Holy Spirit, those convictions He brings home to the Believer’s heart and the teaching by which He trains up the heirs of Glory from the moment of conversion till their final gathering into the heavenly garner—and say that all the witness of the Holy Spirit is “the Truth.” But then you might ask me why we should call these the Truth. What difference is there between their being true, and their being *“the Truth”?* I answer, what God says is necessarily true. It is most certainly true because God has said it. It needs no evidence to establish it, no argument to prove it. Therefore it is so far above evidence and proof that it is really “the Truth.” I have, as your minister, to assert it, illustrate it and preach it as dogmatically as possible, for there can be no appeal against “the Truth.” You have, as disciples, to believe it, search it and explore its depths—but there is no room to doubt or reason how much or how little you ought to receive, seeing it is, *prima facie,*“the Truth.”

Note its *importance.*It is called *the* Truth. There are many other truths in the world beside God’s Truth. There is natural truth, the truth of science, the truth of history and the truth man constantly utters on the evidence of his senses which we unhesitatingly receive. Yet, though these may be important in some degree, they give way to the all-important Truth of God. Now the definite article, “the,” is here put before the word, “Truth,” to teach us that if everything else we believe to be true should prove true, the whole would sink into insignificance when compared with the importance of the Truth of God! See, then, that you do not underrate the importance of God’s Truth. I would have you particularly value it, for some think it a matter of comparative indifference and that although it is right for us to believe all things which God has revealed, yet it is not important that we should do so! They suppose that it is of little consequence what sentiments we hold—we may be half right and half wrong, and yet be quite as well off—it matters little, so long as the heart is right, what the head believes. Alas, Sirs, this is a strange infatuation! The saints of old purified their souls “in obeying the Truth through the Spirit.” I cannot understand how your hearts can be right while you oppose the Truth of God! Were it only that God has revealed it, you might know that it is of Divine importance. What He speaks, it is surely incumbent upon us to believe! What He has set forth, we ought to accept as essential to our well-being, our comfort and our happiness. You may turn a deaf ear to the words of our poets, our philosophers, or our historians. You may even be content to live in ignorance of the laws of your country, “but see that you refuse not Him that speaks” to you from Heaven. This would be perilous, indeed!

Mark then well the importance of the Truth of God, for in these days men are apt to set light by it and, for the sake of peace and quiet, to lead us to suppose that contrary things can also be true.

The Truth is not only important, but *substantial in its character.* The Gospel which God has revealed is so essentially THE Truth there is nothing false, as there is nothing trifling in it. It is Truth unalloyed. It is Truth which ought to be undoubted. It is a vile sin to imagine that there can be any fallacy in the utterances of an Infallible God! Let everything else we credit be a lie. Let all that man has asserted and proved be swept away—God’s Words are *the Truth,* substantially and really so!

The Truth, moreover, is a thing of *unity.* It is not said “truths,” but “THE TRUTH.” God’s Truth is only one. Have you ever noticed, in the great summary of Doctrines, that as surely as you believe one, you must believe the rest! One Doctrine so leans upon the others that if you deny one, you must deny the rest. Some think that they can believe four out of the five points and reject the last. It is impossible! God’s Truths are all joined together like links in a chain. There is but one Truth, and one system of the Truth of God.

“Then,” say some, “tell us how to discern the Truth.” You may judge of it by three things—by God, by Christ and by man. That is, the truth which honors God, the truth which glorifies Christ, and the truth which humbles man. Unless a Doctrine exalts God, unless it acknowledges Him Monarch of Creation and gives Him absolute power over His creatures— He the Potter and ourselves the clay, *He*molding the vessels as seem good in His sight, *we* the vessels that are molded after His pleasure, God everything and ourselves nothing—that doctrine is not *the Truth of God.* And unless a Doctrine magnifies the Atonement—if it asserts that the Atonement may fail, that it was made for many who do not benefit by it, that God’s purpose in redemption is in anywhere frustrated—it is not of God, it is of Satan! If a doctrine teaches that man is possessed of good natural powers, that he is not so fallen as the Bible states, that he can do something to help himself, that his exertions can meet with God’s Grace half way, that he can assist a little in the work of salvation, or, at any rate, that he can preserve himself from falling and hold on his way with steadfastness, it is a man-glorifying, God-dishonoring doctrine! Cast it to the winds, for it never came from above. God never intended it to be preached otherwise than as the very foil of blackness against the brightness of His own Truth!

**II.**Now I desire to address you very solemnly on THE RELATIONSHIP WHICH EXISTS BETWEEN THE CHURCH AND THE TRUTH. “The Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the Truth.”

There is a sense in which the Truth is the pillar of the Church, for the Church is built on the Truth. It is on the revealed Doctrines of Divine Grace, such as Eternal Predestination, Immutable Affection, Covenant Security, the responsibility of Christ as the Surety of His people—it is on such Doctrines as these that the Church is built—and in this sense the Truth is the pillar and ground of the Church. In another sense, the pillar and ground of the Truth is God. He Himself maintains His own Truth. It is not committed to the hands of mortals to maintain it apart from God. One of the best proofs of this is that the Truth is still preserved in the original purity, after so many hypocritical preachings of it, and so much wresting of it to wrong purposes. While God lives, His Truth can never die! There remains the sense in which the Church is, as it were, delegated by God to maintain and support the Truth. You must understand this, then, instrumentally—while God is the real pillar and ground of His Truth, yet in this world He is pleased to make His children such. Really and effectively it is God who upholds the Truth, but instrumentally it is the ministers and elders and members of the Church who maintain the Truth and hold it firm.

In reading this verse, I was pleased with two thoughts that occurred to me. The Church is both the pillar and the ground of the Truth. Sometimes it is the pillar of the Truth when it preaches the Word, when it administers the ordinances and publicly shows forth the Gospel. But sometimes there have been seasons of persecution, when the disciples have not been able to go forth and testify to the world—and then the Church becomes a kind of underlying foundation, the *ground* of the Truth. In the days when Paul stood before Nero, he was like the pillar of the Truth. At another time, when he was shut up in a dungeon and could not come forth, he was in his heart like the ground of the Truth. When the Church stands boldly out and preaches the Word, it is the pillar of the Truth! When it is hidden in the Roman catacombs and cannot proclaim the Savior’s name to the world, there still lives the Truth of God deep in the hearts of Believers—and they are then the ground of the Truth. We, Beloved, who are of the house of God and of the Church of God, are the maintainers and supporters, instrumentally, of God’s Truth on the earth. Come, then, let me stir you up to do your duty! Let me beg of you who love God’s Truth not to leave it to itself. Perhaps you imagine that God’s Truth, being mighty, must prevail without your assistance. It is true, it must and will, but then God has said that if you belong to His Church, you are to be the pillar and ground of the Truth. To leave God’s Truth to shift for itself is as bad as to leave your own children to provide for themselves. True, the great decrees of destiny shall be carried out and our Savior’s Kingdom shall be established—but it shall be by means! God has honored you by choosing you to be the maintainers, the testifiers, the pillar and ground of the Truth. I will endeavor to awaken you, then, by one or two exhortations, to be faithful to this, your solemn duty.

In the first place, *remember how your fathers, in times gone by, defended God’s Truth—*and blush, you cowards, who are afraid to maintain it! Remember that our Bible is a blood-stained book—the blood of martyrs is on the Bible, the blood of translators and confessors. The pool of holy Baptism, in which many of you have been baptized, is a blood-stained pool—full many have had to die for the vindication of that baptism which is “the answer of a good conscience toward God.” The Doctrines which we preach to you are Doctrines that have been baptized in blood—swords have been drawn to slay the confessors of them! And there is not a Truth which has not been sealed by them at the stake, or the block, or far away on the lofty mountains where they have been slain by the hundreds. It is but a little duty we have to discharge compared with theirs. They were called to maintain the Truth when they had to die for it—you only have to maintain the Truth when taunt and jeer, ignominious names and contemptuous epithets are all you have to endure for it! What? Do you expect easy lives? While some have led through seas of blood and have fought to win the prize, are you wearied with a slight skirmish on dry land? What would you do if God should suffer persecuting days to overtake you? O cowardly spirits, you would flee and disown your profession! Be you the pillar and ground of the Truth. Let the blood of martyrs, let the voices of confessors speak to you. Remember how they held fast the Truth of God, how they preserved it and handed it down to us from generation to generation! And by their noble example, I beseech you, be steadfast and faithful, tread valiantly and firmly in their steps, acquit yourselves like men—like men of God, I implore you! Shall we not have some champions in these times who will deal sternly with heresies for the love of the Truth—men who will stand like rocks in the center of the sea so that, when all others shake, they stand invulnerable and invincible? You who are tossed about by every wind of doctrine, farewell! I acknowledge you not till God shall give you Grace to stand firm for His Truth and not to be ashamed of Him nor of His Words in this evil generation!

Think about it again, that you have the greatest reason to be the pillar and ground of the Truth *from the fact that this Truth has been of immeasurable service to you.*How often has it gladdened your hearts? You were once in darkness, but now are you light in the Lord! Once you had no clear view of that great mystery of godliness, but now God has been pleased to open your eyes, having touched them with spiritual eyesalve, so that in His Light you can see light. You are now brought to see that which is revealed and to believe the Doctrines of Grace. Have you not found these things comforting? How often have they supported you in the hour of peril? How often have they checked you when you would have sinned, and guarded you from despair when you were trodden underfoot by the enemy? How often have they nerved your arm for conflict, or moved your foot for journeying? How well furnished have you been since you believed these things, who were but poor defenseless creatures before! Will you not, then, maintain the Truth and spread it abroad? Will you blush to acknowledge the Word which has brought salvation to your souls, which has rescued you from the thralldom of sin and introduced you into the liberty wherewith Christ has made you free? No! I beseech you by the glorious panoply wherewith Christ has arrayed you, by His perfect love wherewith He has covered you, by the crown which He has promised you, by the Heaven which He has prepared for you—be you faithful to the Church of Christ, whereof you are members! Be you still the pillar and ground of the Truth.

Reflect once more, as another weighty reason, that *you should ever have been led to know the Truth at all.*Why, you know you did not deserve it! You believe that God has chosen you in His Sovereignty, entirely irrespective of your character. You must regard yourself as being the last man in the world that you could ever have thought God would have chosen. Some of you were sinners against His love and against His Law—great, open and apparent sinners! Others of you were secret transgressors—you sinned against God with a high hand and an outstretched arm, though men knew it not. Many of you were poor sinners involved in the darkness of deceitful doctrine—you had been led astray to believe yourselves saved, whereas you have since found that it was no work of the Spirit, but the mere excitement of your carnal feelings. And now that you, the chief of sinners, rescued by Divine Grace from death and Hell, are brought into His Church, will you not, for gratitude’s sake, considering what you owe your Master, defend and maintain His Truth at all hazards, in the midst of a gainsaying generation?

Then, once more, you are bound to maintain this Truth as you *consider the manifold blessings which it will confer upon your fellow creatures when it shall win the day.*The Truth of God is always a blessing. Men may hate it, but it is a blessing and it brings a blessing to their door, though they welcome it not. They may think it curses them, but the Truth is no curse unless men make it so to themselves. Nothing can benefit your generation, nothing can ameliorate the morals of mankind, nothing can refine the earth, nothing can wash away its blood, nothing can cleanse its stains, nothing can purge its lusts, nothing can stop its wars and heal its feuds—nothing better, nothing nearly so well as the maintenance of the Truth of God! Therefore, be very bold for it. It is the earth’s one hope—take it away and that world’s brightest star is quenched and her central sun is dim. Maintain the Truth, then, for the world’s sake, I beseech you.

And if encouragement can stir you up to duty, let me remind you that the time is coming when Truth shall be triumphant. Soldier of the Cross, the hour is coming when the note of victory shall be proclaimed throughout the world! The battlements of the enemy must soon succumb. The swords of the mighty must soon be given up to the Lord of lords! What? Soldier of the Cross, in the day of victory would you have it said that you did turn your back in the day of battle? Do you not wish to have a share in the conflict, that you may have a share in the victory? If you are even in the hottest part of the battle, will you flinch and flee? You shall have the brightest part of the victory if you are in the fiercest part of the conflict! Will you turn and lose your laurels? Will you throw away your sword? Shall it be with you as when a standard-bearer faints? No, Man, up to arms again, for the victory is certain! Though the conflict is severe, I beseech you, on to it again! On, on, you lion-hearted men of God, to the battle once more, for you shall yet be crowned with immortal Glory!

May God, then, grant unto us that we may always stand fast in the fight, as we would stand foremost among the conquerors! Mark those who have already overcome—they are pillars in the house of their God and they will “go no more out forever.” As you mark their white garments, their crowns, their palms, do you not pant to join the triumphant host? I know you do! Well then, wrestle hard as they did and, by Divine Grace, you, also, shall overcome and then shall you sit down with Jesus on His Throne, even as He did overcome and is set down forever with His Father upon His Throne!

But some will say, “If we go forth resolved to maintain this Truth, we shall be called bigots and we shall get very much ill feeling from the world.” Well, if you are afraid of that, I have done with you! I call you not kith or kin with me if you are abashed at such trivial rebuffs. If you blush at that, Sir, you will never do much for your Master’s honor! If you do not know how to stand fast against the world, you will find the world will stand fast against you. Did they not call Luther a bigot? Did they not say he was a mere declaimer? Did they not charge him with lack of logic and say he was a man that hurled invectives? But did any of these things move him? No, he persevered and still spread abroad the savor of his Master’s name in every place till he finished his course with joy as a conqueror! What sort of a character was John Knox in his day? Were not all manner of accusations heaped upon his head? But what did he say? “If I am God’s servant and on God’s side, I will not start for anyone of you.” And now he has this for his epitaph, “Here lies a man who in his life never feared the face of man.” Such an epitaph, few of you would merit.

“But,” says another, “how am I to know that it is THE TRUTH?” That question I answer in this way—if you do not know it is the Truth of God, you cannot stand up for it. I am only speaking to men and women who do *know* that it is the Truth. A true Christian cannot allow that he is in error, for he sees the Truth positively written in God’s Word. But you tell me that I may err. No, but I cannot err when I have God’s Word in my lips. People will controvert and will go into endless arguments to show that we are wrong. We cannot be wrong, Sirs! We cannot allow ourselves to be even *supposed* to be wrong when we hold fast by the Scriptures only—for that were to suppose that God’s Word could be wrong! Our inferences from Scripture may be wrong, but when we have the genuine Scripture, itself, we cannot admit the possibility of our being in error! And unless you are most solemnly convinced that you have the Infallible testimony of God in your own consciences and of the truthfulness of His Inspired Word, I do not ask you to be defenders of the Truth—such defense would be childish, and I would be more childish to ask for it!

“But,” another says, “I don’t think it necessary to make a noise about Doctrine—it does not concern souls much.” Does it not? I believe souls have been instrumentally damned by the thousands by false doctrine. I believe that the universal redemption scheme is doing immense mischief. As Joseph Irons said, “When men once believe that Jesus Christ died for His elect, they begin questioning, ‘Did He die for me?’ and that stirs them up to seek to know the Truth of God. But when they hear that there is salvation for all, they say at once, ‘Then I may sit still and fold my arms!’ And so they are deluded into Hell.” When men are told that they can do all things, and have power to save themselves, do you not think that is a soul-deluding doctrine? They seek to do what they can and they do a great deal, resting content with a spurious conversion, instead of the conversion which is of God and not of the will of the creature! I do not believe in all the conversions we hear of as brought about by false doctrine. God forbid that I should! Men who preach false doctrine may be sometimes useful in conversion because they preach some true doctrine, but a false doctrine never converted a soul yet, unless it converted it into worse dangers and made it tenfold more the child of Hell than before! It is foolish for you to cry out that Doctrine does not matter! What would you do if it were not for Doctrine? How could your soul be saved? How could you enter Heaven but for the Doctrine of Redemption? Yes, and how could you get to Glory but for the Doctrine of Election—the Doctrine that you were chosen in Christ Jesus from before the foundation of the world? Say what you like, you will find Doctrines far more essential than you ever dreamed!

Now, how many of my hearers have had any spiritual realization of the preciousness of these things? “Ah!” cries one, “I will defend the Truth.” Stop, young man! Have you felt in your heart the great Doctrine of God’s Sovereignty? Have you been humbled in the dust to know that God has a right to do with you as He pleases? If not, you cannot defend the Doctrine of Divine Sovereignty! Have you been brought to see the blood of Christ shed especially for you? If not, you cannot defend the Doctrine of Particular Redemption, for you do not understand it. Have you ever felt your own depravity in all its desperate character? If not, you cannot defend the Doctrine of Original Sin. Have you felt that God the Holy Spirit has called you out of darkness into marvelous light? If not, you cannot defend the Doctrine of Effectual Calling. Do you feel in your soul that God has enabled you to persevere up to the moment and have you the solemn conviction that you shall hold on your way? If not, you cannot defend Final Perseverance. I beseech you examine yourselves and see whether you have these Doctrines in your heart. If you have, I shall never be much afraid that you will not maintain them, though I think it right, sometimes, to stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance. And as there are too many who would guide your minds into “THE NONDOCTRINE SCHEME” and feed you with that which is vague and visionary instead of that which is substantial and true, I would the more earnestly exhort you, as for your very lives, to “hold fast the form of sound words which you have received.” Stand fast, Beloved! Be not moved in the evil day and, having done all, stand fast in the Lord! May God grant it for Jesus’ sake!

—Adapted from *The C. H. Spurgeon Collection,* Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307  
**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.** Sermon #393 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

THE CHURCH—CONSERVATIVE AND AGGRESSIVE  
NO. 393

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, MAY 19, 1861, *BY REV. C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“The Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the Truth.”*** 1Ti 3:15***.***

YOU will remember it was announced last Sunday that a collection would be made today in behalf of our institution for training young men for the ministry. It has been thought desirable that I should state a few particulars relative to the institution. Some of them will appear in the course of the sermon. It may suffice for me to say now that some five or six years ago one of the young men of the Church gave promise of being a successful minister if he could but have a good education. With the assistance of a friend in the Church, I undertook to take him under my charge, put him under a suitable tutor and train him for the ministry.

So successful, by God’s grace, was that work that I was induced to take another and another and another. Up to now I have been myself the committee, secretary, treasurer and subscriber. I have not, except in one or two instances, even mentioned the matter to anyone but have been content to provide everything that I could out of my own income, besides that which is necessary for the support of my household in order to educate any young men who might become ministers of the Cross of Christ.

There are now seven settled out, all of whom have been eminently successful. They are not men probably who will become great or brilliant but they have been good and useful preachers. I think there are not another seven in the whole Baptist denomination who have had so many converts during the years that they have been settled. They have been the means, most of them, in the hands of God of adding a very considerable number every year to the churches where they have settled. Those are churches not in provincial towns but in villages.

I have therefore been led still further to increase my number and I think I have now about sixteen young men wholly to support and maintain. Besides these, there is a very considerable number who receive their education in the evening though they still remain in their own callings. With the enlarged sphere we now occupy as a Church, I have proposed so to enlarge my scheme that all the members of this Church and congregation who happen to be deficient in the plain rudiments of knowledge can get an education—a common English education for themselves. Then, if they display any ability for speaking—without giving up their daily avocations—they shall have classes provided for higher branches of instruction.

But should they feel that God has called them to the ministry, I am then prepared after the use of my own judgment and the judgment of my friends, as to whether they are fit persons to give them two years’ special tutorship that they may go forth to the work of the Cross, thoroughly trained so far as we can effect it in so short a time. I know I am called to this work and I have had some most singular interpositions of Providence in providing funds for it. At the day of judgment the world shall know that there has never lived a man upon the face of the earth who has less deserved the slander of seeking to enrich himself than I have.

I shall say no more upon that. Let the world scandalize me if it will. I want the money today, not for myself in any respect. I give my services and my work freely and of my own income all that I can spare. I only want my friends who feel interested in this work to assist me that we may provide men who shall preach the Gospel to multitudes who are longing to hear it fully and faithfully proclaimed. Permit me to say there was held in Westminster Abbey last Thursday a grand choral festival, at which there were singers from the various choirs of London—St. Page, the Abbey, the Temple and the Foundling and some from Windsor.

Several ecclesiastical dignitaries graced the assembly. Anthem and cantatas and I know not what else, were performed on a most classic scale. The sermon was preached by a Provost of some college in which the claims of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts were eloquently advocated and the whole collection amounted to seventy pounds. “A very poor result for so sublime a service,” said the *Times* report. Last Friday evening there was held a little meeting in one of the rooms here of about forty or fifty of the seat holders in this congregation.

There were no bishops present. There were only a few street preachers and my poor student. They addressed that little meeting and though no collection was called for or even contemplated, those friends spontaneously subscribed one hundred and eighty pounds as an earnest of what they were sure the congregation would give to this work today. I think this just shows that when people have a mind for Christ’s cause, they do not need to have the State to support their religion but can support it out of the generosity of loving hearts without the elaborate parade of gorgeous rituals.

I shall now invite your attention to the subject of this morning’s discourse which has a very strong bearing upon this point. “The Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the Truth”—1Ti 3:15. The word “Church” has suffered very much from the hands of men. Strangely but frequently, has it been used to designate a mass of bricks and mortar. *Ecclesia*, a chosen assembly, has actually by the natural debasement of the tongue of priests come down to mean a *building*. By no possible construction can it mean any such a thing. A more debasing use of a divine word than that can scarcely be found. The word “Church” has also been used by many to signify the clergy. A young man is to enter the Church— that is, he is to take holy orders, to become a preacher and an authorized dispenser of the sacraments, as they are called.

He is to aspire after an incumbency and is to be recognized as an ordained minister of the Word. Now, the word “Church” in Scripture means nothing like that. Such a use of terms is but confusion. It is taking God’s Words, making and destroying their sense and then using them for our own purpose. The “Church of Christ” according to the Scripture, is an assembly of faithful men. *Ecclesia* originally signified *assembly*. Not a mob, but an assembly of persons who were called together on account of their special right to meet for the discussion of certain subjects. They were a called-out assembly.

The “Church of God” itself, in its full sense, is a company of persons called out by the Holy Spirit from among the rest of mankind, banded together for the holy purpose of the defense and the propagation of the Truth. If there are but three or four, yet if they be so banded together in the fear of God, they are to all intents and purposes a Church. And if they should happen to number thousands, they are no more a Church on account of their numbers—a Church being a company of faithful men. To our minds, the Scripture seems very explicit as to how this Church should be ordered. We believe that every Church member should have equal rights and privileges.

We believe that there is no power in Church officers to execute anything unless they have the full authorization of the members of the Church. We believe, however, that the Church should choose its pastor and having chosen him they should love him and respect him for his work’s sake. That with him should be associated the deacons of the Church to take the oversight of pecuniary matters. And the elders of the Church to assist in all the works of the pastorate in the fear of God, being overseers of the flock. Such a Church we believe to be scripturally ordered.

And if it abide in the faith—rooted, grounded and settled—such a Church may expect the benediction of Heaven and so it shall become the pillar and ground of the Truth. But what is intended in our text by saying that the Church of God is the pillar and ground of the Truth? When you go outside this building you may observe the use of a pillar. And that part of it which forms a basement upon which the circular stone rests exactly answers to what the Apostle means by the ground of the Truth. It is the business of the Church, of course, to uphold the Truth in its deep foundations. To conserve and preserve it intact—thus it is the ground.

To lift it up and bear it aloft in beauty and in all its fair proportions, in this the Church, of course, is the pillar of the Truth. Some commentators say that as pillars were used of old to bear inscriptions, as upon pillars even the brazen decrees of the Roman senate were exhibited to the people, so the Church of Christ is intended to be a pillar bearing the inscription of the Truth, so that it not only maintains it and upholds it, but sets it forth. At any rate I think you will perceive in a moment that the simple meaning of my text is just this—it is the business of the Church of God to maintain, to propagate, to uphold, to spread and to defend the Truth as it is in Jesus—wherever that Church may be placed.

I shall use the text, this morning, in four ways. First, *to correct certain*

*mistakes* . Secondly, *to convince judgments of the excellency of God’s ordinance in this matter*. Thirdly,*to awake reflections upon the subject*. And fourthly, *to suggest some ways of making this Church and every Church, the pillar and ground of the Truth.*

**I.**First, then, my Brethren, LET US CORRECT SOME FEW MISTAKES. We are all deeply impressed with the importance of maintaining the doctrines of the Gospel and the Truths of Christ pure and simple as we find them in the New Testament. There are brethren who in their extreme anxiety to accomplish this end suggest methods which are not warranted by the text. For the rule here laid down is that the Church is itself to maintain and to be the guardian of the Truth. But these brethren, in their great anxiety to maintain it, have suggested other ways.

One of the first has been the drawing up of a creed. The articles of the faith shall be written out clearly and unmistakably. At a general synod every word of these articles shall be argued—any discrepancy shall be removed—and the articles shall, as nearly as possible, express the orthodox creed. It is done. The ministers assembled go home and say that creed will be the pillar and ground of the Truth—as long as ever the name of the

Westminster Assembly Confession shall be known—the Truth will be safe. As long as the thirty-nine articles of the Church of England shall stand— that Church must be free from error.

Ah, how signally they have failed! Especially let us take the glaring instance of the Church of England. The articles of the Church of England are Calvinistic. No person who is not deluded or dishonest, can read them without seeing that the pen was dipped in Geneva ink which wrote those articles. And yet how many Church of England clergy are as far from anything like Calvinism, as the wildest Pelagian could be supposed to be? There are, it is true and God be glorified for it, many Brethren who do believe these articles and preach them faithfully, too. We love them and honor them for the Truth’s sake.

But is there one in ten? Nay, is there one in twenty who really receives those articles in their pure and simple meaning? If this were all, it were not so bad. But men have had the impudence to subscribe to those articles of the Church—when they have not believed a single one of them— and have been infidels. You have had of late and it is not necessary for me to allude to the matter, a glaring proof that no articles whatever can conserve and maintain the Truth. For men will sign them when they do not believe a word they set forth.

We have been led to think we have grown a little wiser and we have tried to maintain the Truth by our trust deeds. Our friends have, as they thought, put the Truth in the trust deeds. And it is enacted that if a minister does not preach the doctrines the trustees shall see that he is dismissed. Ah, a very poor pillar and ground of Truth this is! Our strict Baptist Brethren—I am not now about to enter into the question whether they are right or wrong—but supposing they are right for the moment—they have been exceedingly wise in putting the strict Baptist clause into their trust deed.

I am not now about to dispute the verdicts of the judges. But their clauses have been broken and their bands have been like green twigs. I know a chapel now in Norfolk which has on the forefront over the door, these words printed in stone, “For the strict Baptists forever.” Really there is something fine and heroic in that—but equally ridiculous and absurd. The place will not be for the strict Baptists forever. Nor will any trust deed ever be so written but that you may drive a coach and horses through, just as surely as you can through an Act of Parliament. That never was and never will be the way to maintain the Truth. Let it be done if you like, but do not imagine that your trust deed is a pillar and ground of the Truth.

We have fallen into a similar mistake with regard to the diffusion of the Truth. In order to spread the doctrines of the Gospel, we have formed societies. There are missionary societies appended to every denomination. These societies are to be pillars and grounds of the Truth, not so much in the maintenance of the Truth as in the spreading of it. To become a member of a missionary society you have only to subscribe to it. If you were a very infidel and subscribed, you would become a member. Nothing whatever is required of you but that you should simply give a certain amount of money and you become a member of that society.

We have been wondering why our societies have not greater success. I believe the reason is because there is not a single word in the Book of God about anything of the kind. The Church of God is the pillar and ground of the Truth—not a society. The Church of God never ought to have delegated to any society whatever, a work which it behooved her to have done herself. Instead of sending our subscriptions to associations we ought to have picked our own men out of our own midst and found the means to send them forth to preach the Truth as it is in Jesus, ourselves.

We have given up the work of the education of our young men to our colleges. I will not say they have done it ill. But I do dare say they have not done it well. The reason, I think, has been because there is nothing in the Word of God that could warrant their accepting the trust. The Church of God, not a college, is the pillar and ground of the Truth. Every Church should itself see to the education of its own young men. It should look out for its own evangelism—should train its own soldiers and send them forth to the fight. The Church of God will never see things done rightly, if shirking her own responsibility, she tries to cast it upon other men.

Even if those men could be the best of men. If they were angelic, if you could find superhuman beings—yet if God never called them to the work He will not, therefore, honor them in it. The Church, the Church, the Church of God, the assembly of believers is, according to God’s Word, to hold forth His Truth and to be the pillar and ground of the Truth.

Many have thought, however, that the Truth would be quite safe in the hands of ministers. If we could not leave its preaching to the society, at least let the minister, so intimately connected with the Church, become the pillar and ground of the Truth. It is a melancholy fact that heresy never began with the people yet—but with the minister. And I speak what I know—the hearts of the people of our denomination are more sound in the Truth than the hearts of the preachers. There is not a denomination under Heaven which has a more sincere love to all Calvinistic doctrines than our own. Yet how many of our ministers there are who, while they do not preach against them and I hope secretly believe them, are, nevertheless silent upon the subject?

They keep it back, perhaps imagining it would not be profitable to their hearers. But there is scarcely a Church in London in which there are not men and women grumbling, groaning and murmuring, because the full Truth is not preached to them and they do not hear the Word by which alone they live. There are Churches in London where the Truth is fully preached, praised be God and there you will find none who are groaning because they are famished. But there is not a Church of the other sort in which there are not many disaffected persons who are thoroughly ready to come out at any moment and leave their minister if he will not give them the whole Truth, instead of keeping part of it back.

You must not trust the ministry, Brethren. If you rely upon us you will rely upon broken reeds. However honest we may be, yet we have not to deal so much with the world and with its cares and troubles as you. And I think your dealing with the world casts you back very often upon the old, solid realities—because in the hard daily struggle which you have to carry on, you need to have the finest of the wheat to sustain your strength. Let us uplift, this morning, as a great Truth which the Church has too much forgotten, the words of the text, “The Church of the living God is the pillar and ground to maintain the Truth.” Not trust deeds nor Church articles. And the Church of the living God is the pillar to set forth and proclaim the Truth. Not the ministry, not societies, not authors, not any set of men to whom it can be delegated, but the Church of God—and the Church of

God alone.

Now do not misunderstand me. I would not say a single word against any society for the spread of God’s Truth. But I must repeat again that all societies of that sort spring from an irregular and unscriptural position of the Church. THE Church, if she were in her right state, would do the whole of the work herself. The city missionary would be a member of the Church sent out and supported by the Church itself. The missionary to foreign lands would have the Church at his back to whom he would look for support both in prayers and in subscriptions. Every work would be performed—not through this secretary or that—but through the Church itself.

This, I believe, is the principle which will work a radical cure in all the errors that have been made and bring back the state and system of evangelization into a proper and healthy condition. I may be wrong, but this has deeply laid upon my soul. And I shall never be satisfied till I see in this Church an organization so complete that it does not need a supplement—able to do every good work and fulfill every needful office of itself and by itself—welcoming ever the cooperation of others—but never needing to depend upon a society for the accomplishment of any purpose to which the Lord God has been pleased to call it.

**II.**I shall now pass on to my second point. Let us note THE WISDOM OF GOD IN MAKING THIS MATTER SO—presuming, of course—that we have thus far rightly interpreted the will of God concerning us.

The Church of God in Scripture is called a mother. What is a mother’s business? What is a mother’s duty? A mother’s duty is to feed her own child from her own bosom. She loses a joy herself and inflicts a serious injury upon her offspring when, if having the ability, she lacks the affection which would constrain her to support her own child from the fountains which God Himself has opened. And as the Church of Christ is a mother, she shall lack the greatest joy and lose the sweetest privilege unless she herself train her own children and give them the unadulterated milk of the Word.

She has no right to put her children out to nurse. How shall they love her? What affection shall they bear towards her? No, let her do as she should and keep her children at home and supply them herself. It is a mother’s business, as that child grows up, to train and teach it. Let her teach it the first letters of the alphabet. Let it gather its first knowledge of Christ from a mother’s lips. Who so fit to teach as she that brought it forth? None can teach so sweetly and none so effectually as she. Let her not give up the training of her child to another. And why should we, the Church of Christ, give up our children when we first taught them to speak in Christ’s name, to be trained and to be taught by others?

No, by every motherly feeling that remains within the bosom of Christ’s Church, let us see her children brought up at her own knees, dandled there in her own lap and not give up the work of training her sons and daughters to others. And who so fit as the mother of the family to inspire her son with holy ardor when at last he goes forward to the battle of life? Who shall give him the affectionate advice? Who shall give him the cheering word which shall sustain him in the hour of difficulty so well as a mother whom he loves? And let the Church of God, when her young men go forth to her battles, put her hand upon their shoulders and say, “Be strong, young man, be strong. Dishonor not the mother that bare you. But go forth and like the son of a Spartan mother, return not but in glory. Go forth to conquer or to die. Come back on your shield, or with it—a hero or a martyr.”

Who can speak the words so well and sing at home so powerfully as the mother to her son, or the Church to her child? The Church, then, has no right to delegate to another her own work. Let her bring forth her own children. Let her give them nourishment. Let her train them up. Let her send them forth to do the Master’s work.

But, then, my Brethren, the Church is often compared to a city. Christians are the citizens. Who so fit to fight the battles of a country as the countrymen themselves? Shall we give up to a tribe of mercenaries the defense of this stalwart island? Shall we hire foreigners from afar and say to them, “Dash the invader from our own shores”? No, my Brethren, Britain’s true hearts would wake up and Britain’s strong arms would wield the weapon if invasion should ever take place. The liberties of a country are not safe with an army, but with the citizens themselves. We must be our own defenders if the land is to be preserved. No body of troops more fit than those who fight for their own children, their own wives, their own hearths and the altars of their own land.

Shall we, then, the Church of God, seek out others besides our own citizens? Shall we give the command of our armies to those who belong not to us? Shall we send our sons and daughters out to be enrolled in other armies? No. In the name of the living God let the Church of Christ train her own citizens for the battle of Christ. Let her bring up her own young warriors for the defense and maintenance of the Truth. Besides, who is there who will naturally care for this matter like the Church? My dear Brethren, if I were the minister of a society I should be in a miserable plight. What would the society care for me? What would they care about what I did if there could be but a smart report sent in at the end of the year to be read at the public meeting amid the clapping of hands and so forth?

The secretary would smile upon me, but what would they care for me? What prayers should I have from the subscribers? How should I be likely to be carried on the heart of the secretary? Good man, he has twenty other agents to think of—how should he be thinking of me? But I am a minister of a Church and there is not one member of this Church but what prays for me. I know that as often as you bow your knee at the family altar you mention my name as you mention the name of your son and your daughter. Many a proof have I had from you that I am as much loved by you as if I were your brother according to the flesh.

Your prayers make me strong. Your sympathies make me blest. They cheer my heart and bear me up amidst the waves of calumny. And who shall care for anything when God and the Church are with him? So, then, if it is so with a minister it must be very much more so with a missionary in the foreign land. “Why,” says he, “who will pray for me? The Missionary Society has sent me out. The secretary knows about me. He reads my letters when I send them to him. They are put in the magazine.” But suppose some young man from these galleries was sent out to preach the Word—why we should all notice him. When the letter came from John Soand-So at Canton and we read it at the prayer meeting, how should we pray for him! We should feel he was one of ourselves. And when we made the collection for his support, we should give far more liberally than for

another that we never saw, who had no connection with us and—however good the man might be—was not a personal friend of ours.

The Church of God can naturally care for the state of her own ministers and her own missionaries—and a minister, a missionary, cannot hope to be greatly blest till they are under the Church—and not under a society. Just so with the young men for the ministry. When they go to college they do not, I suppose, expect many people to care about them there. But with regard to those we have in our midst, why there is nothing that any of you would not cheerfully do for them! As soon as there is a new face seen among them, some of the elders of the Church are sure to get him into their houses—are sure to speak kindly with him till I fall into another difficulty.

Sometimes my friends take them away too much, are too kind to them, get them away from their studies in order to be with them—when they ought rather to be sticking fast by their books. I find no lack of sympathy and I know the men are happier. And I believe they have greater motives to be holy because they are more watched, more observed by the members of the Church. Anything which they do ill would reflect discredit upon the whole of us and when they do that which is right and honorable, there is a sort of *esprit de corps* which makes them long to distinguish themselves—that the whole Church may share in the honor of their connection.

I am persuaded that this is a right principle and I shall not cease to advocate it unless I find arguments by which it can be disproved. And after all, my Brothers and Sisters, who should care for the cause of Christ like the Church? Oh what reason you and I have for loving Christ’s cause! Dear have been the places where we have worshipped, some of us, for there we first found a Savior. Some of you, not long ago, were the servants of sin and Satan—you were at a distance from God—and you loved that distance well. Could we not cast our eyes around and remember how some of you were drunkards and swearers and such like?

But you are washed, you are sanctified. And now you rejoice in Him that loved you, for He has washed you in His own blood. Now you can sing of pardoning grace and dying love. Who, like you, my Brethren, to propagate the Gospel? Who makes such preachers as these Pauls, who preach the faith which they once destroyed? Who will stand so well at the back of every agent for Christ as those who have themselves tasted and felt and handled the good Word of Life? Truly the Word of God is safe in the hands of the Church, when the Church lives near to God.

When you are sensible of your gratitude to Christ, when you are conscious of your obligations to eternal and sovereign mercy, then it is that you will be pillars of the Truth. And you will maintain and uphold it, not shunning to declare the whole counsel of God, not hesitating to support those who endeavor to do it in your names. Thus the Church is made the salt of the earth and the light of the world—irrespective of any society whatever—“The Church of God is the pillar and ground of the Truth.”

**III.**Thirdly, this topic AWAKENS REFLECTION.  
“Well,” says one, “I am afraid it would not work.” That is it, my Brethren, that is just the hitch in the whole matter—it would not work. “We have got a machinery,” said a Brother to me once, “we have got a machinery in our Church which will go on just as well, whatever the characters of the members may be.” “Then,” I said to him, “depend upon it, yours is not that which God has ordained.” For it seems to me that the most Scriptural system of Church government is that which requires the most prayer, the most faith and the most piety to keep it going.  
The Church of God was never meant to be an automaton. If it were, the wheels would all act of themselves. The Church was meant to be a *living* thing—a living person. And as the person cannot be supported if life be absent, or if food be kept back, or if breath be suspended—so should it be with the Church. There should be certain solemn necessities without which she ceases to be a Church—certain things which she must have and without which she cannot do her work.  
I am glad that this difficulty is suggested at all, for it seems to me that if there were not this difficulty, it would not be God’s plan. “Well,” says one, “if you believe the Church is to do all this work, then the Churches cannot yet be what they should.” I am glad you draw that inference, my Brethren, I am glad you do. “Why,” says one, “our Churches could not support a missionary, some of them hardly support their minister.” Just so, Brethren, but that is just because they are in a wrong state. There is hardly a Church anywhere but if the Spirit of God were poured upon it might not do ten times as much for Christ as it is now doing. The fact is there may be some few Churches that are walking in the right road but they are very few indeed. And the objection which you bring ought to be an objection against the state of the Church and not against the plan itself—for it is possible for the Churches to maintain missionaries and minister—if they want to do it.  
“Well,” says one, “but a Church must be very watchful to find out young men for the ministry.” Just so, I am glad you say that, for a Church ought to be very watchful. “But the minister must have a good deal to do,” you say. Just so and he ought to have a great deal to do. What is the use of a lazy minister? He is no good either to the world, to the Church, or to himself. He is a dishonor to the noblest profession that can be bestowed upon the sons of men. Let him have plenty to do. It will keep him out of mischief and it would do him good. Too much to do may be an evil, but too little to do is a curse. Let him have much to do.  
“But,” says another, “the minister ought to be a holy man, because if the young persons who associate with him learn ill manners, what then?” Just so, I am glad you say that. And so he should be a holy man. Amongst the Swiss, the Vaudois and the Waldenses, every minister trains one young man. Those pastors or shepherds always have a younger brother to travel with them wherever they go. He watches the elder pastor, observes his ways, listens to his holy prayers. He is inspired with his spirit, learns to tread the craggy mountains with him, learns to defy the enemy through the courage which he sees in his elder brother. He learns lessons of wisdom which are not to be learnt from books, lessons of practical pastoral training which are not to be gathered from the best professors of the best colleges in the world.  
And thus the Swiss have ever maintained a succession of men, perhaps not brilliant, but always useful—perhaps not popular, but always sound and valiant in their defense of the Truth. And should it not be so with the Church? If to carry it out it need a laborious ministry, so much the better. If it need a holy and wise ministry, so much the better. No other man should be a minister at all. If it need a watchful Church and a prayerful Church and a Church which consecrates liberally of its substance to the Lord, I say so much the better—for so ought every Church be.  
The only question is, are we in the right state now to accomplish all the Lord’s purposes? If we are not, let us make it a matter of prayer that we may be brought into this state—for we are never healthy unless we are prepared to do whatever God calls us to do. We must be losing in our own spiritual enjoyment if we fail to have strength to carry out all the work which the Lord imposes upon us. The Lord never gives us more to do than we can do. We had the work of building this place and many thought we could not do it—at last we thought we could—and by God’s grace we did

it. If we had fifty more such places to build and the Lord laid it to our

heart to build them, we could do it if we were in a right state. Our only want of power is want of grace. Give the Church grace and she does not want a new banker. Give her grace, she does not need then to have new ministers. Give her more grace, she will not want the world’s pitiful gold to endow her and make her rich. Give her grace and you have given her all she wants. In that one word, you shall have successful ministers, you shall have laborious agencies, you shall have benevolence pouring out its floods and piety consecrating all its activities for Christ.

**IV.**Now I shall come to my last point. The last point is BY WAY OF SUGGESTION.  
What can we do practically to carry out this plan? Brethren, before I answer that question let me say there are some things we must take care of or else we cannot carry it out at all. We must watch lest the Church be adulterated by additions which are not an increase to her strength. We must be very careful that no thought of strife, no symptom of envy, no feeling of jealousy creep in. Up to now you have been as one man— undivided and indivisible. This is absolutely necessary in the Church for the carrying out of any of her purposes. Divided we should utterly fail.  
I remember a somewhat ludicrous incident which occurred to a Church in which there were great quarreling and bickerings. The minister and the deacons and his people, were all at arm’s length and daggers drawn. It was determined at last that the matter should come to a settlement and it was by mutual consent given up to the judgment of a good Christian farmer, who lived in the neighborhood. He was to hear the case and write an answer to be read at the next Church-meeting.  
Our friend, the farmer, sat down to write his Letter—at the same time he had a letter from a steward or tenant asking advice about his farm— and by a mistake, or rather by a blessed Providence as God would have it, he put the wrong letters into the envelopes, so that the letter which was intended for the Church went to the steward and that which was intended for the steward went to the Church.  
At the Church meeting, when they were all assembled, this letter was read to the Church, it ran thus—“Dear friend, mind you see to the hedges well. Keep them up as best you can and take special care of the old black bull.” Now that was a most extraordinary letter to write to a Church. It had been sent by mistake, but the minister thinking it was a *bona fide*piece of advice, said he could not comprehend it. Some Brother got up and said it was plain enough—it was meant that they must be very watchful as to whom they should receive into the Church. They must keep their hedges up and see there were no gaps.  
“And,” said he, “by the ‘old black bull’ I have no doubt he means that spirit of Satan that would get in and trouble and divide us.” So understanding it in that sense they made up their difference, repaired their hedges and were careful of “the old black bull.” Every Church must do the same, for before we can do anything for Christ, we must first be right at home. We must have peace within our borders. We must be filled with the finest wheat, or else he will not send forth his Word and make it to run very swiftly. This, I hope, will be well seen to.  
What, then, are *we* to do? If the Church is to do all this, Brethren, what are you and I to do? As for *me*, I must take heed unto myself. I am to be the leader of this people, constantly ministering to them in the Word of Life. I must take care that my dedication of myself and all I have to my Lord be so perfectly complete that I would not have an objection to them knowing what I do with all I have. I must so live that they can see right through me that I desire to serve my Master and serve Him alone.  
Then one and all of you must say, “What must I do?” Let each man finding his own proper niche, each seaman on board the vessel finding which rope he can best handle, or what part of the tackling he best understands, take his place. Then come rocking tempests, let the ship reel. She is safe, for she is in the hand of God and in the hand of faithful men, who know how to manage her right well.  
The battle is to be fought, Brethren. It is to be fought by Christ’s army, not by hirelings. What are you and I to do? I must stand at the front of the line and wave my sword and say, “Come on, comrades!” And you, with steady step advancing, with firm bold front maintaining every inch of the ground you take and at last—rushing in one tremendous phalanx straightway to the thick of the fight—you must carry everything before you and win the crown for King Jesus. England expects every man to do his duty, but the Church of God expects it more and must and shall have it. By Him who shall judge the quick and the dead. By Him who bought you with His blood, I adjure you, Christian men and women, see to it that you stand each of you in your place. Do, each of you, your own appointed work. And so shall Christ’s kingdom come and His will be done on earth even as it is in Heaven.  
I think I hear a little murmuring going round the gallery and especially stopping at some few of the pews. I will not indicate the Brethren. They are saying, “I do not belong to the Church—what am I to do?” My Brethren, the first thing you ought to do is to join the Church. You say you love the Lord Jesus Christ. Very well. If you neglect one duty, that does not excuse you from another. You are dying in a state of sin, as a Christian man, if you omit the duty of joining yourself with the people of God. May I ask you, when the Church goes to the fight, will you tarry at home? “No,” you say, “I will follow with you. I will do my work. I will go as one of the camp-followers.”  
Yes, but somehow or other, those camp-followers are in a very unsatisfactory state because they are not under the discipline of the officers. And though some of them can fight well a sort of guerilla warfare, yet we should be much stronger if we could have them in the ranks. Brethren, don’t you think sometimes that the world may imagine that you mean to hold hard till you see which will win? Had you not better cast in your lot with us while the battle rages? Besides, what does the Master say?—“He that confesses Me before men, him will I confess.”  
And what does He say to those who do not confess? “He that denies Me before men, him shall be denied of My Father which is in Heaven.” You do not wish for that, surely. Enlist, then. Put on your Lord’s regimentals. True, you can fight His battle without them, but methinks you will be more in the path of obedience and the path of safety, if you put on the garments of Christ and the garments of His salvation. Come! Whosoever is on the Lord’s side, let him join with the Lord’s hosts. If you be not, stand back and do not dare to come. But if you are, the standard is lifted, the trumpets sound. Come, comrades! Who is for Christ? Soldiers, who is for the Lord God Omnipotent? Unfurl the standard afresh today.  
Jehovah-Nissi, the Lord is our banner and who will stand back? Let us enroll ourselves beneath Him and say, “O Lord, go forth with our armies and grant success, for the battle is great and without You we shall utterly fail, but with You we shall surely get the victory.”  
I have preached, as you will perceive, then, to the Church only. I have said nothing to the unconverted. We cannot do twenty things at a time. But I would say this word before I sit down. Remember, my dear Hearers, if you are not numbered with the friends of Christ, you are numbered with His enemies. Will you remember that? I do not mean if you are not numbered with the visible Church—I mean this—if you do not love and serve Christ. He that is not with Him is against Him—he that gathers not with Him scatters abroad.  
You say you take neither side—it is impossible—you must be on one side or the other. Clear the field! There is no room here except for the two armies. Whosoever is not with Christ is with Satan and shall surely be trod down when the enemies of God are trod like straw for the dunghill. Sinner, be you aware of this—that *God* is against you—and the hosts of God are against you. The Lord give you repentance! The Lord give you faith! And come you to the Captain of salvation and ask Him to have mercy on you! Run down the old flag! Thank God it is not nailed to the mast! Let the black flag come down and let the blood-red flag run up!  
Spirit of God, constrain them to change masters! May they no more serve the black prince, Satan. But may they, by Your grace, serve under His banner whose service is perfect freedom and whose reward is everlasting life!  
May the Lord bless each one of you, for Christ’s sake!

Adapted from*The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #1087 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

**÷1Ti 3.16**

THE HEXAPLA OF MYSTERY  
NO. 1087

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, DECEMBER 22, 1872, *BY C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.”*** 1Ti 3:16***.***

THE Apostle tells us in the preceding verse that the Lord has a double design in maintaining His Church in the world. The first is that it may be the place of His abode, for the Church of the living God is “the house of God,” the home wherein He reveals Himself unto His own children, the resting place of His love which He has of old appointed. Jehovah still inhabits the praises of Israel and still He fulfills His promise to His chosen, “I will dwell in them and walk in them.” (2Co 6:16). Blessed is the Church which has realized this first design of God and so has continued to enjoy the Lord’s Presence and power. May we in this place be a building fitly framed together and grow unto a holy temple in the Lord, for a habitation of God through the Spirit.

God’s next purpose in sustaining a Church in the world is that it may preserve and uphold His Truth among men, for the Church of the living God is “the pillar and ground of the Truth.” The Gospel must be believed, practiced and proclaimed by men of God or it will not have power. God does not trust the conservation of His Truth to books, or to the most accurately written creeds, or to some one person supposed to be infallible— He puts the incorruptible Seed into the hearts of His chosen and in such good soil its vitality and its growth secure its preservation. Even the inspired Word, as a letter, has small power till it gains a lodging place for the Truth in a warm heart—and then it grows and yields fruit till its boughs spread far and wide and its seeds are wafted on the wings of every wind to spring up on the hills and among the valleys where none had looked for them.

As long as one copy of the Holy Scriptures remains in the world we shall have the pure Truth of God among us, but it will be like an unplanted seed. For the propagation of the Gospel, human voices are required—for the establishment and confirmation of it among men, human lives are needed. And God intends that His Gospel shall be set forth and held up, published, defended, maintained and supported in the world by His Church—not alone by His ministers, nor by a hierarchical establishment—but by the entire company of faithful men and women! To the sacramental host of His elect has He committed the banner of the Truth which they are always to unfold and carry on by the power of His Spirit, from victory to victory. In this sense, the Church of the living God is and ever must be, “the pillar and ground of the Truth.” Let us take care, in our measure, to make her so.

While dealing with this question, it was most fitting for the Apostle to tell us what the Truth is and *now* is the most proper time for each one of us to learn what are the vital and essential Truths which the Church of God is forever to maintain. Our text is, for this reason, deeply interesting. It deals not with questionable and debatable topics, but with things verily and, indeed, received among us. Its testimony is short but weighty. We cannot spare a single word from it and it would be a crime to add anything to it.

The Apostle calls it a “mystery,” and so, indeed, it is for exceeding greatness of meaning, but not for obscurity of language, for it is as plain as it is full. Neither is it a mystery because it speaks of recondite opinions or philosophical theories, for it deals only with facts and is an historical summary of actual occurrences. Observe that the comprehensive summary of the Gospel here given is contained in six little sentences which run with such regularity of measure in the original Greek that some have supposed them to be an ancient hymn. And it is possible that they may have been used as such in the early Church.

There is a poetic form about the six sentences. You are aware, of course, that the Orientals do not consider it essential to sacred Psalms and hymns that they should resound with jingling rhymes—*we* are the slaves of mere sound in that respect, but they are free. Their fashion of verse-making has more respect to the sense than ours and lies, as a rule, very much in introducing pleasant parallels and contrasts. These you have here, whether the six paragraphs are verses of a hymn or not. Note that “manifest in the flesh” is contrasted with “justified in the spirit.” “Seen of angels,” who are nearest to the Throne of God, is fitly set by the side of “preached unto the Gentiles,” who stand at the opposite pole and are far off. And then the third duplicate is made up of the evident opposites, “believed on in the world,” “received up into glory.” Thus, all through, the lights and shades are set over against each other by evident design.

Moreover, you will perceive an equally plain parallelism if you will read attentively. The first two stanzas deal with the revealing of the Lord Jesus—He is manifest in the flesh and He is yet more fully made manifest by being justified in the Spirit. Then follows a making known of the Lord by sight to angels and by hearing to the Gentiles. And in the third pair of lines there is a twofold reception—the one by Grace among men who believe and the other into His actual glory in Heaven. Add to all this that pairs are also discernable in the first and last, the second and fourth and the two middle lines.

Just for an instant notice that the first clause of the series deals with Christ’s descent and the last with His ascent. The second and the fifth are both intensely spiritual and the third and fourth have to do with the senses only. Thus you find another set of parallels whose existence can hardly be a mere accident. Note this, for it teaches us that our memories need to be helped and strengthened in every way and so it is well to have condensed Truth to carry about with us and exceedingly advantageous to us to have it arranged in such a shape that we are likely to recollect it. The Apostle has been led by the Spirit to give us goodly words helping our infirmities—of this help we should gratefully avail ourselves to the utmost.

If we are somewhat instructed in the Word we have here an example of practical usefulness. We may for ourselves and for others, especially for the young, try to put the Truth of God into forms which will help it to retain its hold upon the memory. I shall call my text a hexapla of essential Truth, a six-fold mystery of godliness. You have six great points clearly set forth before you and these constitute the main, the essential elements of our holy faith which the Church of God is forever to set forth and uphold to the end of time. The Apostle has said, “without controversy great is the mystery of godliness.” When he says “without controversy,” I suppose he means that there ought to be no controversy about these facts though controversies have arisen concerning them and always will, since the most self-evident Truth of God will always find self-evident fools to contradict it!

He means that in the Church of God, at any rate, there is no question about these fundamentals. Outside of the Church these statements are denied, but inside the house of God no one ever questions them for a moment—and he who does so is by that very act proven to have no part nor lot in the matter. Without controversy all Christians agree that these are Truths of God and also that they are no trifles, but involve a mystery— a great mystery—that is to say they were things hidden in themselves and so concealed that reason could not have found them out. And even now, though they are revealed, they concern matters so vast and so profound that none of us comprehend them fully—and the best instructed scribe in the kingdom recognizes in them infinite deeps which he cannot hope fully to explore.

The facts are unquestioned by the Church of God and are without dispute among the faithful, regarded as containing in their inner depths a world of weighty meaning, even the great mystery of godliness. Have you ever noticed that there are six New Testament mysteries? There may be more, but these six are the chief. The first is the mystery of the Incarnation, which is now before us—“Great is the mystery of godliness, God was manifest in the flesh.” The next is the mystery of the union of Christ with His Church, of which we read, in Eph 5:31-32, “For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the Church.” Thrice blessed union with Jesus, may our souls find their Heaven in Your holy mystery—

***“Oh teach us, Lord, to know and own  
This wondrous mystery,  
That You with us are truly ONE,  
And we are ONE with You!”***

The third mystery is the mystery of the calling of the Gentiles, to which Paul refers in Eph 3:4-6, where he says, “Whereby, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ; which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto His holy Apostles and Prophets by the Spirit; that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ by the Gospel.” Herein we have a joyful portion for which we can never be too grateful.

The fourth mystery concerns the Jews and deals with the restoration of Israel, whom we ought to remember with abounding sympathy and brotherly love. Of this you will read in Rom 11:25-26 : “For I would not, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles is come in. And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob.”

For a fifth mystery I would bid you remember the doctrine of the removal of corruption from the body and of its resurrection as spoken of in the famous passage, “Behold, I show you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.” And then, alas, to close the list, there is that mystery of iniquity which began to work so soon and works yet more and more of evil.

Our text, then, is one of six mysteries, but it has this preeminence that it is a *great* mystery. It is called, “the mystery of godliness,” because it most intimately concerns a godly life. Those who receive it in their hearts become thereby godly men and, moreover, it builds up Believers in godliness and is to them a grand motive for the reverent love and holy fear of the Lord their God. Let so much as we have already spoken stand for our preface, and let us now, by the Holy Spirit’s aid, consider one by one the six branches of the mystery which is now before us.

**I.**The first sentence is, “GOD WAS MANIFEST IN THE FLESH.” I believe that our version is the correct one, but the most fierce battles have been held over this sentence. It is asserted that the word *Theos* is a corruption for “*Os*” so that, instead of reading, “God was manifest in the flesh,” we should read, “*who* was manifest in the flesh.” There is very little occasion for fighting about this matter, for if the text does not say, “*God* was manifest in the flesh,” who does it say was manifest in the flesh?

Either a man, or an angel, or a devil. Does it tell us that a man was manifest in the flesh? Assuredly that cannot be its teachings, for every man is manifest in the flesh and there is no sense whatever in making such a statement concerning any mere man and then calling it a mystery! Was it an angel, then? But what angel was ever manifest in the flesh? And if he were, would it be at all a mystery that he should be “seen of angels?” Is it a wonder for an angel to see an angel? Can it be that the devil was manifest in the flesh? If so, he has been “received up into glory,” which, let us hope, is not the case.

Well, if it was neither a man, nor an angel, nor a devil—who was manifest in the flesh? Surely He must have been God! And so, if the word is not there, the *sense* must be there or else *nonsense*. We believe that if criticism should grind the text in a mill, it would get out of it no more and no less than the sense expressed by our grand old version. God Himself was manifest in the flesh! What a mystery is this! A mystery of mysteries! God the Invisible was manifest! God the Spiritual dwelt in flesh! God the Infinite, uncontained, boundless, was manifest in the flesh!

What infinite leagues our thought must traverse between Godhead self-existent and, therefore, full of power and self-sufficiency, before we have descended to the far-down level of poor flesh which is as grass at its best and dust in its essence! Where can we find a greater contrast than between God and flesh? And yet the two are blended in the Incarnation of the Savior! God was manifest in the flesh. Truly God, not God *humanized*, but God as God! He was manifest in real flesh. Not in manhood deified and made superhuman, but in actual flesh—

***“Oh joy! There sits in our death,  
Upon a throne of light,  
One of a human mother born,  
In perfect Godhead bright!  
Forever God, forever Man,  
My Jesus shall endure;  
And fixed on Him,  
My hope remains  
Eternally secure.”***

Matchless Truth of God! Let the Church never fail to set it forth, for it is essential to the world’s salvation that this doctrine of the Incarnation be fully known. O my Brothers and Sisters, since it is, “without controversy,” let us not controvert but sit down and feed upon it! What a miracle of condescension is here, that God should manifest Himself in flesh! It needs not so much to be preached upon as to be pondered in the heart. It needs that you sit down in quiet and consider how He who made you became like you—He who is your God became your brother Man. He who is adored of angels once lay in a manger! He who feeds all living things hungered and was thirsty. He who oversees all worlds as God, was, as a Man, made to sleep, to suffer and to die like yourselves!

This is a statement not easily to be believed. If He had not been beheld by many witnesses, so that men handled Him, looked upon Him and heard Him speak, it were a thing not readily to be accepted that so Divine a Person should be manifest in flesh. It is a wonder of condescension! And it is a marvel, too, of benediction, for God’s manifestation in human flesh conveys a thousand blessings to us. Bethlehem’s star is the morning star of hope to Believers. Now man is nearest to God. Never was God manifest in angel nature, but He is manifest in *flesh*. Now, between poor puny man that is born of a woman and the infinite God, there is a bond of union of the most wonderful kind. God and Man in one Person is the Lord Jesus Christ!

This brings our manhood near to God and by so doing it ennobles our nature—it lifts us up from the dunghill and sets us among princes—while at the same time it enriches us by endowing our manhood with all the glory of Christ Jesus in whom dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily! Lift up your eyes, you down-trodden sons of man! If you are men you have a brotherhood with Christ, and Christ is God! O you who have begun to despise yourselves and think that you are merely sent to be drudges upon and slaves of sin, lift up your heads and look for redemption in the Son of Man who has broken the captives’ bonds!

If you are Believers in the Christ of God, then you are also the *children* of God and if children then heirs—heirs of God, joint heirs with Jesus Christ! What a fullness of consolation there is in this Truth, as well as of benediction, for if the Son of God is Man, then He understands me and will have a fellow feeling for me. He knows my unfitness to worship sometimes—He knows my tendencies to grow weary and dull—He knows my pains, my trials and my griefs—

***“He knows what fierce temptations mean,***

***For He has felt the same.”***  
Man, truly Man, yet sitting at the right hand of the Father, You, O Savior, are the delight of my soul! Is there not the richest comfort in this for you, the people of God? And, besides, there is instruction, too, for God was manifest in the flesh. And if you desire to see God, you must see Him in Christ Jesus.

It does not say God was veiled in the flesh, though under certain aspects that might be true, but God was “manifest in the flesh.” The brightness of the sun might put out our eyes if we gazed upon it and we must look through dark glasses and then the sun is manifested to us. So the excessive glory of the infinite Godhead cannot be borne by our mind’s eyes till it comes into communication and union with the nature of man and then God is manifest to us. My Soul, never try to gaze upon an absolute God—the brightness will blind your eyes—even our God is a consuming fire! Ask not to see God in fire in the bush, nor God in lightning upon Mount Sinai—be satisfied to see God in the Man Christ Jesus, for there God is manifested!

Not all the glory of the sky and of the sea, nor the wonders of Creation or Providence can set forth the Deity as does the Son of Mary, who from the manger went to the Cross and from the Cross to the tomb—and from the tomb to His Eternal Throne. Behold, now, the Lamb of God, for God is manifest in Him! People of God, look nowhere else for God! I shall leave the point when I have asked a personal question. Have we, each one of us, seen God in Christ Jesus? Remember, this is essential to salvation! We speak not now that which is harsh or severe—we only speak that which is honest and true. If you rebel against it we can still say no less. You cannot be right anywhere unless you are right about the Person of the Lord Jesus!

If you do not accept Him as the Son of God He cannot be a Savior to you. And without Him for a Savior you are as surely lost as you are born, whatever profession you may make. I trust we can say, many of us, “Yes, Jesus Christ is to us Lord, to the glory of God the Father and we worship Him and obey Him, putting all our trust in Him and rendering our adoration to Him.” If you are not now His worshippers, may the blessed Spirit bring you to Jesus and not suffer you to attempt to go to the Father first, for the Lord Jesus has told us, “no man comes unto the Father but by Me.” May you go to the Throne of God by the way of the Cross, for that is the *only* way—and may you go by that road at once.

**II.**The second clause concerns our Lord’s vindication by the Spirit. He who was “manifest in the flesh” was also “JUSTIFIED IN THE SPIRIT.” When our Lord came in human flesh and declared to be the Son of God there were many reasons why His statement would be doubted, for He came in such poverty, weakness and disrepute. In any case, the appearance of God in flesh would need great proof, but the circumstances which surrounded our Savior were such as to cast, especially in carnal minds, great doubt upon His pretensions.

Our Lord, however the flesh might seem to cloud His claims, was “justified in the Spirit,” which may mean, and perhaps does, that His *spiritual* Nature as Man was so elevated by His Godhead that it abundantly justified His claim to be the Son of God. What a spirit was His for purity and dignity! What nobility ever came near to His? What a mind was His! What wisdom dwelt in Him! Even as a Child He baffled Rabbis and as a Man He confounded all who would entrap Him in His speech. Was there ever such teaching as His? Listen to Him and you feel that the spirit which flashes from those eyes and distils from those lips justifies His claim to be the Son of the Highest.

Hearken, also, to His words of command when His Godhead glows through His Humanity and proves Him Divine. He speaks and it is done. He commands and it stands fast. At His bidding waves sleep and winds rest—pain flees, strength returns, health smiles—and death lives! Has not His spiritual Nature, by deeds so astounding, fully justified Him? And see, dear Friends, how He was justified—not only by His own spirit, which worked beyond the reach and compass of all other spirits—but He was justified by the Holy Spirit which rested upon Him without measure and made His human spirit strong.

It was this anointing which made Him the chief of all Prophets, teachers and revealers of the mind of God. All who heard Him confessed His unrivalled power, even when they resisted it. The Spirit of God bore witness *in* Him—His words were full of unction. The Spirit of God bore witness *with* Him—His words went to men’s hearts. The Spirit of God bore witness to Christ and justified all His claims at the time of His Baptism, when out of the excellent Glory there appeared the form of a dove and a voice cried out of Heaven, “This is My beloved Son.” That same Spirit justified Him audibly again in His Transfiguration. But silently and yet more evidently the seal of God was *always* on Him—the Spirit witnessed to Him everywhere. Only blind eyes, blinded by hate, refused to see the Divine light which hung about His every word and act, as radiance enrobes a star!

Above all, our Lord’s claims were justified by the Spirit in His Resurrection, when He was “declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness by His resurrection from the dead.” Nor less so when, after 40 days, He was received up into Glory and the Spirit of God justified all that Christ had said by coming down like a rushing mighty wind and cloven tongues of fire and resting upon His disciples. If Christ had not risen from the dead He would have been a convicted impostor. And after His rising from the dead, if the Spirit of God had not been given, His claim would still have remained under a cloud!

But now it is clear that, “He has ascended on high and received gifts for men, yes, for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them,” for the scattering of the Spirit of God among men was that promised largess which our mighty Conqueror distributed among His people when He entered upon the possession of His crown. The Holy Spirit has justified Christ! This is a part of the testimony of the Church—that Christ’s claims are to be justified by the spirit of His teaching and also by the Holy Spirit whose supernatural power will accompany the proclamation of the Gospel.

Now, let the Church always stand to this. I am afraid we are on wrong ground when we begin to defend the Gospel by mere *reason*. The true defense of the Gospel is the Spirit of Christ—Jesus is justified in the Spirit— and needs no other justification. O, Brethren, if we exhibit the Spirit of Christ we shall answer ridiculers and if the Spirit of God rests on the ministry of the Church, ridiculers will cease to ridicule! They will see her glory and they will be ashamed.

The Holy Spirit is our strength, our glory, the abiding witness that our great Leader is Lord and God. Brethren, has the Holy Spirit ever justified Christ in your soul? He has come to save—has the Holy Spirit revealed Him as your Savior? He has come to blot out sin—has the Holy Spirit ever revealed Him in all His power to pardon you? This is the sure vindication of Christ—your own personal experience of His preciousness and His power! If the Holy Spirit has given you that, none can confuse you! But if you have it not you lack the one thing necessary. God grant you may not lack it long!

**III.**The third clause of our hexapla is, “SEEN OF ANGELS.” This is an important point, for angels had waited to see the Lord, patiently gazing on the Mercy Seat. There had been rumors in Heaven of this mystery of the manifold wisdom of God but they had not understood it. And it is now in Christ that the mystery of Incarnate God has been revealed to them. If I may say so, the brightness of the Godhead had confused even the angels. They were not able to see God, but when God came and manifested Himself in the flesh, then God was seen of angels.

The Godhead was seen in Christ by angels as they had never seen it before. They had beheld the attribute of justice. They had seen the attribute of power. They had marked the attribute of wisdom and seen the prerogative of sovereignty. But never had angels seen love, condescension, tenderness and pity in God as they saw these things resplendent in the Person and the life of Christ! They were astounded to think that God was such a One. They knew Him to be thrice holy, for they had chanted, “Holy, holy, holy,” in their perpetual song. But they did not know Him to be Love—essential Love—as they knew it when they saw that, “He spared not His own Son, but freely delivered Him up for us all.”

The angels, seeing God thus manifest in flesh, ministered to Him. They watched around the manger. They were messengers to His foster parent to warn him of intended evil to the Child. And they waited on the Redeemer in the desert of His temptation. One of their number strengthened Him in the garden. Another rolled away the stone from His grave, while others sat at the head and foot of the sepulcher where Jesus had lain. I doubt not it is true as we sang just now—

***“They brought His chariot from above,  
To bear Him to His Throne;  
Clapped their triumphant wings, and cried, ‘The glorious work is done.’”***

Jesus was alone seen of angels and this is one reason why they sing so sweetly of Him—why they tune their notes so heartily to the song, “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain,” for they saw Him live and die—they saw Him labor and suffer and therefore is their song so vivid and so full of adoration. “You were slain,” they sing, though they *cannot* add, “and have redeemed us unto God by Your blood.”

Now the joy of this truth lies here—it brings the angel host near to us, for they saw Jesus and waited on Him and we see Him and therefore our eyes and the angels’ eyes meet upon the Person of Christ. We have one common love, one common Lord—and now the ministering spirits that waited upon Him are ready to wait upon us. They love the members for the sake of the Head. Beloved, we rejoice this day to know that Christ is Head of angels and principalities and powers, as well as Head of His Church! And so, in Him broken unity is restored and the household of God is one in Him. Angelic eyes beheld and loved—they still love and wonder. Fair spirits, charmed with the beauty of our Bridegroom, you rejoice with us and make it your delight to swell His train!

One question and we leave this point. Have you ever seen Jesus? He was seen of angels. Have your eyes ever seen Him—your inner, spiritual eyes? If not, the Lord help you this morning to look unto Him and be saved! It is nothing that He was seen of angels unless He is seen of me also, even as of one born out of due time. O, to see Him as my Savior, my All and rest in Him! This is the main business. May God grant us that gladness!

**IV.**Briefly, the fourth part of the great mystery does not look, at first sight, to be at all mysterious. There is much of mystery in the facts that God was “manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, and seen of angels.” But the next appears very commonplace—“PREACHED UNTO THE GENTILES.” Yet it is not without a marvel. Those who reflect will see a great mystery of Grace in it. Until Christ came,*nothing* was “preached to the Gentiles.” They were accounted *dogs*, and few were the crumbs that fell to them from the Master’s table! But after our Lord had ascended on high He was proclaimed to the Gentiles.

To a Jew, especially, this would seem a very strange thing. The Jew thought that if the Gentile perished it was but a matter of course—but for the Gentiles to be visited with the Gospel was strange, indeed! That God should work effectually in Peter to the Apostleship of the circumcision was to them readily a matter of faith. But that the same should be equally mighty in Paul towards the Gentiles was incredible! Well, blessed be God, you and I are partakers in this mystery, for we have heard and believed the love which God has toward us! We are Gentiles, also, but unto us has the Gospel been preached as well as unto the ancient people! Yes, and we have been more highly favored than they, for at this day more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife.

God has multiplied the seed of Abraham after the Spirit among the Gentiles, whereas the seed of Abraham after the flesh have, in these times, rejected the Savior. Rejoice then, in the mystery that Christ is preached among the Gentiles! Mark you, *preached*! For He is to be set forth in that manner. The Church is ever to maintain this great, incontrovertible mystery that the setting forth of Christ to the Gentiles is to be by *preaching* and not by any other means of man’s devising. Suppose I could take my pencil, now, and draw the Savior with such matchless skill that a Raffaelle or a Titian could not rival me? God has never ordained that Christ should so be set forth to the Gentiles.

Or, suppose I should perform the ceremony of the “mass” with all the exactness and with all the gorgeousness which the church of Rome would require? Such a setting forth of Christ among the Gentiles would not be according to the Divine mystery. Christ is to be *preached* among the Gentiles! The appointed way of manifesting the Incarnate God to the sons of men is by *preaching*—the Church must always maintain this! The strongest castle of the walls of Zion for offense and defense must always be the pulpit. God is pleased by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe!

I hate to see, as I do sometimes in certain modern buildings, the pulpit stuck in the corner and the altar in the most conspicuous place. The altar of sacrifice, indeed! The place of defilement and remembrance of sin—how come is that in the holy place at all? God has never ordained it to be there! Where in Holy Scripture have we mention of a material altar in the assemblies of Believers? Our only altar is the *spiritual* Altar of our Lord’s Person, whereof they have no right to eat that serve the tabernacle of outward forms of rites and ceremonies. Altars belong to Jews and heathens and even they never bow before them! None but your Popish idolaters have fallen so low as that!

The most prominent agency in the Church of God is the preaching of Christ—this is the trumpet of Heaven and the battering ram of Hell! By this door salvation comes, for faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God—and how shall they hear without a preacher? God’s way of creating faith in men’s hearts is not by pictures, music, or symbols, but by the hearing of the Word of God! This may seem a strange thing—but strange let it seem, for it is a *mystery*—and a great mystery, but a fact beyond all controversy! Let the Church forever maintain that Christ is to be preached unto the Gentiles!

A part of the greatness of the mystery lies in the persons who preached the Gospel. It was a strange thing that Jesus should be preached unto the Gentiles by unlearned and ignorant men. One of the Apostles, it is true, was of another class, but he declares that he never preached with excellency of speech. He declared that in all simplicity he laid bare the mystery of God in plain language. It was wonderful that Christ should be preached unto the Gentiles so rapidly. It was but the other day the 120 were in the upper room and within a few years there was no part of the civilized globe which had not heard the name of Jesus! They had penetrated Scythia. They had subdued the barbarians—their only weapon being the Cross!

They had triumphed at Athens, in the stronghold of classic learning. They had passed into Rome and set up the Cross amidst the luxurious vices of the capital. No place was untrodden by the Christian missionary and no place was unaffected by the power of the Gospel which he preached. This is a great mystery—may the Lord repeat the mystery again and again! O that preaching might once again be recognized to be God’s power unto salvation and used everywhere—in the Church, in the lecture hall, in the street—in foreign lands and at home! The voice of the Truth of God in the preaching of Jesus is the great power of God!

One question here, and we leave it—Have you reverently heard the Gospel? For there goes with the declaration that God saves through preaching, the warning, “Take heed how you hear.” If God waits to bless by hearing, woe unto the men who hear inattentively and disrespectfully! Woe unto the hearers who are not*doers* of the Word! A responsibility goes with hearing and God grant that you may be *obedient* hearers so that we who preach may give a good account of you at the last—that our ministry may not have been in vain—but may have been to you the voice of God to your salvation.

**V.**And now the fifth part of the mystery is a very remarkable one. Like that which preceded, it does not appear to be mysterious on the surface, but it is so—“BELIEVED ON IN THE WORLD.” This is the most glorious of all the six points, this wonderful fact that Jesus is “believed on in the world.” Why, when the humble preachers first went out to tell of Jesus, their story was so strange you could not imagine that any would believe it! And then the doctrines that they taught were so contrary to all the prejudices of flesh and blood, so humbling to human pride, so insulting to all our self-esteem that it was not probable that men would accept them!

And the world, too, what a world it was! It was steeped up to its throat in cruelty, in vice, in luxury, in sins infamous and unmentionable—and was it likely that a pure Savior with a perfect doctrine like His would find followers? But He did—He was “believed on in the world.” Why, I think the first preachers must have been ready to leap for joy when they found that men believed them! If I had been Peter, I should scarcely have slept for joy for many a night if I had found 3,000 willing to believe my testimony and willing to be baptized into Christ! And Paul—oh, I thinks with all his sorrows, he must have been a very happy man—must have been struck with wonder to see that though he went into idolatrous lands to tell this new, strange and incredible story, yet in every place there were found men or women who received it joyfully!

Hark well that the Church is bound to maintain this mystery—that it is by believing in Christ that the efficacy of His Sacrifice comes to men. The mystery is not that Christ is *served* in the world, that is not put here—nor that Christ is *worshipped* in the world, that is not the first point—those things will be sure to follow. But the vital mystery is that Christ is “believed on in the world,” that is to say, trusted as the Savior! Men leave all other trusts and trust in Him! They give up their self-righteousness. They leave their vaunted sacraments. They forsake all ways and modes of selfsalvation and come and trust in Christ—this is the great mystery!

“Well,” says one, “I do not see that there is a mystery in it.” Have you ever believed in Jesus yourself, beloved Friend? If you have, you will say, “this is the finger of God.” Belief in Jesus is as great a work of Divine power as the making of this globe. One of the visitors to this place lately said, “I am willing to be a Believer if the preacher can persuade me.” Very likely, but no preacher can create true faith—it needs a mightier power than the preacher’s, even the power of the Holy Spirit! God gives to His elect the blessing of faith and others willfully remain in unbelief. Faith, simple as it is, is *supernatural*, Divine and not to be attained by human aid, nor human eloquence. They who have it know that it is a blessed mystery, this believing on Jesus Christ in the world. Have you this faith? Do you believe in Jesus? Everything else in my text leads up to this.

If He is manifest in the flesh, what is that unless I believe in Him? What if He is justified in the Spirit? What is that unless faith in Him justifies *me*? What if He is seen of angels, how does that help me unless I see Him, too? And even if He is preached among the Gentiles, that does but involve greater guilt upon my soul if, after hearing, I have not believed in Him. O dear Hearers, I may not speak to you much longer and every time that I am kept away from addressing you I feel a deep anxiety that by some means my preaching may be made effectual to your salvation. Many of you have believed in my Lord—this is my comfort—but, on the other hand, how many there are who still hear, and hear, and hear, and that is all? How long will you wait? How long will you cause me to labor for nothing? No one is so worth trusting as the Savior is and nothing is so true as that He came to save sinners!

**VI.**The last point of the Church’s witness is that Jesus was “RECEIVED UP INTO GLORY.” Only this word about it—He was so received because His work is finished. He would never have gone into His Glory if He had not finished all His toil. He would have accepted no reward had He not fully earned it. My Soul, do you believe that Christ is received up into Glory? That will let you know that you are resting in a finished work, an Atonement which has put away all sin, a satisfaction which has made all Believers accepted in the Beloved. He has gone into Glory, thus He is personally rewarded.

And moreover, He has thus representatively taken possession of all that He has purchased. Is Christ in Glory? Then the Believer is in Glory—not *literally* but in his Covenant Head. What Christ takes possession of He claims in our name—“I go to prepare a place for you.” O you who sorrow over the present, rejoice also, for even now at this moment Heaven is yours—your Jesus has taken possession in your name! And oh, it is joyous to know that our great Lord is eternally exalted! If He were not exalted what comfort could we have? He is received up into Glory!

Men say He is not God—they cannot hurt Him, for He is received up into Glory! They revile His Gospel—they cannot dim the luster of His crown, He is received up into Glory! They would gladly slay His people if they could, but He is received up into Glory! They struggle and they strive against His cause and would gladly overthrow it—but O, what does it matter? He is everlastingly exalted and He will shortly come—that same Jesus who was received into Glory shall so come, in like manner as He was seen to go up into Heaven!

Here are great wells of comfort! He has gone to His Glory and has taken to Himself His great power! But every hour is bringing nearer the time when He shall lay bare His sword in the midst of His foes and shall unveil His face in the midst of His friends! Let us rejoice in Him this day and go our way to bear with all the Church of the living God the six-fold testimony of our text concerning our precious Savior. Amen.

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Sermon #786 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

THE GREAT MYSTERY OF GODLINESS

NO. 786

**DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, DECEMBER 22, 1867, *BY C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.”***1Ti 3:16***.***

THE Apostle had just reminded Timothy that the Church of the living God is the pillar and ground of the Truth of God, and he had pressed it upon him to behave himself aright in the midst of those faithful men to whom the Lord had committed the Gospel. And, lest by any means the youthful minister should think that the treasure committed to the Church was of little value, he declares that beyond all controversy it was great and precious. Every heathen religion had its mystery, its secret doctrine revealed only to the initiated which was held to be the essence of the faith. The mystery of some religions was mere froth, foolish if untrue, and if true of no consequence to anyone. But even those who do not believe the facts of our religion can hold no controversy with us about the unspeakable greatness of them, if they are, indeed, true.

Be a man what he may, if he is reasonable he will admit that Christianity does not deal in trifles. Like the eagle, it does not hawk for flies—it aspires to conquer the loftiest themes of thought. Right or wrong, the subjects with which we deal are not secondary, but wear about them an awful interest which none but the frivolous despise. Jesus sits in no second place among teachers. Paul mentions what the mystery of godliness is and declares that it concerns the manifestation of God in human flesh that He might save men from their sin. Now, says he, without controversy this is a great matter. If it is received by us as true, it becomes us to act as those who are put in trust with a priceless deposit with which we dare not be otherwise than faithful.

There is no room for indifference where the Gospel is concerned—it is either the most astounding of shams, or the most amazing of revelations! No man can safely remain undecided about it—it is too weighty, too solemn to be snuffed at as a matter of no concern. Foes and friends alike confess that the mystery of godliness is great. It is no rippling rill of dogma but a broad ocean of thought. It is no molehill of discovery, but an Alp of revelation. It is no single beam of light but a sun shining at its strength.

I shall, this morning, first take up the Apostle’s summary of our religion. Secondly, I shall give a few notes upon it. And, thirdly, draw one or two inferences from it.

**I.**First let us carefully look at THE SUMMARY OF TRUE RELIGION handed by the Apostle to his son in the faith.

**1.**The first article in this most authentic Apostle’s creed declares that “God was manifest in the flesh.” This is claimed as an especially valuable part of the great mystery of godliness. My Brothers and Sisters, if you will carefully consider it, this is one of the most extraordinary doctrines that was ever declared in human hearing! And were it not well attested, it would be absolutely incredible that the Infinite God who fills all things, who was and is, and is to come—the Almighty, the Omniscient, and the Omnipresent actually condescended to veil Himself in the garments of our inferior clay!

He made all things, and yet He deigned to take the flesh of a creature into union with Himself! The Infinite was linked with the infant, and the Eternal was blended with mortality. That manger at Bethlehem, tenanted by the express image of the Father’s Glory, was a great sight, indeed, to those who understood it. Well might the angels troop forth in crowds from within the gates of pearl, that they might behold Him whom Heaven could not contain finding accommodation in a stable with a lowly wedded pair. Wonder of wonders! God over all, blessed forever, became One with a newborn Babe which slept in a manger where the horned oxen fed! “God was manifest in the flesh.”

In this Paul testifies not merely to our Lord’s *birth*, but to the whole of the Divine manifestation in His life of two or three and thirty years. He was abundantly manifest among the multitudes and before His disciples during the latter part of His life. He was God in miracles most plenteous, but He was Man in sufferings most pitiable. He was the Son of the Highest, and nevertheless, “a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.” He trod the billows of the obedient sea and yet He owned not a foot of land in all Judea. He fed thousands by His power and yet all faint and weary He sat upon a well, and cried, “Give Me to drink.”

He cast out devils, but was Himself tempted of the devil. He healed all manner of diseases and was Himself exceedingly sorrowful even unto death! Winds and waves obeyed Him. Every element acknowledged the august Presence of Deity and yet He was tempted in all points like as we are. Our Lord’s Manhood was no phantasm, no myth, no mere appearance in human shape. Beyond all doubt “the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.” “Handle Me and see,” says He, “a Spirit has not flesh and bones as you see I have.” “Reach here your finger, and behold My hands; and reach here your hand, and thrust it into My side: and be not faithless, but believing.”

Yet with equal certainty God was manifest in Him. As the light streams through the lantern, so the Glory of Godhead flamed through the flesh of Jesus. Those who were His nearest companions bear witness—“We beheld His glory, the glory as of the Only-Begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.” That revelation of God in the flesh became yet more extraordinary when, at last, our Lord condescended to be put to death by His own creatures! Arraigned before human tribunals, condemned as guilty of the gravest crimes, He is taken from prison and from judgment with none to declare His generation. He is fastened to the accursed wood and put to a death of deepest shame and bitterest torture.

O you whose loving eyes have looked upon the ensanguined rills which gush from the wounds of your bleeding Lord and have delighted to behold the Lily of the Valleys reddened into the Rose of Sharon with the crimson of His own blood—you can see God in Christ as you behold rocks rending, the sun darkened and the dead arising from their tombs at the moment of His departure from the earth! Behold in the writhing form of the Crucified Man the vengeance and the love of God, nor less behold Divine power sustaining the load of human guilt, and Divine compassion enduring such agonies for rebels so ill deserving. Truly this Son of Man was also the Son of God!

Beloved, this is a mystery surpassing all comprehension. If any man should attempt to explain, or even to define the union of the Divine and Human in the Lord Jesus, he would soon prove his folly. The schoolmen of the dark ages were very fond of asking puzzling questions about what they called the hypostatical union of the Deity and humanity of Christ. They could not cast so much as a ray of light upon the subject. They amused themselves with enigmas and lost themselves in labyrinths. It is *enough* for us to know that the Incarnation is a glorious fact and it suffices us to hold it in its simplicity. God was manifest in the flesh of Jesus Christ the Incarnate Word.

Beloved, this is a great mystery—great because it treats of God. Any doctrine which relates to the Infinite and the Eternal is of the utmost weight. We should be all ears and all heart when we have to learn concerning God. Reason teaches us that He who made us, who is our Preserver, and at whose Word we are soon to return to the dust, should be the first object of our thoughts. Turn here, you wayward children of Adam, and behold this great mystery for your God is here! A bush burning and unconsumed would attract your curious gaze—what do you think of a Man who was in union with the God who is a consuming fire? The Truth of God manifest in flesh is great if you consider the great honor which is thereby conferred upon manhood!

Man honored in God’s taking the nature of man into union with Himself, for verily He took not upon Him the nature of angels, but He took upon Him the seed of Abraham! Whichever of all the creatures shall come nearest to the Creator will evidently have the preeminence in the ranks of creatureship! Which, then, shall bear the palm? Shall not the seraphs be chosen? Shall not the swift-winged sons of fire be chief among Heaven’s courtiers? Behold, and be astonished—a *worm* is preferred—a rebellious child of the earth is chosen! Human nature is espoused into oneness with the Divine! There is no gulf between God and redeemed man at this hour. God is first, over all, blessed forever, but next comes man in the Person of the Man Christ Jesus.

Well may we say with David, “When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, the moon and the stars which You have ordained; what is man, that You are mindful of him? And the son of man, that You visit him? For You have made him a little lower than the angels, and have crowned him with glory and honor. You made him to have dominion over the works of Your hands. You have put all things under his feet.” Man is royal now that Christ is human! Man is exalted since Christ is humiliated. Man may go up to God now that God has come down to man. This is great, is it not? A mystery, certainly, but great in every way! See that you despise it not lest you miss the abounding benefit which flows to man through this golden channel.

My Brothers and Sisters, the mystery appears greatest of all because it is so nearly connected with our eternal redemption. There could have been no putting away of sin by vicarious suffering if God had not become Incarnate. Sin is not removed except by an atonement—neither would any person have sufficed to atone but one of like nature to those who had offended. By man came death—by man also must come resurrection. Jesus appears as Man to save His people from their sins by taking the sins of His people upon Himself and offering a propitiation for them. What a wondrous sight was the dying Redeemer! The Cross is the focus of all human history. I was almost going to say it is the *center* of the life of God, if such a thing can be.

All the ages meet in Calvary. Jesus is the central Sun of all events. O, gaze again, and marvel more and more that God should put Himself into the place of His offending creature, and in the Person of His dear Son should offer to eternal justice a compensation for the insults which sin had cast upon law and rule! There is no greatness in Heaven or earth if it is not here in the bleeding flesh of Jesus, the Son of God! All else is dwarfed into nothingness in His Presence. Beloved, the manifestation of God in Jesus Crucified will appear to be great to you if you have ever drank deep into its meaning. If, standing at the foot of the Cross, you have seen all your sins punished in the Person of the Incarnate God, and have heard the voice which says, “There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus,” you cannot think lightly of the Word made flesh.

If you have learned that His blood has brought perfect pardon to all Believers, and that through the torn veil of His flesh the saints have access to God and entrance into Heaven, you will lay hold upon the great Truth of an Incarnate Deity with a grasp which neither the trials of life nor the terrors of death shall unclasp! You will hate the very thought of denying the Godhead of the Lord that bought you—you will be jealous for His great name, and burn with sacred zeal for His glory. Your heart will cry out indignantly, “Away from me, you rejecters of the Divine Redeemer! If you rob Christ of His glory I count you the worst of thieves. ‘Whoever denies the Son, the same has not the Father,’ and in denying Jesus you reject the one God Himself!”

**2.**The Apostle mentions, in the next place, the important witness by which the mission of Jesus was confirmed. He was “Justified in the Spirit.” By the word “Spirit,” we understand the Holy Spirit, although it may be understood of the spiritual nature of Christ in which He was *always* justified, though in the flesh He was condemned of men. It appears more natural to confine the expression to the Holy Spirit.

Every religion demands our attention in proportion to the certainty of its teachings and the value of its confirmatory testimony. How matchless is the seal which is set upon the mystery of godliness, since the Holy Spirit has been pleased Himself, Personally and repeatedly, to confirm it! If we demand trustworthy evidence, behold the Holy Spirit bearing witness to our most holy faith, both in Heaven and in earth!—“It is the Spirit that bears witness, because the Spirit is truth.”

Observe what part the Holy Spirit took in connection with our Lord. The formation of the Immaculate Body of the Holy Child Jesus was by the energy of the Holy Spirit—as the angel said to Mary, “The Holy Spirit shall come upon you, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow you: therefore also that Holy Thing which shall be born of you shall be called the Son of God.” Afterwards, the Holy Spirit confirmed this same most sacred Person, in whom God was manifest, by descending upon Him at His Baptism in the waters of Jordan. John, who was the forerunner and witness of Jesus, bore record, saying, “I saw the Spirit descending from Heaven like a dove, and it abode upon Him. And I knew Him not: but He that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom you shall see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, the same is He which baptizes with the Holy Spirit. And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God.”

The heavens were opened, and the Spirit, the Voice of God, proclaimed, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” On one or two other occasions we have it upon the testimony of witnesses who were present that an audible voice was heard out of the excellent glory, saying, “This is My beloved Son: hear Him!” The greatest attestation which the Holy Spirit gave to Christ was the raising of Him from the dead. In some respects Christ rose from the dead by His own power, but it is a Scriptural doctrine that He was “declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness by the resurrection from the dead.”

The power by which we are converted is evidently the Holy Spirit, and we read in the Ephesians, “The exceeding greatness of His power to usward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power, which He worked in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead.” Moreover, let us not forget that 40 days after our Master had been taken up from us, while the disciples were gathered together with one accord in one place, suddenly they heard a sound as of a rushing mighty wind which filled all the place where they were sitting. The Holy Spirit, whom Jesus had promised, had come to make good the Word of the Lord. You have not forgotten the miraculous flames of fire which sat upon each of the disciples and how they spoke with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance!

You know how that day 3,000 were converted to the faith by the testimony of those first champions of Christ! Thus the Holy Spirit bore witness with signs and miracles, and wondrous gifts, that He who professed to be Incarnate Deity was most truly God and the Savior of men! Beloved, if you complain that this attestation has now ceased and that the record of miracles is rather a strain upon your faith than an assistance to it, I would remind you that the Spirit of God has not ceased from the midst of the Church. The Holy Spirit no longer operates upon material substances—the sick are not healed and the dead are not raised—this we freely confess. But He still acts with equally wonderful results upon the minds of men.

In this very house there have been miracles performed, which, in lasting value, put the raising of the dead to shame! Many of us who are now present bear witness that by the Spirit of God we have been newly created, raised from spiritual corruption, delivered from the dominion of Satan and translated into the kingdom of God! The swine of drunkenness have been made lovers of holiness! The beasts of sensuality have become partakers of the Divine nature! What better sign is needed? When hearts of stone melt like wax and streams of penitence flow from souls as hard as flinty rocks—who will refuse to believe? Let the Gospel be judged by its *fruits* and we are satisfied with the trial. If it does not turn the moral desert into an Eden, transform the lion into a lamb, and raise up the beggar from the dunghill, then let it be rejected!

But since it has done this, and is doing it, let its despisers beware lest they commit the sin against the Holy Spirit while they reject the solemn evidences which He daily thrusts before our eyes. Brethren, in our own souls the blessed Spirit has borne most overwhelming witness when we have been bowed in penitence at Jesus’ feet, and have been lifted up into the loftiest joy as we found pardon in His blood. The Spirit of God is with us still, working with the Word of God. See the savage casting away his weapons, the cannibal softened into the man! What philosophy could not do and did not care to attempt—what civilization never could have accomplished alone, the Cross of Christ has effectually performed! The Spirit of God is with us, and both in the holiness of the saints and in the conversions of unbelievers He bears witness that God was in Christ.

**3.**Our Apostle writes, as the next part of the great mystery of godliness, that Christ “was seen of angels.” Jesus was seen of angels at His birth. They appeared to the shepherds and bade them hasten to Bethlehem while they, themselves, looked on with holy wonder—

***“They saw the Heaven-born Child, in human flesh arrayed, Benevolent and mild, while in a manger laid.  
And praise to God, and peace on earth,  
For such a birth, proclaimed aloud.”***

Our Lord was watched by holy spirits in the wilderness where, after He had conquered that arch tempter, angels ministered unto Him. He was with the wild beasts at one moment and seraphic spirits waited in His train. An angel ministered unto Him in Gethsemane when His sweat was, as it were, great drops of blood. Upon Calvary they watched Him, too, and doubtless, as the poet says***—***

***“Around the bloody tree they pressed with strong desire That wondrous sight to see, the Lord of Life expire. And, could their eyes have known a tear,  
Had dropped it there in sad surprise.”***

Visions of angels were seen by the witnesses of His Resurrection. Two clothed in white sat the one at the head and the other at the foot where the Body of Jesus had lain. Angels met Him at His Ascension when the clouds received Him out of the sight of His gazing followers. And they attended Him up to Glory, crying, “Lift up your heads, O you gates; and be you lift up, you everlasting doors; and the King of Glory shall come in.”

The Apostle mentions this to show the greatness of our religion since the most noble intellects are interested in it. Did you ever hear of angels hovering around the assemblies of philosophical societies? Very interesting papers are sometimes produced speculating upon geological facts. Startling discoveries are every now and then made as to astronomy and the laws of motion. We are frequently surprised at the results of chemical analyses, yet I do not remember ever reading, even in poetry, that angelic beings have shown any excitement at the news! The fact is that the story of the world’s history in geologic times, and all the facts about this world are as well known to angels as the letters of the alphabet are to us!

All our profound sciences and recondite theories must seem utterly contemptible to them. Those august minds which have been long ago created of God and preserved from defilement by His decree, are better able to judge than we are of the importance of things. And when we find them deeply interested in a matter, it cannot be of small account. Concerning an Incarnate God, it is said, “which things the angels desire to look into.” Their views of God’s manifesting Himself in the flesh are such that over the Mercy Seat they stand with outspread wings gazing in reverent admiration. And before the Throne they sing, “Worthy is the Lamb, for He was slain.”

The doctrine of Incarnate Deity may be folly to the Greeks, and the vainglorious wiseacres of this world may call it commonplace, but to angels it is an ever flowing fountain of adoring admiration. They turn from every other sight to view the Incarnate Redeemer, regarding His condescending deed of Divine Grace as a bottomless ocean of mystery, a topless steep of wonder! Jesus was seen of angels and they still delight to gaze upon Him—this, to the Apostle’s mind, was conclusive evidence that the doctrines of our faith are of the greatest importance.

**4.**Then, he passes on to the next Truth—Jesus Christ was preached unto the Gentiles. Was this a great thing? Is preaching a wonder? Yes. The preaching of the Gospel proves conclusively the grandeur of our religion. The nearest to Christ were the angels—He was seen of them. The furthest from Christ were fallen Gentiles who had given themselves up to the worship of the works of their own hands—to these, also, Jesus came. That Jesus Christ was preached to the Gentiles at all was a wonder which it behooves us not to forget.

As Paul says, “Therefore remember, that you, being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands: that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: but now in Christ Jesus you who some times were far off are made near by the blood of Christ. For He is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of partition between us; having abolished in His flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in Himself of two one new man, so making peace.”

The Gentiles were brutalized with groveling vices and no form of spiritual faith had ever found footing among them. Was, then, the most spiritual of all religions to be taught to them and carried to them by no other means than that of *preaching*? This surprised our Apostle! And what surprises me still more is this—that Christ was preached to the Gentiles by *Jews*—that those whose bigotry at that time was invincible so that they could not imagine such a thing as a Gentile being in covenant with God were the very men who with indefatigable ardor went among the Gentiles to preach Jesus Christ!

If you had told an intelligent Jew that some of his fellow countrymen would become Apostles to the Gentiles, to declare that the wall which surrounded the favored nation was broken down, he would have smiled incredulously and exclaimed, “Impossible! You may cut the Jew in pieces first. The belief that his race is peculiarly favored of God lies in the very heart and marrow of the Israelite. He will never consent to become one with the Gentile dogs.” Yet Jesus the King of the Jews, Israel’s hope and consolation, was first published to the heathen by Jews, and chiefly by one who boasted that he was a “Hebrew of the Hebrews. As touching the law, a Pharisee.”

Paul, the most ferocious of bigots, who counted that he did God’s service when he hunted out the disciples of Christ, became the Gentile’s friend and spiritual father! This is a startling fact. It is a most noteworthy fact in the history of our faith that Jesus is still preached among the nations, and the Church labors to make him known everywhere. What other religion spends so much energy in seeking converts?

If any of you were foolish enough to wish to become Jews, you would not be welcomed among the Jewish fraternity. No Israelite ever attempts to proselyte us to his opinions. It would be a novelty, indeed, to hear of Jewish missionaries sent out to convert the heathen from their superstitions, or to recover Christians from their errors! No, the Jew does not want us—he prefers to keep his heritage for himself and his heirs. How far different is it with the followers of Jesus, whose very watchword is “preach the Gospel to every creature!”

In the case of all other religions, the preaching to the Gentiles is absent. I am not aware of any Muslim society for the conversion of the world to the Prophet. I never saw in the streets of London a Brahmin, come from far, to convert the crowds of London to the doctrines of the Shasters. Nor have I ever seen a Buddhist thrusting himself into the midst of peril to win the savage to his creed. Can any other faith than the Christian show me a man traversing alone the center of Africa, like Livingstone, or dwelling alone with Bushmen, as Moffat has done? The fact is that the spirit of false creeds is rather monopoly than extension. But as for the religion of Christ, it is expansive as the arch of Heaven!

If I could, I would have all men saved! If it were possible, I would have every one of you partakers of Christ Jesus this very morning. And we would cheerfully lay down our lives if we could extend the kingdom of Jesus Christ to the utmost bounds of the earth. What is it that keeps up this incessant preaching of Christ? Nothing but the real force of our faith. O you heathens, if your religions are true, why do you not promulgate them? Gods of the heathen, if you are gods, why do you not command your worshippers to convert the nations to your allegiance?

But no, they confess the worthlessness of their system in that these systems are not preached among the Gentiles, and have no vitality to secure their spread. When these religions do attempt to spread themselves, which is rare enough, how do they do it? Mohammed put a scimitar into the hand of each one of his followers, and said, “That is the strength of Islam—use that sharp argument upon the nations.” But Christ refused all carnal weapons and chose the simple preaching of the Word. What other faith can dare to depend upon preaching—upon one man’s testimony to other men about Truth precious to himself? Surely this goes to show that the things which we believe are powerful and worthy to be considered with attentive respect.

**5.**Another great part of the mystery is that Christ is believed on in the world. I will acknowledge that I have often wondered at this sentence, and have asked why Paul should write it down as a great mystery that Christ should be believed on in the world. And yet it is a marvel of marvels! If you think how sunken the world was in vice—how darkened the understanding of man was with ignorance—it is astounding that such men should receive so holy and so spiritual a religion as that which Jesus Christ preached by His servants.

We come to you who are fond of sin and we tell you that you must give up your favorite pleasures, that cherished vices must be abandoned, that holiness which is distasteful to you must rule your life—and yet obnoxious as these things are to flesh and blood, when the Holy Spirit comes with the Word—you believe them and accept them joyfully. The Apostle, in his first Epistle to the Corinthians, uses the following language: “Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.

“And such were some of you: but you are washed, but you are sanctified, but you are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.” Was not this extraordinary that such horrible characters should become lovers of the pure and holy Jesus? Must not a religion which can change such as these be something more than a cunningly devised fable?

In another place, we are told of all mankind, “There is none that understands, there is none that seeks after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that does good, no, not one.” Is it not a wonder that such depraved minds should perceive beauties in the Lord Jesus and yield their full confidence to Him? Indeed, to every saved man it is the greatest miracle of all that he is himself a Believer! When I come to look at the Truths of God upon which I rest, they are very simple, indeed, and yet around them so many doubts are cast by the evil of my own heart that I stand amazed my faith retains her hold!

I believe that Christ died for my sins with much more assurance than I believe anything else. No fact in history is one-half as certain to me, and yet, at times, it is so hard to believe it that it is clear to me that true faith is not of man but is a fruit of the Spirit. Great must be the Truth which forces itself upon the conviction of minds so dark and so benighted as ours. The Apostle winds up his summary of the mystery by reminding us that Christ was “received up into glory.” This is no small Truth, surely, that the Apostle and High Priest of our profession has not gone from us into obscurity, but is at this day sitting upon the Throne of God!

At this hour Jesus is King of kings and Lord of lords, upholding all things by the word of His power. He shall shortly come to be our Judge. He shall descend from Heaven with a shout, with the trump of the archangel and the voice of God, and all men shall be gathered before Him to receive their final sentence. This is no small Truth, but a great one to be proclaimed with zeal! Thus, throughout, the burden of our religion is far from trivial. “Great is the mystery of godliness.”

**II.**I must now detain you with a few NOTES UPON THIS SUMMARY. Paul has here given us an outline of the Christian faith and we note upon it as follows—First, it is all concerning Christ. Out of these six articles of Paul’s creed, they all speak of Christ, from which I gather that if we are to preach the Gospel faithfully. We must preach much concerning Jesus Christ. My dear Brothers, this must be the first, the middle and end of our ministry. That man of whom it cannot be said that he preaches Christ does not behave himself aright in the house of God. He evidently is not a messenger sent from Heaven.

It is our business here to cry with John the Baptist, “Behold the Lamb of God, which takes away the sin of the world.” Brothers and Sisters, as it is ours to preach Christ, so it is yours to receive Him. If you have received a Gospel of which Christ is not the top and bottom, throw it away! If you are resting on anything beside Christ Jesus, you are resting upon a rotten foundation. Get off from it lest you be deceived at the last! But if Christ is All in All to you, and His work and Person are the sum and substance of your hope, then be of good cheer—where Jesus is honored, souls are safely sheltered.

I notice, in the second place, that there is not here a single word upon Sacramentarianism. Now, in these days we are perpetually told by men who are manifestly in earnest that the great thing is the sacrament. According to their teaching God has committed to bishops and priests the fullness of His Divine Grace which we meekly and reverently may receive at their venerable hands. We are told that in connection with a few drops of water, sprinkled by the successors of the Apostles, children become regenerate! We are assured that through the laying on of these same blessed hands, we afterwards become confirmed in the faith and assured of our salvation!

We are told that through priestly power we are made partakers of the very *body* and *blood* of Christ, which, according to them, becomes *literally present* through *their* operation. When we come to die, they can anoint us with oil, consecrated by *their* power, and by this unction all our sins are forgiven us! The top and the bottom of the system is the *priest*, the *priest*, the *priest*! A man like ourselves, and not a whit better, but 10,000 times worse for his infamous impudence in pretending to be what he is not— this man, dressed out in as many colors as the peacock—is the divinely appointed medium of grace!

If this is the Truth of God, Paul did not know it, for, if he had known it, he would say, “Great is the mystery of godliness: God dwells in the priests. Hasten and kiss their feet, for by their ceremonials you get salvation.” Paul says nothing of the kind! He has nothing to reveal about candles, and capes, and pompous processions! All he has to say is this, “God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory,” and that is all. How different this simple Gospel from the complex machinery of Popery and Anglicanism!

I want you to notice, still further, that in this summary there is no exhibition of mere doctrine. I believe, most firmly, in the doctrines commonly called Calvinism, and I hold them to be filled with comfort to God’s people. But if any man shall say that the preaching of these is the whole of the preaching of the Gospel, I am at issue with him. Brothers, you may preach those doctrines as long as you like, and yet fail to preach the Gospel! And I will go further and affirm that some who have even *denied* those truths, to our great grief, have nevertheless been Gospel preachers for all that, and God has saved souls by their ministry.

The fact is, that while the doctrines of election, final perseverance, and so on, go to make up a complete ministry, and are invaluable in their place, yet the soul and marrow of the Gospel is not *there*, but is to be found in the great fact that “God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit,” and so on. Preach Christ, young man, if you want to win souls! Preach all the doctrines, too, for the building up of Believers, but still the main business is to preach *Jesus* who came into the world to seek and to save that which was lost. The Apostle tells us in the Corinthians that first of all he delivered unto us as soul-saving Truth, “how that Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again on the third day, according to the Scriptures.” Facts about Christ Jesus, and the promise of life through Him—these are the faith of the Gospel!

Let me also say that I do not perceive anything in this summary tending remarkably to exalt prophecy. I would not make this remark were it not that there is a certain troublesome sect abroad nowadays to whom the one thing needful is a perpetual speculation upon prophecy. All the bells in their steeple ring out, “Prophecy! Prophecy! Prophecy!” They plume themselves upon an expected *secret rapture*, and I know not what vain imaginings beside! Where prophecy is preached in connection with their shibboleth, there the Gospel is preached, but all ministers beside their own, however honored by God, are railed at by them as part of Babylon against whom men are to be warned.

They, indeed, are wise men, and can afford superciliously to look down upon their fellow Christians as the slaves of sect and system, being, I venture to say, far more sectarian than the worst of us, and more bigoted to their system than Romanists themselves! My dear Friends, if you have any time to spare and cannot find any practical work for Jesus, study the dark places of prophecy, but do not read *modern* prophetical works, for that is a sheer waste of time and nothing better. Hold off as you would from a serpent the idea that the study or preaching of prophecy is the Gospel, for the belief that it is so is mischievous beyond conception.

The Gospel which is to be vehemently declared is this—“God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.” So long as London is reeking with sin, and millions are going down to Hell, let us leave others to prophecy. Let us go with anxious hearts to seek after souls and see if we cannot, by the Spirit’s power, win sinners from going down into the pit.

You will, doubtless, have observed that this summary of the Gospel is very simple. Whenever you meet with teaching which is cloudy and complicated, you may generally conclude that it is not the Gospel of your salvation, for the Truth of Christ is so plain that he who runs may read, and the wayfaring man, though a fool, need not err. Perhaps some of you have been thinking that conversion and salvation are dark and mysterious things, and that you have to pass through many singular operations and feelings in order to be saved. Now, Beloved, the whole of our faith lies in a nutshell—he that believes in Jesus Christ the Incarnate God, is saved. These few Truths of God, if grasped by the *mind*, received and trusted in by the *heart*, will save you.

It is at the Cross that salvation must be found. We have not written over our religion, “Mystery, mystery, mother of harlots,” that is the sign of Babylon. But we have this to tell you, “He that believes and is baptized shall be saved. He that believes not shall be damned.” And the things which you have to believe are just these simplicities—Jesus the Son of God has come into this world as Man to save men. He has bled and died. He is proclaimed and preached. He is to be received and believed in. He has gone up to Glory to prepare a place for them that trust Him—and that is all!

**III.**THE INFERENCES I draw from this are just these. If this is a great Gospel, then how important it is for us to receive it! If the Gospel were a laborious system of ethics there are many in this house who never could be saved, for they could not understand it. But since it is so simple, why do men refuse it? “Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.” O will you not lay hold upon *that* Truth of God? I do pray the Spirit of God to take your minds off all philosophies and mysteries that you may come to Jesus only!

Trust in Christ and you are saved! Receive this simple truth! God calls it great. Angels think it great. The Holy Spirit attests it to be great. We who preach it feel it to be great. They who receive it acknowledge it to be great. Christ in Glory bears witness that it is great! O accept this great salvation! May the Spirit lead you to believe in the great Savior of great sinners!

Again, if it is so great, how important it is for us to spread it! It does not require us to go to college in order to tell of Jesus—we can, each in our sphere, publish His fame abroad. If this simple Truth is the message of God to perishing sinners, then in the name of common humanity, and above all, in the name of the love of Christ, let us deliver it! How this text ought to encourage us to spread the Gospel! When I am preaching the Gospel, many may say, “Oh, he is only telling us commonplace Truth.” Just so, I know that. And yet I feel within myself as if I were wheeling up God’s great cannon which will yet blow the gates of Hell to pieces! What? None of the venerable mysteries of Rome? What? None of the new philosophical discoveries? None of the imposing ceremonies? No, Brothers and Sisters, not *one* of them—they are all wooden guns, shams and counterfeits—and if ever they are fired off they will go to shivers.

This plain Truth of God, that “God was made flesh and dwelt among us,” is God’s great battering ram against which nothing can stand! Never lose heart in the Gospel, my Brothers, but think you hear the Apostle calling across the ages, “Great is the mystery of godliness.” Look for nothing greater, the Gospel is great enough! Keep to it. Never think you have told men enough times about it. As Napoleon told his warriors at the pyramids, “A thousand ages look down upon you!” Bleeding martyrs, from their graves, call to you to be faithful. Confessors who ascended to Heaven in fiery chariots implore you to be steadfast. Hold fast that you have received. Attempt not to mend the Truth! Venture not to shape it according to the fancy of the times, but proclaim it in all its native purity.

By this hammer the gods of Rome and Greece were dashed to shivers. By this lever the world was turned upside down! It is this Gospel which has brought glory to God, filled Heaven with redeemed souls, and made Hell to tremble in all its palaces of flame. Bind it about your heart and defy the hosts of Rome or Hell to unloose its folds! Wrap it about your loins in death and hold it as a standard in both your hands in life. This simple Truth of God, that “Jesus Christ has come to seek and to save that which is lost,” and that, “whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have everlasting life,” must be your jewels, your treasure, your life!

Adapted from*The C.H. Spurgeon Collection,*Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #946 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

**÷1Ti 4.8**

THE PROFIT OF GODLINESS IN THE LIFE TO COME  
NO. 946

**DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY EVENING, JUNE 19, 1870, *BY C. H. SPURGEON*  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“Godliness is profitable unto all things, having the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.”***1Ti 4:8***.***

WE endeavored, this morning to prove the profitableness of godliness as to the life which now is, and to discriminate as to what the promise of this life really is. We tried to prove that “the promise” of the life that now is—its real and highest beauty and excellence—consists in peace of mind, peace with God, contentment, and happiness of spirit. And while we pointed out that godliness did not ensure wealth, or health, or even a good name—for all these, even to godly men, might not be granted—yet we showed that the great end of our being, that for which we live and were created, that which will best make it worth while to have existed, shall certainly be ours if we are godly.

We did not think it an unimportant matter to expound the bearing of true religion upon this present state. But I trust we did not exaggerate that view so as to keep those in countenance who dream that this world is the main consideration—and that the wisest man is he who makes it the be-all and the end-all of his existence.

Beloved Friends, there is another life beyond this fleeting existence. This fact was dimly guessed by heathens. Strange as their mythology might be, and singular as were their speculations us to the regions of bliss and woe, even barbarous nations have had some glimmering light concerning a region beyond the river of death. Hardly yet have we been able to discover a people with no idea of an after-state. Man has scarcely ever been befooled into the belief that death is the finis of the volume of his existence.

Few, indeed, have been so lost to natural light as to have forgotten that man is something more than the dog which follows at his heel. That which was dimly guessed by the heathen was more fully worked out by the bolder and clearer minds among philosophers. They saw something about man that made him more than either ox or horse. They marked the moral government of God in the world, and as they saw the wicked prosper, and the righteous afflicted, they said, “There must be another state in which the GREAT AND JUST ONE will rectify all these wrongs— reward the righteous, and condemn the wicked.”

They thought it proved that there would be another life. They could not, however, speak with confidence. For reason, however right her inferences, does not content the heart, or give “the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things unseen.” That is reserved for *faith*. The best light of heathens was but twilight. Yet was there so much light in their obscurity that they looked beyond the stream of death and thought they saw shades as of creatures that had once been here and could not die. What was thus surmised and suspected by the great thinkers of antiquity has been brought to light in the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

He has declared to us that we shall live again, that there will be a Judgment and a Resurrection both of the righteous and of the wicked, and that there will be awarded to the righteous a reward that shall know no end, while the wicked shall be driven into a banishment to which there shall be no close. We are not left, now, to speculate nor to rely upon unaided reason. We have been told upon the authority of God, sometimes by the lips of Prophets, at other times by the lips of His own dear Son, or by His inspired Apostles, that there is a world to come, a world of terrors to the ungodly, but a world of promised blessing to the righteous.

My dear Hearer, if it is so, what will the world to come be to you? Will you inherit its promise? You may easily answer that question by another. Have you godliness? If you have, you have the promise of the life that is to come. Are you ungodly? Do you live without God? Are you without faith in God, without love to God, without reverence to God? Are you without the pardon which God presents to believers in Christ Jesus? Then you are without hope, and the world to come has nothing for you but a fearful looking for of judgment and of fiery indignation which will devour you.

**I.**GODLINESS CONCERNING THE LIFE TO COME POSSESSES A PROMISE UNIQUE AND UNRIVALLED. I say a unique promise, for, observe—infidelity makes no promise of a life to come. It is the express business of infidelity to deny that there is such a life, and to blot out all the comfort which can be promised concerning it. Man is like a prisoner shut up in his cell, a cell all dark and cheerless unless there is a window through which he can gaze upon a glorious landscape.

Infidelity comes like a demon into the cell, and with desperate hands blocks up the window, that man may sit forever in the dark, or at best may have the boasted light of a farthing rush-light called free-thinking. All that infidelity can tell him is that he will die like a dog. Fine prospect for a man who feels eternity pulsing within his spirit! I know I shall not die like the beast that perishes. And let who will propound the theory, my soul sickens and turns with disgust from it. Nor would it be possible by the most specious arguments so to pervert the instincts of my nature as to convince me that I shall thus die, and that my soul, like the flame of an out-burnt candle, shall be quenched in utter annihilation.

My inmost heart revolts at this degrading slander. She feels an innate nobility that will not allow her to be numbered with the beasts of the field, to die as they must do without a hope. Oh, miserable prospect! How can men be so earnest in proclaiming their own wretchedness? Enthusiasts for annihilation? Why not fanatics for Hell itself? Godliness has promise of the life that is to come, but infidelity can do nothing better than deny the ennobling revelation of the great Father and bid us be content with the dark prospect of being exterminated and put out of being. Aspiring, thoughtful, rational Men—can you be content with the howling wildernesses and dreary voids of infidelity? Leave them, I pray you, for the goodly land of the Gospel which flows with milk and honey! Abandon extinction for immortality! Renounce perishing for Paradise!

Again, let me remark that this hope is unique because popery in any of its forms cannot promise us the life which is to come. I know that it speaks as positively as Christianity does about the fact that there will be another life. But it gives us no promise of it—for what is the expectation of the Romanist, even of the best Romanist? Have I not before remarked to you that we have heard—and therefore it is no slander for us to say it—of “masses” being said for the repose of the souls of the most eminent Romanists?

Cardinals distinguished for their learning, confessors and priests distinguished for their zeal, and even Popes reputed to be remarkable for holiness and even infallibility, have, when they died, gone*somewhere*! I know not where, but somewhere where they have needed that the faithful should *pray for the repose of their souls*! That is a very poor look-out for ordinary people like ourselves. For if these superlatively good people are still uneasy in their souls after they die, and have in fact, according to their own statements, gone to purgatorial fires or to purgatorial chills—to be tossed, as certain of their prophets have informed us—from icebergs into furnaces, and then back again, until by some means, mechanical, spiritual, or otherwise, sin shall be burnt out, or evaporated from them. If that is *their* expectation, I think I should be inclined, as the Irishman said, to become a Protestant heretic, and go to Heaven at once, if there is so sorry a prospect for the Catholic.

Godliness has the promise of the life which is to come, but it is altogether unique in possessing such a promise. No voice from the Vatican sounds one-half so sweetly as that from Patmos, which we unabashedly accept—“I heard a voice from Heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from now on. Yes, says the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors. And their works do follow them.” Our sorrow for the departed is not embittered by the absence of hope, for we believe that “them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him.” Neither superstition on the one hand, nor unbelief on the other, so much as *dares* to offer a promise as to the life to come.

No system based upon human merit ever gives its votaries a promise of the life to come which they can really grasp and be assured of. No selfrighteous man will venture to speak of the assurance of faith. In fact, he denounces it as presumption. He feels that his own basis is insecure, and therefore he suspects the confidence of others to be as hollow as his own. He lives between hope and fear—a joyless, unsatisfied life. While the believer in Jesus, knowing that there is no condemnation to him, awaits the hour of his entrance into Heaven with joyful expectancy. What is never promised to man’s fancied righteousness is secured to all who possess the righteousness of Christ Jesus. “Come, you blessed,” is their assured welcome—to be with Jesus—their entailed portion.

Godliness has a monopoly of heavenly promise as to the blessed future. There is nothing else beneath high Heaven to which any such promise has ever been given by God, or of which any such promise can be supposed. Look at vice, for instance, with its pretended pleasures— what does it offer you? It offers pleasure in the life that now is. But as it speaks, you detect the lie upon its face, for even in the life that now is vice gives but a hasty intoxication, to be followed by woe and redness of the eyes. It is true it satiates with sweets, but in all its tables there is vomit. Satiety follows its gluttony, dissatisfaction comes with discontent, loathing, remorse, and misery—like hounds at its heels.

Vice dares not say, it never has had the effrontery yet to say, “Do evil and live in sin, and eternal life will come out of it.” No, the theater at its door does not proffer you eternal life—it invites you to the pit. The house of evil communications, the drunkard’s settle, the gathering place of scorners, the chamber of the strange woman—none of these has yet dared to advertise a promise of eternal life as among the gifts that may tempt its votaries. At best, sin gives you but bubbles, and feeds you upon air. The pleasure vanishes, and the misery is left. Even this side of the tomb the hollowness of sinful mirth is clear to all but the most superficial, and he said truly who sang concerning merry worldlings —

***“They grin. But why? And how long the laugh? Half ignorance, their mirth. And half a lie To cheat the world, and cheat themselves, they smile. Hard either task! The most abandoned own That others, if abandoned, are undone—  
Then, for themselves, the moment reason wakes, Oh, how laborious is their gaiety!  
They scarce can swallow their ebullient spleen, Scarce muster patience to support the farce, And pump sad laughter till the curtain falls. Scarce did I say? Some cannot sit it out;  
Oft their own daring hand the curtain draws, And shows us what is their joy by their despair.”***

If such is the failure of the mirth of fools this side of eternity, of what little benefit can it prove hereafter?

So with other things not sinful in themselves—there is no promise of the life that is to come appended to them. For instance, birth. What would not some men give if they could but somehow trace their pedigree up to a distinguished Crusader, or up to a Norman knight reported of in the battle-roll of Hastings? Yet, nowhere in the world is there a promise of eternal life to blood and birth. “For when he dies he shall carry nothing away: his glory shall not descend after him. Though while he lived he blessed his soul: and men will praise you, when you do well to yourself. He shall go to the generation of his fathers. They shall never see light.”

Genealogies and pedigrees are poor things. Trace us all up far enough, and we are all descended from that naked sinner who tried to cover his shame with fig leaves, and owed his first true garment to the charity of offended Heaven. Let the pedigree run through the loins of kings, yes, and of mighty kings, and let every one of our forefathers have been distinguished for his valor—yet no man shall pretend, because of this, that eternal life will be secured thereby. Ah, no. The king rots like a slave and the hero is devoured by the worm as though he had been but a swineherd all his days. Yes, and the flame unquenchable kindles an earl, and duke, and millionaire, as well as a serf and peasant.

And it is equally certain that no promise of the life that is to come is given to wealth. Men hoard it, and gather it, and keep it, and seal it down by bonds and settlements as if they thought they could carry some thing with them. But when they have gained their utmost, they do not find that wealth has the promise even of *this* life, for it yields small contentment to the man who possesses it. “Their inward thought is that their houses shall continue forever, and their dwelling places to all generations. They call their lands after their own names. Nevertheless man being in honor abides not.”

As for the life to come, is there any supposable connection between the millions of the miser’s wealth and the glory that is to be revealed hereafter? No, but by so much more as the man lives for this world, by so much more shall he be *accursed*. He said, “I will pull down my barns and build greater.” But God calls him a fool, and a fool he is, for when his soul is required of him, whose shall these things be which he had prepared? No, you may grasp the Indies if you will. You may seek to contain within your estates all the lands that you can see far and wide, but you shall be none the nearer to Heaven when you have reached the climax of your avarice. There is no promise of the life that is to come in the pursuits of usury and covetousness.

Nor is there any such promise to personal accomplishments and beauty. How many live for that poor bodily form of theirs which so soon must molder back to the dust! To dress, to adorn themselves, to catch the glance of the admirer’s eye, to satisfy public taste, to follow fashion! Surely an object in life more frivolous never engrossed an immortal soul. It seems as strange as if an angel should be gathering daisies or blowing soap bubbles! An immortal spirit living to dress the body! To paint, to dye, to display a ribbon, to dispose a pin—is this the pursuit of an immortal? Yet tens of thousands live for little else. But ah, there is no promise of the life to come appended to the most noble beauty that ever fascinated the eye. Far deeper than the skin is the beauty which is admired in Heaven.

As for earth’s comeliness, how do time, and death, and the worm together make havoc of it! Take up yonder skull, just upturned by the sexton’s careless spade, “and get you to my lady’s chamber, and tell her, though she paint an inch thick, to this complexion she must come at last.” All her dressing shall end in a shroud, and all her washings and her dainty ornaments shall only make her but the sweeter morsel for the worm. There is no promise of the life to come to these frivolities—why, then, waste your time and degrade your souls with them?

Nor even to higher accomplishments than these is there given any promise of the life to come. For instance, the attainment of learning, or the possession of that which often stands men in as good place as learning, namely, cleverness, brings therewith no promise of future bliss. If a man is clever, if he can write interesting stories, if he can sketch the current fashions, if he can produce poetry that will survive among his fellow men—it matters not. Though his pen never wrote a line for Christ, and though he never uttered a sentence that might have led a sinner to the Cross. Though his work had no aim beyond this life, and paid no homage to the God of the Gospel, yet even professed Christians will fall at the man’s feet! And when he dies, will canonize him as a saint, and almost worship him as a Demigod!

I reckon the meanest Christian that loved his God, though he could only speak with a stammer the profession of his faith, is far nobler than he who possessed the genius of a Byron or the greatness of a Shakespeare who only used his ten talents for himself and for his fellow men, but never consecrated them to the great Master to whom the interest of them altogether belonged. No. There is no promise of the life that is to come to the philosopher, or to the statesman, or to the poet, or to the literary man, as such. They have no preference before the Lord. Not *gifts* but *Divine Grace* must save them. Humbly, penitently, and believingly they must find the promise of eternal life in godliness. And if they have not godliness, they shall find it nowhere.

Godliness has that promise, I say, and none besides. I saw in Italy standing at the corner of a road, as you may frequently see in Italy, a large Cross, and on it were these words, which I had not often seen on a Cross before—“Spes unica”—the only hope, the one unique hope, the one only hope of mankind. So would I tell you that on Christ’s Cross there is written this day, “Spes unica”—the one hope of men. “Godliness has the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.” To nothing else anywhere—search for it high or low, on earth or sea—to nothing else is the promise given save to godliness alone.

**II.**I pass on to notice, in the second place, that THE PROMISE GIVEN TO GODLINESS IS AS COMPREHENSIVE AS IT IS UNIQUE. I have not time on this occasion to go into all the promises of the life that is to come which belong to godliness—who shall give an inventory where the treasure is boundless, or map out a land which has no limit? It will suffice if I give you the heads of this great theme. That promise is something of this kind. The godly man, unless Christ shall come, will die as others die, as to the matter of outward fact, but his death will be very different in its essence and meaning.

He will pass gently out of this world into the world to come, and then, at that instant, he will begin to realize the promise which godliness gave him. For he will enter then, no, he has entered *now*, upon an eternal life far other than that which belongs to other men. The Christian’s life shall never be destroyed—“Because I live, you shall live also,” says Christ. There is no fear of the Christian’s ever growing aged in Heaven, or of his powers failing him. Eternal youth shall be to those who wear the unfading crown of life. Yon sun shall become black as a coal. yonder moon shall fail until her pale beams shall never more be seen. The stars shall fall like withered figs—even this earth, which we call stable, terming it terra firma, shall, with yonder heavens, be rolled up like a vestment that is worn out, and shall be laid aside among the things that were, but are not.

Everything which can be seen is but a fruit with a worm at the core, a flower doomed to fade. But the Believer shall live forever, his life shall be coeval with the years of the Most High. God lives ever, ever, ever, and so shall every godly soul. Christ, having given him eternal life, he is one with Jesus, and as Jesus lives forever, even so shall he. In the moment of death the Christian will begin to enjoy this eternal life in the form of wonderful felicity in the company of Christ, in the Presence of God, in the society of disembodied spirits and holy angels. I say in a *moment*, for from the case of the dying thief we learn that there is no wait upon the road from earth to Heaven—

***“One gentle sigh the fetter breaks—  
We scarce can say, ‘He’s gone!’  
Before the willing spirit takes  
Its mansion near the Throne.”***

How does Paul put it? “Absent from the body.” But you have hardly said that word, when he adds, “present with the Lord.” The eyes are closed on earth and opened again in Heaven! They loose their anchor, and immediately they come to the desired haven. How long that state of disembodied happiness shall last it is not for us to know, but by-and-by, when the fullness of time shall come, the Lord Jesus shall consummate all things by the resurrection of these bodies. The trumpet shall sound, and as Jesus Christ’s body rose from the dead as the first fruits, so shall we arise, every man in his own order.

Raised up by Divine power, our very bodies shall be reunited with our souls to live with Christ, raised however, not as they shall be put into the grave to slumber, but in a nobler image. They were sown like the shriveled seed, they shall come up like the fair flowers which decorate your summer gardens. Planted as a dull unattractive bulb, to develop into a glory like that of a lovely lily with snowy cup and petals of gold. Sown like the shriveled barley or wheat, to come up as a fair green blade, or to become the golden ear. “It does not yet appear what we shall be, but when He shall appear we shall be like He is, for we shall see Him as He is.”

Come, my Soul, what a promise is given you in God’s Word of the life that is to come! A promise for my soul, did I say? A promise for my*body*, too. These aches and pains shall be repaid. This weariness and these sicknesses shall all be recompensed. The body shall be remarried to the soul, from which it parted with so much grief, and the marriage shall be the more joyous because there never shall be another divorce. Then, in body and in soul made perfect, the fullness of our bliss shall have arrived.

But will there not be a judgment? Yes, a judgment certainly. And if not a judgment for the righteous in a set ceremony, as some think, yet certainly in spirit. We shall gather at the Great White Throne, gather with the goats or gather with the sheep. But there is this promise to you who are godly, that you shall have nothing to fear in that Day of Judgment— you shall go to it with the blood-bought pardon in your bosom, to be shown before the Judgment Seat. You shall go to that judgment to have it proclaimed to men, to angels, and to devils, that “there is now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus,” none being able to lay anything to the charge of those for whom Jesus Christ has died, and whom the Father justifies.

You need not fear the judgment, you need not fear the conflagration of the world, or whatever else of terror shall be attendant upon the coming of Christ as a thief in the night. You have the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come. Listen to me! You have the promise that you shall enjoy forever the high dignity of being priests and kings unto God. You sons of toil, you daughters of poverty—you shall be peers in Heaven, you shall be courtiers of the Prince Imperial—yourselves being princes of the royal blood!

Your heads shall wear crowns, your hands shall wave palms of triumph. And as you shall have glorious rank, so shall you have companions suitable to your condition. The worldling’s haunt, the synagogue of Satan, shall be far away from you. No more shall you sojourn in Mesech and dwell in the tents of Kedar. No idle talk shall vex you, no blasphemies shall inflict themselves upon your ears. You shall hear the songs of angels. And as they charm you, you shall also charm them by making known unto them the manifold wisdom of God. The holiest and best of men, redeemed by Jesus’ precious blood, shall commune with you, and, best of all —

***“He that on the Throne does reign  
You for evermore shall He feed;  
With the tree of life sustain,  
To the living fountain lead.”***

You shall have unbroken fellowship with God and with His Christ. What ravishing joy this will be! We shall better be able to experience than to imagine. Communion with Jesus here below uplifts us far above the world, but what its delights are in the unclouded skies of face-to-face fellowship, has not yet entered into the heart of man.

Hearken yet more, Beloved. You shall have suitable occupation. I know not what you may have to do in Heaven, but I do know it is written, “They shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads, and His servants shall serve Him.” They serve Him day and night in His Temple. You would not be happy without occupation. Minds made like yours could not find rest except upon the wing—delightful and honorable employment shall be allotted you—suitable to your perfected capabilities. But, mark you, you shall have rest as well as service. No wave of trouble shall roll over your peaceful bosoms. You shall forever bathe your souls in seas of blissful rest—no care, no fear, no unsatisfied desire. For all desires shall be consummated, all expectations be fulfilled. God shall be your Portion, the infinite Spirit your Friend, and the ever-blessed Christ your elder Brother.

Into the joy of Heaven, which knows no bounds, shall you enter, according to His Words, “Enter you into the joy of your Lord.” And all this, and infinitely more than my tongue can tell you, shall be yours forever and forever, without fear of ever losing it, or dread of dying in the midst of it. “Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither has entered into the heart of man, the things that God has prepared for them that love Him, but He has revealed them unto us by His Spirit.” All the kingdom which the Father has prepared, and the place which the Son has prepared, are yours, O Believer, by the promise of the Lord. For “whom He justified, them He also glorified.”

The promise goes with godliness, and if you have godliness there is nothing in Heaven of joy, there is nothing there of honor, there is nothing there of rest and peace—which is not yours. For godliness has the promise of it, and God’s promise never fails—

***“Lo! I see the fair immortals,  
Enter to the blissful seats;  
Glory opens her waiting portals,  
And the Savior’s train admits.  
All the chosen of the Father,  
All for whom the Lamb was slain,  
All the Church appear together,  
Washed from every sinful stain.  
His dear smile the place enlightens  
More than thousand suns could do;  
All around, His Presence brightens,  
Changeless, yet forever new.  
Blessed state! Beyond conception!  
Who its vast delights can tell?  
May it be my blissful portion,  
With my Savior there to dwell.”***

Perhaps within the next ten minutes we may be there! Who knows? I had half said, “God grant it to me!” No doubt, many anxious spirits would be glad to end so soon life’s weary journey and rest in the Fathers Home!

**III.**Now, very briefly, consider another point. I have shown you that the promise appended to godliness is unique and comprehensive, and now observe that IT IS SURE. “Godliness has promise.” That is to say, it has *God’s* promise. Now, God’s promise is firmer than the hills. He is God, and cannot lie. He will never retract the promise, nor will He leave it unfulfilled. He was too wise to give a rash promise—He is too powerful to be unable to fulfill it. “Has He said, and shall He not do it?”

Already tens of thousands to whom the promise was made have obtained a measure of this bliss in the glorification of their perfect spirits. We are on the road to the same happy state. Some of us are on the river’s brink. Perhaps the Lord may come suddenly, and we shall be changed, and so perfected without dying. Be that as the Lord wills, it is not a question which disturbs us. By God’s Grace, our faith is strong and firm. We are sure that we, too, shall enter into the rest which remains, and with all the blood-washed multitude shall in wonder and surprise adore the God before whose Throne we shall cast our crowns.

**IV.**But I shall not tarry upon that, for there comes a fourth thought. This promise is A PRESENT PROMISE. You should notice the participle, “having promise.” It does not say that godliness after awhile will get the promise, but godliness has promise *now*—at this very moment. My dear Hearer, if you are godly, that is, if you have submitted to God’s way of salvation. If you trust God, love God, serve God—if you are, in fact, a converted man—you have NOW the promise of the life that is to come. When we get a man’s promise in whom we trust, we feel quite easy about the matter under concern. A note of hand from many a firm in the city of London would pass current for gold any day in the week.

And surely when God gives the promise, it is safe and right for us to accept it as if it were the fulfillment itself, for it is quite as sure. We have the promise, let us begin to sing about it! What is more, we have a part of the fulfillment of it, for, “I give unto My sheep eternal life,” says Christ— shall we not sing concerning that? Believe in Jesus—you have eternal life NOW. There will be no new life given to you after death. You have even NOW, O Christian, the germ within you which will develop into the Glorylife above. Grace is Glory in the bud. You have the earnest of the Spirit. You have already a portion of the promise which is given to godliness.

Now, what you should do is to live now in the enjoyment of the promise. You cannot enjoy Heaven, for you are not there, but you can enjoy the *promise* of it, Many a dear child, if it has a promise of a treat in a week’s time, will go skipping among its little companions as merry as a lark about it. It has not the treat yet, but it *expects* it. And I have known in our Sunday schools our little boys and girls, months before the time came for them to go into the country, as happy as the days were long, in prospect of that little pleasure. Surely you and I ought to be childlike enough to begin to rejoice in the Heaven that is so soon to be ours! I know tomorrow some of you will be working very hard, but you may sing—

***“This is not my place of resting,  
Mine’s a city yet to come;  
Onward to it I am hasting  
On to my eternal home.”***

Perhaps you will have to fight the world’s battles, and you will find them very stern. Oh, but you can sing even now of the palm branch, and of the victory that awaits you! And as your faith looks at the crown that Christ has prepared for it, you will be much rested even in the heat of the battle. When a traveler who has been long an exile returns home, it may be after walking many miles he at last gets to the brow of the hill where he can see the Church of the little town, and get a bird’s-eye view of the parish. He gazes awhile, and as he looks again and again, says to himself, “Yes, that is the High Street there, and yonder is the turning by the old inn, and there—yes, there, I can see the gable of the dear old house at home.”

Though his feet may be blistered, the way may have been long, and the sweat may be pouring from his face, yet he plucks up courage at the sight of home. The last mile down hill is soon over, for he has seen his long-loved home. Christians, you may see it, you may see the goodly land from Nebo even now—

***“How near  
At times to faith’s far-seeing eye,  
The golden gates appear!”***

When the Crusaders first came in sight of Jerusalem, though they had a hard battle before them before they could win it, yet they fell down in ecstasy at the sight of the holy city. And do not you and I say, “Soldiers of the Cross, my fellow Crusaders in the holy war of righteousness, will you not in prospect of the coming glory sing—

***‘O my sweet home, Jerusalem,  
Would God I were in you!  
Would God my woes were at an end,  
Your joys that I might see!’?”***

When the brave soldiers, of whom Xenophon tells us, came at last in sight of the sea, from which they had been so long separated, they cried out, “Thallasse! Thallasse!”—“The sea! The sea!” And we, though death appears between us and the better land, can yet look beyond it and see

the— ***“Sweet fields beyond the swelling flood***

***Arrayed in living green,”***  
and bless God that a sight of what is to be revealed renders the burdens of the way light as we march towards Glory. Oh, live, live in the foretaste of Heaven. Let worldlings see that—

***“The thought of such amazing bliss  
Does constant joys create.”***

**V.**Last of all. This promise which is appended to godliness is A VERY NEEDFUL ONE. It is a very necessary one, for ah, if I have no promise of the life that is to come, where am I? Where am I? And where shall I be? Where shall I be? I live, I know. I die, I know I must. And if it all is true as this old Bible, my mother’s Bible, tells me—that there is a hereafter. If I have no godliness, then woe is the day to me! Oh, how much I want the promise of the life to come, for if I have not that I have a curse for the life to come.

I cannot die, God has made my soul immortal. Even God Himself will never annihilate me, for He has been pleased to create me an immortal spirit, and on I must live forever. There are some who say, and I think the doctrine is full of unnumbered perils to the souls of men, that God made man naturally mortal, and the soul can become extinct. And they go on to teach that sinners are made to live after death on purpose to be tormented for a longer or shorter time, and then at last are annihilated. What a God must He be to give them a life they need not have—on purpose—that He might torment them! I know no such God.

But HE, whom I adore, in His unbounded goodness, gave to mankind what was in itself a wondrous blessing—immortality. And if you, my Hearer, choose to turn it into a curse forever, it is *you* that are to be blamed for it! Not God who gave you the immortality which, if you believe in the appointed Savior, will be to you an eternity of bliss. You are now past all recall an immortal being, and if you die without hope in Christ there will remain only this for you—to go on sinning in another state as you have gone on sinning here. But you will get no pleasure from it as you think you do sometimes, here—on the contrary, you will be tortured with remorse concerning it. And you will be vexed with angry passions to think that you cannot have your will, passions that will make you struggle yet worse against your God, and make your misery consequently the greater.

The worm that never dies will be your own furious hatred of God. The fire that never shall be quenched is probably the flames of your own insatiate lust after evil. I say not that there will not be bodily pains, but the natural results of sin are the deepest Hell to the *soul*. Sin has made you unhappy now. It will ripen. It will increase. When everything that checks it shall be taken off, your true character will be developed, and with that development will come enlarging wretchedness. Separated from the company of the righteous, and placed among the wicked, you will go on to be worse and worse, and every stop in the increase of sin necessitates an increase of misery.

It is not true that God will punish you in mere caprice. He has ordained, and right enough was He to ordain it, that sin should punish itself—that sin should be its own misery, and its own anguish. Sin will be to you a never-ending death. O why will you die? Why will you die? Why will you, by the love of sin, bring upon yourselves an eternity of sin, an eternity of suffering? Turn unto Christ! I pray His Spirit to turn you. Come now, come now, and lay hold on eternal life!

I have been thinking while I have been preaching to you, this evening, of my own self, awhile, and I shall turn my thoughts to myself and any others who are preachers or teachers, and who try to do good to others. Years ago Hamburgh was nearly half of it burned down, and among the incidents that happened, there was this one. A large house had connected with it a yard in which there was a great black dog, and this black dog in the middle of the night barked and howled most furiously. It was only by his barking that the family was awakened just in time to escape from the flames, and their lives were spared.

But the poor dog was chained to his kennel, and though he barked and thus saved the lives of others, he was burned himself. Oh, do not you, who work for God in this Church, perish in that fashion! Do not permit your sins to enchain you, so that while you warn others, you become lost yourselves! See to it that you have the godliness which has the promise of the life that is to come.

And now, you who really desire to find godliness, remember, it is to be had in Christ, and only in Christ. I was in Windermere some three weeks ago on a hot, dusty day, and I saw a little gushing stream of water, and a chain with a ladle to it for the passerby to drink. I wanted to drink, and I went to it, but the ladle was cracked quite through, was very rusty, and would not hold a drop of water. Neither was the water, if it had been held in it, fit to drink. There are ways of salvation chosen by some that are equally as deceptive. They mock the traveler.

But oh, my Lord and Master, Jesus Christ, is a river of mercy, deep and broad. You have but to stoop and drink, and you may drink as much as you will, and none shall tell you stop. Have you not His Word for it, “Let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely”? God grant you may with your heart believe the Gospel of Jesus, for our heart believes the Gospel of Jesus, for Christ’s sake.

[Sermon #937, *The Profit of Godliness in This Life*, is the sermon Brother Spurgeon alluded to at the beginning of this sermon.]  
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**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.** Sermon #937 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

THE PROFIT OF GODLINESS IN THIS LIFE  
NO. 937

**DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, JUNE 19, 1870, *BY C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“Bodily exercise profits little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come. This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation.”***1Ti 4:8-9***.***

YOUR attention will be the more readily given to this passage, because Paul declares it to be a “faithful”—a most true and certain saying—and “worthy of all acceptation,” that is to say, worthy to be received and practiced by us all. Paul has four of these faithful sayings. The first, occurs in 1Ti 1:15, “This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.” The second is our text. The third is in 2Ti 2:12, “It is a faithful saying, if we suffer, we shall also reign with Him.” And the fourth is in Tit 3:8, “This is a faithful saying, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works.”

We may trace a connection between these faithful sayings. The first one lays the foundation of our eternal salvation in the free Grace of God, as shown to us in the mission of the great Redeemer. The next affirms the double blessedness which we obtain through this salvation—the blessings of the upper and nether springs of time and of eternity. The third shows one of the duties to which the chosen people are called—we are ordained to suffer for Christ with the promise that “if we suffer, we shall also reign with Him.” The last sets forth the active form of Christian service, bidding us diligently to maintain good works. Thus we have the root of salvation in free Grace.

Next, we have the privileges of that salvation in the life which now is, and in that which is to come. And we have also the two great branches of suffering with Christ and serving with Christ, loaded with the fruits of the Spirit. Let us treasure up these faithful sayings. Let them be the guides of our life, our comfort, and our instruction. The Apostle of the Gentiles proved them to be faithful. They are faithful still, not one word shall fall to the ground. They are worthy of all acceptation, let us accept them now and prove their faithfulness. Let these four faithful sayings be written on the four corners of your house.

Today we consider the second of the four, and we will read the text again, “Bodily exercise profits little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.” In the days when Paul wrote this Epistle, the Greeks and others paid great attention to physical culture, the development of the muscles, the proportion of the limbs, the production of everything in the body which might conduce to the soundness of manhood. The philosophy of

Greece all looked that way, and therefore at the various gymnasia bodily exercises of an athletic and even violent kind were undergone by men with the view of developing the body, and so assisting the soul.

It may be that Timothy, being yet a young man, fancied that there was something in this philosophy. And something, indeed, there is. In the original the Apostle Paul admits that it is so, for the passage might be read thus—“Bodily exercise verily profits a little,” or thus, “Bodily exercise profits for a short time.” Physical training is of some service—attention to it is not sinful nor to be condemned. It is of some use and has its proper place, but still it has no very eminent position in the Christian system. It occupies a place far in the background in the teaching of Christ and His Apostles. It is but a minor part of a complete education. It profits a little, a little, for a little time.

But *godliness*, the worship of God, the fear of God, has a long and wealthy entail of blessing, having the promise both of the life that now is and of that which is to come. Its profiting is not little but great. Its benefit is not confined to the body, but is shared by the body and the soul. It is not limited by this mortal life, but overleaps the grave and brings its largest revenue of profit in the world where graves are all unknown.

This morning I am about to try and speak upon the profit of godliness to a man in this life. We will consider its having the promise of the life to come, in the evening, if God spares us.

With regard to this life, let it be remarked that the religion of our Lord Jesus Christ neither undervalues nor overvalues this present life. It does not sneer at this life as though it were nothing. On the contrary, it ennobles it, and shows the relation which it has to the higher and eternal life. It does not overvalue it by making this life, and the secular pursuits of it, the main object of any man. It puts it into an honorable but yet a secondary place, and says to the sons of men, “Seek you first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness. And all these things shall be added unto you.”

It is not, however, very easy to keep to the middle point of exact truth as to a due estimate of this present life—he who does so is taught of God. There are many who undervalue this life—let me mention some of them to you. Those undervalue it who sacrifice it to indulge their passions, or to gratify their appetites. Too many, for the sake of momentary gratifications, have shortened their lives and rendered their latter end bitterly painful to themselves. They conceived that the pleasures of the flesh were better than life. They were mistaken in their estimate. They made but a poor exchange when they chose lust and death, rather than purity and life.

The drunkard has been known to take his cups, though he knew that in so doing he was virtually poisoning himself. The man of hot passions has been seen to plunge into uncleanness, though the consequences of his folly have been plainly set before him. Men who for a morsel of meat, or a flash of merriment, are selling this world as well as the world to come, are fools, indeed. He that would have pleasure must not pursue it too furiously. Temperance is the rule here—moderation and the use, not excess and the abuse—will secure to us the pleasure even of this mortal life. Value not, I pray you, the transient joys which the animal appetites can bring to you. At least value them not so much as to shorten life for their sakes.

Some evidently undervalue their lives because they make them wretched through envy. Others are richer than they are, and they think it a miserable thing to be alive at all while others possess more of this world’s goods than they. They walk, they say, and toil while yonder person, who has no more deserts than they, is riding in his chariot. So, indeed, they count the *chariot* the main thing and not the life, and they will not enjoy their life because they cannot have a certain coveted addition which another possesses.

Haman is not grateful for all the mercies of life while unbending Mordecai sits in the king’s gate. He counts his honey to be bitterness because he cannot lord it at his will. God gets no thanks at all from the man for the innumerable mercies which he has. These are nothing. He pines for some particular supposed mercy which he has not. He considers that the fact of his being alive, and being favored of God in many respects, is nothing at all to be considered, because he has not all that big avarice might wish for. O poison not life by the envy of others, for if you do so, you miserably undervalue it!

The slaves of avarice undervalue their lives, for they do not care to make life happy, but pinch themselves in order to accumulate wealth. The miser who starves himself in order that he may fill his bags may well be reasoned with in this way—“Is not the life more than the meat, and the body than raiment? Skin for skin, yes, all that other men have will they give for their lives. But you give your life for this wealth, this glittering dust. You are willing to forego all the enjoyments that this life might afford you, that you may have a heap to leave to your uncertain heirs, who will probably squander it, and certainly forget the hands that scraped the hoard together.”

Why should I throw away myself for the sake of dying rich? Is it true success in life to have enjoyed nothing, to have poisoned all my existence merely that the world might be informed in a corner of the Illustrated News that I died worth so many thousands of pounds? This is to undervalue life, indeed.

So, also, do they undervalue it who in foolhardiness are ready to throw it away on the slightest pretext. He that for his country’s sake, or for the love of his fellow creature, risks life and loses it, truly deserves to be called a hero. But he, who, to provoke laughter and to win the applause of fools, will venture limb and life without need is but a fool himself, and deserves no praise whatever. He undervalues life who will display an art which endangers it, or who will run the risk of it for anything whatever short of the laudable motive of preserving liberty to his country, or life to his fellow men.

Holy Scripture never teaches us to undervalue our own lives. He that said, “You shall not kill,” meant that we were not to kill *ourselves* any more than others. We ought to seek by all we can do in the surroundings of our habitations, by our cleanliness, by carefully observing sanitary

laws, by never encouraging dangerous exhibitions, and by every other means to show our care of the life that now is, for it is a precious thing.

Yet, my Brethren, there can be such a thing as *overvaluing* this life, and multitudes have fallen into *that* error. Those overvalue it who prefer it to eternal life. Why, it is but as a drop compared with the ocean, if you measure time with eternity. Seventy or eighty years of dwelling here below—what are they when compared with infinite ages of existence in the Presence of the Most High? I reckon that this present life is not worthy to be compared with the Glory that shall be revealed in us.

When men in fearful moments have denied the faith for the sake of saving their lives, they have overvalued this life. When to preserve themselves from the sword, or the fire, or the tortures of the rack, they have denied the name of Jesus, they have made a mistake and exchanged gold for dross. Alas, how many of us, in like condition, might have fallen into the same error? They overvalue this life who consider it to be a better thing than Divine love, for the love of God is better than life—His loving kindness is better than life itself.

Some would give anything for their lives, but they would give nothing for God’s love. If their lives were in danger, they would hasten to the physician, but though they enjoy not the love of God they yet sit at ease, and seek not the priceless benefit. They who feel aright think it a cheap thing to die, but an awful thing to live apart from God. They recognize that life would be but death unless God were with us, and that death itself is but the vestibule of life while God is our joy and our strength! Let us never set the present life before Divine love, and never let it be compared even for a moment with the pursuit of God’s Glory.

Every Christian man is to feel that he is to take care of his life in comparison with any earthly glory. But if it comes to a choice between God’s Glory and his life, he is to have no timorous hesitation in the matter, but at once sacrifice his life freely at his Lord’s altar. This has been ever the spirit of true Christians. They have never been anxious to die, nor have they been fearful concerning the loss of life. They have not thrown away their lives—they have known their value too well—but they have not withheld their lives for Christ’s sake. They have esteemed Him to be better than life itself. So you see the Scripture teaches us that there is a proper middle course in estimating this present life, and if we follow its instructions, we shall neither undervalue nor overvalue it.

It appears from the text, that godliness influences this present life, puts it in its true position, and becomes profitable to it.  
**I.**First, let me observe that GODLINESS CHANGES THE TENURE OF THE LIFE THAT NOW IS. It has “the promise of the life that now is.” I want you to mark the words—“it has the promise of the life that now is.” An ungodly man lives, but how? He lives in a very different respect from a godly man. Sit down in the cell of Newgate with a man condemned to die. That man lives, but he is reckoned dead in Law. He has been condemned. If he is now enjoying a reprieve, yet he holds his life at another’s pleasure, and soon he must surrender it to the demands of justice. I, sitting by the side of him, breathing the same air, and enjoying what in many respects is only the same life, yet live in a totally different sense. I have not forfeited my life to the Law. I enjoy it as far as the Law is concerned, as my own proper right—the Law protects my life, though it will destroy his. The ungodly man is condemned already, condemned to die, for the wages of sin is death. And his whole life here is nothing but a reprieve granted by the longsuffering of God.  
But a Christian man is pardoned and absolved. He owes not his life now to penal justice. When death comes to him it will not be at all in the sense of an infliction of a punishment. It will not be death, it will be the transfer of his spirit to a better state, the slumbering of his body for a little while in its proper couch to be awakened in a nobler likeness by the trump of the archangel. Now, is not life itself changed when held on so different a tenure? To live because I am now protected by the Law—is not that better than to be living at the sufferance of the Law?  
To live the life of an absolved man, of a free man, the life of God’s own child even in this present life—is not that a different thing from living the life of one to whom each hour measures out a nearer approach to the capital sentence, and to the execution of well-deserved punishment? The first is a life of pleasure—the second, disguise it as you may, is death in life, a life overshadowed with the darkness of eternal wrath.  
“Godliness has the promise of the life that now is.” That word changes the tenure of our present life in this respect, that it removes in a sense the uncertainty of it. God has given to none of you unconverted ones any promise of the life that now is. You are like squatters on a common who pitch their tents, and by the sufferance of the lord of the manor may remain there for awhile. But at a moment’s notice you must up tents and away.  
But the Christian has the promise of the life that now is. That is to say, he has the freehold of it. It is life given to him of God, and he really enjoys it. He has an absolute certainty about it. In fact, the life that now is has become to the Christian a foretaste of the life to come. Do you say that it is uncertain to the Christian whether he shall die or live? I grant you in one sense his remaining here is uncertain. Yet this is certain to him—he shall never die until it is best for him to die. He shall never depart this life till he is ripe for the life to come—he shall never, in fact, be removed from his present tabernacle till he himself, if he knew all, would be perfectly willing to be removed.  
Willing! Yes, far more! *Overjoyed* that his tabernacle should be dissolved that he might enter into his “House not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.” The tenure is very different between the uncertainty of the ungodly who has no rights and no legal titles, and the blessed certainty of the child of God who lives by promise.  
Let me add that this word seems to me to sweeten the whole of human life to the man that has it. Godliness has the promise of life that now is— that is to say, everything that comes to a godly man comes to him by promise. Whereas if the ungodly man has any blessing apparent, it does not come by promise, it comes overshadowed by a terrible guilt which curses his very blessings and makes the responsibilities of his wealth and of his health and position redound to his own destruction. It works as a savor of death unto death through his willful disobedience.  
Everything that comes to the Christian comes by promise. He sees his daily bread, and he says, “It has my Father’s mark on it. He said my bread should be given me. Here comes the water from the crystal stream, it is flavored with the love of God. He said my water shall be sure.” He puts on his raiment, and it may not be so comely as the dress of others, but be says, “This is the livery my Father promised me.” He sleeps, and it is beneath the canopy of Divine protection. He wakes and he walks abroad with angels, according to the promise, bearing him up in their hands.  
Afflictions come to him by promise, the broad arrow of the great King is set on each one of them, for was it not said of old, “In the world you shall have tribulation, but in Me you shall have peace”? He can see everywhere the trace of Divine faithfulness in the keeping of the Covenant promise. He lives not the life of Ishmael, who by-and-by may be banished to the wilderness with the bondwoman, his mother. No, he lives the life of Isaac, the child of the promise, who is before long to inherit all things, and who even now is the darling child of his father, and rejoices in his father’s love.  
There is a vast difference between having the life that now is, and having the promise of the life that now is—having God’s promise about it to make it all gracious, to make it all certain, and to make it all blessed as a token of love from God.  
**II.**It is time that we pass on to THE BENEFIT WHICH GODLINESS BESTOWS IN THIS LIFE. Perhaps the fullness of the text is the fact that the flower of life, the crown of life, the highest blessedness and bliss of life, is secured to us by godliness. I have no doubt you have often heard interpretations of this text, very excellent—and it is not for me to judge or censure them—which lead to the belief that the way to make the best of both worlds is to be a Christian.  
I also subscribe to that, but I must demur to the way in which it is generally put. There is an excellent sermon by that notable Divine, Saurin, in which he urges this text as a proof that the best hope of success in the world is enjoyed by the Christian. I demur to that being the teaching of this text. There may be some truth in it, but I do not think it is much to be insisted on. It has been said that he who fears God has the best guarantee of health. It is true, there is nothing in godliness to destroy the health of the body. The true Christian is preserved from many of those passions, and excitements, and indulgences, which tend to produce disease and to bring on early death.  
That much is true, but I do not believe that godliness inevitably ensures good health. I believe, rather, that some godly men absolutely require for the highest perfection of their godliness, that they should be visited with sickness. It seems to me to be a very strange theory, to teach that godliness guarantees health, for it would lead to the supposition that all people who are unhealthy must necessarily be or have been deficient in godliness. And this is all the more untenable when we observe that some of the best people we have ever met have been those who have for years been bedridden by affliction which they certainly never brought upon themselves by any kind of sin.  
I would say to every young man, there is nothing in the pursuit of godliness that can injure your health, but I would not say to him, “If you are godly you have the promise of being a healthy man,” for I do not believe it, since unhealthiness may come from a thousand other sources besides impropriety of conduct. I will go farther, and affirm that godliness, when carried to its highest and most honorable degree of excellence, might sometimes render it necessary for a man to place himself where he would of necessity become unhealthy. I know that it was the highest godliness which made our missionaries fix their abodes among the fever marshes of Fernando Po and Old Calabar to preach the Gospel.  
When I heard from one of our missionaries, as I did personally, that he had at last become so acclimatized that he did not have the fever oftener than about two days out of three, I could not think that godliness in his case necessarily involved *health*. But I gathered that it might so happen that an eminently godly man might feel it necessary to go where he might say, “Farewell, Health, you are not, after all, the promise of the life that now is. I can bear to suffer, I can bear to creep about this world sick and ready to die if I may but have what is better than health—the luxury of winning souls for Christ—the honor and joy of instructing the ignorant in the faith of the crucified Redeemer.”  
It were wicked to think that a man has less of godliness who sacrifices his health for Christ’s sake. He certainly would not be the man to miss the promise, and yet if health were such a promise he would evidently have missed it.  
Again, we have heard it argued that the godly man has the best prospect of wealth in this world. Now I will also grant that as godliness delivers us from a multitude of expenses into which riot and dissipation would lead us, and as godliness creates habits of sobriety and economy, as godliness begets honesty, and honesty is even in a *worldly* sense the best policy, there are some reasons why Christian traders should grow rich, and godly men have much in their favor.  
But I also cannot help recognizing that while trade is as it is, there are many things which a Christian man cannot do, and dare not do, which some have done, and are to this day rich for having done them—dirty acts, mean, low, and groveling—which have brought wealth to the creatures who have practiced them. And yet more—I have known the best of Christians, and men, too, whose outward conduct has been fully conformable to their profession—who have lived and died poor. Now, if wealth is the promise of the life that now is, I venture to say that godliness does not infallibly or even generally secure it. The God-fearing man may have as fair an opportunity as any other in the race of life, but all things considered, this is all we can say. It may be that the godly man may be a poor man, and from a dozen circumstances not connected with his religion or his morals, may live and may die poor in this world, but rich in faith.  
It has also been said that godliness has the promise of the life that now is, in the sense that a Christian man is the most likely to have a good name, fame, and reputation among his fellow men. That also is true in a measure. In well-regulated society, the believer in Christ, through the holiness of his character, will be had in esteem, and even among the worst of men the excellence of his conduct will command a measure of respect. But for all that, I do not believe that repute among men is the promise of the life that now is—for what is it after all? Good repute among men, if it is deserved, I shall not decry. But if by any chance slander should come and take away the good man’s name—and it has often done so—shall I say pity the calumniated saint as one who has lost the promise of the life that now is?  
I dare not think it! Far rather would I bid him rejoice in that day, and leap for joy, for so persecuted they the Prophets that were before him. And who is the most likely person to be slandered? Is it not the man who is most consistent with his profession, and most zealous in the spread of the faith? The Apostle Paul certainly never accounted riches to be the promise of the life that now is, for he had nothing. He had learned to be poor, and to labor with his hands. He certainly never reckoned health to be the promise of the life that now is, for he was in such circumstances of peril by land and sea, and among false brethren, that his life was in jeopardy for the Gospel. And as to a good name, he never regarded that as the promise of the life that now is, for he was willingly accounted as the offscouring of all things—some thought him mad, others thought him base, his repute with the multitude was gone.  
I will repeat what I have said, lest I be misunderstood. Under ordinary circumstances it is true that godliness wears a propitious face both towards health, and wealth, and name—and he who has respect to these things, shall not find himself, as a rule, injured in the pursuit of them by his godliness. But still I disdain altogether the idea that all these three things together are, or even make up a *part* of the promise of the life that now is. I believe some persons have the life that now is in its fullness, and the promise of it in its richest fulfillment, who have neither wealth, health, nor fame. Being blessed with the suffering Master’s smile and Presence, they are happier far than those who roll in wealth, who luxuriate in fame, and have all the rich blessings which health includes.  
Let me now show you what I think is the promise of the life that now is. I believe

it to be an *inward* happiness, which is altogether independent of outward circumstances. It is something richer than wealth, fairer than health, and more substantial than fame. This secret of the Lord, this deep delight, this calm repose, godliness always brings in proportion as it reigns in the heart.  
Let us try and show that this is so. A godly man, my Brethren, is one who is at one with his Maker. It must always be right with the creature when it is at one with the Creator. The Creator is Omnipotent, All-Just, All-Holy. When the creature is out of gear with the Creator it will always be dashing itself against the pricks, and wounding itself. As the Creator will not change, if the creature runs not parallel to the Divine will, the creature must suffer, must be unhappy, must be restless. But when godliness puts our will into conformity with the Divine will, the more fully it does so, the more certainly it secures to us happiness even in the life that now is.  
I am not happy necessarily because I am in good health, but I am happy if I am content to be out of health when God wills it. I am not happy because I am wealthy, but I am happy if it pleases me to be poor because it pleases God I should be. I am not happy because I happen to be famous, but I am happy if, being all unknown, I count it my highest fame to be accepted in the Beloved. A heart reconciled to the Divine will has full possession of the promise of the life that now is, for such peace with God is perfect happiness where it perfectly exists—conformity to God’s will is Heaven below. I pray that godliness may work in all of you a conformity to the Divine will, and then I am sure, whatever your outward lot may be, you will win the promise of the life that now is.  
The Christian man starting in life as such is best fitted for this life. He is like a vessel fittingly stored for all the storms and contrary currents that may await it. The Christian is like a soldier who must gladly go to battle, but he is protected by the best armor that can be procured. He wears the helmet and the breastplate. He wears the entire Divine panoply which heavenly wisdom has prepared to protect him from every dart of his adversaries. He has the promise of the life that already is, just as the man with a good sword and good armor has the best promise of success in battle.  
O that God may grant us Grace to know and feel that the best instruments and weapons of the warfare of this life are to be found in the arsenals of holiness, in the armories of confidence in God! In this sense we have again the promise of the life that now is. With a Christian all things that happen to him work for good. Is not this a rich part of the promise of the life that now is? What if the waves roar against him—they speed his boat towards the haven! What if the thunders and lightning come forth? They clear the atmosphere and promote his soul’s health.  
He gains by his losses, he grows healthy by his sicknesses, he lives by dying, he is enriched by being despoiled of his goods. Do you ask for any better promise than this? Is it not better that all things should work for my good, than that all things should be as I would wish to have them? They might all work my pleasure, and yet might all work my ruin. But now if they do not always please me—yet if they always benefit me—is not this the best promise of the life that now is?  
The Christian enjoys his God under all circumstances. That, again, is the promise of the life that now is. I spoke of his being reconciled to God— he is much more than that—he delights himself in his God. He finds God in Nature. The landscape glows for him with a more Divine color than any other eye can see. As for the heavens, with their starry glories, there is a light in them which has not yet been beheld by the natural man. He sees God in his solitude, and peoples his loneliness with the spirits that are akin with the Most High. He is, wherever he may be, never debarred from the society he loves best. A wish will find his God, a tear will bring him his best Beloved.  
He has but to sigh and cry when on the bed of sickness, and God comes and makes his bed for him. Blessed man, he has, indeed, the promise of the life that now is, for in it all, and over it all, he sees the Divine love shining for him with a supernal splendor and making earth but the porch of Heaven. This is to have the life that now is in the fullness of the promise. I am sure you will agree with me that the genuine possessor of godliness has the promise of the life that now is in his freedom from many of those cares and fears which rob life of all its luster.  
The man without godliness is weighted with the care of every day, and of all the days that are to come—the dread remembrance of the past, and the terror of the future as well. The godly man knows that all the past is forgiven, his transgressions are blotted out. As for the present, he casts that burden on the Lord. As for the future, he would not pry into it with anxious eye, but he leaves God to rule and govern as He wills. He sits down, calmly content that his Father’s will is right and good towards him. And as he is thus free from care, so is he free from the fear of men.  
Ungodly men, many of them, are servile to their fellow men. It is to them a most important question whether they are smiled upon or frowned at by their fellow worms. The godly man has learned to lift his head above the common race of mankind, and when he lives as he should, he neither thinks a thing the better because men praise it, nor the worse because they censure it. His rule is not popular opinion, nor the dictates of the philosophy of the hour. He believes what God tells him to be true, and what God prescribes he knows to be right. And he does this careless of man’s judgment, for none can judge him but his Master.  
That man has the promise of the life that now is who is in full enjoyment of the sweets of a clear conscience. He can afford to snap his fingers in the face of all mankind and declare that if the heavens themselves should fall, he would do the right, and dare all things for God. Oh, to have the yoke of human judgment from off your neck, and the bondage of man’s domineering opinion from off your spirit! This is to receive the promise of the life that now is.  
Moreover, the fear of death has gone from the Christian. This with many deprives the life that now is of everything that is happy and consoling. They are afraid in their merriest moments that the skeleton will disturb the feast. And when the dance is merriest, they think they hear the sound of the trumpet that will silence all. But the Christian is not afraid. To him the prospect of departure is rather joyous than grievous, and the breaking up of this mortal state is an event he looks for as the clearing away of multitudes of sorrows and the bringing in of mighty joys.  
Brothers and Sisters, to be free from the fear of death is to make life truly life—and he has it who leans wholly upon Christ—and knows that Jesus is the Resurrection and the Life. Put these things togetherpeacefulness with his fellow men, peace with God, a sense that all things are working for his good, fearlessness of man’s judgment, communion with the Most High—and surely you have described in a few words the very flower of life—the thing that makes it worth while to live.  
This does not lie, as I have said before, in accumulated treasure. It does not blush in the rosy cheek. It does not dwell in the trump of fame. It resides *within*, when the man walks with God and subdues the earth beneath his feet. When the soul communes with the spiritual, and makes the visible to glow in the light of the unseen. When the man’s peace and joy all stream from the deep springs of God’s love, and the man lives in God, and God lives in him. Herein lies the highest kind of life—it is the flower of the life that now is—and GODLINESS it is that has the promise of it.  
I must not detain you longer, except to make an application of the subject to the present assembly. Brothers and Sisters, you who have godliness, and live in the fear of God, let me entreat you to believe that there is provided for you in godliness, comfort, joy, and delight for the life that now is. You need not postpone your feasting upon Christ till you see Him face to face. Feed on Him this day. You need not wait for the joys of the Holy Spirit till you have shaken off this cumbrous clay. The joy of the Lord is your strength today. You need not think that your peace and rest remain as yet in the future, hidden from you. Eternal life with its blessings is a present possession.  
They that believe do enter into rest, and may enter into rest *now*. The clusters of Eshcol are before you, brought to you by a Divine hand before you cross the Jordan—  
***“The men of Grace have found  
Glory begun below,  
Celestial fruits on earthly ground  
From faith and hope do grow.”***  
We do not say that godliness has made all Believers rich, for some here will be content always to be poor. The whole body of the faithful cannot claim that godliness has brought them earthly treasure, for some of the greatest of them have written that if in this life only they had hope, they would have been of all men the most miserable. But without exception, the whole of us can unanimously declare that we have found in godliness the highest happiness, the supreme delight, the richest consolation.  
I pray you, therefore, who profess godliness, be not content unless you have the promise of the life that now is. Believe that you can not only make this life sublime, but make it joyous. Believe that you can now be raised up together and made to sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus. You cannot find a Heaven in things below, for the moth is there, and the rust that corrupts. But you can, while here, if you set your affections upon things above, and not on things on the earth, find Glory begun *within* you, and a young Heaven already shining about your path. The life that now is—claim it! Up, you sons of Israel, and slay the Amalekites that would take away from you your comfort! Arise, you men that fear the Lord, and demand that doubts and fears, like the accursed Canaanites, shall be chased from the land. For the promise of God ought to be believed, and in the believing of it, your peace shall be like a river, and your joy shall overflow.  
Another application of the text is this. There is a bearing of it upon the sinner. It is quite certain, O ungodly man, that the promise of the life that now is belongs only to those who are godly. Are you content to miss the cream of this life? I pray you, if you will not think of the life to come, at least think of this. You desire to be happy. You have intelligence enough to know that happiness does not consist in externals, but in the state of your mind. I assure you, and there are thousands of my Brethren who can affirm the same, that after having tried the ways of sin, we infinitely prefer the ways of righteousness for their own pleasure’s sake even here, and we would not change with ungodly men even if we had to die like dogs.  
With all the sorrow and care which Christian life is supposed to bring, we would prefer it to any other form of life beneath the stars. There is no man like the Christian, after all. Happy are you, O Israel, a people saved of the Lord! We do not come to you and tell you that godliness will make you rich, although there is no need that it should make you poor. We do not tell you it will make you healthy. It certainly will not make you the reverse. But these are not the things with which we would bribe you—these are inferior blessings, which we dare not set before you as worthy of your seeking after in the first instance.  
But we do tell you that if you will but seek the Lord while He may be found, and put your trust in His Christ, who came to put away sin, you shall have the happiest, best, noble, most desirable life that can be enjoyed on earth! Now many of you believe this. I know you do. In your hearts you envy Christians—even poor Christians. You feel that you would gladly be as sick or as poor as yonder pious saint, if you might have his hope, if you might have his God. Well, if you know which is best, have which is best. “May I have it?” says one. Who said you might *not*? Does not the Lord invite you to taste and see that He is good?  
Has not He even *commanded* you, and are not these His Words, “Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved”? Simply to trust, and to rely—this is to begin the Divine life, and this will introduce you into a nobler sphere than mortals know of. They rejoice when corn and wine fill their barns and their vats, but you will say, “Lord, lift up the light of Your countenance upon me,” and in that you will find a richer joy than they. “Seek you the Lord while He may be found, call you upon Him while He is near: let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him. And to our God, for He will abundantly pardon.” God bless you, for Christ’s sake.

**[Sermon #946, *The Profit of Godliness in the Life to Come*, is the sermon Brother Spurgeon preached in the evening of June 19, 1870, and is the companion sermon to this one.]**

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**÷1Ti 4.10**

“TRUST IN THE LIVING GOD”  
NO. 2964

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 30, 1905.

***DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON THURSDAY EVENING, AUGUST 5, 1875.**

***“We trust in the living God.”***1Ti 4:10***.***

IF we are inclined to grieve because everything around us changes, our consolation will be found in turning to our unchanging God. If we lament the ills of mortality, it will be wise for us to turn to Him “who only has immortality.” If our earthly joys fade and die, it is a blessed thing for us to be able to go to the fountain of undying joy and there to drink deep draughts of bliss which shall cause us to forget our misery.

Without any further preface, I ask you to follow me while first, in a very simple manner, I speak upon *the great truth of the existence of the living God.* And then, secondly, while I draw *practical inferences from that existence*. Before I close my discourse, I shall have a question to put to you.

**I.**First, for a little while, let us think of THE GREAT TRUTH OF THE EXISTENCE OF THE LIVING GOD. Paul wrote to Timothy, “Therefore we both labor and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God.”

He meant, by that expression, first, *that God is truly existing and not like the dead gods of the heathen, which are no gods at all—*which, in fact, have no existence as gods. Vast multitudes have bowed down before images of wood, or stone, or ivory, or gold—but of them all it might truly be said, “Eyes have they, but they see not; they have ears, but they hear not; noses have they, but they smell not; they have hands, but they handle not; feet have they, but they walk not; neither speak they through their throat.” It is a sure sign that a man’s understanding is dead when he can worship a dead god! But you and I, Beloved, “trust in the living God.” He is the God who made Heaven and earth and all that is in them. He is the God who supports the whole universe by the power of His almighty arms. He is the God who rules and overrules in Nature, Providence and Grace. He is the true God, the only real God—no dream God, no phantom or myth conjured up by imagination, but a real God, the only living and true God! May we worship Him, then, with real worship, real adoration and true sincerity of heart! What a blessing it is for us that we are able to worship the true God! We might have been left, as our remote ancestors were, to seek after God, if haply we might find Him, or to worship gods that are no gods and be lost in the mazes of superstition, unable to find the Most High. But “God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, has shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the Glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ” and, therefore, “we trust in the living God,” the real God!

A second meaning of this expression, I have no doubt, lies in *the fact of God’s self-existence and independence.*“We trust in the living God,” who is “living” in a very emphatic sense. You and I are living, but our existence is entirely dependent upon the will of God. Although He has given us immortal spirits, yet that immortality only comes to us by reason of the Divine decree. And the glorious immortality of Believers comes to them by virtue of their vital union with their ever-living Head, their Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We have no independent immortality—it is not inherent in us and it must be sustained by perpetual emanations of the Divine Power. It is a fire which could not maintain its own glow. It must be fed, or it would go out. But God is selfexistent, the great I AM—and if all His creatures would cease to be, He would be just as completely God without them as with them—

***“He sits on no precarious throne,***

***Nor borrows leave to be.”***  
His is a fire which burns without fuel—a sun which scatters light without itself diminishing! God is independent, self-existing, the only really “living” being in the entire universe in the fullest and most emphatic sense of the word, “living.”

What a joy it is to worship such a God as this, because nothing can diminish His life, His force, His power! If His courts are sustained, not by the tribute of men, but by His own wealth. If His sovereign state stands, not by the might of armies, but by His own Omnipotence and if He, Himself, is All-Sufficient, not because He gathers up all things into Himself, but because all things are from Him, and are all in Him in their germ and seed—is He not a God whom we all ought to worship—in whom, worshipping, we may joyfully trust—and relying on whom we may be perfectly at rest, for He cannot fail us, neither can He fail Himself in any respect or degree?

A third meaning of the expression, “living,” in Paul’s declaration, “We trust in the living God,” I have no doubt is to be found *in the fact of the existence of God through all eternity*. There was a time when you and I, who are now alive, were not alive. And there will be a time when, as far as this world is concerned, we shall be numbered with the dead. But there never was a period in which God did not live. He always was and always is and always will be “the *living*God.” Let your thoughts fly back to eternity if you can—for, mark you, all our ideas of eternity are very shallow and superficial. We cannot form any clear notion of what, “eternity,” means, and the very fact that we speak of a “past” eternity proves that we have to bring it down to our finite apprehension and to use inaccurate words to express our imperfect and incorrect ideas! But far back, when the sun, moon and stars—and the whole universe slept in the mind of God, as a forest sleeps within an acorn cup—even then God was “the living God.” Before the first ray of light had broken in upon the pristine darkness—yes, before there *was* any darkness—before anything was created—God was “the living God!” And He was just as great and as glorious as He is now. Without an angel to sing His praise, or a human being to look up to Him with holy reverence or with tearful repentance— yet still independent of them all, He was “the living God!” What a blessing it is for us that it was so! There was never a period in which Satan could plot and plan against us, but that God had eternally existed before him. That evil spirit is but the infant of a day compared with God, the Eternal of all the ages, the Everlasting Father who was always able to anticipate everything that could possibly occur, knowing beforehand all that might be detrimental to us, countermining every mine of the archenemy and baffling all the old serpent’s cunning in such a way as, in the end, to add still more to His own Glory!

And as He was “the living God” in the past, so He is “the living God” in the present, and just as truly living as He was ten thousand millions of years ago—to speak of eternity after the fashion of men. Dr. Watts hit the mark when he sang—

***“He fills His own eternal NOW,***

***And sees our ages pass.”***  
Ages and years are past, or present, or future to us—but they are all present to Him. When a man looks upon a map, he can cover a whole country with his hand. But a traveler has to journey many weary miles before he can cross that country from one end of it to the other! But on the map your hand covers it all. And all eternity is under the hand of God like that country on the map covered by a human hand. God is “the living God” now as much as He ever was—as powerful, as wise, as loving, as tender, as strong as He ever was, blessed be His holy name!

And so He will be throughout the whole of the future. We cannot tell all that will yet happen in this world, but one thing we know—God will always be “the living God.” It is probable that once powerful nations will be utterly destroyed and that there will be terrible disasters beyond anything that has yet been experienced. We know that the present dispensation will utterly pass away and that “the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed.” But this fact is sure, that He who has been the dwelling place of His people in all generations, will be the dwelling place of His people in all the generations that are yet to come. There will never be a funeral knell to tell us that our great Lord is dead. There will be no need for weeping among the blessed spirits above because He who was their Creator, Protector, Preserver, and Friend has ceased to be, for He will always be “the living God.” So, because of His eternal existence, He is right worthy to bear this title—yes, and to monopolize it, for it belongs to Him alone—

***“Great God! How infinite are Thee!***

***What worthless worms are we!  
Let the whole race of creatures bow,  
And pay their praise to You.  
Your Throne eternal ages stood,  
Ere seas or stars were made.  
You are the ever-living God,  
Were all the nations dead.  
Eternity, with all its years,  
Stands present in Your view.  
To You there’s nothing old appears—  
Great God! There’s nothing new.”***

The fourth meaning of the text seems to me to be this. *God is called “the living God” as being always Himself really and truly God in the full capacity of His Being.* Sometimes we say of a man that he is “all alive.” At another time, he does not appear to be fully quickened. He has life to some extent, but not in its fullness. We say of the man, by-and-by, that he is dead—not that he has ceased to exist, for man will no more cease to exist than will God, Himself, but we speak of him as dead because his body, which is part of his being, lies moldering in the tomb. But God is all life and only life. No portion of Him, (I must use human language, though the words are incorrect which I am using, as our words always must be when we speak of God), no faculty, no power, no attribute of God can be smitten by any paralysis, or can, in any degree, or in the slightest measurer, be subject to any failure which is at all akin to death. God is all alive and altogether life and nothing but life. God’s wisdom is always Infallible, His power is always almighty, His energy is at all times efficacious for everything that needs His attention. There can never come a time when He will be bowed down with age, or wearied with toil, or affected by suffering. “The living God” is the whole God, or, as the holy beings in Heaven call Him—and it means the same thing—“Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was and is, and is to come.” He is the whole God! Whatever the word, “God,” means—and we do not know, nor shall we ever know all that it means—it is too vast to be conceived by anyone but God, Himself—but, whatever that is, that is what God always is to the full measure, never in any degree diminished by what we call, “death.” He is evermore “the living God.”

I like to think of this Truth because God, Himself, speaks of it again and again. The Lord said to Moses in the wilderness, “Is the Lord’s hand waxed short?” In the prophecy of Isaiah we read, “Thus says the Lord, Is my hand shortened at all, that it cannot redeem? Or have I no power to deliver?” And, a little later, this Prophet was Inspired to write, “Behold, the Lord’s hand is not shortened, that it cannot save.” And today He is as mighty as He was in those glorious days when, in the van of Israel’s host, He led His people in safety through the depths of the Red Sea and delivered them forever from the iron bondage of Pharaoh. Yes, blessed be His holy name, He is still “the living God” as full of life and power as He ever was!

Another meaning of this expression is that *God is active and energetic and not a mere name*. There are plenty of people who are willing to believe in a god of a certain sort, but I hardly know how to describe their god. They are not atheists—they would be horrified if we called them by that name—but their notion is that everything is regulated by what they call, “the laws of Nature.” If you ask them what, “Nature,” is, they give you some curious answers. One man says, “I do not go into your places of worship and sit there, and hear you talk about God. I like to walk about and worship Nature.” If it is in London that a man talks like that, I should like to ask him what he calls, “nature.” Does he mean these miles of brick walls and the dark lanes and alleys at the back of them? If he means that, I should not like to worship his “Nature.” Or does he mean the grass in the meadows and the flowers of the field? If so, I hardly think that I should like to worship what cattle eat—it seems a degradation for a man to stoop as low as that! But they will say and do anything to get rid of the idea of the living and true God. “Nature”— “Providence”—and so on, are the expressions they use, just as if “God” did not enter into their calculations—or as if He had gone out of the business and left the whole concern to go on by itself! I should not like to be the child of a father who, the moment I was born, had me washed and dressed by machinery—and had a cradle ready for me to be rocked by machinery and fed me by machinery—who, all the while that I was under his roof, dressed me by machinery, fed me by machinery and taught me by machinery—but I never saw him. In fact, I only knew that there was some mysterious force about somewhere, but I never saw him or it—and never knew anything about his personality. That is the kind of dead force that many men call, “god.” But *our* God, in whom we trust, is a God with a great, warm, loving heart! He is a thinking God, an active God, a working, personal God who comes into the midst of this world and does not leave it to go on by itself. Although He is a stranger in the world, even as His people are also strangers and foreigners by reason of the revolt that men have made against their liege Lord and Sovereign, yet it is still His world and He is still in it!

I like to think of “the living God” being in this world which He created, for, now when I look at the cowslip or the daffodil, I know that it is God who paints these flowers of the spring so delicately. When I gather the geranium or the fuchsias, I know that it is God’s pencil which has been at work and I love to look at the blossom and feel that I am near to God— just as I should feel if I were to go into a friend’s studio and see there some of his sketches and paintings. I know that he has been there and that no other hand than his could paint that picture so well. And, in like manner, I know that no other hand but that of my God could paint these pictures of Nature so beautifully. Thus I am brought very near to “the living God.” O dear Brothers and Sisters, it is such a joy to me to remember that God is not a mere dead force—an abstract something or other which gives energy to the world, or which did give energy to it ages ago, but has now gone away and left the old energies to work till they wear themselves out! Oh, no. I believe that the Lord God still walks among the trees of this garden—that the Lord God, like a shepherd, still watches over His sheep—that the Lord God still speaks to us in the thunder, smiles upon us in the sunlight, scatters His blessings down in the dew and the rain—that He gives us the fruitful fields of harvest and the golden days in which the sheaves can be gathered into the garner— yes, and that He is just as truly at work for us in the winter months, sweetening the clods by the winds and the frost, and so preparing the earth to bring forth food for man and grass for the cattle. We delight to think that in all these ways, God is still “the living God.”

Yet once again, God is “the living God” in that *He is the Source of life, the Giver of life and the Sustainer of life*. We are living creatures, but He is the living Creator. We are living dependent, but He is “the living God” upon whom we all depend. He spoke us out of nothing and He could speak us back to nothing if He pleased to do so. We are the creatures of His will, living on His estates as tenants who may, at any moment, be dismissed at His pleasure, receiving the very breath that is in our nostrils at His absolute discretion! But God is Life, itself, and after all the streams which have flowed from Him to His creatures, there is as much life in Him as at the first. And when He says, “Return, you children of men,” and we go back to Him, He will have no more life than He has now, but He will be as He has always been, “the living God.”—

***“Let them neglect Your Glory, Lord,  
Who never knew Your Grace.  
But our loud songs shall still record  
The wonders of Your praise.  
‘Twas He, and we’ll adore His name,  
That formed us by a word!  
‘Tis He restores our ruined frame—  
Salvation to the Lord!”***

Now, in the six ways I have brought out only one thought—which I want to impress on your minds because it has been such a sweet thought to me. I have, in imagination, looked upon all whom I know upon the earth and I have said of them all, “They are dying creatures.” This is always true, but it is often forgotten. Yet, when one is taken away who has been very precious to us, we begin to realize this truth. Thinking over this matter, I seem to see a procession going past me. I can remember many of those who have passed me. They have gone by while I have remained here and I shall never see them here anymore—a long array of my Master’s servants, some of them bearing His banner aloft and others marching with their swords drawn because of fear in the night. Some of them were weak and feeble folk who had to be guarded on both sides by sturdy champions. And now, those of you who are before me as I speak, are also passing away—and there are more coming on, but they are only coming that they may go! I said, just now, that I was looking on at this procession, but that was a mistake, for *I am in the procession and I am passing on with the rest!*What shadows we all are! What fleeting things! What mists—what paintings on a cloud! We can scarcely say that we live, for, the moment we begin to live, that moment we begin to die and—

***“Every beating pulse we count,  
Leaves but the number less.”***

This earth is not “the land of the living.” This world is a dying world! The living world is beyond Death’s cold river. Here are graves innumerable. What part of the globe is there that has never yet been a cemetery? Every particle of dust which is blown in your face in the street may have once formed a portion of some living being! O Death, you rule over all! No, you do not, for there is One who rules over even you, O Death! You can have no power over “the living God.” You are His servant, permitted to work out His purpose, for it is through death that we pass into life. By the death of our redeeming Lord, we have been redeemed from destruction and, therefore, we can turn away from everything that wears the aspect of death and change, and turn to Him who is always the same and of whose years there is no end—the Eternal, in whom we trust!

**II.**Thus have I set forth, as best I could, the great Truth of the existence of “the living God.” Now, in the second place, LET US DRAW SOME PRACTICAL INFERENCES FROM THIS GREAT TRUTH.

And the first inference is this— *an inference of reverential awe and holy trembling*. What a great God He is whom we have professed to worship! When a poor pagan bows down before his wooden god, I should not wonder if what little sense he has should make him loathe and ridicule himself. But we have gathered here to worship “the living God.” Moses tells us, in the 5TH of Deuteronomy, verse 26, that the Israelites said, when the Law of God was given to them, “Who is there of all flesh that has heard the voice of the living God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as we have, and lived?” Well might they stand there trembling because “the living God” had come down and touched the mountains so that they smoked like great altars of incense. This is the God whom we worship! Far from us be all trifling! Vain thoughts, be gone! Before “the living God” we should prostrate ourselves in the very dust. “O you who profess to serve the Lord, mind that you serve Him faithfully, for it is “the living God” whom you serve, the God who is not to be mocked with hypocritical service! O you who know that you are not reconciled to Him, remember that it is to “the living God” that you are not reconciled! And recollect that solemn and true declaration, “It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.” And that other, “Our God is a consuming fire.” So I say that our first inference should be that of reverential awe and holy trembling.

The next should be, to God’s people, *an inference of holy courage*. Are we on the Lord’s side? Then, my Brothers and Sisters, let us never fear, for we are on the side of “the living God.” Who can successfully defy Him? Who dares to throw down the gage of battle against Him? You remember what young David said to Saul concerning Goliath of Gath, “Your servant slew both the lion and the bear; and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them, seeing he has defied the armies of the living God.” It was grandly put, as though he had said, “This big fellow is only the servant of a dead god and he and his god may both come out against me, and I, little as I am, yes, less than nothing in myself, will go to him in the name of the living God and bring back his head as the trophy of victory! Let no man’s heart fail because of him.” So now, if the biggest Goliath that ever lived at Rome or anywhere else should come stalking out against us, let us say, “Who is he, that he should defy the armies of the living God?” If the God of Israel is not now living, all is over with the cause of truth and righteousness. But we may say, as David did on another occasion, “The Lord lives; and blessed be my Rock.” As long as He lives, we may boldly say, “If God is for us, who can be against us?”

This, too, should be *our great security in time of danger*. I like to recall that incident in the life of Hezekiah when he took that abominable Assyrian letter, “and spread it before the Lord.” Do you ever take your letters to the Lord, Brothers and Sisters? That is the best thing in the world to do with them when they are evil ones. Hezekiah spread his letter before the Lord and said, “Lord, bow down Your ear and hear: open, Lord, Your eyes and see: and hear the words of Sennacherib, which has sent him to reproach the living God.” That was the point and the king felt quite sure that Sennacherib would be overthrown because he had defied the living God. If God had been a dead god, Sennacherib might have done with Him as he did with other idol gods. He asked, “Have the gods of the nations delivered them which my fathers have destroyed?” He did not realize that they were all broken to pieces because they were mere idols. But this time, he was defying “the living God.” If, Brothers and Sisters, “the living, God” is on your side, “no weapon that is formed against you shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against you in judgment you shall condemn.” If you, Beloved, are walking before “the living God” in all sincerity, even if Sennacherib with a mighty host should come against you, the Lord your God would send His holy angel and smite your foes, and you should surely be delivered! Have no doubt or fear, if your God is “the living God.”

And this Truth of God, Brothers and Sisters, *should always make us fearless of men,*for, after all, what are men? Remember what the Lord said to His servant, the Prophet Isaiah, “Who are you, that you should be afraid of a man that shall die?” The most powerful and most cruel man who ever dares to threaten you is only a man that shall die! And the Lord Jesus says to you, “Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do.” Herod is soon eaten of worms. Persecuting monarchs soon disappear when God condemns them. Therefore, while “the living God” is your God, never be afraid of a dying man—

***“Fear Him, you saints, and you will then Have nothing else to fear.”***

Another inference from this Truth is this. *It should bring relief to us in times of bereavement.* Sorrow is natural to us, but to push sorrow to an extreme is wrong. I have heard of a good woman who had lost her husband and who continued sorrowing over her loss for a very long time. Her little boy saw her weeping day after day and, at last, plucking her by the gown, he said to her, “Mother, is God dead?” “No, dear,” she said, “but your father is.” But that question made her stop her grieving, as it well might, for if God is not dead, our best Friend still lives! So let us be of good cheer. If people had to come here and say, “That good woman whom God so greatly blessed in the Church’s work is dead. And that dear Brother whom we all loved, is dead. And the Pastor, too, is dead,” who could help sorrowing? But even then it would still be true that “the Lord lives!” Always get back to that great fact, “the Lord lives.” We shall have to put our Beloved ones into the grave, but, “the Lord lives,” blessed be His name! And as long as God lives, we need never ask, “What shall we do?” It is true that we shall not do much, but God will. We must never say, “Oh, there is such a great gap, it cannot be filled.” God is alive and He can fill it, so you must not give way to despondency or despair. We may grieve, for even Jesus wept, but let us never distrust the Lord, for as surely as He takes away one worker, He knows how to raise up another! And if the Lord should take your husband from you, He will, Himself, be your Husband. If He should let you be fatherless, He will be your Father. And if He should leave you childless, good woman, He will say to you, “Am I not better unto you than ten sons?” He can fill up every gap! Yes, and make your soul to overflow with supreme content—

***“‘Lo, I am with you,’ says the Lord,  
My Church shall safe abide,  
For I will ne’er forsake My own,  
Whose souls in Me confide.  
Through every scene of life and death,  
This promise is our trust.  
And this shall be our children’s song,  
When we are cold in dust.”***

*This truth ought also to keep us from grieving too much over our losses and crosses in business.* You have had a great loss today, Friend, and your face looks very long over it. Or you have heard of someone who was the means of bringing you much business who has moved or is dead. Well, “the Lord lives.” “Trust in the living God.” There have been times in the little business I have had to do for the Lord in connection with the Orphanage and the College, when the funds have been very short and sometimes we have run quite out. I have scraped the bottom of the meal barrel a good many times and I have had to squeeze the cruse to get a drop more oil out of it. But we have trusted in the living God and, up till now, we have always found Him worthy of being trusted! And we believe we always shall. There have been failures and mistakes on our part and on the part of our friends, but never any on God’s part. We must all bear that testimony. Let us, therefore, all “trust in the living God.” If an ill wind blows upon us, let us believe that somehow or other, it will blow us some good. And if a rough tide comes up, let us believe that it will in some way or other wash us nearer to our desired haven.

Once again, “we trust in the living God,” and *this gives us the richest consolation concerning our departed Christian friends*. As “the Lord lives,” and He is their God, they are not dead! You remember Christ’s argument with the Sadducees, it was this—God has said, “I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.” “God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.” So that the dead saints are not really dead. Whenever there comes out a new error, it generally breeds another, for errors are very prolific. Some people started the notion that the soul of man is not immortal—that the soul of the wicked would die. I was quite sure that when they got as far as that error, they would go still further and so the next notion was that every part of us will die when we die—that there is no soul that is immortal, or no soul at all—and that the righteous dead are all in their graves—souls and bodies and everything! That is the beautiful materialistic notion that after having received Christianity, we are expected to imbibe. But we are not such idiots, whatever they may think of us! We shall never believe that all our beloved friends, who, according to the Scriptures, have been with Jesus these many years, have never been with Jesus at all! In fact, do not exist at all, except whatever may be found of them in their coffins or in their graves! How could that be if God was their God and if Christ’s Words are true—“God is not the God of the dead, but of the living”? They are alive, Brothers and Sisters—as much alive as they were alive here, with the exception of that mortal part which they have left behind to be prepared for immortality, as Dr. Watts truly wrote—

***“Corruption, earth, and worms  
Shall but refine this flesh  
Till my triumphant spirit comes  
To put it on afresh.”***

We go down to our graves, as Esther went to her bath of spices, to be prepared for the embrace of the great King! And, in the morning of the Resurrection, this poor body of ours, all fair and lustrous, shall be reunited with our glorified spirit and we shall behold the face of the King in His beauty and be with Him forever and ever! “God is not the God of the dead” and, therefore, those of whom He is the God will never die! The inference is clear and forcible. Believe in it, hold to it and rejoice in it, for it will comfort you to know that as He is your God, you will never die. “God is not the God of the dead.” Then, blessed be His holy name, I am not dead, though once I was dead, for He has quickened me into life! And I shall never be dead any more, for Jesus said, “Because I live, you shall live also.” “The living God” is not the Father of dead souls, but He has an innumerable host of living children to be His heirs and to dwell with Him forever! Did you ever notice that passage where Joshua tells the people to be ready to go over the Jordan and says that when the priests’ feet shall touch the river, it shall divide and the Ark shall be carried across? “And then,” he said, “hereby you shall know that the living God is among you and that He will without fail drive out from before you the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Hivites, and the Perizzites, and the Girgashites, and the Amorites, and the Jebusites.” The joyful triumphs of Believers in death, when they metaphorically cross the Jordan are proofs to us that God is with His people, that He will drive out all our enemies before us and give us a triumphant entrance into the promised land above! Glory be to the name of “the living God” forever!

**III.**Now I finish with the question which I said I might ask. It is this— IS “THE LIVING GOD” YOUR GOD?  
If so, *then remember how near He is to you*, for Paul tells us in 2Co 6:16, “You are the temple of the living God.” I will not dwell on that sentence, though I am tempted to do so, but what a wonderful thing it is that “the living God” should be willing to dwell inside our bodies! Oh, let us keep these bodies pure and let us see to it that we never fall under that terrible curse, “If any man defiles the temple of God, him shall God destroy.” But may our body, soul and spirit be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ!  
And, dear Brothers and Sisters, if “the living God” is really ours, *let us thirst after Him.* Let us say, as did the writer of the 42nd Psalm, “As the hart pants after the water-brooks, so pants my soul after You, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God.” He is “the living God,” so thirst after Him and keep on thirsting after Him—and do not be content to try to live without Him, for, to live without “the living God” is to have death in life and not truly to live at all! Think, child of God, “the living God” dwells within you! Seek to realize His Presence, long and pant to realize it more and more!  
Are any of you obliged to answer my question truthfully by saying, “No, the living God is not mine”? Then I must repeat to you those two texts that I quoted earlier in my sermon—“It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.” “For our God is a consuming fire.” That latter text has often been spoilt by being misquoted. I have many times heard it quoted, “God, *out of Christ*, is a consuming fire.” That is *not* the text at all. It is “*our*God”—the Christian’s God—God *in* Christ “is a consuming fire”—and if He is a consuming fire to His own people, what will He be to the ungodly? That is a wonderful question that is asked in Isa 33:14. “Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? Who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?” And the answer is, “Nobody can except the man that walks righteously, and speaks uprightly,” and so on. The Prophet goes on to describe the man who has been renewed by Grace, for he is the only man who can live in the everlasting burnings of the Divine majesty and purity. He can live there because the devouring fire will only burn up everything in him that is unlike God—but the new life that is in the Christian, the Grace that the Holy Spirit puts into us will endure the fire. Everything that appertains to man and to man’s work must be tried by fire, and if God has built into us the gold, silver and precious stones of His Grace, and if we have built upon them our life work, both we and our work will endure the trial by fire!  
But, Sinner, you will also have to go through that fire! And seeing that there is nothing in you but the wood, hay and stubble of self and sin— nothing in you but that which it foul and obnoxious to God, unholy and unrighteous—or self-righteous, which it really unrighteous—the fire will consume it! All your glory, your peace, your happiness, everything that makes life to be life will be taken from you and there shall remain for you nothing but existence! And this is the description of that existence— “These shall go away into everlasting punishment.” Oh, may the Lord who alone can give you life, give it to you now! For, if not, there will remain nothing but an everlasting death to be your portion! From that may you now be delivered by His infinite mercy, through trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ! Amen.

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**÷1Ti 4.13**

HOW TO READ THE BIBLE  
NO. 3318

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 5, 1912.

***DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON THURSDAY EVENING JUNE 21, 1866.**

***“Till I come, give attendance to reading.”***1Ti 4:13***.***

OF course this counsel and exhortation is intended primarily as a direction to Christian ministers and especially to young Christian ministers. They must read much if they are to be profitable to others as preachers. There used to be a very stupid conceit in some sections of the Church, that if a minister read extensively, he would only give forth stale truth, or what some simpletons called, “dead men’s brains.” Men have now learned, however, that he will be most fresh and original in his own thoughts who most diligently cultivates his mind by studying and pondering the thoughts of other minds. He who never quotes, will never be quoted, and he who does not read is not very likely to be read. Of course the first thing the minister needs is to be taught of the Spirit, but then the question is**—**How does the Spirit teach? He teaches, no doubt, mainly through the Word and through our own experimental acquaintance with that Word. But if He pleases to reveal a Truth of God to another man, and I will not read that Truth as it has been recorded by that other man, I have neglected the teaching of the Spirit of God. You know, with regard to the Savior’s miracles, that there was not one of them that was unnecessary. He never did a thing by miracle which could have been performed by the ordinary laws of Nature. So it is with the teaching of the Spirit—I have no right to expect that the Spirit will reveal Truth to me without the use of a book when I can find it out for myself with the book. “The Holy Spirit helps our infirmities,” but not our idleness! He is given to us on purpose that He may help us when we are weak, but not that we may be indulged where we are slothful. I have sometimes had the unutterable misery of listening to a sermon which has been professedly dictated by the Spirit of God, but in which it was clear that the preacher had never thought upon the subject before he spoke—and I can only say that I was quite at a loss to perceive any peculiar beauty in the sermon, nor did I see anything at all which made it a source of edification superior to a sermon which had been prepared by someone else. I thought I detected a good many traits of human ignorance—and but very few traces of the working of the Holy Spirit.

There are many young fellows here tonight who are preparing for the ministry. I shall not, however, enlarge on this point, but shall only press on their earnest consideration and their most devout meditation. This Inspired exhortation, which is not mine, nor even an Apostle’s only, but the exhortation of the Holy Spirit of God through the Apostle—“Give attendance to reading.” If, Brothers, you would bless God’s Church and train up a band of really intelligent Christians, do not be always appealing only to the emotions, but also give out good, sound, strong Gospel Doctrine—and illustrate the Doctrine, so as to expound and comment to others. Do this especially by reading the words of the greatest masters in Scripture theology—and these will prove your delightful and dear companions and your splendid helpers in making your ministry richly profitable to your hearers.

This, however, is not our special subject for tonight. This same exhortation so peculiarly suitable to the minister, will suit all his hearers, too, because the ministry is not a religious caste peculiar to some few, but we are, all of us, to teach others according as God shall teach us! And in order that we may be useful in our sphere, as the minister is in his, we must adopt the same means to fit ourselves for our high privilege and to prepare us to be used by God. As the minister without reading will have but little power, so will it be with Christians in general. “Give attendance to reading” is an exhortation which I would press upon most of you, especially those of you who have leisure and who are not called to exhausting labors which take up all your time.

I am not, however, going to keep so closely to my text as merely to exhort you to read. I want to ask you to read God’s Word! That seems to me to be the Christian’s book. You may read other books and your mind may thereby be well-furnished with spiritual things, but if you keep to the Word of God, though you may be deficient in many points of a liberal education, you will not be deficient in the education that will fit you for blessed service here, for the service of skies, for communion with God on earth and communion with Christ in Glory!

My objective this evening is to say a few things about how to read the Bible. Last Thursday night we spoke at length upon God’s Word as to its excellencies. *Tonight* I think it fitting that we should speak a little about how to read that Word with greatest profit to our souls. In doing so we shall hope to consider seven precepts all bearing powerfully upon this important matter. Our first precept shall be**—**

**I.**READ AND DEPEND *on the Spirit of God*. How often do we open the sacred Book and read a Chapter through, perhaps at family prayer, or perhaps in our own private devotions and, having read from the first verse to the last, we shut up the book thinking we have done something very right and very proper—and in a vague way somehow profitable to us? Very right and very proper, indeed, and yet, right and proper as the thing is, we may really have gained nothing thereby! We may, in fact, have only drilled ourselves in the merely external part of religion and may not have enjoyed anything spiritual, or anything that can be beneficial to our souls if we have forgotten the Divine Spirit through whom the Word has come to us!

Ought we not even to remember that in order to properly understand the Holy Word we need to have the Holy Spirit *to be His own Expositor?*The hymn says concerning Providence**—**

***“God is His own interpreter***

***And He will make it plain”***  
and certainly it is so with regard to the Scriptures! Commentators and expositors are very useful, indeed, but the best expositor is always the author of a book, himself. If I had a book which I did not quite understand, it would be a very great convenience to me to live next door to the author, for then I could run in and ask him what he meant. This is just your position, Christian! The Book will sometimes puzzle you, but the Divine Author, who must know His own meaning, is always ready to lead you into its meaning! He dwells in you, and shall be with you, and Christ Jesus said, “When He, the Spirit of Truth is come, He shall lead you into all Truth.”

But to understand the Word is not enough. We also need that He *makes us to feel its power*. How can we do this except through the Holy Spirit? “Your Word has quickened me,” O God, but it is only as *You*did quicken me through it. The Word of God is to be read literally, but, “it is the letter that kills.” Only “the Spirit gives life” and, excellent as are its statements, yet even they have no spiritual force in themselves! Unless the Holy Spirit shall fill them, even they shall become as wells without water and as clouds without rain. Have you not often found it so yourselves? I appeal now to your own experience. You have sometimes read a portion of Scripture and the page has seemed to glow, your heart has burned within you and you have said that the Word came home to you with power.

Just so, but it was the Holy Spirit who was bringing it home to your spirit in its true power and making it a sweet savor of life unto life to you! At other times, you may have read the very same page and painfully missed the sweetness which once you had tasted—and lost the lovely light that once flashed from it upon your mind’s eye!

Everything must depend upon the Spirit speaking through it, for even the light of the Word of God is, to a great extent, but moonlight. That is to say, it is a reflection of the light which streams from God, Himself, who is the one true source of light. If God shines not upon the Word when we read it, then the Word shines not back upon us, but becomes a dark Word to us, or as one says, “rather an obscuration than a Revelation, rather concealing God from us, than revealing Him to us.” Look up, reader! The next time the Book is in your hands, look up before you open it—and while your eyes are running down the page, look up and pray that God would shine upon it! And when the Chapter is finished and you put the Book away, take a minute, again, to look up and ask His blessing. If by reading the Scriptures we were only always reminded of the Holy Spirit. If we got no other good from the Scripture, itself, except the turning of our souls to think upon that Divine and blessed One, that would be, in itself, an inestimable blessing! Do read, then, thoughtfully remembering the great Author.

Our second precept is **—  
II.**READ AND MEDITATE.  
There is no exercise more out of fashion, nowadays, than meditation!

And yet, to use Brookes’ expression, “it is a soul-fattening duty.” The cattle crop the grass, but the nutrition comes from the chewing of the cud! Reading is the gathering together of our food, but meditation is the chewing of the cud, the digesting, the assimilating of the Truth of God! I quarry out the Truth when I read, but I smelt the ore and get the pure gold out of it when I meditate! Ruth gleaned, but afterwards she threshed. The reader is the gleaner, but he who meditates is the thresher, too. For lack of meditation the Truth of God runs by us and we miss and lose it. Our treacherous memory is like a sieve—and what we hear and what we read runs through it and leaves but little behind—and that little is often unprofitable to us by reason of our lack of diligence to get thoroughly at it. I often find it very profitable to get a text as a sweet morsel under my tongue in the morning and to keep the flavor of it, if I can, in my mouth all day!

I like to turn it over and over again in my mind, for any one text of the Scriptures you will find to be like the kaleidoscope. Turn it one way and you say, “What a fair Truth of God is this!” Turn it another way and you see the same Truth, but under how different an aspect! Turn it yet once more—and keep doing it all day—and you will be amazed and delighted to find in how many lights the same Truth will appear and what wonderful permutations and combinations you can find in it! When you have been doing this all day, you will be compelled to feel that there is an infinity about even one text, so that you can never completely comprehend it but find it still is beyond you! If you get a passage of Scripture given you, do not quickly give it up because you do not immediately seize its force and fullness. The manna which fell in the wilderness would not keep sweet beyond one day—if kept over unto the second, it bred worms and stank. But there was one portion of manna which was put into a golden pot and laid up in the Ark of the Covenant which never lost its sweetness and heavenly nutriment! And there is a way of keeping the precious portions of God’s Word that are given you today, in such a manner that you may go in the strength of it for forty days and continue to find fresh food in the same text day after day, and even month after month! But this is only to be done by *meditating* upon it. Our hymn has a fable in it when it says that the—

***“Spicy breezes***

***Blow soft over Ceylon’s isle.”***  
Voyagers who have been there, tell us that they have never smelt “the spicy breezes,” for the cinnamon yields no perfume till it is bruised and broken! And certainly God’s Word is exceedingly full of perfume, but not till it has been graciously bruised by reverent and loving meditation. You cannot get the sweetness and fragrance from it till you have smitten it again and again in the mortar of thought with the pestle of recollection. Meditate, then, upon these things!

“But how can we meditate,” asks one, “when we have so many things to think of?” But “one thing is necessary,” and it is necessary that the Christian should mediate upon the things of God! I know you must give your minds to many things and I cannot ask you not to do so, but whenever you have time to rest, then let your minds come back to the old home. The birds of the air are all day long picking up their food, but they go straight away to their roost at night, and so when the day’s business is over and the daily bread has been gained, fly to your nest and rest your soul in some precious portion of God’s Word. During the day, too, whenever you are freed from anxiety, let your mind dart upwards—and it will help you to do so if you take a text and make it as wings that enable you to fly to ponder heavenly things. Read and meditate!

The third rule for our guide should be **—  
III.**READ AND APPLY. What I mean is just this. Do not read the Bible as a Book for other people. Do not read it merely to say, “Yes, it is true. Very true. I believe *its Doctrines* to be the Revelation of the Infallible Mind of God, Himself.” But also endeavor in reading a *page* of the Scriptures, always to see how much it *belongs to you*. For some of you there is very little in the Word of God except threats. Pray God to help you to feel the solemnity even of the threats, for if you feel deeply the threats, now, you may be delivered from the tragic fulfillment of them by-and-by! If you are made to tremble under God’s *Word*, you may never be made to tremble under God’s *hand*. If you feel the wrath to come, now, you may never have to feel it in the next world. Ask God that His threats may drive you out of your sins and drive you to seek pardon in Christ. Then when you read descriptions of the human heart and the Fall, the corruption and the depravity of our nature, look and see yourselves as in a mirror and say of each man as you hear of his sin, “I am such a man as this was, and if I do not fall into precisely the same sin, yet the possibility and peril of it is in my heart and I could do so, but for God’s restraining Grace.” Take the very histories home to your heart and find a point in them, either of encouragement or of warning for yourselves. As for the Doctrines, remember that a Doctrine kills except as it is personally grasped and as you feel your interest in it. I have known some rejoice greatly in the Doctrine of Election who were never elected, and some who were very pleased with the Doctrine of Justification by Faith, but who had no faith by which to be justified! I have known of some, too, who gloried in Final Perseverance, but who, if they had finally persevered would certainly have been in Hell, for they were on the road there! It is one thing to know these Truths of God, and even to fight for them with the zeal and bitterness of a controversialist, but it is quite another thing to enjoy them as our own heritage and our portion forever! Ask the Lord to show you your interest in every Truth and do not be satisfied until you have an assured personal interest in them! Especially let this be so with *the promises*. “I will never leave you, nor forsake *you*!” Well, it is a very fine promise, but if it is read to me thus—“I will never leave *you*, nor forsake *you*,” what a transformed and glorified promise it then becomes! Stout old Martin Luther used to say, “All vital religion is in the personal and possessive pronouns.” Is it not so? “When *you* pass through the river I will be with *you*, the floods shall not overflow *you*!” Oh, truly, such a promise is as a cluster of Eshcol, but it is in Eshcol’s valley and I cannot reach it there! The promise applied is the cluster *brought to me just where I am* and I can receive it and delight myself in its luscious sweetness!  
Take care, none the less, to seek for the application of *precepts*. Some are always looking out for other people’s duty and are great judges and critics for what others ought to do. “Who are you that judges another man?” To his own master he stands or falls. See what precepts are binding upon *yourself* and then, as a child of God, be your feet swift to run in the way of His commandments. Read the Bible as a man reads his relation’s will—to find what legacy there is in it for himself. Do with the Bible as the sick man does with the doctor’s prescription—follow it by personally doing what it bids you. Ask God not to let your Bible be another man’s Bible, but your own Bible—God’s own mouth speaking to your soul of the things which make for your peace.  
Fourthly**—**and this is very hard work**—IV.** READ AND PRACTICE. If you do not do this, you are reading to your own condemnation! If you read, “He that believes on Him is not condemned,” if you believe not, then you are “condemned already,” because you have not believed on the Son of God! The Gospel is a very solemn thing to every man because if it is not a savor of life unto life, since it must always be a savor of some sort—it therefore becomes a savor of death unto death! Some seem as if they read the Bible in order to know how *not* to do—the more God commands, the more they will not obey! Though He draws them, they will not come to Him. And when He calls them, they will give Him no answer. A sorry, sorry heart is that which so uses God’s Word as to make it an aggravation of its sin! Our life ought to be**—**and if God’s Grace is much in it, it will be—a new translation of the Bible. Speak of bringing the Bible down into the vernacular! Well, this is it! The worldling’s Bible is the Christian. He never reads the Book, but he reads the disciple of Christ and he judges the Christian religion by the lives of its professors! The world will learn better and will more likely be brought to know Christ when the lives of Christians are better, and when the Bible of the Christian Life shall be more in accordance with the Bible of Christian Doctrine! God make us holy! Sanctify us, spirit, soul and body, and then we shall be made finely serviceable both to the Church and to the world! Read and practice! But we shall only be able to do this as God the Holy Spirit shall help us. Then let us**—  
V.**READ AND PRAY. This is, perhaps, coming back almost to the first point, that is, read with dependence on the Holy Spirit. But I desire to impress a rather different thought upon your souls. Martin Luther says he learned more by prayer than he ever learned in any other way. A stone-breaker was one day on his knees breaking flints when a minister came by and said, “I see you are doing what I often do, breaking up hard things.” “Yes, Sir,” was the answer, “and I am doing it in the way in which you must do it, on my knees.”  
A passage in Scripture will often open up when you pray over it, which will defy mere criticism or looking to expositors. You put the text into action and then you comprehend it. I suppose if a man were studying anatomy and had never seen the body in life, he might not be able to know what a certain ligature was for, or such a bone—but if he could set that body moving, then he might understand the use of all the different parts, supposing he were able to see them. So when a text of Scripture lies, as it were, dead before us, we may not be able to understand it—but when by prayer the text grows into life and we set it in motion—we comprehend it at once! We may hammer away at a text sometimes in meditation and strike it again and again, and yet it may not yield to us, but we cry to God, and immediately the text opens and we see concealed in it wondrous treasures of Divine Wisdom and of Grace!  
But the prayer should not be merely that we may understand the text. I think we should pray over every passage in order that we may be enabled to get out of it what God would impart to us. A text is like a treasure chest which is locked—and prayer is the key to open it—and then we get God’s treasure! The text is God’s letter, full of loving words, but prayer must break the seal. When reading goes with praying and praying goes with reading, then a man goes on both his feet, the bird flies with both his wings! To only read is unprofitable—to pray without reading is not so soul-enriching, but when the two run together, they are like the horses pulling the chariot and they speed along right merrily!  
Read and pray Christian! But take care you do not read without watering your reading with your prayer. Paul may plant and Apollos may water, but God gives the increase! And even in this blessed Book, Moses may plant and David may water, but prayer must cry to God or else the increase will not come! Now in the sixth place—  
**VI.**READ AND TRY. Try what you hear. Try what you profess. Try what you read. Goldsmiths keep bottles of acid by which they test everything that is offered them for sale, to see whether it is gold or merely tinsel. And the Christian should keep God’s Word near at hand and treasured in the soul, to test thereby all that he hears. “Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.” Many hearers believe all that is said because of the person who declares it to them. This is not according to Christ’s mind! We ought to receive nothing as vital religious truth except it is sent us from above! And however much we may respect the pastor or the teacher, we must not so give up our judgment to any man as to receive his teaching merely because he chooses to utter it. Bring every form of the Truth of God that is delivered to you, though it may glitter with oratory and seem reasonable and proper, to the test of Scripture! It is very difficult, however, to get men to do this. They seem to fancy that you have sinister motives the moment you tell them so. There is a conservatism in the nature of us all with regard to our religious faith which is right enough if it were balanced by another principle. To hold fast what I know is right, but to be willing to receive or to do anything that God would teach me to receive or do is more right still. I must know what it is to which I hold fast, or else I may be injuring myself by the fixedness by which I stand to what I have learned. The woman of Samaria said, “Our fathers worshipped God in this mountain.” That is the argument of numbers of persons. “Our fathers did so-and-so.” This would be a capital argument supposing that our fathers were always right, but a very absurd argument supposing that they were wrong! I hope we are not like that early Saxon who asked where his father and all his ancestors had gone— and when he was told they were no doubt lost—he replied to the missionary that he would rather go where they were than become a Christian and be separated from them!  
There are some who seem to be of this blood and boast in it. Their ancestors believed this or that, and they desire to follow them. Many there are who profess doctrines they have never learned and which they do not really know and grasp. They have the shell but they never reach the kernel. Is not this the case with many of us here tonight? If you even have a Doctrine of God in your mind, find out the text or texts which prove it! If there should happen to be other texts which seem to point the other way, do not cut and pare any of them down, but accept all and wait until the Spirit reveals wherein they really agree! Scripture is not to fit your opinions, but your opinions to conform to the blessed Word! There is a fable of a foolish gardener who had a tree that would persist in growing oddly. He did not like to restrain it and, therefore, had a wall built for it to grow upon. I think the man was far wiser who let the wall alone and changed the tree! There are people who are very apt to alter Scripture to suit their views, pulling out one word until it is never so long, dropping another, or completely changing the meaning of it, though everybody knows that it is the forced and unnatural one, or else tinkering up a text till it will fit some crank or peculiarity of theirs. This is not reverence! It is not treating God’s Word as it ought to be treated. God’s Word is no nose of wax to be shaped according to our fancies**—**or anybody else’s. Though nobody else should say what he means, God always does. He would not have us talk in language that is capable of half-a-dozen meanings—and He does not talk so Himself. He speaks so plainly that if we are candid and desire to know what He means, it is not difficult to do so, especially if we go to Him for it. Let us, then, take this advice and try the spirits whether they are of God and, like the noble Bereans, search the Scriptures whether these things are so—and so read the Scriptures and try what we read.  
And, lastly, the text is significantly followed by, “Give attendance to reading, to exhortation.” I will, therefore, say in the seventh place—  
**VII.**READ AND TELL OUT*what you read*.  
This will be an effectual way of imprinting it upon your own memory. When you read a passage of Scripture and have any enjoyment therein, go to your sick neighbor and tell what God has said to you. If you meet an ignorant one when you know somewhat of the things of God, tell them to him. Nations are enriched by the interchanges of commerce and so are Christians! We each have something that another has not and he has something that we need. Let us trade together. “Then they that feared the Lord spoke often, one to another,” and it is very good that they should do so. Our talk is, alas, too often very frivolous—there is much chaff but little wheat. If we would but talk more of Scripture and establish it as a fashion among Christians, we would grow much faster and stronger, and be wiser in the things the Kingdom.  
I know one who, when he was a young man, read all day until evening came and then went every evening and preached. The preaching in the evening of what he had read during the day stamped and fastened the Truths of God upon his own mind and made them unspeakably profitable to him! When you have read for an hour or so, spend another halfhour in communicating to a child, or a servant, or a seeker, or to some bed-ridden saint the thing that has enriched and helped you.  
How I would press this upon you, everyone, my dear Brothers and Sisters, who are members of this Church. We owe very many of the conversions that have been worked here to the personal exertions of our Church members. God owns *our*ministry, but He also owns *yours*. It is to our delight at Church Meetings that when converts come, they often have to say that the Word preached from the pulpit was blessed to them, and yet I think that almost as often they say it was the Word of God spoken in some of the classes, or in the pews—for not a few of you have been spiritual parents to strangers who have dropped in! Continue doing this! Let our congregation be full of these spiritual sharpshooters who shall pick out, each man his man, and who shall fire with the gun of the Gospel directly at each individual!  
Of course, if you know nothing, you can tell nothing. If you have never read anything which by the blessing of God has been brought powerfully home to your own soul, do not attempt to speak to others. There must be something begun in your own soul, first, but if you have been brought into personal contact with Divine Truth, let it be the first impulse of your soul to—  
***“Tell to the sinners round  
What a dear Savior you have found.”***  
The woman of Samaria left her water pot and went into the city, and said, “Come, see a Man that told me all things that ever I did; is not this the Christ?” My Beloved, let us do the same! I do not know a living thing, even a wild flower in the hedge, but seeks to prolong the existence of its species. The foxglove sheds its seeds all down the banks—no matter how tiny the flower may be, it seeks to produce its like. So you, Christian, who are the noblest work of God, should not be satisfied unless your life is a continually spreading around of the Truth of God which has been made vital to you and will be new life to others!  
What a grand crown and close to this night’s service it would be could we be used of God to bring a soul from darkness to light, and from slavery to liberty! We cannot do it of ourselves, but God may help us. Would you not walk a mile, yes, many miles to do it? Well, you need not walk miles! It is quite possible that the very person who, as it were by chance, is sitting next to you tonight, is the person whom God has predestinated to be blessed and to be blessed *by you*! At any rate, try it. There shall be nothing lost, there may be much gained. Why has God taught the Truth to you? For your own good? Yes, but you are not to be selfish! Be you, at least, as unselfish as the three lepers who, when they found the Syrian camp deserted and an abundance of gold and silver, said, “We do not well to stay here. This is a day of good tidings; let us go in the city and tell.” Dear Friend, you do not well if you read only for yourself! Having read, go out and tell what you have read, and the blessing shall come into your own bosom, even if it goes not out to others! And you shall be blessed and God shall be glorified!  
I would press this, in conclusion, upon some of you who are not converted. Often men have come to Christ by reading the Scriptures. Attend upon a preached ministry, but do also read and search the Scriptures. I recollect when I was seeking Christ. I read Doddridge’s *Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul*, but the book muddled me much, though it is a very admirable book in some respects. Then I read Alleine’s *Alarm*, and then Baxter’s *Call to the Unconverted*, and all these only plowed my heart more and more. But the comfort which I got came out of God’s Word. It was from that precious text, “Look unto Me and be you saved, all you ends of the earth.” Then I got light! Turn you away from all human books to the Divine Book, and from all human helpers to Him upon whom help is laid and who is mighty to save! Read God’s love in the Book of Atonement upon the Cross, written in the crimson lines of the Savior’s flowing blood and streaming veins! Look to Christ and trust in Him, and you shall live! May God bless you for Jesus’ sake.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:**Psa 119:105-115***.***

**Verse 105.***Your Word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.* We are walkers through the city of this world and we are often called to go out into its darkness—let us never venture there without the lightgiving Word of God, lest we slip. Each man should use the Word of God personally, practically and habitually, that he may see his way and see what lies in it. When darkness settles down upon all around me, the Word of the Lord, like a flaming torch, reveals my way. We would not know the way, or how to walk in it, if Scripture, like a blazing flambeau, did not reveal it. It is a lamp by night, a light by day and a delight at all times! David guided his own steps by it and also saw the difficulties of his road by its beams.

**106.***I have sworn, and I will perform it, that I will keep Your righteous judgments.* Under the influence of the clear light of knowledge he had firmly made up his mind and solemnly declared his resolve in the sight of God. Perhaps mistrusting his own fickle mind, he had pledged himself in sacred form to abide faithful to the determinations and decisions of his God. Whatever path might open before him, he was sworn to follow that only upon which the lamp of the Word of God was shining.

**107.***I am afflicted very much: quicken me, O LORD, according unto Your Word.*According to the last verse he had been sworn in as a soldier of the Lord, and in this next verse he is called to suffer hardness in that capacity. Our service of the Lord does not screen us from trial, but rather secures it for us! The Psalmist was a consecrated man and yet a chastened man. Quickening is the best remedy for tribulation—the soul is raised above the thought of present distress and is filled with that holy joy which attends all vigorous spiritual life—and so the affliction grows light.

**108.***Accept, I beseech You, the freewill offerings of my mouth, O LORD, and teach me Your judgments.* He offers prayer, praise, confession and testimony**—**these, presented with his voice in the presence of an audience—were the tribute of his mouth unto Jehovah. He trembles lest these should be so ill-uttered as to displease the Lord and, therefore, he implores acceptance. When we render unto the Lord our best, we become all the more concerned to do better. If, indeed, the Lord shall accept us, we then desire to be further instructed that we may be still more acceptable.

**109.***My soul is continually in my hand: yet do I not forget Your Law.* He lived in the midst of danger. He had to be always fighting for existence**—** hiding in caves, or contending in battles. This is a very uncomfortable and trying state of affairs, and men are apt to think any expedient justifiable by which they can end such a condition. But David did not turn aside to find safety in sin. They say that all things are fair in love and war—but the holy man thought not so—while he carried his life in his hand, he also carried the Law of God in his heart!

**110.***The wicked have laid a snare for me: yet I erred not from Your precepts.* Spiritual life is the scene of constant danger—the Believer lives with his life in his hand, and meanwhile all seem plotting to take it from him—by cunning if they cannot by violence. We shall not find it an easy thing to live the life of the faithful. Wicked spirits and wicked men will leave no stone unturned for our destruction. David was not snared, for he kept his eyes open and kept near his God.

**111.***Your testimonies have I taken as an heritage forever: for they are the rejoicing of my heart.* He chose them as his lot, his portion, his estate. And what is more, he laid hold upon them and made them so—taking them into possession and enjoyment. David’s choice is our choice. If we might have our desire, we would desire to keep the commands of God perfectly. To know the Doctrines, to enjoy the promises, to practice the commands—be this a kingdom large enough for me!

**112.***I have inclined my heart to perform Your statutes always, even unto the end.* He was not half inclined to virtue, but heartily inclined to it. His whole heart was bent on practical, persevering godliness. He was resolved to keep the statutes of the Lord with all his heart, throughout all his time, without erring or ending! He made it his end to keep the Law unto the end and that without end.

**113.***I hate vain thoughts: but Your Law do I love.* The opposite of the fixed and Infallible Law of God is the wavering, changing opinion of men! David had an utter contempt and abhorrence for this—all his reverence and regard went to the sure Word of Testimony. In proportion to his love to the Law was his hate of man’s inventions. The thoughts of men are vanity, but the thoughts of God are Truth.

**114.***You are my hiding place and my shield: I hope in Your Word.*To his God he ran for shelter from vain thoughts! There he hid himself away from their tormenting intrusions and in solemn silence of the soul he found God to be his hiding place. When called into the world, if he could not be alone with God as his hiding place, he could have the Lord with him as his shield—and by this means he could ward off the attacks of wicked suggestions.

**115.***Depart from me, you evildoers: for I will keep the commandments of my God.*If we fly to God from vain thoughts, much more shall we avoid vain men. Evildoers make evil counselors. Those who say unto God, “Depart from us,” ought to hear the immediate echo of their words from the mouths of God’s children, “Depart from us. We cannot eat bread with traitors.”

—Adapted from *The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307  
**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.** Sermon #3055 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

**÷1Ti 5.22**

ACCOMPLICES IN SIN  
NO. 3055

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, AUGUST 29, 1907.

***DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORD’S-DAY EVENING, MARCH 30, 1873.**

***“Neither be partaker of other men’s sins.”***1Ti 5:22***.***

WE have all abundant reason to look at home and see about our own sins. Nothing can be more absurd than for a man to take his hoe and weed everybody else’s garden—and leave all the thorns and thistles to flourish on his own plot. The old parable of the man who carried two bags, one behind and one in front, and who put other people’s faults into the one in front, and his own into the one at his back, is a very correct representation of the folly of those who have their eyes wide open to see the faults of their neighbors, but are totally blind to their own imperfections. If, as our proverb puts it, “Charity begins at home,” so should criticism—and criticism concerning character had better stop there. There is so much dirty linen in our own house needing to be washed that none of us need to take in our neighbor’s washing. “Mind your own business,” is a command that might have been spoken by Solomon, himself, and the Apostle Paul was inspired to write to the Thessalonians, “Study to be quiet and to do your own business.” And he and Peter very sternly condemned those who were “busybodies in other men’s matters.”

So it is not my intention to bid any of you to cease to look to your own affairs, but at the same time, I want to remind you that we cannot, in this world, live altogether to ourselves. He who is most bent upon minding his own business cannot help knowing that his next door neighbor has something to do with his garden. Even if he looks diligently after his own plot, thistle seeds from the left and the right may blow over into his garden and trouble will come to him from the very fact that he has neighbors! Our dwelling places in this life are not all detached— many of us have to live on streets and if our neighbor’s house is on fire, it is not at all unlikely that the flames may spread to our dwelling. Let us never be so concerned about our own interest as to be selfish, for even if we try to be wholly wrapped up in ourselves, we shall be compelled to notice the actions of others with whom we are more or less intimately linked—whether we wish to do so, or not. Hence, the message of the text is necessary, not to take us away from our own duty, but to help us to make sure that we are not “partakers of other men’s sins.”

The connection in which this text stands must be noticed. Timothy was exhorted by Paul to “lay hands suddenly on no man.” There were certain upstarts who wrongly thought that they could preach—and there were others who thought that they could rule in the churches. These persons probably gained a few or many partisans to support their claims. There were some of their relatives in the church who thought a great deal of their sons, or brothers, or uncles, or cousins, or there were friends who heard some man speak on a certain occasion with considerable fluency and, being unwise, they judged him to be man of master-mind and would have put him into the front rank of the army at once if the power to do so had rested with them! Paul tells Timothy, whom he had sent to exercise a general oversight over the officers and members of the church, not to be in a hurry to lay his hands upon these men, so as to endorse their claim, but to let them wait awhile until they were tried and tested—because if he allowed them to take office in the church and they committed faults or follies, he would be responsible for them and everybody would say, “We wonder that Timothy should have sent out such men as these.” So he was bid to be cautious lest he should become, in any way, “a partaker of other men’s sins.” None of us are exactly in Timothy’s position so we are not likely to fall into the fault against which Paul warned him—at least not in precisely the same form. Yet the text has a message to us and we may say to one another, “Be not partakers of other men’s sins.”

**I.**I shall first try to show you HOW WE CAN BE PARTAKERS OF OTHER MEN’S SINS and, in doing that, I am afraid that the various ways in which we can do this will seem to be very many. And that if I am not very careful, you will think that my sermon is like Ezekiel’s valley of vision in which the bones were “very many” and “very dry.” I will not be more wordy than I can help, but at the same time I must deal with the subject somewhat in detail.

As to how we can become accomplices in other people’s sins— *the preacher must first say to himself that he will be such a man if he is not true to his trust.* If he shall teach false Doctrine, or if, teaching the true Doctrines, he shall teach them erroneously—if he shall keep back unpalatable Truths of God—if he shall allow sin to pass without reproof—if he shall see a great deficiency of spiritual life and service and not point it out—if, in brief, he shall be an unfaithful servant of Christ and his hearers shall thereby be kept in a low state of Divine Grace, inconsistent with their profession—and the unconverted shall be hindered from coming to Christ, he will become a partaker in other men’s sins. Indeed, I know of no man who is more likely to fall into the fault indicated in the text than a minister of the Gospel is! Oh, what Grace we need and what help from on high lest if we fail in faithfulness to God and our hearers, the doom of souls should be laid at our door and we should be partakers of other men’s sins! Brothers and Sisters, pray for us that this may not be our unhappy lot—

***“‘Tis not a cause of small import  
The pastor’s care demands,  
But what might fill an angel’s heart  
And filled a Saviors hands!  
They watch for souls for which the Lord  
Did heavenly bliss forego,  
For souls which must forever live  
In raptures or in woe.  
May they that Jesus, whom they preach,  
Their own Redeemer see—  
And watch YOU daily over their souls,  
That they may watch for THEE.”***

That piece is especially intended for myself and my Brother ministers. The rest of my discourse will be for you as well as myself. So next I must remind you that we can, all of us, be partakers of other men’s sins *by willfully joining with them in any act of sin and doing as they do—*like those sinners mentioned by Solomon in the Book of Proverbs, who said, “Cast in your lot among us; let us all have one purse.” We must have nothing to do with such men! God forbid that we should! If we sin alone, it is bad enough, but if we sin in company, we have not only to answer for our own sins, but also for the sins of others, at least in part. If hand joins with hand in sin, there is a multiplication of its guilt, for each man who has helped to lead a fellow creature into iniquity will have his own transgression increased by the transgression of that other sinner. By their combination, the two will become capable of even greater guilt than they would have committed individually. God save us all from being accomplices in the sins of others by uniting with them in their sinful acts and deeds!

Further, we may be partakers in other men’s sins *by tempting them to sin.*This is a most hateful thing and makes the man who practices it to become the devil’s most devoted drudge, servant and slave. I have known such tempters of others—old men who, from their youth up, had sinned in such a shameful way that their very looks were full of lechery. There was a leer about their eyes that was almost enough to destroy all chastity that came beneath their glance. And their speech was full of the *double entendre,*insinuations and innuendoes which were almost worse than open profanity. I have known one such walking mass of putrefaction defile a whole parish—and when I have seen a boy walking with such a demon incarnate, or sitting down with him in the public-house, I knew that the boy’s character would be ruined if that vile doctor in devilry could only instruct him in the vices with which he is, himself, so shamefully familiar. There are such fiends in London and we could almost wish to have them all buried straightaway, for they are Satan’s servants spreading wickedness all around them! I do not suppose I am addressing one such dreadful creature, yet I know that some great sinners of that sort do come within these walls and they will, of course, be very angry because of my allusion to them. Yet I never knew a thief who was fond of a policemen and I do not expect or wish to secure the approval of scoundrels whose evil character I am exposing. If, Sir, I have described you and you will not repent of your sin, I tell you that the hottest place in Hell is reserved for you, for you have led young men to the alehouse and taught them to drink the devil’s drugs and to repeat your foul blasphemies and to imitate your scandalous lasciviousness! Yet before it is too late, I beseech you to repent of your sin, that it may be blotted out by the precious blood of Jesus Christ, God’s Son, which cleanses from all sin! But if not, “other men’s sins” will cry out against you for judgment at the bar of the Almighty! I solemnly charge all of you who have not committed this iniquity, to never do so—take care that you never say a word which might stain the innocence of a child’s mind and that you never let fall an expression which might, in any way, be the means of leading another person into sin—for it is an easy thing for us to become partakers of other men’s sins by tempting them to commit iniquity.

If there is any evil worse than that, I think it is that of *employing others to sin.*It was one of the basest parts of David’s great sin that when he wanted to have Uriah killed, he did not slay him, himself, but got Joab to expose him in a position where he was certain to be killed. It is horrible when a man is determined to be dishonest, yet gets someone else to commit the sin for him! It is a shameful thing that there are professedly “religious” employers who try to get their young men to say across the counter what they know is not according to truth. Are there not some of these so-called “Christian” employers who want young men who are not “too particular”? Do I not hear, every now and then, of young men who have been found to be too scrupulous and who have been told that they had better get situations somewhere else? They objected to describe the goods as their employer wanted them to do because they knew it would be a lie. They were told, “It is the custom in the trade and, therefore, must be so here.” That is to say because other persons were liars and cheats, these young men must be knaves—and their master must make money by their lying to his customers! Now, if I meant to thieve or deceive, I would do it myself—I would not employ young men and women, or old ones either, to lie and cheat for me! If any of you have done so, I pray God that He may lead you to repent of such abominable wickedness, for the sin is not one-half theirs and the other half yours—it is partly theirs, but it is far more yours if they are doing wrong at your bidding! God save us all from being “partakers of other men’s sins” in that way!

Some commit this great crime *by driving other men into sin*by the fears which they have inspired, or by oppressing them in their wages, or by setting them to do what must involve them in sin. I remember the case of a man who was employed where it was well known that some of the parcels which he collected on his way and carried to their destination would never be booked by him, but the price paid for the carriage would be secretly dropped into his own pocket. The man’s wages were so small that nobody, unless an idiot, ever believed that he lived on them, so, tacitly, the understanding was that the man would be sure to pilfer on his own account, so his wages were cut down below the point at which he could earn an honest living. I fear that there are many men who are dishonest for this reason—I will not excuse them, but I hope that if they are ever sent to prison for stealing, their masters will be sent with them, for they are equally guilty!

Yet again, we may become partakers of the sins of others *by a misuse of our position over them.*This is especially the case with parents. When a father is a man of loose habits, if his son follows his evil example, who is to blame? If a drunken father sees his child become a drunkard, whose fault is it? If he is a swearer and his son uses profane language, who taught the boy those oaths? Is not the guilt of that swearing largely the father’s? “Oh!” some of you say, “we would not teach our children either drunkenness or profanity.” Yet you are not, yourselves, Christians—you may be moral and truthful, and so on, but you are not Christians. And if your children are not converted, will they not say, “Our father was never converted, so why should we be?” “But we always take them to a place of worship.” I know you do. And your children say, “Father goes to a place of worship, but he does not believe in Christ and he never prays.” So if they grow up in the same way, who is to blame? You say that you trust they will not do so—then ask the Lord to make you a Christian, for then it will be more likely that your children will also be Christians. When you blame your children for wrongdoing, you ought to blame yourselves even more, for after all, what are they doing but what you yourself are doing?

Plato, the philosopher, one day saw a boy in the street behaving in a very shameful manner, so he walked straight into the house where the boy’s father lived and began to beat him. When he said to Plato, “Why do you beat me?” the philosopher replied, “I found your boy doing wrong. I did not beat *him*, but I beat you, for he must have learned it from you, or else it was your fault because you did not exercise proper discipline upon him at home.” Have you never felt, when you have seen the faults of your own children, that you ought to lay the rod on your own back because, in some way or other, you were an accomplice in your children’s sins? How much of the ruin of many children’s souls lies at their parents’ door! How sad it is that in many cases the influence of the mother and father is damning to their children! Men and women who have boys and girls at home who are very dear to you—can you bear the thought that you may, one day, have to say, “Our unchristian example has ruined our own children”?

“Oh, but we are members of the Church,” say some. Yes, I know you are, yet I speak to you as well as to others, for there are some of you who are bringing up your children in an improper manner. I do not see how they can be expected to love religion when they see your own household ordered so badly, or not ordered at all. The professor of religion who does not live consistently with his profession does more injury to the cause of Christ than a non-professor does! There are some who hang out the sign of, “The Angel,” but the devil keeps the inn! Someone has truly said that many a man’s house is like Noah’s ark in that it is pitched within and without with pitch. There is pitch in the dining-room—gluttony and drunkenness. And pitch in the bed-chamber—lasciviousness and wantonness. Pitch in the drawing-room—talk which is not even fit for the stables. And pitch in the shop, for much that is “dirty” goes on there. How can anyone expect good children to come out of such a house as that? May none of us, like Eli, be accomplices in our children’s sins through neglecting to rebuke them, or like David, through our evil example leading them into sin! On the contrary, let us pray for them, as Abraham cried to the Lord, “O that Ishmael might live before You!” I like to present to God the petitions and pleas which are so well worded in that hymn in “*Our Own Hymn Book*” which is attributed to Rowland Hill—

***“You, who a tender Parent are,  
Regard a parent’s plea—  
Our offspring, with an anxious heart,  
We now commend to Thee.  
Our children are our greatest care,  
A charge which You have given—  
In all Your Graces let them share,  
And all the joys of Heaven.  
If a centurion could succeed,  
Who for his servant cried,  
Will You refuse to hear us plead  
For those so near allied?  
On us You have bestowed Your Grace,  
Be to our children kind—  
Among Your saints give them a place,  
And leave not one behind.”***

The injunction of the text of course applies, in a measure, to the teacher of a class as well as to the parent of a family. If the teacher is inconsistent and his scholars imitate him, the guilt of their wrong-doing will, at least in part, rest upon the teacher. The same principle applies to all persons who are in positions of influence in the land. If I were preaching to the House of Commons and the House of Lords, I would probably have to say some things which they would not wish to hear again. Certain “honorable gentlemen” and “noble lords” talk very glibly about the necessity for the nation to be religious, yet their lives are not remarkably religious, so their talk is all hypocritical and great sin lies at their door! God will certainly punish princes and so-called “nobles” if their example is not such as the common people can safely follow.

But even though we may not be of royal or exalted rank, all of us will become “partakers of other men’s sins” *if we set them bad examples.* If they can quote us as having done certain wrong things which they have imitated, we must share in the guilt of their sin. Yet it is always a bad thing to follow a bad example. If I see anyone’s example to be bad, it ought not to be a temptation to me—and I am a partaker of that man’s sins if, knowing that he has done amiss—I also do amiss simply because he has done so first. If I know that his course is wrong, I ought to shun the rock on which his boat has been wrecked.

We can also be “partakers of other men’s sins” *by countenancing them* and there are many ways in which that may be done—for instance, by associating with ungodly men as though we did not think there was much harm in them. And worst of all, by laughing at and with them when their mirth is not pure fun. I fear that many a wicked man has been hardened in his sin because a professing Christian has laughed at his filthy jests.

We may also be “partakers of other men’s sins” *by joining a church that holds unscriptural doctrines, or that does not act according to Apostolic precedent.* Some people say, “We belong to such-and-such a church, but we don’t approve of its teaching or its practice.” What? You belong to it and yet you do not approve of its principles? Out of your own mouth you are condemned! If I unite with a church whose creed and catechism I do not believe, and whose ordinances I do not practice, I am guilty of my own share in all the error that is there! It is no use for me to say, “I am trying to undo the mischief”—I have no business to be there! If I join a pirate’s crew, I shall be responsible for all that is done by the whole crew. I have no business to be on that vessel at all and I must get off it at the first opportunity, or even fling myself into the sea rather than have a share in the pirates’ wrongdoing!

But supposing you have joined a church whose doctrines are Scriptural, you may be “partakers of other men’s sins” if the discipline of the church is not carried out as it should be. If we know that members are living in gross sin and do not deal with them either by way of censure or excommunication in accordance with the teaching of Christ and His Apostles, we become accomplices in their sin. I often tremble about this matter, for it is no easy task where we count our members by the thousands. But may we never wink at sin, either in ourselves or in others! May you all, Beloved, exercise a jealous oversight over one another and so help to keep one another right! And let each one pray Charles Wesley’s prayer which we have often sung—

***“Quick as the apple of an eye,  
O God, my conscience make!  
Awake, my Soul, when sin is near,  
And keep it still awake.”***

Further, we may be “partakers of other men’s sins” *by not rebuking them for sinning* if it is our duty to do so, or *by not doing all we can towards their conversion.*For instance, by living in a certain neighborhood and never trying to bring the Gospel to the people in that neighborhood, or by not maintaining our consistent Christian walk as the separated people of God. In brief, let each one sing, from the heart, the rest of that hymn from which I began to quote just now—

***“I need a principle within  
Of jealous godly fear.  
A sensibility of sin,  
A pain to feel it near!  
I need the first approach to feel  
Of pride, or fond desire  
To catch the wandering of my will,  
And quench the kindling fire.  
That I from You no more may part,  
No more Your goodness grieve—  
The filial awe, the fleshy heart,  
The tender conscience give.  
If to the right or left I stray,  
That moment, Lord, reprove  
And let me weep my life away,  
For having grieved Your love.  
Oh may the least omission pain  
My well-instructed soul  
And drive me to the blood again,  
Which makes the wounded whole!”***

**II.**I must not say more upon this part of the subject lest I should weary you. So I pass on to ask, in the second place, WHY SHOULD WE SEEK TO AVOID BEING PARTAKERS OF OTHER MEN’S SINS?

This will be a sufficient answer— *Because we have more than enough sins of our own and cannot also carry other people’s. And also because if we are partakers in their sins, we shall also partake in their plagues.*And *because we do other men an injury by being accomplices with them—we steel and harden them in their sins*. The weightiest reason of all is this— we should not be “partakers of other men’s sins” *because, by so doing, we should grieve our holy and gracious God—*and no true lover of Christ ought ever to do that! Remember what Paul wrote to the saints at Ephesus, “Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby you are sealed unto the day of redemption.”

**III.**My next question is—HOW CAN WE AVOID BEING PARTAKERS IN OTHER MEN’S SINS?  
And I reply—Only by the help of God’s Spirit! First, *be very jealous about other men’s sins.* I wish all parents acted as wisely as Job did concerning his children. They went to one another’s houses and feasted, so Job “rose up early in the morning and offered burnt offerings according to the number of them all: for Job said, It may be that my sons have sinned and cursed God in their hearts.” O parents, do likewise, for that is the way to keep yourselves from participation in your children’s sins!  
Next to being thus jealous with a holy jealousy,*be always on the watch lest you should be “partakers in other men’s sins.”* The man who wants to avoid certain diseases will take care not to go to an infected house. So, go not where sinners go, lest you should catch the infection of their sin. Remember how careful Abraham was not to take anything from the King of Sodom, “from a thread even to a shoelace,” even though it was his lawful share of the spoils of war. Be you equally careful concerning even the least sin.  
The next way to keep from being an accomplice in sin is *by prayer.*Augustine used to offer a short prayer which I commend to you all, “O Lord, save me from my other men’s sins!” Put this down among your other confessions, “O Lord, I confess unto you my other men’s sins! I mourn over my other men’s sins, I repent of my other men’s sins, I grieve on account of my participation in other men’s sins.” This will be a good way of keeping from committing them.  
I think I had better close by saying that I do not think we have, any of us, escaped from the meshes of this sermon. If we have done so, it is either my fault or the fault of our own consciences. I have tried to fire red-hot shot in all directions, not omitting myself—and most of us have felt that there was a shot specially meant for us. What had we better do then? I will call to your minds a verse which we often sing and which we will again sing almost immediately—  
***“There is a Fountain filled with blood,  
Drawn from Immanuel’s veins—  
And sinners, plunged beneath that flood, Lose all their guilty stains!”***  
We are all stained with at least splashes from other men’s sins as well as our own, so let us all go to the Fountain and wash. Let us renew our faith in the precious blood of Jesus, for if we never had any faith in it before, may God graciously grant it to us now! If we had rebelled against the Queen and had been at last subdued by force—and if there had been an Act of Oblivion passed for all who wished to claim an interest in it— perhaps some would say to themselves, “We do not know that we took any great part in the rebellion, yet it may be that we did—and the safest thing for us all to do is to put down our names and so secure the benefit of the Act of Oblivion.” So I, as one of the guilty ones, confessing that it is so, desire to say to the great King, “My Lord, I am guilty of sins of my own, sins of my children, sins of my servants, sins of my neighbors, sins of my Church and sins of my congregation—but You have said, ‘I, even I, am He that blots out your transgressions for My own sake, and will not remember your sins.’ You have promised to blot out all sin from those who believe in Jesus Christ, Your Son. Lord, I believe in Him, so I claim the benefit of that Act of Oblivion.”  
Dear Hearer, will not you say the same? Will you not now obey that Divine command, “Look unto Me, and be you saved, all the ends of the earth”? Though you have gone to the ends of the earth, yet God says to you, “Look unto Me, and be you saved.” Look! *Look!*LOOK! It is little that you have to do! Indeed, it is nothing that *you*have to do, for God gives you Grace to do all that He requires of you. So trust in Him, rest in Him—the Lord help you to do so and then, whatever your sins may have been, though they may have been “as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow.” Though they may have been “red like crimson, they shall be as wool.” God bless you and save you, for His name’s sake! Amen.  
Now let us all sing the verse that I quoted just now—  
***“There is a Fountain filled with blood,  
Drawn from Immanuel’s veins—  
And sinners, plunged beneath that flood, Lose all their guilty stains”—***  
and let all who can sing it from the heart join in the well-known chorus— ***“I do believe, I will believe,  
That Jesus died for me!  
That, on the Cross, He shed His blood From sin to set me free!”***

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: *Psalms 73.***

You may have noticed that the 73rd Psalm and the 37th Psalm are on the same subject. It will help you to recall this fact if you remember that the figures are the same, only reversed.

**Verse 1.** *Truly God is good to Israel.*Settle that matter in your hearts. Whatever doubts may distress or disturb your mind, fix this point as certain— “Truly God is good to Israel.”

**1, 2.***Even to such as are of a clean heart. But as for me, my feet were almost gone; my steps had well near slipped.* He was a good man, one of the leaders in Israel, yet he had to make this confession, “My feet were almost gone; my steps had well near slipped.”

**3, 4.***For I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked. For there are no bands in their death: but their strength is firm.* Many of them have so stifled conscience that it does not trouble them even in that last dread hour—and they pass into eternity with blinded eyes, self-deluded to the last.

**5.***They are not in trouble as other men; neither are they plagued like other men.* They are not the children of God—and that is why they escape the rod of God. The rod is not for strangers, but for the children of the family. Yet the Psalmist began to envy these people because, said he, “they are not in trouble as other men; neither are they plagued like other men.”

**6.***Therefore pride compasses them about as a chain.*They wear it gladly and think it to be an ornament.  
**6-9.***Violence covers them as a garment. Their eyes stand out with fatness: they have more than heart could wish. They are corrupt, and speak wickedly concerning oppression: they speak loftily. They set their mouth against the heavens.* As though they would blow them down, as the wind blows the clouds that are full of rain.  
**9.***And their tongue walks through the earth.*Like the ravening lion of the pit, seeking characters that they may destroy or devour. There is no end to the mischief that such people can do. If they are not in trouble, they make much trouble for other people and while they set themselves on so high a pinnacle, they are mean enough to slander the characters of the good.  
**10.***Therefore his people return here: and waters of a full cup are wrung out to them.* They have to drink of the bitter cup again and again—it seems to them to be always full. And the wicked have their full cup— filled, as it seems, with the juice from the very finest fruit!

**11.***And they say, How does God know? And is there knowledge in the Most High?*They admit that there is a God, but they ask, “What does He know, and how does He know?”

**12-14.***Behold, these are the ungodly who prosper in the world; they increase in riches. Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocence. For all day long have I been plagued, and chastened every morning.*It was one of his greatest sorrows that the more holy he was, the more troubled he seemed to be—and the more closely he endeavored to follow his God, the more it seemed as if God only frowned upon him. Yet the Psalmist’s was no exceptional case, of which there is only one in all history—there have been many such and there are many such to this day!

**15.***If I say, I will speak thus; behold, I should offend against the generation of your children.*You know that some people have made up a kind of proverb like this, “If you think it, you may as well speak it.” But it is not so. Bad thoughts should never be spoken! If a man has a bottle of whisky in his house, or in his pocket, that is bad enough, but if the cork is never taken out, it will do no very great hurt to anybody. So if a man has evil thoughts but does not utter them, the mischief will not be so great as if he were to make them known to others.

**16.***When I thought to know this, it was too painful for me.* He could not bear the thought of offending God’s children, but at the same time, the problem itself, concerning the righteous and the wicked, until he could solve it, was too painful for him.

**17.***Until I went into the sanctuary of God.* When he went into God’s holy place—when he began to understand God’s purposes and plans and looked beyond the present life into the dreadful future of the ungodly, he could say.

**17.***Then I understood their end.*And understanding their end, his difficulty ceased, his puzzling problem was solved!  
**18.***Surely You did set them in slippery places.*As if they stood upon a ridge of ice from which they must slip down—who wishes to be lifted up upon an Alp of prosperity from which he may be dashed down at any moment? If you knew that there was a man standing on the top of the Cross of St. Paul’s at this moment, I do not suppose that any of you would envy him—certainly I would not. Let him have a patent for standing there and let nobody else ever attempt it. And an ungodly man, in the elevated places of prosperity, is in such a perilous position that we need not envy him.  
**18.***You cast them down into destruction.* Down they go! If not in this life, yet in the next, and who will envy them then?  
**19, 20.***How they are brought into desolation, as in a moment! They are utterly consumed with terrors. As a dream when one awakes, so, O Lord, when You awake, You shall despise their image.* When a man wakes up, the image that was before his mind, in his dream, is gone. And when God wakes up to judgment, these wicked men who were but as images in a night dream, shall pass away.

**21.***Thus my heart was grieved, and I was pricked in my reins.* In the most tender and most vital parts of his being, he felt an inward and terrible pain.

**22.***So foolish was I, and ignorant: I was as a beast before You.*Judging as the beast judges that can only see the little grass around itself, and fattens itself, knowing nothing of the shambles and of the butcher’s knife that is being sharpened to kill it there. “So,” says the Psalmist, “I was like that, I forgot about the future, I did not judge as an immortal being should judge concerning the infinite and the eternal, but I judged things as a beast might judge by the narrow compass of its little grazing ground.

**23.***Nevertheless.* This phrase is most delightful, coming in connection with his previous confession, “I was as a beast before you. Nevertheless.”  
**23.***I am continually with You: You have held me by my right hand.*That is your portion also, Christian! However few your pounds, however short your supplies, you are continually with God and He holds you by your right hand. Will you envy the ungodly after that?  
**24.***You shall guide me with Your counsel, and afterward receive me to Glory.*There is where your chief possession lies, locked up in that which is marked, “Afterward.” Not today, possibly not tomorrow, but, “afterward,” is your inheritance! “Afterward You will receive me to Glory.”  
**25.***Whom have I in Heaven but You? And there is none upon earth that I desire beside You.*Here is the Christian’s heavenly and earthly portion and treasure. He has his God, both here and hereafter—and this is better than all that can fall to the lot of the worldling!  
**26, 27.***My flesh and my heart fails; but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever. For, lo, they that are far from You shall perish: You have destroyed all them that go a whoring from You.*That is, setting their hearts on unlovely things and forgetting to love God.  
**28.***But it is good for me to draw near to God: I have put my trust in the Lord GOD, that I may declare all Your works.*The Psalm ends jubilantly, as it began, though part of it had been in a minor key.

—Adapted from *The C. H. Spurgeon Collection,* Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307

÷1Ti 6.12  
**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.** Sermon #2226 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

“LAY HOLD ON ETERNAL LIFE!”  
NO. 2226

**A SERMON INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S-DAY, OCTOBER 18, 1891,  
*DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON THURSDAY EVENING, MARCH 19, 1891.**

***“Lay hold on eternal life.”***1Ti 6:12***.***

PAUL was very anxious about Timothy, his own son in the faith. He loved him greatly and he had much confidence in him, but still he felt that the work of preaching the Gospel was such a responsible undertaking that he could not be too prayerful for him, nor too earnest in exhorting him to continued steadfastness in those things which he had received. So “the old man eloquent,” whose very pen seems to have borrowed some of the burning fervor of his heart, pours out his very soul to young Timothy in the earnest desire that he may find in him a true successor—one who, when Paul is compelled to lay down his trusteeship—will take it up and be faithful to his Lord and to the Gospel when his father in Christ is taken away from him. We cannot be too anxious about our young Brothers who are to preach the Gospel of the Grace of God. Always pray for students! Let them continually be mentioned in your private prayers than when those who have borne the burden and heat of the day shall rest with their fathers, God may raise up better men than they, who shall yet more faithfully proclaim His Word.

This passage of Scripture, “Lay hold on eternal life,” is suggestive from its connection. In the same verse Timothy is told to, “Fight the good fight of faith.” From this it is evident that if he lays hold on eternal life, he will have to fight for it and that if he has to fight, he can only fight by laying hold upon eternal life with a tenacious grip. Every Christian man is a soldier and no man will war a good warfare unless he lays hold upon eternal life with all his heart and soul. A man may fight the battles of earth with the life of earth, but our warfare is of a different kind—“For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.” With such foes we can only contend successfully when we are made invulnerable by the reception of the life of God within our souls. In a classic story we read of one who was dipped in the river Styx before he went forth to the battle so that the arrows of the foe might fall harmless about him. That fable becomes a fact for us when we “lay hold on eternal life.” The fiery darts of the wicked are quenched by our shield of faith!

The whole chapter forms a sort of preface to the text. Three classes of people seem to have existed in the community where Timothy was called to labor—each with different views of the best method of teaching those around them. First of all, there were some who intermeddled with social politics. They told the slaves that they might conspire against their masters and try to rectify the unquestionable wrongs which existed in that day. Paul desires, as much as anybody could, that injustice should come to an end and especially that *slavery*should be swept off the face of the earth, as it has largely been by the influence of the Gospel. But, taught of God, and seeing that it was by the proclamation of the Gospel that these evils would be most surely overcome—rather than by any hasty social change—he says to Timothy, “Leave that matter alone. Lay hold on eternal life! You are not sent to cleanse the Augean stable of politics and to set things socially right—let it be sufficient for you to lay hold on eternal life and to call upon the people to do the same. Every man to his own calling and this is yours, “Lay hold on eternal life.” Today many a young preacher and, perhaps some of the older ones, would do well to take heed to this advice of Paul given by the Spirit, for while every real social improvement, based on the principles of right and justice must have the sympathy of all Christian men, depend upon it that, in the long run, the surest way to raise men is to preach the Gospel to them! This will change their character and regenerated lives will soon result in altered social conditions.

Round about Timothy, too, there buzzed a set of men full of questions and difficulties—and discoveries of a false science which Paul calls, “profane and vain babblings.” These were in a most unhealthy state, “sick about questionings and disputes of words,” as the Apostle’s language in verse four may be literally rendered. Concerning such, he says to Timothy, “Do not answer such wrangling of men corrupted in mind and bereft of the Truth of God. Do not worry yourself about them! Let the bees or the wasps buzz as much as they like. As for you, lay hold on eternal life! Stick to your business. Go in for the one thing for which God has called you, the glorious work of saving souls! Let those who like such questions fight them out to the bitter end, but, as for you, lay hold on eternal life!”

Then Paul had noticed that, at Ephesus, there were certain men who were striving to be rich. Certain men, even of the members of the Church, who seemed to be sacrificing everything else for gain. They were counting that gain was godliness and that if they could get rich, they really were the better men for it. But Paul says to Timothy, “Leave money alone. Having food and raiment, let us be content. Your hand is not big enough to lay hold of two things. Therefore, since you can only have one, see that it is the *vital* thing. Lay hold on eternal life!” To use the rough old proverb, “Let the cobbler stick to his last.” “Timothy, stick to your business! Lay hold on eternal life—that is your main concern—‘Whereunto you are also called and have professed a good profession before many witnesses.’”

I like this plain dealing of the Apostle. He seems to say, “Come to the all-important point, Timothy, and stick to it. Let others go in for this, and that, and the other—but as for you, set before yourself the highest aim. Say to them, as I wrote to the Philippians last year from Rome, ‘This one thing I do’—‘Lay hold on eternal life.’”

The great complaint which we have to make against many is that they seem to be looking after the odds and ends, the paraphernalia, the minor affairs of life. They do not seem to aim at this point—*eternal life*! Is it not so in praying? Is there not much that passes by the name which is not real prayer? We might often say, “Get to the point, Man, and ask of God what you need! Come to real prayer and downright grips with the Angel! Wrestle with Him and prevail!”

Paul seems, also, to hint that there was in the preaching, even in his day, a great deal that was extraneous, ornamental, superfluous—and so he says to young Timothy, “Aim at the center of the target. Go in for this, the main business, first of all—lay hold on eternal life!

How much there is of our prayer which is only language. How much of our praise which is only music! How much there is in our Churches which is something that may have to do with the betterment of the people, but is not salvation, not winning souls for Christ! How much there is of teaching which may be Christian teaching, but is not the teaching of Christ! But here we clearly see that the Apostle focused *everything* to this one point and brought Timothy to this one thing—that he should “lay hold on eternal life”—and having laid hold on it, himself, should then set it forth before others with such vehemence and strong emphasis that they, also, might be persuaded to lay hold on it and be saved!

Oh, my dear Hearers! What does it matter what I have preached to you unless you get eternal life? What does it matter how I have said this or that to you, unless you have received, at the hand of my Master, that lifegiving stream which shall be in you “a well of water springing up into everlasting life”? With all your getting, I beseech you, get the understanding of the great mystery of godliness and become wise as to the life which is life, indeed!

I am now going to take this exhortation and press it upon each one here present, asking God to bless it. “Lay hold on eternal life.”  
**I.**First, then, WHAT IS ETERNAL LIFE?  
In attempting to answer this question, I remark what should be perfectly obvious—it is a *gift of God—*the fruit of a Divine operation upon the heart. One of the first works of the Grace of God is to put within us eternal life. No man can create it, either in himself, or in his fellow men. Just as our physical life was bestowed upon us apart from any effort of our own, the Divine life cannot be evolved by any device of man—it must be imparted by the Spirit of God. At first, God created man “and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.” And when, in Christ, man becomes a new creation, the work is as wholly and as really God’s. Eternal life is what no man has by nature, for he is dead in sin. No man can earn it, for carnal works cannot purchase a spiritual gift. And if a man toiled for a whole eternity, he would be no nearer the possession of eternal life than when he began.  
That it does not come by*effort* is clear, for how shall the dead, by any kind of effort, if effort they could make, attain to life? It does not come by outward*ceremonies*—these could never purchase that which God bestows freely. Yet how natural it is to the proud heart of man to seek to make *payment* for that which is to be obtained without money and without price! It is strange that men should expect God to take *their* gift when they refuse to accept His! If they would but remember that all their giving cannot enrich God—that they cannot give Him anything that He does not already possess—it would be quite evident to them that eternal life can come in no other way than by the gift of God! It is foolish to try to fill an already full vessel! It is profane as well as foolish to seek to be saved by giving to God instead of receiving from Him, or by anything we can bring to attempt to buy this eternal life. This is to imitate Simon Magus, to whom Peter said, “Your *money* perish with you, because you have thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money.” Neither with money nor with *ceremonies* can it be purchased. It is purely and solely the *gift* of God by Jesus Christ. “The wages of sin is death; but the gift”—the *free* gift—“of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”— ***“Life is found alone in Jesus,  
Only there ‘tis offered thee—  
Offered without price or money’  
‘Tis the gift of God sent free!  
Take salvation,  
Take it now and happy be.”***  
This eternal life, given thus freely, is *a present possession*. “Eternal life” may sometimes be employed to set out the glories of Heaven, but not often—it is a thing possessed *here*. In the day in which we are regenerated, we receive the first germs of this everlasting life. When we are born again, it is, “not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which lives and abides forever.” It is a gift of God, a gift not reserved for the future, but given *now*, the moment a sinner believes in Christ! One of the first tokens of eternal life being given is the cry of prayer—and then come repentance of sin—and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. This is eternal life—the gift of God and a present possession. Have you received it? I do not ask you whether you know exactly the day or the hour when you received it, but are you alive unto God with a life you had not by nature, but which has been planted in you by God the Holy Spirit?  
This life is, in fact, *the life of God in the soul*. The Holy Spirit comes and breathes God’s life into dead men. There is nothing everlasting in itself but *God*—and there is no life that is everlasting except that which comes from the Everlasting One! The gift of God is not only the gift God gives, but God *is the gift* that is given! He it is who breathes into us this eternal life which is really Christ living in us! He, Himself, is “that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us.” The Holy Spirit comes and dwells in the man! “We will come to him,” says Christ, “and take up Our abode with him.” The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, each in a certain way, comes and dwells within the man—he becomes a Temple of the Holy Spirit and so he is alive unto God.  
Again, eternal life is *a life which never dies*. We speak very positively here. Eternal life cannot have an end! If it can come to an end by any process, whatever, then it is *not* eternal! This is as clear as words can make it. The life, then, which God gives to every soul in its regeneration, can never die! Hear these words of Christ—“My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand.” We do not teach that if the life of God in a Believer were to die out, he could, nevertheless, be saved. No Scripture teaches that!  
We teach that if there is the life of God in a man, it is eternal—not only that it is *going* to be eternal, but that *now*, in its nature and essence, it is eternal and can be nothing but eternal life and, therefore, can never come to an end! It may be lessened; it may be sick; it may be obscure; but if it is there, since it is *eternal life*, it cannot come to an end! If it did, it could by no possibility be correctly said to be eternal life at all. Do you see, then, what a blessing is yours if you have received the gift of God? If by Grace you have received life through Jesus Christ, you have a life which will never die, a life which will outlast the sun and moon! You will see this world turned to a black coal. You will see all things expire, but your life and the life of God shall run on forever and ever. Well might Paul urge Timothy and well may we urge you to lay hold on such a life as this. So— ***“Take, with rejoicing, from Jesus at once  
The life everlasting He gives!  
And know, with assurance, you never can die, Since Jesus, your righteousness, lives.”***  
Once more, this eternal life is *the life that is perfected in Glory*. It goes on developing and matures, even in this world, to a very high degree. There is a very great difference between the new-born babe and the fullgrown man and there is a great difference between the Believer who has just received eternal life and that riper saint who has come to the fullness of the stature of a man in Christ Jesus. But it is the same life! It is the same life that says, “God be merciful to me a sinner,” which afterwards says, “I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day.” It is the same life, but a fuller measure thereof. One is life, the other is life more abundant. As certainly as the eternal life begins, even in the tiniest bud, so will it blossom and become fruitful until it comes to its full perfection in Glory. The life of Believers in Heaven, the life that never sins, the life that is absolute obedience, the life that is undiluted bliss is exactly the same life that is in the Believer right now! The same life that God gave him when he first believed is that with which he beholds the face of God— without a veil between them—as he treads the golden streets of the New Jerusalem!  
This, then, is eternal life—a new principle, a Divine principle, an inexhaustible, unquenchable, immortal principle. He that has it is blessed, indeed, among the sons of men! He that has it not is dead while he lives!  
Having thus considered the nature of this possession, we come back to the question we have already asked —Have we this eternal life? Have we received it as God’s gift? Is it, within our hearts, a lamp burning there, never to be put out? Do we know its present power and reality and have we joy therein? Yes, do we delight ourselves in God, who has brought us out of death into life—out of the region of the Valley of the Shadow of Death into that great light which is the beginning of Heaven, the dawn of the day that shall never end? If we do, let us unitedly lift up our hearts in praise and say, “Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift!” Can we ever cease to adore His name, since He has bestowed such a treasure upon us? But if you have not yet become a possessor of it, I beseech you at this moment to hold out your empty hands and take the gift so freely offered! “And this is the record, that God has given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He that has the Son has life, but he that has not the Son of God has not life.”  
**II.**In the second place, the Apostle tells us to “lay hold on” eternal life. That is the main point of my present discourse. How DO WE LAY HOLD ON ETERNAL LIFE? There are degrees in the reception of this life, but happy is the man who fully apprehends that for which he is also “apprehended of Christ Jesus.” The Spirit of God lays hold of us in order that we may lay hold on eternal life! How we are enabled to do this is our present subject for consideration.  
First, if you would grasp this gift, *believe in it as true*. The very beginning of our hope is when the Lord leads us to believe that there is such a thing as eternal life—and that it is a *tangible* thing, not a dream or a vision—but a reality to be laid hold of. I certainly believe in the existence of a thing that I can lay hold upon. If “seeing is believing,” laying hold is even a more thorough mode of believing! Believe, then, that there is a higher life than Nature can ever create. If unconverted, you do not know anything about this in your own experience, but there is such a thing. There is life in Christ which He can give you. There is life by the Holy Spirit which He can work in you. He can strip you of those grave clothes of sin and raise you from your tomb. The words which Christ once addressed to Martha still sound in our ears—“I am the resurrection and the life: he that believes in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?”  
Answer this question of my Master, “Do you believe this?” If you do, there is hope that you shall yet be a partaker of His Grace. Nothing can hinder when He begins to work! Though you feel as if you did not feel at all. Though you seem paralyzed and unable to repent or to believe—this life shall be given to you and it shall be given to you *now* if you look unto Him who was lifted up upon the Cross, that, “whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”  
Believe, my Brothers and Sisters, you that have this eternal life, in the power and reality of it! And whenever Satan tempts you to think that it is a fiction, a dream, a piece of enthusiasm, an idea born of fanaticism— resist him by the plain testimony of the Word of God—and the abundant witness of those who have gone before you, rejoicing in the power of it! Every child of God has times when he questions himself, but he can still truly say, “I am not what I used to be. I have feelings both of pain and joy that come not of the old life, but of the new, which has come to me by God’s gracious gift.”—  
***“Lord, I was dead. I could not stir  
My lifeless soul to come to Thee!  
But now, since You have quickened me,  
I rise from sin’s dark sepulcher.”***  
If any of you have not yet experienced such a change, begin, as I have told you, by believing that there is such a thing as eternal life. I wish that you who have not yet obtained this blessing would make a point of regularly attending some place where the Gospel is preached, saying, “It is to be had and I will have it. It is to be had by faith. ‘Faith comes by hearing.’ I will be an earnest hearer! ‘Hearing comes by the Word of God.’ I will take care to read and hear only the Word of God, so that faith may come to me and life may come by faith, for there is such a thing as receiving a new and spiritual life that shall make me far other than by nature I am. I believe it is true.” That is the first way of laying hold.  
But you do not lay hold of a thing by simply believing that there is such a thing! You must go farther. *Appropriate it*. There is a book and I believe that it is there, but if anybody told me that it was a present for me and said, “All that you have to do in order to have it is to lay hold upon it,” I should understand that he meant not only that I was to believe in its existence, but that I was to take it up and carry it home with me. That is how you are to “lay hold on eternal life.” Strange as it is, this is a thing which, though it is so simple, we cannot make awakened sinners understand! That eternal life is God’s free gift put within their reach and that they are to take hold of it for their own salvation seems harder for some to grasp than if it were the most intricate puzzle! Yet this is, perhaps, the clearest aspect of the great matter of salvation.  
It was Dr. Chalmers, I think, who used to say that he had no such comfort in the Gospel as when he viewed it as a simple offer on the one side, and a simple acceptance on the other. God gives—and we take! The Lord who has been chastening you, making you feel your sinnership and showing you that you are condemned and only fit to die, now says, “Lay hold on eternal life. Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. Take Him to be yours. Accept Him as your Substitute, bearing the death justly your due and, having given His life *for* you, now giving it *to* you. Make the exchange! Christ took your death—take His life! He bore your evil—take His good! *Appropriate* it. *Lay hold* on eternal life.” When people are sinking in the water and there is a life buoy or a rope near, they do not need much exhorting to lay hold upon it, nor any elaborate explanation of the way! They simply grip anything that gives them half a hope of being saved from the devouring

deep. Now, Soul, you are not to bring anything with you. That would be to fill your hands and then you could not lay hold of anything else! You are to come empty-handed, just as you are, to Christ, who is set before you. Be bold enough to take Him and let Him be yours! You need no worthiness. How could *you* be worthy of *Him*? He gives Himself freely to your unworthiness and sinnership! Confess these and lay hold on eternal life—appropriate it to yourself.  
The exhortation means more than that, however. Having appropriated it, keep it. *Hold to it* and never let it go. Hide it in your heart as a choice treasure and, if any would rob you of it, or frown you out of it, or laugh at you because you prize so highly what they so lightly esteem, lay hold on it still more! This is the work of the Grace of God which enables you, first, to take and then to keep it! Oh, what efforts will be made from within and from without to get you to give up eternal life! But here comes, in the exhortation, “Cling to it. Hold fast by it constantly. As with a death grip, grasp it with new energy. If you have held it with one hand, hold it with both hands. Yet more and more lay hold on eternal life.”  
And then, furthermore, *keep yourself upon it*. According to the text, you have to “Fight the good fight of faith.” Every now and then you will get an ugly knock, a bruise, a bleeding wound from your enemy. What are you to do? Always lay hold on eternal life, again, and it will strengthen you, stanch your wounds and make you, once more, strong in the day of battle. I would have you think much of this. If you believe in Christ, there is a life within you, like the life of God, which will never die—a life within you which will bring you to stand before the glorious Throne of Christ, “without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing.” Do not, therefore, ever give up hope! Do not be staggered by what you may have to suffer here. In the midst of all the agony of the way, keep your heart upon God and upon the gift He has given you. “Lay hold on eternal life.” If between here and Heaven you could be burned as a martyr every day, it would be worth your while to bear it, laying hold on eternal life—  
***“The King above in beauty,  
Without a veil is seen!  
It were a well-spent journey,  
Though ten deaths lay between.”***  
If between here and Heaven you had nothing to bear but the cruelty of men and the unkindness of the enemies of Christ, you should bear it right manfully, and even *joyfully*, because you can say, “I know in myself that I have in Heaven a better and an enduring substance. Even here I have a life which the world did not give me and cannot take from me—therefore I hold to it, still, and I comfort myself with this sweet thought, that it is mine, the gift of God to me! It bears me up amid seas of grief. ‘My flesh and my heart fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.’”  
Further, I think that the Apostle, by the exhortation, “Lay hold on eternal life,” meant, *let other things go*. Here is a Brother, lately converted, who has been accustomed to keep his shop open on Sundays. He lives in a street where the best business is to be done on that day and if he closes his shop he will very likely be a great loser. What should he do? I thank God that the man has not asked anybody what he should do—he has done the right thing and trusted in his God! The Apostle seems to say, “Let anything else go, let everything else go, but lay hold on eternal life. Hold to that.” “Oh, but I should lose a living!” Yes, but if you lost a living and saved your life, what would you lose? Have you ever heard of the one who had a bag of gold on board a ship coming home from Australia? The ship was sinking and he went down to his cabin, put as much gold as he could into a belt, and then fastened the belt around his waist. When he leaped for the boat and missed it, it was not possible to pick him up, for he sank with the weight of his own gold round his loins! There was no hope for him—his treasure was his ruin!  
And many a man, in like manner, is, by all his toil, but preparing sure destruction for himself—toiling and working hard only that he may effectually ruin his own soul! Let these things go. “For what is a man advantaged if he gains the whole world and loses himself, or is cast away?” Even for the fleeting life of the body, a man will sacrifice all, thankful if he can get out of the burning house alive, though all his worldly goods are destroyed—glad to escape from the hands of the brigands, though they strip him of every possession. “All that a man has will he give for his life.” If this is wise for a transient life, how much more for the life which is eternal! We shall be gainers by losing everything, if by the loss we gain everlasting bliss! Let all that opposes go—friends, kindred, comfort, this present life— let them all go if, by the sacrifice, we may more firmly lay hold on eternal life! To keep that—and hold fast to it amidst the stress of temptation—is the main business of the Christian man! “Lay hold on eternal life.”  
And it means, in my text, more than that. Fight, and as you fight, lay hold upon the victory. While you are running for Heaven, often *anticipate the joys of Heaven*. I think you and I do not go to Heaven often enough. “Well” says one, “I thought we should go there when we died.” Yes, if you are a Believer in Christ, that is secure, but why not go there *now*? The Christian’s position is unique—he is in two worlds at once! Our Lord has quickened us, “and has raised us up together and made us sit together in the heavenlies in Christ.” Do you not know that the lower ends of all the streets of Heaven are near here? Victory—that is Heaven! Well, we even now overcome through the blood of the Lamb! Peace with God—that is Heaven! And at this moment, “Being justified by faith we have peace with God.” Holiness—that is Heaven! Yes, but we are made holy, now, by the work of the Spirit of God in our hearts. Communion with God—that is Heaven! But even today, “Truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ.”  
Is it not good, sometimes, to sit down and anticipate the day when you will come into your inheritance? You have heard of the young prince, who, when his father wakened one morning, was found putting on the king’s crown. It was awkward in his case, but your Father will not object to your often putting on your crown! Try it and see how it fits. You will have a new song to sing—begin to sing it here! You will have holy work to do—“They serve God day and night in His Temple”—serve Him here! Christ is to dwell among us in Heaven—let us know that He dwells among us here! I like that verse of our hymn—  
***“I would begin the music here,  
And so my soul should rise!  
Oh, for some heavenly notes to bear  
My passions to the skies!”***  
It was said of an old Puritan that Heaven was in him before he was in Heaven. That is necessary for all of us—we must have Heaven in us before we got to Heaven. If we do not get to Heaven before we die, we shall never get there afterwards. An old Scotchman was asked whether he ever expected to get to Heaven. “Why, Man, I *live* there,” was his quaint reply. Let us all live in those spiritual things which are the essential features of Heaven! Often go there before you go to stay there! If you come down tomorrow morning, knowing and realizing that Heaven is yours, and that you will soon be there, those children will not worry you half so much! When you go out to your business or to your work, you will not be half so discontent when you know that this is not your rest, but that you have a rest on the eternal hills where your heart has already gone—and that *there* your portion is in the everlasting dwellings! “Lay hold on eternal life.” Get a hold of it now! It is a thing of the future and it is a thing of the present—and even your part of it that is future can be, by faith, so realized and grasped as to be actually enjoyed while you are yet here. “Lay hold on eternal life.”  
I have not explained my text so fully or so clearly as I could wish. The life of which it speaks is beyond all language, but if you will obey the exhortation of the text, that will be the best exposition of it. Let him that has not this eternal life believe that it is to be had. Let the man whose heart aches for it, grasp it and appropriate it *now*—he need not be afraid that he will be repelled! Let him that has it, hold it fast as a jewel for which, sooner than part with it, he would sell house and home! Let him that has it, enjoy it even now. God help you in this manner to “lay hold on eternal life”!  
**III.**Now I have to finish with just a special word. WHO ARE THE PEOPLE THAT OUGHT CHIEFLY TO LAY HOLD ON ETERNAL LIFE?  
First, those who are called. This is the reason the Apostle gives to Timothy—“whereunto you are also called.” Beloved, there are some of you that have been called. A boy, who had come upon an errand, stood at my window this afternoon. Suddenly he ran away and I thought, “What made him go?” I found out that though I had not heard the voice, someone had called him and, therefore, he was gone. Imitate that boy! Go about this world as men who have been called by a voice that nobody has heard but you! Has God called you to Himself? He means you to come away from your old self and cease to live the old life—He would have you lay hold on eternal life! God never singles us out in this way unless He means to bless us! He never says, “Seek you My face,” in vain! Has God called you out from among men? Do you feel what your parents and friends at home do not feel? Is there a call to you like that call, “Samuel, Samuel,” and have you responded, “Here I am, for You did call me. Speak, for Your servant hears”? Oh, if God has favored you with a special and effectual call, then lay hold on eternal life with your whole heart and soul—and never let it go! Come what may, resolve that you will hold to this gift of God in life, in death and throughout eternity!  
Next, *those who have confessed Christ* ought especially to lay hold on eternal life—“whereunto you are also called, and have professed a good profession before many witnesses.” Timothy had been baptized and probably there had been a great number of persons to encourage or watch him as he came forward to confess Christ. This, then, was a double reason why he should hold fast that on which he had laid hold. O you that have named the name of Christ and have put Him on by that wonderful symbol of death and burial and resurrection, “Lay hold on eternal life.” Do not play at Baptism and the Lord’s Supper. Let these be stern, no, *sweet realities* to you! Lay hold, not only on the symbol, but on what the symbol means! Have you been “Buried with Him by baptism into death”? Then grasp the soul of the symbol. It is not a mere empty form, or only the badge of a sect, but a picture of the end of the old life of the flesh dying to the world and sin, that we may rise in “newness of life” to walk before God in the land of the living! Of all men, he who has been baptized should “lay hold on eternal life,” for, in proportion as his Baptism is true, he has no other life to lay hold of, having died and been buried with Christ!  
Then, also, we come to His Table and there we eat His flesh and drink His blood after a spiritual sort, receiving not merely bread and wine as memorials, but Himself, by faith, into our hearts! “Lay hold on eternal life,” for profession without eternal life is a fearful mockery. Without eternal life, to come to the Lord’s Supper will be to eat and drink condemnation to yourself, not discerning the Lord’s body! You that have professed Him before many witnesses, “Lay hold on eternal life.”  
And, especially do I say this to *those who have been consecrated*, like Timothy, to the service of the Christian ministry. You that have been permitted in any way, even in the Sunday school, to speak of Christ to children. You to whom the Lord has committed His Gospel, that you may impart it to others, “Lay hold on eternal life.” You will never do much in this work unless you have eternal life within your own soul. See to that first. A dead preacher—what is he but a mocker of dead souls? A dead teacher— what can she teach? A dead instructor of a Bible class—how shall the Word of Life have free course and be glorified? A blind man teaching about colors, or a dumb man teaching music is not more out of place than a man without eternal life trying to tell out the Gospel! What can he do? “Lay hold on eternal life,” or else quit this false position lest, when the Lord comes, He should say to you, “What have you to do to declare My statutes, or that you should take My Covenant in your mouth?” Ah, I am speaking to myself, now, and I will take it home. Will you also open your heart to whatever in the sermon belongs to you? And when it is done and my voice is silent to your ears, I pray that you may hear, for many a day, a gentle whisper saying to you, “Lay hold on eternal life.”  
You, poor Sinner, as you go after your follies and amusements, may the call, “Lay hold on eternal life,” come to you until you shall obey it and quit such trifles! And you, Christian, when you get into the world and are tempted to make gain by sin, while you will suffer loss by righteousness, may you hear a voice say, “Lay hold on eternal life”! And any of you who get the “cold shoulder” and the rough side of men’s tongues, when you begin to think that you cannot bear it, may you hear the voice saying, again, “Lay hold on eternal life.” Cling to that, for God, for Christ, for eternity, for Heaven! The eternal life is the only life worth living! God help you to live for it always and, if you do, it will be of His own Grace—and to Him shall be all the Glory, forever and ever! Amen.

***PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—1 Timothy 6.*HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—567, 435, 538.**

**MR. SPURGEON UPDATE:**  
The following letter from MR. SPURGEON to the congregation at the Tabernacle, will give the readers of his sermons the latest available information concerning him—

Eastbourne, October 10, 1891. “Dear Friends—I was rightly directed to this place, for I have found a measure of appetite and feel much better. I think I shall soon be able to reach a warmer climate. This is the great desire of my doctor. The deaths of others cause anxiety about a chill, especially as I have lost one skin and the new one is exceedingly tender and would feel the influence of cold most readily. However, I am in those hands which control temperature and everything else! I am, indeed, happy in being borne up by the prayers of saints as by the hands of angels. I am relieved of great anxiety by the Lord’s plainly directing me to secure DR. PIERSON to fill the pulpit during my absence. He is a man after my own heart and a great winner of souls. He will not aim at anything but the Glory of God. He begs that the whole Church will grant him the aid of their united prayers and efforts. He is just now leaving America and will be ready to preach October 25, if the Lord wills. I shall be among you as soon as I feel that it would be right and wise—and then he will be ready to return to his own land. He has set aside everything to serve us. I was guided to him at the same moment that he was led of God to think of helping me.

“May our Lord be with you and grant you, each one, His Presence, power and peace! Oh, that many might yield to Jesus, now, that all may see that the Lord saves by every instrument! When MR. NEWMAN HALL bids sinners, ‘Come to Jesus,’ may the Holy Spirit draw them and the same in the evening! May you have a glorious day! MRS. SPURGEON’S company here makes me feel very happy, but when shall I meet with all the companions of my nearly 40 years’ service and feel that each one adds to my joy?  
“Yours very heartily,  
***C. H. SPURGEON.”***

Adapted from*The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #1946 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

ETERNAL LIFE WITHIN PRESENT GRASP  
NO. 1946

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, FEBRUARY 6, 1887, *BY C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“Lay hold on eternal life.”***1Ti 6:12***.***

***“Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.”***1Ti 6:19***.***

“LAY hold on eternal life.” Observe that this precept is preceded by another—“Fight the good fight of faith.” Those who lay hold on eternal life will have to *fight* for it. The way of the spiritual life is no easy one—we shall have to contest every step of the way along which it leads us. “Contest the good contest of the faith” would be an accurate rendering of the passage and a contest it is against the world, the flesh and the devil! If we live unto God, we shall need to war a daily warfare and tread down the powers of death and Hell.

We fight the good fight by firm faith in the Lord our God—“This is the victory that overcomes the world, even your faith.” That fight is the fight of faith, fought for the faith and by the faith. The article should be inserted and then the words are—“Fight the good fight of *the* faith.” “Contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints.” “Hold fast the form of sound words.” It is worth fighting for, even if we come to resistance unto blood! He who dies for the faith has laid down his life in a worthy cause and he shall find it unto life eternal. We can only hope that we shall be able to live unto God by faith in Him and faith in the great Truths which He has revealed to be the object of our faith. When I say unto you, “Lay hold on eternal life,” do not imagine that this is to be done in a dream, or accomplished without awakening your utmost energies, nor even then without that Divine assistance which only faith can receive.

As my text follows the command to “fight the good fight of the faith,” it teaches us that the best way of contending for the faith is for ourselves, personally, to lay hold on eternal life. You cannot defend the faith by mere reasoning—victory does not come through an array of arguments which have been, before, used by men of learning—you must, *yourself*, possess the inward life and exhibit the force and power of it in your daily conduct if you would be successful in the holy war. Men who forget the Divine Life soon cast away the Divine Truth. If the life is not in us, we may make what profession of orthodoxy we like, but we shall, in all probability, before long, turn aside like others, unto crooked ways. Well are the two commands joined together—“Fight the good fight of the faith, lay hold on eternal life.” It reminds me of our Lord’s words, “I am the way, the truth and the life.”

My Brothers and Sisters, *there is a higher and a better life than that which is known to the most of men*. There is an animal life which all possess; there is a mental life which lifts us up above the beasts, but there is another life as much above the mental life as the mental life is above the mere animal life! The bulk of men are not aware of this and when they are told of it, they do not believe the statement. Men whom they would believe upon any other subject—honest and true men—are, nevertheless, regarded as a sort of madmen when they begin to talk about a *spiritual* life. How should the carnal mind discern that which is spiritual? it can only be spiritually discerned. But there is such a life, as many of us assuredly know, and this is the eternal life which we are bid to lay hold upon. The life of Heaven is none other than the Divine Life which God’s Grace imparts to Believers here below—only *it* is developed and brought to perfection. There is no jerk to the Believer in death—his line of life is unbroken. There is a change in his *condition*, for he drops this mortal body and those tendencies to sin which cling to it, but the same life is in him, in the body or out of it, unclothed or clothed. His life is the same day, only here it is the dawn, but in Glory it is full moon. His life is one and flows on like a river, widening and deepening until, at last, it swells into a sea of joyous, perfected life in Heaven!

Dream not that any of you will ever obtain eternal life hereafter unless you receive it in this life. Unless you are partakers of it *now,* tremble for the consequences! Where death finds you, eternity will leave you. Thus I read the Word of God. Let others read as they may. The only laying hold on eternal life that can be practiced by us must be commenced *now—*it is now brought to light by Christ Jesus in the everlasting Gospel—beware how you put it from you. Grip it *now;* lay hold of it *now* and hold on to it at all hazards! Do my expressions sound strange? Let me remind you of that exhortation of Holy Scripture—“Awake, you that sleep, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give you light.” Once obtained, we may rest assured that this life will not be wrenched from us in the pangs of departure from the body nor in the Day of Judgment, nor throughout eternity! “Lay hold on eternal life.” I would dwell upon this precept, entreating the aid of the Holy Spirit that I may speak of this true life in a living and true manner.

**I.**“Lay hold on eternal life,” that is, BELIEVE IN IT. You cannot lay hold on it unless you know it to be a reality. We do not lay hold on shadows, or fictions, or fancies—there must be something substantial and tangible for us to lay hold upon. It is necessary, therefore, to begin by a realizing *faith*.

That we may believe in this life, let me say that *Holy Scripture constantly describes men unrenewed by Divine Grace as being dead—*they are “dead in trespasses and sins.” They “shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on them.” The natural life of fallen men, though it is cultivated to the highest degree so that they become sages and philosophers, is, nevertheless, nothing better than death as compared with the inner life which is called *eternal*. The life which you possess today, if you are ungodly men, will be taken from you. How suddenly none of us can guess! In this very house we have lately had a solemn reminder of our mortality. But if God gives to you the new life, if there is infused into you the Divine Life, it is eternal—a living and incorruptible seed which abides forever. It is the life of Christ in you—the sap of the undying vine flowing into the branches! Without this heavenly quickening you are dead while you live and as the tendency of death is to corruption, you will grow more and more sinful. Men who are dead in trespasses and sins, by-and-by proceed to a further stage—and frequently become so corrupt that society itself cries out, “Bury my dead out of my sight.” Without the quickening Spirit you will remain in spiritual death forever.

*The Scripture represents Believers everywhere as possessing everlasting lif*e. “He that believes in Him has everlasting life.” Our death in sin has passed away when we have believed in Christ. That first look of the spiritual eyes is sure proof that we possess within us the life of God and, henceforth, we are so linked with Jesus that because He lives, we shall live, also. “When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall we also appear with Him in Glory.”

*This life is produced by the operation of the Holy Spirit within the heart* . The Lord Jesus said to Nicodemus, “Except a man is born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God.” It is by the new life worked of the Spirit that we enter the Kingdom. The infusion of the new life is the new birth and the entrance into the Kingdom. We are created anew in Christ Jesus, or, to use another expression, we are quickened and raised from among the dead! Beloved Hearers, do you know this change by personal experience? I know that many here present have passed from death unto life and I rejoice with them in Christ Jesus.

*What a difference this quickening has made to those who have received it!*What a marvelous life it is! It brings with it new perceptions, new emotions, new desires. It has new senses—there are new eyes with which we see the invisible; new ears with which we hear the voice of God, before inaudible! Then we have a new touch with which we lay hold on Divine Truths of God. Then we have a new taste so that we “taste and see that the Lord is good.” This new life ushers us into a new world and gives us new relationships and new privileges. The Lord Jesus, who makes all things new, sits upon the throne of the soul and is the center of new power and rule. Do you know this life? Some of us confidently bear witness of this life—but what does this avail to dead men? There is no change that can be comparable to that which is worked in men when they are quickened by the infusion of the Divine Life—it is as though the dead left their graves and much more than that!

The new life is a life of reconciliation. The possessor of it is at peace with God. We are no longer enemies, but friends of God; no longer heirs of wrath, but children of the Most High. The spirit of adoption within us cries, “Abba, Father.” We delight ourselves in God who becomes the spring of all our joys, the light of our delights. This delight in God draws us nearer and nearer to him in communion and fellowship—and this fellowship with God begets a new character in us like that of God. We are changed into the image of Him in whom we live and with whom we have communion! The new life has about it a spirituality, an elevation and a purity which are never found anywhere else. Under its power the man loves the things which are akin to the life of God and he enters into sympathy with God. The spiritual life has instinctive aspirations after holiness, even as the old natural life has desires after evil. It has new pains and new passions; new joys and griefs. A heavenly fire burns upon the altar of the renewed soul which will utterly consume all that is contrary to holiness. As our God is a consuming fire, so is the life of God within the soul of man—ultimately it will destroy, by the spirit of burning—all the accumulated mass of original and acquired sinfulness. Much of smoke may blind our eyes and make us weep during the process, but the end is beyond measure to be desired. Do we know this life? Does God live in us? Are our bodies temples of the Holy Spirit? If not, since the Lord lives, we can never see His face till *we* live. He is not the God of the dead, but of the *living*—and only those that live unto Him in Christ Jesus can be in communion with Him.

I scarcely need to tell you that this life is one of high enjoyment. Truly it is a life of battle and of strife against the old death, but the life itself is as peaceable as it is pure. The spiritual life has in it all the elements of Heaven. There is a fullness of joy about it, inasmuch as it brings us into communion with the Ever-Blessed One. On high days and holy days some of us have said, as a dear Sister said to me last Thursday night, “I am happy as God, Himself, can make me.” We can say, “God, my exceeding joy.” The Lord’s visits fill us with such calm content and overflowing peace that we rejoice with joy unspeakable. Those who know this happiness may truthfully be said *to live—*but those who know it not have missed “the life which is life, indeed.”

I want you all to get this idea into your heads—I mean all of you who have not learned this fact as yet—there is a life superior to that of common men! There is a life eternal, to be enjoyed *here* and *now*! I want this idea to become a practical force with you. Stephenson got the notion of a steam engine into his brain and the steam engine soon became an actual fact with him. Palissy, the potter, had his mind full of his art and for it he sacrificed everything till he gained his end. So may you, by the teaching of the Holy Spirit, lay hold upon eternal life as being a blessed possibility— and may you be moved to seek it! There *is* an eternal life! There *is* a life of God in the soul of man! And I trust that you will, each one, resolve, “If it is to be had I will have it.” Therefore direct your thoughts and desires this way. When the heart begins to value this life and to sigh after it, it is not far from the Kingdom of God! The quickening Spirit is moving upon the soul when it begins to be restless in its fallen estate and feels a hunger after higher things. Oh that the Lord, Himself, would convince you this morning that the life spiritual and eternal is no fancy of enthusiasts, but a literal fact, a matter worthy of your very best consideration! In this way you will begin to “lay hold on eternal life.”

**II.**But this is not enough—it is merely the doorstep of the subject. “Lay hold on eternal life”—that is to say, POSSESS IT! Get it into your soul—be alive! What am I saying? My Brothers and Sisters, this eternal life must come to you before you will come to it! The Holy Spirit must breathe upon you, or you will remain in your natural death. Behold, He sends me to cry, “You dry bones, live!” And therefore I dare to speak as I have done. Apart from a Divine commission, I dare not speak thus to you!

How is eternal life grasped? Well, *it is laid hold of by faith in Jesus Christ*. It is a very simple thing to trust the Lord Jesus Christ and yet it is the only way of obtaining the eternal life. Jesus says, “He that believes in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?” By faith we have done with self and all the confidences that can ever grow out of self—and we rely upon the full Atonement made by the Lord Jesus, whom God has set forth to be a Propitiation. It is thus that we come to live! Faith and the new life go together and can never be divided! God grant that we may *all* lay hold on eternal life by laying hold of God in Christ Jesus!

This life once laid hold upon *is exercised in holy acts*. From day to day we lay hold on eternal life by exercising ourselves unto godliness in deeds of holiness and loving kindness. Let your life be love, for love is life. Let your life be one of prayer and praise, for these are the breath of the new life. We still live the animal and mental life, but these must be the mere outer courts of our being—our innermost life must be spiritual and wholly consecrated to God. Henceforth let devotion be your breathing, faith your heartbeat, meditation your feeding, self-examination your washing and holiness your walking! Let your best life be most thought of and most exercised. Be not content to use your eyes, but practice your faith in God. Neither be satisfied to exercise your limbs in moving your body, but in the power of the new life mount up with wings as eagles, run without weariness, walk without fainting! Lay hold on the eternal life by exercising it continually and never allowing it to lie dormant.

In laying hold upon it, remember that it *is increased by growth*. Zealously grasp more and more of it. Do not be afraid of having too much spiritual life! Lay hold on it, for Christ has come not only that we may have life, but that we may have it more abundantly. My Brothers and Sisters, we are, none of us, what we might be! Let us reach after something higher! “To him that has shall be given, and he shall have abundance.” Let us not forget this encouraging Word of our Lord. You that have much life have the promise of more! We may covet earnestly this heavenly treasure. We are quickened, but perhaps our life is sickly—let us bask in the beams of the Sun of Righteousness, for He has healing beneath His wings. Let us lay hold of the fullest measures of eternal life and go from strength to strength.

Remember that spiritual life is *enjoyed in the fullest sense in close communion with God*. “This is life eternal, to know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom You have sent.” “Acquaint yourself with God and be at peace.” Do not think that those gates of Heaven cut us off from God, for they are never shut and we may enjoy daily fellowship with Him who reigns within1 In Heaven or on earth we are in the same Father’s house— yes, we will dwell in the house of the Lord forever! We are not in Heaven yet, but Heaven may be in us. Men do not yet say of us, “He is with God,” but we know that God is with us. Let us endeavor to enjoy the eternal life now by abiding in the love of Christ. Then do we live, indeed, when He sups with us and we with Him. He, being raised from the dead, dies no more. And we, being raised with Him, live with Him, for Him and like He! This Christ-life in us comes to the front and pushes back the lower order of things. We cry no longer, “What shall we eat?” Or, “What shall we drink?” Or, “How shall we be clothed?” But we cry, “Lord, what would You have me to do?” Oh, to say with Paul, “I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me”!

**III.**Thirdly, “Lay hold on eternal life.” That is, WATCH OVER IT, guard it and protect it. Most men will preserve their lives at any cost. Unless they are drunk or mad, they will do anything for dear life—“Skin for skin, yes, all that a man has, will he give for his life.” *Let every Believer regard the life of God within him as being his most precious possession*, more valuable by far than the natural life. It would be wise to lay down a thousand natural lives, if we had them, in order to preserve the spiritual life. It is infinitely better to suffer than to sin, to lose property than purity. God has given us this priceless jewel—let us guard it as the apple of our eye!

The other day we read in the newspapers of two persons in America being found dead from “starvation and cold.” And we also read that each of these persons was possessed of a considerable sum of money. We say, “What fools!” Men with sums of money about their persons, or hidden away in their rooms, and yet suffering the ills of need till they actually die of hunger—what madness is this! Are those more sane who injure and dwarf their *spiritual* life for the sake of intellectual pride, or carnal joy, or the esteem of men? Is not the spirit infinitely more precious than the body? Brethren, if we starve at all, let us starve our bodies and not our spirits! If anything must be stunted, let it be the baser nature! Let us not live eagerly for this world and languidly for the world to come. Having the Divine Life within us, let us not neglect to feed it and supply its needs.

Here is a man that gives up attendance at religious services in the week because he hungers to increase his business—he buys brass with gold! Another quits the place where he enjoys a Gospel ministry to go at a larger salary to a place where his soul will be famished—he barters fine flour for husks! Another goes into all sorts of evil company where he knows that his character is injured and his soul imperiled—and his excuse is that it pays! O Sirs, is it so, after all, that this eternal life which you *profess* to possess is of trifling value in your eyes? Then I declare before you that you do not possess it at all! How could you thus play the fool if the Lord had made you wise unto salvation? “Lay hold on eternal life,” for this is the chief good, for the sake of which you may quit inferior things. “Seek you first the Kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.” First and foremost, guard beyond everything your life, your *real* life, wearing always “the armor of light,” “the whole armor of God.”

Here is a sinking ship and none can escape but those who can swim. One man grasps a life belt and puts it about him. Sensible man! Another carefully secures his gold into a girdle and binds it about his waist. Madman! He is treating himself as cruel wretches treat a dog whom they sink into the water with a stone about him! This last individual is the portrait of professing Christians who will be rich and, thereby, drown themselves in perdition and destruction. See the ninth verse of the chapter before us. Hold first and foremost onto eternal life and guard it with all your power, as being yourself, your all!

To that end the Apostle bade Timothy *flee from those things which are detrimental to that life*. “You, O man of God, flee these things.” A man that is very careful of his life will not remain in a house where fever has been rife. He looks to the drains and all other sanitary arrangements—and if these are hopelessly bad, he quits the house. No measure of cheapness or convenience will make him risk his life. Have you heard of men in their senses who will hunt for dens of fever and cholera and wantonly enter them? On the contrary, visitors are scared from a city or district by the mere *rumor* of cholera or other infectious disease. You who profess to be men of God must flee these things which are injurious to purity, to truth, to godliness, to communion with God—for these are detrimental to your best life.

Then the Apostle tells Timothy to *seek after everything that would promote his eternal life*. He says, “Follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness”—seek after that which will exercise and develop your highest life. Frequent those hills of holiness where the atmosphere is bracing for your new-born spirit. I notice how people who are sickly will leave their homes and journey far for health. Not only will they sojourn upon the sunny shores of the Mediterranean, but they will encounter the pitiless cold of the Alps in mid-winter at St. Maritz or Davoust in the hope of restoration. If physicians would only guarantee prolongation of life, men would emigrate to inhospitable Siberia or banish themselves to Greenland’s icy mountains! Men will do *anything* for life. Shall we not be eager to do all that we can to foster our *spiritual life*? Christian people, do nothing that will damage your Heaven-born lives! Act in this according to the highest prudence.

God help us to lay hold on eternal life and to that end *above all things lay hold on Christ*! We only live in Him—He is our life. To be divided from Christ is as surely death to us as it would be death to the body to be separated from the head. Make Jesus the Alpha and the Omega of your existence, for without Him you can do nothing, nor even live. “This is the true God and eternal life.” To believe in Jesus is to live! To love Him much is to have life more abundantly. Cling to Jesus! Rest in the Lord, for He is our peace. Dwell on Calvary. Live between the First and Second Comings of the Lord. Lay hold on eternal life as a drowning man lays hold upon a spar and will not relax his grasp. It is not a vain thing for you, for it is your life. “He that has the Son, has life; and he that has not the Son of God, has not life.” Let us, therefore, steadfastly abide in the Son of God and so know that we have eternal life.

**IV.**But now, fourthly (and with the same brevity)—“Lay hold on eternal life,” that is, FULFILL IT. Labor that the time of your sojourning here shall be occupied not with this poor, dying existence, but with the eternal life. *Fulfill the higher and the eternal life in every position of society*. The chapter opens with advice to servants who, then, were slaves. Their earthly life was wretched, indeed, but the Apostle bids them live, not for this present life, but for the eternal life. Inasmuch as they could glorify God by continuing to bear the yoke and would *not* glorify Him by rising in insurrection against their masters, he bade them remain in their position until better times might come. He would have them, by Divine Grace, fulfill the relationship in which they found themselves.

Christianity is the deadly foe of slavery, but it took time to destroy it, and meanwhile, believing slaves were bid to glorify God in their station. And this is what the Gospel says to every one of us—Honor your station by glorifying God in it. When the famous Spartan warrior Brasidas complained that Sparta was so small a state, his mother replied to him, “My son, Sparta has fallen to your lot and it is your duty to adorn it.” Christian man, adorn the doctrine of God, your Savior, in all things! Wherever you are found, endeavor in that place to live out eternal life. Be not so anxious to change your position as to use it for eternal purposes. Are you a preacher? Seek not popularity by pleasing the times, but seek honor by pleasing God! Are you a master? Seek not to use your position to please self, but to bless your day and generation. Are you a servant? Be not perpetually lamenting because of your hard work and scant wage, but let all men see what Grace can do.

The eternal life should gild the lower life as the sun lights up the landscape. It is a sad pity when we let the lower life rise above us! Shall the horse ride the man? Shall the bullock drive the farmer? Let the position be bettered, if it may be, but if this cannot be improved, be you, yourself, improved—and a greater thing is done! Live not for time, but for eternity. What if I am a servant, yet I am the Lord’s freeman—let me live as such! What if I am poor, yet I am rich towards God, so let me enjoy my portion! Lay hold on eternal life all the more eagerly if in this temporal life you have little to lay hold on.

Fulfill this better life, also, by *leaving alone those questions which would swallow up the hour*. See how Paul destroys these devourers—“Questions and strifes of words, whereof comes envy, strife, railings, evil surmising, perverse disputes of men of corrupt minds and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw yourself.” He speaks in the end of the Epistle of “profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called.” We are overdone with these canker worms at this hour! Brothers and Sisters, you can go and interfere in all the controversies of the day if you like, but beware of the consequences! You can be a party politician if you like, or you can be a man of culture, loving speculation better than Revelation, if you think fit, but, if you take my advice, you will do nothing of the sort, but “lay hold on eternal life.”

I like that expression of Mr. Wesley’s preachers, when they were asked to interfere in this or that political struggle, they replied, “Our work is to win souls and we give ourselves to it.” Oh that churches would listen to this just now! They are going in for amusements and the church is vying with the theater! Oh that we would lay hold on eternal life and seek the salvation of men! Eternal life in our churches would soon cast out the rubbish which is now defiling them! Jesus in the churches would purify the temple of the puppets, as once He cleansed it of the traders. We need to receive anew this conviction that our one great business here below is to lay hold on eternal life, first making our own calling and election sure, and then seeking to bring others to Christ! Other questions compared with this are mere debates as to tweedledum and tweedledee! Let the potsherds strive with the potsherds of the earth until they break each other in their anger! But we strive only for the Kingdom of Heaven which lies not in trivial things. It is ours to lay hold upon eternal life! As for the rest, the will of the Lord be done!

Further, the Apostle bids us *do this so as to surmount the temptations of selfishness*. He warns us that “they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.” He whose life’s object is to accumulate money is not a Christian! No man can serve two masters—and if Mammon is his master, Christ is not his Master. To prosper in business with the sincere desire of using everything for the honor and glory of God is laudable and proper. But to make this the *end* rather than the *means* is a horrible prostitution and debasement of our energies. To live for this world is to be dead to the world to come.

The Apostle bids us “lay hold on *eternal* life” rather than on *this* life—to gain riches of *Grace* rather than riches of *gold*. Furthermore, he has a word for us if we become rich—for he supposes that such a thing may be and that it did happen in his own day. He says—“Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God who gives us richly all things to enjoy; that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.” As the alchemist was said to transmute brass and copper into gold, (though he did no such thing), so there is a *real* alchemy which can sublime gold and silver into everlasting treasure. These talents are not to be despised, but put out to interest for the Lord. They can be laid by where no rust does corrupt and where thieves do not break through and steal. They can be traded with in a heavenly market and turned to everlasting gains. We can use them for helping in the work of the Lord and by distribution to the poor and needy.

I would that all men at this hour abounded in almsgiving, but specially those who are followers of the loving Jesus. Regard your transactions from the standpoint of eternity. Weigh what you do, not as it may be thought of by men of the world, but as it will be judged by yourself when you behold in the heavenly country the face of Him you love! I do not want you to have to say when you come to die, “I have had large possessions, but I have been a bad steward. I have had a competence and I have wasted my Master’s goods. All I have done with my wealth was to furnish my house well, perhaps to buy expensive pictures and to allow myself luxuries which did me more harm than good.” I hope, on the contrary, you will have to say, “I am saved by Grace, alone, and that Grace enabled me to consecrate my substance and put it to the best uses. I can render up my stewardship without fear. I did not live for the fleeting life which is now over, but for the life everlasting.”

Brothers and Sisters, some men spend so much upon themselves and so little for the Lord, that they seem to me to eat the apple and give Christ the parings! They hoard up the flour and give the Lord a little of the bran. Happy man who can carry out in life what he has dared to say in song—

***“All that I am and all I have,  
Shall be forever Yours!  
Whatever my duty bids me give,  
My cheerful hands resign.  
Yet if I might make some reserve,  
And duty did not call  
I love my God with zeal so great,  
That I should give Him all.”***

The Apostle means, when he says, “lay hold on eternal life,” get beyond today and tomorrow. Leap out of this month and this year. Live for the future; for eternity. Live not as insects that die in a day, but as men that live forever. This life is as a prick made on paper by a pin—it is too small a thing to compare with the everlasting future. The for-ever, whether of misery or bliss, dwarfs this life to nothing.

Once more, let me say the Apostle urges us to fulfill the higher life by sundry arguments. He says, “whereunto you are also called.” Sovereign Grace has called us to eternal life—we are elect according to the foreknowledge of God from among men, in order that we may live unto Him. We are bound to make eternal life our first and last consideration, for God has called us thereto. Be not false to the call. If you are a minister or deacon, you have an official call. Be not unmindful of it, but live up to your high calling. The Apostle adds, “and has professed a good profession before many witnesses.” Many of you did this in your Baptism, when, as Believers, you were buried with Christ “by Baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.” In that sacred act you professed that the old nature was then and there to be regarded as buried and you would live for Christ and like Christ. Oh, be not false to your solemn vows, but lay hold on eternal life—not upon the miserable wretchedness of the passing hour! Then the Apostle sets before us the great example, “I charge you in the sight of God, who quickens all things and before Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession; that you keep this commandment.” Christ sacrificed everything for us. He gave *Himself* for us! He laid hold on things eternal—as for anything here below, He let it slip by for our sakes. Eternity was always pressing upon the heart of Christ, for the joy that was set before Him, He endured the Cross, despising the shame. Therefore, if you are a Christian, professing to follow Christ, lay hold on eternal life and let this fill your grasp.

**V.**Last of all, and I have done,*EXPECT* ETERNAL LIFE. By the two hands of faith and hope lay hold on eternal life as the great reward of the righteous. Look for the crown of life which fades not away. The time comes when this mortal life shall be utterly swallowed up in eternal life. Let me suggest to you, my beloved Brothers and Sisters, that we *think much about the life to come*. We shall soon be there in the endless home, let us send our thoughts there like couriers in advance. Let the harps of angels ring out their music to our listening ears! Let the songs of the redeemed awaken us to unite with them in the praises of our Lord! You will soon be there—anticipate the joy! Put on your white robes by faith and even if a little imagination should come to the aid of faith, it will do no harm. Your heads will soon wear the crown—the crown which you will delight to cast at Jesus’ feet! Today you know the straits of poverty, but you are going where the streets are paved with transparent gold! You now know the aches and pains of this frail flesh, but you are going where perpetual youth and rigor shall cause all pain to flee away! You are passing quickly along the journey—think much of that journey’s end. Remember the rest which remains, the perfection which is promised, the victory which is secured, the communion which is provided, the Glory which is dawning! “His servants shall serve Him and they shall see His face.” Think much of your home—every good child will do so.

When you think of it and your heart grows warm with the thought, then *count it very near*. Suppose you are to live a comparatively long life? Yet no human life is really long. Even to a young man, if he has to look forward to a gray old age, life is but a span. How brief it seems on looking back! When I remember the Brother who died in yonder pew last Sunday, I can but feel how near Heaven is to some among us. We have touched the celestial country! One Brother has just leaped on shore! The other day, all of a sudden, I saw the white cliffs of Dover. The swift ship had performed the passage so rapidly that the sea had been crossed before I had reckoned on reaching land. There were the cliffs. Just ahead, Brothers and Sisters, Heaven is just ahead! Run to the bows! Heaven ahoy! Do not forever continue gazing at the misty shores behind you. Look ahead! You are far nearer than you think, to the land of the immortal! We are within speaking distance of Heaven! The Lord hears our cry and we hear His

promise— ***“How near to faith’s far-seeing eye  
The golden gates appear!”***  
In this way lay hold on eternal life by confident expectancy. *Rehearse eternal life*! Rehearse the service and joy of Heaven! They have  
rehearsals of fine pieces of music—let us have a rehearsal of Heaven’s  
harmonies. The thing is practicable. We have often enjoyed rehearsals of  
temple music in this Tabernacle. In this pulpit I have been within half an  
inch of Heaven—and I hope you know the same nearness in the pews! Let  
us begin the music here and now. Glorified saints praise the Lamb—let *us*  
praise Him! They worship the great God with transports of joy—let *us*  
worship with them! They find their all in Jesus—where else have *we* anything? Let our Sabbaths be, each of them, a taste of the Sabbath that  
shall have no end! Thus “lay hold on eternal life.”  
“Ah,” says one, “I wish I were already in Heaven.” Do not be in a hurry.  
The best expectancy is that which waits with patience. Our esteemed  
Brother, Mr. Lockhart, tells a story of one of his members, of the name of  
Carey—a royal name *that*! She was very sick and near to die, but she expressed a desire to live, at which he was somewhat astonished, for he  
knew her to be so well prepared to depart. She wished to stay here a while for a good and laudable reason. There was one thing which she could see here on earth—which she could not see in Heaven—and she wished to remain here to see it again and again. “What is that?” Mr. Lockhart asked. “It is the tear of repentance on the sinner’s cheek. I want to see a great many more of those before I go Home.” And so do I. O my unconverted Hearers, I would willingly stay out of Heaven to weep for you till you weep for sin! To see tears of repentance in all your eyes would be a Heaven to me!  
My Brothers and Sisters around me would be willing to wait, also, even until Jesus comes, if we could, by our waiting, help to give you repentance. Tears of repentance bedewing the cheeks of sinners are the diamonds of angels and the jewels of saints! Oh, that my beloved helpers may see many drops of the dew of repentance this morning when they come round among you! And may Jesus see them and speak peace to repenting hearts. Poor sinners! We would stay out of Heaven for such as you, even as Jesus came out of Heaven for such as you! Believe on the one appointed Savior and enter into eternal life—and we will dwell in Heaven together! The Lord grant it. Amen.

***PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—1 Timothy 6.*HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—885, 852, 229.**

My Sermon readers who, from week to week, learn what I have said to my congregation would greatly gratify me if they would take in my monthly magazine, “The Sword and the Trowel,” and so learn what is *done*, as well as what is said. I think they will be interested by this periodical and I feel sure that this would lead to their lending a hand in those many holy enterprises in which I am engaged for my Lord’s sake. If I have helped you, dear Readers, help me! Order the magazine and see what those works are by which I try to show that the Doctrines of the Grace of God are not fruitless things.—C. H. S.

÷2Ti 1.6

OUR GIFTS AND HOW TO USE THEM  
NO. 1080

*DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

***“Therefore I remind you to you stir up the gift of God which is in you by the laying on of my hands.”***2Ti 1:6***.***

I SUPPOSE that Timothy was a somewhat retiring youth and that from the gentleness of his nature he needed to be exhorted to the exercise of the bolder virtues. He is bid not to be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord and to endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. He is called to the front, though his modesty would have kept him in the rear, and he is exhorted to command and teach, suffering no man to despise his youth. Perhaps, also, he was not a man of very vigorous action and needed, every now and then, a little touch of the spur to induce him to put forth all his dormant energy and keep himself and his Church thoroughly up to the mark in labor for Christ.

His was a choice spirit and therefore it was desirable to see it strong, brave and energetic. No one would wish to arouse a bad man, for like a viper he is all the worse for being awake. But in proportion to the excellence of the character is the desirability of its being full of force. The Apostle Paul tells Timothy, in his first Epistle, not to neglect the gift that is in him. And in the text before us he bids him stir up that gift—in each case he is sounding the trumpet in his ear and summoning him to intense *action*. He speaks of the gift that was conferred by the laying on of hands, and in the former Epistle he connects that with the hands of the presbytery.

Now it was no doubt the custom to lay on hands at the ordination of Christian ministers by the Apostles and there was an excellent reason for it—for gifts were thereby conveyed to the ordained. And when we can find anybody who can thereby confer some spiritual gift upon us, we shall be glad to have their hands laid on our heads. But we care not for empty hands. Rites cease when their meaning ceases. If practiced any longer they gender to superstition and are fit instruments of priestcraft. The upholding of the hands of the eldership, when they give their vote to elect a man to the pastorate, is a sensible proceeding, and is, I suspect, all the Apostle means when he speaks of the presbytery. But empty *hands*, it seems to me, are fitly laid on empty *heads*—and to submit to an empty ceremony is the most idle of all idle waste of time!

If Paul were here and could confer a gift, we should rejoice to receive it. Yes, and if the meanest man in Christendom, or woman, for that matter, could confer the smallest drachma of Divine Grace by the putting on of their hands, we would bow our head in the most humble manner. Till then we shall beg to decline submitting to the imposition, or assisting in it. For this reason, and others, we cannot use the text exactly as it stands in addressing this congregation. But leaving out the reference to laying on of hands, we may honestly, without violation of the current of Inspiration, proceed to exhort each one of you to stir up the gift that is in you!

There are many kinds of gifts. All Christians have some gift. Some may have but one talent, but all have one at the least. The Great Householder has apportioned to every servant a talent. No single part of a vital body is without its office. True, there are some parts of the body whose office has not been discovered—even the physician and the anatomist have not been able to tell why certain organs are in the human frame, or what office they serve—but as even these are found to be necessary, we are quite sure that they fulfill some useful purpose. Truly, there are some Christians who might be put in that category—it might puzzle anybody to know what they are capable of—and yet it is certain they have some charge committed to them to keep, and, if true Believers, they are essential parts of the body of Christ.

As every beast, bird, fish and insect has its own place in Nature, so has every Christian a fit position in the economy of Grace. No tree, no plant, no weed could be dispensed with without injury to Nature’s perfection. Neither can any sort of gift or Grace be lost to the Church without injury to her completeness. Every living saint has his charge to keep—his talent over which he is a steward. A measure of gift is in all of us, needing to be stirred up. Some have gifts outside of them rather than within them— gifts, for instance, of worldly position, estate and substance. These ought to be well used, and considering that in these times we have a starving world to deal with, and that one of the great impediments to the spread of the Gospel is, with some of us, the lack of means for the maintenance of those who should preach the Word, it does seem a strange thing that professors should store up God’s money and use it as if it were their own.

When for our orphans, our students, our tract distributors and our missionaries we need funds, how can men love the Lord with all their hearts and yet keep their thousands cankering at their bankers, or their tens resting in their purses? They have not learned to provide for themselves bags that wax not old. They do not understand that to *keep* their money they must *give it away*—that truly to preserve it they must dedicate it to God—that which is kept by the miserly for themselves is not really preserved, but wasted. That which is expended in the Master’s service is laid up in Heaven where neither moth nor rust can corrupt.

But I am not going to speak about that. I have not much reason to speak upon that subject to those who are immediately connected with me, for I have rather to praise you than to upbraid. Most of our dear friends here serve the Lord with the gifts that are outside of them—not all as we should, but many with more than ordinary liberality and some up to the full measure of their means, if not beyond them. There are, however, exceptions to all rules and there are a few who attend this place who need more than a gentle hint to excite anything like generosity in them. But we must go at once to the point in hand—“the gift that is in you,” we have now to speak of. First, the gift that may be in each one of us. And then, secondly, how we are to stir this gift up. And in conclusion, we will give reasons for the stirring of it.

**I.**First, then, WHAT GIFT IS THERE IN US? In some here present there are gifts of mind which are accompanied with gifts of utterance. It is no mean thing to be able to read the Scriptures and to see their inner meaning—to be able to compare spiritual things with spiritual and to be so taught in other matters so that we are able to see the hand of God in history and can, upon all such subjects, speak to edification. It is not everyone who has a mind who has also the gift of utterance, but where God is pleased to give to any man mind and mouth, he possesses a gift which he ought abundantly to use.

Many a man is mighty in the Scriptures but not eloquent. When the two things meet, as in Apollos, and are combined with a fervent spirit, a man of God has power, indeed! May I suggest that every Christian man here who is possessed of the faculty of eloquent discourse is bound to use it for Jesus Christ? Some young men spend their evenings in Debating Societies and the like, and I have not a word to say against that, but I have this to say—whatever you may do with this talent in other directions, the Lord, who has bought you with His blood, if you are a Christian man—has the first claim upon you and you are bound to use your powers of utterance in His cause.

“But I am not a minister!” What do you mean by that? Do you find anything in Scripture about clergy and laity? If so, you have read it with different eyes from mine! There were men called especially to the oversight of the Church and the preaching of the Word, but everyone, according to his gift, also had a call—and there is no man in the Church of God who has ability to speak who has any license to be silent. Not only the goldenmouthed orators, but the silver-tongued speakers—men of the second as well as of the first order—should serve in the Gospel of the Son of God. I shall not ask any young man whether he *ought* to preach, but whether he can prove that he ought *not*.

Every man is bound to tell another who is in danger, to escape from that danger. Everyone who has recovered from a dreadful disease is bound to tell others what remedy was made effectual in his case. Nothing can excuse us from, in some way or other, spreading abroad the Gospel of Jesus Christ! And if we have the ability to speak, it will go hard at last with us if we have been silent with our fellow men. The stones in the street might surely cry out against some religious professors who make the Houses of Parliament, the Council Chamber, the Courts of Justice, the Athenaeum, or the Mechanics’ Hall ring with their voices, and yet preach not Jesus—who can argue points of politics and the like, but not speak a word for Christ—eloquent for the world, but dumb for Jesus?

From this may God deliver us! If you have any gift, young man, come out and use it—or old man, also, if you have laid it by till late in the day. In these straitened times when the harvest is ripe and the laborers are few, let every man that has his sickle come forth into the field. Let no man say, “I pray you have me excused,” but by the blood that bought you, if you have tasted of the Water of Life, cry aloud and spare not, and be this your message—“Whoever will, let him take the Water of Life freely.”

There are numbers of Believers who have not the gift of utterance with the tongue, who nevertheless can speak very fluently and admirably with the pen. If, then, you have the gift of the pen, are you using it for Christ as you ought? I need to stir up the gift that is in you. Letters have often been blessed to conversion! Are you accustomed to write with that view? Perhaps you are a great contributor to the postal revenue. Let me ask you what sort of matter it is with which you burden her Majesty’s mails? Do you write letters to your children and friends full of loving testimony to what the Grace of God has done for you? If you have not done so, dear Friends, try at once! Jesus wants consecrated pens and in His name I claim your service!

The writing of tracts and the dissemination of holy Truth by means of the press are most important—any person who has any gifts in that direction should be sure to use them. Why are writers upon religion often so dull, while the world commands talent and vivacity? Many thousands of pens are running every day upon the most idle nonsense and mailing booksellers’ shelves groan with the literature of fiction! Are there none who, with splendor of diction or in humbler guise, could write interestingly of the Gospel and tell of its power among the sons of men? If there is, in the tribe of Zebulon, any that handle the pen of the ready writer, let them not keep back from the help of the Lord—the help of the Lord against the mighty!

Another form of gift that belongs to us is influence. We have all of us influence of some sort—some more, some less. What an influence the parent has! To a great extent you mold your children’s lives. Some of us owe what we never can repay to our mothers. What they have done for us shall make us grateful to them even when they shall slumber in the dust. The nurse girl who has the care of little children should be very careful, for a remark she may make without intention may shape the character—yes, mar or bless the child’s character throughout eternity! And you who associate daily with working men—is there enough among Christian masters of earnest zeal to use a holy and affectionate influence among the employed?

If classes are alienated, one from the other, as it is to be feared they are, is it not because we meet each other just as a matter of business and that there is little of anything like Christian affection and communion between the one and the other? Indeed some laugh off the idea as ridiculous and tell me I know very little of the world to dream of such a thing! I will leave that question to the day which shall reveal all things, and I think I know who will prove to be right. Let every one of us reckon up what influence he has, and having done so, let us ask God’s Grace that we may use it aright. I shall not go into details here. You are all affecting those round about you for good or evil. As Christian men you are either leading others to Christ even unconsciously, or else you are deadening their consciences and leading them to think there is not much in religion after all—and surely you would not wish to do that! If you have the gift of influence, I would stir you up to *use* it.

Many of the elder members of the Church have another gift, namely, experience. Certainly, experience cannot be purchased nor taught. It is given us of the Lord who teaches us to profit. It is a peculiar treasure each man wins for himself as he is led through the wilderness. An experienced Christian is put in the Church on purpose that he may guide the inexperienced—that he may help those who are distressed with a word of comfort derived from his own experience of God’s helping hand in time of trouble—that he may warn the heedless by the mischiefs he himself has suffered through carelessness. Now, when an experienced Christian merely uses his experience for his own comfort, or as a standard by which to judge his fellow Christians, or makes use of it for self-exaltation as though he were infinitely superior to the most zealous young men—such a man mars his talent, does mischief with it—and makes himself heavily responsible.

Dear Brothers and Sisters, I, who am so young in years compared with many of you, beseech you who have long walked in the ways of godliness to use your experience continually in your visitation of the sick, in your conversations with the poor, in your meetings with young beginners and in your dealings with backsliders! Let your paths drop fatness! Let the anointing God has given you fall upon those who are round about you! May you be of such a sort as a certain clergyman I heard of the other day. I asked a poor woman “What sort of man is he?” She said, “He is such a sort of man, Sir, that if he comes to see you, you know he has been there.” I understood what she meant—he left behind him some godly saying, weighty advice, holy consolation, or devout reflection which she could remember after he had left her cottage door. May our venerable friends always have this said of them!

Another gift which many have is the gift of prayer—of prayer with power—in private for the Church and with sinners. There are some who have learned by long practice how to knock at Heaven’s door so as to get a readier opening of the door than others. Numbers of these have coupled with this the gift of utterance in public prayer. Such dear friends ought not to be absent from the Prayer Meeting except when absolutely necessary. They should not only be content with coming to Prayer Meetings that are established, but they should stir up the gift that is in them and try to establish others in neglected places. There was never a period when the Church had too much prayer. “The Sacraments,” as they are called, may have been unduly exalted but who has ever unduly exalted prayer? Biblereadings may degenerate into mere discussion, and even preaching into a show of oratory—but prayer has vital elements about it which survive many an injury.

Alas! Alas for Churches that have given up Prayer Meetings! You shall judge of the Presence of God by the Prayer Meeting as accurately as you shall judge the temperature of the air by the thermometer. It is one of the truest signs that God is with the people when they pray—and it is one of the darkest signs that He has departed when prayer is lacking. You who have sweet communion with God in private, look upon your prevalence on the knee not only as a blessing for yourselves, but as a gift that is bestowed upon you for the good of others. There is another gift which is a very admirable one. It is the gift of conversation, not a readiness for chit chat and gossip—(he who has that wretched propensity may bury it in the earth and never dig it up again)—but the gift of leading conversation, of being what George Herbert called the “master-gunner.”

When we have that, we should most conscientiously use it for God. There lived, some 50 years or so ago, a set of great table-talkers who were asked out to dine because of their lively conversational powers. Now if this is in any of you, never waste it in mere pleasantries, but say something worth saying and aim at the highest results. Remember Jesus was a mighty table-talker, as the Evangelists take care to note. I wish I could, with discreet adroitness, break in upon a conversation in a railway carriage and turn it round to the Savior—turn it round to something worth speaking of. I often envy those of my Brethren who can go up to individuals and talk to them with freedom. I do not always find myself able to do so, though when I have been Divinely aided I have had a large reward.

When a Christian man can get hold of a man and talk to him, it is like one of the old men of war laying alongside a French ship and giving her a broadside, making every timber shiver and at last sending her to the bottom. How many a soul has been brought to Christ by the loving personal exhortations of Christian people who know how to do it? To be able, like Elijah, to stretch yourselves upon the dead child—to put your hands upon his hands, your feet upon his feet and breathe the life by God’s help into the dead—oh, some of you can do this better, perhaps, than those who are called to speak to hundreds and thousands! Do use it if you have the ability, and try to get the ability if you have it not.

Perhaps you possess it and have not found it out. No unconverted person should come to this place without your speaking to him. And as to a person attending the Tabernacle three Sundays without being spoken to by some Christian, it ought to be an impossibility and would be if all were in a right warm-hearted state, earnestly desiring the salvation of others! May God teach us, if we can converse personally with individuals, to furbish up the gift, keep it in good condition and continually use it. My inventory of the gifts which are in us is not complete, nor is it intended to be. Each person may have a separate gift. Even the gift to be able to lie still and suffer is not a small one. The gift of being able to be poor and content is not to be despised. The gift of nursing the sick or of interesting children should be lovingly employed. Neither ought any talent to be wrapped in a napkin. But, whatever it is, the word is, “Stir up the gift which is in you.”

**II.**And this brings us, secondly, to the consideration of HOW WE ARE TO STIR UP OUR GIFTS. First, we should do it by *examination* to see what gifts we really have. There should be an overhauling of all our stores to see what we have of capital entrusted to our stewardship. May I ask you for a minute to sit quietly and take stock of all God has given you? Remember you shall assess yourself, for I am sure your manhood, not to say your self-esteem, will not let you put yourself down as utterly without gifts.

If somebody were to speak of you depreciatingly, you would very soon defend yourself and argue for your own capacity in many departments. I would put you on your mettle and bring you to acknowledge your capabilities. Now think of all the abilities you have, dear Brother, dear Sister. What has God trusted you with? Add up each item and compute the total sum. What trading-money have you of your Lord’s? To whom much is given, of him much will be required. What, then, has been given to *you*? Such an enquiry will help you to stir up the gift that is in you. The selfexamination of every mental faculty, every spiritual attainment, every form of characteristic force or individual influence will be an excellent commencement for a more vigorous course of action.

Enquire what you can do, what more you *could* do, what more you might *learn* to do, what more you ought at least to *attempt*. Diminish nothing from the just amount of your possibilities and it will greatly tend to stir you up, if you then enquire, “How far have I done what I could do? How far have I used all that has been committed to me? How much of my life has been allowed to rust and how much has been made bright by wear and tear in the service of my Master?” It is not a pleasant duty to which I have invited you. You would be much more gratified if I asked you to consider some precious promise of the Covenant and certainly I should find it more consolatory to myself, but this is necessary. Sweet things are pleasant, but sharp things are often the more beneficial. Pillows for our heads are not our main desire—we wish, as soldiers of the Cross—to be found faithful, first of all and above all! We shall have to give an account before God. Oh, let us give an account before ourselves, now, in the forum of our own conscience and so stir up the gift that is in us!

The next mode of stirring up our gift is to consider to what use we could put the talents we possess. To what use could I put my talents in my family? Am I doing all I could for the children? Have I labored all I ought for my wife’s conversion—my husband’s conversion? Then about the neighborhood—is there nothing more that I could do for the salvation of my poor godless neighbors? Perhaps I see them drunk, profane, unchaste, irreligious, full of all manner of disobedience to God—can I not, by God’s Grace, uplift them? They never come to a place of worship—have I done all I could to get them there? I was not placed in that neighborhood without an object. If it is a dark part of London, I am put there to be a lamp if I am a Christian. Am I shining, then?

Some people prefer to live where there is light and for themselves the choice is wise, but I think, for usefulness, loving hearts might prefer to live in bad districts that they might do good. Are you doing all you can for Jesus? Come, answer like an honest man! Having done so, I have more for your self-inspection. Will you examine yourself in every relation in which you stand? As a master, stir up your gift in reference to those you employ. As a servant, stir up the gift towards your fellow servants. As a trader, stir up your gift in reference to those with whom you come in contact. Are you a sailor? Have you stepped in here tonight? What an opportunity you have, my Friend, in landing on many shores and doing something for Christ here, and there and everywhere!

Are you a commercial traveler and do you go to many places? Surely you might travel for our Lord with Gospel wares to be distributed without money and without price and yet attend to your own calling, none the less. If our Churches were in a right state of spiritual health, men would not first say, “What can I do to make money?” but, “What can I do to serve Christ, for I will take up a trade subserviently to that.” But if we cannot bring men to that point, we must at least say, (to all of you who profess to be Christians, at any rate), in whatever condition you are placed, high or low, rich or poor, you should live unto Christ! You should each enquire, “What can I do for the Lord in my present condition? What peculiar service does my position involve?” In this way, dear Friends, stir up the gift that is in you.

But, next, stir it up not merely by consideration and examination, but by actually *using* it. We talk much of working, but working is better than *talking* about working. To get really at it and to do something for soulwinning and spreading abroad the Glory of God is infinitely better than planning and holding committees. Away with windbags! Let us get to acts and deeds. None of us know what we can do till we try. The sportsman will tell you that there may be many birds in a field, but you know not how many till you walk through and then you discover them and see them on the wing. When the wheel turns you will be able to see the force of the current. You will see the speed of the horse when you put him to his best. Work, work and the tool that is blunt will get an edge by being used! Shine, and the light you have shall grow in the very act of shining!

He who has done one thing will find himself capable of doing two, and doing two will be able to accomplish four—and having achieved the four will soon go on to 12 and from 12 to fifty! And so, by growing multiples he will enlarge his power to serve God by using the ability he has. Does this tire you? Does my subject seem too much like salvation by works? Nothing is further from my thoughts! I am not, now, speaking upon salvation at all! Neither am I addressing those who are seeking after salvation. I am speaking to you who have been saved already by the Grace of God! You are saved, and on that point all is done. You are resting in the finished work of Christ. Should it ever seem hard to you to be stirred up to serve Him? Let the vision of His tearful face come up to you.

Behold His crown of thorns! Let Him turn His back to you, and count the gashes the Roman scourges made! Look at Him—a spectacle of blood and love! And is it possible that any service for Him can, by you, be considered difficult? To burn at a stake! If we could do it a thousand times, He well deserves that we should make the sacrifice! To give Him every pulse and every drop of blood and every breath we breathe—He well deserves it, glory be to His name! He merits all our love a thousand times over. I shall not fear to press upon you again and again and again that you use the gifts which are in you by actual service of so precious a Master.

And then, dear Friends, in addition to using our gift, every one of us should try to improve it. We have for years endeavored to stir up the young Christians of this congregation to educate themselves. By our evening classes it is intended that young men who preach in the street may get education in order to better preach the Gospel of Christ. And out of this congregation have gone hundreds whom God has owned as ministers of Christ and many such are being trained now. I would have *every* man put himself in training. I think every man ought to feel, “I have been Christ’s man with a talent; I will be Christ’s man with 10 if I can. If now I do not thoroughly understand the doctrines of His Gospel, I will try to understand them. I will read and search, and learn.”  
We need an intelligent race of Christians, not an affected race of boasters of culture—mental fops who pretend to know a great deal and know nothing—but we need hard students of the Word, adept in theology like the Puritans of old. Romanism will never do much with people who know the doctrines of the Word of God—it is a bat and hates sunlight. Every one of us ought to be students and learners, trying to get more ability for usefulness as well as to be built up ourselves in our most holy faith. To the younger members of our Churches, especially, we speak this. Give yourselves to reading, study and prayer. Grow mentally and spiritually. You teach in the class—you do well—but could not you do better if you knew more? And if you address children in the Sunday schools we are glad of it—but would you not do that better if you studied more perfectly the Truth of God?

Apollos was not ashamed to be taught, nor need the most successful laborer be ashamed to learn! Improve your gift, for that is one way of stirring it up. And then pray over your gifts—that is a blessed way of stirring them up—to go before God and spread out your responsibilities before Him. In my own case I have often to cry, “Lord, You have given me this Congregation, and O it is hard to be clear of the blood of them all, and to speak with affection and prudence, and courage to all so as not to leave one unwarned, unhelped, untaught. Help me, my Lord, that I may leave no one without his portion of meat in due season. Who is sufficient for these things? Only Your Grace is sufficient for me.”

It stirs one up to preach with all his might when he has laid before God in prayer his weakness. And the ability which God has given him, too, and asked that the weakness may be consecrated to God’s Glory and the ability accepted to the Lord’s praise. Should we not do just the same, whatever our calling is—take it to the Lord and say, “Assist me, great God, to live to You. If Your Grace in me is only as a handful of meal and a little oil, make it hold out—make it hold out! It is not much I can do, my Master. Help me to do it well and to continue steadfast and unwearied in it”? Pray over yourself, as it were.

Put your whole self upon the altar and then let the drink-offering be the pouring out of your tears before God in prayer that He would be pleased to accept you, to qualify you, to anoint you, to direct you and bless you in all that you do. This would be the most excellent manner of stirring up the gift that is in you. O Spirit of the living God, lead all Your people to downright, earnest and actual service of the Redeemer, and especially work in us to that end!

**III.**I will not linger longer there, but close with the third observation— WHY IS IT THAT WE SHOULD STIR UP THE GIFT THAT IS IN US? There are many replies to this. One or two will answer our purpose. We should stir up the gift that is in us because all we shall do, when we have stirred ourselves to the utmost and when the Spirit of God has strengthened us to the highest degree, will *still* fall far short of what our dear Lord and Master deserves at our hands! Ah, what must Jesus think of us when He remembers His own love? Was there ever such a contrast between His furnace seven times hotter and our iceberg spirits?

He spared not Himself but we are *always* sparing ourselves. He gives us everything to the last rag and hangs naked on the Cross. We keep almost all to ourselves and count self-sacrifice to be difficult. He labors, is weary and yet ceases not. We are a little weary and straightway we faint. He continued to preach on, notwithstanding all the ill return men made. We take offense and throw up our work because we are not appreciated as we should be. Oh, the little things which put some workers out of temper and out of heart! Oh, the looks or the not-looks! The words, or the silence that will make some spirits give up any place and any service and any work!

“Forbearing one another” seems to have gone out of fashion with many people. “Forgiving one another even as God for Christ’s sake has forgiven you,” is forgotten. Brothers and Sisters, if being doormats for Christ for all the Church to wipe their feet upon would honor Him, we ought to think it a great glory to be so used! Among genuine Christians the contention is for the lowest place—among sham Christians the controversy is for the higher positions. Some will ask the question now-a-days—“Which is the higher office—that of elder or deacon,” and so on. Oh, what triviality!

When the Master was going up to Jerusalem to die, there was a contention among the disciples which of them should be the greatest—and so it is with us. At times when Grace is low, our opinion of ourselves is very high, and then our love to Christ is so little that we soon take affront and are quick to resent any little insults, as we think them to be, where perhaps nothing of the kind was meant. Beloved, may we be saved from all this littleness of soul! And remember what obligations we are under to our Master—how we should have been dead in trespasses and sins but for Him—how we should have been in Hell but for Him—how our expectations tonight would have been “a fearful looking for of judgment and of fiery indignation” but for Him. But we are washed and cleansed and on the way to Heaven—and we owe it all to Him. Therefore let us stir up the gift that is in us and serve Him with all our might.

Another reason is that these are stirring times. If we are not stirring, everybody else is. The Church of God, it seems to me, is traveling along the road to Heaven in a broad-wheel wagon and all the world is going its own way by express speed. If men become at all earnest in the cause of God, worldly critics shout out, “Fanaticism! Excitement!” Did you ever stand on the Paris Bourse—ever hear the raving, raging excitement of those stock-jobbers as they are trying to buy various forms of scrip! Nobody says, “Look at these men! See how fanatical they are!” No, they *expect* to see excitement on the Bourse. But if we were half as excited for God and His Gospel, there would be a hue and cry all over the country, “Here’s a set of madmen! Here’s a set of fanatics let loose.”

Of good Mr. Rowland Hill they said, “The dear old gentleman’s too earnest.” “Why,” said he, “When I was at Wotton-Under-Edge I saw a piece of a gravel pit fall in upon two or three men when I was walking by, so I went into Wotton as fast as my aged legs could carry me and I shouted with all my might, ‘Help! Help! Help!’ and nobody said, ‘the dear old man’s too earnest.’” Oh, no, you may be as earnest as you like about saving people’s *lives*, but if their *souls* awaken your sympathy, some lukewarm professor or other is sure to be ready with a wet blanket to cool your ardor. And yet were there ever times in which the wheels of life revolved so swiftly as now? The world marches with giant strides! Everybody is up and awake, but the Church is asleep to a great extent.

For other things men labor, and tug, and toil and make sacrifices—for an *idea* they slaughter their fellow creatures! For the unity of a race they fatten fields with blood and make rivers run with gore. But to preach Christ and snatch sinners from the jaws of Hell they require of us to be chilled—and insist that we must not be too earnest—we must not go too fast. We must be prudent! We must be cool! From “prudence” and “coolness” good Lord, deliver us! From “decorum” and “propriety,” (wherein they stand in the way of our winning souls), good Lord deliver us! And from every conventionality and every idol that has been set up among us which prevents our being thoroughly useful and grandly serviceable to the cause of God, good Lord deliver us! Because these are stirring times, we ought to stir up the gift that is in us.

And then, again, we must stir up our gift because it *needs* stirring. The gifts and Graces of Christian men are like a coal fire which frequently requires stirring as well as feeding with fuel. You must not stir it up too much—the poker does not give heat, and stirring up a man of itself does not make him better—indeed, it is as injurious to a weak man to stir him up as it would be to an expiring fire in the grate. But yet there must be stirring and fires go out sometimes for the lack of it. There are times with us when we become dull and heavy, doing little or nothing—restless, indifferent—and then it is that we require rebuking. If there is a solid bottom of real Grace in us, we only need the poker that we be stirred up and straightway the fire begins to burn.

How I like to stir up some of you! I remember a dear Brother dropping in one Thursday night to hear the Word preached—an excellent Christian, but sluggish—but the Lord touched his heart with the spoken Word and he began to preach in the streets of the city where he resides! He has now one of the largest houses of prayer and God has given him hundreds of souls! He only needed stirring up! Is there no other Brother here, who, hearing this earnest word shall find it like a live coal from off the altar, touching his lips and moving him to go forth and preach the Word and serve his Master according to his ability? We must, then, dear Friends, stir ourselves up because if we do not, we may lose the faculty and rob ourselves of the power of usefulness! The knife which is not used loses its edge and the man who does not work for God loses much of his ability to do so in the future.

I shall give you another reason, and that is this. If we will but stir ourselves, Beloved, or rather, if God’s *Holy Spirit* will but stir us, we, as a Church may expect very great things! I can hardly tell you how comforted I felt last Monday evening. I said on Sunday, “The Elders and Deacons will meet to pray, and those of you who love souls and are concerned about them will kindly come, too, at six o’clock.” I was glad to see many of you who I know love the Lord fervently, and through that warm Prayer Meeting which we had before our more public gathering, we felt that we had laid hold upon our God. I know there is a blessing coming! I am sure of it! I hear “a sound of a going in the tops of the mulberry trees.” The Lord is with us! He never made His people agonize in secret and join together publicly in deep soul earnestness without intending to bless them!

We might as well fear, when the months are warm, that there will be no ripening of the wheat as to say when Christian’s hearts are warm towards God that there will be no conversions. It can’t be! Enquiring saints always make enquiring sinners. If we enquire of God for sinners, sinners will soon enquire for themselves. Up, therefore! Up, therefore, Beloved! Stir yourselves, for God is stirring us! And remember, there will be a great stir byand-bye. Business will all end, politics will be done with and all the matters in which you are concerned will be eternally closed. What a stir there will be in that day! Fallen we shall stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ to give an account of the deeds done in the body!

What a stir about ourselves! What a stir about others! Where will they be? Will they be on the right hand, or on the left? Shall I see my boys in Heaven, or will they be cast out? What a stir there will be about your husband or your wife! What a stir there will be about your neighbors! Think of it! Think of it, I say, and be stirred now! If they die as they are, they will be damned—they must be. They must sink into Hell! There is no hope of their escape if they die unsaved.

What a stir there will be throughout all the nations in that day! And, surely, if we look at it in the light of eternity—in the light of that tremendous day when Christ, with clouds, shall come—we shall feel that there is nothing worth living for but serving God! We shall surely feel that the very core and center of all life is to bring glory to God by bringing sinners to Jesus Christ! God grant you may live as if you expected to die! We ought always to preach as though we should go out of the pulpit into Heaven and we should always to *pray* in that way. And we should always spend every day as if we had not another day to spend. For this we need much of the Holy Spirit’s power.

And He rests upon His people! May He come and rest upon us, now, for Jesus Christ’s sake. Amen.  
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÷2Ti 1.9

SALVATION ALTOGETHER BY GRACE

NO. 703

**DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, JULY 29, 1866, *BY C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“Who has saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according  
to His own purpose and grace which was given  
to us in Christ Jesus before the world began.”***

2Ti 1:9***.***

IF we would influence thoughtful persons it must be by solid arguments. Shallow minds may be worked upon by mere warmth of emotion and force of excitement, but the more valuable part of the community must be dealt with in quite another manner. When the Apostle Paul was desirous to influence his son in the faith, Timothy, who was a diligent and earnest student and a man of gifts as well as of Divine Grace, he did not attempt to affect him by mere appeals to his feelings. Paul felt that the most effectual way to act upon him was to remind him of solid doctrinal Truth of God which he knew Timothy believed.

This is a lesson for the ministry at large. Certain earnest preachers are incessantly exciting the people, but seldom, if ever, instructing them. They carry much fire and very little light. God forbid that we should say a word against appealing to the feelings—this is most necessary in its place—but then there is a due proportion to be observed in it. A religion which is based upon, sustained, and maintained simply by *excitement* will necessarily be very flimsy and unsubstantial, and will yield very speedily to the crush of opposition or to the crumbling hand of time.

The preacher may touch the feelings by rousing appeals as the harpist touches the harp strings, and he will be very foolish if he should neglect so ready and admirable an instrument. But still, as he is dealing with reasonable creatures, he must not forget to enlighten the intellect and instruct the understanding. And how can he appeal to the understanding better than by presenting to it the Truth which the Holy Spirit teaches? Scriptural doctrine furnishes us with powerful motives to urge upon the minds of Christians.

It seems to me that if we could, by some unreasoning impulse, move you to a certain course of action it might be well in its way. But it would be unsafe and untrustworthy, for you would be equally open to be moved in an opposite direction by other persons more skilled in such operations. But if God enables us, by His Spirit, to influence your minds by solid Truth and substantial argument, you will then move with a constancy of power which nothing can turn aside. The feather flies in the wind, but it has no inherent power to move—and consequently when the gale is over it falls to the ground—such is the religion of excitement. But the eagle has life within itself and its wings bear it aloft and onward whether the breeze favors it or not—such is religion when sustained by a conviction of the Truth of God! The well-taught man in Christ Jesus stands firm where the uninstructed infant would fall or be carried away. “Be not carried about with every wind of doctrine,” says the Apostle, and those are least likely to be so carried who are well established in the Truth as it is in Jesus.

It is somewhat remarkable—at least it may seem so to persons who are not accustomed to think upon the subject—that the Apostle, in order to excite Timothy to boldness—to keep him constant in the faith—reminds him of the great doctrine that the Grace of God reigns in the salvation of men! He gives in this verse—this parenthetical verse as some call it, but which seems to me to be fully in the current of the passage—he gives in this verse a brief summary of the Gospel, showing the great prominence which it gives to the Grace of God, with the design of maintaining Timothy in the boldness of his testimony for Christ.

I do not doubt but that a far greater power for usefulness lies concealed within the Doctrines of Grace than some men have ever dreamed of. It has been usual to look upon doctrinal Truth as being nothing more than unpractical theory, and many have spoken of the precepts of God’s Word as being more practical and more useful. The day may yet come when, in clearer light, we shall perceive that sound doctrine is the very root and vital energy of practical holiness, and that to teach the people the Truth which God has revealed is the readiest and surest way of leading them to obedience and persevering holiness.

May the Holy Spirit assist us while we shall, first, consider the doctrine taught by the Apostle in this text. And secondly, the uses of that doctrine.  
**I.**Very carefully let us CONSIDER THE DOCTRINE TAUGHT BY THE APOSTLE IN THIS TEXT. Friends will remember that it is not our object to preach the doctrine which is most popular or most palatable. Nor do we desire to set forth the views of any one person in the assembly. Our one aim is to give what we judge to be the meaning of the text. We shall probably deliver doctrine which many of you will not like, and if you should not like it we shall not be at all surprised! Or even if you should be vexed and angry we shall not be at all alarmed because we never understood that we were commissioned to preach what would please our hearers, nor were expected by sensible, not to say gracious men, to shape our views to suit the notions of our audience.  
We count ourselves amenable to God and to the text. And if we give the meaning of the text, we believe we shall give the mind of God and we shall be likely to have His favor which will be sufficient for us, contradict us who may. However, let every candid mind be willing to receive the Truth of God if it is clearly in the inspired Word.  
**1.**The Apostle, in stating his doctrine in the following words, “Who has saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given to us in Christ Jesus before the world began,” declares God to be the Author of salvation—“Who has saved us and called us.” The whole tenor of the verse is towards a strong affirmation of Jonah’s doctrine, “that salvation is of the Lord.”  
It would require very great twisting—involving more than ingenuity, it would need dishonesty—to make out salvation by *man* out of this text! But to find salvation altogether of God in it is to perceive the Truth of God which lies upon the very surface. No need for profound enquiry. The wayfaring man, though a fool, shall not err here—the text says as plainly as words can say, “God has saved us, and called us with a holy calling.”  
The Apostle, then, in order to bring forth the Truth that salvation is of Grace, declares that it is of God—that it springs directly and entirely from Him and from Him alone. Is not this according to the teaching of the Holy Spirit in other places where He affirms over and over again that the alpha and omega of our salvation must be found, not in ourselves, but in our God? Our Apostle, in saying that God has saved us, refers to all the Persons of the Divine Unity. The Father has saved us. “God has given to us eternal life” (1Jn 5:11). “The Father Himself loves you.” It was He whose gracious mind first conceived the thought of redeeming His chosen from the ruin of the Fall.  
It was His mind which first planned the way of salvation by Substitution. It was from His generous heart that the thought first sprang that Christ should suffer as the Covenant Head of His people, as said the Apostle, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ. According as He has chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love: having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He has made us accepted in the Beloved” (Eph 1:3-6).  
From the heart of Divine compassion came the gift of the only begotten Son: “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” The Father selected the persons who should receive an interest in the redemption of His Son, for these are described as, “called according to His purpose” (Rom 8:28). The plan of salvation in all its details sprang from the Father’s wisdom and grace. The Apostle did not, however, overlook the work of the Son. It is most certainly through the Son of God that we are saved, for is not His name Jesus, the Savior? Incarnate in the flesh, His holy life is the righteousness in which saints are arrayed, while His ignominious and painful death has filled the sacred bath of blood in which the sinner must be washed that he may be made clean.  
It is through the Redemption, which is in Christ Jesus, that the people of God become accepted in the Beloved. With one voice before the Eternal Throne they sing, “Unto Him that loved us and washed us from our sins in His blood, unto Him be glory.” And they chant that hymn because He deserves the glory which they ascribe to Him. It is the Son of God who is the Savior of men, and men are not the saviors of themselves. Nor did the Apostle, I am persuaded, forget that Third Person in the blessed Unity— the Holy Spirit.  
Who but the Holy Spirit first gives us power to understand the Gospel? “The carnal mind understands not the things that are of God.” Does not the Holy Spirit influence our will, turning us from the obstinacy of our former rebellion to the obedience of the Truth of God? Does not the Holy Spirit renew us, creating us in Christ Jesus unto good works? Is it not by the Holy Spirit’s breath that we live in the spiritual life? Is He not to us Instructor, Comforter, Quickener? Is He not everything, in fact, through His active operations upon our mind?  
The Father, then, in planning. The Son in redeeming. The Spirit, in applying the redemption, must be spoken of as the one God “who has saved us.” Brothers and Sisters, to say that we save ourselves is to utter a manifest absurdity! We are called in Scripture “a temple”—a holy temple in the Lord. But shall anyone assert that the stones of the edifice were their own architect? Shall it be said that the stones of the building in which we are now assembled cut themselves into their present shape and then spontaneously came together and piled this spacious edifice? Should anyone assert such a foolish thing we should be disposed to doubt his sanity! Much more may we suspect the spiritual sanity of any man who should venture to affirm that the great temple of the Church of God designed and erected itself!  
No! We believe that God the Father was the Architect, sketched the plan, supplies the materials, and will complete the work. Shall it also be said that those who are redeemed, redeemed themselves? That slaves of Satan break their own fetters? Then why was a Redeemer needed at all? How should there be any need for Jesus to descend into the world to redeem those who could redeem themselves? Do you believe that the sheep of God, whom He has taken from between the jaws of the lion, could have rescued themselves? It were a strange thing if such were the case.  
Our Lord Jesus came not to do a work of supererogation, but if He came to save persons who might have saved themselves, He certainly came without a necessity for so doing. We cannot believe that Christ came to do what the sinners might have done themselves! No, “He has trod the winepress alone, and of the people there was none with Him,” and the redemption of His people shall give glory unto Himself only!  
Shall it be asserted that those who were once dead have spiritually quickened themselves? Can the dead make themselves alive? Who shall assert that Lazarus, rotting in the grave, came forth to life of himself? If it is so said and so believed, then, no, not even *then*, will we believe that the dead in sin have ever quickened themselves! Those who are saved by God the Holy Spirit are created anew according to Scripture—but whoever dreamed of creation creating itself? God spoke the world out of nothing, but nothing did not aid in the creation of the universe! Divine energy can do everything, but what can *nothing* do?  
Now if we have a new creation, there must have been a creator, and it is clear that not being, then, *spiritually* created, we could not have assisted in our own new creation, unless, indeed, death can assist life, and non-existence aid in creation. The carnal mind does not assist the Spirit of God in new creating a man, but altogether regeneration is the work of God the Holy Spirit, and the work of renewal is from His unassisted power. Father, Son and Spirit, we, then, adore, and putting these thoughts together, we would humbly prostrate ourselves at the foot of the Throne of the august Majesty and acknowledge that if saved, He alone has saved us, and unto Him be the glory!  
**2.**We next remark that *grace* is in this verse rendered conspicuous when we see that God pursues a singular method, “Who has saved us and called us.” The peculiarity of the manner lies in three things—first, in the completeness of it. The Apostle uses the perfect tense and says, “who has saved us.” Believers in Christ Jesus are saved. They are not looked upon as persons who are in a hopeful state and may ultimately *be saved*, but they are already saved.  
This is not according to the common talk of professors nowadays, for many of them speak of being saved when they come to die. But it is according to the usage of Scripture to speak of us who *are* saved. Be it known this morning that every man and woman here is either saved at this present moment, or lost—and that salvation is not a blessing to be enjoyed upon the dying bed and to be sung of in a future state—but a matter to be obtained, received, promised and enjoyed NOW! God has saved His saints, mark, not *partly* saved them, but *perfectly* saved them. The Christian is perfectly saved in God’s purpose. God has ordained him unto salvation, and that purpose is complete.  
He is saved, also, as to the price which has been paid for him, for this is done not in part but in whole. The substitutionary work which Christ has offered is not a certain proportion of the work to *be* done, but, “it is finished,” was the cry of the Savior before He died. The Believer is also perfectly saved in his Covenant Head, for as we were utterly lost as soon as ever Adam fell, before we had committed any actual sin, so every man in Christ was saved in the second Adam when He finished His work. The Savior completed His work and in the sense in which Paul uses that expression, “He has saved us.”  
This completeness is one peculiarity—we must mark another. I want you to notice the order as well as the completeness—“who has saved us and called us.” What? Saved us *before*He called us? Yes, so the text says. But is a man saved before he is called by Divine Grace? Not in his own *experience.* Not as far as the work of the Holy Spirit goes. But he is saved in God’s purpose, in Christ’s redemption, and in his relationship to his covenant Head. And he is saved, moreover, in *this* respect—that the work of his salvation is done, and he has only to receive it as a finished work. In the olden times of imprisonment for debt it would have been quite correct for you to step into the cell of a debtor and say to him, “I have freed you,” if you had paid his debts and obtained an order for his discharge.  
Well, but he is still in prison! Yes, but you really liberated him as soon as you paid his debts. It is true he was still in prison, but he was not *legally* there, and no sooner did he know that the debt was paid and that receipt was pleaded before proper authorities, than the man obtained his liberty. So the Lord Jesus Christ paid the debts of His people before they knew anything about it. Did He not pay them on the Cross more than eighteen hundred years ago to the utmost penny? And is not this the reason why, as soon as He meets with us in a way of Grace, He cries, “I have saved you. Lay hold on eternal life”? We are, then, virtually, though not actually, saved before we are called. “He has saved us and called us.”  
There is yet a third peculiarity, and that is in connection with the calling. God has called us with a *holy* calling. Those whom the Savior saved upon the tree are, in due time, effectually called by the power of God the Holy Spirit unto holiness. They leave their sins, they endeavor to be like Christ, they choose holiness—not out of any compulsion—but from the stress of a new nature which leads them to rejoice in holiness, just as naturally as before they delighted in sin. Whereas their old nature loved everything that was evil, their new nature cannot sin because it is born of God, and it loves everything that is good.  
Does not the Apostle mention this result of our calling in order to meet those who say that God calls His people because He *foresees* their holiness? Not so! He calls them *to* that holiness—that holiness is not a cause but an *effect—*it is not the *motive* of His purpose, but the *result* of His purpose. He neither chose them nor called them because they were holy, but He called them that they might *be* holy, and holiness is the beauty produced by His workmanship in them. The excellences which we see in a Believer are as much the work of God as the Atonement itself!  
This second point brings out very sweetly the fullness of the Grace of God. First—salvation must be of Grace, because the Lord is the Author of it, and what motive but Grace could move Him to save the guilty? In the next place, salvation must be of Grace because the Lord works in such a manner that our righteousness is forever excluded. Salvation is completed by God, and therefore not*of* man, neither *by* man. Salvation is worked by God in an order which puts our holiness as a consequence and not as a cause, and therefore merit is forever disowned.  
**3.**When a speaker desires to strengthen his point and to make himself clear, he generally puts in a negative as to the other side. So the Apostle adds a negative— “Not according to our works.” The world’s great preaching is, “Do as well as you can. Live a moral life and God will save you.” The*Gospel* preaching is this—“You are a lost sinner, and you can deserve nothing of God but His displeasure. If you are to be saved, it must be by an act of Sovereign Grace. God must freely extend the silver scepter of His love to you, for you are a guilty wretch who deserves to be sent to the lowest Hell. Your best works are so full of sin that they can in no degree save you—to the free mercy of God you must owe all things.”  
“Oh,” says one, “are good works of no use?” Good works are of use when a man is saved—they are the *evidences* of his being saved. But good works do not save a man, good works do not influence the mind of God to save a man, for if so, salvation would be a matter of debt and not of Grace. The Lord has declared over and over in His Word, “Not of works, lest any man should boast.” “By the works of the Law there shall no flesh living be justified.” The Apostle in the Epistle to the Galatians is very strong, indeed, upon this point. Indeed, he thunders it out again, and again, and again! He denies that salvation is even so much as in *part* due to our works, for if it is by works, then he declares it is not of Grace, otherwise Grace is no more Grace. And if it is of Grace, it is not of works, otherwise work is no more work.  
Paul assures us that the two principles of Grace and merit can no more mix together than fire and water—that if man is to be saved by the mercy of God—it must be by the mercy of God and not by works. But if man is to be saved by works, it must be by works entirely and not by mercy mixed with it, for mercy and work will not go together. Jesus saves, but He does all the work or none. He is Author and Finisher, and works must not rob Him of His due. Sinner, you must either receive salvation freely from the hand of Divine Bounty, or else you must earn it by your own unassisted merits, which is utterly impossible! Oh that you would yield to the first!  
My Brethren, this is the Truth of God which still needs to be preached. This is the Truth of God which shook all Europe from end to end when Luther first proclaimed it. Is not this the old thunderbolt which the great Reformer hurled at Rome—“Justified freely by His grace, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus”? But why did God make salvation to be by *faith*? Scripture tells us—“Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace.” If it had been by works it must have been by *debt—*but since it is by *faith* we can clearly see that there can be no merit in faith. It must be therefore by Divine Grace.  
**4.**My text is even more explicit, yet, for the eternal *purpose* is mentioned. The next thing the Apostle says is this: “Who has saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works but according to His own purpose.” Mark that word—“according to His own purpose.” Oh how some people wriggle over that word, as if they were worms on a fisherman’s hook! But there it stands, and cannot be gotten rid of. God saves His people “according to His purpose.” No, “according to His OWN purpose.”  
My Brothers and Sisters, do you not see how all the merit and the power of the creature are shut out here, when you are saved, not according

to your purpose or merit, but “according to His own purpose”? I shall not dwell on this. It is not exactly the object of this morning’s discourse to bring out in full the great mystery of *electing love*, but I will not, for a moment, keep back the Truth of God. If any man is saved, it is not because *he* purposed to be saved, but because *God* purposed to save him.  
Have you never read the Holy Spirit’s testimony: “It is not of him that wills, nor of him that runs, but of God that shows mercy”? The Savior said to His Apostles what He, in effect, says also to us, “You have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that you might bring forth fruit.” Some hold one and some another view concerning the freedom of the will, but our Savior’s doctrine is, “You will not come unto Me that you might have life.” You will not come! Your wills will never bring you! If you do come, it is because Divine Grace inclined you! “No man can come unto Me, except the Father which has sent Me draw Him.” “Whoever comes to Me I will in no wise cast out,” is a great and precious general text, but it is quite consistent with the rest of the same verse—“All that the Father gives Me shall come to Me.”  
Our text tells us that our salvation is “according to His own purpose.” It is a strange thing that men should be so angry against the purpose of God. *We* ourselves have a purpose—we permit our fellow creatures to have some will of their own, and especially in giving away their own goods. But is my God to be bound and fettered by *men*, and not permitted to do as He wills with His own? But be this known unto you, O men that reply against God, that He gives no account of His actions, but asks of you, “Can I not do as I will with My own?” He rules in Heaven, and in the armies of this lower world, and none can stay His hand or say unto Him, “What are you doing?”  
**5.**But then the text, lest we should make any mistake, adds, “according to His own purpose and grace.” The purpose is not founded on foreseen *merit*, but upon Divine Grace alone. It is Grace, all Grace, nothing but Grace from first to last! Man stands shivering outside, a condemned criminal, and God, sitting upon His Throne, sends the herald to tell him that He is willing to receive sinners and to pardon them. The sinner replies, “Well, I am willing to be pardoned if I am permitted to do something in order to *earn* pardon. If I can stand before the King and claim that I have done something to win His favor, I am quite willing to come.”  
But the herald replies, “No, if you are pardoned, you must understand it is entirely and wholly as an act of Grace on God’s part. He sees nothing good in you. He knows that there is nothing good in you. He is willing to take you just as you are, filthy, and bad, and wicked, and undeserving. He is willing to give you graciously what He would not sell to you, and what He knows you cannot earn of Him. Will you take it?” And *naturally* every man says, “No, I will not be saved in that style.”  
Well, then, Soul, remember that you will never be saved at all, for God’s way is salvation by Grace! You will have to confess, if ever you are saved, my dear Hearer, that you never deserved one single blessing from the God of Grace. You will have to give all the glory to His holy name if ever you get to Heaven. And mark you, even in the matter of the acceptance of this offered mercy, you will never accept it unless He makes you willing! He does freely present it to every one of you, and He honestly bids you come to Christ and live. But come you never will, I know, except the effectual Grace which first provided mercy shall make you willing to *accept* that mercy. So the text tells us it is His own purpose and Grace.  
**6.**Again, in order to shut out everything like boasting, the whole is spoken of as a *gift*. Notice—lest, (for we are such straying sheep in this matter), lest we should still slip out of the field—it is added, “purpose and grace which He gave us.” Not, “which He *sold* us,” “*offered* us,” but “which He GAVE us.” He must have a word here which shall be a death-blow to all merit—“which he gave us”—it was GIVEN. And what can be freer than a gift, and what more evidently of Divine Grace?  
**7.**But the gift is bestowed through a medium, which glorifies Christ. It is written, “which was given us in Christ Jesus.” We ask to have mercy from the wellhead of Divine Grace, and we ask not even to make the bucket in which it is to be brought to us! Christ is to be the sacred vessel in which the Grace of God is to be presented to our thirsty lips. Now where is boasting? Why surely there it sits at the foot of the Cross and sings, “God forbid that I should glory save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Is it not Grace and Grace alone?  
**8.**Yet further, a period is mentioned and added—“before the world began.” Those last words seem to me forever to lay prostrate all idea of anything of our own merits in saving ourselves, because it is here witnessed that God gave us Divine Grace “before the world began.” Where were you then? What hand had you in it “before the world began”? Why, fly back, if you can, in imagination, to the ancient years when those venerable mountains, that elder birth of nature, were not yet formed! Fly back when world, and sun, and moon, and stars, were all in embryo in God’s great mind—when the unnavigated sea of space had never been disturbed by wing of seraph, and the awful silence of eternity had never been startled by the song of cherubim—when God dwelt alone.  
If you can conceive that time before all time, that vast eternity—it was *then* He gave us Grace in Christ Jesus. What, O Soul, had you to do with that? Where were your merits then? Where were you yourself? O you small dust of the balance, you insect of a day, where were you? See how Jehovah reigned, dispensing mercy as He would, and ordaining unto eternal life without taking counsel of man or angel, for neither man or angel then had an existence! That it might be all of Grace He gave us Grace before the world began!  
I have honestly read out the doctrine of the text, and nothing more. If such is not the meaning of the text I do not know the meaning of it, and I cannot, therefore, tell you what it is. But I believe that I have given the natural and grammatical teaching of the text. If you do not like the doctrine, I cannot help it. I did not make the text, and if I have to expound it I must expound it honestly as it is in my Master’s Word. And I pray you receive what *He* says, whatever you may do with what I say.  
**II.**I shall want your patience while I try to SHOW THE USES OF THIS DOCTRINE. The Doctrine of Grace has been put by in the lumber chamber. It is acknowledged to be true, for it is confessed in most creeds. It is in the Church of England articles. It is in the confessions of all sorts of Protestant Christians, except those who are avowedly Arminian, but how little is it ever preached! It is put among the relics of the past. It is considered to be a respectable sort of retired officer who is not expected to see any more active service.  
Now I believe that it is not a superannuated officer in the Master’s army, but that it is as full of force and vigor as ever. But what is the use of it? Why, first, it is clear from the connection that it has a tendency to embolden the man who receives it. Paul tells Timothy not to be ashamed, and he gives this as a motive—how can a man be ashamed when he believes that God has given him Grace in Christ Jesus before the world was? Suppose the man to be very poor. “Oh,” he says, “what does it matter? Though I have but a little oil in the cruse, and a little meal in the barrel, yet I have a lot and a portion in everlasting things! My name is not in Doomsday Book nor in Burke’s Peerage—but it is in the book of God’s election, and was there before the world began!”  
Such a man dares look the proudest of his fellows in the face. This was the doctrine on which the brave old Ironsides fed—the men who, when they rode to battle with the war cry of, “The Lord of Hosts!” made the cavaliers fly before them like chaff before the wind. No doctrine like it for putting a backbone into a man, and making him feel that he is made for something better than to be trod down like straw for the dunghill beneath a despot’s heel. Sneer who will, the elect of God derive a nobility from the Divine choice which no royal patent can outshine! I would that Free Grace were more preached, because it gives men something to believe with confidence.  
The great mass of professing Christians know nothing of doctrine. Their religion consists in going a certain number of times to a place of worship, but they have no care for the Truth of God one way or another. I speak without any prejudice in this matter—but I have talked with a large number of persons in the course of my very extensive pastorate who have been for years members of other churches. And when I have asked them a few questions upon doctrinal matters it did not seem to me that they thought they were in error—they were perfectly willing to believe almost anything that any earnest man might teach them. But they did not know anything—they had no minds of their own—and no definite opinions.  
Our children, who have learned “The Westminster Assembly’s Confession of Faith,” know more about the Doctrines of Grace and the doctrine of the Bible than hundreds of grownups who attend a ministry which very eloquently teaches nothing. It was observed by a very excellent critic not long ago that if you were to hear thirteen lectures on astronomy or geology you might get a pretty good idea of what the science was, and the theory of the person who gave the lectures—but that if you were to hear *thirteen hundred* sermons from some ministers, you would not know at all what they were preaching about or what their doctrinal sentiments were. It ought not to be so.  
Is not this the reason why Puseyism spreads so, and all sorts of errors have such a foothold, because our people, as a whole, do not know what they believe? The doctrine of Election, if well received, gives to a man something which he knows and which he holds and which will become dear to him. Something for which he would be prepared to die if the fires of persecution were again kindled! Better still is it that this doctrine not only gives the man something to hold but it holds the man! Let a man once have burnt into him that salvation is of God and not of man, and that God’s Grace is to be glorified and not human merit, and you will never get that belief out of him!  
It is the rarest thing in all the world to hear of such a man ever apostatizing from his faith. Other doctrine is slippery ground, like the slope of a mountain composed of loose earth and rolling stones down which the traveler may slide long before he can even get a transient foothold. But this is like a granite step upon the eternal pyramid of Truth—get your feet on this—and there is no fear of slipping so far as doctrinal standing is concerned. If we would have our churches in England well instructed and holding fast the Truth of God, we must bring out the grand old verity of the eternal purpose of God in Christ Jesus before the world began!  
Oh may the Holy Spirit write it on our hearts! Moreover, my Brethren, this doctrine overwhelms, as with an avalanche, all the claims of priestcraft. Let it be told to men that they are saved by God, and they say at once, “Then what is the good of the priest?” If they are told it is God’s Grace, then they ask, “Then you do not want our money to buy masses and absolutions?” And down goes the priest at once! Beloved, this is the battering ram that God uses with which to shake the gates of Hell! How much more forcible than the pretty essays of many so-called Divines which have no more power than bulrushes, no more light than smoking flax!  
What do you suppose people used to meet in the woods for in persecuting times? They met by thousands outside the town of Antwerp, and suchlike places on the Continent, in jeopardy of their lives! Do you suppose they would ever have come together to hear that poor milk-and-water theology of this age, or to receive the lukewarm milk and water of our modern anti-Calvinists? Not they, my Brethren! They needed stronger meat, and a more savory diet to attract them. Do you imagine that when it was death to listen to the preacher, that men under the shadows of night, and amid the wings of tempest would then listen to philosophical essays, or to mere moral precepts, or to diluted, adulterated, soulless, theological suppositions?  
No! There is no energy in that kind of thing to draw men together under fear of their lives. So what *did* bring them together in the dead of night amidst the glare of lightning, and the roll of thunder? What brought them together? Why, the doctrine of the Grace of God! The doctrine of Jesus and of His servants Paul, and Augustine, and Luther, and Calvin! For there is something in that doctrine which touches the heart of the Christian and gives him food such as his soul loves, savory meat, suitable to his Heaven-born appetite!  
To hear this, men braved death and defied the sword! And it we are to see once again the scarlet hat plucked from the wearer’s head, and the shaven crowns with all the gaudy trumpery of Rome sent back to the place from where they came—and Heaven grant that they may take our Puseyite Established Church with them—it must be by declaring all the doctrines of the Grace of God! When these are declared and vindicated in every place, we shall yet again make these enemies of God and man to know that they cannot stand their ground for a moment where men of God wield the sword of the Lord and of Gideon by preaching the doctrines of the Grace of God.  
Brothers and Sisters, let the man receive these Truths! Let them be written in his heart by the Holy Spirit, and they will make him look up. He will say, “God has saved me!” and he will walk with a constant eye to God. He will not forget to see the hand of God in Nature and in Providence. He will, on the contrary, discern the Lord working in all places, and will humbly adore Him. He will not give to laws of Nature or schemes of State the glory due to the Most High, but will have respect unto the unseen Ruler.  
“What the Lord says to me, that will I do,” is the Believer’s language. “What is His will that will I follow. What is His Word, that will I believe. What is His promise, on that I will live.” It is a blessed habit to teach a man to look up, look up to God in all things! At the same time, this doctrine of Election makes a man look down upon himself. “Ah,” he says, “I am nothing! There is nothing in me to merit esteem. I have no goodness of my own. If saved, I cannot praise myself. I cannot in anyway ascribe to myself honor. God has done it, God has done it.” Nothing makes the man so humble, but nothing makes him so glad! Nothing lays him so low at the Mercy Seat, but nothing makes him so brave to look his fellow man in the face. It is a grand Truth of God! Would to God you all knew its mighty power!  
Lastly, this precious Truth is full of comfort to the sinner, and that is why I love it. As it has been preached by some it has been exaggerated and made into a bugbear. Why, there are some who preach the doctrine of Election as though it were a line of sharp spikes to keep a sinner from coming to Christ! As though it were a sharp, glittering sword to be pushed into the breast of a coming sinner to keep him from mercy!  
Now it is not so. Sinner, whoever you may be, wherever you may be, your greatest comfort should be to know that salvation is by Divine Grace. Why Man, if it were by merit, what would become of you? Suppose that God saved men on account of their merits? Where would you drunkards be? Where would you swearers be? You who have been unclean and unchaste, and you whose hearts have cursed God, and who even now do not love Him—where would you be?  
But when it is all of Grace, why, then, all your past life, however black and filthy it may be, need not keep you from coming to Jesus. Christ receives sinners! God has elected sinners! He has elected some of the filthiest of sinners—why not you? He receives everyone that comes to Him. He will not cast you out. There have been some who have hated Him, insulted Him to His face—that have burned His servants alive, and have persecuted Him in His members—but as soon as they have cried, “God be merciful to me a sinner,” He has given them mercy at once!  
And He will give it to you if you are led to seek it. If I had to tell you that you were to work out your own salvation apart from His Grace it were a sad day for you. But when it comes to you yourself—filthy—there is washing for you! Dead—there is life for you! Naked—there is raiment for you! All undone and ruined—here is a complete salvation for you! O Soul, may you have Grace to lay hold of it, and then you and I together will sing to the praise of the glory of Divine Grace.

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÷2Ti 1.12

FAITH ILLUSTRATED  
NO. 271

**DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, AUGUST 21, 1859, *BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT THE MUSIC HALL ROYAL SURREY GARDENS.**

***“For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless***

***I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have  
believed and am persuaded that He is  
able to keep that which I have committed  
unto Him against that day.”***

2Ti 1:12***.***

AN assurance of our safety in Christ will be found useful to us in all states of experience. When Jesus sent forth His seventy chosen disciples, endowed with miraculous powers, they performed great wonders and naturally enough they were somewhat elated when they returned to tell Him of their deeds. Jesus marked their tendency to pride. He saw that in the utterance—“Behold even devils were subject to us,” there was mingled much of self-congratulation and boasting. What cure, do you think, He administered—or what was the sacred lesson that He taught them which might prevent their being exalted above measure? “Nevertheless,” said He, “rejoice not in this, but rather rejoice because your names are written in Heaven.”

The assurance of our eternal interest in Christ may help to keep us humble in the day of our prosperity. For when God multiplies our wealth, when He blesses our endeavors, when He speeds the plow—when He wafts the good ship swiftly onward—this may act as a sacred ballast to us, that we have something better than these things and therefore we must not set our affections upon the things of earth, but upon things above. And let our heart be where our greatest treasure is, I say, better than any lancet to spill the superfluous blood of our boasting, better than any bitter medicine to chase the burning fever of our pride. Better than any mixture of the most pungent ingredients is this most precious and hallowed wine of the Covenant—a remembrance of our safety in Christ. This, this alone, opened up to us by the Spirit, will suffice to keep us in that happy lowliness which is the true position of the full-grown man in Christ Jesus.

But note this—when at any time we are cast down with multiplied afflictions and oppressed with sorrow—the very same fact which kept us humble in prosperity may preserve us from despair in adversity. For mark you here, the Apostle was surrounded by a great fight of affliction. He was compassed about with troubles, he suffered within and without—and yet he says, “Nevertheless I am not ashamed.” But what is that which preserves him from sinking? It is the same truth which kept the ancient disciples from overweening pride. It is the sweet persuasion of his interest in

Christ. “For I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day.” Get then, Christian Brethren and friends, get *assurance*. Be not content with *hope—*get confidence. Rest not in faith, labor after the full assurance of faith. And never be content, my Hearer, till you can say you know your election, you are sure of your redemption and you are certain of your preservation unto that day.

I propose this morning in preaching upon this text to labor both for the edification of the saint and the conversion of the sinner. I shall divide the text very amply thus—First, we have in it the grandest action of the Christian’s life, namely, the committing of our eternal interests into the hand of Christ. Secondly, we have the justification of this grand act of trust—“I know in whom I have trusted.” I have not trusted one whose character is unknown to me, I am not foolish, I have sure grounds for what I have done. And then we have, thirdly, the most blessed effect of this confidence—“I am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him.”

**I.**First, then I am to describe THE GRANDEST ACTION OF THE CHRISTIAN’S LIFE.  
With all our preaching, I am afraid that we too much omit the simple explanation of the essential act in salvation. I have feared that the anxious enquirer might visit many of our Churches and Chapels, month after month and yet he would not get a clear idea of what he must do to be saved. He would come away with an indistinct notion that he was to believe, but *what* he was to believe he would not know. He would, perhaps, obtain some glimmering of the fact that he must be saved through the merits of Christ, but how those merits can become available to him, he would still be left to guess. I know at least that this was my case—that when sincere and anxious to do or be anything which might save my soul, I was utterly in the dark as to the way in which my salvation might be rendered thoroughly secure. Now, this morning, I hope I shall be able to put it into such a light that he who runs may read and that the wayfaring man, though a fool, may not err therein.  
The Apostle says he committed himself into the hands of Christ. His soul with all its eternal interests. His soul with all its sins, with all its hopes and all its fears, he had put into the hands of Christ, as the grandest and most precious deposit which man could ever make. He had taken himself just as he was and had surrendered himself to Christ, saying— “Lord save me, for I cannot save myself. I give myself up to You, freely relying upon Your power and believing in Your love. I give my soul up to You to be washed, cleansed, saved and preserved and at last brought home to Heaven.”  
This act of committing himself to Christ was the first act which ever brought real comfort to his spirit. It was the act which he must continue to perform whenever he would escape from a painful sense of sin. The act with which he must enter Heaven itself—if he would die in peace and see God’s face with acceptance—he must still continue to commit himself into the keeping of Christ. I take it that when the Apostle committed himself to Christ, he meant these three things. He meant first, that from that good hour he renounced all dependence upon his own efforts to save himself.  
The Apostle had done very much, after a fashion, towards his own salvation. He commenced with all the advantages of ancestry. He was a Hebrew of the Hebrews, of the tribe of Benjamin, as concerning the law, a Pharisee. He was one of the very straightest of the straightest sect of his religion. So anxious was he to obtain salvation by his own efforts, that he left no stone unturned. Whatever Pharisee might be a hypocrite, Paul was none. Though he tithed his anise and his mint and his cumin, he did not neglect the weightier matters of the law. He might have united with truth, in the affirmation of the young man, “All these things have I kept from my youth up.” Hear you his own testimony—“Though I might also have confidence in the flesh, if any other man thinks that he has whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more.”  
Being exceedingly desirous to serve God, he sought to put down what he thought was the pestilent heresy of Christ. Being exceeding hot in his endeavors against everything that he thought to be wrong, he persecuted the professors of the new religion. He hunted them in every city, brought them into the synagogue and compelled them to blaspheme. When he had emptied his own country, he must needs take a journey to another, that he might there show his zeal in the cause of his God, by bringing out those whom he thought to be the deluded followers of an impostor.  
But suddenly Paul’s mind is changed. Almighty grace leads him to see that he is working in a wrong direction—that his toil is lost—that Sisyphus might as well seek to roll his stone up hill as for him to find a road to Heaven up the steeps of Sinai. That as well might the daughters of Danaus hope to fill the bottomless cauldron with a bucket full of holes, as Paul indulge the idea that he could fill up the measure of the Laws’ demands. Consequently he feels that all he has done is worth nothing and coming to Christ he cries, “But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yes, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord for whom I have suffered the loss of all things and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ and be found in him, not having my own righteousness, which is of the Law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.”  
And now, my dear Friends, if you would be saved, this is what you must do. I hope many of you have already performed the solemn act—you have said to Jesus in the privacy of your closet—“O Lord, I have tried to save myself, but I renounce all my endeavors. Once I said, ‘I am no worse than my neighbors, my goodness shall preserve me.’ Once I said, ‘I have been baptized, I have taken the sacrament, in these things will I trust,’ and now, Lord, I cast all this false confidence to the winds— ***‘No more, my God, I am set no more  
Of all the duties I have done.  
I quit the hopes I held before  
To trust the merits of Your Son.  
The best obedience of my hands  
Dares not appear before Your throne—  
But faith can answer Your demands  
By pleading what my Lord has done.’”***  
You cannot be saved if you have one hand on self and the other hand on Christ. Let go, renounce all dependence in anything you can do. Cease to be your own keeper—give up the futile attempt to be your own Savior and then you will have taken the first step to Heaven. There are but two, the first is—out of self, the next is—into Christ. When Christ is your all, then are you safe.  
But again, when the Apostle says he committed his soul to the keeping of Christ, he means that he had implicit confidence that Christ would save him now that he had relinquished all trust in self. Some men have gone far enough to feel that the best performance of their hands cannot be accepted before the bar of God. They have learned that their most holy acts are full of sin, that their most faithful service falls short of the demands of the Law. They have relinquished self, but they are not able yet to see that Christ can and will save them. They are waiting for some great revelation. They think, perhaps, that by some marvelous electric shock, or some miraculous feeling within them, they will be led to place their confidence in Christ. They want to see an angel or a vision, or to hear a voice. Their cry is, “How could I think that Jesus would save such an one as I am? I am too vile, or else I am too hardened. I am the odd man. It is not likely that Christ would ever save me.”  
Now, I doubt not that the Apostle had felt all this, but he overcame all this attacking of sin and he came at last to Christ and said, “Jesus, I feel that You are worthy of my confidence. Behold, I the chief of sinners am, I have nothing in myself that can assist You in taking me to Heaven. I shall kick and struggle against You rather than assist You. But behold, I feel that such is Your power and such Your love, that I commit myself to You. Take me as I am and make me what You would have me be. I am vile, but You are worthy. I am lost, but You are the Savior. I am dead, but You are the Quickener—take me—I beseech You. I put my trust in You and though I perish, I will perish relying on Your blood. If I must die, I will die with my arms about Your Cross, for You are worthy of confidence and on You do I rely.”  
And now, my Friends, if you will be safe, you must, in the strength of the Holy Spirit, do this also. You say you have given up all trust in self— well and good. Now place your trust in Christ, repose your all on Him. Drop into His arms—cast yourself into His power—lay hold on Him. You know how Joab, when he fled from the sword of Solomon, laid hold on the horns of the altar, thinking that surely when he had laid hold on the altar he was safe. His was vain confidence, for he was dragged from the horns of the altar and slain. But if you can lay hold on the horns of the altar of God, even Christ, you are most surely safe and no sword of vengeance can ever reach you.  
I saw the other day a remarkable picture, which I shall use as an illustration of the way of salvation by faith in Jesus. An offender had committed a crime for which he must die, but it was in the olden times when Churches were considered to be sanctuaries in which criminals might hide themselves and so escape. See the transgressor—he rushes towards the Church, the guards pursue him with their drawn swords, all thirsty for his blood. They pursue him even to the Church door. He rushes up the steps and just as they are about to overtake him and hew him in pieces on the threshold of the Church, out comes the Bishop and holding up the crucifix he cries, “Back, back! Stain not the precincts of God’s House with blood! Stand back!” And the guards at once respect the emblem and stand back, while the poor fugitive hides himself behind the robes of the priest.  
It is even so with Christ. The guilty sinner flies to the Cross—flies straight away to Jesus and though Justice pursues him, Christ lifts up His wounded hands and cries to Justice, “Stand back! Stand back! I shelter this sinner. In the secret place of My tabernacle do I hide him. I will not suffer him to perish, for he puts his trust in Me.” Sinner, fly to Christ! But you say, “I am too vile.” The viler you are, the more will you honor Him by believing that He is able to make you clean. “But I am too great a sinner.” Then the more honor shall be given to Him that you are able to confide in Him, great sinner though you are. If you have a little sickness and you tell your physician—“Sir, I am quite confident in your skill to heal,” there is no great compliment. But if you are sorely sick with a complication of diseases and you say—“Sir, I seek no better skill, I will ask no more excellent advice, I trust alone in you,” what an honor have you conferred on him—that you could trust your life in his hands when it was in extreme danger.  
Do the like with Christ. Put your soul in His care—dare it, venture it— cast yourself simply on Him. Let nothing but faith be in your soul. Believe Him and you shall never be mistaken in your trust.  
But I think I have not completely stated all the Apostle meant, when he said that he committed himself to Christ. He certainly meant those two things—self-renunciation and implicit belief in Christ’s power and willingness to save. But in the third place, the Apostle meant that he did make a full and free surrender of himself to Christ—to be Christ’s *property* and Christ’s *servant* forever. If you would be saved you must not be your own. Salvation is through being bought with a price. And if you are bought with a price and thus saved, remember, from that day forward you will not be your own.  
Today, as an ungodly sinner, you are your own master, free to follow the lusts of the flesh. Or, rather Satan is your great tyrant and you are under bondage to him. If you would be saved you must, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, now renounce the bondage of Satan and come to Christ, saying, “Lord I am willing to give up all sin. It is not in my power to be perfect but I wish it were, make me perfect. There is not a sin I wish to keep— take all away. I present myself before You. Wash me, make me clean. Do what You will with me. I make no reserve, I make a full surrender of all to You.”  
And then you must give up to Christ all you are and all you have by solemn indenture, signed and sealed by your own heart. You must say in the words of the sweet Moravian hymn—  
***“Take You my soul and all my powers.  
O take my memory, mind and will.  
Take all my goods and all my hours,  
Take all I know and all I feel.  
Take all I think and speak and do—  
O take my heart, but make it new.”***  
Accept the sacrifice—I am worthless, but receive me through Your owe merits. Take and keep me, I am, I hope I ever shall be Yours.  
I have now explained that act which is, after all, the only one which marks the day of salvation to the soul. I will give one or two figures, however, to set it in a clearer light. When a man has gold and silver in his house, he fears lest some thief may break through and steal and therefore if he is a wise man he seeks out a bank in which to store his money. He makes a deposit of his gold and his silver. He says in effect, “Take that, Sir, keep it for me. Tonight I shall sleep securely. I shall have no thought of thieves. My treasure is in your hands. Take care of that for me, when I need it, at your hands shall I require it.” Now in faith we do just the same with our blessed Redeemer. We bring our soul just as it is and give it up to Him. “Lord, I cannot keep it. Sin and Satan will be sure to ruin it—take it and keep it for me and in that day when God shall require the treasure, stand as my Sponsor and on my behalf return my soul to my Maker kept and preserved, by Your grace, to the end.”  
Or take another figure. When your adventurous spirit has sought to climb some lofty mountain, delighted with the prospect, you scale many and many a steep. Onward you climb up the rocky crags until at last you arrive at the verge of the snow and ice. There in the midst of precipices that scarcely know a bottom and of summits that seem inaccessible, you are suddenly surrounded with a fog. Perhaps it becomes worse and worse until a snow-storm completes your bewilderment. You cannot see a step before you—your are lost. A guide appears—“I know this mountain,” says he. “In my early days have I climbed it with my father. Over each of these crags have I leaped in pursuit of the chamois. I know every chasm and cavern. If you will follow me, even through the darkness, I will find the path and bring you down.  
But mark, before I undertake to guide you in safety, I demand of you implicit trust. You must not plant

your feet where you think it safest, but where I shall bid you. Wherever I bid you climb or descend you must implicitly obey and I undertake on my part to bring you safely down to your house again.” You do so—you have many temptations to prefer your own judgment to his but you resist them—and you are safe.  
Even so must you do with Christ. Lost today and utterly bewildered Christ appears. “Let Me guide you, let Me be an eye to you through the thick darkness. Let Me be your feet, lean on Me in the slippery places. Let Me be your very life. Let Me wrap you in My crimson vest to keep you from the tempest and the storm.” Will you now trust Him? Rely entirely, simply and implicitly upon Him? If so, the grand act of your life is done and you are a saved man and on the terra firma of Heaven you shall one day plant your delighted feet and praise the name of Him who saved you from your sins.  
I must add, however, that this act of faith must not be performed once only, but it must be continued as long as you live. As long as you live you must have no other confidence but “Jesus only.” You must take Him today, to have and to hold through life and in death, in tempest and in sunshine, in poverty and in wealth, never to part or sever from Him. You must take Him to be your only prop, your only pillar from this day forth and forever. What do you say, Sinner? Does God the Holy Spirit lead you to say “Yes?” Does your heart now confide in Jesus? If so, let the angels sing, for a soul is born to God and a brand is plucked from the eternal fire. I have thus described faith in Christ—the committing of the soul to him.  
**II.**This brings us to our second point—THE JUSTIFICATION OF THIS GRAND ACT OF TRUST.  
Confidence is sometimes folly—trusting in *man* is always so. When I exhort you, then, to put your entire confidence in Christ, am I justified in so doing? And when the Apostle could say that he trusted alone in Jesus and had committed himself to Him, was he a wise man or a fool? What said the Apostle? “I am no fool,” said he, “for I know whom I have believed. I have not trusted to an unknown and untried pretender. I have not relied upon one whose character I could suspect. I have confidence in One whose power, whose willingness, whose love, whose truthfulness I know. I know whom I have believed.”  
When silly women put their trust in yet more silly and wicked priests, they may say possibly that they know whom they have believed. But we may tell them that their knowledge must be ignorance indeed—that they are greatly deluded in imagining that any man, be he who he may, or what he may, can have any power in the salvation of his fellow’s soul. You come sneaking up to me and ask me to repose my soul in you. And who are you? “I am an ordained priest of the Church of Rome.” And who ordained you? “I was ordained by such a one.” And who ordained him? “It comes after all,” said he, “from the Pope.” And who is he and what is he more than any other man, or any other imposter? What ordination can he confer? “He obtained it directly from Peter.”  
Did he? Let the link be proven. And if he did, what was Peter and where has God given Peter power to forgive sin—a power which he should transmit to all generations? Be gone! The thick pollutions of your abominable Church forbid the idea of descent from any Apostle but the traitor Judas. Upon the Papal throne men worse than devils have had their seat and even a woman big with her adulteries once reigned as head of your accursed Church. Go purge the filthiness of your priesthood, the debauchery of your nunneries and the stygian filth of your mother city, the old harlot Rome. Talk not of pardoning others, while fornication is licensed in Rome itself and her ministers are steeped to the throat in iniquity.  
But to return. I rest no more on Peter than Peter could rest in himself— Peter must rest on Christ as a poor guilty sinner himself—an imperfect man who denied his Master with oaths and curses. He must rest where I must rest and we must stand together on the same great rock on which Christ does build His Church, even His blood and His everlasting merits. I marvel that any should be found to have such confidence in men, that they should put their souls in their hands. If however any of you wish to trust in a priest, let me advise you if you do trust him, to do it wholly and fully. Trust him with your cash-box, trust him with your gold and silver.  
Perhaps you object to that. You don’t feel at all inclined to go that length. But, my Friend, if you cannot trust the man with your gold and silver, pray, don’t trust him with your soul. I only suggested this because I thought you might smile and at once detect your error. If you could not trust such a fox with your business. If you would as soon commit your flocks to the custody of a wolf, why will you be fool enough to lay your soul at the feet of some base priest who, likely enough, is ten thousand times more wicked than yourself?  
Was Paul, then, justified in his confidence in Christ? He says he was because he knew Christ. And what did he know? Paul knew, first of all, Christ’s Godhead. Jesus Christ is the Son of God, co-equal and co-eternal with the Father. If my soul is in His hand—  
***“Where is the power can reach it there, Or what can pluck it from there?”***  
If the wings of Omnipotence cover it, if the eyes of Omnipotence are fixed upon it and if the heart of eternal love does cherish it, how can it be destroyed? Trust not your soul, my fellow man, anywhere but with your God.  
If Jesus is your God rely fully in Him and think not that you can place a confidence too great in Him who made the heavens and bears the world upon His shoulders. Paul knew, too, that Christ was the Redeemer. Paul had seen in vision, Christ in the garden. He had beheld Him sweat, as it were, great drops of blood. By faith Paul had seen Jesus hanging on the Cross. He had marked His agonies on the tree of doom. He had listened to His death shriek, “It is finished,” and he felt that the atonement which Jesus offered was more than enough to recompense for the sin of man.  
Paul might have said, “I am not foolish in confiding my soul in the pierced and blood-stained hand of Him whose sacrifice has satisfied the Father and opened the gates of Heaven to all Believers.” Further, Paul knew that Christ was risen from the dead. By faith he saw Christ at the right hand of God, pleading with His Father for all those who commit themselves to His hand. Paul knew Christ to be the all-prevailing Intercessor. He said to himself, “I am not wrong in believing Him, for I know whom I have trusted, that when He pleads, the Father will not deny Him and when He asks, sooner might He even die than become deaf to Jesus’ prayer.”  
This was again, another reason why Paul dared to trust in Christ. He knew His Godhead, he knew His redemption, he knew His resurrection, he knew His ascension and intercession. And I may add, Paul knew the love of Christ, that love which passes kindness—higher than thought and deeper than conception. He knew Christ’s power, that he was Omnipotent, the King of kings. He knew Christ’s faithfulness. That He was God and could not lie. He knew His immutability, that He was “Jesus Christ, the same yesterday today and forever.” And having known Christ in every glorious office, in every Divine attribute and in all the beauty of His complex Character, Paul said, “I can with confidence repose in Him, for I know Him, I have trusted and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed to Him.”  
But Paul not only knew these things by faith, but he knew much of them by experience. Our knowledge of Christ is somewhat like climbing one of our Welsh mountains. When you are at the base you see but little, the mountain itself appears to be but one half as high as it really is. Confined in a little valley you discover scarcely anything but the rippling brooks as they descend into the stream at the base of the mountain. Climb the first rising knoll and the valley lengthens and widens beneath your feet. Go up higher and higher still, till you stand upon the summit of one of the great roots that start out as spurs from the sides of the mountain. You see the country for some four or five miles round and you are delighted with the widening prospect. But go onward and onward and onward and how the scene enlarges, till at last, when you are on the summit and look east, west, north and south, you see almost all England lying before you.  
Yonder is a forest in some distant country, perhaps two hundred miles away and yonder the sea and there a shining river and the smoking chimneys of a manufacturing town, or there the masts of the ships in some well known port. All these things please and delight you and you say, “I could not have imagined that so much could be seen at this elevation.” Now, the Christian life is of the same order. When we first believe in Christ we see but little of Him. The higher we climb the more we discover of His excellencies and His beauties. But who has ever gained the summit? Who has ever known all the fullness of the heights and depths and lengths and breadths of the love of Christ which passes knowledge?  
Paul now grown old, sitting, gray haired, shivering in a dungeon in Rome—he could say, with greater power than we can, “I know whom I have believed.” Each experience had been like the climbing of a hill, each trial had been like the ascending to another summit and his death seemed like the gaining of the very top of the mountain from which he could see the whole of the faithfulness and the love of Him to whom he had committed his soul.  
**III.**And now, I close by noticing THE APOSTLE’S CONFIDENCE. The Apostle said, “I am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed to Him.” See this man. He is sure he shall be saved. But why? Paul! Are you sure that you can keep yourself? “No,” says he, “I have nothing to do with that.” And yet you are sure of your salvation! “Yes,” said he, “I am!” How is it, then? “Why, I am persuaded that He is able to keep me. Christ, to whom I commit myself, I know has power enough to hold me to the end.” Martin Luther was bold enough to exclaim, “Let Him that died for my soul, see to the salvation of it.”  
Let us catechize the Apostle for a few minutes and see if we cannot shake his confidence. Paul! You have had many trials and you will have many more. What if you should be subject to the pangs of hunger, combined with those of thirst. If not a mouthful of bread should pass your mouth to nourish your body, or a drop of water should comfort you, will not your faith fail you then? If provisions are offered you, on condition of the denial of your faith, do you not imagine that you will be quashed and that the pangs of nature will overpower you?  
“No,” says Paul, “famine shall not quench my faith—for the keeping of my faith is in the hands of Christ.” But what if, combined with this, the whole world should rise against you and scoff you? What if hunger within should echo to the shout of scorn without? Would you not *then* deny your faith? If, like Demas, every other Christian should turn to the silver of this world and deny the Master, would not you go with them? “No,” says the Apostle, “my soul is not in my keeping, else might it soon apostatize. It is in the hand of Christ. Though all men should leave me, yet He will keep me.”  
But what, O Apostle, if you should be chained to the stake and the flames should kindle and your flesh should begin to burn. When your beard is singed and your cheeks are black, will you then hold Him fast!? “Yes,” says the Apostle, “He will then hold me fast.” And I think I hear him, as he stops us in the midst of our catechizing and replies, “No, in all these things we are more than conquerors, through Him that loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”  
Paul, Paul, suppose the world should tempt you in another way. If a kingdom were offered you—if the pomp and pleasures of this world should be laid at your feet, provided you would deny your Master, would your faith maintain its hold then? “Yes,” says the Apostle, “Jesus would, even then, uphold my faith for my soul is not in my keeping, but in His, and empires upon empires could not tempt Him to renounce that soul of which He has become the guardian and the keeper. Temptation might soon overcome*me*, but it could not overcome*Him*. The world’s blandishments might soon move me to renounce my own soul. But they could not for one moment move Jesus to give me up.”  
And so the Apostle continues his confidence. But Paul, when you shall come to die, will you not then fear and tremble? “No,” says he, “He will be with me there, too, for my soul shall not die, that will be still in the hands of Him who is immortality and life.” But what will become of you when your soul is separated from your body? Can you trust Him in a separate state, in the unknown world which visions cannot paint? In the time of God’s mighty thunder, when earth shall shake and Heaven shall reel. Can you trust Him then? “Yes,” says the Apostle, “until that day when all these tempests shall die away into eternal calm and when the moving earth shall settle into a stable land in which there shall be no more sea, even then can I trust Him—  
***“I know that safe with Him remains,  
Protected by His power,  
What I’ve committed to His hands  
Till the decisive hour.”***  
O poor Sinner! Come and put your soul into the hands of Jesus! Attempt not to take care of it yourself. And then your life shall be hidden in Heaven and kept there by the Almighty power of God, where none can destroy it and none can rob you of it. “Whosoever believes on the Lord Jesus Christ shall be saved.”

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KNOWING AND BELIEVING  
NO. 3331

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, DECEMBER 5, 1912.

***DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,*  
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***“I know whom I have believed.”***2Ti 1:12***.***

THE text is wholly taken up with three things—with knowing, with believing and with the Person who is known and believed. And upon both the knowing and the believing, Paul is very decided. He puts in no, “if,” no word of change. He does not say, “I hope so,” or, “I trust so,” but, “I know I have believed and I know whom I have believed.” It is all assurance and not a shadow of doubt! Let us imitate the Apostle, or ask for Grace to be able to imitate him, that we may shake off the dubious phraseology which is so common among Christians, nowadays, and may be able to speak with Apostolic confidence upon a matter upon which we ought to be confident if anywhere at all, namely—our own salvation!

As the text is thus taken up with knowing and believing, these two matters will be the subject of our meditation at this time. My first remark drawn from the text shall be—

**I.**THE ONLY RELIGIOUS KNOWING AND BELIEVING WHICH ARE OF A SAVING CHARACTER CONCERN THE PERSON OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST. “I know,” says the Apostle—not, “what”—but, “*whom* I have believed.” He does not say, “I know the Catechism which I have believed,” nor, “I know the Institutes of Calvin,” nor, “I know the body and system of theology,” but, “I know*whom* I have believed.” Both the knowing and the believing center around the wondrous Person who for our sakes left His starry Throne and became a Man. Knowing whom is a saving knowledge and trusting whom is a saving trust—of which all other knowing and believing fall short!

Observe, then, that all other knowledge may be useful enough in itself, but if it does not concern Christ, it cannot be called *saving knowledge*. Some persons *know a great deal about Doctrine.* Perhaps they have taken up with the Calvinistic theology, or even with the hyper-Calvinistic and they really understand the system thoroughly well—and they certainly hold it with quite enough tenacity, if not too much. We know some who we believe would very cheerfully go to the stake in defense of some points of Doctrine so convinced are they of the orthodoxy of what they have received! Others take up another theory and go upon the Arminian principle—and they, too, know their set of doctrines and know them well. But, dear Friends, I may know all the Doctrines in the Bible, but unless I know Christ, there is not one of them that can save me! I may know Election, but if I cannot see myself as chosen in Christ Jesus, election will do me no good. I may know the Doctrine of the Final Perseverance of the Saints, but if I am not in Christ, I would only persevere in my sins—and such a final perseverance will be dreadful, indeed! It is one thing to know the Doctrine of Justification by Faith, but it is quite another thing to be justified by faith and to have peace with God! You may stand up for Imputed Righteousness and fight for it, and yet the righteousness of Christ may never be imputed to you! It is not *knowing* the creed, though that is well, that can save the soul—the knowledge that is needed is to know *Him* whom Paul believed!

And, again, a man may know something more than Doctrine. He *may know a great deal about experience.*There is a class of persons who sneer at Doctrine. They call the doctrinal preacher a mere “letterman.” As for themselves, they talk about deep *experience*. They have a consciousness of having a corrupt heart. They have discovered that they have evil tempers (by the way, other people, too, have discovered it)! They have discovered that they have defiled natures and everybody can see that they are not perfectly free from sin. But, strange delusion, because they *know the disease*, they fancy they have been healed! Because they have perception enough to see they are spiritually bankrupt, they, therefore, imagine that their debts are paid! Because they *feel* themselves to be in the Slough of Despond, they dream they are on the Rock!

But there is a vast difference between the two things. A man may think he has an experience of his own emptiness—no, he may truly possess it—but if it does not drive him to Christ, if he does not come and rest on the Lord Jesus, all his experiences are of no saving value! The foundation of the soul’s salvation is not experience of any or every kind, but the finished work, the meritorious blood and righteousness of our Lord and Savior!

There are some, too, who not only know experience and Doctrine, but who also *know how to talk of them.*They have mingled with Christian people until they can get up their phraseology and, as some Christians have cant expressions, these people can “cant” in any quantity and to any extent. They can talk about their “poor souls” and about, “the dear Lord,” and use all those other precious phrases of hypocrisy which lard some religious publications and which are to be found in the conversation of some people who ought to know better. They use these expressions and then, when they get in among the people of God, they are received with open arms! And they fancy that because they can talk as Christians talk, it is all well with them! But, oh, remember that if a parrot could call you, “father,” it would not, for all that, have become a child of yours! A foreigner may learn the language of an Englishman but never be an Englishman, but still remain a foreigner. So, too, you may take up the language of a Christian, but may never have within you the Spirit of God and, therefore, be none of His. You must know *Him*. “Know yourself,” said the heathen philosopher. That is well, but that knowledge may only lead a man to Hell. “Know *Christ*,” says the Christian philosopher, “know *Him* and then you shall know yourself”—and this shall certainly lead you to Heaven, for the knowledge of Christ Jesus is *saving* knowledge—“whom to know is life eternal.”

In addition to these valuable pieces of information, there are some *who know a great deal*ABOUT *Christ*, but here I must remind you that the text does not say, “I know *about* Christ,” but, “I know *Him*.” Ah, dear Hearer, you may have heard the Gospel from your youth up, so that the whole history of Christ is at your fingertips! But you may not know *Him*, for there is a deal of difference between knowing *about Him*, and *knowing Him*. You may know about a medicine, but still die of the disease which the medicine might have cured. The prisoner may know about liberty and yet lie and pine in his dungeon until, as John Bunyan put it, “the moss grows on his eyelids.” The traveler may know about the home which he hopes to reach and yet may be left out at nightfall in the midst of the forest. Many a man of business knows about wealth, or even concerning the millions of the Bank of England, and yet is a bankrupt or on the verge of poverty. Many a sailor knows about the port, but his ship drifts upon the rocks and all hands go down. It is not enough to know *about* Christ, it is knowing Christ, *Himself,* that alone saves the soul!

And, over and above, and in addition to all this, you *may know the Scriptures from youth up.*I suppose I have some—perhaps many—before me who are well acquainted with almost every Chapter in the. Bible. You could not be questioned upon any part of it so as to be really nonplussed. You have read the Book and you continue to read it—and I approve of your wise choice in so doing—and beg you to always continue in so excellent a practice! But remember, if you have not the Word of God *in your heart* it is of small use to have it merely in your head. Oh, to know Christ is our supreme and tragic need! Not to merely know texts and Scripture, for—“the letter kills, it is only the Spirit that quickens”—and unless you know Christ you do not know the vital Spirit of the Word of God! The only saving knowledge, then, is knowing Christ.

Well, now, so is it with the exercise of faith. You may *know a great deal about faith*, but the only saving faith is belief concerning Christ. “I know *whom* I have believed.” To believe Doctrine will not save a man. You may hold all the creed and be orthodox—and then be no better than the devil, for I suppose that the devil is a very sound theologian. He surely knows the Truth. He believes and trembles! But you may know it and *not* tremble—and so you may fall short of one virtue which even the devil possesses! A firm belief in what is preached to you is well enough in its way, but to believe a Doctrine as such cannot save you. Some have a belief in their minister—and I suppose that is so flattering to us that you will hardly expect us to speak against it—but of all vices, it is one most surely to be dreaded because it is so very dangerous! We charge you in the sight of God, always weigh what we have to say to you—and if it is not according to Scripture, cast it away as you cast away refuse! Take nothing merely because we say it! Let nothing that we preach be received upon our *ipse dixit*, but let it be tried and tested by the Word of God, for otherwise you may be led by the blind. And “if the blind lead the blind, they shall both fall into the ditch.” Ah, what multitudes of persons there are in England who are beginning to get their fellow man to perform their religion for them! They are too lazy to think! They are too idle to use whatever brains they have and so they get some mere simpleton who thinks that God is pleased with his putting on a white gown or a blue dress, or a black gown or green dress, a scarlet gown or mauve dress, is pleased with burning candles in the daylight and pleased with making a pungent odor in the church—they get such a creature as this to do their religion for them and then they lie down at night to rest, feeling perfectly satisfied that God is satisfied and they are all right! Oh, I charge you, believe not this delusion! It is not believing in a priest that will save you! Believing in the priest may be your ruin, but believing in Christ is the really vital point—the one thing that truly matters. He that believes in Christ is saved! But he that believes even the Pope of Rome shall find that he believes to his own eternal ruin!

Then again, it is not *believing in ourselves.* Many persons believe thoroughly in themselves. The doctrine of self-reliance is preached in many quarters now-a-days. I suppose that what is meant by the term is a good mercantile possession, a business virtue, but it is a Christian vice as towards spiritual things and emphatically towards the soul’s salvation! Self-reliance in this matter always ruins those who practice it. Rely on self? Let night rely on her darkness to find a light! Let emptiness rely on its insufficiency to find its fullness! Let death rely on the worms to give it immortality! Let Hell rely upon its fire to make it into Heaven—such trusts as these would be equally strong with those of the sinner who relies upon himself for salvation! Your belief must not be that *you*can force your way to Heaven, but you must believe Him, for anything else is an unsaving faith.

You see, then, that the knowledge which saves, and the belief which saves, both hang upon the Cross. They both look to the wounds of that dear Man, that blessed God who was there the Propitiation for our sins and who suffered in our place. My Hearer, are you trusting Christ? Are you hanging upon Him as the vessel hangs upon the nail? Do you know Him as a man knows his friend? Do you seek to know more of Him? Is He all your salvation and all your desire? If not, take home this solemn warning—whatever else you know, you are still ignorant, and whatever else you believe, you are still an unbeliever—unless you know and believe in Him who is the Savior of men!

I pass on now to a second point, which is this—  
**II.**THAT KNOWLEDGE WITHOUT FAITH IS VAIN.  
This is to try to balance with but one scale—to run a chariot on one

wheel. You have the double matter here. “I *know* whom I have *believed*.” It is good to know, but knowledge must be crowned with faith! It has been remarked that Paul does not say, “I know of whom I have heard.” He does not say, “I know of whom I have read.” He does not say, “I know of whom I have preached,” but, “I know whom I have believed.” Here he hits the nail on the head. Knowledge is useful in the bud. Mere reading, preaching, too, are well as an exercise—but *believing* is the fruit which must grow upon the Tree of Knowledge or else the knowledge will be of little use to us!

Now, my dear Friends, I know that I am addressing many of your class, many who know Christ in a certain sense. Know much about Him. You know of His Nature, you believe Him to be true Deity. You know Him to be Human like yourselves and for man’s sake made Man. You know His life. You have often read it. You often like to dwell upon the incidents of it. It is a genuine and great pleasure to sing of Bethlehem and its manger, of Cana and its marriage. You have turned over the pages of that Life of lives and felt enraptured with this matchless masterpiece of biography. You are well acquainted, too, with His death—it has often drawn tears to your eyes when you have thought of the shame and the spitting and the crown of thorns. You know something concerning His expiring cries. Your imagination has often pictured to you the wounded body of that dread Sufferer. You have thought that if you had been there, you would have wet His feet with your tears, you did so sympathize with Him. You know of His burial and of His Resurrection, too, and you have sweetly joined with us when we have been singing—

***“Angels, roll the rock away,***

***Jesus Christ is risen today”***  
and you have not been lacking when we have been singing of His Ascension! Your eyes have flushed with fire when you have heard the words—

***“They brought His chariot from on high,  
To bear Him to His Throne,  
Clapped their triumphant wings and cried, ‘The glorious work is done.’”***

You know that He reigns in Heaven! You know that He has prepared mansions for His people. You know that He intercedes for sinners. You expect that He will come. You believe in His Second Advent and when the *Te Deum* has been sung in your hearing—**“**We believe that You shall come to be our Judge,” you have said, “Yes! I do—I do—I believe it.” Now, if you know all this, you know that which it is very important to be known, but if you stop short here, where are you? Why, I have no doubt there have been hundreds who knew this, but who have given their bodies and souls to the devil and have lived in open sin, day by day! If you could go to the condemned cell tonight, I would not wonder if the wretch confined there knows all this. If you were to go into the flaunting gin palaces which are scattered to our shame and curse all over London— where men and women are drinking liquid fire at this very moment—you would find that half of them know all this, but they do not drink any the less for it! If you were to go into the lairs of vice, you would find that the most abandoned know all this, but it does them no good! And I will add also this—that the lost spirits in Hell went there knowing all this! And the devil, himself, knows it all, but he still remains a devil! Ah, my Hearer, I charge you before God, do not sit down and say, “I know, I know, I know.” Do you believe? Do you BELIEVE?

The common answer given very frequently to the city missionary is just this—men say to them, “There is no need for you to come here and tell me anything. I know all about it.” Ah, but do you *believe in Jesus*? What is the good of your knowing unless you believe? I do not think that the most of you who go to places of worship need so much instruction in Divine Truth as you need an earnest appeal to your hearts not to stop short at instruction! You do know, and that, indeed, shall be, indeed, part of your damnation—that you had the light but you would not see! That Jesus came into your street and came near to you, but you would not have Him! The medicine was there, but you died because you would not take it! The food was on the table, but you would sooner perish with hunger than receive it as the free gift of Heaven! Ah, my Hearer, your knowing will not benefit you, but will be a plague to you! The poor savage in his kraal in Central Africa who never heard the name of Jesus shall die with at least this mitigating circumstance—that he never rejected the Savior’s love! The million a month who die in China, for a million do die every month in China—the million who die every month in China die with this one solace, at any rate, that they never sinned against the light of Christianity, nor rejected the Truth as it is in Jesus! This is more than you can say! This will never help to make a dainty couch for you, when you make your bed in Hell! The responsibility of having known shall add remorse to the whips of accusing conscience and make Hell still more terrible! Oh, may God grant that we may not stop short with knowledge, alone, but may know Christ as Him whom we have believed! But still we have in the next place—

**III.**FAITH WITHOUT KNOWLEDGE IS BUT A BIRD WITH ONE WING. The old faith of the fuller is coming back in some places today. You remember what the fuller said, “Yes, he believed” He believed—what did he believe? He believed, “What the Church believed.” And what did the Church believe? “Well, the Church believed—well, what *he* believed.” And, pray tell, what did he and the Church, together, believe? “Why, they both believed the same thing.” Ah, how many there are of that sort today! They say, “We think he ought to be sincere, you know, and if he is sincere, it does not matter much whether it is absolutely true. He need not trouble greatly to enquire whether what he believes is Scriptural or not, or whether it is according to God’s Revelation—that will take up too much of his time and thought—and look too much like being obedient to God’s will. Just be sincere, you know, and then, hit or miss, whatever your mother or father happened to be in religious character, go at it with all your might and it will be all right.”

Now, unfortunately, that does not happen to be the Truth of God—and we do not find people in this world getting on in proportion to their sincerity. I suppose our friends who bought Overend and Gurney’s shares were sincere enough in their belief that they were buying a good thing, but I should fancy that their opinions have undergone a change of late! No doubt there have been persons who have taken prussic acid, sincerely believing that it would benefit them, but I suppose it has killed them, notwithstanding their sincerity. If a man should travel due south in order to get to the Orkney Islands, however sincere he might be, he would probably discover himself in the Bay of Biscay before long. The fact is, it is not sincerity, alone—it is the studious endeavor to find out what the right is and what the Truth is—that is the only safe way for us! We do not, therefore, ask you to believe without knowing what you are to believe. It is impossible. Do not think a man can hold in his hands four or five doctrines and say to you, “Do you believe them?” “Well, but what are they?” “Never mind! You are a true Believer and you must believe then without knowing them.” A man who has no power of belief at all says, “Oh, yes, I believe. I will kiss your feet if necessary, or do anything you like to tell me.” But the thoughtful man, the man who is likely to be saved, says at once, “I find it impossible to believe until I first know what I am to believe.”

I have sometimes thought when I have heard addresses from some revival Brothers who had kept on saying time after time, “Believe, believe, believe,” that I would like to have known for myself what it was we were to believe in order to our salvation. There is, I fear, a great deal of vagueness and crudeness about this matter. I have heard it often asserted that if you believe that Jesus Christ died for you, you will be saved. My dear Hearer, do not be deluded by such an idea! You may believe that Jesus Christ died for you and may believe what is not true! You may believe that which will bring you no sort of good whatever. That is not saving faith! The man who has saving faith attains to the conviction that Christ died for him afterwards, but it is not of the essence of saving faith. Do not get that into your head or it will ruin you! Do not say, “I believe that Jesus Christ died for me,” and because of that feel that you are saved! I pray you to remember that the genuine faith that saves the soul has for its main element—trust—absolute rest of the whole soul—on the Lord Jesus Christ to save me, whether He died in particular or in special to save me or not and, relying as I am, wholly and alone on Him, I am saved! Afterwards I come to perceive that I have a special interest in the Savior’s blood, but if I think I have perceived that before I have believed in Christ, then I have inverted the Scriptural order of things and I have taken as a fruit of my faith that which is only to be obtained by rights— by the man who absolutely trusts in Christ, and Christ alone, to save!

The matter, then, which saves is this—a man *trusts* Christ, but he trusts Christ because he*knows* Him. See! He knows Christ and, therefore, he trusts Him. How does he come to know Him? Well, he has heard of Him, he has read of Him, he seeks Him in prayer and when he has learned His Character, he trusts Him. Occasionally young converts will say to us, “Sir, I cannot trust Christ.” I never try to argue with them about it, but say, “Then you do not know Him, because to truly know Christ is sure to bring trust.” I believe there are some men in the world whom you have only to know to trust because they are so transparently honest, so clearly truthful that you must trust them! The Savior is such a Person as that. Let me tell you, Sinner, God was made flesh and dwelt among us—do you believe that? “Yes.” He lived a holy life. He died a painful death. The merit of His life and death is set to the account of everyone who trusts in Him and He declares that if you trust in Him, He will save you. Now surely you can trust Him! You say, “No, I cannot.” Why not? Is He not able? He is Divine—therefore you cannot raise the question. Is He not willing? He died—that argues willingness surely to do a lesser thing, since He has done the greater! Surely you cannot doubt that! The life of the Lord Jesus Christ is an answer to every form of doubt. Do you know, I feel with regard to Christ, myself, that instead of its being any difficulty to trust Him, I find it very difficult *not* to trust Him if I cannot find any reason why I should distrust Him. I was turning over the other day some odds and ends of my own brain to see if I could find any reason why Christ should not receive my soul. Well, I could not find half a one, but I could think of 20,000 reasons why I should believe in Him to save me, even if I had a million souls! I feel as if His way of saving is so magnificent and the working of it out so Divinely generous, that His offerings were so great, His Person is so glorious, that I could not only cast my one soul on Him, but 50,000 souls if I had them! Why, I cannot find any reasonable ground for doubting Him! Soul, I would to God that you would think of Him in the same light!—

***“He is able, He is willing***—

***Doubt no more!”***  
You know something of Him. Oh, may God give the Grace to add to your knowledge, trust, and then shall you have true saving faith!

Let it be remarked here that in proportion as our genuine knowledge of Christ increases, so we shall find that our trust in Him will increase, too. The more we know Christ, the more we shall trust Him because every new piece of knowledge will give new arguments for immovable confidence in Him! Oh, if you have not seen Christ, I can understand your doubting Him, but if you have leaned your head upon His bosom, if He has ever kissed you with the kisses of His lips, if He has ever taken you into His banqueting house and waved His banner of love over you, I know you will feel, “Doubt You, Jesus, doubt You? Why, how can I? I know the power of Your arm. I know the love of Your heart. I know the efficacy of Your blood. I know the Glory of Your Person. I know the faithfulness of Your Word. I know the Immutability of Your oath and I can trust You and, either sink or swim, my soul casts herself upon You, You blessed Savior!”

But now there may be some present who are saying, “I cannot say I know whom I have believed.”  
**IV.**“HOW CAN I KNOW THAT I MAY BELIEVE IN HIM?” The answer is, search the Word of God with a desire to find Him. Seek out the most Christ-exalting ministry in your neighborhood, in whatever denomination you can find it, and listen to it with all your ears and with all your heart. Get to your chamber and there seek the Lord to illuminate you in the matter of the Lord Jesus Christ! Ask Him to reveal His Son in you. I tell you this—faith comes by hearing and by hearing the Word of God—and when to these is added earnest seeking, you shall not be long without finding Him! They who seek Christ are already being sought of Him. You who desire Him shall have Him! You who want Him shall not be long without Him. It is to have Christ to some degree, to hunger and to thirst after Him—and when you feel that you cannot be content without Him, He will not let you be, but will soon come to you! I believe there are some who will get peace with Christ tonight! Do you understand it, dear Friend? You have nothing to *do*. You have nothing to *be.*You have not even anything to learn, except that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners and that He is able to save unto the uttermost them that come unto God by Him! You know that. Now, trust Him, and if you do, it is all done and you are saved! If you have trusted in Him whom God has revealed as your Savior, it is not a matter of twenty minutes nor much less a matter of months, but you are saved at once!—  
***“The moment a sinner believes,  
And trusts in his crucified God,  
His pardon at once he receives,  
Salvation in full through Christ’s blood.”***When a man once gets into the lifeboat, if it were certain that the lifeboat would never sink, he is saved as soon as he gets in. Now, the act of faith does, as it were, put us into the lifeboat of Christ Jesus and we are saved immediately! You may have many a tossing, but you will get safely to land at last. If you want faith you must get it, as I have told you, by knowing Him, studying the Word of God, listening to it and seeking His face. But make use of what you know, or else what you know will be like the stale manna and will be of no use to you. Believe it as you know it. Use it up as you get it. And if you already know Christ to be a sinner’s Savior, and know that you are a sinner, then come tonight and put your trust in Him! And be of good cheer because He will never, never, never cast you away! And now, lastly, I should like to ask a question, and it is this—  
**V.**HOW MANY ARE THERE WHO DO KNOW CHRIST?  
We all know something of which we are a little proud, but, “I know, I know, I know,” is a very poor thing to say when you do not know Christ! “I know,” says my young friend over there who has been to Oxford or Cambridge University, “I know So-and-So.” “I know,” says another, “such-and-such a special line of distinguished thinking.” But do you know Christ, my dear Friend? “Ah, thank God,” says one upstairs, and another good soul below, “we can hardly read, Sir, but we do know Him.” I would change places with you, Friends, much sooner than I would with the most learned of men who do not know Christ, because when they come to the gates of death, you know, he who keeps the gate will not say, “Do you know the classics? Have you read Horace? Have you studied Homer? Do you know mathematics? Do you understand logarithms or conic sections?” No, but he will say, “Do you know Christ?” And if you scarcely even know your own native tongue, yet if you know Christ, the gates of Heaven shall fly open to let you in!  
Now, do you know Christ? Do let the question go round to each one, “Do I know Christ?” Well, then, do you believe Christ? Do you trust Christ? “Yes, thank God!” says one, “with all my imperfections I can sing the hymn—  
***“On Christ the solid Rock I stand  
All other ground is sinking sand.”***  
Oh, then, Brothers and Sisters, let us be of good cheer, for, trusting Him, He will never fail us! Believing Him, He will never leave us! We shall see His face in Glory. Oh, that the day were come! But when it does, to His name shall be all the praise! Amen.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:**2Ti 4:1-11***.***

**Verses 1, 2.***I charge you, therefore, before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at His appearing and His Kingdom, preach the Word of God.* We are not to use such strong language as this unless there is some sufficient reason for it. We must not be too hot upon cold matters, but even this is better than to be cold upon matters that require heat. When John Calvin wished to leave Geneva to complete his studies elsewhere, that man of God, Farrell, knowing how necessary it was for the Church that Calvin should remain at Geneva, charged him before God that he dared not go—and hoped that a curse might light upon all his studies, if for the sake of them he should forsake what he held to be his duty. So sometimes, like the Apostle, we may before the Judge of the quick and dead, charge men not to forsake their work and calling.

**2.***Be instant in season and out of season.* The Greek word means, “Stand up to it,” as when a man is determined to finish his work, he stands right up to it. Stand over your work, putting your whole strength into it—standing up over it. “In season and out of season,” because the Gospel is a fruit which is in season all the year round! Sometimes these “out of season” sermons, preached at night or at some unusual time, have been of more service than the regular ordinances of God’s House. Mr. Grimshaw used to ride on horseback from village to village throughout the more desolate parts of Yorkshire and wherever he met with ten or a dozen people, he would preach on horseback to them, preaching sometimes as many as 24 sermons in a week! That was being instant “out of season” as well as “in season.” So should God’s Timothys be and, indeed, all of us!

**2.***Reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and Doctrine.*That is, do not exhort with mere declamation, but put some argument into your exhortation! Some men think it quite enough to appear to be in earnest, though they have nothing to say. Let such exhorters remember that they are to exhort with Doctrine—with solid teaching!

**2.***For the time will come when they will not endure sound Doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears.* When men have not good preachers, they are sure to have a great many of them! Those nations which have the worst priests always have them in swarms. So let us be thankful if God sends us a glowing and zealous minister, for even those who count it an affliction to have a minister, would be more afflicted if they had not a good one! But how evil it is when men get itching ears, when they need someone to be perpetually tickling them, giving them some pretty things, some fine pretentious intellectualism! In all congregations there is good to be done, except in a congregation having itching ears. From this may God deliver us!

**4.***And they shall turn away their ears from the Truth, and shall be turned unto fables.* When a man will not believe the Truth of God, he is sure, before long, to be a greedy believer of lies! No persons are so credulous as skeptics. There is no absurdity so gross but what an unbeliever will very soon be brought to receive *it*, though he *rejects* the Truth of God!

**5, 6.***But watch you in all things, endure affliction, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of your ministry. For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand.* How complacently he talks about it! It is only a departure, though Caesar’s sword might smite his head from his body! And truly death to the Believer is no frightful thing. “Go up,” said God to Moses, and the Prophet went up, and God took away his soul to Him—and Moses was blessed! And so, “Come up,” says God to the Christian, and the Christian goes up, first to his chamber and then from his chamber to Paradise!

**7, 8.***I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give Me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing.*This seems, then, to be a distinguishing mark of a true child of God—he loves the appearing of Christ! Now there are some professors who never think of the Second Advent at all. It never gives them the slightest joy to believe that—

***“Jesus the King will come,  
To take His people up  
To their eternal home.”***

Truly they are mistaken and are surely wrong, for was not this the very comfort that Christ gave to His disciples? “If I go away, I will come again and receive you unto Myself, that where I am there you may be also.” I trust, dear Friends, we are among those “who love His appearing,” and if we are, it is a sure prophecy that we shall have a crown of righteousness!

**9, 10.***Do your diligence to come shortly unto me: for Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica.* Demas was once almost a martyr! He was upon the very edge of suffering, but now you see he goes back to the world—he is not content to lie in the dungeon and rot with Paul, but will rather seek his own ease. Alas, Demas, how have you dishonored yourself forever, for every man who reads this passage, as he passes by flings another stone at the heap which is the memorial of one cowardly spirit who fled from Paul in danger!

**10.***Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia.* It is likely that Paul had sent Crescens and Titus away upon a mission, but now, from certain intimations, the Apostle is sure that his time of death is coming on and so, indeed, it was, for his head was struck off by Nero’s orders a few weeks after the writing of this Epistle—and now he somewhat laments that he had sent them away. And would not you and I want the consolation of kind faces round about us, and the sweet music of loving voices in our ears if we were about to be offered up?

**11.***Only Luke is with me. Take Mark, and bring him with you for he is profitable to me for the ministry.*That is one of the prettiest verses in the Bible! You remember that the Apostle Paul quarreled with Barnabas about this very Mark, because John Mark would not go into Bythinia to preach the Word, but left Paul and Barnabas. Therefore Paul would not have Mark with him anymore because he had turned in the day of trouble. But now Paul is about to die and he wishes to be perfectly at peace with everyone. He has quite forgiven poor John Mark for his former weakness. He sees Divine Grace in him and so he is afraid lest John Mark should be under some apprehensions of the Apostle’s anger. And so he puts in this very kind passage, without seeming to have any reference at all to the past, but he gives him this great praise—“for he is profitable to me for the ministry.”

—Adapted from *The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 **PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.** Sermon #908 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

ASSURED SECURITY IN CHRIST  
NO. 908

**DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, JANUARY 2, 1870, *BY C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“I know Whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that  
which I have committed unto Him against that day.”*** 2Ti 1:12***.***

IN the style of these Apostolic words there is a positiveness most refreshing in this age of doubt. In certain circles of society it is rare nowadays to meet with anybody who believes anything. It is the philosophical, the right, the fashionable thing, nowadays, to doubt everything which is generally received. Indeed, those who have any creed whatever are by the liberal school set down as old-fashioned dogmatists, persons of shallow minds, deficient in intellect, and far behind their age. The great men, the men of thought, the men of high culture and refined taste consider it wisdom to cast suspicion upon Revelation, and sneer at all definiteness of belief.

“Ifs” and “buts,” and “perhaps” are the supreme delight of this period. What wonder if men find everything uncertain—when they refuse to bow their intellects to the declarations of the God of Truth? Note then, with admiration, the refreshing and even startling positiveness of the Apostle— “I know,” says he. And that is not enough—“I am persuaded.” He speaks like one who cannot tolerate a doubt. There is no question about whether he has believed or not. “I know Whom I have believed.” There is no question as to whether he was right in so believing. “I am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed to Him.” There is no suspicion as to the future. He is as positive for years to come as he is for this present moment. “He is able to keep that which I have committed to Him against that day.”

Now there *is* a positiveness which is very disgusting—when it is nothing but the fruit of ignorance and is unattended with anything like thoughtfulness. But in the Apostle’s case, his confidence is founded not on ignorance, but on knowledge. “I know,” says he. There are certain things which he has clearly ascertained, which he knows to be *fact*. And his confidence is grounded on these ascertained Truths of God. His confidence, moreover, was not the fruit of thoughtlessness, for he adds, “I am persuaded.” As though he had reasoned the matter out and had been persuaded into it—had meditated long upon it, and turned it over—and the force of Truth had quite convinced him, so that he stood persuaded.

Where positiveness is the result of knowledge and of meditation, it becomes sublime, as it was in the Apostle’s case. And being sublime it becomes influential. In this case it certainly must have been influential over the heart of Timothy, and over the minds of the tens of thousands who

have, during these nineteen centuries, perused this Epistle. It encourages the timid when they see others preserved. It confirms the wavering when they see others steadfast. The great Apostle’s words, ringing out with trumpet tone this morning, “I know, and I am persuaded,” cannot but help to cheer many of us in our difficulties and anxieties. May the Holy Spirit cause us not only to admire the faith of Paul, but to imitate it, and to attain to the same confidence!

Some speak confidently because they are not confident. How often have we observed that brag and bluster are only the outward manifestations of inward trembling? They are but concealments adopted to cover cowardice! As the schoolboy, passing through the Churchyard, whistles to keep his courage up, so some people talk very positively because they are *not* positive. They make a pompous parade of faith because they desire to sustain the presumption which, as being their only comfort, is exceedingly dear to them.

Now in the Apostle’s case, every syllable he speaks has beneath it a most real weight of confidence which the strongest expressions could not exaggerate. Sitting there in the dungeon, a prisoner for Christ, abhorred by his countrymen, despised by the learned, and ridiculed by the rude, Paul confronted the whole world with a holy boldness which knew no quailing. A boldness resulting from the deep conviction of his spirit. You may take these words and put what emphasis you can upon each one of them, for they are the truthful utterance of a thoroughly earnest and brave spirit. May we enjoy such a confidence ourselves, and then we need not hesitate to declare it—for our testimony will glorify God and bring consolation to others.

This morning for our instruction, as the Holy Spirit may help us, we shall first consider the matter in question, that which Paul had committed to Christ. Secondly, the fact beyond all question, namely, that Christ was able to keep him. Thirdly, the assurance of that fact, or how the Apostle was able to say, “I know and am persuaded.” And fourthly, the influence of that assurance when it rules in the heart.

**I.**First, then, dear Friends, let us speak for a few minutes upon THE MATTER IN QUESTION.  
**1.**That matter was, first of all, the Apostle’s deposit of all his interests and concerns into the hands of God in Christ. Some have said that what Paul here speaks of was his *ministry*. But there are many reasons for concluding that this is a mistake. A great array of expositors, at the head of whom we would mention Calvin, think that the sole treasure which Paul deposited in the hands of God was his eternal salvation. We do not doubt that this was the grandest portion of the priceless deposit—but we also think that as the connection does not limit the sense, it cannot be restricted or confined to any one thing. It seems to us that all the Apostle’s temporal and eternal interests were, by an act of faith, committed into the hands of God in Christ Jesus.  
To the Lord’s gracious keeping the Apostle committed his body. He had suffered much in that frail tabernacle—shipwrecks, perils, hunger, cold, nakedness, imprisonments, beatings with rods and stoning had all spent their fury upon him. He expected before long that his mortal frame would become the prey of Nero’s cruelty. None could tell what would then happen to him—whether he should be burned alive to light up Nero’s gardens, be torn to pieces by wild beasts to make a Roman holiday—or become the victim of the headsman’s sword. But in whatever way he might be called to offer up himself a sacrifice to God, he committed his body to the keeping of Him who is the Resurrection and the Life.  
He was persuaded that in the day of the Lord’s appearing he would rise again, his body having suffered no loss through torture or dismemberment. He looked for a joyful resurrection and asked no better embalming for his corpse than the power of Christ would ensure it.  
He gave over to Christ at that hour his character and reputation. A Christian minister must expect to lose his reputation among men. He must be willing to suffer every reproach for Christ’s sake. But he may rest assured that he will never lose his real honor if it is risked for the Truth’s sake and placed in the Redeemer’s hands. The day shall declare the excellence of the upright, for it will reveal all that was hidden and bring to light that which was concealed. There will be a resurrection of characters as well as persons. Every reputation that has been obscured by clouds of reproach for Christ’s sake shall be rendered glorious when the righteous shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Let the wicked say what they will of me, said the Apostle, I commit my character to the Judge of the quick and the dead.  
So also his whole lifework he delivered into the hands of God. Men said, no doubt, that Paul had made a great mistake. In the eyes of the worldly wise he must have seemed altogether mad. What eminence awaited him had he become a rabbi! He might have lived respected and honored among his countrymen as a Pharisee. Or if he had preferred to follow the Grecian philosophies, a man with such strength of mind might have rivaled Socrates or Plato! But instead, he chose to unite himself with a band of men commonly reputed to be ignorant fanatics who turned the world upside down. Ah, well, says Paul, I leave the reward and fruit of my life entirely with my Lord, for He will at last justify my choice of service beneath the banner of His Son. And then the assembled universe shall know that I was no mistaken zealot for a senseless cause.  
So did the Apostle resign to the hands of God in Christ his soul, whatever its jeopardy from surrounding temptations. However great the corruptions that were within it, and the dangers that were without, he felt safe in the great Surety’s hands. He made over to the Divine Trustee all his mental powers, faculties, passions, instincts, desires and ambitions. He gave his whole nature up to the Christ of God to preserve it in holiness through the whole of life. And right well did his life-course justify his faith.  
He gave that soul up to be kept in the hour of death, then to be strengthened, sustained, consoled, upheld, and guided through the tracks unknown—up through the mysterious and unseen—to the Throne of God, even the Father. He resigned his spirit to Christ, that it might be presented without spot or wrinkle or any such thing in the Last Great Day. He did, in fact, make a full deposit of all that he was, and all that he had, and all that concerned him, into the keeping of God in Christ, to find in his God a faithful Guardian, a sure Defender and a safe Keeper. This was the matter, then, about which the Apostle was concerned.  
**2.**But next to this, the matter in question concerned the Lord’s ability to make good this guardianship. The Apostle did not doubt that Christ had accepted the office of Keeper of that which he had committed to Him. The question was never about Christ’s faithfulness to that trust. The Apostle does not even say that he was confident that Jesus would be faithful. He felt that assertion to be superfluous. There was no question about Christ’s willingness to keep the soul committed to Him—such a statement Paul felt it unnecessary to make. But the question with many was concerning the *power* of the once crucified Redeemer to keep that which was committed to Him.  
Oh, said the Apostle, I know and am persuaded that He is able to do that. Mark, my dear Friends, that the question is not about the Apostle’s power to keep *himself*. That question he does not raise. Many of you have been troubled as to whether you are able to endure temptation. You need not debate the subject. It is clear that apart from Christ you are quite unable to persevere to the end. Answer that question with a decided negative at once, and never raise it again. The enquiry was not whether the Apostle would be found meritorious in his own righteousness in the Day of Judgment, for he had long ago cast that righteousness aside.  
He does not raise that point. The grand question is this, “Is Jesus able to keep me?” Stand to that, my Brethren, and your doubts and fears will soon come to an end. Concerning your own power or merit, write, “despair,” straightway upon its forehead. Let the creature be regarded as utterly dead and corrupt, and then lean on that arm, the sinews of which shall never shrink. And cast your full weight upon that Omnipotence which bears up the pillars of the universe. There is the point—keep to it, and you will not lose your joy. You have committed yourself to Christ. The great question now is not about what you can do, but about what Jesus is able to do. And rest assured that He is able to keep that which you have committed to Him.  
**3.**The Apostle further carries our thoughts on to a certain set period— the keeping of the soul unto what he calls “that day.” I suppose he calls it, “that day,” because it was the day most ardently expected and commonly spoken of by Christians. It was so usual a topic of conversation to speak of Christ’s coming and of the results of it, that the Apostle does not say, “the advent,” he simply says, “that day.” That day with which Believers are more familiar than with any other day beside. That day, the day of death if you will, when the soul appears before its God. The Day of Judgment, if you please—that day when the books shall be opened and the record shall be read.  
That day, the winding up of all, the sealing of destiny, the manifestation of the eternal fate of each one of us. That day for which all other days were made. Christ Jesus is able to keep us against that day. That is to say, He is able to place us, then, at the right hand of God, to set our feet upon the Rock when others sink into the pit that is bottomless. To crown us when others shall be accursed. To bring us to eternal joy when sinners shall be cast into Hell.  
Here was the matter of consideration—can the Great Shepherd of souls preserve His flock? Ah, Brethren, if you have never searched into that question, I should not wonder but what you will! When you are very low and weak, and heart and flesh are failing. When sickness brings you to the borders of the grave and you gaze into eternity, the enquiry will come to any thoughtful man—Is this confidence of mine in the Christ of God warranted? Will He be able in this last article, when my spirit shivers in its unclothing, will He be able to help me now?  
And in the more dreadful hour, when the trumpet peal shall awake the dead, shall I, indeed, find the Great Sin Bearer able to stand for me? Having no merit of my own, will His merit suffice? From ten thousand sins will His blood, alone, cleanse me? Nothing can ever equal this matter in importance. It is one of most pressing urgency of consideration.  
**II.**It is a happy circumstance that we can turn from it to our second point, to dwell for a while upon THE FACT BEYOND ALL QUESTION, namely, that God in Christ is able to keep that which we have committed to Him.  
The Apostle’s confidence was that Christ was an able Guardian. So he meant, first, that Jesus is able to keep the soul from falling into damning sin. I suppose this is one of the greatest fears that has ever troubled the true Believer. Have you ever prayed that you might rather die than turn aside from Christ? I know I have, and I have sung bitterly in my soul that verse—  
***“Ah, Lord! With such a heart as mine,  
Unless You hold me fast,  
I feel I must, I shall decline,  
And turn from You at last.”***  
Now, troubled Christian, remember that your Lord is able to keep you under every possible form of temptation. “Ah,” you say, “the Apostle Paul had not the trials I have. I think he had. But if he had not, Jesus had. And Christ has ability to keep you under them. Do I hear one say, “I am the only one of my household that has been called by Grace, and they all oppose me. I am a lonely one in my father’s house”? Now, Paul was precisely in your condition. He was a Hebrew of the Hebrews, and he was regarded by his people with the most extreme hate because he had come out from among them to follow the Crucified One.  
Yet Paul felt that God was able to keep him, and you may depend upon it—though father and mother forsake, and brothers and sisters scoff—He whom you trust will keep you also firm in the faith. “Ah,” says another, “but you do not know what it is to strive with the prejudices of an education hostile to the faith of Jesus. When I seek to grow in Grace, the things I learned in my childhood force themselves upon me and hinder me.” And was not the Apostle in this case? As touching the Law he had been a Pharisee, educated in the strictest sect, brought up in traditions that were opposed to the faith of Christ. And yet the Lord kept him faithful even to the end.  
None of his old prejudices were able so much as to make him obscure the simplicity of the Gospel of Christ. God is able to keep you, also, despite your previous prejudices. “Ah,” says one, “but I am the subject of many skeptical thoughts. I often suffer from doubts of the most subtle order.” Do you think that the Apostle never knew this trial? He was no stranger to the Greek philosophy, which consisted of a bundle of questions and skepticisms. He must have experienced those temptations which are common to thoughtful minds. And yet he said, “I know that He is able to keep me.” Believe me, then, the Lord Jesus is equally able to keep you.  
“Yes,” says another, “but I have so many temptations in the world. If I were not a Christian, I should prosper much better. I have openings now before me by which I might soon obtain a competence, and perhaps wealth, if I were not checked by conscience.” Do you forget that the Apostle was in like case? What might he not have had? A man of his condition in life—his birth and parentage being altogether advantageous—a man of his powers of mind and of his great energy! He might have seized upon any attractive position. But those things which were gain for him, he counted loss for Christ’s sake. And he was willing to be less than nothing, because the power of Divine Grace kept him true to his profession.  
But you tell me you are very poor, and that poverty is a severe trial. Brothers and Sisters, you are not so poor as Paul. I suppose a few needles for his tent-making, an old cloak, and a few parchments made up all his wealth. A man without a home, a man without a single foot of land to call his own, was this Apostle. But poverty and want could not subdue him— Christ was able to keep him even then. “Ah,” you say, “but he had not my strong passions and corruptions.” Most surely he had them all, for we hear him cry, “I find, then, a Law, that when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the Law of God after the inward man: but I see another Law in my members, warring against the Law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the Law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?”  
He was tempted as you are, yet he knew that Christ was able to keep him. O trembling Christian, never doubt this soul-cheering fact—that your loving Savior is able to keep you. But the Apostle did not merely trust Christ thus to keep him from sin—he relied upon the same arm to preserve him from despair. He was always battling with the world. There were times when he had no helper. The Brethren often proved false, and those that were true were frequently timid. He was left in the world like a solitary sheep surrounded with wolves. But Paul was not faint-hearted. He had his fears, for he was mortal—he rose superior to them, for he was Divinely sustained. What a front he always maintains! Nero may rise before him—a horrible monster for a man even to dream of—but Paul’s courage does not give way.  
A Jewish mob may surround him, they may drag him out of the city— but Paul’s mind is calm and composed. He may be laid in the stocks after having been scourged, but his heart finds congenial utterance in a song rather than a groan. He is always brave, always unconquerable, confident of victory. He believed that God would keep him, and he was kept. And you, my Brothers and Sisters, though your life may be a very severe conflict and you sometimes think you will give it up in despair—you never shall relinquish the sacred conflict. He that has borne you onward to this day will bear you through, and will make you more than conqueror, for He is able to keep you from fainting and despair.  
Doubtless, the Apostle meant, too, that Christ was able to keep him from the power of death. Beloved, this is great comfort to us who so soon shall die. To the Apostle, death was a very present thing. “I die daily,” said he. Yet was he well assured that death would be gain rather than loss to him, for he was certain that Christ would so order all things that death should be but like an angel to admit him into everlasting life. Be certain of this, too, for He who is the Resurrection and the Life will not desert you. Do not, my Brothers and Sisters, fall under bondage through fear of death, for the living Savior is able to keep you, and He will.  
Do not, I pray, look too much at the pains, groans, and dying strife. Look rather to that kind Friend, who, having endured the agonies of death before you, can sympathize with your sufferings, and who, as He ever lives, can render you available assistance. Cast this care on Him, and fear no more to die than you fear to go to your bed when night comes.  
The Apostle is also certain that Christ is able to preserve his soul in another world. Little is revealed in Scripture by way of detailed description of that other world. Imagination may be indulged, but little can be proved. The spirit returns to God who gave it, this we know. And in the instant after death the righteous soul is in Paradise with Christ. This, too, is clear. Yet whether we know the details or not, we are assured that the soul is safe with

Christ. Whatever danger from evil spirits may await us on our journey from this planet up to the dwelling place of God. Whatever there may be of conflict in the last moment, Jesus is able to keep that which we have committed to Him.  
If I had to keep myself, I might, indeed, tremble with alarm at the prospect of the unknown region. But He that is the Lord of death and of Hell, and has the keys of Heaven, can surely keep my soul on that dread voyage across a trackless sea. It is all well. It must be well with the righteous— even in the land of death—for our Lord’s dominion reaches even there— and being in His dominions we are safe. Paul believed, lastly, that Christ was able to preserve his body. Remember my statement that Paul committed all that he had, and was, to God in Christ?  
We must not despise this body. It is the germ of the body in which we are to dwell forever. It shall be raised from corruption into incorruption, but it is the same body. Developed from weakness into power, from dishonor into glory, it never loses its identity. The marvel of the resurrection will not fail of accomplishment. It may seem an impossibility that the body which has rotted in the tomb, and, perhaps been scattered in dust over the face of the soil—which has been absorbed by vegetables, which has been digested by animals, which has passed through countless circles of change—should be raised again. Yet impossible as it seems, the Lord Jesus Christ will perform it.  
It must be as easy to construct a second time as to create out of nothing at the first. Look at creation and see that nothing is impossible with God. Think of the Word, without whom was not anything made that was made, and straightway you will talk no longer of difficulties. With man it may be impossible, but with God all things are possible. In your entirety, my Brethren, in the integrity of your manhood, spirit, soul, and body—all that is essential to your nature, to its happiness, to its perfection. Every part of you and every power of you—you having placed all in the hands of Christ—shall be kept until that day, when in His image you shall stand, and prove in your own persons the power which in your faith you do, this day, devoutly trust.  
**III.**We shall, in the third place, pass on to notice THE ASSURANCE OF THAT FACT, or how the Apostle Paul attained to it.  
“I cannot talk like that,” says one. “I cannot say, ‘I know, and I am persuaded,’ I am very thankful that I can say, I hope, I trust, I think.” Dear Friends, in order to help you to advance, we will notice how the Apostle Paul attained to such assurance. One main help to him was the *habit*, as seen in this text, of always making faith the most prominent point of consideration. Faith is twice mentioned in the few lines before us. “I know Whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed to Him.” Paul knew what faith was, namely, a committal of his precious things into the custody of Christ.  
He does not say, “I have served Christ.” No. He does not say, “I am growing like Christ, therefore I am persuaded I shall be kept.” No. He makes most prominent in his thought the fact that he *believed*, and so had committed himself to Christ. I would to God, dear Friends, that you who are subject to doubts and fears, instead of raking about in your hearts to find evidences and marks of growth in Grace and likeness to Christ, and so on, would first make an investigation concerning a point which is far more vital—namely this—have you believed?  
Dear anxious Heart, begin your search on this point. Do you commit yourself to Christ? If you do, what though marks should be few and evidences for awhile should be obscure, he that believes on Him has everlasting life. He that believes and is baptized shall be saved. The evidences will come, the marks will be cleared in due time. But all the marks and evidences between here and Heaven are not worth a single farthing to a soul when it comes to actual conflict with death and Hell.  
Then it must be simple faith that wins the day. Those other things are good enough in brighter times. But if it is a question whether you are safe or not, you must come to this, “I have rested with all my heart on Him that came into the world to save sinners, and though I am the very chief of sinners, I believe He is able to save *me*.” You will get to assurance if you keep clear about your faith.  
The next help to assurance, as I gather from the text, is this. The Apostle maintained most clearly his view of a personal Christ. Observe how three times he mentioned his Lord. “I know Whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed to Him.” He does not say, “I know the doctrines I believe.” Surely he did, but this was not the main point. He does not say, “I am certain about the form of sound Words which I hold.” He was certain enough about that, but it was not his foundation. No mere doctrines can ever be the stay of the soul. What can a dogma do? What can a creed do?  
Brethren, these are like medicines—you need a hand to give them to you. You want the physician to administer them to you—otherwise you may die with all these precious medicines close at hand. We want a person to trust. There is no Christianity to my mind so vital, so influential, so true, so real, as the Christianity which deals with the Person of the living Redeemer. I know Him, I know He is God, I know that He is mine. I trust not merely in His teaching, but in Him. Not on His laws, rules, or teachings am I depending so much as on Himself, as a Person. Dear Brothers and Sisters, is that what you are doing now?  
Have you put your soul into the keeping of that blessed Man who is also God? He who sits at the right hand of the Father? Can you come in faith to His feet and kiss the prints of the nails? Can you look up into His dear face and say, “Ah, Son of God, I rely upon the power of Your arms, on the preciousness of Your blood, on the love of Your heart, on the prevalence of Your plea, on the certainty of Your promises, on the immutability of Your Character. I rest on You, and on You alone”? You will get assurance readily enough, now. But if you begin to fritter away your realization of the Person of Christ and live merely on dogmas and doctrines, you will be far removed from real assurance.  
Brothers and Sisters, the Apostle attained this full assurance through growing *knowledge*. He did not say, “I am persuaded that Christ will save me, apart from anything I know about Him.” But he begins by saying, “I know.” Let no Christian among us neglect the means provided for obtaining a fuller knowledge of the Gospel of Christ. I would that this age produced more thoughtful and studious Christians. I am afraid that apart from what many of you gather from the sermon, or from the reading of the Scriptures in public, you do not learn much from the Word of God, or from those innumerable instructive books which godly men have bequeathed to us.  
Men are studious in various schools and colleges in order to obtain knowledge of the classics and mathematics. But should we not be even more diligent that we may know Christ? That we may study Him, and all about Him—and no longer be children, but in knowledge may be men? Many of the fears of Christians would be driven away if they knew more. Ignorance is not bliss in Christianity, but misery. Knowledge sanctified and attended by the Presence of the Holy Spirit is as wings by which we may rise out of the mists and darkness into the light of fall assurance. The knowledge of Christ is the most excellent of sciences. Seek to be masters of it, and you are on the road to full assurance.  
Once, again, the Apostle, it appears from the text, gained his assurance from close consideration as well as from knowledge. “I know and am persuaded.” As I have already said, persuasion is the result of argument. The Apostle had turned this matter over in his mind. He had meditated on the pros and cons. He had carefully weighed each difficulty, and he felt the preponderating force of Truth swept every difficulty out of the way. O Christian, if you made your mind more familiar with Divine Truth, you would, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, have much more assurance! I believe it is the doctrine which we have least studied in the Word which gives us the most trouble in our minds. Search it out and look.  
The divisions among Christians, nowadays, are not so much the result of real differences of opinion as of want of accurate thought. I believe we are getting closer and closer in our theology, and that on the whole, at least among the Nonconforming Churches of England, very much the same theology is preached by all evangelical ministers. But some are not careful of their terms and words, and use them incorrectly. And so they seem to preach wrong doctrines when in their hearts they mean rightly enough. May we come to be more thoughtful, each of us, for a thousand benefits would flow from there.  
Thinking of the Deity of Christ, considering of the veracity of the Divine promises, meditating upon the foundations of the Everlasting Covenant, revolving in our minds what Christ has done for us—we should come at last, by the Spirit’s teaching—to be fully persuaded of the power of Christ to keep the sacred charge which we have given to Him. Doubts and fears would vanish like clouds before the wind. How many Christians are like the miser who never feels sure about the safety of his money, even though he has locked up the iron safe and secured the room in which he keeps it—*and* locked up the house—*and* bolted and barred every door?  
In the dead of night he thinks he hears a footstep, and tremblingly he goes down to inspect his strong-room. Having searched the room and tested all the iron bars in the windows, and discovered no thief, he fears that the robber may have come and gone, and stolen his precious charge. So he opens the door of his iron safe. He looks and pries, he finds his bag of gold all safe, and those deeds, those bonds—they are safe, too. He puts them away, shuts the door, locks it, bolts and bars the room in which is the safe and all its contents. But even as he goes to bed he fancies that a thief has just now broken in! So he scarcely ever enjoys sound, refreshing sleep.  
The safety of the Christian’s treasure is of quite another sort. His soul is not under bolt and bar, or under lock and key of his own securing. He has transferred his all to the King eternal, immortal, invisible—the only wise God, our Savior—and such is his security that he enjoys the sleep of the Beloved, calmly resting, for all is well. If Jesus could fail us, we might wear sackcloth forever! But while He is Immutable in His love and Omnipotent in his power, we may put on the garments of praise. Believing as we do that eternal love neither can, nor will desert a soul that reposes in its might, we triumph in heart and find glory begun below.  
**IV.**Now to close. What is THE INFLUENCE OF THIS ASSURANCE when it penetrates the mind? As time fails me, I shall but say that, as in the Apostle’s case, it enables us to bear all the disgrace which we may incur in serving the Lord. They said Paul was a fool. “Well,” replied the Apostle, “I am not ashamed, for I know Whom I have believed. I am willing to be thought a fool.” The ungodly may laugh at us now, but their laughs will soon be over, and he will laugh that wins forever.  
Feel perfectly confident that all is safe and you can let the world grin at you till its face aches. What does it matter what mortals think? What difference does it make what the whole universe thinks if our souls are beloved of God? You will, my dear Friends, as you live in full assurance of God’s love, grow quite indifferent to the opinions of the carnal. You will go about your heavenly service with an eye only to your Master’s will—and the judgment of such as cavil and carp will seem to you to be too inconsiderable to be worth a thought.  
If you doubt and fear, you will be hard put to it. But if you are serenely confident that He is able to keep you, you will dare the thickest of the fray—fearless because your armor is of God. Assurance will give you a serenity within which will qualify you for doing much service. A man who is always worrying about his own soul’s salvation can have little energy with which to serve his Lord. But when the soul knows the meaning of Christ’s words, “It is finished,” it turns all its strength into the channels of service out of love to such a blessed Savior.  
O you that doubt, and therefore fret and care, and ask the question, “Do I love the Lord or not? Am I His or am I not?”—how I wish this suspense were over with you! O you who fear daily, lest, after all, you will be castaways—you lose your strength for serving your God! When you are sure that He is able to keep what you have committed to Him, then your whole manhood, excited by gratitude, spends itself and is spent in your Master’s cause. God make you men to the fullness of vigor by giving you a fullness of assurance.  
Those who are unsaved in this place may well envy those who are. That which attracted me to Christ—I have not heard of others brought in this way, but this brought me to Christ mainly—was the doctrine of the safety of the saints. I fell in love with the Gospel through that Truth. What, I thought, are those who trust in Jesus safe? Shall they never perish and shall none pluck them out of Christ’s hands? Everybody esteems safety. One would not insure his life where he thought there was a doubt as to the safety of the insurance. Feeling that there was perfect safety if I gave myself up to the Redeemer, I did so. And I entertain no regrets to this day that I committed my soul to Him.  
Young people, you cannot do better than early in life entrust your future with the Lord Jesus. Many children at home appear to be very excellent. Many lads, before they leave their father’s house, are amiable and commendable in character. But this is a rough world—and it soon spoils the Graces that have been nurtured in the conservatory of the home. Good boys very often turn out very bad men. And girls who were so lovely and pure at home have been known to become very wicked women.  
O children, your characters will be safe if you trust them with Jesus! I do not say you will be rich if you trust Christ, nor that you will prosper after the manner of men. But I do say that you shall be happy in the best sense of that word, and that your holiness shall be preserved through trusting yourself with Jesus. I pray that you may be led to desire this, especially any of you who are leaving your father’s house, or are setting up in business on your own account. Commit yourselves to God!  
This first Sunday of a new year. What time more suitable for beginning aright? O may the Holy Spirit softly whisper in your ears reasons that shall persuade you to give yourselves to Christ! I say again, my testimony is that you cannot do a wiser or a better thing. Oh, the happiness my soul has known in resting on my Lord! I wish you knew it. I would not cease to be a Christian if I might be made a king or an angel. No character can be to me so suitable or so happy as that of a humble dependant upon the faithful love of my redeeming Lord.  
O come and trust Him, dear young Friends! You older ones—do you need that I should speak to you, when you are getting so near your grave? You are now out of Christ—how soon may you be in Hell? You younger ones, I say, embrace this flying hour and let this be the day of which you shall sing in after years —  
***“It is done! The great transaction’s done!  
I am my Lord’s, and He is mine—  
He drew me, and by His Grace I followed on, Charmed to confess the voice Divine.  
High Heaven, that heard the solemn vow,  
That vow renewed shall daily hear—  
Till in life’s latest hour I bow,  
And bless in death a bond so dear.”***

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**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD’S DAY MORNING, AUGUST 8, 1886, *BY C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“For this reason I also suffer these things; nevertheless I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that  
He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day. Hold fast the form of sound words, which you have heard  
of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. That good thing which was committed unto you keep by the  
Holy Spirit which dwells in us.”***2Ti 1:12-14***.***

OUR Apostle was in prison. If he was confined in the Mammertine, those of us who have shivered in that dark underground dungeon may well pity him. And if he was confined in the prison of the Praetorian Guards, he fared no better, for the near company of such rough and cruel soldiers would involve much suffering. The Apostle was not only a prisoner, chained by his right hand to a soldier both day and night, but he was, to his intense sorrow, forsaken by his friends. The encouragements of Christian communion are exceedingly great and the loss of them is very bitter. Those who ought to have gloried in the Apostle for his fervor, his self-sacrifice, his courage and his zeal, had turned against him. He writes to Timothy, “This you know, that all they which are in Asia have turned away from me; of whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes.” It would seem that these two notable persons were ashamed of Paul’s chain and, to their endless disgrace, turned against him.

Deserted in his utmost need, deprived of his liberty and treated as a breaker of the laws, we could not have marveled if the Apostle had been somewhat dispirited. Active spirits are apt to fret in confinement and tender hearts bleed under desertion. Beside that, the man of God was in daily danger of execution by the tyrant’s sword. He was not likely to be spared by the monster who occupied the Roman throne and already he had the sentence of death in himself. Any morning he might be awakened by a rough summons to come forth and die. See him, then—such a one as Paul the Aged! Wearing his chain, he sits in his cell, expecting soon to die a cruel death—but instead of being personally discouraged—he has encouragement to spare for others! He is thinking of young Timothy and not of himself! As for himself, he says, “Nevertheless, I am not ashamed.” And then he charges his young Brother not to be disheartened nor shaken in faith, but bravely to carry on the great work committed to his charge. It is grand to see how calmly this man bore himself! In his case it was, indeed, true, that “stone walls do not a prison make, nor iron bars a cage.” Paul ranged the world with his free missionary spirit and he reigned more royally in his prison than Caesar in his palace! No one envies Nero, but many have felt that Paul’s sufferings might readily be embraced for the sake of his exalted life.

What was the cause of the cool courage of the Apostle? On what foundation was his peace built? How was his confidence sustained? He tells us in our text how his fears were removed—and he also informs us as to a matter which pressed upon his mind. Our discourse this morning will be an attempt to show at once Paul’s confidence and his concern. I pray God to bring our minds into a parallel line with that of the Apostle so that we may enjoy the most serene peace, as Paul did, and may, at the same moment, feel a noble concern for higher interests than those which begin and end with ourselves! The honored Apostle had committed all his own matters into the hands of God and so was at perfect peace about them. But he experienced deep anxiety for another treasure which was committed to him—which he handed over to Timothy with an earnest entreaty that he would guard it by the Holy Spirit. The blending of deep peace and holy zeal will give us a condition of heart of a most desirable kind!

Our subject opens up to us under four divisions. First, we shall notice *what Paul had done.* Then, secondly, *what Paul knew.* Thirdly, *what Paul was persuaded of.* And lastly, *what he was concerned about*.

**I.**First, observe carefully WHAT PAUL HAD DONE. I will speak but briefly here.  
*He had trusted a Person*—“I know whom I have believed.” He had trusted that Person with full, clear knowledge of Him—so trusted that he did not alter his trust as years rolled by but, as he grew in the knowledge of that Person, he was also confirmed in his confidence in Him—“I know whom I have believed.”  
He does not say, “I know *what* I have believed,” though that would have been true. He does not say, “I know *when* I believed,” though that would have been correct. Nor does he say, “I know *how much* I have believed,” although he had well weighed his faith. He does not even say, “I know *in whom* I have believed,” but he goes still closer! He says expressly, “I know *whom* I have believed,” as much as to say, “I know the Person into whose hand I have committed my present condition and my eternal destiny. I know who He is and I, therefore, without any hesitation, leave myself in His hands.” Brothers and Sisters, it is the beginning of spiritual life to believe Jesus Christ! Is not this the one word that we preach to you continually? “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved.” “He that believes on the Son has everlasting life.” “He that believes on Him is not condemned.” Many are the Scriptural assurances to the same effect. Paul had not ventured upon a fancy, but he had trusted in a well-known Friend! He had not done this in ignorance, nor in fanaticism, nor in desperation, but with cool, clear, deliberate judgement—knowing whom he had trusted. Ignorance is a wretched foundation, but sure knowledge is like a rock!  
Paul had gone further and had practically carried out his confidence, for *he had deposited everything with this Person*. He had unreservedly committed his body, soul, spirit, character, life and *immortality* to the guardian care of that Person whom he knew and loved so well! I may believe in a person and yet I may never have committed *anything* to his charge—he might not wish that I would do so, nor be willing to accept any trust at my hands. But we *must* go that length with the Lord Jesus. While we are bound to believe in the Lord Jesus as faithful and true and able to save, this belief is not enough, in itself, to work salvation—we must, in consequence of this belief—actually and definitely convey out of our own keeping all our eternal interests and put them into His keeping. We must make the Lord Jesus Christ the depository of all our anxieties and hopes. He must be to us the banker who has the custody of all our valuables, bonds and title-deeds—yes we must also leave ourselves with Him—all that we are, all that we have, all that we expect to have, we must confide with Jesus.  
A poor idiot, who had been instructed by an earnest Christian, somewhat alarmed him by a strange remark, for he feared that all his teaching had been in vain. He said to this poor creature, “You know that you have a soul, John?” “No,” said he, “I have no soul.” “No soul!” thought the teacher, “this is dreadful ignorance.” All his fears were rolled away when his half-witted pupil added, “I had a soul, once, and I lost it, but Jesus found it. And so I have let Him keep it.” How could he better have expressed his faith? Is not that *exactly* what the Apostle meant—he passed his soul out of his own keeping into the care of Jesus, his Lord? As a man leaves his estate with a trustee, or as the patient entrusts his life to his physician, even so had the Apostle Paul committed himself into the hands of that glorious Person whom having not seen, he loved!  
I pause here to ask whether we have all done the same. This is a vital question. If you, my Friend, are keeping your own soul, you have a poor keeper! You will lose your soul as surely as you attempt to be your own savior! Have you once and for all transferred salvation work from yourself to Jesus? Are you looking out of yourself and looking to Jesus, only? Are you leaning upon the Beloved? Are you living in Him? If so, your safety is secure. In the hands of Jesus, a soul must be safe. In the keeping of Jesus, nothing shall hurt you either night or day. In Him you dwell in a fortress and high tower—and no enemy shall molest you. Through time and eternity you are secure! Death shall leave you sleeping on His bosom! Resurrection shall awaken you in His likeness and endless ages shall display your security in Him forever and ever!  
What Paul did is summed up in these words, “I know whom I have believed,” “I have committed everything to Him.”  
**II.**The next thing is, WHAT DID PAUL KNOW? He tells us plainly, “I know whom I have believed.” We are to understand by this that Paul looked steadily at the Object of his confidence and *knew that he relied upon God in Christ Jesus*. He did not rest in a vague hope that he would be saved, nor in an indefinite reliance upon the Christian religion, nor in a sanguine expectation that all things would, somehow, turn out right at the end. He did not hold the theory of our modern divines, that our Lord Jesus Christ did something or other, which, in one way or another, is more or less remotely connected with the forgiveness of sin. No, Paul knew the Lord Jesus Christ as a Person and he deliberately placed himself in His keeping, knowing Him to be the Savior!  
His countrymen did not know Jesus, or they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory, but Paul knew Him. Those around the Apostle were strangers to the Lord Jesus and could not sympathize with Paul, yet he knew Him. Some of them curiously asked, “Who is this Christos of whom you sing?” Others asked, “Who is this Crucified One, of whom you make so much fuss?” Paul answers by avowing his own faith—“I know whom I have believed.” He had no phantom Savior, no mythical Savior, no unknown Savior, no Savior sharing salvation with two or three others. Paul knew no company of saints and virgins, nor even a church to which he trusted his soul—he says, “I know *whom* I have believed.” Jesus was a distinct Person to the Apostle, so real as to be known to him as a man knows a friend. Paul knew nobody else so well as he knew his Lord!  
By faith he knew Jesus as He was born at Bethlehem, partaker of our humanity, bone of our bone, flesh of our flesh—a Brother born for adversity. He knew Him as He died on Calvary, bearing our sins in His own body on the tree. He knew Him as dead and buried in the tomb of Joseph—and as risen from the dead for our justification! He knew Him as gone up into Glory and sitting at the right hand of God, clothed with honor and majesty. Because of all this, the Apostle trusted his Lord. On what better ground could he have gone? What could be more reasonable than that he should entrust his all with One so fitted to preserve him till he day of His appearing?  
Dear Friends, do you really know Christ Jesus as a real Person? Do you trust in Him as now *living*? I beseech you, do not trust the weight of your salvation upon a doctrine! A statement, an abstraction, cannot save you— you need the active interference of a Person. Do not trust in a *form* of faith, nor in a code of rules. What are they? Trust in the living Person of Him who, though He was dead, rose again and always lives to make intercession for us at the right hand of God, even the Father! I trust that you have no hesitation as to faith in Him, but that you can sing with me— ***“Jesus, my God, I know His name,  
His name is all my trust!  
Nor will He put my soul to shame,  
Nor let my hope be lost.”*** *Paul also knew the Character of Jesus* whom he trusted. His perfect Character abundantly justified the Apostle’s implicit trust. Paul could have said, “I know that I trust in One who is no mere man, but very God of very God. I have not put my soul into the keeping of a priest, like unto the sons of Aaron, who must die, but I have rested myself in One whose Priesthood is according to the Law of an endless life—a Priest forever after the order of Melchizedek. He upon whom I confide is He without whom was not anything made that was made, who sustains all things by the Word of His power and who, at His coming, shall shake both the heavens and the earth, for all fullness of Divine energy dwells in Him.” Paul knew that his Christ was God as well as Man and so he felt safe in relying upon Him.  
He knew also that this blessed Person was pre-eminently satisfactory to the heart of the eternal God. What manner of perfection must concentrate itself in Him in whom the Father, Himself, delights? Think of Him as the great Sacrifice for sin who has made a complete, absolute and everlasting Atonement, to which nothing can be added, from which nothing shall ever be taken away! Think of Him in whom the Justice of God is vindicated and the Love of God is displayed! When my own eyes dart a glance to Calvary and I picture the Lord of Glory dying there for my sake, I cannot allow a doubt to live—I feel compelled to trust—I cannot but rest in perfect peace when I see that great Sacrifice which has forever put away all the sins of Believers!  
Beloved, Paul knew whom he had believed as being Divine in His Person and complete in His Sacrifice, but more than that. Paul knew that the Lord Jesus Christ, to whom he trusted his soul, was now adorned with all the Glory of Heaven and clothed with all the Omnipotence of the mighty God. He knew that, if he was bound, Jesus was not bound and that, if he must die, yet Jesus could not die. He knew that the Lord shall reign forever and ever and his expectant ears caught the hallelujahs of eternity when the Crucified shall be acknowledged Lord of All! “All power is given unto Me in Heaven and in earth,” said Jesus, “Go you therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them.” Paul felt that such power was worthy of boundless confidence and, therefore, he said—“I know whom I have believed.” Jesus was to Paul’s faith no longer the despised and rejected Nazarene; no longer the condemned and crucified Man of Sorrows, but He was the acknowledged King of Kings and Lord of Lords! He knew Him in His risen Glory. Happy, happy, happy heart which has such knowledge of Jesus and such confidence in Him!  
Now, Brothers and Sisters, I think I have shown you why Paul had much faith in Jesus. How could he do otherwise than trust in One of whom he knew such wonderful things? But how did Paul come to know Christ? I suppose he knew Him in great part by the Word of God. Every page of Scripture, as the Apostle perused it, revealed Jesus to him. These Scriptures are the swathing-bands of the Holy Child Jesus. Unroll them and there He is! This Book is a royal pavilion within which the Prince of Peace is to be met with by Believers who look for Him. In this celestial mirror, Jesus is reflected! This is a sure testimony—more to be trusted than the sight of the eyes, or the hearing of the ears. Do you know Christ by seeing Him in His Word?  
Paul also knew Jesus in another way than this. He had personal acquaintance with Him. He knew Him as “the Lord Jesus, who appeared unto him in the way.” When he was going to Damascus to persecute the saints of God, this same Jesus spoke out of the excellent Glory and said to him, “Saul, Saul, why do you persecute Me?” Brethren, have we any personal acquaintance with Christ? If not, our witness will not run parallel with Paul’s utterance in our text, “I know whom I have believed.” Did Jesus ever call you to Himself, and have you answered His call? Has He so spoken as to change the whole current of your life? Does He still speak to you? Do you remember a sacred place, a consecrated spot where Jesus has met you? Have you a chamber where He meets you and manifests Himself to you as He does not to the world? If so, you can well trust Him whose love is shed abroad in your heart by the Holy Spirit. You can well trust Him, for He is no stranger, but your near kinsman who is mindful of you and visits you. Cannot you join with our poet and softly sing— ***“Yes, though I have not seen and still  
Must rest in faith alone,  
I love You, dearest Lord, and will,  
Unseen, but not unknown.”***  
There are other gates of the soul beside eyes and ears, other touches than those of the hands and other feelings than those of the flesh. Our inner spirit, when it would commune with the spiritual world, disdains to use the gross and inefficient instruments of this poor body—she cannot, with these, have fellowship with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ. By its own inner hands, our spirit has touched Him. With her own inner mouth she has kissed the Well-Beloved. With other than a material eyes she has beheld her unseen Spouse. Our eyes do not see—we see through our eyes even these temporal things—but we see eternal things without the need of eyes. Our spirit needs no intervening medium, but she sees in her pure spirit the pure spirit of Jesus, face to face! More than the senses could convey to the soul, she perceives without them! This is a Divine and blessed knowledge and the Apostle could, with all his heart, declare that it was his own. Though he had once known Christ after the flesh, he declared that after the flesh he knew Him no more, but he knew Him so well and so truly after the spirit that he said, without reserve, “I know whom I have believed.”  
He knew the Lord, also, by practical experience and trial of Him. Paul had tested Jesus amidst furious mobs, when stones fell about him, and in prison when the dampness of death chilled him to the bone! He had known Christ far out at sea, when Euroclydon drove him up and down in the Adriatic. And he had known Christ when the rough blasts of unbrotherly suspicion had beaten upon him on the land. All that he knew increased his confidence! He knew the Lord Jesus because He had delivered him out of the mouth of the lion. “I*know*,” he said—he was past the age of speculation and theory. Look at his hoary locks and his scarred face—he is no fair-weather sailor—he has sailed with his Lord upon the great deeps and has suffered many things for His sake. And now, after all his experience, he does not say that he *hopes*, *supposes*, or *thinks*, but he writes, “*I know*.”  
Glorious dogmatist, we are not ashamed to follow in your track! Where is there any comfort or stimulus except in the Truth of God assuredly believed? To doubt is to be downcast and feeble. Only in solemn assurance is there courage and strength. Come on, you who quibble and criticize— Paul meets you with, “I know!” You demand that he shall maintain his thesis with logic? He answers, “I know!” What he knew of his Lord was as sure to him as his own consciousness. He had no reserve in his mind for future alterations of creed, for he had reached certainty. “I know whom I have believed.” He could not doubt Him, nor distrust Him, nor stir an inch from the absolutely unlimited confidence which he reposed in Him. Beloved, I trust we know as much of Jesus as leads us to a living faith in our living Lord. Some people do not know much else, but they are well educated if they know this! Others are skillful in classics, mathematics and applied sciences, but if they do not know Jesus, in whom the saints believe, they are in the worst of ignorance! I pray God to send such untaught persons to His infant school, for it is written, “Except you are converted and become as little children, you shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.” May we be taught of God to know Jesus by that practical acquaintance which engenders trust in Him!  
**III.**Thirdly, let us enquire—WHAT WAS THE APOSTLE PERSUADED OF? If one should say to a Christian man, “Pray, Sir, what are your opinions?” he might answer, “I have no opinions, but I know whom I have believed.” If the enquirer then said, “But what is your persuasion?” he might answer, “I am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed to Him.” This method of treating matters is far better than forming mere opinions for ourselves, or borrowing persuasions from others.  
*Implicitly Paul declares his faith in our Lord’s willingness and faithfulness*. He does not mention these in words, but sometimes there is great instruction in omissions—things not said may, perhaps, be more conspicuous by their absence than things which are spoken. Silence is often more emphatic than speech. Paul does not raise the question whether the Savior was willing or faithful to keep what he had committed to Him—he takes that for granted. He will not even assert his knowledge of the Truth and Grace of his Redeemer—he leaves these among the things which could not be questioned for a moment! Dear Heart, if you have given yourself to Christ, Christ has given Himself to you—do not doubt His readiness to receive you! If you are leaning upon the Beloved, He is willing to be leaned upon and He will never fail you. If, in very truth His Word is your trust, the Lord will never run back from His promise. Has He not said it and will He not do it? Take this for granted! Receive it as an acknowledged principle which none may question.  
But *the point which the Apostle expressly mentions is the power of Christ*—“I am persuaded that He is *able*.” He had a solemn conviction of the ability of the Lord Jesus, who is able to save unto the uttermost. Let us hope

that no Believer here has any doubt about the power of Christ. If he has, the doubt is most absurd! He that goes to the sea for salt water cannot rationally fear that he will be forced to come back with an empty bucket. He that lifts up his face to the sun can have no doubt but that his features will be bright with the light. So he that turns to Christ may be persuaded that there is no lack of sufficiency or ability in Him.  
“Oh,” one says, “I do not doubt the ability of Christ to save me!” May I ask you, then, what you do doubt? “Oh, I doubt my own merit, my own ability and so forth.” What have any of these things to do with the matter in hand, which is the power of Jesus? These things are altogether out of the circle! All the salvation of a man depends upon the Lord Jesus Christ—and if *He* is able to save you, why are you full of fears? If you have committed your money to the banker and you say, “I am afraid it is not safe,” the only justifiable reason for such suspicion must be because the bank is not solvent. Would you say, “I doubt about my money because I have a headache?” Would that be rational? Would you say, “I am afraid my money is unsafe because my eyesight is failing me?” Does that influence the safety of your deposit at the bank? Nothing can affect that matter but lack of stability in the bank, itself.  
If you have committed yourself to the care of the Lord Jesus Christ, I cannot listen to those miserable, “ifs,” and “buts”—they are unreasonable and irrelevant. I blow them away as so much chaff. If Jesus is able to save and you are trusting Him, there is no room for distrust. Can you doubt the Lord’s ability? Have we not believed in His Godhead and in the almighty power with which the Father has girt Him as the God-Man, the Mediator, now that He has gone up into His everlasting reward? If these are facts, how can it be difficult to trust such a One? Trust my soul with Christ? Why, if I had all your souls within my body, I could trust them all to Him! And if every sin that man has done in thought, word and deed since worlds were made, or time began, could meet upon my one guilty head—I dare say it—the precious blood of Jesus could wash them all away! Trust Him with *one soul*? Yes, indeed, it seems too little a thing!  
He that goes on board a great Atlantic liner does not say, “I venture the weight of my body upon this vessel. I trust it to bear my ponderous frame.” Yet your body is more of a load to the vessel than your soul is to the Lord Jesus. Did you ever hear of the gnat on the horn of the ox which feared that it might be an inconvenience to the huge creature? O Friend, you are but a gnat in comparison with the Lord Jesus! No, you are not so heavy to the ascended Savior as the gnat to the ox! You were a weight to Him once, but having borne that load once and for all, your salvation is no burden to Him now. Well may you say, “I am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him.”  
*What was this which Paul had committed to Christ*? He committed to Him everything that he had for time and for eternity—his body, his soul, his spirit—all fears, cares, dangers, sins, doubts, hopes, joys. He just made a clean removal of his all from himself to his Lord. “I am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him.” See how the eyes of the Apostle light up as he tells his copyist to write down, “He is able to keep my deposit against that day.” If he had little joy and rejoicing in his waiting time, he would, nevertheless, look to have his full of it in that day of days, that day in which his Lord would appear! He left everything with Jesus with a view to the Advent, the Judgment, and the eternal Glory! Then would he look for his Divine Keeper to produce the deposit entrusted to Him. There will be no need in that day to ask, “My Lord, is it all right?” Yes, we may picture Him as coming in all His Glory and majesty to be admired in all them that believe! He sits upon the Throne of His Glory and there are you among the countless multitude!  
Suppose you could say, “My Lord, I trusted You with my soul. Am I safe? I trusted You with my eternal interests. Are they all secure?” How sweet will be His reply, as He says to His Father, “Of them which You gave Me have I lost none.” And to us, “Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you!” If any enquire of us in Glory, “How did you get here?” we will answer, “He brought us here.” If they say, “How is it that you are on His right hand?” we will reply, “Because His own right hand brought us there.” “But how is it that you are so bright in your apparel?” “We have washed our robes and made them white in His blood.” “How is it that after you were converted you did not turn back?” “He kept us in the Way and preserved our lives, for He said, ‘Because I live, you shall live also.’” “How is it that you have escaped the power of the enemy, since you were only a sheep, and a wolf was after you?” “It is because He said, ‘I give unto My sheep eternal life and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand.’”  
When the Lord shall make up His last account of His jewels in that Great Day, we shall be found in Christ, even as gems are found in a golden vault! In the Lord Jesus Christ, all His elect, all His blood-bought, all His called, all His justified, all His believing people shall be found in that day. None of His redeemed shall be absent in the day when the sheep shall pass, again, under the hand of Him that counts them. All who were marked with the blood-mark here below shall be folded in the pastures of Glory! “I know whom I have believed,” says Paul, “and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day.”  
Those of you who are acquainted with the original will follow me while I forge a link between my third division and my fourth. If I were to read the text, thus, it would be quite correct—“I am persuaded that He is able to keep my deposit against that day.” Here we have a glimpse of a second meaning. If you have the Revised Version, you will find in the margin, “that which He has committed to me.” And the original allows us to read the verse whichever way we choose—“He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him”—or “that which He has committed unto me.” This last expression, though I could not endorse it as giving the full sense of the text, does seem to me to be a part of its meaning. It is noteworthy that, in the 14th verse, the original has the same phrase as in this verse. It runs thus—“that good deposit guarded by the Holy Spirit which dwells in us.”  
Inasmuch as the words are the same—the Apostle speaking of “my deposit” in the 12th verse and, in the 14th verse speaking of “that good deposit”—I cannot help thinking that one thought dominated his mind. His soul and the Gospel were so united as to be, in his thought, but one deposit—and this he believed that Jesus was able to keep. He seemed to say, “I have preached the Gospel which was committed to my trust and now, for having preached it, I am put in prison, and am likely to die, but the Gospel is safe in better hands than mine.” The demon of distrust might have whispered to him, “Paul, you are now silenced and your Gospel will be silenced with you! The Church will die out. The Truth of God will become extinct!” “No, no,” says Paul, “I am not ashamed, for I know that He is able to guard my deposit against that day.”  
I cannot tell you what heart-cheer it often brings to my soul, in these evil days, to join in the confidence of this text! At the present moment it seems as if parts of the Church had almost forgotten the Gospel of the Grace of God. We hear on all hands, “another gospel, which is not another; but there are some that trouble you, and would pervert the Gospel of Christ.” We hear the noise of archers at every place of drawing of water and the wayfaring man almost ceases from the highways of Zion. Worldliness is growing over the Church, she is overgrown with the moss of it. The visible Church is honeycombed through and through with a baptized infidelity! Unholy living is following upon unbelieving thinking. They boast that they have nearly extirpated Puritanism—some of us are described as the last of the race! Have they quenched our coal? Far from it! The light of the Doctrines of Grace shall yet again shine forth as the sun!  
Elijah was known to say, “As the Lord lives, before whom I stand.” And this also is my confidence—the Truth of God lives because God lives! Though Truth were dead and buried, it would rise again. The day is not far distant when the old, old Gospel shall again command the scholarship of the age and shall direct the thoughts of men! Even if it were not so, it would be a small matter, for it signifies little, except to themselves, what men think, since God is true and with the Truth of God there is power. The fight is not over! The brunt of the battle is yet to come! They dreamed that the old Gospel was dead more than a hundred years ago, but they dug its grave too soon. Conformists and Nonconformists had, alike, gone over to a cold Socinianism and in the old sanctuaries, where holy men once preached with power, modern dreamers droned out their wretched philosophies! All was decorous and dead, but God would not have it so. All of a sudden, a voice was heard from Oxford, where the Wesleys and their companions had found a living Savior and were bound to tell of His love!  
From an inn in Gloucester there came a youth who began to preach the Everlasting Gospel with a trumpet tongue. A new era dawned. Two schools of Methodists with fiery energy proclaimed the living Word of God. All England was awakened! A new springtide arrived—the time of the singing of birds had come—life rejoiced where once death withered all things! It will be so again. The Lord lives and the Gospel lives, too. Our charioteers are driving as fast as they can in the direction of Unitarianism and spiritual death, but the Lord will lay His hand upon the bridles of the horses, though Jehu himself drives them, and He shall turn them back by the way they came! “I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep my deposit against that day.”  
**IV.**This leads me on to this fourth point—WHAT THE APOSTLE WAS CONCERNED ABOUT. The matter about which he was concerned was this deposit of his—this everlasting Gospel of the blessed God. He expresses his concern in the following words—“Hold fast the form of sound words, which you have heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. That good thing which was committed unto you, keep by the Holy Spirit which dwells in us.”  
First, *he is concerned for the steadfastness of Timothy* and, as I think, for that of all young Christians and especially of all young preachers. What does he say? “Hold fast the form of sound words.” I hear an objector murmur, “There is surely not much in words.” Sometimes there is very much in words. Vital truth may hinge upon a single word. The whole Church of Christ once fought a tremendous battle over a syllable—but it was necessary to fight it for the conservation of the Truth of God. Only the unorthodox ridicule words and with them it is an affectation, for were they not impressed with the importance of words, they would not be so eager to alter them. “Surely we may change our terms.” I have no objection if I know that your intentions are honest!  
“Surely we may change the form of a creed, however sound it may be.” Do so if you like. I will not contend for words to no profit. But as for some of you who ask for these changes, I shrewdly suspect that you would get rid of a phrase that you might be rid of that which the phrase means. You gentlemen who say, “Surely you will not stick out for a word,” are, after all, neither so innocent nor so liberal as you appear to be. Brethren, it is not a *word* they would amend, but a Truth of God they would efface! I intend calling a rose a rose, even though I admit that by another name it might smell as sweet, for I perceive that there is an intent to inflict upon me a rank smelling weed which is no rose at all! When people rail at creeds as having no vitality, I suppose that I hear one say that there is no life in eggshells. Just so—there is no life in egg shells—they are just so much lime, void of sensation.  
“Pray, my dear Sir, do not put yourself out to defend a mere shell.” Truly, good Friend, I am no trifler, nor so litigious as to fight for a mere shell. But listen! I have discovered that when you break eggshells you spoil eggs! And I have learned that eggs do not hatch and produce life when shells are cracked! I have come to be rather tender about shells, now that I find that certain rogues are depriving me of chickens by cracking my eggshells! At certain periods when everybody is sound and right at heart, it may be wise to revise expressions, but we will have none of it when the very air is tainted with unbelief! If you walk round certain continental towns you will see bright lawns and gardens where once there stood grim walls. In times of peace we are glad to see fortifications demolished, but, mark you, when the Prussians are around Paris, no Frenchman will tolerate the proposition to throw down the forts! This is our case, today, and therefore we hold fast the form of sound words!  
“We hate your narrowness—your nasty narrowness! You are shut in within your walls of creeds and beliefs!” Yes, gentlemen, so we are. And we mean to remain so, since we see how you hate the Gospel. If everything were in peace and we believed in you, we might, perhaps, think about turning bulwarks into boulevards—but at the present moment we will do nothing of the kind, but rather hear the voice of our old captain from his prison at Rome, crying—“Hold fast the pattern of wholesome words which you have heard from me.” Brothers, do not change your posture nor shift your position! Stand fast on the Immutable Truth of God, trusting and loving your Lord. Hold the old faith and hold it in the old fashion, too. We are crossing the stream and can make no change of horses. Brothers, why should we change? Do these tempting novelties offer any real improvement on the old? Do they offer us anything to die upon? Can these new teachings afford us comfort in poverty, in sickness, in depression of spirit or in prospect of the Day of Judgment? They are only pretty flowers for the children of this world to play with. They suit well with minds that love frivolities, but they are not for men whose life is a warfare against sin! The eternal Truths revealed within this Book and grasped by the hands of our inner life—these are everything to us—therefore we shall stand by them even to the last with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus!  
*The Apostle was anxious not only that the men should stand, but that the Everlasting Gospel, itself, should be guarded*. “That good thing which was committed unto you, keep by the Holy Spirit which dwells in us.” O Friends, it were better for us that the sun were quenched than that the Gospel were gone! I believe that the moralities, the liberties and, perhaps, the very *existence* of a nation depend upon the proclamation of the Gospel in its midst! Have you not noticed that where the Gospel has been given up and various forms of infidelity have ruled, foul pollution has also boiled up from below! The very idea of morality seems to have departed from some men by whom belief in God has been rejected. The Lord save us from the general spread of this mischief! Let the sea, itself, cease to ebb and flow sooner than the Gospel fail to be preached among the sons of men! If the whole Church were to die for the defense of the Gospel, it were a cheap price to pay for the maintenance of it! I speak solemnly when I say that our main care in life should be to preserve this Gospel intact and hand it down to our descendants. God grant that future ages may not have to curse us for having been undecided or cowardly in the hour of conflict!  
How are we to keep the faith? There is only one way. It is of little use trying to guard the Gospel by writing it down in a trust-deed—it is of small service to ask men to subscribe to a creed—we must go to work in a more effectual way. How is the Gospel to be guarded? “By the Holy Spirit which dwells in us.” If, my dear Brothers and Sisters, the Holy Spirit dwells in you and you obey His monitions, are molded by His influences and exhibit the result of His work in the holiness of your lives, then the faith will be kept. *A holy people are the true bodyguard of the Gospel*. Only living people, in whom the Holy Spirit is the soul of their soul and the spirit of their spirit, are able to keep the Truth of God living and influential in the world! Let the power of the Gospel be missing where it may, it must be present where the Holy Spirit abides, for He makes the Word of God to be a living and incorruptible Seed which lives and abides forever! God send us, more and more, the Holy Spirit! May He be in us as rivers of Living Water! Oh for His heavenly Presence in this day of blasphemy and rebuke! Amen.

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**÷2Ti 1.13**

THE FORM OF SOUND WORDS  
NO. 79

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, MAY 11, 1856, *BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.**

***“Hold fast the form of sound words which you have heard from me, in faith and love which are in Christ Jesus.”*** 2Ti 1:13***.***

MY incessant anxiety for you, dearly Beloved in the faith of Jesus Christ, is that I may be able, in the first place, to teach you what God’s Truth is. And then, trusting that I have, to the best of my ability, taught you what I believe to be God’s most holy Gospel, my next anxiety is that you should “hold fast the form of sound words.” So that whatever may occur in the future—should death snatch away your pastor, or should anything occur which might put you in perilous circumstances—my desire is that even if you were tempted to embrace any system of heresy, you might, everyone of you, stand as firm and as unmoved as rocks! And you would be as strong as mountains abiding in the faith which was once delivered unto the saints whereof you have heard and which we have proclaimed to you. If the Gospel is worth your hearing—and if it *is* the true Gospel, it *is* worth your hearing—our anxiety is that you should be so established in the faith that you may, “hold fast the profession of your faith without wavering, for He is faithful who has promised.”

The Apostle most earnestly admonished Timothy to, “hold fast the form of sound words which he had heard from him in faith and love which are in Christ Jesus.” I do not suppose that by this, it is intended that Paul ever wrote for Timothy, a list of Doctrines. Or that he gave him a small abstract of divinity, to which he desired him to subscribe his name, as the articles of the Church over which he was made a pastor. If so, doubtless that document would have been preserved and enrolled in the canons of Scripture as one of the writings of an Inspired man! I can scarcely think such a creed would have been lost, while other creeds have been preserved and handed down to us. I conceive that what the Apostle meant was this—“Timothy, when I have preached to you, you have heard certain grand outlines of the Truth of God. You have heard from me the great system of faith in Jesus Christ. In my writings and public speaking you have heard me continually insist upon a certain pattern or form of faith. Now I bid you, my dearly beloved son in the Gospel, Hold fast the form of sound words which you have heard from me, in faith and love which are in Christ Jesus.”

This morning I shall first attempt to tell you what I conceive to be a, “*form of sound words,*”*which we are to hold fast*. In the second place, I shall endeavor to urge upon you *the strong necessity of holding fast that form*. In the third place, I shall *warn you of some dangers to which you will be exposed, tempting you to give up the form of sound words*. Then, in the last place I shall mention *the two great holdfasts, faith and love in Christ Jesus*, which are the great means of “holding fast the form of sound words.”

**I.**What is a, “FORM OF SOUND WORDS”? Ten thousand persons will quarrel upon this. One will say, “MY creed is a form of sound words.” Another will declare that his creed, also, is sound if not Infallible! We will not, therefore, enter into all the minute details which distinguish creeds from each other, but just simply say that no system can be a form of sound words unless it is *perfectly Scriptural*. We receive no Doctrines as the doctrines of men—whatever authority comes to us which is not the authority of the Holy Spirit and Inspired by God, is no authority at all to us! We laugh to scorn all the dogmatism of men. We care for nothing they assert, however strongly they declare it, or however eloquently they plead for it. We utterly reject and discard it! We hold it a sin to “take for Doctrines the commandments of men.” We give no heed to the traditions that are handed down to us. If our opponent cannot quote text or verse for anything he advances, we hold no argument with him! Scripture is the only weapon we can acknowledge.

But since it is said that texts may be found to prove almost everything, we must remark that a form of sound words must be one that *exalts God and puts down man*. We dare not, for a moment, think that any Doctrine is sound that does not put the crown upon the head of Jesus and does not exalt the Almighty. If we see a doctrine which exalts the creature, we do not care one fig about what arguments may be brought to support it! We know that it is a lie—unless it lays the creature in the very dust of abasement and exalts the Creator. If it does not do this, it is nothing but a rotten doctrine of pride. It may dazzle us with the brilliant malaria rising from its marshes, but it can never shed a true and healthful light into the soul. It is a rotten doctrine, not fit to be built on the Gospel, unless it exalts Jehovah Jesus, Jehovah, the Father, and Jehovah the Holy Spirit!

We think, also, that we may judge of the soundness of Doctrine *by its tendency*. We can never think a doctrine sound when we see plainly upon its very surface that it has a tendency to create sin in men. Unless it is a Doctrine according to godliness, we cannot conceive it to be a Doctrine of God! Unless the believer of it, earnestly and truthfully believing it, does give himself to virtue—unless that Doctrine has in itself a natural tendency to promote in him a love to the right—we are at first sight, suspicious of it. And if we find on examination that it is a licentious doctrine— it may have all the glitter and the glare of novelty, but we cast it away as not being the Doctrine of Christianity, because it does not promote holiness in the soul.

We shall, perhaps, be asked what we *do*regard as a form of sound words and what those Doctrines are which are Scriptural, which at the same time are healthful to the spirit and exalting to God. We answer, we believe a form of sound words must embrace, first of all, the Doctrine of *God’s Being and Nature.* We must have the Trinity in Unity and the Unity in Trinity. Any Doctrine which has not the Father, Son and Holy Spirit as equal Persons in one undivided essence, we cast aside as being unsound. We are sure that such doctrines must be derogatory to God’s Glory. And if they are so, it is enough for us. If any man despises either Father, Son or Holy Spirit, we despise him and despise his teachings and cannot even say to him, “I wish you God speed.”

Now we hold that a form of sound words must *look upon man aright as well as upon God aright*. It must teach that man is utterly fallen, that he is sinful, and for his sin, condemned. It must teach that man in himself is altogether hopeless of salvation. If it exalts man by giving him a character which is not a true one and clothing him with a spurious robe of righteousness, woven by his own fingers, we reject and utterly discard it!

And next, we think that a Doctrine that is sound *must have right views of salvation* as being of the Lord, *alone*. Unless we find in it everlasting, unchanging love, working out a salvation for a people “who were not a people,” but were made a people by special Divine Grace—unless we find discriminating love, others may say what they will—we cannot consider such a creed to be a form of sound words unless we discern redeeming mercy openly and boldly taught! Unless we see Final Perseverance and all those great and glorious Truths which are the very bulwarks of our religion, others may embrace the doctrine as being a form of sound words, but we cannot and we dare not! We love the old system of our forefathers. We love the old Truths of Scripture, not because they are old, but because we cannot consider anything to be Truth which does not hold the Scriptural view of salvation. I think Paul, himself, in this very Chapter, gives us a form of sound words where he speaks of “God who has saved us and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works but according to His own purpose and Grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.”

I need not stop, this morning, to prove to you that which I have briefly hinted at as a form of sound words because you believe it and believe it firmly. I am not about to urge you to receive it, because I know you have already received it! But what I have to say is, “Hold fast,” I beseech you, “the form of sound words which you have heard from me in faith and love which are in Christ Jesus.”

**II.**Now let me show you THE NECESSITY OF HOLDING FAST THIS FORM OF SOUND WORDS, AND KEEPING IT FOR YOUR OWN SAKE, FOR THE CHURCH’S SAKE, FOR THE WORLD’S SAKE.

First, *for your own sake* hold it fast, for thereby you will receive ten thousand blessings. You will receive the blessing of peace in your conscience. I proclaim, before God, that if at any time I ever doubt one of the great things I receive from God, instantly there comes an aching void which the world can never fill and which I can never get filled until I receive that Doctrine, again, and believe it with all my heart! When at any time I am cast down and dejected, I always find comfort in reading books which are strong on the Doctrines of the faith of the Gospel. If I turn to some of them that treat of God’s eternal love, revealed to His chosen people in the person of Christ—and if I remember some of the exceedingly great and precious promises made to the elect in their Covenant Head—my faith at once becomes strong and my soul, with sublime wings, mounts upwards towards its God! You cannot tell, Beloved, if you have never tasted, how sweet is the peace which the Doctrines of Grace will give to the soul! There is nothing like them. They are—

***“A Sovereign balm for every wound,***

***A cordial for our fears.”***  
They are God’s sweet lullaby, wherewith He sings His children to sleep, even in storms. They are God’s sheet anchors which are cast out into the sea to hold our little vessels fast in the midst of tempests. There is a “peace of God which passes all understanding,” which accrues to a man who is a strong Believer. But you know the tendency of the day is to give up old land marks and to adopt new ones—and to avow anything rather than the old-fashioned Divinity! Well, my dear Friends, if any of you like to try new doctrines, I warn you that if you are the children of God, you will soon be sick enough of those new-fangled notions, those newly invented doctrines which are continually taught! You may, for the first week, be pleased enough with their novelty. You may wonder at their transcendental spirituality, or something else which entices you on—but you will not have lived on them long before you will say—“Alas! Alas! I have taken in my hands the apples of Sodom! They were fair to look upon, but they are ashes in my mouth.” If you would be peaceful, keep fast to the Truth, hold fast the form of sound words—so shall, “your peace be like a river and your righteousness like the waves of the sea.”

“Hold fast the form of sound words,” again, let me say, *because it will tend very much to your growth*. He who holds fast the Truth will grow faster than he who is continually shifting from doctrine to doctrine. What a mighty number of spiritual weathercocks we have in this world right now! We have men who in the morning hear a Calvinistic preacher and say, “Oh, it is delightful.” In the evening they hear an Arminian and they say, “Oh, it is just as good. And no doubt they are both true, though one contradicts the other!” The glorious charity of the present day is such that it believes lies to be as good as the Truth of God—and lies and His Truth have met together and kissed each other! And he that teaches the Truth of God is called a bigot—and the Truth of God has ceased to be honorable in the world! Ah, Beloved, we know better than to profess such unlimited but false charity! The truth is, we know how to “hold fast the form of sound words,” which was given to us, because in this way we grow! Changeable people cannot grow much. If you have a tree in your garden and plant it in one place today, and tomorrow place it somewhere else, how much bigger will it be in six months? It will very likely be dead! Or if it does not die, it will not be very much grown. It will be marvelously stunted. So it is with some of you—you plant yourselves here. Then you are persuaded that you are not quite right and you go and plant yourself somewhere else. Why, there are men who are “anythingarians”—who go dodging about from one denomination to another—and cannot tell what they are! Our opinion is of these people that they believe nothing and are good for nothing—and anybody may have them who likes. We do not consider men to be worth much unless they have settled principles and “hold fast the form of sound words.” You cannot grow unless you hold it fast. How could I know any more of my faith, in ten years’ time, if I allowed it to take ten forms in ten years? I would know but a little in each and know nothing thoroughly of one. But he that has one faith and knows it to be the faith of God and holds it fast—how strong he becomes in his faith! Each wind or tempest does but confirm him, as the fierce winds root the oaks and make them strong, standing firmly in their places. But if I shift and change, I am none the better, but rather the worse. For your own peace, then, and for your growth, “hold fast the form of sound words.”

But, my Beloved, I would beseech you to hold it fast for your own sakes *from a remembrance of the great evils which will follow the contrary course*. If you do not “hold fast the form of sound words,” listen to me while I tell you what will happen to you!

In the first place, *every deviation from the Truth of God’s Word is a sin*. It is not simply a sin for me to do a wrong act, but it is a sin for me to believe a wrong Doctrine. Lately our ministers have absolved us all from obeying God in our judgments. They have told us, point blank, many of them, in their drawing rooms and some of them in the pulpit, that we shall never be asked in the Day of Judgment what we believed! We have been told that for our acts we shall be responsible but for our faith we shall be irresponsible, or something very much like it. They have told us plainly that the God who made us, although He has authority over our hands, our foes, our eyes and our lips, has but little authority over our judgments! They have told us that if we make ever such blunders in Divinity, they are not sins as long as we can live right lives. But is that true? No! The whole man is bound to serve God. And if God gives me a judgment, I am bound to employ that judgment in His service. And if that judgment receives an untruth, it has received stolen goods and I have sinned as much as if I put forth my hand to take my neighbor’s goods! There may be degrees in the sin. If it is a sin of ignorance, it is, nevertheless, a sin—but it is not so heinous as a sin of negligence, which I fear it is with many. I tell you, Beloved, if, for instance, Baptism is not by immersion, I commit a sin every time I practice it! And if it is by immersion, my Brother commits a sin who does not practice it! If Election is true, I am committing a sin if I do not believe it. And if Final Perseverance is true, I am committing a sin before Almighty God if I do not receive it. And if it is not true, then I sin in embracing what is not Scriptural! Error in Doctrine is as much a sin as error in practice. In everything, we are bound to serve our God with all our might—exercising those powers of judging and believing which He has given us. I warn you, Christians, not to think it is a little thing to hold faith with a feeble hand—it is a sin every time you do anything which makes you waver in the faith of Jesus Christ! Remember, too, that error in Doctrine is not only a sin but a sin which has a great tendency to increase. When a man, once in his life, believes a wrong thing, it is marvelous how quickly he believes another wrong thing! Once open the door to a false doctrine—Satan says it is but a little one—yes, but he only puts the little one in like the small end of the wedge—and he means to drive in a larger one! And he will say it is only a little more and a little more and a little more. The most damnable heretics who ever perverted the faith of God, erred by littles and littles! Those who have gone the widest from Truth of God have only gone so by degrees. Whence came the Church of Rome, that mass of abominations? Why, from gradual departures! It did not become abominable at first. It was not the “mother of harlots” all at once. But it first did deck itself in some ornaments, then in others, and, by-and-by, it went on to commit its fornications with the kings of the earth! It fell little by little—and in the same way it separated itself from God’s Truth. For centuries it was a Church of Christ and it is difficult to say, in looking at history, when was the exact point in which it ceased to be numbered with Christian Churches. Take care, Christians, if you commit one error, you cannot tell how many more you will commit!

“Hold fast the form of sound words,” *because error in Doctrine almost inevitably leads to error in practice*. When a man *believes* wrongly, he will soon *act* wrongly. Faith has a great influence on our conduct. As a man’s faith is, so is he. If you begin to imbibe erroneous doctrines, they soon have an effect on your practice. Keep fast to the bulwarks of your fathers’ faith. If you do not, the enemy will make sad havoc with you. “Hold fast the form of sound words which was delivered unto you.”

**1.**And now, *for the good of the Church, itself*, I want you all to “hold fast the form of sound words.” Would you wish to see the Church prosperous? Would you wish to see it peaceful? Then “hold fast the form of sound words.” What is the cause of divisions, schisms, quarrels and bickering among us? It is not the fault of the Truth of God! It is the fault of man’s errors! There would have been peace in the Church—entire and perpetual peace—if there had been purity. Going down to Sheerness on Friday, I was told by someone on board that during the late gale, several of the ships there had their anchors rent up and had gone dashing against the other ships and had done considerable damage. Now, if their anchors had held fast and firm, no damage would have been done. Ask me the cause of the damage which has been done to our Churches by the different denominations and I tell you, it is because all their anchors did not hold fast. If they had held fast by God’s Truth, there would have been no disputing. Disputing comes from errors. If there are any ill feelings, you must not trace it to the Truth of God—you must trace it to man’s errors. If the Church had always kept firm to the faith and had always been united to the great Doctrines of the Truth, there would have been no disputes. Keep firm to your belief and you will prevent discord in the Church!

Keep to your faith, I say again, for the Church’s sake, *for so you will promote strength in the Church*. I saw lying between Chatham and Sheerness, a number of ships that I supposed to be old hulks. And I thought how stupid Government was to let them remain there and not chop them up for firewood, or something else. But someone said to me, those ships can soon be fitted for service. They look old, now, but they only need a little paint and when the Admiralty requires them, they will be commissioned and made fit for use. So we have heard some people say, “there are those old Doctrines—what good are they?” Wait. There is not a Doctrine in God’s Bible that has not its use! Those ships that you may think are not needed, will be useful, by-and-by. So it is with the Doctrines of the Bible. Do not say, “Break up those old Doctrines, you can do without them.” No, we need them and we must have them! Some people say, “Why do you preach against Arminians? We have not much to fear from them, now.” But I like to practice my men so they’ll be ready when the time comes for action! We are not going to burn our ships! They will be needed, by-and-by, and when we sail out of harbor, the men will say, “Whence came these old ships?” “Why,” we will reply, “they are just the Doctrines you thought good for nothing. Now we bring them out and we will make good use of them!” Nowadays we are having new and marvelous hymn books, full of perfect nonsense. And we are having new theories and new systems. And they say, “Why be so stringent? Our Christian Brethren may believe what they like on those points just now.” But as certain as there is a Church in this land, they will need our old ships to fight their battles! They may do very well in times of peace, but they will not do in the time of war! They will then need our broadside to support the faith of the Gospel, though now they laugh at us. For the strength of the Church, my Brothers and Sisters, I bid you, “hold fast the form of sound words.”

“Well,” says one “I think we ought to hold the Truth of God firmly, but I do not see the necessity for holding *the form* of it. I think we might cut and trim a little and then our doctrines would be received better.” Suppose, my Friends, we should have some valuable egg and someone should say, “Well, now, the shell is good for nothing—there will never be a bird produced by the shell, certainly—why not break the shell?” I would simply smile in his face and say, “My dear Friend, I need the shell to take care of what is inside. I know the vital principle is the most important, but I need the shell to take care of the vital principle.” You say, “Hold fast the principle, but do not be so severe about the form. You are an old Puritan and want to be too strict in religion—let us just alter a few things and make it a little palatable.” My dear Friends, do not break the shell. You are doing far more damage than you think. We willingly admit the form is but little, but when men attack the *form*, what is their objective? They do not *hate* the *form*. They hate the *substance*! Keep the substance, then, and keep the form, too. Not only hold the same Doctrines but hold them in the *same shape*—just as angular, rough and rugged as they were, for if you do not, it is difficult to change the form and to keep fast the substance. “Hold fast *the form* of sound words which you have heard from me, in faith and love which are in Jesus Christ.”

**2.**Again, I say, “hold fast the form of sound words,” *for the Word’s sake*. Pardon me when I say that, speaking after the manner of men, I believe that the progress of the Gospel has been awfully impeded by the errors of its preachers. I never wonder when I see a Jew, an unbeliever in Christianity—for this reason—that the Jew very seldom sees Christianity in its beauty. For hundreds of years, what has the Jew thought Christianity to be? Why, pure idolatry! He has seen the Catholic bow down to blocks of wood and stone. He has seen him prostrating himself before the Virgin Mary and all saints. And the Jew has said, “Ah, this is my watchword—“hear, O Israel, the Lord, your God, is our Lord. I could not be a Christian, for to worship one God is the essential part of my religion.” So, too, the heathens, I believe, have seen a false system of Christianity. They have said, “What? Is that your Christianity?” And they did not receive it. But I believe that when the Gospel is purged from all the rudiments of men and all the chaff and dust have been winnowed from it— and it is presented in all its naked simplicity—it will be sure to win the day! And I say again, speaking as a man, the Gospel might have made ten thousand fold greater progress if it had been preached in all its simplicity, instead of that diluted or rather distorted form in which it is commonly proclaimed. If you would see sinners saved, if you would see God’s elect gathered in, “Hold fast the form of sound words which you have heard from me, in faith and love which are in Christ Jesus.”

**III.**And now, very briefly, in the third place, LET ME WARN YOU OF TWO DANGERS.  
One is that you will be very much tempted to give up the form of sound words that you hold *on account of the opposition you will meet with*. I do not prophesy that you will have corporeal persecution, though I know there are some poor creatures, here, who have to endure that from ungodly husbands and such like. But you will, all of you, in some measure, if you hold the Truth of God, meet with the persecution of the tongue. You will be laughed at—your Doctrine will be held up to ridicule—exhibited in a grotesque manner. You will be caricatured in all that you believe and you will be sometimes tempted to say, “No, I do not believe that,” though all the while you do. Or if you do not positively say it, you will at times be led to turn a little because of the laughter you cannot stand and the scoff of the worldly-wise is rather too hard for you. Oh, my Beloved, let me warn you against being thus drawn aside! “Hold fast the form of sound words” in the midst of all ridicule.  
But the greatest obstacle you will have is a sort of slight and cunning trying to pervert you to the belief that your Doctrine is the same one which is just the very opposite! The enemy will try to persuade you that something he holds is quite harmless, though opposed to what you hold. And he will say, “You do not want to be broaching these things. They will bring forth controversy—there is a way of squaring your sentiments with mine.” And you know we all like to be thought so charitable! The greatest pride in the world, now, is to be thought charitable in sentiment. Some of us would run a hundred miles rather than be called a bigot or an Antinomian. I beseech you, be not drawn aside by those who are so ready to subvert your faith! They do not by openly attacking it, but insidiously undermine every Doctrine, saying this does not really matter and that does not matter, while all the while they are trying to pull down every castle and fortress wherewith God has guarded His Truth and His Church!  
**IV.**And now, in the last place, I am to tell you of the GREAT HOLDFASTS WHEREBY YOU ARE TO HOLD FAST THE TRUTH OF THE GOSPEL.  
If I might be allowed to mention one or two before coming to those in the text, I would say, in the first place, if you want to hold fast the Truth, *seek to get an understanding of it*. A man cannot hold a thing fast unless he has a good understanding of it. I never want you to have the faith of the coal miner who was asked what he believed. He said he believed what the Church believed. “Well, but what does the Church believe?” He said the Church believed what he believed and he believed what the Church believed and so it went all the way round. We do not want you to have that faith! It may be a very pernicious faith, a very obstinate faith—but it is a very foolish faith! We want you to understand things, to get a true knowledge of them. The reason why men forsake the Truth of God for error is that they have not really understood the Truth. In nine cases out of ten, they have not embraced it with enlightened minds. Let me exhort you parents as much as lies in you to give your children sound instruction in the great Doctrines of the Gospel of Christ. I believe that what Irving once said is a great truth. He said, “In these modern times you boast and glory and you think yourselves to be in a high and noble condition because you have your Sunday schools and British Schools and all kinds of schools for teaching youth. “I tell you,” he said, “that philanthropic and great as these are, they are the ensigns of your disgrace. They show that your land is not a land where parents teach their children at home! They show you there is a lack of parental instruction—and though they are blessed things, these Sunday schools—they are indications of something wrong. For if we all taught our children, there would be no need of strangers to say to our children, ‘Know the Lord.’”  
I trust you will never give up that excellent Puritan habit of catechizing your children at home. Any father or mother who entirely gives up a child to the teaching of another, has made a mistake. There is no teacher who wishes to absolve a parent from what he ought to do himself! He is an assistant, he was never intended to be a *substitute*. Teach your children, Parents! Bring out your old catechisms, again, for they are, after all, blessed means of instruction and the next generation shall outstrip those who have gone before it. The reason why many of you are weak in the faith is this you did not receive instruction in your youth in the great things of the Gospel of Christ. If you had, you would have been so grounded, settled and firm in the faith, that nothing could by any means have moved you. I beseech you, then, understand God’s Truth and then you will be more likely to hold fast by it!  
But then, Christian Brothers and Sisters, above all things, if you would hold fast the Truth, *pray yourselves right into it*. The way to get a Doctrine is to pray till you get it. An old divine says, “I have lost many things I learned in the House of God, but I never lost anything I ever learned in the closet.” That which a man learns on his knees, with his Bible open, he will never forget. Well, have you ever bowed your knees and said, “Open You my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of Your Law”? If you have *seen* that wondrous thing, you will never forget it. He that prays himself into God’s Truth will never be gotten out of it by the very devil, himself, though he were to put on the garb of an angel of light! Pray yourselves into the Truth.  
But the two great holdfasts are here given—*faith and love*. If you would hold the Truth of God fast, put your faith in Jesus Christ and have an ardent love towards Him. Believe the Truth. Do not *pretend* to believe it, but believe it thoroughly. And he who does believe it and fixes his faith, first in Christ and in all Christ says, will not be likely to let it go. Why, we do not believe religion, most of us! We pretend to believe it, but we do not believe it with all our heart and all our soul, with all our might and all our strength—not with that, “faith which is in Christ Jesus.” For if we did, come storms, come trials, like Luther of old, we would not flinch because of persecution, but stand fast in the evil day, having our faith fixed upon a Rock!  
And then the second holdfast is *love*. Love Christ and love Christ’s Truth because it is Christ’s Truth, for Christ’s sake. And if you love Christ’s Truth, you will not let it go. It is very hard to turn a man away from the Truth he loves. “Oh,” says one, “I cannot argue with you about it, but I cannot give it up—I love it and cannot live without it. It is a part of myself, woven into my very nature. And though my opponent says that bread is not bread and I cannot prove that it is, yet I know I go and eat it. It is wonderfully like it to me and it takes away my hunger. He says that stream is not a pure stream. I cannot prove that it is, but I go and drink of it and find it the river of the water of life to my soul.” And he tells me that my Gospel is not a true one—well, it comforts me, it sustains me in my trials, it helps me to conquer sin and to keep down my evil passions and brings me near to God. And if my Gospel is not a true one, I wonder what sort of thing a true one is—mine is wonderfully like it and I cannot suppose that a true Gospel would produce better effects! That is the best thing to do—to *believe* the Word—to have so full a belief in it that the enemy cannot pull you away. He may try to do it, but you will say— ***“Amidst temptations sharp and long,  
My soul to the same refuge flies!  
Faith is my anchor, firm and strong,  
When tempests blow or billows rise.”***  
Hold on then, Christian, to “faith and love which are by Christ Jesus”— two blessed holdfasts wherewith we grasp the Truth of God’s Word.  
And now, Brothers and Sisters, I pray that my Master will enable you to see the importance of what I have uttered. Perhaps you may not think it so important, now, especially those of you who are young. But there are some here, the fathers of this Church, who will tell you that the older they grow and the longer they live, the more they find the Truth of God to be valuable. They may, perhaps, in their youth have had a little radicalism in them with regard to God’s Truth, but they are conservative in their views of it now! They feel it to be worth conserving. It would be well for us if, with regard to the Truth, we began to be conservative as soon as we believed it and held it fast and never let it go. I think the chief fault of the present day is that in seeking to be charitable, we do not hold the Truth firmly enough. I met, some time ago, with the case of an eminent minister in the Gospel, a Brother whom I respect and esteem, who preached a sermon from the text, “Prove all things.” A young man was there who was professedly a Believer in Christianity. But such was the style in which the subject was handled, that after hearing that sermon, he went home and bought some infidel works. The consequence is that he has become entirely apostate even from virtue, itself, and has forsaken everything that he once held to be true! I say, send your anchor right down, young Christian—and whatever may come against you, still hold on by that Truth. And you may yet, even then, “prove all things.” But while you are doing it, remember to “hold fast that which is good.” Do not “prove all things” by giving up that which is good to do it!  
Now such of you as know not the Lord, if you are ever saved, let me tell you that the most likely place for you to meet with salvation is under a pure Gospel ministry. Therefore there is a lesson for you. Attend where the Gospel is preached.  
Again—the most likely way for you ever to receive God’s Grace is to believe God’s Truths. Never kick against God’s Doctrines, but receive them! And I have one thing to say to you this morning, if in your heart, poor Sinner, you can say, “I believe God’s Gospel to be a glorious Gospel.” You are not far from something else. If you can say, “I submit to all its demands, I believe God just if He destroys me and if He saves me, it will only be because of His Sovereign Mercy,” then, Sinner, there are good hopes for you! You have proceeded some way on the road to Heaven. If you can but do one thing more and say, “Though He slays me, yet will I trust in Him.” And if you can come to the Cross of Christ and say, “Jesus, I love Your Gospel and I love Your Truth. If I perish, I will perish believing all Your Truth, I will perish clasping Your Cross. If I die, I will die proclaiming that You are a just and gracious God and still, in my poor way, holding fast the form of sound words,” I tell you, poor Soul, God will never damn you! If you do believe in Jesus Christ and hold fast His Words, He will look upon you in Love. He will say, “Poor Soul, though he does not know that these Truths are his, yet he thinks them precious. Though he dares not hope that they belong to him, yet he will fight for them. Though he does not know that he is really a soldier of the Cross, chosen of Me before time began, yet see how valiantly he strives for Me.” And the Lord will say, “Poor Soul, you love the things that you think are not your own—I will make you rejoice in them as your own, by My Grace. You love Election, though you think you are not elect—that is an evidence that you are Mine.” “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and be baptized and you shall be saved.”  
And now my Brothers and Sisters, stand fast, I beseech you. If my tears, if my bended knees, if my cries, yes, if my blood could prevail with you to lay to heart what I have said, this morning, here should be tears and cries and blood, too—if I could but make you all hold fast in these evil, perilous times! Hold fast and with the tenacity of the dying hand of the sinking mariner—“Hold fast,” I beseech you, “the form of sound words which you have heard from me, in faith and love which are in Christ Jesus.”

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**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.** Sermon #3531 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

**÷2Ti 1.18**

“THAT DAY” AND ITS DISCLOSURES  
NO. 3531

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 28, 1916.

***DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON THURSDAY EVENING, FEBRUARY 15, 1872.**

***“The Lord grant unto him that he may find mercy from the Lord in that day.”*** 2Ti 1:18***.*  
[The original title was “The Day”…]**

GRATITUDE is never failing in Christians. When they have received a benefit, they are sure to acknowledge it. When Paul was at Rome, Onesiphorus found him out very diligently, and was not ashamed of his chains, but ministered to his necessities and, therefore, Paul felt bound to him and to his family in perpetual thankfulness. Let none of us ever be accused of ingratitude—it is one of the worst of sins. Paul, no doubt, would have done all he could for Onesiphorus in other ways, but he added to all other ways of showing his gratitude, that of praying for him— praying the prayer which we have here put on record in the Book of Inspiration. Learn hence that if we can do nothing else for our benefactors, we can bless them by our prayers. Let us be abundant in pouring out supplications before the Throne of God for all those who in any way have done us a service. We also learn from the text that the best of men have need to be prayed for. I cannot doubt but that Onesiphorus was saved. He seems to have been a most decided follower of Christ, for when others did not know Paul because he was a prisoner, Onesiphorus knew him. He sought him out—he sought him out diligently—even into the poorest quarters of that great city of Rome. He hunted him out, though probably the population at that time was not less, but perhaps far more than four millions of people. He found the Apostle and he ministered unto his need. He was a good man and yet Paul prayed for him—prayed for him a prayer which would be appropriate for a bad man, too, “The Lord grant that he may find mercy from the Lord in that day!” The best of us needs to be prayed for! Let us be thankful if we have anybody to pray for us. Let us count the prayers of the faithful to be our truest riches. He is the happiest man who shall have the most of God’s people lift up their hearts in prayer for him!

I call your attention, tonight, however, to none of these surrounding particulars. I want to fix your minds upon one thing. I desire, anxiously desire, that we may all be led to look forward to that day of which the Apostle here speaks. And our first point shall be *that day*. Then our second point shall be *the mercy of that day*. First, then—  
**I.**“THAT DAY.”  
Paul speaks of the Day of Judgment here. He does not specify it, because it was so commonly believed in and expected among Christians, that it was quite sufficient for him to say, “that day.” From the earliest times, wherever there has been Divine Light, that day has been expected. Enoch, also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied concerning the coming of the Lord. And his prophecy, though very early, was so clear that the Jew, who almost closes the Book of Inspiration, quotes it—feeling, I suppose, that he could not use words mode expressive than those which came from that ancient Prophet. All along the pages of Scriptural history you read of men raised up to tell of “that day.” Asaph, in the Psalm we read just now, gave a most accurate description of that day when the Lord shall judge His people. And Daniel, when he saw the Throne of God set and the Ancient of Days come, perceived that day for which we also are now looking. Nothing, perhaps, is more often spoken of in Scripture than “that day.” The New Testament teems with allusions to that Day of Judgment, when the Lord shall be revealed with flaming fire. I say it was so commonly understood that Paul had no need to say anything except, “that day.” Questions will be asked tonight by some, “When will that day come?” to which I would answer, it were better for us to be prepared for it, come when it may, than to be anxious to fix its date! We can give you no information, because “of that day and of that hour knows no man— no, not even the angels of Heaven.” After trying to discover what I can of the future, I arrive at this conclusion from Scripture, that the Lord would have us be in a state of perpetual vigilance and expectancy and, therefore, He has studded the Scriptures with phrases to the effect that He comes quickly. Truly His, “quickly,” will not be the same as ours, but I think the noontide of the world may have passed and these are the latter days—and we might to be looking for and hastening unto the coming of the Son of Man. He may come tomorrow! He may come tonight! He may delay His coming, but He shall come at such an hour as the mass of men think not, and at an hour when they are not aware! That day shall overtake them as a thief in the night, and come upon them as pain upon a woman in childbirth. Some may curiously ask whether the Day of Judgment will be a natural day or not. Will it be a day of 24 hours? To which we again reply, we have no information—but we know that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. It will be a definite period. Whatever its length or brevity, it will suffice for an accurate judgment and a judgment of all mankind! Whether it shall occupy a thousand years or a single day, the work will be done—done thoroughly, done effectually, done forever—for all the race of Adam. Let us rest assured of that.

It is far more important for us to know these things about that day— first, that it will be ushered in as no other day has been. The day began in Eden with the rising sun. And when the sun’s first beams had lit up the sky, the birds began to sing right joyously among the trees. But “that day” shall be ushered in, not by the rising sun, but by the Sun of Righteousness Himself! He shall arise with all the Glory of His Father and the holy angels shall come with Him. There will be sights and sounds on that tremendous morning such as never were seen or heard by mortal men before! Even Sinai’s tremendous pomp, which made Moses fear and quake, shall be outdone in that dread day when the Lord shall descend from Heaven with a shout, with the trumpet of the archangel, and with the voice of God. It will be a day of days. Its dreadful surroundings are spoken of in Scripture, but, after all, words can but feebly describe them. It will be a day especially notable *for the Revelation of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ!* As yet He is hidden among the sons of men. He was as one concealed incognito. He traveled through this world and they counted Him a Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief. He has gone into His Glory, but He is concealed at the right hand of God from the gaze of men below. They see Him not. They know Him not!

But in that day He shall sit upon the clouds of Heaven and every eye shall see Him—and they, also, who crucified Him. Then shall they say that He is Divine, and no longer shall they dare to dispute it! Then shall the Jew see that He is the Messiah who was to come and then shall the Gentile perceive that He is King of Kings and Lord of Lords! The flashings of His Glory shall convince all mankind—and the wicked shall stand speechless before His Judgment Seat! Pilate then shall not ask Him, “What is truth?” for he, alas, too late, shall perceive it! They shall bring no accusation against Him, then, for to their confusion they shall see that He was no traitor, but a King! Judas shall not sell Him, then, for he shall perceive, then, that he who sold Him was the son of perdition, to perish forever! Oh, what a day shall that be when, coming out of His chamber, rejoicing like a strong man to run a race, the Bridegroom of the Church shall appear, and all His saints shall appear with Him! It will be *a day remarkable for its wonderful convictions.* There will be a general assembly held on that day such as never has been held before! For, first, *the Son of God shall be the center of all eyes*, and around Him shall be His Father’s angels. Heaven shall send her pomp to swell His train. He shall come and His saints, also, shall come with Him. The glorified shall come to sit with Him and then, as in a moment, the dead shall arise. I shall go into no minute questions or particulars, now, but certainly at that moment there shall stand upon the earth all the dead, both small and great—they that were on the earth buried in it and they that were in the sea shall all arise—and as the trumpet rings out clear and loud, the whole multitude of men that lived and died shall start up from their tombs to see their God upon His Throne! And those who are alive at that time—all shall come and live again—and the raised bodies of men and the spirits of the just! There shall come up from the infernal pit of Hell, lost spirits, too, and the chief foe of God and man, long scarred by Jehovah’s lightning—he shall come and lift his brazen front once more, and the saints shall judge the fallen angel who long had persecuted them! He shall receive his final sentence and begin the utmost Hell which God had reserved for the devil and his angels, so that there on this poor planet, little compared with greater stars, and yet in God’s sight most glorious of them all, there shall be a convocation of the three worlds! Heaven, Earth and Hell shall meet together, and Christ, in the midst of them all, shall judge the world in righteousness and the people with equity. Oh, what a day will that day be!

And it will be a day, in addition to the general convocation, *of universal excitement*. Next week the day of thanksgiving will move London from end to end, but there will be tens of thousands to whom it will be no day of thanksgiving, but perhaps of bitter sorrow. There will be nothing that could make them thankful in the pageantry of that day. So of all the days that have ever happened to the sons of men, there have been some unmoved thereby. Let us speak as though our soul were in every word— some of our Hearers will slumber, or their minds will wander. But on that day there will be no indifferent spectators of that tremendous pomp! The wicked shall wake up—their indifference shall have gone and they shall be filled with dismay and despair! They shall long for annihilation! They shall ask the rocks to cover them, and the mountains to conceal them. The righteous shall not be listless, either, for theirs shall be boldness in the Day of Judgment, and joy, and triumph, and acclamations of welcome with which they shall hail the King of Kings sitting upon His Throne! There will be a general excitement. Hell will howl its loudest howl and Heaven will resound with its loftiest songs on that closing day of the drama of time, that day of which the Apostle speaks!

And that will be *a day of wondrous revelations*. On that day we shall detect the hypocrite. See him yonder? The mask has fallen. See the leprosy on his brow? Then shall we see the men who were misrepresented, who were counted the offscouring of all things, though of them the world was not worthy! The filth with which men pelted them in the pillory of scorn shall fall off and their garments shall be whiter than any fuller can make them in the Glory of the Righteousness which Christ shall put upon them! There will be a resurrection of reputations in that day. And at the same time there will be the judgment of mere profession. Perhaps in that hour we shall understand the Providence of God infinitely better than we do now. Then we shall see the evil of men’s hearts as we never saw it, for every idle word that man has spoken shall be published there, and transgressions of midnight that were covered up with curtains of lies shall suddenly stand revealed as in the noonday sun—and the men who scorned the righteous and were themselves guilty of abominable sin! Oh, what a revealing day! The housetops, then, shall ring with secrets that have been hidden in the closet, and men shall read the writing, as it were, upon the sky, the dark sayings and the hidden things which were of old.

And then when the revealing shall have come, it will be a *day of final judgment*. From almost any court on earth there is an appeal. Even after the judge puts on the black cap and condemns the criminal, he yet appeals to public opinion and to the mercy from the nation, and perhaps an unworthy life may yet be spared. But from that Judgment Seat there shall be no appeal! Forever and forever fixed is the fate of men whom Christ has judged. “He that is filthy, let him be filthy, still, and he that is unrighteous let him be unrighteous still.” No change can take place, and no appeal can ever be made. ‘Tis done, ‘tis sealed, ‘tis inevitable. ‘Tis over forever and forever—forever saved, or forever lost! That day, then, ought to be a matter of personal interest to everyone of my Hearers, yes, and to everyone beneath the sun. It will be the last day of time! Then there will be no more counting of rising and setting suns, no reckoning by waxing and waning moons. Then there will be no revolutions of the year to mark the period of time, nor will men count by centuries. It shall be eternity— one ocean of eternity without landmarks by which to say, “Thus far have we gone, and thus far have we yet to go.” Oh, wondrous day! Oh! marvelous day! The last day of time, a day forever to be remembered— remembered by the wicked in Hell, to whom it shall be said, “Son, remember,” and remembered, I think, by the righteous in Heaven forever, for they shall look back to that day when Christ appeared and they were declared to be the blessed of the Father to inherit the Kingdom prepared for them from before the foundation of the world! Oh, how I blame my tongue and chide myself that I cannot speak upon this theme as I would, but nevertheless may the solemn facts make up for my lack of speech and may they tell upon your souls! Now I must turn to the second point, and speak upon—

**II.**THE MERCY OF THAT DAY.  
The mercy which is prayed for in this verse, “The Lord grant unto him that he may find mercy from the Lord in that day.” Will that prayer be heard? Will that prayer be heard for me, for you, each one of you in this area, in these galleries? Will God have mercy on you in that day? I will tell you—  
First, He will have no mercy in that day upon those who had *no mercy upon others*. If you cannot forgive, neither shall you be forgiven! If you cannot kneel down and sincerely pray, “Forgive us our debts as we forgive them that are indebted to us,” then the gates of Heaven are fast barred against you! If you take your brother by the throat and say, “Pay me what you owe me,” the great Master of us all will commit you to the tormentors, because *your great debt* has not been paid! Relentless, malicious, revengeful men, take heed of that! Lay it on your pillow tonight and let it pierce your heart—if you forgive not every man his brother, your heavenly Father will not forgive you!  
Next, God will have *no mercy in that day upon those who lived and died in wickedness*. Here is the proof of it, “The wicked shall be turned into Hell,” and Hell means not mercy, but misery! The men that have lied in the breaking of God’s Law from day to day, from childhood to manhood, perhaps from manhood to old age, and have died still sinning—for them there shall be no mercy whatever! There shall be no mercy for those who neglect salvation. Again I give you God’s words for it, “How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?” These people had not done any particular mischief to anybody else. They had not persecuted Christ. They had not reviled His Gospel. They had not been heretics—they simply neglected the matter. “How shall you escape if you neglect so great a salvation?” You shall not escape at all! If you neglect His mercy, here, mercy will neglect you forever!  
Then, again, *they shall have no mercy who said they needed none.* Are there not some here who fancy that they need no mercy from God? They do their best. They are excellent in character. They are well deserving and they expect to enter into Heaven through their good deeds. You seek no mercy, you shall have none! You proudly reject it. You trust to your own righteousness—you seek to have what you merit—you shall have what you merit—but that will be to be driven forever from the Presence of God! There cannot be mercy to those who will not confess that they need mercy. There shall be no mercy in that day for those who sought no mercy here. Prayerless souls? You are graceless souls and mercy shall be denied you then! You will pray loudly enough then! Oh, how they pray in Hell! What tears and groans send they up to Heaven! They would gladly have mercy there, but Mercy’s day is over—Justice has turned the key and hurled that key into the abyss where it can never be found! They are prisoners forever beneath the wrath of God! They who will not ask for it deserve not to have it. When mercy is to be had for the asking, if man turns upon his heels and refuses to ask, what shall God do but say, “Because I called and you refused—I stretched out My hand and no man regarded—I also will mock at your calamity. I will laugh when your fear comes”? There shall be no mercy for those who ask no mercy.  
Further, there shall in that day be *no mercy for those that scoffed at Christ*, denied His dignity, railed at His people, broke His Sabbath and altogether abhorred His Gospel. Oh, Sirs, you fight a desperate battle against Him who made the heavens and the earth and who is the darling Son of God! In fighting against Christ, you dash yourselves upon the bosses of Jehovah’s buckler! You cast yourselves upon the point of His spear! Be wise and stop your rebellion. “Kiss the Son lest He be angry, and you perish from the way when His wrath is kindled but a little.” How shall the wax contend with the fire, or the thistles wage war with the flames? Yet you are doing this, O you that rebel against Christ! You shall either break or bow. Bow, I pray you, for if not, He shall break you with a rod of iron! He shall break you in pieces like a potter’s vessel. Beware, you that despise Him, lest in the day of His coming He despises your image and you utterly perish.  
There shall in that day be *no mercy for those who refuse the Gospel*. And I am sorry to say there are some here of that sort. Those cannot be said to refuse the Gospel who do not know it, but most of you do know it. I was thinking this afternoon, as I prayed God to let this subject get into my own soul, about some of you who do not lack for light and instruction, who do not need to know more about the way of salvation, or about the penalty of neglecting it. What you need is a new heart and a right spirit! You need your will subdued! You need decision of character! You need to be made thoughtful—you need to be made prayerful! I cannot do this for you, but I can warn you over and over and over again that they who go to Hell from under the shadow of the pulpit wherein there is an earnest ministry, go there with an emphasis! They that fall from the heights of privilege fall, indeed, into the Lake of Fire! God grant that not a solitary one of the many hearers who gather here may know what it is to have it said, “It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the Day of Judgment than for you. They would have repented had they heard the Gospel, but you heard it and repented not.”  
I must add to all this that there shall be *no mercy in that day for those who have sold their Lord*. “Where are they?” you ask. “Does there live on this earth a miscreant who has sold his Lord?” God have mercy on the man—he not only lives on earth, but he is here! He was once a professor, but he found it more profitable to cease from religion, and he has done so. He once came to the Communion Table, but he fell into lustful habits and he is no member of Christ. He has defiled the Temple of God—and God shall destroy him! He could sometimes pray in public—at the Prayer Meeting, but he dares not pray now—he has enough conscience left to let him cede from such hypocrisy! He sold his Lord for pleasure. He sold his Lord for money. He sold his Lord for the fear of man. “Verily I say unto you, he who is ashamed of Me and My Word, of him will I be ashamed when I shall come in the Glory of My Father and all My holy angels with Me.” You know who spoke those words! They were spoken by Him whose hands were pierced! He has said it, and oh, note, you apostates, note it well, “He that denies Me before men, him will I deny before My Father who is in Heaven. Verily I say unto you, I never knew you! Depart from Me, you workers of iniquity.” Oh, where is this unhappy man? May God have mercy on him, tonight, for He will have no mercy upon him in that day if he dies as he now is!  
And I shall close that list by saying in that day God will have *no mercy for false professors*. He will have no mercy upon preachers who could talk glibly, but whose lives were not consistent with their own teaching. What a condemnation shall await me if I am not found in Christ after having preached so continuously to so many thousands! Oh, whatever a man shall be in Hell, may God grant he may never be an unfaithful minister of Christ, condemned out of his own mouth! But what shall I say of unfaithful deacons and Elders, and Church members? Their condemnation will be as just as it is terrible! Why needed they to add to their other sins the sin of a false profession? If they loved not Christ they need not have been traitors. There was no necessity for them to come forward and be baptized into the Triune name! There was no demand upon them to come to the Table in remembrance of Christ’s death if they were not His! They voluntarily thrust themselves into a profession which was a lie and into the midst of a Church with which they were not akin. Surely if He begins first at the House of God, His judgments will be most terrible upon false professors! For this chaff there shall be the unquenchable fire, for it was once upon the Lord’s threshing floor! For this dross there shall be consuming flames, for it was once in alliance with the precious gold which the King calls His own. I feel inclined to stop preaching and to pray for myself. The Lord have mercy upon me in that day! And then to take you all by name, if I could know you all, one by one, and kneel here and say, “The Lord have mercy upon this man—this woman—this child— in that day.” But I beg you pray it for yourselves! Now, in the silence of your souls, let this prayer go up vehemently to Heaven, “O God, have mercy upon me! Have mercy upon me in that day and to that end have mercy upon me now.”  
I close, but I never like to close a sermon when it looks like Jeremiah’s roll—written inside and outside with lamentations. Let us have a sweet word or two to finish with. We spoke of that day—for a moment let me speak of *this* day—of *this* day! You have not come to that day yet. Today it is not judgment, but love that rules the hour. Now the Great White Throne is not yet set, neither is there a trumpet that rings in your ears, but it is an affectionate voice which speaks to you and says, “Mercy is still to be had! Mercy is to be had by false professors! Mercy is to be had by apostates! Mercy is to be had by the very chief of sinners!” This is a night, this very night, in which prayer will be answered! God has said, “Seek and you shall find.” This is a night in which Christ waits to be gracious! He is exalted on high on purpose to give repentance unto Israel, and remission of sins. This is a night in which sin may be forgiven! You are on praying ground—you are still on pleading terms! The sentence is not passed. The wax is still melted and it is not stamped and cold. There is hope for you! Better than that, there are kind invitations for you— there are loving exhortations! How long these may stand good, I cannot tell. As far as any one of us may be concerned, the Judgment Day may come tomorrow. It may come to all mankind—but as far as the practical fact is concerned—it may come in death to any one of us tonight. I look round me, now, and I remember a month ago certain seats in this place that were occupied by those that are now gone—gone to their account. If it were right, I think I could point my finger to some of you that are sitting in the places of dead men. They were their seats. They used to sit there, some of them, and they rejoiced in every word they heard! Is a sinner filling a saint’s place?  
There are some, again, that are gone out of this company who gave us no evidence of Grace. Alas, is there no sinner sitting in the place where one sat before him who forgot God? You are all passing away—I am passing with you. We are all shadows. We fly like an arrow through the air. We are a wind that passes and it is not. Oh, make sure of eternal things, Brothers and Sisters! Whatever you lose, lose not Christ! Whatever you miss, miss not salvation! May God impress you with this thought. May He impress you, moreover, with this thought—that, “today is the accepted time; today is the day of salvation”—and may some of you be unable to sleep tonight until you have found the Savior—  
***“For should swift death this night overtake you, And your couch become your tomb,”***

then tomorrow, if unregenerate and unforgiven, you would be shut up where hope can never come to you! Oh, seek His face tonight! Dare not permit yourselves to feel the image of death upon you in sleep unless you have felt the scepter of Christ, touched by faith, communicate life and pardon to you! Seek Him! Oh, seek Him! Seek Him while He may be found! Call upon Him while He is near! The Lord bless you, everyone of you, and may we meet in Heaven without exception, for Christ’s sake! Amen and Amen!

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:**2Ti 1:1-18***.***

**Verse 1.***Paul, an Apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, according to the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus.* Paul takes high ground. He is not an Apostle by the will of the Church, but an Apostle by the will of God! God’s will is the great motive power in the Church of God. Some talk a great deal about man’s will. What do you think of God’s will, the will of the Almighty? Surely that shall stand! Paul felt that he had that at the back of him. “Paul, an Apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God.” Hence he always speaks very boldly. He never asks leave of anybody. If he is an Apostle by the will of God, he exercises his office without fear!

**2.***To Timothy, my dearly beloved son—*Son in the faith. When all the ties of natural descent shall be forgotten, sonship in Christ will continue. I do not doubt that in Heaven Timothy is still Paul’s son—Paul is still father to Timothy, for the relation is of the Spirit.

**2.***Grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.*I think I have called upon you to notice that when Paul writes to a Church, it is, “Grace and peace.” Whenever he writes to a minister, it is, “Grace, mercy, and peace.” I have sometimes wondered whether we ministers need mercy more than other people, and I suppose that we do, or else the Apostle would not have said, “Grace, mercy, and peace.” Oh, if a minister gets to Heaven, it will be a wonder! His responsibilities are so great. “Who is sufficient for these things?” It will be a marvelous display of mercy if any of us shall be able to say at last, “I am clear of the blood of all men,” for we have not only our own blood, but the blood of others to look to in this matter.

**3.***I thank God, whom I serve from my forefathers with pure conscience, that without ceasing I have remembrance of you in my prayers night and day.* For this Paul thanks God. He never forgot to pray for Timothy, and it is a matter of thankfulness. When we feel moved to pray, though it is for another, the spirit of prayer is essentially the same, whatever its object—and we ought to be thankful when we feel continually able to pray for a friend. “I thank God,” he says, and he says that he had served God with a pure conscience all his days. So he had, but it was a blind conscience. At first, when he was a Pharisee, he still served God, though he then ignorantly persecuted the people of God! Oh, but it is a good thing sincerely to follow after God. May we be helped to do so. “I have remembrance of you in my prayers night and day.”

**4.***Greatly desiring to see you, being mindful of your tears, that I may be filled with joy.* What were those tears? Tears of holy men and women are as precious as diamonds! Paul had noticed the tears twinkling in brother Timothy’s eyes—the tears of repentance, the tears of gratitude, the tears of fervent desire. He had noticed that and, being mindful of all this, he wished to see that dear face again! Christianity does not make us unsociable. It gives us new ties of love, fresh brothers, fresh sons.

**5.***When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in you, which dwelt first in your grandmother Lois, and your mother Eunice: and I am persuaded that in you, also.*Happy son who has grandmother and mother before him in the faith! Unhappy young man who has quit the faith of his fathers and has turned aside altogether. If such are here, we would remember them in our prayers, but we cannot say that we can remember them with joy.

**6.***Therefore I put you in remembrance that you stir up the gift of God which is in you by the putting on of my hands.* Stir up your gifts like a fire. It will not burn without sometimes poking. Stir it up! And every now and then it is a good thing to have the heart stirred up, awakened, quickened, brought to a higher diligence. We must try to do this. Perhaps there are some dear friends here who have a large measure of latent gifts, dormant faculties. Stir up the gift that is in you!

**7.***For God has not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.* Neither Paul nor Timothy had a cowardly spirit. They were, neither of them, afraid. God had taught them His Truths and they knew them, and they held them, defying all opposition.

**8.***Be not you, therefore, ashamed of the testimony of the Lord, nor of me, His prisoner.*What? Were people ashamed of Paul? Oh, yes, dear Friends. The great Apostle, because he was persecuted, found himself despised by some of the very people who owed their souls to him! It is the lot of those who are faithful to Christ to find even good men sometimes turning against them. But what of that? They are responsible to their Master, not to their fellow servants! Yet it is a hard thing when any come to be ashamed of you—ashamed of you, though you know that you have done right. I do not wonder that he puts it even to Timothy, “Be not you, therefore, ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me, His prisoner.” Some of us know what it is to have trained and brought up those about us, who were to us what Timothy was to Paul—who have been ashamed of us and of the testimony of our Lord.

**8.***But be you partaker of the afflictions of the Gospel according to the power of God.*You will need the power of God to do it, and mind you do it. Take your full share in whatever affliction the Gospel brings upon Christians. “According to the power of God.”

**9.***Who has saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and Grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.* How plain it is that he earnestly believed in the eternal Election of Believers—in their being in Christ and in their possession of Grace in Christ. “Grace which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.” God’s love to His people is not a thing of yesterday! He loved them before the world was made and He will love them when the world has ceased to be. “It was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.”

**10-12.***But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ who has abolished death, and has brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel. Whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an Apostle and a teacher of the Gentiles. Indeed, for this cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day.* Paul knew that Grace could keep his soul, but I think that he here means that he could keep his own Gospel. Paul had kept it, kept the faith, but he committed it now into the hands of the Greater One, who would keep it when every Apostle was dead, and every faithful witness had passed away. “He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day.”

**13.***Hold fast the form of sound words.* Many say they have no creeds, and there is hardly an Epistle in which there is not a distinct mention of a creed.

**13.***Which*you have *heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.* Hold fast the Truth of God. Hold fast the very form and shape of it! If you are to keep the life that is in an egg, you must not break the shell. Take care of it all, and take care of it all the more when, with specious reasoning they say, “We will hold the same Truth of God, only in a different form.” Why a different form at all, if they do not wish to hold a different Doctrine altogether? No, my Brothers, especially you that are like young Timothy, take this passage to heart. “Hold fast the form of sound words, which you have heard of me in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.”

**14.***That good thing which was committed unto you keep by the Holy Spirit which*dwells*in us.* This is what we need! If the Holy Spirit is in us, we shall never trifle with the Truth. He is the lover and revealer of Truth, and we shall press the Doctrines of the Word of God and the Word of God, itself, nearer and nearer to our hearts in proportion as the Holy Spirit dwells in us!

**15.***This you know, that all they who are in Asia have turned away from me;*What? Turned away from Paul? Some people think it is an awful thing because certain people turn away from a minister of Christ. It is not an awful thing at all, except for them! Paul stands fast—even he, the bravest of the brave—and they all turn aside from him. What of that? Does Paul flinch? No, not he! “This you know, that all they who are in Asia have turned away from me.”

**15.***Of whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes.*Two men who ought to have known better! Paul evidently fixed his eyes upon them—more bitter than others, more perverse, more cruel, more willfully guilty in turning aside from him.

**16, 17.***The Lord grant mercy unto the house of Onesiphorus; for he often refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chains. But when he was in Rome, he sought me out very diligently, and found me.* You could not tell in Rome where a prisoner was. The registers were not open to investigation. You had to go from prison to prison, and pay the guards to get admission, or to be told who might be there, but Onesiphorus was determined to find Paul. I suppose that he went to the Mamertine, a dungeon in which some of us have been—one dungeon under the bottom of another. The first one has no light, except through a round hole at the top. And the second has a round hole through which you drop into the lower one. We think that Paul was there. It is a tradition that he was. And then there is the Palatine prison, which was at the guard house of the Praetorian guards, near the palace on the Palatine Hill. There Paul certainly was, and Onesiphorus went from one jail to another. “Have you seen a little Jew with weak eyes?” I daresay that was his description of him. “He is a friend of mine. I want to speak with him.” “What?*That* Paul?—the man that is chained to one or another of us every morning? We have twelve hours of it and he preaches to us most of the time! And we know it by the time we are let go again!” “Oh, that is the man,” said Onesiphorus. “That is the man! Does he talk about Jesus Christ?” “Oh, nothing else but that. He will not let any soldier go from being bound to him without hearing about Jesus Christ.” “That is my man,” said Onesiphorus. He sought him out very diligently, and he found him!

**18.***The Lord grant unto him that he may find mercy from the Lord in that day: and in how many things he ministered unto me at Ephesus, you know very well.*

*—Adapted from the C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software.*  
**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.** Sermon #938 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

**÷2Ti 2.2**

A GOOD SOLDIER OF JESUS CHRIST  
NO. 938

**DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, JUNE 26, 1870, *BY C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“A good soldier of Jesus Christ.”***2Ti 2:2-3***.***

MANY men, many minds. In reference to what a Christian is there have been very many and diverse opinions. According to the notions of some, a Christian is an exquisite of remarkably delicate tastes. He cannot worship except it be in a place whose architecture is correctly Gothic, otherwise his dainty soul will be shocked. He is unable to offer prayer aright unless his devotions are uplifted upon the wings of the choicest music. And, even then, scarcely will he be successful unless he is aided by sundry gentlemen, whose pedigree, like that of racehorses, can be clearly traced, and whose garments the tailor has fashioned according to the directions of the ecclesiastical fashion book for the various seasons of the year.

If this is to be a Christian in these days, it must be confessed that Paul has said little concerning this delicate and artistic sort of creature, unless, indeed, he had reference to it in Gal 4:9-11, which read at your leisure—neither would Paul’s Master acknowledge it.

With some a Christian is a spiritual gourmet. He attends upon the ministry of the Word for no purpose but to be fed. He strongly denounces every sermon that is aimed at the conversion of sinners, for he looks even upon the Bible itself as a book solely intended to yield him personal consolation. The more any doctrinal teaching promises him a monopoly of good things, and the more it excludes others, the better he enjoys it—it being to him a particular part of the sweetness of the feast to believe that but a very slender company may dare to partake of it.

For him to live is to enjoy and not to serve. To gratify his selfishness he would blot out the free invitations of the Gospel. He is not a hearer only, but certainly he is not also a doer. He is a hearer and a feeder, in a certain coarse sense, upon the Word of God, and nothing more. That is not Paul’s ideal of a Christian. He does not picture him with his napkin in his hand, sitting at a banquet table, but rather with a sword girt upon his thigh, ready for the conflict.

To some, the highest form of Christian is a great reader—a profound student of the best of books—for the purpose of composing spiritual riddles. He reads for no practical end. He is a picker-out of words, a spellerover of syllables, a magnifier of microscopic points, a proficient in biblical hair-splitting. The more a passage perplexes others the more sure he is of its meaning. He cares most for things which have the least practical bearing. He is a peeper through spiritual spyglasses, fancying that he can interpret what wiser men leave to God to expound. He is a hunter after spiritual conies, which, if caught, would never pay the huntsman for his toil, while the weightier matters he holds in small esteem. This does not seem to have been Paul’s conception of a Christian. For the Apostle was no lover of foolish and unlearned questions which gender strife.

And I am afraid I must add that with some the ideal of a Christian is that of a man who can sleep out his existence in blissful serenity—a man who, having believed, or professed to believe in Christ—has settled his lifework forever, and from now on can say, “Soul, take your ease, you have from now on much goods laid up for many years in your own security. Eat, drink, be merry in the Gospel. But as for feeding the hungry or clothing the naked, are you your brother’s keeper? What is that to you? See you to yourself, and if you, yourself are right, let fate, or Providence, or Sovereignty, take care of the rest.”

Paul does not appear to have pictured true Believers as sluggards sound asleep upon the downiest beds. His description of a Christian in the text is that of a *soldier*. And that means something far different either from a religious fop, whose best delight is music and millinery, or a theological critic who makes a man an offender for a word. Or a spiritual glutton who cares for nothing but a lifelong enjoyment of the fat things full of marrow. Or an ecclesiastical slumberer who longs only for peace for himself. Paul represents him as a soldier and that, I say, is quite another thing.

For what is a soldier? A soldier is a practical man, a man who has work to do, and hard, stern work. He may sometimes, when he is at his ease, wear the fineries of war, but when he comes to real warfare he cares little enough for them. The dust and the smoke, and the garments rolled in blood—these are for those who go soldiering. And swords all hacked, and dented armor, and bruised shields—these are the things that mark the good, the practical, soldier. Truly to serve God, really to exhibit Christian graces, fully to achieve a lifework for Christ, actually to win souls—this is to bear fruit worthy of a Christian.

A soldier is a man of deeds, and not of words. He has to contend and fight. In war times his life knows little of luxurious ease. In the dead of night, perhaps, the trumpet sounds to boot and saddle—just at the time when he is most weary—and he must hurry to the attack just when he would best prefer to take his rest in sleep. The Christian is a soldier in an enemy’s country always needing to stand on his watchtower, constantly to be contending, though not with flesh and blood—with far worse foes— namely, with spiritual wickedness in high places.

The Christian is a self-sacrificing man as the soldier must be. To protect his country, the soldier must expose his own bosom. To serve his King, he must be ready to lay down his life. Surely he is no Christian who never felt the spirit of self-sacrifice. If I live unto myself I am living unto the flesh, and of the flesh I shall reap corruption. Only he who lives to his God, to Christ, to the Truth of God, to the Church, and to the good old cause—only he is the man who can reckon himself at all to be a soldier of Jesus Christ.

A soldier is a serving man. He does not follow his own pleasure. He is under law and rule. Each hour of the day has its prescribed duty. And he must be obedient to the word of another and not to his own will and whim. Such is the Christian. We serve the Lord Jesus Christ. Though no longer the slaves of man so as to dread his frown, we are servants of Christ who has loosed our bonds.

The soldier is full often a suffering man. There are wounds, there are toils, there are frequent stays in the hospitals—there may be ghastly cuts which let the soul out with the blood. Such the Christian soldier must be ready to suffer, enduring hardship, not looking for pleasure of a worldly kind in this life, but counting it his pleasure to renounce his pleasure for Christ’s sake. Once again, the true soldier is an ambitious being. He pants for honor, seeks for glory. On the field of strife he gathers his laurels, and amidst a thousand dangers he reaps renown.

The Christian is fired by higher ambitions than any earthly warrior ever knew. He sees a crown that can never fade. He loves a King who best of all is worthy to be served. He has a motive within him which moves him to the noble deeds—a Divine spirit impelling him to the most self-sacrificing actions. Thus you see the Christian is a soldier, and it is one of the main things in Christian life to contend earnestly for the faith, and to fight valorously against sin.

Paul does not exhort Timothy to be a common, or ordinary soldier, but to be a “good soldier of Jesus Christ.” For all soldiers, and all true soldiers may not be good soldiers. There are men who are but just soldiers and nothing more. They only need sufficient temptation and they readily become cowardly, idle, useless and worthless. But he is the good soldier who is bravest of the brave, courageous at all times. He is zealous, does his duty with heart and earnestness. He is the good soldier of Jesus Christ who, through Divine Grace, aims to make himself as able to serve his Lord as shall be possible.

He tries to grow in Grace and to be perfected in every good word and work that he may be in his Master’s battles fit for the roughest and sternest service, and ready to bear the very brunt of the fray. David had many soldiers, and good soldiers, too, but you remember it was said of many, “These attained not unto the first three.” Now Paul, if I read him rightly, would have Timothy try to be of the first three, to be a good soldier. And surely I would, this morning, say to my dear comrades in the little army of Christ meeting here—let each one of us try to attain unto the first three. Let us ask to be numbered among the King’s mighties, to do noble work for Him and honorable service, that we may bring to our Master’s cause fresh glory. Be it ours to covet earnestly the best gifts, and as we have had much forgiven, let us love much, and prove that love by action.

Before I proceed fully to open up this metaphor, let me say that though we shall use military terms this morning, and stirring speech, it should ever be remembered that we have no war against *persons*, and that the weapons which we use are not such as are forged for the deadly conflicts of *mankind*. The wars of a Christian are against *principles*, against*sins*, against the *miseries* of mankind, against that Evil One who has led man astray from his Maker. Our wars are against the iniquity which keeps man an enemy to himself. The weapons that we use are holy *arguments* and consecrated *lives*, devotion and prayer to God, teaching and example among the sons of men.

Ours is battling for the peace, and fighting for rest. We disturb the world to make it quiet, and turn it upside down to set it right. We pull down strongholds that they may not pull down the Zion of God. We dash down the mighty that the humble and the meek may be established. We have no sympathy with any other war, but count it an evil of the direst sort, let it be disguised as it may. Now with that caution, whatever I shall seem to say will not sound as though I loved or excused ordinary warfare—for nothing can be more abhorrent to the Christian man than

wholesale slaughter. Nothing can be more desired by us than the promised era when men shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks.

Now let us come to the work of this morning. First, we shall describe a good soldier of Jesus Christ, and when we have done so, we shall exhort you to be such.

**I.**First, then, this morning, we shall endeavor TO DESCRIBE A GOOD SOLDIER OF JESUS CHRIST. We must begin with this fundamental—he must be loyal to his King. A soldier of Jesus Christ owns the Divine Redeemer as his King, and confesses His sole and undivided sovereignty in the spiritual kingdom. He abhors Antichrist in all its forms, and every principle that opposes itself to the reign of the Beloved Prince of Peace. Jesus is to him both Lord and God. The day when he enlisted, he did, as it were, put his finger into the print of the nails, and said with Thomas, “My Lord and my God.”

This was his enlistment declaration, and he remains true to it. “Christ is All,” is his motto, and to win all men to obedience to Immanuel is his lifework. Till he sheathes his sword in the last victory, the Crucified is sole monarch of his soul. For Him he lives, for Him he would even dare to die. He has entered into solemn league and covenant, to maintain against all comers that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

Moreover, the Christian soldier not only acknowledges Jesus to be his King, but his heart is full of loving devotion to Him as such. Nothing can make his heart leap like the mention of that august, that more than royal name. He remembers who Jesus is, the Son of God, “the Wonderful, the Counselor, the Mighty God.” He remembers what Jesus did, how He loved him, and gave Himself for him. He looks to the Cross and remembers the streams of blood whereby the elect were redeemed, even when they were enemies of God. He remembers Christ in Heaven, enthroned at the right hand of the Father.

He loves Him there, and it ravishes his heart to think that God has highly exalted the once-despised and rejected One, and given Him a name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, of things in Heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth. He pants for the time when the Crucified shall come in His Glory, and rule the nations as their liege Lord. He loves Jesus so that he feels he belongs to Him altogether, bought with His blood, redeemed by His power, and comforted by His Presence. He delights to know that he is not his own, for he is bought with a price. And since he loves his King, and loves Him with an ardor unquenchable—for many waters cannot drown his love, neither can the floods quench it—he loves all the King’s Brethren and servants for the King’s sake.

He hails his Brethren in arms with hearty affection. He loves the grand old banner of the Gospel. He prays for the wind of the Holy Spirit to expand its furls, that all eyes may behold its beauties. He is steadfast in the faith once delivered to the saints, and rejoices so much at every doctrine of the Gospel that he would gladly lay down his life to preserve it to the world. Above all, he loves the crown of his King, and the cause of his Master. Oh, could he set the Captain of his salvation higher among men, he would be content to die in the ditch of neglect and scorn! Could he but see the King come to His own, and the Heir of all things loyally acknowledged by His revolted provinces, he would be satisfied whatever might become of himself. His heart is more than loyal, it is full of personal affection for the Chief among ten thousand.

I ask you, Brethren, whether it is so with you? Believing, yes, *knowing* that it is so with many, I would to God it were thus with all. Brethren, I know you love Jesus well, no music sounds to your ears so sweetly as His charming name. No song of choicest minstrel is half so sweet. The very thought of Him with rapture fills your breasts. Assuredly you have one of the first marks of good soldiers—go on, I pray you, to that which lies beyond.

The next characteristic of a good soldier is that he is *obedient* to his captain’s commands. He would be no soldier at all who would not take his marching orders from his leader, but must needs act after his own mind. He would soon be dismissed from service, if not shot by order of a court martial for crimes which military rule cannot tolerate. Now, without enlarging on that illustration, let me ask every Christian here, and myself first of all, are we doing all the Master’s will? Do we wish to know the Master’s will? I should not like that any part of the Scripture should be distasteful to me. I would tremble if there were portions of my Lord’s Testimony which I feared to read, or found it convenient to forget.

It is terrible when men are obliged to pass over certain texts, or else to cut and square them to make them agree with their beliefs. We should not practice an ordinance merely because our Church teaches it, or our parents believed in it. We must read the Scriptures and search the question for ourselves, or we are not respectful to our Lord. The soldier who did not take the trouble to read the orders of his superior might justly be suspected of mutinous intentions. Disobedience rankles in any heart where there is carelessness about knowing the Lord’s will. Be courageous enough always to look Scripture in the face—it is, after all, nothing more than your bare duty.

Better for us that we changed our sentiments every day in order to be right, than that we held to them obstinately while we had some fear that perhaps we were wrong. To live a life of obedience is a greater matter than some suppose. Obedience is no second-rate virtue—“to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.” “If you love Me”—what does Jesus say, “Go to the stake for Me,” or, “Preach before kings for Me”? No, neither of these things is expressly selected, but “If you love Me, keep My commandments,” as though this were the surest and most accepted test of love. May you thus, then, being loyal to the King, be in the second place obedient to His commands.

The third matter for a good soldier to mind is this—if he is, indeed, a first-class soldier, worthy of the service—to conquer will be his ruling passion. The fight is on, and the soldier’s blood is up, and now he feels, “I must drive the enemy from his entrenchment, I must take yonder redoubt. I must plant our conquering standard on the castle of the foe, or I must die. Accursed be the sun if he goes down this day and sees me turn my back upon the enemy.” He is resolved that he will win or lie cold and stark upon the battlefield. The Christian man, in order that he may win for Christ the souls of others, may make known Christ’s Truth, may establish Christ’s Church on fresh ground, is quite as ready to suffer or die

as is the boldest member of the most renowned regiment.

To do this he disentangles himself as much as he can from all other ambitions and aims, “for he that wars, entangles not himself with the affairs of this life.” With a good soldier of Christ the master passion is to spread the Gospel, to save souls from perishing—and he would sooner do this and be poor than be rich and neglect it. He would sooner be useful and live unknown than rank among the great ones of the earth and be useless to his Lord. A truly good soldier of Jesus Christ knows nothing about difficulties except as things to be surmounted. If his Master bids him perform exploits too hard for him, he draws upon the resources of Omnipotence, and achieves impossibilities.

Wellington sent word to his troops one night, “Ciudad Rodrigo must be taken tonight.” And what do you think was the commentary of the British soldiers appointed for the attack? “Then,” said they all, “we will do it.” So when our great Captain sends round, as He does to us, the Word of command, “Go you into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature,” if we were all good soldiers of the Cross, we should say at once, “We will do it.” However hard the task, since God Himself is with us to be our Captain, and Jesus the Priest of the Most High is with us to sound the trumpet, we will do it in Jehovah’s name. May such dauntless resolution fire your breasts, my Brothers and Sisters, and may you thus prove yourselves “good soldiers of Jesus Christ.”

The passion for victory with the soldier often makes him forget everything else. Before the battle of Waterloo, Picton had had two of his ribs smashed in at Quartre Bras, but he concealed this serious injury, and, though suffering intense agony, he rode at the head of his troops, and led one of the great charges which decided the fortunes of the day. He never left his post, but rode on till a ball crushed in his skull and penetrated to his brain. Then in the hot fight the hero fell. How few among us could thus endure hardness for Jesus? O that we felt we could suffer *anything* sooner than be turned aside from accomplishing our lifework for Him we love!

In that same battle one of our lieutenants, in the early part of the day, had his left forearm broken by a shot. He could not, therefore, hold the reins in his hand, but he seized them with his mouth and fought on till another shot broke the upper part of the arm to splinters, and it had to be amputated. But within two days there he was, with his arm still bleeding, and the wound all raw, riding at the head of his division. Brave things have been done among the soldiers of our country—O that such brave things were common among the armed men of the Church militant!

Would to God that in the teeth of suffering we could all persevere in living the holy life He bids us live, and in zealously spreading abroad that glorious Gospel which has saved our souls and which will save the souls of others. Great Master, by Your own example inspire us with this valor! I desire to see in this, our Beloved Church, more of you who are resolved that Christ’s Gospel shall conquer this South of London. That it shall conquer the world! That Christ shall see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied. I long to witness more of that dogged perseverance among Christians which would make them work on and on, even without success, and persevere under every discouragement, until at last their Master shall give them their reward on earth, or else take them away to their reward in Heaven. To be a good soldier of Jesus Christ there must be a passion for victory, an insatiable greed for setting up the Throne of Jesus in the souls of men.

Fourthly, a good soldier is very brave at a charge. When the time comes and the orders are given for the good soldier to advance to the attack, he does not wish himself away. Though a perfect hail of hurtling shot whistles all around, and the ranks of the army are thinned, he is glad to be there—for he feels the stern joy that flushes the face in the light of battle—and he only wants to be within arm’s length of the foe and to come to close quarters with him. So is it with the genuine Christian when his heart is right with God. If he is bid to advance, let the danger be what it may, he feels he is honored by having such a service allotted to him.

But are we all such? I fear not. How many of us are silent about Jesus Christ in private conversation? How little do we show forth our light before men. If we were good soldiers, such as we ought to be, we should select every favorable opportunity in private as well as in public communion with our fellow men, and prudently but yet zealously press the claims of Jesus Christ and His Gospel upon them. Oh, do this, Beloved, and good will come of it! We should each one be seeking to have his own special work for Jesus, and if no one else were attempting the task, we should, like the brave men who rush in to the storming of a battery, carry the flag first and plant it, knowing that there are hundreds of others who will follow the first brave man, who might not be able perhaps to lead the way themselves.

My Beloved, may you and I be ready for anything, and bold to bear witness for Christ before a scoffing world. In the pulpits where we preach, in the workshops where we labor, in the markets where we trade, in every company amidst which we are called to move—wherever we may be, may we be brave enough to own our Lord and to uphold His cause.

But this is not all that goes to make a good soldier. A good soldier is like a rock under attack. So British soldiers have been. They have stood in solid squares against the enemies’ cavalry until their foes have dashed upon them madly, gnashed their teeth, fired in their faces, thrown their guns at them, and yet might just as well have ridden against granite rocks. For our soldiers did not know how to yield, and would not retreat. As fast as one fell another filled up the gap, and there stood the square of iron defying the rush of the foe.

We want this kind of fixed, resolved, persevering godliness in our Churches, and we shall have it if we are good soldiers of Jesus Christ. Alas, too many are exhausted by the zeal at first exhibited. For a time they can reach the highest point, but to continue on, and on, and on—this is too difficult a task for them. How many young people will join the Church and for awhile seem very zealous and then grow cold! Alas, it is not always the young, there are some among yourselves who were once most diligent in your various forms of service. What hinders you that you are not diligent in your Master’s business now? Has Christ given you leave to retire into inglorious ease? Does He exempt you from service?

Take heed lest you are also exempt from reward. No, we must through all our Christian life maintain our integrity, resist temptation, tread the separated path, and seek the souls of men with undying ardor—with indefatigable earnestness—wrestling with God for men and with men for God.

Oh, for more of this stern determination to stand, and having done all—to still stand!

The last mark of a really good soldier of Jesus Christ is that he derives his strength from on High. This has been true even of some common soldiers, for religious men, when they have sought strength from God, have been all the braver in the day of conflict. I like the story of Frederick the Great. When he overheard his favorite general engaged in prayer, and was about to utter a sneering remark, the fine old man, who never feared a foe, and did not even fear his majesty’s jest, said, “Your Majesty, I have just been asking aid from your Majesty’s great Ally.” He had been waiting upon God.

This is how Christians get the victory. They seek it from the Church’s great Ally, and then go to the conflict sure that they shall win the day. He is the best Christian who is the best intercessor. He shall do the most who shall pray the best. In the battle of Salamanca, when Wellington bade one of his officers advance with his troops and occupy a gap which the Duke perceived in the lines of the French, the general rode up to him, and said, “My lord, I will do the work, but first give me a grasp of that conquering right hand of yours.” He received a hearty grip, and away he rode to the deadly encounter.

Often has my soul said to her Captain, “My Lord, I will do that work if You will give me a grip of Your conquering right hand.” Oh, what power it puts into a man when he gets a grip of Christ, and Christ gets a grip of him! Fellowship with Christ is the fountain of the Church’s strength. Her power did never lie in her wealth, nor in the eloquence of her preachers, nor in anything that comes of man. The strength of the Church is Divine, and if she fails to draw strength from the Everlasting Hills, she becomes weak as water. Good soldiers of Jesus Christ, watch unto prayer, “praying in the Holy Spirit,” for so shall you be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might.

**II.**Thus I have in a very poor way described a good soldier of Jesus Christ. Give me a few minutes while I EXHORT YOU TO BE SUCH. And, mark you, I shall speak especially to the members of this Christian Church. I exhort you, dear Brethren, who are soldiers of Christ, to be good soldiers, because many of you have been so. Paul was likely to commend the Churches when he could, and I feel I may honestly and from my heart commend many of you, for you have served your Lord and Master well.

I know you have nothing whereof to glory, for when you have done all, you are unprofitable servants. But still I rejoice, and will rejoice when I see the work of the Holy Spirit in you. And I will venture to say that I have seen here instances of Apostolic ardor and self-sacrifice such as I have read of in ancient records, but hardly ever expected to see. There are those in this House this day who will shine as stars forever and ever, for they have turned many to righteousness. Dishonor not your past, I beseech you! Fall not from your high standing. “Forward” is your motto! Never think of declining, but rather advance in love to God, and in the ardor of your zeal.

Be good soldiers still, and depart not from your first love. I am sure there is greater need of good soldiering now than ever. Ten years ago, or sixteen years ago, when first I addressed you, the power of popery in this land was nothing compared to what it is now. In those days the Church of England was more generally Protestant. Now it is so frequently popish that I may broadly say that now we are afflicted with two popish churches—that of Rome and that of Oxford. The second one is not one whit better than the first—only more crafty and insidious—inasmuch as it attracts to itself a number of godly and gracious men who protect the villains who bear a Protestant name and who are doing the Pope’s work.

I grieve to know that the evangelical clergy of England, by their continued union with the Church of England are acting as a shield to the ritualistic or popish party, and giving them every opportunity to work out their schemes for leading the nation back to popery en masse. Around this very spot a battle will have to be fought between the Sacramentarians and the lovers of the Gospel. At your very doors the battle is come at last. It was not so till but lately, but here it is—and you that are men must show your colors, and serve your Master against innumerable and constantly active foes. You have never failed me, you have always been bold and steadfast, and laborious, and so let it be, for the time requires it.

I can see on all hands that many of you young men are being attracted by the worldly amusements which surround us, for our dangers are not only those of popery, but those of the world, the flesh, and the devil. There must be greater earnestness and a deeper piety among you, or the next generation will become unworthy of yourselves—your grief—and not your joy. I pray you see to this. Be good soldiers, for much depends upon it. Your country will be blessed in proportion as you are earnest. Nonconformity in England will lose all its power if it loses its godliness. I do not care much for our political strength—I was about to say I am almost indifferent to our political rights—I care for them, but only so much as to occupy a very minor place in my consideration.

Our spirituality is the main matter. It is this, alone, that can make us a blessing to our country. Sons of the Puritans, you must walk with God, or your day is past—you will be swept away as Esther would have been, who came to the kingdom for the salvation of her nation—if she had not fulfilled the office for which God had exalted her. You have grown in numbers, grown in strength. O that you may grow in Grace, love the Gospel better, and love Christ better, for your country needs it, your children need it, you, yourselves need it! The times are perilous, and yet they are hopeful! By their peril, and by their hopefulness, I beseech you, be good soldiers of Jesus Christ! Good soldiers we ought to be, for it is a grand old cause that is at stake. It is the kingdom of God, it is the Church of Christ, it is the Word of God, the Truth, the doctrine of the Gospel, the crown of Jesus, that are all at stake.

I grant you that none shall ever shake the Throne of Jesus, for though “the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing,” yet shall His Throne be established. But we now speak according to the manner of men. God has been pleased to leave this matter to His Church, which is the pillar and ground of the Truth. Oh then! Stand up manfully, and fight earnestly when so much rests upon it! God grant that you may not be as the children of Ephraim, who being armed and carrying bows turned their backs in the day of battle.

I implore you, my Brethren, and mostly myself, to be good soldiers of

Jesus when you consider the fame that has preceded you. A soldier, when he receives his colors, finds certain words embroidered on them to remind him of the former victories of the regiment in which he serves. Look at the eleventh chapter of Hebrews and see the long list of the triumphs of the faithful. Remember how Prophets and Apostles served God. Remember how martyrs joyfully laid down their lives. Look at the long line of the reformers and the confessors. Remember your martyred sires and covenanting fathers, and by the Grace of God I beseech you, walk not unworthy of your noble lineage.

Be good soldiers because of the victory which awaits you. Oh, it will be a grand thing to share in the ultimate triumph of Christ, for triumph He will! When all His soldiers shall come back from the war, and the King Himself at their head with the spoils of the victory. When they shall come back to the metropolitan city, to the ivory palaces of the great Captain. When the song is heard, “Lift up your heads, O you gates, and be you lifted up, you everlasting doors.” When the question shall be answered, “Who is the King of Glory?” by the reply, “The Lord of Hosts, the Lord mighty in battle, He is the King of Glory,” it will be a glorious thing to have shared the fight, for so surely you shall share the honors of that coronation day!

A crown is prepared for that head though it is now made to ache with care for the cause. There is a palm branch for that hand which now toils in the fight. There are silver sandals for those feet which have now to march over weary miles for Christ’s sake. Honor and immortality not to be imagined till they are enjoyed await every faithful soldier of the Cross!

Besides, and lastly, if I want another argument to make you good soldiers, remember your Captain, the Captain whose wounded hands and pierced feet are tokens of His love to you. Redeemed from going down to the pit, what can you do sufficiently to show your gratitude? Assured of eternal Glory by-and-by, how can you sufficiently prove that you feel your indebtedness? Up, I pray you! By Him whose eyes are like a flame of fire, and yet were wet with tears—by Him on whose head are many crowns, and who yet wore the crown of thorns—by Him who is King of kings and Lord of lords, and yet bowed His head to death for you—resolve that to life’s latest breath you will spend and be spent for His praise. The Lord grant that there may be many such in this Church—good soldiers of Jesus Christ.

Two or three words and I will close. At this present time I contemplate exhorting you to engage in fresh efforts for Christ. I do not know that you are relaxing, neither have I complaints to make of any. But I would wish that we would commence with renewed vigor this day, if God so wills it. As I myself commence a new year of Sundays as to my own age, I desire to see a new era of greater exertion in the cause of Jesus Christ. And, in order that it may be successful, let not a single man or woman on the Church-roll be missing from his or her post in the spiritual conflict.

It is a remarkable fact that on the eve of a great battle in the Peninsular War the officers read the muster-roll, and noted that “not a man was missing.” They had all good stomach for the fight, and were all there. You that are in the Sunday school, you that distribute your tracts, you that preach in the streets—every man to his post! And if you have no post as yet, find one—let there not be one idler, not one single loiterer, for a single sluggard may mar the work. Then if we are to be successful let nothing divide us. The motto of one of our most famous regiments embroidered on their banner is, “Quis separavit.” Who shall separate us?

We are but mortals, and, therefore, little jealousies may spring up. And among us there may be little causes of personal vexation, but brave warriors in the olden times who had fallen out have been known to come together on the eve of battle and say, “Come, let us be reconciled, we may die tomorrow. Besides, we join in common hatred of the foe and love to the king.” Let your peace be unbroken, your union indissoluble, and God will bless you.

To help us to succeed now, let us lay down this one rule—let no low standard of work, or virtue, or spiritual attainment, content any one of us. Let us resolve to be as good Christians as can be found beneath the stars, as fond of Christ as human hearts can be, doing and giving as much for Christ as we can do or give consistently with other duties. Let us spare nothing, and keep back no part of the price. Let there be no Ananias and Sapphira among us, but all be as John, who loved his Lord. And Paul, who counted all things but loss for the excellency of Christ Jesus his Lord.

Next, let me say let the present moment be seized. I should like to saturate this district with a mass of tracts simply teaching the Gospel and protesting against the bastard popery around us. Heaven and earth are being raised around us just now. Our poor are being bribed, the houses of our members are being systematically visited with the view of decoying them from our worship. We are told that a certain small building used by the Episcopal body is the parish Church, and we ought to attend it. I might far more truthfully assert *this* to be the Church of the parish by the choice of a far more numerous body, but I care not to make pretensions which prove nothing.

The true question is—do we follow Christ, and uphold the teachings of Scripture? If so, our standing is unassailable. Doubtless the word has gone forth that Dissent must be crushed, but if we live near to God, and maintain our zeal, Dissent will rise invincible from every attack. Foreseeing the gathering storm, it is our consolation that we know where He dwells who is Master of the tempest, and can walk the waters for our help, and calm the sea around the weather-beaten boat. It becomes us now at this present moment to be indefatigable, to put forth all our strength for the Truth of God, even the Lord’s pure Word in doctrine and in ordinance.

Let no man’s heart fail him. There is no fear of defeat. Lo, these many years the Lord of Hosts has been with us as a Church, and He will still be our Helper. We have seen the rise and fall of many who blazed for awhile—but are now quenched in darkness—while we have increased from a handful to this mass, and God who has been our trust, and is still our stay, will not forsake us now. He has not drawn you together, and held you in one body by cords of love, that after all you may prove to be a powerless unwieldy mass of associated Christians. He intends to direct and strengthen you for nobler ends and purposes!

God, even our own God, will bless us! Immanuel, God with us, leads the van. The Truth, like the virgin daughter of Zion, shakes her head at boastful error, and laughs it to scorn. Let Falsehood put on her tawdry garments and think herself a queen, and say that she shall sit alone, and see no sorrow. Let Error come forth in her panoply and wave her flaunting banner before the sun. She draws near her end. Her armor—what is it?

It is but pasteboard, and the lance of Truth shall pierce it through and through. Her banner, what is it but a foul rag of the Roman harlot? It shall be laid in the dust.

No, let Error bring forth all her hosts, and let them stand in their serried ranks, and through them the faithful soldiers of Jesus will ride and bow the columns like reeds in the wind. In these days, the doctrines and traditions of men compass us about, yes, like bees they compass us about, but in the name of the Lord will we destroy them. Only let us have confidence in God, and the victory is sure. As for the thought of turning back, that can never be endured. A message came to Sir Colin Campbell at the Alma, that Her Majesty’s Guards were falling thick and fast beneath the shot, had they not better retire for a little while into safe quarters? The answer was, “It were better, Sir, that everyone of Her Majesty’s Guards should lie dead on this battlefield than turn their backs on the enemy.”

And it is so. Let us die, yes—it were to be devoutly wished rather than we lived a coward’s life! Let the preacher first of all be carried to his grave. Let him never live to see the shame of this Israel. Let these eyes be sealed in death rather than behold “Ichabod” written on these walls! No, Brethren, it shall not be! You will serve Jesus, you will love Him, and “Onward to victory” shall be your watchword from today on. Be more in PRAYER— for this is the great matter. Seek out, each one, your own sphere of action—give yourselves wholly to it. And if any grow cold or careless, let him remember Jesus says, “I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me.”

This blessed supping with Jesus will restore you! Though you are like Laodicea, “neither cold nor hot,” fellowship with Jesus will renew the love of your espousals. Oh, then, my Brethren, in Jesus’ name I bid you be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might!

I have not preached to sinners, but you will do that if you catch the spirit of this sermon. There will be many thousands of words to sinners spoken as the result of this exhortation, if God, the Holy Spirit, makes it answer my design. Only this word to those who are not soldiers of Jesus Christ—trust Him now! Come now and kiss His silver scepter of Divine Grace. He will forgive the rebel, and take him to be His servant. God bless you. Amen.

Adapted from*The C.H. Spurgeon Collection*, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #1653 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

**÷2Ti 2.8**

THE RESURRECTION OF OUR LORD JESUS  
NO. 1653

**DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, APRIL 9, 1882, *BY C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my Gospel.”***2Ti 2:8***.***

FROM long sickness my mind is scarcely equal to the work before me. Certainly, if I had ever sought after brilliance of thought or language, I should have failed, today, for I am almost at the lowest stage of incapacity. I have only been comforted in the thought of preaching to you this morning by the reflection that it is the doctrine, itself, which God blesses, and not the way in which it may be spoken—for if God had made the power to depend upon the *speaker* and his style, He would have chosen that the Resurrection, grandest of all the Truths of God, would have been proclaimed by angels rather than by men! Yet He set aside the seraph for the humbler creature.

After angels had spoken a word or two to the women, their testimony ceased. The most prominent testimony to the Resurrection of the Lord was, at first, that of holy women, and afterwards that of each one of the guileless men and women who made up the 500 or more whose privilege it was to have actually seen the risen Savior and who, therefore, could bear witness to what they had seen, though they may have been quite unable to describe with eloquence what they had beheld! Upon our Lord’s rising I have nothing to say! And God’s ministers have nothing to say beyond bearing witness to the fact that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead.

Put it in poetry. Proclaim it in sublime Miltonic verse—it will come to no more! Tell of it in monosyllables and write it so that little children may read it in their first spelling books and it will come to nothing less—“The Lord is risen, indeed!” is the sum and substance of our witness when we speak of our risen Redeemer. If we do but know the Truth of this Resurrection and feel the power of it, our mode of utterance is of secondary consequence, for the Holy Spirit will bear witness to the Truth of God and cause it to produce fruit in the minds of our hearers.

Our present text is found in Paul’s second letter to Timothy. The venerable minister is anxious about the young man who has preached with remarkable success and whom he regards, in some respects, as his successor. The old man is about to put off his tabernacle and he is concerned that his son in the Gospel should preach the same Truths of God as his father has preached—and should by no means adulterate the Gospel. A tendency showed itself in Timothy’s day and the same tendency exists at this very hour—to try to get away from the simple matters of fact upon which our religion is built—to something more philosophical and hard to be understood.

The Word of God which the common people heard gladly is not fine enough for cultured sages and so they must surround it with a mist of human thought and speculation. Three or four plain facts constitute the Gospel, even as Paul puts it in the 5th chapter of his first Epistle to the Corinthians—“For I delivered unto you, first of all, that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures.” Upon the Incarnation, life, death and Resurrection of Jesus, our salvation hinges. He who believes these Truths of God, aright, has believed the Gospel and, believing the Gospel, he shall without doubt find eternal salvation!

But men want novelties. They cannot endure that the trumpet should give forth the same certain sound! They crave some fresh fantasia every day. “The Gospel with variations” is the music for them! Intellect is progressive, they say; they must, therefore, march ahead of their forefathers. Incarnate Deity, a holy life, an atoning death and a literal Resurrection— having heard these things, now, for nearly 19 centuries, they are just a little stale—and the *cultivated* mind hungers for a change from the oldfashioned manna. Even in Paul’s day this tendency was manifest and so they sought to regard facts as mysteries or parables—and they labored to find a spiritual meaning in them till they went so far as to deny them as actual facts!

Seeking an ambiguous meaning, they overlooked the fact, itself, losing the substance in a foolish preference for the shadow. While God set before them glorious events which fill Heaven with amazement, they showed their foolish wisdom by accepting the plain historical facts as *myths* to be interpreted or riddles to be solved. He who believed as a little child was pushed aside as a fool, that the disputer and the scribe might come in to mystify simplicity and hide the light of the Truth of God! Hence there had arisen a certain Hymenaeus and Philetus, “Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the Resurrection is already past; and overthrow the faith of some.” Turn to verse 17 and read for yourselves. They spirited away the Resurrection! They made it to mean something very deep and mystical—and in the process they took away the actual Resurrection altogether.

Among men there is still a craving after new meanings, refinements upon old doctrines, and spiritualization of literal facts. They tear out the heart of the Truth of God and give us the carcass stuffed with hypotheses, speculations and larger hopes. The golden shields of Solomon are taken away and shields of brass are hung up in their place—will they not answer every purpose—and is not the metal more in favor with the age? It may be so, but we never admired Rehoboam and we are old-fashioned enough to prefer the original shields of gold! The Apostle Paul was very anxious that Timothy should stand firm to the old witness and should understand, in their plain meaning, his testimonies to the fact that Jesus Christ of the seed of David rose again from the dead.

Within the compass of this verse several facts are recorded and, first, there is here the great Truth of God that Jesus, the Son of the Highest, was anointed of God. The Apostle calls Him “Jesus Christ,” that is, the Anointed One, the Messiah, the Sent of God. He calls Him, also, “Jesus,” which signifies a Savior, and it is a grand Truth that He who was born of Mary; He who was laid in the manger at Bethlehem; He who loved and lived and died for us, is the ordained and anointed Savior of men! We have not a moment’s doubt about the mission, office and design of our Lord Jesus! In fact, we hang our soul’s salvation upon His being anointed of the Lord to be the Savior of men!

This Jesus Christ was really and truly Man, for Paul says He was “of the seed of David.” True He was Divine and His birth was not after the ordinary manner of men, but still, He was, in all respects, partaker of our human nature and came of the stock of David. This, also, we believe. We are not among those who spiritualize the Incarnation and suppose that God was here as a phantom, or that the whole story is but an instructive legend. No, in very flesh and blood did the Son of God abide among men! He was bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh in the days of His sojourn here below. We know and believe that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh. We love the Incarnate God and in Him we fix our trust.

It is implied, too, in the text, that Jesus died, for He could not be raised from the dead if He had not first gone down among the dead and been one of them! Yes, Jesus died—the Crucifixion was no delusion, the piercing of His side with a spear was most clear and evident proof that He was dead— His heart was pierced and the blood and water flowed from them. As a dead Man, He was taken down from the Cross and carried by gentle hands and laid in Joseph’s virgin tomb. I think I see that pale corpse, white as a lily! Mark how it is stained with the blood of His five wounds which make Him red as the rose. See how the holy women tenderly wrap Him in fine linen with sweet spices and leave Him to spend His Sabbath all alone in the rock-hewn sepulcher.

No man in this world was ever more surely dead than He. “He made His grave with the wicked and with the rich in His death.” As dead they laid Him in the place of the dead, with napkin and grave clothes fit for a grave. Then they rolled the great stone at the grave’s mouth and left Him, knowing that He was dead. Then comes the grand Truth of God, that as soon as the third sun commenced, Jesus rose again! His body had not decayed, for it was not possible for that Holy Thing to see corruption! But still, it had been dead and, by the power of God, by His own power, by the Father’s power, by the power of the Spirit—for it is attributed to each of these in turn—before the sun had risen, His dead body was quickened!

The silent heart began to beat, again, and through the stagnant canals of the veins, the life-flood began to circulate. The soul of the Redeemer again took possession of the body and it lived once more! There He was within the sepulcher, as truly living as to all parts of Him as He had ever been! He literally and truly, in a material body, came forth from the tomb to live among men till the hour of His Ascension into Heaven! This is the Truth of God which is still to be taught, refine it who may, spiritualize it who *dare*! This is the historical fact which the Apostles witnessed! This is the Truth of God for which the confessors bled and died! This is the doctrine which is the keystone of the arch of Christianity! And they that hold it not have cast aside the essential Truth of God. How can they hope for salvation for their souls if they do not believe that “the Lord is risen, indeed”?  
This morning I wish to do three things. First, let us consider the bearings of the Resurrection of Christ upon other great Truths of God. Secondly, let us consider the bearings of this fact upon the Gospel, for it has such bearings, according to the text—“Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my Gospel.” And thirdly, let us consider its bearings on ourselves, which are all indicated in the word, “Remember.”

**I.**First, then, Beloved, as God shall help us, let us CONSIDER THE BEARINGS OF THE FACT THAT JESUS ROSE FROM THE DEAD. It is clear at the outset that the Resurrection of our Lord was a tangible proof that there is another life. Have you not quoted a great many times certain lines about, “That undiscovered country from whose journey no traveler returns”? It is not so! There was once a Traveler who said, “I go to prepare a place for you, and if I go away I will come again and receive you unto Myself; that where I am there you may be also.”

He said, “A little time and you shall see Me, and again a little time and you shall not see Me because I go to the Father.” Do you not remember these words of His? Our Divine Lord went to the undiscovered country and He returned! He said that at the third day He would be back, again, and He was true to His Word! There is no doubt that there is another state for human life, for Jesus has been in it and has come back from it! We have no doubt as to a future existence, for Jesus existed after death! We have no doubt as to a Paradise of future bliss, for Jesus went to it and returned! Though He has left us, again, yet that coming back to tarry with us 40 days assures us that He will return a second time, when the hour is due, and then pledge with us for a thousand years and reign gloriously on earth amongst His ancients!

His return from among the dead is a pledge to us of existence after death and we rejoice in it! His Resurrection is also a pledge that the body will surely live, again, and rise to a superior condition, for the body of our blessed Master was no phantom after death any more than before. “Handle Me, and see.” Oh wondrous proof! He said, “Handle Me, and see”! And then to Thomas, “Reach here your finger, and behold My hands; and reach here your hand, and thrust it into My side.” What deception is possible here? The risen Jesus was no mere spirit! He promptly cried, “A spirit has not flesh and bones, as you see I have.” “Bring Me,” He said, “something to eat.” And as if to show how real His body was, though He did not *need* to eat, yet He *did* eat—and a piece of a broiled fish and honeycomb were proofs of the reality of the act!

Now, the body of our Lord in its risen state did not exhibit the whole of His glorification, for otherwise we should have seen John falling at His feet as dead! And we should have seen all His disciples overcome with the Glory of the vision! But, still, in a great measure, we may call the 40 days’ sojourn—“The life of Jesus in His Glory upon earth.” He was no longer despised and rejected of men, but a Glory surrounded Him. It is evident that the raised body passed from place to place in a single moment; that it appeared and vanished at will and was superior to the laws of matter. The risen body was incapable of pain, of hunger, thirst, or weariness during the time in which it remained here below—fit representative of the bulk of which it was the first fruits.  
Of our body, also, it shall be said before long, “It was sown in weakness, it is raised in power: it was sown in dishonor, it is raised in Glory.” Let us, then, as we think of the risen Christ, rest quite sure of a future life and quite sure that our body will exist in it in a glorified condition! I do not know whether you are ever troubled with doubts in connection with the world to come—as to whether it can be true that we shall live eternally. Here is the point which makes death so terrible to doubters, for while they have realized the grave, they have not realized the life beyond it! Now, the best help to that realization is a firm grip of the fact that Jesus died and Jesus rose again.

This fact is proved better than any other event in history! The witness to it is far stronger than to anything else that is written either in profane or sacred records. The rising of our Lord Jesus Christ being certain, you may rest assured of the existence of another world! That is the first bearing of this great Truth of God. Secondly, Christ’s rising from the dead was the seal to all His claims. It was true, then, that He was sent of God, for God raised Him from the dead in confirmation of His mission. He had said, Himself, “Destroy this body, and in three days I will raise it up.” Look, there He is—the Temple of His body is rebuilt! He had even given this as a sign, that as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale’s belly, so should the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth—and should then come forth to life again.

Behold His own appointed sign fulfilled! Before men’s eye the seal is manifest! Suppose He had never risen? You and I might have believed in the truth of a certain mission which God had given Him, but we could never have believed in the truth of such a commission as He claimed to have received—a commission to be our Redeemer from death and Hell! How could He be our Ransom from the grave if He had, Himself, remained under the dominion of death? Dear Friends, the rising of Christ from the dead proved that this Man was innocent of every sin! He could not be held by the bands of death, for there was no sin to make those bands fast! Corruption could not touch His pure body, for no original sin had defiled the Holy One! Death could not keep Him a continual prisoner because He had not actually come under sin! And though He took sin of ours and bore it by imputation and, therefore, died, yet He had no fault of His own and must, therefore, be set free when His imputed load had been removed.

Moreover, Christ’s rising from the dead proved His claim to Deity. We are told in another place that He was proved to be the Son of God with power by the Resurrection from the dead. He raised Himself by His own power and though the Father and the Holy Spirit were cooperative with Him and, therefore, His Resurrection is ascribed to them, too, yet it was because the Father had given Him to have life in Himself that, therefore, He arose from the dead! Oh, risen Savior, Your rising is the seal of Your work! We can have no doubt about You now that You have left the tomb! Prophet of Nazareth, You are, indeed, the Christ of God, for God has loosed the bands of death for You! Son of David, You are, indeed, the elect and precious One, for You live forever! Your Resurrection life has set the sign-manual of Heaven to all that You have said and done, and for this we bless and magnify Your name.

A third bearing of His Resurrection is this—and it is a very grand one— the Resurrection of our Lord, according to Scripture, was the acceptance of His Sacrifice. By the Lord Jesus Christ rising from the dead, evidence was given that He had fully endured the penalty which was due to human guilt. “The soul that sins, it shall die”—that is the determination of the God of Heaven! Jesus stands in the sinner’s place and dies—and when He has done that, nothing more can be demanded of Him, for he that is dead is free from the Law of God. You take a man who has been guilty of a capital offense. He is condemned to be hanged. He is hanged by the neck till he is dead—what more has the Law to do with him? It has done with him, for it has executed its sentence upon him.

If he can be brought back to life, he is clear from the Law. No writ that runs in Her Majesty’s dominions can touch him—he has suffered the penalty. So when our Lord Jesus rose from the dead, after having died, He had fully paid the penalty that was due to Justice for the sin of His people and His new life was a life clear of penalty, free from liability. You and I are clear from the claims of the Law of God because Jesus stood in our place and God will not exact payment both from us and from our Substitute! It were contrary to justice to sue both the Surety and those for whom He stood! And now, joy upon joy! The burden of liability which once did lie upon the Substitute is removed from Him, also, seeing He has, by the suffering of death, vindicated Justice and made satisfaction to the injured Law of God!

Now both the sinner and the Surety are free! This is a great joy, a joy for which to make the golden harps ring out a loftier style of music. He who took our debt has now delivered Himself from it by dying on the Cross. His new life, now that He has risen from the dead, is a life free from legal claims and it is the token to us that we whom He represented are also free! Listen! “Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifies, who is he that condemns? It is Christ that died, yes, rather, that is risen again.” It is a knockdown blow to fear when the Apostle says that we cannot be condemned because Christ has died in our place, but he puts a double force into it when he cries, “Yes, rather, that is risen again!”

If Satan, therefore, shall come to any Believer and say, “What about your sins?” Tell him Jesus died for them and your sins are put away. If he come a second time and says to you, “What about your sins?” Answer him, “Jesus lives, and His life is the assurance of my justification; for if our Surety had not paid the debt, He would still be under the power of Death.” Inasmuch as Jesus has discharged all our liabilities and left not one farthing due to God’s Justice from one of His people, we live and are clear—and we live in Him and are clear, also, by virtue of our union with Him. Is not this a glorious doctrine, this doctrine of the Resurrection, in its bearing upon the justification of the saints? The Lord Jesus gave Himself for our sins, but He rose again for our justification!

Bear with me while I notice, next, another bearing of this Resurrection of Christ. It was a guarantee of His people’s resurrection. There is a great Truth of God that never is to be forgotten, namely, that Christ and His people are one, just as Adam and all his seed are one. That which Adam did, he did as a head for a body—and as our Lord Jesus and all Believers are one—that which Jesus did, He did as a Head for a body. We were crucified together with Christ! We were buried with Christ! And we are risen together with Him! Yes, He has raised us up together and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus! He says, “Because I live, you shall live also.”

If Christ is not raised from the dead, your faith is in vain and our preaching is in vain! And you are yet in your sins! And those that have fallen asleep in Christ have perished—and you will perish, too! But if Christ has been raised from the dead, then all His people must be raised, also—it is a matter of Gospel necessity! There is no logic more imperative than the argument drawn from union with Christ. God has made the saints one with Christ—and if Christ has risen, all the saints must rise, too! My soul takes firm hold on this and as she strengthens her grasp, she loses all fear of death!

Now we bear our dear ones to the cemetery and leave them, each one in his narrow cell, calmly bidding them farewell and saying—  
***“So Jesus slept—God’s dying Son  
Passed through the grave and blest the bed! Rest here, dear saint, till from His throne The morning breaks and pierces the shade.”***

It is not merely ours to know that our Brothers and Sisters are living in Heaven, but also that their mortal parts are in Divine custody, securely kept till the appointed hour when the body shall be reanimated and the perfect man shall enjoy the adoption of God! We are sure that our dead men shall live—together with Christ’s dead body they shall rise! No power can hold in durance the redeemed of the Lord. “Let My people go” shall be a command as much obeyed by Death as once by the humbled Pharaoh who could not hold a single Israelite in bonds! The day of deliverance comes quickly—

***“Break from His throne, illustrious morn! Attend, O earth, His sovereign Word!  
Restore your trust, a glorious form  
He must ascend to meet His Lord.”***

Once more, our Lord’s rising from the dead is a fair picture of the new life which all Believers already enjoy. Beloved, though this body is still subject to bondage like the rest of the visible creation, according to the Law of God stated in Scripture, “the body is dead because of sin,” yet, “the spirit is life because of righteousness.” The regeneration which has taken place in those who believe has changed our spirit and given to it eternal life! But it has not affected our body further than this—that it has made it to be the Temple of the Holy Spirit and thus it is a *holy* thing—and cannot be obnoxious to the Lord, or swept away among unholy things.

But the body is still subject to pain and weariness, and to the supreme sentence of death. Not so the spirit! There is already within us a part of the resurrection accomplished, since it is written, “And you has He quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins.” You once were like the ungodly—under the Law of sin and death—but you have been brought out of the bondage of corruption into the liberty of life and Grace, the Lord, having worked in you gloriously, “according to the working of His mighty power, which He worked in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places.”  
Now, just as Jesus Christ led, after His Resurrection, a life very different from that before His death, so you and I are called upon to live a high and noble spiritual and heavenly life, seeing that we have been raised from the dead to die no more! Let us joy and rejoice in this! Let us behave as those who are alive from the dead—the happy children of the Resurrection of Christ! Do not let us be money-grubbers, or hunters after worldly fame. Let us not set our affections on the foul things of this dead and rotten world, but let our hearts fly upward, like young birds that have broken loose of their shells—upward towards our Lord and the heavenly things upon which He would have us set our minds! Living truth, living work, living faith—these are the things for living men—let us cast off the grave clothes of our former lusts and wear the garments of light and life! May the Spirit of God help us in further meditating upon these things at home.

**II.**Now, secondly, LET US CONSIDER THE BEARINGS OF THIS FACT OF THE RESURRECTION UPON THE GOSPEL, for Paul says, “Jesus Christ was raised from the dead according to my Gospel.” I always like to see what way any kind of statement bears on the Gospel. I may not have many more opportunities of preaching and I have made up my mind to this one thing—that I will waste no time upon secondary themes—and when I do preach, it shall be the Gospel, or something very closely bearing upon it.

I will endeavor, each time I preach, to strike under the fifth rib and never beat the air. Those who have a taste for the superfluities may take their fill of them—it is for me to keep to the great necessary Truths of God by which men’s souls are saved! My work is to preach Christ Crucified and the Gospel which gives men salvation through faith! I hear, every now and then, of some preaching sermons about some bright new nothing or another. Some preachers remind me of the emperor who had a wonderful skill in carving men’s heads upon cherry stones! What a multitude of preachers we have who can make wonderfully fine discourses out of a mere passing thought of no consequence to anyone!

But we need the Gospel! We have to live and die—and we must have the Gospel! Certain of us may be cold in our graves before many weeks are over and we cannot afford to toy and trifle—we need to see the bearings of all teachings upon our eternal destinies and upon the Gospel which sheds its light over our future! The Resurrection of Christ is vital because, first it tells us that the Gospel is the Gospel of a living Savior. We have not to send poor penitents to the crucifix, the dead image of a dead man!

We say not, “These are your gods, O Israel!” We have not to send you to a little baby Christ nursed by a woman! Nothing of the sort! Behold the Lord that lives and was dead and is alive forevermore! Behold our Master who has the keys of Hell and of death! Behold in Him a living and accessible Savior who, out of Glory still cries with loving accents, “Come unto Me, all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” “He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever lives to make intercession for them.” I say we have a living Savior— and is not this a glorious feature of the Gospel?

Notice, next, that we have a powerful Savior in connection with the Gospel that we preach, for He who had power to raise Himself from the dead has all power now that He is raised! He who in death vanquishes death, can much more conquer by His life! He who being in the grave did, nevertheless, burst all its bonds, can assuredly deliver all His people! He who, coming under the power of the Law of God, did, nevertheless, fulfill the Law, and thus set His people free from bondage, must be mighty to save! You need a Savior strong and mighty, yet you do not need one stronger than He of whom it is written that He rose again from the dead! What a blessed Gospel we have to preach—the Gospel of a living Christ who has returned from the dead leading captivity captive!

And now notice that we have the Gospel of complete justification to preach to you. We do not come and say, “Brethren, Jesus Christ, by His death, did something by which men *may* be saved, if they have a mind to be, and diligently carry out their good resolves.” No, no! We say Jesus Christ took the sins of His people upon Himself and bore the consequences of them in His own body on the Cross—so that He died—and having died and paid the penalty, He lives again! And now all for whom He died, all His people whose sins He bore, are free from the guilt of sin! You ask me, “Who are they?” and I reply, as many as believe on Him!

Whoever believes in Jesus Christ is as free from the guilt of sin as Christ is! Our Lord Jesus took the sins of His people and died in the sinner’s place—and now being, Himself, set free, all His people are set free in their Representative! This doctrine is worth preaching! One may well rise from his bed to talk about perfect Justification through faith in Christ Jesus! One might as well stay asleep as rise to say that Jesus accomplished little or nothing by His passion and His Resurrection! Some seem to dream that Jesus made some little opening by which we have a slight chance of reaching pardon and eternal life if we are diligent for many years. This is not our Gospel! Jesus has *saved* His people! He has *performed* the work entrusted to Him! He has *finished* transgression and made an end of sin! And He has brought in everlasting righteousness— and whoever believes in Him is not condemned and never can be!

Once again, the connection of the Resurrection and the Gospel is this—it proves the safely of the saints, for if when Christ rose, His people rose, also, they rose to a life like that of their Lord—and therefore they can never die. It is written, “Christ being raised from the dead dies no more; death has no more dominion over Him,” and it is so with the Believer! If you have been dead with Christ and are risen with Christ, death has no more dominion over you! You shall never go back to the beggarly elements of sin! You shall never become what you were before your regeneration! You shall never perish, neither shall any pluck you out of Jesus’ hands. He has put within you a living and incorruptible Seed which lives and abides forever! He says, Himself, “The water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of living water springing up unto everlasting life.”

Therefore hold fast to this and let the Resurrection of your Lord be the pledge of your own final perseverance!  
Brothers and Sisters, I cannot stop to show you how this Resurrection touches the Gospel at every point, but Paul is always full of it. More than 30 times Paul talks about the Resurrection and, occasionally, at great length, giving whole chapters to the glorious theme! The more I think of it, the more I delight to preach Jesus and the Resurrection! The glad tidings that Christ has risen is as truly the Gospel as the doctrine that He came among men and for men presented His blood as a ransom! If angels sang Glory to God in the highest when the Lord was born, I feel impelled to repeat the note, now, that He is risen from the dead!  
**III.**And so I come to my last head and to the practical conclusion— THE BEARING OF THIS RESURRECTION UPON OURSELVES. Paul expressly bids us to, “Remember” it. “Why?” asks one, “we don’t forget it.” Are you sure you don’t? I find *myself* far too forgetful of Divine Truths. We ought not to forget, for this first day of the week is consecrated for Sabbatical purposes to remind us to think of the Resurrection. On the seventh day men celebrated a finished creation. On the first day we celebrate a finished *redemption*. Bear it, then, in mind!  
Now, if you will remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David rose from the dead, what will follow? First, you will find that most of your trials will vanish. Are you tried by your sin? Jesus Christ rose again from the dead for your justification! Does Satan accuse? Jesus rose to be your Advocate and Intercessor! Do infirmities hinder? The living Christ will show Himself strong on your behalf! You have a living Christ and in Him you have all things! Do you dread death? Jesus, in rising again, has vanquished the last enemy! He will come and meet you when it is your turn to pass through the chilly stream and you shall ford it in sweet Company! What is your trouble? I care not what it is, for if you will only think of Jesus as living, full of power, full of love and full of sympathy—having experienced all your trials, even unto death—you will have such a confidence in His tender care and in His boundless ability that you will follow in His footsteps without a question! Remember Jesus and that He rose again from the dead—and your confidence will rise as on eagles’ wings!  
Next, remember Jesus, for then you will see how your present sufferings are as nothing compared with His sufferings, and you will learn to expect victory over your sufferings even as He obtained victory. Kindly look at the chapter and you will find the Apostle saying in the third verse, “You therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ,” and further on in the 11th verse, “It is a faithful saying: For if we are dead in Him, we shall also live in Him: if we suffer, we shall also reign with Him.” Now, then, when you are called to suffer, think— “Jesus suffered, yet Jesus rose again from the dead. He came up out of His baptism of griefs the better and more glorious for it and so shall I!”  
Therefore go into the furnace at the Lord’s bidding and do not fear that the smell of fire shall pass upon you. Go down into the grave and do not think that the worm shall make an end of you any more than it did of Him! Behold, in the Risen One, the type and model of what *you* are and are to be! Fear not, for He conquered! Stand not trembling, but march boldly on, for Jesus Christ of the seed of David rose from the dead—and you who are of the seed of the promise shall rise again from all your trials and afflictions—and live a glorious life!  
We see here, dear Brothers and Sisters, in being told to remember Jesus, that there is hope even in our hopelessness! When are things most hopeless in a man? Why, when he is dead! Do you know what it is to come down to that, so far as your inward weakness is concerned? I do. At times it seems to me that all my joy is buried like a dead thing and all my present usefulness and all my hope of being useful in the future are in a coffin and laid underground like a corpse. In the anguish of my spirit and the desolation of my heart, I could count it better to die than to live. You say it should not be so. I grant you it should not be so, but so it is!  
Many things happen within the minds of poor mortals which should not happen. If we had more courage and more faith they would not happen. Yes, but when we go down, down, down, is it not a blessed thing that Jesus Christ of the seed of David died and was raised from the dead? If I sink right down among the dead, yet will I hold to this blessed hope—that as Jesus rose again from the dead, so, also, shall my joy, my usefulness, my hope, my spirit rise! “You, which have showed us great and sore troubles shall quicken us, again, and bring us up from the lowest depths of the earth.”  
This casting down and slaying is good for us. We take a deal of killing and it is by being killed that we live. Many a man will never live till his proud self is slain. O proud Pharisee, if you are to live among those whom God accepts, you will have to come to the slaughterhouse and be cut in pieces as well as killed. “This is dreadful work,” says one, “this dividing of joints and marrow, this spiritual dismemberment and destruction.” Assuredly, it is painful, and yet it were a grievous loss to be denied it! Alas, how many are so good and excellent, strong and wise, clever and all that, that they cannot agree to be saved by Grace through faith! If they could be reduced to less than nothing, it would be the finest thing that ever happened to them.  
Remember what Solomon said might be done with the fool, and yet it would not answer—he was to be ground in a mortar among wheat with a pestle—pretty hard dealing that, and yet his folly would not depart from him. Not by that process alone, but through some such method, the Holy Spirit brings men away from their folly. Under His killing operations, this may be their comfort that, if Jesus Christ rose literally from the dead, (not from sickness, but from *death*), and lives again, even so will His people! Did you ever get, where Bunyan pictures Christian as getting—right under the old dragon’s foot? He is very heavy and presses the very breath out of a fellow when he makes him his footstool!  
Poor Christian lay there with the dragon’s foot on his chest, but he was just able to stretch out his hand and lay hold on his sword, which, by God’s Grace, lay within his reach. Then he gave Apollyon a deadly thrust which made him spread his dragon wings and fly away. The poor crushed and broken pilgrim, as he gave the stab to his foe, cried, “Rejoice not over me, O my enemy; though I fall, yet shall I rise again!” Brothers and Sisters, do the same! You that are near despair, let this be the strength that nerves your arm and steels your heart. “Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to Paul’s Gospel .”  
Lastly, this proves the futility of all opposition to Christ. The learned are going to destroy the Christian religion. Already, according to their boasting, it has pretty nearly come to an end! The pulpit is infertile—it cannot command public attention. We stand up and preach to empty benches! As you see—or do not see—nothing remains for us but to die decently, so they insinuate. And what then? When our Lord was dead, when the clay-cold corpse lay watched by the Roman soldiers, and with a seal upon the enclosing stone—was not the cause in mortal jeopardy? But how fared it? Did it die out? Every disciple that Jesus had made forsook Him and fled—was not Christianity then destroyed?  
No, that very day our Lord won a victory which shook the gates of Hell and caused the universe to stand astonished! Matters are not worse with Him at this hour! His affairs are not in a sadder condition, today, than then. No, see Him today and judge! On His head are many crowns and at His feet the hosts of angels bow! Jesus is the master of legions, today, while the Caesars have passed away! Here are His people—needy, obscure, despised, I grant you, still—but assuredly somewhat more numerous than they were when they laid Him in the tomb! His cause is not to be crushed! It is forever rising! Year after year, century after century, bands of true and honest hearts are marching up to the assault of the citadel of Satan! The prince of this world has a stronghold, here on earth, and we are to capture it! But as yet we see small progress, for rank after rank the warriors of the Lord have marched to the breach and disappeared beneath the terrible fire of death. All who have gone before seem to have been utterly cut off and destroyed, and still the enemy holds his ramparts against us.  
Do you think nothing has been done? Has death taken away those martyrs, and confessors, and preachers, and laborious saints, and has nothing been achieved? Truly if Christ were dead, I would admit our defeat, for they that are fallen asleep in Him would have perished! But as Christ lives, so the cause lives, and they that have fallen are not dead— they have vanished from our sight for a little while—but if the curtain could be withdrawn, every one of them would be seen to stand in his lot unharmed, crowned and victorious! “Who are these arrayed in white robes, and whence came they?” These are they that were defeated! Why, then, their crowns? These are they that were dishonored! Why, then, their white robes? These are they who clung to a cause which is overthrown! Why, then, their long line of victories, for there is not a vanquished man among them all?  
Let the Truth of God be spoken! Defeat is not the word for the cause of Jesus, the Prince of the house of David! We have *always* been victorious, Brothers and Sisters! We are victorious now. Follow your Master on your white horses and be not afraid! I see Him in the front with His bloodstained vesture around Him, fresh from the winepress where He has trod down His foes. You have not to present atoning blood, but only to conquer after your Lord! Put on your white raiment and follow Him on your white horses, conquering and to conquer! He is nearer than we think and the end of all things may be before the next jibe shall have come forth from the mouth of the last new skeptic. Have confidence in the Risen One and live in the power of His Resurrection!

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NOT BOUND YET

NO. 1998

**A SERMON INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S-DAY, DECEMBER 18, 1887,  
*DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“Wherein I suffer trouble, as an evil doer, even unto bonds; but the Word of God is not bound.”***2Ti 2:9***.***

YOU will observe, if you read the preceding verse, which, indeed, it would be wrong to sever from the text, that the doctrine of the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ was the sheet anchor of Paul’s comfort, as it was the great substance of his preaching. “Remember that Jesus Christ, of the seed of David, was raised from the dead according to my Gospel: wherein I suffer trouble, as an evildoer, even unto bonds; but the Word of God is not bound.” Perhaps we do not give sufficient prominence to the doctrine of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. Possibly, also, for this reason we do not fully grasp the idea of “the power of His Resurrection.” Our Lord’s death was not the close of His career—He still passed onward. From the Cross to the sepulcher was still forward. With weeping and mourning they laid Him in the tomb—surely that was the *finis* of His course. Ah, no, He passed into the grave, it is true, but He also passed *through* it! The grave had hitherto seemed a *cul-de-sac—*a blind alley from which there was no exit. All the footsteps pointed to entrance, but none to return. It looked like a dread abyss swallowing all and offering passageway to none.

Look what our Lord Jesus has done! He has made a tunnel of it for all His redeemed to pass into the Kingdom of God—we enter at the grave to emerge in the resurrection into eternal life! In this lies part of the power of His Resurrection, that He has opened the Kingdom of Heaven to all Believers. It looked like an iron door or gate of death, but He has unhinged it, yes, He has taken it quite away. The grave was once “a charnel house to fence the relics of lost innocence,” but it is so no longer—the imprisoning stone is rolled away! By passing through death, our Lord has made a thoroughfare for us. We take death and the grave in transit, now—they do not hinder our advance to Glory, immortality and eternal life! Our course is always onward, whatever may lie in the way!

In the strength of that Truth of God, Paul, when he found himself in prison, expected to come out of it. When he saw great difficulties in the way to Heaven, he expected to go through those difficulties and to come out with gain at the further end thereof. This helped to cheer him in his darkest moments. His brave heart thus spoke within him and said, “What if I should be even dead and buried, I shall rise again! And if the Gospel should seem dead and buried, yet it will rise again! And if the particular cause which I am advocating in Rome should seem dead and buried, yet it must come to life again. I take courage from the great Truth of God that the Lord Jesus Christ rose from the dead according to my Gospel.”

Friends, I think we, too, may encourage ourselves in our hour of sorrow. From the tomb of our Lord, we may gather gems of comfort! Though He died, yet He is dead no longer! And though He was buried, yet the sepulcher could not hold Him—and that same victorious power which brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ, that great Shepherd of the sheep, will also bring all His sheep with Him in due time—though they, also, shall descend into the same darkness of the tomb—

***“Vain the stone, the watch, the seal  
Christ has burst the gates of Hell!  
Death in vain forbids His rise,  
Christ has opened Paradise.  
Lives again our glorious King!  
‘Where, O death, is now your sting?’  
Once He died our souls to save!  
‘Where’s your victory, boasting grave?’  
Soar we now where Christ has led,  
Following our exalted Head;  
Made like He, like He we rise;  
Ours the cross, the grave, the skies.”***

I like much this self-forgetting sentence of the Apostle, “I suffer trouble, as an evildoer, even unto bonds; but the Word of God is not bound.” He is shut up in the gloomy dungeon at Rome. No hideous cells could be worse than Roman dungeons usually were. No prison is a desirable place, but a Roman prison was a very vestibule of death. Paul is not only in prison, but in bonds! His right arm is chained to the left hand of a soldier. He cannot do anything except under the inspection of his enforced companion, who, kindly as he may be disposed, cannot be so closely bound to him without causing him much discomfort. One would not like to be chained to the best man that ever lived, but much less to a rough Roman soldier! Paul is in bonds as he writes. His fetters clank, but he makes light of them and finds more than sufficient comfort in the reflection, “I suffer as an evildoer, even unto bonds; but the Word of God is not bound.”

I am going to talk to you upon that point with as much brevity as I can. First, I call your attention to this grand Truth, that the Word of God is not bound—*in what sense is this true?* And, secondly,*for what reasons is this true?* And, thirdly, *what other facts run parallel to this fact, that though the preacher is bound, yet the Word he preaches is not bound?*

**I.**First, then, IN WHAT SENSE IS IT TRUE that, “the Word of God is not bound”? Possibly a meditation upon this text may revive the spirits of some who are cast down. May the Holy Spirit, Himself, bless the subject to us!

That the Word of God is not bound, is, at this time, true in many senses. And, first, *it is not bound so that it cannot be preached*. Paul could preach it even when in bonds and he *did* preach it, so that the Gospel was made known throughout Caesar’s palace—and there were saints in the imperial household! Many came to and fro into the Praetorian guard-room and heard the Word from the mouth of the Apostle. You may be quite sure that he never neglected to make known the message of the Gospel to all that visited him in his prison, so that the Word of God was not bound, even, with respect to himself!

And, dear Friends, whatever saddens us at this hour, we rejoice that the Word of God still finds a tongue and a voice with which to speak to the multitudes. That Word of God which, when there was nothing, spoke everything into existence, would still be able to speak for itself if not a single tongue voluntarily yielded itself to give forth speech for God! But, at the same time there are many tongues which gladly proclaim the glorious Grace of God, the Word of God is not bound by reason of the lack of men to make it known—the true Apostolic succession continues among us and, “Christ is preached.” That everlasting Gospel will never be silenced! It will still be proclaimed to the ends of the earth and to the end of time. It shall never cease to bless the world so long as the sea pulses with tides and time is checkered with night and day—

***“Nor shall Your spreading Gospel rest,  
Till through the world Your truth has run;  
Till Christ has all the nations blest  
That see the light, or feel the sun.”***  
“The Word of God is not bound.” Nineteen centuries after Paul, we still have an open Bible and a free pulpit. Blessed be God for this! There have been a great many attempts to bind the Word of God, but yet it has not been bound. The preachers of the holy faith of Christ have been hunted to death. They have “wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, afflicted, tormented”—but, “the Word of God has not been bound.” When Hamilton was burned in Scotland, there was such an impetus given to the Gospel through his burning that the adversaries of the Gospel were known to say, “Let us burn no more martyrs in public, for the smoke of Hamilton’s burning has made many eyes to smart until they were opened.” So, no doubt, it always was! Persecution is a red hand which scatters the white wheat far and wide. I need not remind you how the ashes of God’s martyred servant, cast into a brook, were borne onward to a river and afterwards to the sea—and by the sea they were carried to every shore! The Word of God is not bound by the binding of the preachers, but it happens to the persecuted as to Israel in Egypt—“The more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied.” Probably the Church of God has never had better times, certainly she has never had *happier* times, than during periods of persecution! These were the days of her purity and, consequently, her glory. When she has been in the dark, God has been her light—and when she has been driven to and fro by the cruelties of men—then has she most effectually rested under the shadow of the Almighty!  
*“The Word of God is not bound” so as to be no longer a living, working power among men*. Sometimes the enemies of the Truth of God have thought that they had silenced the last witness and then there has been an unexpected outburst—and the old faith has been to the front again. When in Scotland, under the reign of Moderates, the Gospel seemed to have died out, one earnest man, by Providence, fell in with a little book, Fisher’s, “*Marrow of Divinity.*” He was enlightened as to the pure Truth of God, began, at once, to preach it and found thousands to rejoice in it! That marrow has never been taken away from Scotland’s bones ever since, nor can it, nor shall it, let the devil do what he may! A desperate and subtle attempt is now being made, but it will be assuredly foiled through the Wisdom of God. Yet, if it should come to this, that they should get rid of all the preachers of the Gospel—of the men who would thunder out God’s Word like Boanerges, or speak it out in tender tones as Barnabas—if the last of the faithful testifiers were consigned to the tomb, God would be sure to raise up another generation to publish His Truth, so that the Word of God would not lack a spokesman in the midst of the earth! The devil’s work is never done—one word from the Lord—and it is all undone in an instant!  
The enemies of the Gospel have also attempted to bind it by the burning of books. I have in my possession an early copy of Luther’s sermons and I was told how very rare it was because, at first, the circulation was forbidden, and afterwards they were bought up and burned as soon as they were met with. And what did they do? They only put fire into Luther when they burned his sermons—they drove him to be more outspoken than he otherwise might have been—and so they helped the cause they thought to destroy! It is impossible that the Truth of God can die. It has about it the Immortality of God. It is utterly impossible that the Truth of the Gospel shall die, since it is wrapped up in the work of the Lord Jesus Christ who lives and reigns forever! He *must see*of the travail of His soul and must be satisfied for all the scoffs and agonies He has endured. Neither will less content Him than a Kingdom in which all others shall be merged.  
“The Word of God is not bound.” It will still be preached despite the scoffs of philosophers and the roaring of devils. Do not, therefore, at any time sit down in despair because of evil times, for the times are always evil in one respect or another! Do not imagine that the Truth of God will become extinct and that the simple Gospel will be forgotten. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but God’s Word shall never pass away! If the Gospel which we hold is of men, it will be overthrown—and let it be—let us see it die without regret! But if it is of God, none can overcome it and woe unto those who set themselves to do so! If these things are so, why are we so timorous? If our Gospel is, as some think, only man’s voice, it shall die down into the eternal silences. But if it come from Heaven, it shall increase into the everlasting chorus of Heaven! Error shall be blown away like smoke from the chimney, or like March dust in the north wind—but God’s own Word is as eternal as God Himself! As the sun is not blown out by the tempest, nor the moon quenched by the damp of the night, so is not the Gospel destroyed by the sophistries of perverse minds! Therefore, let us comfort one another with these words, “The Word of God is not bound.” It will be preached till doomsday!  
Another sense must be remembered—*the Word of God is not bound so that it cannot reach the heart*. You may have, perhaps, dear Friend, some very obdurate relative about whose salvation you have very great concern. You have prayed long and have used the means within your reach perseveringly. You have also used extraordinary means and you have looked for an immediate result. But as yet the hard heart does not melt. As yet you see no tear of repentance and hear no cry of faith and, moreover, it may be that your friend refuses to go and hear the Gospel and appears to be more opposed to it than before! I see that you are beginning to be bound in spirit, for the hot tears force up your eyelids and scald their way down your cheeks while I mention the painful subject. You are hardly able to speak a good word, however much you desire it, for you have so often been repulsed. I think I hear you complaining to the Lord in prayer and saying—  
***“But feeble my compassion proves,  
And can but weep where most it loves;  
Your own all-saving arm employ,  
And turn these drops of grief to joy.”***  
But oh, remember that “the Word of God is not bound!” God has ways of reaching the hardest hearts and melting them—and He can do it in a moment when such a work is least expected! He has ways of making His servants draw the bow at what to them is a venture, but to Him is an absolute certainty—and between the joints of the harness the shaft of conviction finds its way! Do not give anybody up in despair! While God is almighty, have hope for the chief of sinners! Hope on, hope always, even when your last argument seems to have failed and your last instruction has been refused. It is well that it should be so, that in the work of salvation God may have all the glory and you may learn to love Him and trust Him all the better in years to come. “The Word of God is not bound.” Sometimes it happens to those whom we love that they are removed from the means of Grace, but even then the Word of God is not bound. We thought full surely, while we could take them to hear the minister whom God blessed to us, that they were within the reach of God’s Grace. But now they have gone away and our spirit sinks. At this hour, perhaps, they are on the sea, or you have had a letter telling you that they live in a place remote from Gospel preaching. You sigh within your soul and think, “Oh, now they cannot be saved!” But the Word of God is not bound! Had we not, a little while ago, an instance of one whom we were praying for at a Prayer Meeting and that night, while we were praying, it was a moonlight night, and as he was walking the deck of the ship, the Lord met with him? When no tongue was able to reach him, the memory of what he had heard at home came over his soul and he was humbled before God! I was telling, just a little while ago, at our Prayer Meeting, a very singular instance of how, just lately, three or four sermons on Sunday evenings have been made most useful to a young friend. He was going away to Australia unconverted and without God. He went on board to depart and when the vessel steamed out of dock, it ran into another ship and he was obliged to wait and spend almost a month here while the vessel was being repaired. The Lord met with him on those Sunday nights and he has gone, now, leaving in his mother’s heart the sweet persuasion that he has found his mother’s God! The God of all Grace has ways of getting at human hearts when, to our thinking, every avenue is fast closed! He can reach the poor in the slums of London. He can reach the harlot in her chambers of iniquity. He can touch the most debauched man in town in his lordly mansion. There is not a soldier who has gone into the ranks for the sake of hiding away from God and indulging his passions, but what the Lord can conquer him! There is not a runaway thief but what the Lord can find him when the police cannot! He knows just where His fugitives are—His warrants are out against them and when the time comes, His Grace will arrest them—  
***“Thus the eternal counsel ran,  
‘Almighty Grace, arrest that man’!”***  
And he was arrested, though he never thought that he should be made to turn to God and seek eternal life. “The Word of God is not bound.” It goes forth conquering and to conquer!  
But sometimes we are apt to think a case is more hopeless, still, when, in addition to natural depravity and the absence of the means of Grace, there springs up a skepticism, perhaps a downright derision of the Word of God and of things sacred. One is apt to think, then, “It is all over now. It is of no further use praying for such an one.” I am not so sure that the case is any the worse for being openly declared and honestly described. Nothing is more deadly than absolute indifference and, sometimes, when a man begins to avow himself an infidel, it is only that his conscience is troubling him and he is obliged to take some drug with which to stifle it— no drug is more handy for his use than avowed infidelity. A profession of skepticism is often nothing more than the whistling of the boy as he goes through the churchyard and is afraid of ghosts and, therefore, “whistles hard to keep his courage up.” They try to get rid of the thought of God because of that ghost of conscience which makes cowards of them all! They might have professed to be Believers if it had not become too barefaced an inconsistency to live as they do and yet acknowledge God.  
I think it would be a good rule for all Christians to immediately pray whenever they hear a man swear. Pray for that particular man and keep him in your mind’s eye as far as you can, hoping that he may be converted to God. “The Word of God is not bound.” Even blasphemy and infidelity yield to the conquering touch of Sovereign Grace. I knew a man who had lived a life of carelessness and indifference, with occasional outbursts of drunkenness and other vices. This man happened, one day, on Peckham Rye, to hear a preacher say that if any man would ask anything of God, He would give it to him. The assertion was much too broad and might have done harm, but this man accepted it as a test and resolved that he would ask and thus would see if there really was a God. On the Saturday morning of that week, when he was going early to his work, the thought came upon him, “Perhaps there is a God, after all.” He was ready to swoon as the possibility struck him and then and there he offered the test petition, concerning a matter which concerned himself and his fellow workmen!  
His prayer was granted in a remarkable manner and he came, then, to be a believer in God! He is more than that, now, and has found his way to be a believer in all that God has spoken and has found peace through believing in Jesus Christ. It struck me as wonderful that this man, who never had any religious care at all, should, all of a sudden, be turned to serve the living God! The preacher at Peckham Rye never had a more unlikely hearer and yet he succeeded with him! Oh, pray for them! Pray for them till the doors of death enclose them, till the bolts of the gates of eternal destiny are driven home! Pray for them! Pray for them! Never cease to cry to God for those who go to the utmost extremity of sin, for though you cannot reach them, “the Word of God is not bound.” It is not bound, then, as to the preaching of it, nor as to its power to reach the heart! Still further, *it is not bound as to its power to comfort the soul*. I have— perhaps you have in your measure—to deal with persons under conviction of sin; with others who are suffering through ill health, or mental decline; with some who groan under Satanic temptation and various forms of mental trial causing awful depression of spirits. We have spoken to certain of them many times without being able to bring them the Light of God and comfort. We put the Gospel very plainly to them and try to place it in different lights, hoping that somehow or other they may see hope. Alas, we are often unable to touch the wound of their spirit. And, oh, how they baffle us! How frequently have we had to cry out, “O God, help us!” We cannot comfort these poor people. The man in the iron cage, described by Bunyan, is repeated many times over in our observation. We bring the promises. We bring the doctrines. We bring our own experience to bear upon such persons, but their despair defies our consolation! The darkness is too dense for our poor rushlight to remove. The captive is too closely shut up in prison for us to set him free.  
But here is a blessed Truth of God—“The Word of God is not bound.” By-and-by that blessed Word of God will break into the midnight darkness! Let us, therefore, continue to ply the afflicted with the Word of God, searching out its most cheering assurances and giving them full and free scope. Perhaps we put too much of our own explanation with the Lord’s own Words—perhaps we have thought that clever illustrations were necessary—and so have overlaid the Truth of God with our poor imagination! When we have come to the end of our explanations and our illustrations, it may be that the Word which is not bound will come in and give liberty to the captives! Wonderful cases have we seen of persons driven to despair and ready to lay violent hands upon themselves, who have been raised up and set at joyful liberty by the Word of God, of itself, alone! Oh, that some may prove its Divine power tonight!  
One Scripture has set many at liberty—“Him that comes to Me I will in no wise cast out.” Hear it, think of it, believe it and be at peace. I think a second passage has been fruitful above all other texts—“God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” Let a man muse on that verse till he sees his fetters turn to cobwebs and his prison walls dissolve like dreams! You are bound, poor sinner, but the Word of God is not bound! You

are bound, poor preacher, but the Word of God is not bound! You are bound, dear mother, dear father—bound up in your weakness and unable to do anything for your wayward child—but the Word of God is not bound! It wears no bonds but it is able to take them from all who groan under them.  
Thus I have given you several senses of the text. There is another one. *The Word of God is not bound in the sense that it cannot be fulfilled*. I now allude principally to the promises and prophecies of God’s Word. If there is a promise of deliverance to you and you cannot see the way in which you are to be delivered, you may not, therefore, doubt the promise, for that would dishonor the Lord who spoke it. The Word of God is not bound! The Word of God will cleave its own way and reach its own destination. Who makes a path for the lightning? The lightning burns its own instant way. Who shall make a path for the Word of God? It will effect its own design. Jehovah speaks and it is done. He said to the primeval darkness, “Let there be light!” And there was light. Now, if God has given a promise to you, He will as readily fulfill His Word of promise to the least of His people, as He will make His own Word effective for His own designs in Nature, Providence, or Judgment. The Word of God is not bound! You are come, perhaps, to your last penny, but He has said, “I will never leave you, nor forsake you.” You have come to your last grain of strength, but He faints not, neither is He weary, and He has said, “As your days, so shall your strength be.” And so shall it be. Oh, that we could believe the promises of God! We do not half believe them, Brothers and Sisters. We have never yet pressed the best of the wine out of them because we have let them lie like uncrushed bunches of grapes! Truly they are beautiful to look upon, like the clusters of Eshcol, but that is not the way to know all that is in them. Oh, that we had but faith to tread them in the winepress, that the ruddy juice might run out and we might drink and be refreshed!  
Remember that God has promised nothing beyond His strength, nothing beyond His will. God carries out His promise to the full! He may sometimes exceed it, but He certainly never falls short of it. Therefore, let us be comforted tonight with the recollection that God’s Word is free to effect its own accomplishment. His decree is Omnipotence resolving and His Providence is Omnipotence acting. “The Word of God is not bound.” There is yet one other sense. “*The Word of God is not bound” so that it cannot endure and prevail unto the end*. I know that there are those who think it dead and, therefore, they are anxious to attend its funeral and bury it out of sight, while the new theology shall dance on its grave. They call us poor old fogies for believing in the old Gospel—and tell us to go home and order our coffins—and leave the world to these wiser men. They begin to crow as if their work of defeating us had been unquestionably done. We are out of date. We are dead. We are extinct! Perhaps so! Perhaps so! But we think they will be mistaken in their imagination, for the Word of God is not defeated, after all. And if it were—if it were bound like the Lord Jesus and were taken before priests and princes to be scourged and spit upon. And if it were crucified among thieves and taken down from the Cross and laid in the tomb. And if the grave were sealed and watched by mighty men, yet the story would not be ended! Because the Lord lives, it would live again and its Resurrection power would be testified in the midst of its adversaries! For this Gospel, on which we have rested our souls, and on which our fathers rested throughout their generations, this is not bound!  
Who is to bind it? With what will they bind it? Green willow branches, ropes and bars of brass cannot hold this greater than Samson! It shall snap them in pieces as twigs! There is no overcoming the free Gospel! They dreamed that they had bound it many times before and they cried in mockery, “The Philistines are upon you, Samson,” but they have had to learn its might when least they expected it and so they shall yet again! Philosophy and heresy are in league and they gather their armies in haste. The Lord shall make them as the sheaves of the threshing floor. Therefore, let us be of good comfort, Brothers, and rest quite sure that, though *we* are beaten, the Word of God is not beaten! And though *we* are in a minority and our preaching at a discount, it does not matter—“The Word of God is not bound.”  
**II.**For a moment or two I have further to enquire, WHAT ARE THE REASONS WHY THE WORD OF GOD IS NOT BOUND? It is not bound because *it is the voice of the Almighty*. If the Gospel is, indeed, the Gospel of God, and these Truths are Revelations of God, Omnipotence is in them! It is not possible that the Omnipotent Word can be bound. Who will attempt the deed? Go bit the tempest! Put a chain about the hurricane, control the winds and bridle the raging sea! And when you have done these, you are but at the *beginning* of your task—you cannot, even then, hinder the Omnipotence of God which finds a chariot for itself in the Word of God and rides forth conquering and to conquer!  
Moreover, *the Holy Spirit puts forth His power in connection with the Word of God* and, as He is Divine, He is unconquerable! He comes as a rushing, mighty wind—who can stop Him? He comes as fire—who can stand before His flaming vehemence? The Holy Spirit’s being with the Gospel is the reason of its great power. It is not that Truth, alone, is mighty and will prevail, but that the Spirit of Truth works mightily by it and causes it to subdue the minds of men. If we had no Holy Spirit, what could we do? But as He has promised to take of the things of Christ, and to show them to His people, while He reproves the world of sin, of righteousness and of judgment, we know that “the Word of God is not bound.” The Holy Spirit manifests His own Sovereign will, doing what He pleases, even as the wind blows where it wishes—and this is the surest proof that His Word “is not bound.”  
If you needed another reason less strong than these two, I should say, “How can it be bound while *it is so necessary to men*?” There are certain things which, if men need, they will have. I have heard say that in the old Bread Riots, when men were actually starving for bread, no word had such a terribly threatening and alarming power about it as the word, “Bread!” when shouted by a starving crowd. I have read a description by one who once heard this cry—he said he had been startled at night by a cry of, “Fire!” but when he heard the cry of, “Bread! Bread!” from those that were hungry, it seemed to cut him like a sword. Whatever bread had been in his possession, he must, at once, have handed it out. So it is with the Gospel—when men are once aware of their need of it, there is no monopolizing it. None can make “a ring” or “a corner” over the precious commodity of heavenly Truth. Neither can anyone put this candle under a bushel so as to conceal its light. It cannot be hidden because there are so many that need it. They are pining, these myriads of London, these myriads all over the world—and though they hardly know it—yet there is a cry coming up forever from them for something which they can never find except in Christ! You may depend upon it—you cannot stop the Gospel being preached while there is this awful hunger after it in the souls of men. They must have it! You cannot cheat them into enduring a substitute for it.  
You may set up your altars and put up your gimcrackeries, but they won’t have them instead of the Gospel! You may preach your speculations and tell them “modern thought” has done away with the old Gospel, but as soon as the Holy Spirit shows them their state by nature and their future danger, they sweep all this rubbish away! As the mower lays the grass in swaths to dry in the sun when he has passed up and down the field, so will the nations of the earth sweep away the green and flowery growths of human philosophy—and either give them to beasts to eat, or cast them into the oven! When men once know what they need, they will have it, despite priests or princes, scientists or skeptics. Oh, it must be so! This dire need of men must be met—the Word of the Lord cannot be bound.  
I have one thing else to tell you. The Word of God is not bound because, when once it gets into men’s hearts, *it works such an enthusiasm in them that you cannot bind it*. You cannot silence lips which have been touched by a live coal from off the Altar of Christ! When the humblest woman gets to know the Gospel, you may say, “There, hold your tongue about it!” But you charge her in vain! She cannot but speak of what the Lord has done for her. The converted man must talk to his work mates about it. You may say, “It would be very irregular for you to hold a meeting. It would be out of all character for a mere working man to stand up on the village green.” But he is very likely to do it. You let the man alone—he cannot help it! Look at the many that gathered together in the desert in the South of France in the old persecuting times! Why did they thus risk their lives? Why did they expose themselves to be ridden down by dragoons? They could not help it! They were eager for the Gospel! They were in danger of being broken on the wheel if they preached, or listened to preaching, but they could not help it—they must hear the Word of the Lord! The preacher said, “Woe is unto me if I preach not the Gospel.” Their adversaries tortured them and sent them to the galleys. They threatened them with banishment and death, but all in vain. You had better let them go on, for you cannot stop them! In our own land there was no binding the Word of God, for those who knew it felt compelled to spread it.  
There is Master Bunyan. They have put him in prison and his family is nearly starving. They bring him up and they say, “You shall go out of prison, John, if you won’t preach. Go home and tag your laces, that is what you have to do, and leave the Gospel alone. What have you got to do with *that*?” But honest John answers, “I cannot help it. If you let me out of prison today, I will preach again tomorrow, by the help of God. I will lie here till the moss grows on my eyelids, but I will never promise to cease preaching the Gospel.” They could sooner bind the sweet influences of the Pleiades, or loose the bands of Orion, than govern the movements of the Spirit of God in men! The love of Christ is such that when it once pours into a man’s heart, it must run out at his lips in loving testimony! Has He not put rivers of Living Water into the midst of those who once drink of the life-giving stream? And they must speak of it, even till they die! **III.**Now I come to the close. ONE OR TWO OTHER FACTS RUN PARALLEL TO THE TEXT. Paul is bound, but the Word of God is not bound. Read it thus—the preacher has had a bad week. He is full of aches and pains. He feels ill, *but the Word of God is not ill*. Oh, what a blessing that is! We preach a healthy Gospel even though we are unhealthy ourselves. In this, let the invalid rejoice! Dear suffering worker, your work shall not suffer, for it is a sound Gospel which you preach, though you, yourself, are hampered by a poor, weak body!  
“What will become of the congregation when a certain minister dies?” Well, he will be dead, *but the Word of God is not dead*. God buries His workmen, but His work goes on. One light goes out, but another torch flames forth. Star by star sinks beneath the horizon, but another star appears on the other side to make glad the night. The Word of God is not dead when the preacher is dead!  
“Oh, but the worker is so feeble!” *The Word of God is not feeble*. “But the worker feels so stupid.” *But the Word of God is not stupid*. “But the worker is so unfit.” *But the Word of God is not unfit*. You see it all comes to this— the preacher is bound, but the Word of God is not bound! The worker is feeble, but the Word of God is not feeble! You are nothing and nobody, but the Word of God cannot be said to be nothing and nobody—it is everything and everybody—it is girt about with All Power.  
But you bitterly and truthfully lament that Christian men are, nowadays, very devoid of zeal. “All hearts are cold in every place.” The old fire burns low. *But the Word of God is not cold*, nor lukewarm, nor in any way losing its old fire! “Such and such a congregation is as frozen as the North Pole.” Yes, but the Word of God is not frozen! Divine Truth is not turned into an iceberg. Do not fret yourself into despair as to the condition of the Church, since the Lord lives! Things are bad, indeed, without His power, but then in the dark hour the Glory of the Lord will shine out. “Yes,” says one, “but I am disgusted with the cases I have lately met with of false brethren.” Yes, *but the Word of God is not false*. “But they walk so inconsistently.” I know they do, but *the Word of God is not inconsistent*. “But they say they have disproved the faith.” Yes, they have disproved their own faith, but they have not disproved the Word of God for all that! The Word of God is not affected by the falsehood of men. “If we believe not, He abides faithful; He cannot deny Himself.” And till He denies Himself we need not make much account of who else denies Him. “Oh, but,” says one, “it is an awful thing to think of the spiritual ruin of so many that are round about us, who hear the Gospel and yet, after all, willfully refuse it, and die in their sins.” Truly this is a grievous fact. They appear to be bound by their sins like beasts for the slaughter, but the Word of God is not bound or injured. It was said of old that it would be a sweet savor unto God in them that are saved, and in them that perish—in the one a savor of life unto life, and in the other a savor of death unto death.  
Is not the fact as the Lord, Himself, forewarned us? The ungodly reject the Gospel, but the Gospel has not, therefore, failed. O Sinners, you cannot overcome God’s Word! You have defeated its influence of love upon *yourselves*, but it is not defeated, after all. If you will not come to Christ, others will—the Spirit of the Lord shall bring them. Christ shall see of the travail of His soul. If you turn away from His precious blood and refuse the redemption that He has worked, Christ shall not be disappointed as to the result of His passion. He shall see His seed and shall prolong His days. You may bite at the Gospel, but it shall be as when the viper in the fable gnawed at the file and destroyed his teeth. You may seek to put out the Gospel light, but you will be thrusting your hand into the fire and your own flesh shall be consumed!  
Do not try to war against the Gospel! Choose some other adversary than the Lord God Almighty and His invincible Gospel. I pray you, cease to fight against the Lord, for the Word of God is not bound! However much you may try to bind it, you shall find that it has its liberty and it will, in the next world, have liberty to accuse and to condemn if you will not now give it liberty to persuade and to save you! God bless you, dear Friends, for Christ’s sake! Amen.

***PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—2 Timothy 2.*HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—484, 766, 478.**

**LETTER FROM MR. SPURGEON:**  
BELOVED FRIENDS—I would not have written this week, only you desire it. I have suffered much from neuralgic pain, for the weather was wet and windy. Today a summer’s sun is shining and we hope for better things.

I rejoice to hear good news of the preachers who have favored me by filling the pulpit in my absence. May the blessing of the Lord rest upon the good Seed which they have sown and on the rest of the services which will take place before my return! I should like to be thoroughly well before I return, but that is not the case just now. Still, I am resting and hoping and, being out of the world’s wars and fights, I have a better opportunity for recovering tone and energy.

Receive my hearty Christian love and my sincere thanks for all you do to support the work and keep me from any anxiety about it. I am sure that the Lord, who has provided, will provide even to the end—and bring glory to His name by the doing of it.

It is an easy matter to trust when you feel bright and joyous, but we honor the Lord most by believing in Him when we feel depressed and circumstances are saddening. God is to be trusted whatever the weather may be, inside or out. God’s Truth will prevail, even if every Apostle should turn out to be a Judas and every prophet a Balaam.

In confidence in the unchanging God, let us forever abide. Yours in the Gospel of Jesus Christ,  
Mentone, December 9th, 1887.  
***C. H. SPURGEON.***

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**÷2Ti 2.12**

SUFFERING AND REIGNING WITH JESUS  
NO. 547

**DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING JANUARY 3, 1864, *BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him: if we deny Him, He also will deny us.”***2Ti 2:12***.***

MY venerable friend who has up to now sent me a text for the New Year, still ministers to his parish the Word of Life and has not forgotten to furnish the passage for our meditation today. Having preached from one of a very similar character a short time ago, I have felt somewhat embarrassed in preparation. But I will take courage and say with the Apostle, “To write the same things to you, to me, indeed, is not grievous, but for you it is safe.” If I should bring forth old things on this occasion, be you not unmindful that even the wise householder does this at times. For oft-recurring sickness the same wine may be prescribed by the most skillful physician without blame. No one scolds the contractor for mending rough roads again and again with stones from the same quarry. The wind which has borne us once into the haven is not despised for blowing often from the same quarter, for it may do us good service yet again. And therefore I am assured that you will endure my repetitions of the same Truths of God, since they may assist you to suffer with patience the same trials.

You will observe that our text is a part of one of Paul’s faithful sayings. If I remember rightly, Paul has four of these. The first occurs in [1Ti 1:8](tw://bible.*?id=54.1.8|_AUTODETECT_|), that famous, that chief of all faithful sayings, “This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief. “A golden saying, whose value Paul himself had most marvelously proved. What shall I say of this verse, but the same—the lamp of a lighthouse, it has darted its ray of comfort through leagues of darkness and guided millions of tempest-tossed spirits to the port of Peace.

The next faithful saying is in the same Epistle, at the fourth chapter and the ninth verse. “Godliness is profitable unto all things, having the promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come. This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation.” This, too, the Apostle knew to be true, since he had learned in whatsoever state he was in to be content. Our text is a portion of the third faithful saying. And the last of the four you will find in [Tit 3:8](tw://bible.*?id=56.3.8|_AUTODETECT_|), “This is a faithful saying and these things I will that you affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men.” We may trace a connection between these faithful sayings.

The first one, which speaks of Jesus Christ coming into the world to save sinners, lays the foundation of our eternal salvation in the Free Grace of God, as shown to us in the mission of the great Redeemer. The next affirms the double blessedness which we obtain through this salvation—the blessings of the upper and nether springs—of time and of eternity. The third faithful saying shows one of the duties to which the chosen people are called. We are ordained to suffer for Christ with the promise that “if we suffer, we shall also reign with Him.” The last faithful saying sets forth the active form of Christian service, bidding us diligently to maintain good works.

Thus you have the root of salvation in Free Grace. You have next the privileges of that salvation in the life which now is and in that which is to come. And you have also the two great branches of suffering with Christ and service of Christ loaded with the fruits of the Spirit of all Divine Grace. Treasure up, dear Friends, those faithful sayings, “Lay up these words in your heart; bind them for a sign upon your hand that they may be as frontlets between your eyes.” Let these choice sayings be printed in letters of gold and set up as tablets upon the doorposts of our house and upon our gates. Let them be the guides of our life, our comfort and our instruction. The Apostle of the Gentiles proved them to be faithful. They are faithful still, not one word shall fall to the ground. They are worthy of all acceptation—let us accept them now and prove their faithfulness—each man for himself.

This morning’s meditation is to be derived from a part of that faithful saying which deals with suffering. We will read the verse preceding our text. “It is a faithful saying: For if we are dead with Him, we shall also live with Him.” All the elect were virtually dead with Christ when He died upon the tree—they were on the Cross—crucified with Him. In Him, as their representative, they rose from the tomb and live in newness of life. Because He lives, they shall live also. In due time the chosen are slain by the Spirit of God and so made dead with Christ to sin, to self-righteousness, to the world, the flesh and the powers of darkness.

Then it is that they live with Jesus! His life becomes their life and as He was, so are they also in this world. The Spirit of God breathes the quickening Grace into those who were once dead in sin and thus they live in union with Christ Jesus. When Believers die, though they may be sawn in sunder, or burnt at the stake, yet, since they sleep in Jesus, they are preserved from the destruction of death by Him and are made partakers of His immortality. May the Lord make us rooted and grounded in the mysterious but most consolatory doctrine of union with Christ Jesus.

We must at once advance to our text—“If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him: if we deny Him, He also will deny us.” The words naturally divide themselves into two parts—suffering with Jesus and its reward—denying Jesus and its penalty.

**I.** SUFFERING WITH JESUS AND ITS REWARD. To suffer is the common lot of all men. It is not possible for us to escape from it. We come into this world through the gate of suffering and over death’s door hangs the same escutcheon. We must suffer if we live, no matter in what style we spend our existence. The wicked man may cast off all respect for virtue and riot in excess of vice to the utmost degree, yet, let him not expect to avoid the well-directed shafts of sorrow. No, rather let him look for a tenfold share of pain of body and remorse of soul. “Many sorrows shall be to the wicked.”

Even if a man could so completely degrade himself as to lose his intellectual powers and become a brute, yet even then he could not escape from suffering. For we know that the brute creation is the victim of pain as much as more lordly man. Only, as Dr. Chalmers well remarks, the brutes have the additional misery that they have no mind endowed with reason and cheered by hope to fortify them under their bodily affliction.

Understand, O Man, that however you may degrade yourself, you are still under the yoke of suffering—the loftiest bow beneath it nor the meanest can avoid it. Every acre of humanity must be furrowed with this plow. There may be a sea without a wave but never a man without sorrow. He who was God as well as Man had His full measure pressed down and running over! Let us be assured that if the Sinless One was not spared the rod, the sinful will not go free. “Man that is born of woman is of few days and full of trouble.” “Man is born unto trouble as the sparks fly upward.”

If then, a man has sorrow, it does not necessarily follow that he shall be rewarded for it since it is the common lot brought upon all by sin. You may smart under the lashes of sorrow in this life but this shall not deliver you from the wrath to come. Remember, you may live in poverty and drag along a wearisome existence of ill-requited toil. You may be stretched upon a bed of sickness and be made to experience an agony in every single member of your body. And your mind, too, may be depressed with fears, or plunged in the depths of despair. And yet, by all this you may gain nothing of any value to your immortal spirit, for, “Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”

And no amount of affliction upon earth can alter that unchanging rule so as to admit an unregenerate man into Heaven. To suffer is not peculiar to the Christian—neither does suffering necessarily bring with it any recompense of reward. The text implies most clearly that we must *suffer with* Christ in order to *reign with* Him. The structure of the preceding verse plainly requires such a reading. The words, “with Him,” may be as accurately supplied at the close of the one clause as the other. The suffering which brings the *reigning* with Jesus must be a *suffering* with Jesus.

There is a very current error among those poor people who are ignorant of true religion that all poor and afflicted people will be rewarded for it in the next state. I have heard working men refer to the parable of the rich man and Lazarus with a cruel sort of satisfaction at the pains of Dives because they have imagined that, in the same manner, all rich people would be cast into the flames of Hell without a drop of water to cool their tongue—while all poor persons like Lazarus would be triumphantly carried into Abraham’s bosom.

A more fearful mistake could not be made! It was not the *suffering* of Lazarus which entitled him to a place in Abraham’s bosom. He might have been licked by all the dogs on earth and then have been dragged off by the dogs of Hell! Many a man goes to Hell from a dunghill. A drunkard’s hovel is very wretched—is he to be rewarded for bringing himself to rags? Very much of the beggary we see abroad is the result of vice, extravagance, or folly—are these things so meritorious as to be passports to Heaven?

Let no man deceive himself so grossly! On the other hand the rich man was not cast into Hell because he was rich and fared sumptuously. Had he been rich in faith, holy in life and renewed in heart, his purple and fine linen would have done him no hurt. Lazarus was carried above by the angels because his *heart* was in Heaven—and the rich man lifted up his eyes in Hell, because he had never lifted them up towards God and heavenly things. It is a work of Free Grace in the heart and character which shall decide the future—not poverty or wealth. Let intelligent persons combat this notion whenever they meet with it.

Suffering here does not imply happiness hereafter. It is only a certain order of suffering to which a reward is promised—the suffering which comes to us from fellowship with the Lord Jesus and conformity to His image. A few words here, by way of aiding you in making the distinction. We must not imagine that we are suffering *for* Christ and *with* Christ if we are not *in* Christ. If a man is not a branch of the Living Vine, you may prune and cut until the sap flows and the branch bleeds but he will never bring forth heavenly fruit. Prune the bramble as long as ever you like. Use the knife until the edge is worn away—the brier will be as sharp and fruitless as ever!

You cannot by any process of pruning translate it into one of the vines of Eshcol. If a man remains in a state of nature, he is a member of the earthly Adam—he will not, therefore, escape suffering—but ensure it. He must not, however, dream that because he suffers he is suffering with Christ! He is plagued with the old Adam. He is receiving with all the other heirs of wrath the sure heritage of sin. Let him consider these sufferings of his to be only the first drops of the awful shower which will fall upon him forever—the first tingling cuts of that terrible whip which will lacerate his soul forever.

If a man is in Christ, he may then claim fellowship with the second Man, who is the Lord from Heaven and he may expect to bear the image of the heavenly in the Glory to be revealed. O my Hearers, are you in Christ by a living faith? Are you trusting in Jesus only? If not, whatever you may have to mourn over on earth, you have no hope of reigning with Jesus in Heaven. Supposing a man to be in Christ—it does not even follow, then, that all his sufferings are sufferings with Christ. If a good man were, out of mistaken views of mortification and self-denial, to mutilate his body, or to flog his flesh as many a sincere enthusiast has done, I might admire the man’s fortitude, but I should not allow for an instant that he was suffering with Christ!

Who called men to such austerities? Certainly not the God of Love! If, therefore, they torture themselves at the command of their own fancies, fancy must reward them, for God will not. If I am rash and imprudent and run into positions for which neither Providence nor Grace has fitted me, I ought to question whether I am not rather sinning than communing with Christ. Peter drew his sword and cut off the ear of Malchus. If somebody had cut his ear off, what would you say? He took the sword and he feels the sword! He was never commanded to cut off the ear of Malchus and it was his Master’s gentleness which saved him from the soldiers’ rage.

If we let passion take the place of judgment, and let self-will reign instead of Scriptural authority, we shall fight the Lord’s battles with the devil’s weapons! And if we cut our own fingers we must not be surprised. On several occasions, excited Protestants have rushed into Romish cathedrals, have knocked down the priest and dashed the wafer upon the ground, trod upon it and in other ways exhibited their hatred of idolatry. Now when the Law has interposed to punish such outrages, the offenders are hardly to be considered as suffering with Christ! This I give as one instance of a class of actions to which overheated brains sometimes lead men under the supposition that they will join the noble army of martyrs.

The martyrs were all *chosen* to their honorable estate. And I may say of martyrdom as of priesthood, “No man takes that honor upon himself but he that is called thereunto as was Aaron.” Let us mind we all make a distinction between things which differ and do not pull a house down on our heads and then pray the Lord to console us under the trying Providence.

Again, in troubles which come upon us as the result of sin, we must not think we are suffering with Christ. When Miriam spoke evil of Moses and the leprosy polluted her, she was not suffering for God. When Uzziah thrust himself into the temple and became a leper all his days, he could not say that he was afflicted for righteousness’ sake. If you speculate and lose your property, do not say that you are losing all for Christ’s sake! When you unite with bubble companies and are duped, do not whine about suffering for Christ—call it the fruit of your own folly. If you will put your hand into the fire and it gets burned, why, it is the nature of fire to burn you or anybody else! Be not so silly as to boast as though you were a martyr.

If you do wrong and suffer for it, what thanks have you? Go behind the door and weep for your sin, but come not forth in public to claim a reward. Many a hypocrite, when he has had his deserts and has been called by his proper name, has cried out, “Ah, I am persecuted!” It is not an infallible sign of excellence to be in bad repute among men. Who feels any esteem for a cold-blooded murderer? Does not every man reprobate the offender? Is he, therefore, a Christian because he is spoken against and his name cast out as evil? Assuredly not! He is a heartless villain and nothing more. Brethren, truthfulness and honesty should stop us from using expressions which involve a false claim. We must not talk as if we suffered nobly for Jesus when we are only troubled as the result of sin. O, to be kept from transgression! Then it matters not how rough the road of obedience may be—our journey shall be pleasant because Jesus walks with us.

Be it observed, moreover, that suffering such as God accepts and rewards for Christ’s sake must have God’s Glory as its end. If I suffer that, I may earn a name, or win applause among men. If I venture into trial merely that I may be respected for it, I shall get my reward—but it will be the reward of the Pharisee and not the crown of the sincere servant of the Lord Jesus. I must mind, too, that love to Christ and love to His elect is ever the mainspring of all my patience, remembering the Apostle’s words, “Though I give my body to be burned and have not charity, it profits me nothing.”

If I suffer in bravado, filled with proud defiance of my fellow men. If I love the dignity of singularity and out of dogged obstinacy hold to an opinion, not because it is right—but because I choose to think as I like, then I suffer not with Jesus. If there is no love to God in my soul. If I do not endure all things for the elect’s sake, I may bear many a cuff and buffeting, but I miss the fellowship of the Spirit and have no recompense.

I must not forget, also, that I must manifest the Spirit of Christ or I do not suffer with Him. I have heard of a certain minister, who, having had a great disagreement with many members in his Church, preached from this text, “And Aaron held his peace.” The sermon was intended to portray himself as an astonishing instance of meekness. But as his previous words and actions had been quite sufficiently violent, a witty hearer observed that the only likeness he could see between Aaron and the preacher, was this, “Aaron held his peace and the preacher did not.”

It is easy enough to discover some parallel between our cases and those of departed saints, but not so easy to establish the parallel by holy patience and Christ-like forgiveness. If I have, in the way of virtue, brought down upon myself shame and rebuke. If I am hot to defend myself and punish the slanderer. If I am irritated, unforgiving and proud—I have lost a noble opportunity of fellowship with Jesus. I must have Christ’s Spirit in me, or I do not suffer acceptably. If like a sheep before her shearers, I can be dumb. If I can bear insult and love the man who inflicts it. If I can pray with Christ, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” If I submit all my case to Him who judges righteously and count it even my joy to suffer reproach for the cause of Christ—then and only then, have I truly suffered with Christ.

These remarks may seem very cutting and may take away much false but highly-prized comfort from some of you. It is not my intention to take away any *true* comfort from the most humble Believer who really suffers with my Lord. But God grant we may have honesty enough not to pluck flowers out of other men’s gardens, or wear other men’s honors. Truth will only be desired by true men.

I shall now very briefly show what are the forms of real suffering for Jesus in these days. We have not now to rot in prisons, to wander about in sheepskins and goatskins, to be stoned, or to be sawn in sunder—though we ought to be ready to bear all this if God wills it. The days of Nebuchadnezzar’s furnace are past, but the fire is still upon earth. Some suffer in their estates. I believe that to many Christians it is rather a gain than a loss, so far as pecuniary matters go, to be Believers in Christ. But I meet with many cases—cases which I know to be genuine—where persons have had to suffer severely for conscience sake.

There are those present who were once in very comfortable circumstances, but they lived in a neighborhood where the majority of the business was done on a Sunday. When Divine Grace shut up their shop, trade left them. And I know some of them are working very hard for their bread, though once they earned abundance without any great toil. They do it cheerfully for Christ’s sake, but the struggle is a hard one. I know other persons who were employed as servants in lucrative positions involving sin, but upon their becoming Christians they were obliged to resign their former post and are not at the present moment in anything like such apparent prosperity as they were.

I could point to several cases of persons who have really suffered to a very high degree in pecuniary matters for the Cross of Christ. Brethren, you may possess your souls in patience and expect as a reward of Grace that you shall reign with Jesus your Beloved! Those feather-bed soldiers who are broken-hearted if fools laugh at them should blush when they think of those who endure real hardship as good soldiers of Jesus Christ. Who can waste his pity over the small griefs of faint hearts when cold, hunger, and poverty are cheerfully endured by the true and brave?

Cases of persecution are by no means rare. In many a country village squires and priests rule with a high hand and smite the godly villagers with a rod of iron. “No blankets, no coals, no almshouse for you if you venture into the Meeting House. You cannot live in my cottage if you have a Prayer Meeting in it. I will have no religious people on my farm.” We who live in more enlightened society little know the terrorism exercised in some of the rural districts over poor men and women who endeavor conscientiously to carry out their convictions and walk with Christ.

True Christians of all denominations love each other and hate persecution, but nominal Christians and ungodly men would make our land as hot as in the days of Mary if they dared. To all saints who are oppressed, this sweet sentence is directed—“If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him.” More usually, however, the suffering takes the form of personal contempt. It is not pleasant to be pointed at in the streets and have opprobrious names shouted after you by vulgar tongues. Nor is it a small trial to be saluted in the workshop by opprobrious epithets, or to be looked upon as an idiot or a madman.

And yet this is the lot of many of the people of God every day of the week. Many of those who are of the humbler classes have to endure constant and open reproach. And those who are richer have to put up with the cold shoulder and neglect and sneers as soon as they become true disciples of Jesus Christ. There is more sting in this than some dream. And we have known strong men who could have borne the lash brought down by jeers and sarcasms, even just as the wasp may more thoroughly irritate and vex the lion than if the noblest beast of prey should attack him. Believers have also to suffer slander and falsehood. It is not expedient for me, doubtless, to glory, but I know a man who scarcely ever speaks a word which is not misrepresented and hardly performs an action which is not misconstrued.

The press at certain seasons, like a pack of hounds, will get upon his track and worry him with the most bases and undeserved abuse. Publicly and privately he is accustomed to be sneered at. The world whispers, “Ah, he pretends to be zealous for God, but he makes a fine thing of it!” Mark you, when the world shall learn what he does make of it, maybe it will have to eat its words! But I forbear such is the portion of every servant of God who has to bear public testimony for the Truth of God.

Every motive but the right one will be imputed to him. His good will be evil spoken of. His zeal will be called imprudence—his courage, impertinence—his modesty, cowardice. It is impossible for the true Believer in Christ who is called to any eminent service to do anything right. He had better at once learn to say with Luther, “The world hates me and there is no love lost between us, for as much as it hates me, so heartily do I hate it.” He meant not the men *in* the world, for never was there a more loving heart than Luther’s. But he meant the *fame*, the *opinion*, the *honor* of the world he trod beneath his feet. If in your measure you bear undeserved rebuke for Christ’s sake, comfort yourselves with these words, “If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him: if we deny Him, He also will deny us.”

Then again, if in your service for Christ you are enabled to sacrifice yourself—bearing upon yourself inconvenience and pain, labor and loss—then I think you are suffering with Christ. The Missionary who tempts the stormy deep—the herald of the Cross who penetrates into unknown regions among savage men—the tract distributor toiling up the mountainside—the teacher going wearily to the class—the village preacher walking many toilsome miles—the minister starving on a miserable pittance—the evangelist content to break down in health—all these and their like suffer with Christ.

We are all too much occupied with taking care of ourselves. We shun the difficulties of excessive labor. And frequently behind the entrenchments of taking care of our constitution we do not half as much as we ought. A minister of God is bound to spurn the suggestions of ignoble ease—it is his calling to labor! And if he destroys his constitution, I for one, thank God that He permits us the high privilege of so making ourselves living sacrifices. If earnest ministers should bring themselves to the grave, not by imprudence, for that we would not advocate—but by honest labor, such as their ministry and their consciences require of them—they will be better in their graves than out of their graves if they come there for the cause of Christ. What? Are we never to suffer? Are we to be carpet-knights? Are God’s people to be put away in padding, perfumed with lavender and boxed up in quiet softness? No! Not unless they would lose the reward of true saints!

Let us not forget that contention with inbred lusts, denials of proud self, resistance of sin and agony against Satan are all forms of suffering with Christ. We may, in the holy war within us, earn as bright a crown as in the wider battlefield beyond us. O for Grace to be ever dressed in full armor, fighting with principalities and powers and spiritual wickedness of every sort! There is one more class of suffering which I shall mention and that is, when friends forsake, or become foes. Father and mother forsake sometimes. The husband persecutes the wife. We have known even the children turn against the parents. “A man’s foes are they of his own household.” This is one of the devil’s best instruments for making Believers suffer. And those who have to drain this cup for the Lord’s sake shall reign with Him.

Brethren, if you are thus called to suffer for Christ, will you quarrel with me if I say, in adding all up, what a very little it is compared with *reigning* with Jesus? “For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, works for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of Glory.” When I contrast our sufferings of today with those of the reign of Mary, or the persecutions of the Albigenses on the mountains, or the sufferings of Christians in Pagan Rome—why ours are scarcely a pin’s prick—and yet what is the reward? We shall reign with Christ!

There is no comparison between the service and the reward. Therefore it is all of Grace. We do but little and suffer but little—and even that little, Grace *gives* us! And yet the Lord grants us, “A far more exceeding and eternal weight of Glory.” We are not merely to *sit* with Christ, but we are to *reign* with Christ. All that the pomp imperial of His Kingship means. All that the treasure of His wide dominions can yield. All that the majesty of His everlasting power can bestow— all this is to belong to you—*given* to you of His rich, Free Grace, as the sweet reward of having suffered for a little time with Him!

Who would draw back, then? Who among you will flinch? Young man, have you thought of flying from the Cross? Young woman, has Satan whispered to you to shun the thorny pathway? Will you give up the crown? Will you miss the Throne? O Beloved, it is so blessed to be in the furnace with Christ, and such an honor to stand in the pillory with Him that if there were no reward, we might count ourselves happy! But when the reward is so rich, so super-abundant, so eternal, so infinitely more than we had any right to expect—will we not take up the Cross with songs and go on our way rejoicing in the Lord our God?

II. DENYING CHRIST, AND ITS PENALTY. “If we deny Him, He also will deny us.” Dreadful “if,” and yet an “if” which is applicable to every one of us. If the Apostles, when they sat at the Lord’s Supper, said, “Lord, is it I?” surely we may say as we sit here, “Lord, shall I ever deny You?” You who say most loudly, “Though all men shall deny You, yet I will not”—you are the most likely to do it!

In what way can we deny Christ? Some deny Him openly, as scoffers do, whose tongue walks through the earth and defies Heaven. Others do this willfully and wickedly in a doctrinal way, as the Arians and Socinians do who deny His deity—those who deny His Atonement, who rail against the inspiration of His Word—these come under the condemnation of those who deny Christ. There is a way of denying Christ without even speaking a word and this is the more common.

In the day of blasphemy and rebuke, many hide their heads. They are in company where they ought to speak up for Christ. But they put their hands upon their mouths. They come not forward to profess their faith in Jesus. They have a sort of faith, but it is one which yields no *obedience*. Jesus bids each Believer to be baptized. They neglect His ordinance. Neglecting that, they also despise the weightier matters of the Law. They will go up to the House of God because it is fashionable to go there. But if it were a matter of persecution, they would forsake the assembling of themselves together.

In the day of battle they are never on the Lord’s side. If there is a parade, and the banners are flying and the trumpets are sounding, if there are decorations and medals to be given away, there they are. But if the shots are flying, if trenches have to be carried and forts to be stormed, where are they? They have gone back to their dens and there will they hide themselves till fair weather shall return.

Mind, mind, mind, for I am giving a description, I am afraid, of some here. Mind, I say, you silent ones, lest you stand speechless at the bar of Judgment. Some, after having been long silent and so practically denying Christ, go farther and apostatize altogether from the faith they once had. No man who has a genuine faith in Christ will lose it, for the faith which God gives will live forever. Hypocrites and formalists have a name to live while yet they are dead—and after a while they return like the dog to its vomit and the sow which was washed to her wallowing in the mire. Certain professors do not run this length, yet practically deny Christ by their lives, though they make a profession of faith in Him.

Are there not some here who hove been baptized and who come to the Lord’s Table but what is their character? Follow them home. I would to God they never had made a profession because in their own houses they deny what in the House of God they have avowed. If I see a man drunk. If I know that a professor indulges in lasciviousness. If I know a man to be harsh and overbearing and tyrannical to his servants. If I know another who cheats in his traffic and another who adulterates his goods. And if I know that such men profess allegiance to Jesus—which am I to believe—their words or their deeds? I will believe that which speaks loudest! And as actions always speak louder than words, I will believe their actions—I believe that they are deceivers whom Jesus will deny at the last.

Should we not find many present this morning belonging to one or other of these grades? Does not this description suit at least some of you? If it should do so, do not be angry with me but stand still and hear the Word of the Lord. Know, O Man that you will not perish even if you have denied Christ, if now you fly to Him for refuge. Peter denied, but yet Peter is in Heaven. A transient forsaking of Jesus under temptation will not bring on everlasting ruin, if faith shall step in and the Grace of God shall intervene. But persevere in it—continue still in a denial of the Savior and my terrible text will come upon you—“He also will deny you.”

In musing over the very dreadful sentence which closes my text, “He also will deny us,” I was led to think of various ways in which Jesus will deny us. He does this sometimes on earth. You have read, I suppose, of the death of Francis Spira. If you have ever read it, you never can forget it to your dying day. Francis Spira knew the Truth of God. He was a reformer of no mean standing, but when brought to death, out of fear, he recanted. In a short time he fell into despair and suffered Hell upon earth. His shrieks and exclamations were so horrible that their record is almost too terrible for print. His doom was a warning to the age in which he lived.

Another instance is narrated by my predecessor, Benjamin Keach, of one whom, during Puritanical times, was very earnest for Puritanism but afterwards, when times of persecution arose, forsook his profession. The scenes at his deathbed were thrilling amid terrible. He declared that though he sought God, Heaven was shut against him. Gates of brass seemed to be in his way. He was given up to overwhelming despair. At intervals he cursed. At other intervals he prayed and so perished without hope.

If we deny Christ, we may be delivered to such a fate. If we have stood highest and foremost in God’s Church and yet have not been brought to Christ—if we should become apostates—a high soar will bring a deep fall. High pretensions bring down sure destruction when they come to nothing. Even upon earth Christ will deny such. There are remarkable instances of persons who sought to save their lives and lost them. One Richard Denton, who had been a very zealous Lollard and was the means of the conversion of an eminent saint, when he came to the stake, was so afraid of the fire that he renounced everything he held and went into the Church of Rome.

A short time after, his own house took fire, and going into it to save some of his money, he perished miserably, being utterly consumed by that fire which he had denied Christ in order to escape. If I must be lost, let it be any way rather than as an apostate. If there is any distinction among the damned, those have it who are wandering stars, trees plucked up by the roots, twice dead, for whom Jude tells us, is “reserved the blackness of darkness forever.” *Reserved*! As if nobody else were qualified to occupy that place but themselves. They are to inhabit the darkest, hottest place because they forsook the Lord.

Let us, my dear Friends, rather lose everything than lose Christ. Let us sooner suffer anything than lose our ease of conscience and our peace of mind. When Marcus Arethusus was commanded by Julian the apostate to subscribe towards the rebuilding of a heathen temple which his people had pulled down upon their conversion to Christianity, he refused to obey. And though he was an aged man, he was stripped naked and then pierced all over with lancets and knives. The old man still was firm.

If he would give but one halfpenny towards the building of the temple, he could be free—if he would cast in but one grain of incense into the censer devoted to the false gods, he might escape. He would not countenance idolatry in any degree. He was smeared with honey and while his innumerable wounds were yet bleeding, the bees and wasps came upon him and stung him to death. He could die, but he could not deny his Lord. Arethusus entered into the joy of his Lord, for he nobly suffered with Him!

In the olden time when the Gospel was preached in Persia, one Hamedatha, a courtier of the king, having embraced the faith, was stripped of all his offices, driven from the palace and compelled to feed camels. This he did with great content. The king, passing by one day, saw his former favorite at his ignoble work, cleaning out the camel’s stables. Taking pity upon him he took him into his palace, clothed him with sumptuous apparel, restored him to all his former honors and made him sit at the royal table. In the midst of the dainty feast, he asked Hamedatha to renounce his faith.

The courtier, rising from the table, took off his garments with haste, left all the dainties behind him, and said, “Did you think that for such silly things as these I would deny my Lord and Master?” And away he went to the stable to his ignoble work. How honorable is all this! How shall I denounce the meanness of the apostate—his detestable cowardice to forsake the bleeding Savior of Calvary to return to the beggarly elements of the world which he once despised and to bow his neck again to the yoke of bondage? Will you do this, O followers of the Crucified?

You will not! You cannot! I know you cannot if the Spirit of the Lord dwells in you and it must dwell in you if you are the children of God. What must be the doom of those who deny Christ, when they reach another world? Perhaps they will appear with a sort of hope in their minds and they will come before the Judge, with, “Lord, Lord, open to us.” Who are you? He says. “Lord, we once took the Lord’s Supper—Lord, we were members of the Church, but there came very hard times. My mother bade me give up religion. Father was angry. Trade went bad. I was so mocked at, I could not stand it. Lord, I fell among evil acquaintances and they tempted me—I could not resist. I was Your servant—I did love You—I always had love towards You in my heart, but I could not help it—I denied You and went to the world again.”

What will Jesus say? I know you not! “But, Lord, I want You to be my Advocate.” I know you not! “But, Lord, I cannot get into Heaven unless You should open the gate—open it for me.” I do not know you! I do not know you! “But, Lord, my name was in the Church Book.” I know you not—I deny you. “But will You not hear my cries?” You did not hear Mine—you did deny Me and I deny you. “Lord, give me the lowest place in Heaven, if I may but enter and escape from wrath to come.” No, you would not brook the lowest place on earth and you shall not enjoy the lowest place here. You had your choice and you did choose evil. Keep to your choice. You were filthy, be you filthy still. You were unholy, be you unholy still.

O, Sirs, if you would not see the angry face of Jesus! O, Sirs, if you would not behold the lightning flashing from His eyes and hear the thunder of His mouth in the day when He judges the fearful and the unbelieving and the hypocrite. If you would not have your portion in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, cry this day mightily unto God, “Lord, hold me fast, keep me, keep me. Help me to suffer with You, that I may reign with You. But do not, do not let me deny You, lest You also should deny me.”

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÷2Ti 2.13

ETERNAL FAITHFULNESS UNAFFECTED BY HUMAN UNBELIEF  
NO. 1453

*DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON. *“If we believe not, yet He abides faithful: He cannot deny Himself.”* **2Ti 2:13***.*

THIS is one of the five faithful sayings which the Apostle mentions. All those faithful sayings are weighty and important. I suppose that they may have come into the possession of the Church by having been uttered by some of those Prophets who were raised up to cherish the infancy of the Church, such as Agabus and the daughters of Philip and others. These may have been some of their more remarkable sayings which laid hold upon the minds of good men; were quoted by the preachers and teachers and so became current throughout the Church. Such golden sayings were minted into proverbs and passed from hand to hand, enriching all who received them. To the saints they became “familiar in their mouths as household words” and were specially named faithful or true sayings.

No doubt the Apostle Paul gave his endorsement to many of these holy proverbs, but five of them he has encased in the amber of Inspiration and handed down for our special note. Perhaps it may interest you to notice them as they occur. The first one, probably the *best* one*,*is in the First Epistle of Timothy, first chapter, and the 15th verse, “*This* is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.” I can suppose that the good news was frequently conveyed by humble-minded Christians to the outside world in that short and compact form—“Jesus Christ came into the world to save *sinners,*” so that it was commonly known to be a saying among Christians. It was the way in which those who could not preach a sermon and, perhaps, could scarcely compose a sentence for themselves, learned the pith and marrow of the Gospel and had it in a concise and simple form for instructing others. Converts were in the habit of telling this to their heathen friends and acquaintances wherever they went, that they might know what Jesus Christ had come to do and might be led to believe on His name.

The next faithful or true saying is in the First Epistle of Timothy, the third chapter and the first verse. “This is a true saying , If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desires a good work.” Any man who desires to oversee the Church of God and to be in the midst of the people as a shepherd, desires a good work. He will bring himself great anxiety, labor and travail, but the work is honorable and has so large a spiritual reward that a man is wise to choose it and to give his whole life to it. Another of these faithful sayings will be found in the First Epistle of Timothy, the fourth chapter, and the eighth verse, for so the words run, “For bodily exercise profits a little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come. This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation. For therefore we both labor and suffer

reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Savior of all men, specially of those that believe.”

Godliness has the profit of this life and the next and, therefore, godly men are content to suffer, because they expect and receive an abundant blessing as the result thereof at the hand of God. Such a proverb as this was greatly needed in persecuting times and it is still valuable in these greedy days when men find godliness a hindrance to their hasty snatching at wealth and, therefore, turn aside unto ways of dishonesty and falsehood. The next is the one which constitutes our text. We will not, therefore, read it again till we come to handle it. But the fifth is in Titus, the third chapter, and the eighth verse—“*This* is a faithful saying, and these things I will that you affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men.” That those who believe in Jesus should manifest the holy character of their faith by their lives is another one of these faithful sayings which comes with all the greater force from Paul because he, above all men, was free from any suspicion of legality, or the putting of human merit into the place of the Grace of God which is received by faith.

And now, coming to the faithful saying before us, it may not strike you at first, but scholarly men have observed that the 11th , 12th and 13th verses assume the form of a hymn. The Hebrew hymns were written in parallelisms, not, of course, in rhymes, and these three verses are thought to have been one of the oldest of Christian hymns—

***“It is a faithful saying:  
For if we are dead with Him,  
We shall also live with Him:  
If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him: If we deny Him, He also will deny us:  
If we believe not, yet He abides faithful:  
He cannot deny Himself.”***

This is a miniature Psalm—one of those Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs with which the saints of God were known to edify one another. I am sure this last part of this brief hymn is well worthy to be regarded as a faithful saying among ourselves. Brethren, we may often mention it. We may frequently quote it. We may roll it under our tongue as a sweet morsel. We may pass it from one to another as a classic saying of Christian wisdom—“If we believe not, yet He abides faithful: He cannot deny Himself.”

In handling it at this time I would divide it into two folded parts. The first double portion is, *the sad possibility, with the consoling assurance.*“If we believe not”—sad possibility, “yet He abides faithful”—consoling assurance. The second part of our subject *is the glorious impossibility and the sweet inference that we may draw from it.*The glorious impossibility is*—* “He cannot deny Himself” and the inference we draw from it is the obverse or converse of our text—If we believe, He abides faithful: He cannot deny Himself.

**I.**To begin, then, with THE SAD POSSIBILITY AND THE CONSOLING ASSURANCE—If we believe not, yet He abides faithful.” I must take the *sad possibility* first—“if we believe not,” and I shall read this expression as though, first of all, it concerned *the world in general,* for I think it may so be fairly read. If we believe not—if mankind believes not, if the race believes not, if the various classes of men believe not—yet He abides faithful. *The rulers* believe not and there are some that make this a very great point. They said concerning Jesus, “Have any of the rulers believed on Him?”

If Lord So-and-So hears the preacher, there must be something in what he says. Englishmen are wonderfully impressed with the judgment of a duke or an earl and even with that of titled folk of lower degree. If any of the rulers believe in Him, who among worshippers of rank would raise a question? Is it published under authority? Do the great ones subscribe to it? “Oh, then,” says one, “it must be good and it must be true.” Now, I venture to say that all history proves that the Truth of God has very seldom been accepted by the rulers of this world and, for the most part, the poorest of the poor have been more able to perceive the Truth than the greatest of the great have ever been!

There would have been no Christianity in the world at the present moment if it had not found a shelter in workshops and in cottages. It has flourished among the despised poor when it has been condemned by the great ones of the earth. Well, Sirs, if we believe not—that is, if our greatest men, if our senators and magistrates, princes and potentates, believe not—it does not affect the Truth of God in the smallest conceivable degree—“yet He abides faithful.” Many, however, think it more important to know on which side *the leaders of thought* are enlisted and there are certain persons who are not elected to that particular office by popular vote, who, nevertheless, take it upon themselves to consider that they are dictators in the republic of opinion.

They are advanced men and far ahead of the old school of Divines. Some of us think that they are advancing in the direction of going backwards and that they are putting ignorant guess-work into the room of proved doctrine and solid, experimental, Scriptural teaching. Still, as in their own opinion they are our superiors and pioneer the way of progress, we will, for a moment, think of them as such. Now, in our Lord’s day the advanced thinkers were not on His side at all—they were all against Him— and after He had departed, the greatest peril of the Church of God arose from the advanced thought of the period. The Gnostics and other Grecian thinkers came forward and threw their philosophical mud into the pure stream of the Gospel till there was no plain statement which was not rendered mythical, mystical, confused, or clouded, so that only the initiated could possibly understand it.

The Gospel of Jesus Christ was meant to be the most plain Truth that ever shone upon the sons of men. It was meant to be legible in its own light by the young, the unlearned and the simple. But the advanced thinkers took the Gospel and twisted it, colored it, adorned it and bedaubed it till by the time it came through their various processes you would not have known it to be the same thing at all! And, in fact, Paul said that it was *not* the same thing, for he called it, “another gospel,” and then he corrected himself and said it was not another—“But there are some,” he said, “that trouble you.” However, we need not care because of these wise men, for if they believe not, but becloud the Gospel, yet God abides faithful!

If over there in the groves where Socrates and Plato gathered disciples by their philosophy; if over there, I say, there should not be found a single philosopher who believes in God, so much the worse for the philosophers! It does not affect the Gospel or our faith in it—if they believe not, He abides faithful! If Paul at the Areopagus gets no sympathy except from two or three and, in fact, they have only asked him there to “*hear what this babbler says*” and though they all, as they go home, say that Paul is beside himself and mad—and a setter forth of strange gods—yet Paul is right and the Lord abides faithful! Yes, and I venture to enlarge this thought a little more. If the rulers do not believe and if the philosophical minds do not believe—and if, in addition to this, *public opinion,*so called, rejects it— yet the Gospel is still the same eternal Truth of God.

Public opinion is not the test and gauge of the Truth of God, for public opinion has continually altered and it will continue to alter. The aggregate thinking of fallible men is less than nothing when set against the one solitary mind of God, who is Infallible, as He reveals it to us by the Holy Spirit in the Words of Truth in the Scriptures. But some think that the old Gospel cannot be right because, you see, everybody says that it is out of date and wrong. That is one reason for being the more sure that it is right, for the world lies in the Wicked One and its judgment is under his sway. What are multitudes when they are all under the influence of the Father of Lies?

The greatest majority in the world is a minority of one when that man is on God’s side. Count heads, do you? Well, count by the millions if you like, but I shall rather weigh, than count—and if I speak the Truth of God—I have more weight on my side than can be found in a million who believe not! I wish we all partook of the spirit of Athanasius when he said, defending the Deity of his great Master, “I, Athanasius, against the world.” You must learn to stand alone! When you know that you have a grip on revealed Truth, you may not set all the judgments of men in comparison with the eternal and Infallible judgment of the mighty God! No, though we believe not, that is, the mass of us and nations of us, “*yet He abides faithful: He cannot deny Himself*.”

I want to ask your thoughtful attention to one consideration here. Have you not often heard it said that ministers ought to be abreast of the times; that theology should be always toned and varied so as to suit the advanced thought of the wonderful period in which we live? And as this is a time when infidelity appears to be in the very air, we are told that we ought to sympathize with it very earnestly and heartily, for it is a form of struggling for the Light which we ought to encourage. Now, this is another sort of talk from what I hear from the Apostle Paul. He has no sympathy with it! He put his foot on it. “Let God be true and every man a liar”—that is the style in which he speaks! As to going in to study the philosophies in order to tune the Gospel to their note, he says, “I determined not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ and Him crucified.”

When he finds that this style of doctrine does not please the Jew and that it is a stumbling block to him and that it does not please the Greek, but makes him sneer and call it foolishness, does the Apostle, therefore, say, *“*Come here, dear Jewish Friend. I have a way of putting this which will show you that I do not quite mean what you thought I did. I used the word, “Cross,” in a certain sense not at all objectionable to Judaism”? Does he gently whisper, *“*Come to me, my learned Greek Friend and I will show you that your philosophers and I mean the same thing”? Not a bit! No, he stands fast and firm to Christ crucified and salvation by His blood, as, by God’s Grace, I trust we are resolved to do. Though we believe not— that is, though the whole world believe not—yet God’s Gospel is not to be altered to suit human whims and fancies, but in all its forms, in all its Divine authority, unpaved, uncut, worked out as a whole, it is still to be proclaimed, for, “He abides faithful: He cannot deny Himself.”

Now, having spoken of our text as referring to the world in general, it is, perhaps, a more sorrowful business to look at it as referring to the visible Church in particular. The Apostle says, “Though*we* believe not,” and surely he must mean *the visible Church of God.*And does the Church of God ever fall into such a state that we may say of it, “It believes not”? Yes, the visible Church has many and many a time fearfully turned aside. Go back for a type of it to the wilderness. The children of Israel were brought up out of Egypt with a high hand and an outstretched arm. They were fed in the wilderness with angels’ food and made to drink of water from the Rock—but they were continually doubting their God—

***“Now they believe His word  
While rocks with rivers flow.  
But soon with sin they grieve the Lord,  
And judgments lay them low.”***

And what happened? Did God depart from His purpose to give the land that flowed with milk and honey to the seed of Abraham? Did He break up the Covenant and grow weary of it? No—Abraham’s seed inherited the land and they dwelt therein, every man under his own vine and fig tree. Though the visible people of God rejected Him full often, so that for their unbelief they died in the wilderness, yet He remained faithful—He did not, He could not deny Himself. Well, now, it comes to pass, sometimes, according to this type, that the visible Church of God apostatizes from the Truth of God. The Doctrines of Grace, the Truths of the Gospel are obscured, beclouded, scarcely preached—preached with gaudy words or hid behind ceremonies and rites and all sorts of things.

And what happens? Are the foundation Truths removed? Is the eternal verity reversed? Has God recalled His promises? Oh no! “He abides faithful: He cannot deny Himself.” Alas, the Church of God seems to lose, sometimes, her faith in prayer! Her pleading assemblies become scarce. Her prayer for men’s conversion is scarcely raised. Few come together to supplicate the Lord and besiege the Mercy Seat. But what then? Does God change? Does He forsake His cause? Oh, no: “He abides faithful: He cannot deny Himself.” At such times the Church almost loses her faith in the Holy Spirit and looks upon preaching as, perhaps, a necessary evil to be borne with—not as the vehicle by which the Holy Spirit saves men. They have small confidence in God’s Word that, “By the foolishness of preaching” He will “save them that believe.”

They do not expect the kingdom of Christ to be predominant, but they say, “Since the fathers fell asleep what long ages have dragged along and what slow progress Christianity has made! It is a hopeless cause. Let us be content to let the heathen world alone.” At such time they lose all heart and all faith in God! Have we not seen large portions of the visible Church

of God decline into such a state as this till we have been ready to ask with our Master, “When the Son of Man comes, shall He find faith on the earth?” But, what then, my Brothers and Sisters? Suppose we should live to see a degenerate Church *everywhere*? Suppose it should become like Laodicea, till the Lord should seem to spew the visible Church out of His mouth because she has become neither hot nor cold?

Suppose He should say of the professing Church of today as He did of Shiloh of old—“Go now to Shiloh where My place was at the first and see if there is one stone left upon another that is not cast down”? He took the candlestick away from Rome and He may take that candlestick away from other Churches, too. But would that prove that God was unfaithful, or that He had denied Himself? No, Beloved, no! His faithfulness would then be seen in the judgment with which He would visit an unfaithful Church. Yes, and it is seen today. You shall see a Church which does not believe in the simple Gospel grow few and feeble. According as the Churches cease to be evangelical, they are diminished and brought low. A Church that neglects prayer becomes disunited, scattered, lethargic, all but dead.

A Church that has no faith in the Holy Spirit may carry on her ordinances, but it will be with barren formality and without power from on high—all of which proves the faithfulness of Him who said, “If you walk contrary to Me, I will walk contrary to you.” If they cast away from them that which is their strength, it is but faithfulness on God’s part that they should become weak. All the history of the Church, if you read it, from the days of Christ till now, will go to show that He deals with His Church in such a way as to make her see that He is faithful, whatever she may be. He will help her when she turns to Him. He will bless her when she trusts Him. He will crown her when she exalts Him. But He will bring her low and chasten her when she turns, in any measure, aside from the simplicity of her faith. Thus does He prove that He is still faithful.

Once more, my Brethren, I will read the text in a somewhat narrower circle. “If we believe not”—that is to say, if *the choicest teachers,*preachers and writers believe not, yet He abides faithful. One of the most shocking trials to young Christians is the fall of an eminent teacher. I have known some that have been almost ready to give up their faith when someone who appeared to be very earnest and faithful has suddenly apostatized. Such things have happened in our memory, to our intense grief and I want, therefore, to put it very, very plainly. If it should come to pass that anyone whom you revere as having been blest to your soul—whom because you have received from him the Word of Life—if such a one upon whom you may, perhaps, have learned much, should, in the future, turn out not to be true and faithful and should not believe, do not follow his unbelief, for “if we believe not, yet He abides faithful: He cannot deny Himself.”

Peter denies his Master—do not follow Peter when he is doing that, for he will have to come back weeping and you will hear him preaching his Master again. Worse still, Judas sells his Master—do not follow Judas, for Judas will die a wretched death and his destruction shall be a warning to others to cling more closely to the King. You may see the man who stood like a cedar in Lebanon fall by one stroke of the devil’s axe, but do not, therefore, think that the trees of the Lord, which are full of sap, will fall, too. He will keep His own, for He knows them that are His.

Pin not your faith to any man’s sleeve. Let not your confidence rest on any arm of flesh, neither say, “I believe because of the testimony of such a one and I hold to the form of sound words because my minister has held it,” for all such props may be pulled away and all of a sudden may fail you! Let me put this very, very plainly. If *we* believe not—if those that seem to be the choice teachers of the age, the most successful evangelists of the period—if those who seem to stand the highest in the esteem of God’s people, should, in an evil hour, forsake the eternal verities and begin to preach to you some other gospel which is not the Gospel of Jesus Christ, I beseech you follow us not, *whoever* we may be or *whatever* we may be!

Suffer no teachers, however great they may be, to lead you to doubt, for God abides faithful! Keep to the revealed will and mind of God—for “He cannot deny Himself.” Here, then, is the fearful possibility and side by side with it rims*this most blessedly consoling assurance—*“He abides faithful.” Jesus Christ *abides—*there are no shifts and changes in Him. He is a rock and not a quicksand! He is the Savior whether the rulers and the philosophers believe in Him or refuse Him; whether the Church and her ministers are true to Him or desert Him. He is the same Savior, God-Man, sitting supreme upon the Truth of God. “Why do the heathens rage and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord and against His anointed? He that sits in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision. Yet,” says He, “have I set My king upon My holy hill of Zion.”

They cannot affect the imperial throne of our immortal Lord! He is still “the blessed and only Potentate” and so He must be, let them say what they will! And as Christ remains the same Savior, so we have the same Gospel. They have improved upon it, they tell us! Well, well, I feel so satisfied with the Gospel as I get it from Paul and the Inspired Apostles that I would rather not have this improved gospel if they will allow me to keep to the old original. But so it is, like babies pleased with new toys, they cry their “modern thought” and culture and advanced ideas! He that has once tasted the old wines does not desire the new, because he says, “The old is better.”

Our Savior and His Gospel abide the same! The Gospel of Paul, the Gospel of Augustine, the Gospel of Calvin, the Gospel of Whitefield, the Gospel of any succession of *faithful* men you like to mention suffices us. He abides faithful! And as the Gospel is the same, so does Christ remain faithful to His engagements to His Father. He has promised to keep those whom the Father gave Him and He will keep them even to the end. And when the sheep shall pass again under the hands of Him that counts them, He will say, “Of all whom You gave me I have lost none.” “He abides faithful.” To sinners all over the world He says that if they come to Him, He will not cast them out and He is faithful to that. He graciously promises that “whoever calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.” And He will be faithful to that.  
He is also faithful to His saints. He has promised to preserve them to

His eternal kingdom and Glory and He will preserve them. He says, “I give unto My sheep *eternal life* and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of My hands”—and He has held them in His loving grasp and He will hold them even to the end! And all this, though all the unbelief in the world should rise against Him! He will stand to every Word He has spoken and carry out every promise He has declared, though all should distrust and deny. “Yes and amen in Christ Jesus” are all the promises, henceforth and forever—and we shall find it so.

**II.**And now we have but a little time to spend upon the second very important part of our text, which is A GLORIOUS IMPOSSIBILITY WITH A SWEET INFERENCE THAT MAY BE DRAWN FROM IT. “He cannot deny Himself.” Three things God cannot do. He cannot die. He cannot lie. And He cannot be deceived. These three impossibilities do not limit His power, but they magnify His majesty, for these would be infirmities, and infirmity can have no place in the Infinite and Ever-Blessed God. Here is one of the things impossible with God—“He cannot deny Himself.” What is meant by that?

It is meant, first, that *the Lord Jesus Christ cannot change*as to His Nature and Character towards us, the sons of men, for if He were to change He could only change from one state to another—from a better to a worse or from a worse to a better. If from a better to a worse, that were to deny Himself, indeed, by ceasing to be as good as He is by Nature. And if from a worse to a better, that were to deny Himself by proving that He was not, before, so good as He might have been! In no one point can Jesus Christ be changed, for He is “Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today and forever.” If in any point He changed, He would, in that point, deny Himself. But He cannot do this, for being God He changes not.

*His Word cannot alter.*I want you to notice this, because His Word is so conspicuously Himself. His name shall be called the Word of God. Yes, He is Himself the Logos, the Eternal Word, and that Word cannot change. “The grass withers, and the flower falls away, but the Word of the Lord endures forever and this is the Word which by the Gospel is preached unto you.” O servant of the Lord, the assurance which Paul and Peter gave, you may give! That same Word of mercy which those first messengers of Heaven went forth to declare, you may declare, for it still stands the same! He cannot deny His Word since that Word is Himself and He cannot deny Himself. *He cannot,* beloved Friends, *withdraw the salvation which He has presented to the sons of men,* for that salvation is, indeed, Himself.

Jesus is the salvation of Israel. If a sinner wants to know where salvation lies, we point him to the Christ of God. He is not only a Savior, but He is Salvation itself! And His salvation cannot be changed, for if *it* were changed He would be Himself changed or denied and He cannot deny Himself. There is still the same pardon for the chief of sinners; still the same renewing for the hardest hearts; still the same generous response to those who have strayed most; still the same adoption into the family for aliens and foreigners. His salvation, as Peter preached it at Pentecost, is the salvation which we preach to sinners today. “He cannot deny Himself.” And then*the Atonement is still the same,* for that, too, is Himself—He has, by Himself, purged our sins.

He Himself is the Sacrifice. Well did the poet say—  
***“Dear dying Lamb,  
Your precious blood***

***Shall never lose its power.”***  
Because it is *His* blood, it must be unchanged in efficacy. He cleanses away our sins by Himself. His blood is His life and He always lives. And since He always lives, He is “able to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by Him.” Blessed be His name, the atoning Sacrifice has not, even in the smallest degree, lost its efficacy! It is just as mighty as when it washed the dying thief from the foulness of Hell into the purity of Heaven and carried him from the gallows to a throne! Oh, how blessed must its power be to have cleansed so foul a wretch and to have placed him with the Master Himself in Paradise the same day! The Atonement cannot change, for that would involve that Jesus had denied Himself.

And *the Mercy Seat,* the place of prayer, still remains, for if that were altered He would have denied Himself, for what was the Mercy Seat, or propitiatory, but that golden lid upon the Covenant Ark? What was it but Christ Himself, who is our Propitiatory, the true Mercy Seat? You may always pray, Brothers and Sisters, for if prayer were denied its efficacy, God would have denied Himself! This is His memorial, “The God that hears prayer,” and if He does not hear prayer He has denied Himself and ceased to be what He was. Jehovah will never so deny Himself as to become like Baal, a deaf God—to imagine it would be blasphemy!

And here is another sweet thought— *Christ’s love to His Church and His purpose towards her cannot change,* because He cannot deny Himself and His Church is Himself. I mean not that *visible* Church of which I spoke just now, which is a mixed multitude, but I mean that *invisible* Church, that *spiritual* people, that bride of Christ which no man sees, for she is prepared in darkness and curiously worked in the lowest parts of the earth—and her Lord Himself will never actually see her till she is perfected, even as Adam never saw Eve, but slept until the great God had finished His bride and presented her in all her matchless beauty to be His sister and spouse. The day comes when the Lord Jesus Christ shall thus receive His perfected bride—and meanwhile He cannot change towards her, but His espousals shall be confirmed. She was taken out of His side when He lay in deep sleep of death and she is fashioned to be like He, so that when in joy He shall behold her, His joy and her joy shall be full. No, He will never, never deny her, for He cannot deny Himself. His plan of love shall be carried out and all His thoughts of Grace fulfilled.

Nor will any of *His offices towards His Church*and people ever fail. The Prophet shall be Prophet forever—“He cannot deny Himself.” The Priest shall be a Priest forever after the order of Melchisedec and will never refuse to offer our prayers and praises and to cleanse our souls, for He cannot deny Himself. The King will never cease to reign, or doff His crown, or lay down His scepter, for He cannot deny Himself. The Shepherd will forever keep the flock. The Friend will eternally stick closer than a brother. The Husband will still love His spouse. All that He is in relation to His people shall continue and abide, for He abides faithful. “He cannot deny

Himself.”

Now, my last word is about *an inference.*The text says, “If we believe, not, yet He abides faithful.” It runs on that supposition. Now, Brethren, take the other supposition—suppose we do believe? Will He not be faithful in that case, too? And will it not be true that He cannot deny Himself? I will suppose that a sinner is, at this moment, saying, “I believe that Christ can save me. I will go and ask Him, I will go and trust Him.” Ah, He will not deny Himself by rejecting your cry! I tell you, if He were to shut you out, dear Soul, whoever you may be, if you go to Him, He would deny Himself! He never did deny Himself yet. Whenever a sinner comes to Him, He becomes his Savior. Whenever He meets a sick soul, He acts as his physician.

Now, I have heard of persons who have been physicians who were ill, or weary and needed rest—an accident has happened and they have felt inclined to get out of the way, if they could, because they were very hardworked and worn out. They have told their servant to say, “My master is not at home!” But *my* Master never denied Himself! He will never get out of the way of a sinner! If you go to Him, you will find Him at home and on the look-out for you! He will be more glad to receive you than you will be to be received, for He “waits to be gracious.” As Matthew sat at the receipt of custom, waiting for the people to pay their dues, so does Christ sit at the receipt of sinners waiting for them to mention their needs!

He is watching for you. I tell you again that He cannot reject you—that would be to alter His whole Character and “un-Christ” Himself! To spurn a coming sinner would un-Jesus Him and make Him to be somebody else, and not Himself any longer. “He cannot deny Himself.” Go and try Him! Go and try Him. I wish some trembling soul would, at this moment, go and cast Himself upon Christ and then report to us the result. Come, poor quivering Seekers, sing in your heart, unbelieving as you are, that hymn of ours***—***

***“I can but perish if I go,  
I am resolved to try!  
For if I stay away, I know  
I must forever die.”***

Oh, but if you were to perish at His feet, you would be the first that ever did so out of all those who have ever come to Him! And that first man has never been seen yet! Go and try my Lord and see for yourselves.

Well now, you Christian people, I want you to come, also. If you believe your Lord, He will be faithful to you. Suppose it is a time of trouble with you? He will be faithful to you—go and cast your burden upon Him. Suppose at this time you are much exercised with spiritual distress? Go to the Lord as you did at first, as poor, guilty, rebellious sinners—and cast yourself upon Him and you will find Him faithful. “He cannot deny Himself.” If my Lord were not kind to me tonight when I go to Him with my burdens, I should think that I had knocked at the wrong door because the Lord has been so good and so faithful to me up to now that it would take my breath away if I found Him changed! Oh, how good, how exceedingly good is my Lord!

Did not we sing just now—  
***“He by my side has always stood:***

***His loving kindness, oh, how good!”?***  
I could sing that with all my heart and I hope many of you could earnestly join with me. You have a dear mother, or a fond wife, or a choice friend and none of them has ever spoken anything but kindness to you— if, therefore, in some dark hour you were to go to them and,, instead of showing sympathy, they gave you sharp words and you could evidently see that they did not love you, how surprised you would be! So should I be if I were to meet anything but love from my dear Lord after all these years of tenderness! There is no fear of it, for “He cannot deny Himself.”

So I finish by saying that we shall find it so in connection with the things of His kingdom and the concerns of His Truth. There is a great uproar just now about the God of Providence and they call me, I know not by what names, for speaking the Truth for my Master. Well, what comes of it? Shall we, therefore, be afraid? No! If we believe, we shall find Him faithful—He will not deny Himself. Is the good old cause really in danger from skepticism and superstition? Speaking after the manner of men, it may seem so, but it never really is so. Even if it were tottering, we must not put our hand upon the Ark of the Lord to steady it.

God’s cause is always safe! I do not know whether we may live to see it, but as surely as the Lord lives the Truth of God will be triumphant in England! They may tell us that Puritanism is thrust to the wall, but it will take the crown of the causeway yet. The old cause goes back a little to take a breath, but she will make such a leap in this land as shall utterly surprise the soothsayers, for the Lord will make the Diviners mad and they that count the towers and say that Zion is utterly fallen shall not know where to hide their heads! The devil once flew all over Europe and said, “It is all mine. Here they are, selling indulgences and the Pope and I are master of it all.”

But there was a poor monk who had not, himself, seen the Light of God but for a short time, who nailed his theses on the door of a Church and from that hour the Light of Christ began to spread all over Europe! And do you think the Lord is short of Luthers? Do you imagine that He has no sword or spear left in His armory? I tell you He has as many instruments within reach as there are stars in the sky! When the influence of the Gospel appears to recede, it is like the tide when it is ebbing out. Steadily it goes back and if we did not know better, we should begin to think that the silver waves would all give place to mire and shingle—yet when the hour comes, at the very *minute—*the waters pause and remain at one point awhile.

Then up comes the first wave of the wash and another and another and another and another, rising, advancing, conquering the shore till the set has come to her fullness again! So must it be and so shall it be with the ocean of the Truth of God! Only let us have faith and we shall see the Gospel at the flood, again, and old England covered with it! Doubt what you like, Brothers and Sisters, but do not doubt Divine Truth or doubt God! Hold on to the side that is most disgraced and dishonored—that has the worst word from men—for Christ and His Church usually have the bleak side of the hill. Be content to breast the stream with courage learned from your Redeemer and Lord, for the day comes when to have stood with the Truth and with the Son of the Highest will be the grandest honor that a creature can have worn. May that honor be ours, for Jesus’

sake. Amen.  
***PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—2 Timothy 2.*HYMNS FROM *“OUR* OWM HYMN BOOK”—192, 664, 196.**

**TO MY BELOVED CHURCH AND CONGREGATION:**DEAR FRIENDS—After a long and severe illness I am now on my way to the South of France to seek rest and gather strength in a less trying climate. The Church has requested me to take three months’ furlough and as this corresponds with the serious counsel of physicians and judicious friends, I shall probably accept the considerate advice. I have promised to correspond with you and with my sermon readers, week by week, by a note appended to the sermon, or by a short discourse such as I have written during the last two weeks.

This, then, to commence with—I have reached Paris [Jan. 18, 1879] by easy stages and I am none the worse for the traveling, but all the better for the change. Snow is falling heavily and may detain us, but if not, we hope to be at Mentone next Wednesday. It would have been a far greater pleasure to me to have been able to occupy my pulpit, but as this must not be, I am right glad to speak by the press. May the weekly sermon be used by the Lord in a greater degree, now that the preacher’s voice ceases for a while to proclaim His Gospel. One great favor I have to ask of you all—will you unite in hearty prayer that there may be a great revival at the Tabernacle during my absence?

You have united to celebrate the 25th year of my pastorate by noble testimonies which I have dedicated to the Lord’s work. Now unite with even greater ardor in seeking a great, a surpassing, a crowning spiritual blessing! The Lord’s own Word is, “Bring you all the tithes into the storehouse and prove Me now, herewith, if I will not open the windows of Heaven and pour you out a blessing, that you shall not have room enough to receive it.” You have fulfilled the precept, now enquire for the promise!

The Lord has guaranteed heavenly blessing, a Divine blessing, an overwhelming blessing—do not be content without it, or it will look as if you despised the promise of the Lord. We stand on vantage ground, now. Let us plead with double importunity, saying, “I will not let You go unless You bless me.” Then will the windows open and the Divine hand pour out the benediction of His Spirit—and salvation shall come to multitudes through Christ Jesus our Lord. My love be with you all. Yours for Jesus’ sake, ***C. H. SPURGEON***

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**÷2Ti 2.15**

RIGHTLY DIVIDING THE WORD OF TRUTH  
NO. 1217

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY EVENING, DECEMBER 26, 1875, *BY C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“Rightly dividing the word of truth.”***2Ti 2:15***.***

TIMOTHY was to divide rightly the Word of God. Every Christian minister must do this if he would make full proof of his ministry and if he would be clear of the blood of his hearers at the Last Great Day. Of the whole 20 years of my printed sermons, I can honestly say that this has been my aim—rightly to divide the Word of Truth. Wherein I have succeeded, I magnify the name of the Lord. In which I have failed I lament my faultiness. And now once more we will try, again, and may God the Holy Spirit, without whose power nothing can be done aright, help us rightly to divide the Word of Truth.

The expression is a very remarkable one because it bears so many phases of meaning. I do not think that any one of the figures by which I shall illustrate it will be at all strained, for they have been drawn from the text by most eminent expositors, and may be fairly taken as honest comments, even when they might be challenged as correct interpretations of the text. “Rightly dividing the word of truth” is our authorized version, but we leave it for a little to consider other renderings. Timothy was neither to mutilate, nor twist, nor torture, nor break in pieces the Word of God, nor keep on the outside of it, as those do who never touch the soul of a text, but rightly to divide it, as one taught of God to teach others.

**I.**The Vulgate version translates it—and with a considerable degree of accuracy—“Rightly HANDLING the word of truth.” What is the right way, then, to handle the Word of Truth? It is like a sword and *it was not meant to be played with*. That is not rightly to handle the Gospel. It must be used in earnest and pushed home. Are you converted, my Friends? Do you believe in Jesus Christ? Are you saved, or not? Swords are meant to cut and hack, wound and kill—and the Word of God is for pricking men in the heart and killing their sins. The Word of God is not committed to God’s ministers to amuse men with its glitter, nor to charm them with the jewels in its hilt, but to *conquer* their souls for Jesus!

Remember, dear Hearers, if the preacher does not push you to this— that you shall be converted, or he will know the reason why. If he does not drive you to this—that you shall either willfully reject, or cheerfully accept Christ—he has not yet known how rightly to handle the great “sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.” Now, then, where are you personally at this moment? Are you unbelievers, upon whom the wrath of God abides, or are you Believers who may lay claim to that gracious Word, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believes in Me has everlasting life”?

Oh that the Lord would make His all-discerning Word go round this place and strike at every conscience and lay bare every heart with its mighty power!

He that rightly handles the Word of God will *never use it to defend men in their sins*, but to slay their sins! If there is a professing Christian here who is living in known sin, shame upon him! And if there is a nonChristian man who is living in sin, let his conscience upbraid him! What will he do in that day when Christ comes to judge the hearts of men? Remember, the books shall be opened and every thought shall be read out before an assembled universe! I desire to handle the Word of God so that no man may ever find an excuse in my ministry for his living without Christ and living in sin, but may know clearly that sin is a deadly evil and unbelief the sure destroyer of the soul! He has, indeed, been made to handle the word aright who plunges it like a two-edged sword into the very heart of sin!

The Gospel ought *never to be used for frightening sinners from Christ*. I believe it is so handled sometimes. Sublime doctrines are rolled like rocks in the sinner’s way and dark experiences set up as a standard of horror which must be reached before a man may believe in Jesus—but to rightly handle the Word of Life is to frighten men *to* Christ rather than *from* Him—yes, to woo them to Him by the sweet assurance that He will cast out none that come! That He asks no preparations of them, but if they come at once, as they are, He will assuredly receive them. Have I not handled the Word of Truth in this way hundreds of times in this house? Has it not been a great magnet attracting sinners? As a magnet has two poles, and with one pole it repels, so, no doubt, the Truth of God repels the prejudiced, rebellious heart—and thus it is a savor of death unto death. But our object is so to handle it that the attractive pole may come into operation through the power of the Spirit of God—and men may be drawn to Christ.

Moreover, if we rightly handle the Word of God *we shall not preach it so as to send Christians into a sleepy state*. That is easily done. We may preach the consolations of the Gospel till each professor feels “I am safe enough. There is no need to watch, no need to fight, no need for any exertion whatever! My battle is fought, my victory is won. I have only to fold my arms and go to sleep.” No, no! This is not how we handle the Word of God, but our cry is, “Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God which works in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure. Watch and pray that you enter not into temptation. Reckon not yourselves to have attained unto perfection, but forget the things that are behind, and reach forward to that which is before, looking unto Jesus.”

This is rightly to handle the Word of God. And, oh, Beloved, there is one thing that I dread above all others—that I should ever handle the Word of God *so as to persuade some of you that you are saved when you are not*. To collect a large number of professors together is one thing. But to have a large number of true saints built together in Christ is quite another. To get up a whirl of excitement and to have people influenced by that exment so that they think, full surely, that they are converted, has been done a great many times. But the bubble, has, by-and-by, vanished. The balloon has been filled until it has burst. God save us from that! We want sure work—lasting work—a work of Divine Grace in the heart.

If you are not converted, do not pretend that you are. If you have not known what it is to be brought down to see your own nothingness and then to be built up by the power of the Spirit upon Christ as the only foundation, O, remember that whatever is built upon the quicksand will fall with a crash in the hour of trial! Do not be satisfied with anything short of a deep foundation, cut in the solid rock of the work of Jesus Christ. Ask for real vital godliness, for nothing else will serve your turn at the Last Great Day. Now, this is rightly to handle the Word of God—to use it to push the Truth of God home upon men for their present conversion, to use it for the striking down of their sins—to use it to draw men to Christ, to use it to arouse sinners and to use it to produce, not mere profession, but a real work of Grace in the hearts of men

May the Holy Spirit teach all the ministers of Christ after this fashion to handle the two-edged sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.  
**II.**But now, secondly, my text has another meaning. It has an idea in it which I can only express by a figure. “Rightly dividing, or STRAIGHT CUTTING. A plowman stands here with his plow and he plows right along from this end of the field to the other, making a straight furrow. And so Paul would have Timothy make a straight furrow right through the Word of Truth. I believe there is no preaching that God will ever accept but that which goes decidedly through the whole line of Truth from end to end, is always thorough, honest and downright. As the Truth of God is a straight line, so must our handling of the Truth be straightforward and honest, without shifts or tricks.  
There are two or three furrows which I have labored hard to plow. One is the furrow of *free Grace*. “Salvation is of the Lord”—He begins it, He carries it on, He completes it. Salvation is not *of* man, neither *by* man, but of Grace alone. Grace in election, Grace in redemption, Grace in effectual calling, Grace in final perseverance, Grace in conferring the perfection of Glory—it is all Grace from beginning to end! If we say, at any time, anything which is really contrary to this distinct testimony that salvation is of Grace, do not believe us! This furrow must be plowed fairly, plainly and beyond all mistake.  
Sinner, you cannot be saved by any merit, penance, preparation, or feeling of your own! The Lord, alone, must save you as a work of gratis mercy, not because you deserve it, but because He wills to do it to magnify His abundant love. That is the straight furrow of the Word. We endeavor always to make a straight furrow upon the matter of *human depravity—*to preach that man is fallen, that every part and passion of his nature is perverted, that he has gone astray altogether, is sick from the crown of his head to the sole of his feet—yes, is dead in trespasses and sins, and corrupt before God. “There is none that does good, no, not one.”  
I have noticed some preachers plowing this furrow very crookedly, for they say, “There are still some very fine points about man and many good things in him which only need developing and educating.” You may have read, in the history of Mr. Whitfield’s time, what a howl was made at him because he once said that man was half beast and half devil. I do not think he ever got nearer the truth than when he said that—only I would beg the beast’s pardon—for a beast would scarcely become so evil and vile as human nature becomes when it is left alone to fully develop itself! O pride of human nature, we plow right over you!  
The hemlock stands in your field and must be cut up by the roots. Your weeds smile like fair flowers, but the plow must go right through them till all human beauty is shown to be a painted Jezebel, and all human glorying a bursting bubble. God is everything, man is nothing! God in His Grace saves man, but man by his sin utterly ruins himself until God’s Grace interposes. I like to plow a straight furrow here. Another straight furrow is that of *faith*. We are sent to tell men that he that believes and is baptized shall be saved, and our duty is to put it so. “Salvation is not of works”—works is not the furrow. Not of prayers—that is not the furrow. Not of feelings—that is not the Gospel Arrow. Not of preparations and amendments and reforms—but by*faith* in Jesus Christ. He that believes on Him is not condemned.  
As we begin the new life by faith, we must abide in it by faith. We are not to be saved by faith up to a certain point and then to rely upon ourselves. Having begun in the Gospel we are not to be perfected by the Law. “The just shall live by faith.” We live by faith at the wicket gate and we live by faith until we enter into our eternal rest. *Believe*!—that is the grand Gospel precept and we trust we have never gone out of this furrow, but have tried to plow right across the Gospel field from end to end, crying, “Look unto Me and be you saved, all you ends of the earth, for Jehovah is God, and beside Him there is none else.”  
Another furrow which some do not much like to plow, but which must be distinctly marked if a man is an honest plowman for God, is that of *repentance*. Sinner, you and your sins must part! You have been married long and you have had a merry time of it, perhaps, but you must part. You and your sins must separate, or you and your God will never come together! You may not keep*one* sin. They must all be given up! They must be brought out like the Canaanite kings from the cave and hanged up before the sun. Not one darling must be spared. You must forsake them, loathe them, abhor them and ask the Lord to overcome them. Do you not know that the furrow of repentance runs right through the Christian’s life? He sins, and as long as he sins he repents of his sin. The child of God cannot *love* sin—he must loathe it as long as he sees any of it in existence!  
There is the furrow of *holiness*, that is the next turn the plowman takes. “Without holiness no man shall see the Lord.” We have preached salvation by Grace, but we do not preach salvation to those who still continue in sin. The children of God are a holy people—washed, purged, sanctified and made zealous for good works. He who talks about faith, and has no works to prove that his faith is a *living* faith, lies to himself and lies before God. It is faith that saves us, not works—but the faith that saves us always *produces* works. It renews the heart, changes the character, influences the motives and is the means in the hand of God of making the man a new creature in Christ Jesus. No nonsense about it, Sirs—you may be baptized and re-baptized, you may attend to sacraments, or you may believe in an orthodox creed—but you will be damned if you live in sin.  
You may become a deacon, or an elder, or a minister, if you dare, but there is no salvation for any man who still harbors his sins. “The wages of sin is death”—death to professors as well as to non-professors. If they hug their sins in secret, God will reveal those sins in public and condemn them according to the strict justice of His Law. These are the furrows we have tried to plow—deep, sharp cut and straight. O, that God might plow them, Himself, in all your hearts, that you may know, experimentally, how the Truth of God is rightly divided!  
**III.**There is a third meaning to the text. “Rightly dividing the word of truth” is, as some think, an expression taken from the priests dividing the sacrifices. When they had a lamb or a sheep, a ram or a bullock to offer, after they had killed it, it was cut in pieces, carefully and properly. And it requires no little skill to find out where the joints are, so as to cut up an animal discreetly. Now, the Word of Truth has to be taken to pieces wisely—it is not to be hacked or torn as by a wild beast—but rightly divided.  
There has to be DISCRIMINATION AND DISSECTION. It is a great part of a minister’s duty to be able to dissect the Gospel—to lay one piece there, and another there, and preach with clearness, distinction and discrimination. Every Gospel minister must divide between the Covenant of Works and the Covenant of Grace. It is a very nice point, that, and many fail to discern it well, but it must always be kept clear, or great mischief will be done. Confusion worse confounded follows upon confusing Grace and Law. There is the Covenant of Works—“This do, and you shall live,” but its voice is not that of the Covenant of Grace which says, “Hear and your soul shall live.” “You shall, for I will”—that is the Covenant of Grace.  
It is a covenant of pure promise unalloyed by terms and conditions. I have heard people put it thus—“Believers will be saved if, from this time forth, they are faithful to Grace given.” That smells of the Covenant of Works! “God will love you”—says another—“*if you—*.” Ah, the moment you get an “*if*” in it, it is the Covenant of Works and the Gospel has evaporated! Oil and water will sooner mix than merit and Grace! When you find the Covenant of Works anywhere, what are you to do with it? Why, do what Abraham did and what Sarah demanded, “Cast out the bondwoman and her son, for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, even with Isaac.”  
If you are a child of the Free-Grace promise, do not suffer the Hagar and Ishmael of legal bondage and carnal hope to live in your house. Out with them! You should have nothing to do with them. Let Law and Gospel keep their proper places. The Law is master to bring us *to* Christ, but when we have come to Christ we are no longer under a schoolmaster. Let the Law principle go its way to work conviction in sinners and destroy their ill-grounded hopes, but you abide in Christ Jesus even as you have received Him. If you are to be saved by works then it is not of Grace, otherwise work is no more work. And if saved by Grace, then it is not of human merit, otherwise Grace is no more Grace. To be absolutely clear, here, is of the first importance, for on the rocks of legality many a soul has been cast away.  
We need, also, to keep up a clear distinction between the efforts of nature and the work of Grace. It is commendable for men to do all they can to improve themselves, and everything by which people are made more sober, more honest, more frugal, better citizens, better husbands, better wives is a good thing. But that is nature and not Grace. Reformation is not regeneration. “You must be born again,” still stands for the good as well as for the bad. To be made a new creature in Christ Jesus is as necessary for the moral as for the debauched, for when flesh has done its best, “that which is born of the flesh is flesh”—and men must be born of the Spirit or they cannot understand spiritual things, or enter into Heaven.  
I have always tried to keep up this distinction and I trust none of you will ever mistake the efforts of nature for the works of Divine Grace. Do what you can for human reformation, for whatever things are honest and of good repute you are to foster, but, still, *never* put the most philanthropic plan, or the most elevating system in the place of the work of Sovereign Grace, for, if you do, you will do 10 times as much mischief as you can possibly do good. We must rightly divide the Word of Truth.  
It is always well, too, for Christian men to be able to distinguish one Truth of God from another. Let the knife penetrate between the joints of the work of Christ *for* us and the work of the Holy Spirit *in* us. Justification, by which the Righteousness of Christ is imputed to us, is one blessing. Sanctification, by which we, ourselves, are made personally righteous, is another blessing. I have known some describe Sanctification as a sort of foundation, or at least a buttress for the work of Justification. Now, no man is justified because he is sanctified—he is justified because he believes in Him that justifies the ungodly. Sanctification *follows* Justification. It is the work of the Spirit of God in the soul of a Believer, who, first of all, was justified by believing in Jesus while as yet he was unsanctified. Give Jesus Christ all the glory for His great and perfect work and remember that you are perfect in Christ Jesus and accepted in the Beloved. But, at the same time, give glory to the Holy Spirit and remember that you are not yet perfect in holiness, but that the Spirit’s work is to be carried on and will be carried on all the days of your life.  
One other point of rightly dividing should never be forgotten—we must always distinguish between the root and the fruit. He is a very poor botanist who does not know a bulb from a bud—but I believe that there are some Londoners who do not know which are roots and which are fruits, so little have they seen of anything growing! And I am sure there are some theologians who hardly know which is the cause and which is the effect in spiritual things. Putting the cart before the horse is a very absurd thing, but many do it. Hear how people will say—“If I could feel joy in the Lord I would believe.” Yes, that is the cart before the horse, for joy is the *result* of faith, not the *reason* for it! “But I want to feel a great change of heart, and then I will believe.” Just so—you wish to make the fruit the root. “Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ,” that is the root of the matter! Change of life and joy in the Lord will spring up as gracious fruits of faith and not otherwise. When will you discriminate?  
Thus I have given you three versions of my text—rightly handling, straightly furrowing, and wisely discriminating.  
**IV.**The next interpretation of the Apostle’s expression is practically CUTTING OUT the Word for holy uses. This is the sense given by Chrysostom. I will show you what I mean here. Suppose I have a skin of leather before me and I want to make a saddle. I take a knife and I begin cutting out the shape. I do not want those parts which are dropping off on the right and round this corner—they are very good leather—but I cannot, just now, make use of them. I have to cut out my saddle and I make that my one concern.  
Or, suppose I have to make a pair of reins out of the leather. I must take my knife round and work away with one object, keeping clearly before me what I am aiming at. The preacher, to be successful, must also have his wits about him. And when he has the Bible before him he must use those portions which will have a bearing upon his grand aim. He must make use of the material laid ready to his hand in the Bible. Every portion of the Word of God is very blessed and exceedingly profitable, but it may not happen to be connected with the preacher’s immediate subject and, therefore, he leaves it to be considered another time. And, though some will upbraid him for it, he is much too sensible to feel bound to preach all the doctrines of the Bible in each sermon!  
He wants to have souls saved and Christians quickened and, therefore, he does not forever pour out the vials and blow the trumpets of prophecy. Some hearers are crazy after the mysteries of the future. Well, there are two or three Brothers in London who are always trumpeting and vialing. Go and hear them if you want to! I have something else to do. I confess I am not sent to decipher the Apocalyptic symbols—my errand is humbler but equally as useful—I am sent to bring souls to Jesus Christ!  
There are preachers who are always dealing with the deep things, the *very* deep things. For them the coral caves of mystery and the far descending shafts of metaphysics have a mighty charm. I have no quarrel with their tastes, but I do not think the Word of God was given us to be a riddle book. To me the *plain* Gospel is the part which I cut out and rightly cut out of the Word of God. There is a soul that needs to know how to find peace with God. Some other Brother can tell him where predestination falls in with free agency, I do not pretend to know. But I do know that faith in Jesus brings peace to the heart. My business is to bring forth

that which will save souls, build up saints and set Christians to work for Christ. I leave the mysteries, not because I despise them, but because the times demand that we, first, and above all other things, seek the souls of men!  
Some Truths of God press to be heard. They must be heard now, or men will be lost. The other Truths they can hear tomorrow, or by-and-by, but *now* escape from Hell and fitness for Heaven are their immediate business! Fancy the angels sitting down with Lot and his daughters, inside Sodom, and discussing predestination with them, or explaining the limits of free agency! No, no! They cry, “Come along,” and they take them by the arm and lead them out, saying, “Flee, flee, flee, for fire is coming down from Heaven and this city is to be destroyed!”  
This is what the preacher has to do—leaving certain parts of the Truth of God for other times, he is now rightly dividing the Word of Truth when he brings out that which is of pressing importance. In the Bible there are some things that are essential, without which a man cannot be saved at all. There are other things which are important, but still, men are saved, notwithstanding their ignorance of those things. Is it not clear that the essentials must have prominence? Every Truth ought to be preached in its turn and place, but we must never give the first place to a second Truth, or push that to the front which was meant to be in the background of the picture.  
“We preach Christ,” said the Apostle, “Christ and Him crucified.” And I believe that if the preacher is rightly to divide the Word, he will say to the sinner, “Sinner, Christ died, Christ rose again, Christ intercedes. Look to Him. As for the difficult questions and nice points, leave them for awhile. You shall discuss them by-and-by, so far as they are profitable to you, but just now, believing in the Lord Jesus Christ is the main matter.” The preacher must, thus, separate the vital from the secondary, the practical from the speculative and the pressing and immediate from that which may be lawfully delayed. And in that sense he will rightly divide the Word of Truth.  
**V.**I have given you four meanings. Now I will give you another, leaving out some I might have mentioned. One thing the preacher has to do is to ALLOT TO EACH ONE HIS PORTION. And here the figure changes. According to Calvin, the intention of the Spirit, here, is to represent one who is the steward of the house and has to apportion food to the different members of the family. He has rightly to divide the loaves so as not to give the little children and the babes all the crust. He has to rightly supply each one’s necessities, not giving the strong men milk, nor the babes hard diet—not casting the children’s bread to the dogs, nor giving the swine’s husks to the children—but placing before each his own portion.  
Let me try and do it. Child of God, your portion is the whole Word of God. Every promise in it is yours! Take it. Feed on it. Christ is yours. God is yours. The Holy Spirit is yours. This world is yours and worlds to come. Time is yours. Eternity is yours. Life is yours. Death is yours. Everlasting Glory is yours! There is your portion! It is very sweet to give you your royal meat. The Lord gives you a good appetite. Feed on it! Feed on it! Sinner, you who believe not in Jesus, none of this is yours! While you remain as you are, only the threats are yours. If you refuse to believe in Jesus, neither this life nor the next is yours, nor time, nor eternity. You have nothing good.  
O, how dreadful is your portion now, for the wrath of God abides on you! O, that you were wise, that your character might be changed, for until it is, we dare not flatter you. There is not a promise for you, nor a single approving sentence! You get your food to eat and your raiment to put on, but even that is given to you by the abounding long-suffering of God and it may become a curse to you unless you repent. I am sorry to bring you such a portion but I must be honest with you. That is all that I can give you. God has said it—it is an awful sentence—“I will *curse*their *blessings*.” O, Sinner, the curse of the Lord is in the house of the wicked!  
We have also to divide a portion to the *mourners*, and O, how sweet a task that is, to say to those that mourn in Zion that the Lord will give them beauty for ashes. “Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted.” The Lord will restore peace unto His mourners! Fear not, neither be dismayed, for the Lord will help you! But when we have given the mourners their sweet meats we have to turn round upon the *hypocrites* and say to them, “You may hang your heads like bulrushes. You may rend your garments and pretend to fast, but the Lord, who knows your heart, will suddenly come and unmask you! And if you are not sincere before Him—if you are weighed in the balances and found wanting—He will deal out the gall of bitterness to you forever! For his mourners there is mercy, but for the deceiver and the hypocrite there is judgment without mercy.”  
It is a very pleasant thing, moreover, to deal out a portion to the *seeker—*when we say, “He that seeks finds, and to him that knocks it shall be opened.” “Come unto Me all you that labor and are heavy laden,” says Christ, “for I will give you rest.” Take your portion and be glad! We have to turn round and say to others who *think* they are seekers, but *who are delaying*, “How long will you wait between two opinions?” How is it that you continually hesitate and refuse to believe in Jesus, and stay in the condition of unbelief, when the Gospel mandate is, “Believe—believe now and live”? So we have to give to one comfort, to another counsel—to one reproof, to another encouragement. We have to give to one the invitation—to another the warning. This is to rightly divide the Word of Truth.  
Yes, and sometimes God enables His servants to give the Word very remarkably to some men. I believe that if I were to tell a few of the things which have happened to me during the last 21 years they would not be believed. Or if I were to tell you of passages of history which are known to me that have occurred in this Tabernacle to people who have come here and to whom I have spoken the exact Word, not knowing them for a moment, the facts would sound like fictions. I will give you one instance. Some of you may remember my preaching from the text, “What if your father answers you roughly?” There came into the vestry, after that sermon, a venerable Christian gentleman, bringing with him a young foreigner whom he was anxious to satisfy upon one point.  
He said, “Sir, I want you kindly to answer this question—have you seen me, concerning this young gentlemen?” “No, Sir, certainly not,” I said. And assuredly, though I knew the gentleman who addressed me, he had never spoken to me about the foreign stranger whose very existence was, up to that moment, unknown to me. Said he, “This young gentleman is almost persuaded to be a Christian. His father is of quite another faith and worships other gods. And our young friend knows that if he becomes a Christian he will lose his father’s love. I said to him, when he conversed with me, come down and hear Mr. Spurgeon this morning. “Here he came, and your text was, ‘What if your father answers you roughly?’ Now, have you ever heard a word from me about this young gentleman?” “No, never,” I said. “Well,” said the young man, “it is the most extraordinary thing I ever heard in my life.” I could only say, “I trust it is the voice of God to your soul. God knows how to guide His servants to utter the Word most fitted to bless men.”  
Some time ago a town missionary had, in his district, a man who never would suffer any Christian person to come into his house. The missionary was warned by many that he would get a broken head if he ventured on a visit. He therefore kept from the house though it troubled his conscience to pass it by. He made a matter of prayer of it, and one morning he boldly ventured into the lion’s den and the man said, “What have you come here for?” “Well, Sir,” he said, “I have been conversing with people in all the houses along here, but I have passed you by because I heard you objected to it. But somehow I thought it looked cowardly to avoid you and therefore I have called.”  
“Come in,” the man said. “Sit down, sit down. Now, you are going to talk to me about the Bible. Perhaps you do not know much about it yourself. I am going to ask you a question and if you can answer me you shall come again. If you do not answer it, I will bundle you downstairs. Now,” he said, “do you understand me?” “Yes,” said the other, “I do understand you.” “Well, then,” he said, “this is the question—where do you find the word, ‘*girl,*’ in the Bible, and how many times do you find it?” The city missionary said, “The word, ‘girl,’ occurs only once in the Bible, and that is in the Book of Joel, the third chapter and the third verse. ‘They sold a girl for wine.’”  
“You are right,” he said, “but I would not have believed you knew it, or else I would have asked you some other question. You may come again.” “But,” said the missionary, “I should like you to know how I came to know it. This very morning I was praying for direction from God and when I was reading my morning chapter I came upon this passage, ‘And they sold a girl for wine,’ and I took down my Concordance to see whether the word, ‘girl,’ was to be found anywhere else. I found that the word, ‘girls,’ occurs in the passage, ‘There shall be girls and boys playing in the streets of Jerusalem,’ but the word did not occur as, ‘girl,’ anywhere but in Joel.”  
The result, however, of that story, however odd it seems, was that the missionary was permitted to call and the man took an interest in his visits. And the whole family were the better—the man and his wife, and one of his children becoming members of a Christian Church some time afterwards. What an extraordinary thing it seems, yet, I can assure you that such extraordinary things are as commonplaces in my experience. God does help His servants rightly to divide the Word, that is to say, to allot a special portion to each special case, so that it comes upon the man as if everything about him was known.  
Before I came to London, a man met me one Sunday, in a dreadful state of rage. He vowed he would horsewhip me for bullying him from the pulpit. What had I said, I asked. “What have you said? You looked me in the face and said, ‘What more can God do for you? Shall He give you a good wife? You have had one—you have killed her by bad treatment! You have just got another and you are likely to do the same by her.’” “Well,” I said, “did you kill your first wife by your bad treatment?” “They say so, but I was married on Saturday,” said he. “Did you not know it?” “No, I did not, I assure you,” I replied. “I have no knowledge whatever of your family matters, and I am sure I wish you joy with your new wife.” He cooled down a great deal but I believe that I had struck the nail on the head that time—that he had killed his wife with his unkindness and he scarcely liked to bring his new wife to the place of worship to be told of it.  
The cap fit him. And if any cap fits you, I pray you wear it, for so far from shrinking from being personal, I do assure you I *try* to be as personal as I can, for I long to see the Word go home to every man’s conscience, and convict him and make him tremble before God and confess his sin and forsake it!  
**VI.**You must give me a few more minutes while I take the last point, which is this. Rightly to divide the Word of Truth means to TELL EACH MAN WHAT HIS LOT AND HERITAGE WILL BE IN ETERNITY. Just as when Canaan was conquered, it was divided by lot among the tribes, so the preacher has to tell of Canaan, that happy land, but he has to also tell of the land of darkness and of death-shade, and to let each man know where his last abode will be. You know it. You who come here know it.  
Need I repeat a story that we have gone over and over a thousand times? As many as believe in Jesus and are renewed in heart, and are kept by the Grace of God through faith unto salvation, shall inherit eternal life. But as for those who believe not on God, who reject His Son, who abide in their sins—there remains nothing for them but “a fearful looking for of judgment and of fiery indignation.” “The wicked shall be turned into Hell with all the nations that forget God.” “These shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into life eternal.” “Beware,” says God—“Beware, you that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces and there be none to deliver.” O, the wrath to come! The wrath to come!  
Believer, there is your portion—in the blessed land! Sinner, unless you repent, there is your portion—in the land of darkness and of weeping—of wailing and of gnashing of teeth! I take a religious newspaper from America and the last copy I had of it bore on it these words at the end, in good large type, printed in a practical, business-like, American way—“If you do not want to have this paper, discontinue it NOW. If you wish to have it for the year 1876, send your subscription NOW. If you have any complaint against it, send your complaint NOW. If you have removed, send a notice of your change of residence NOW.”  
There was a big “NOW” at the end of every sentence! As I read it, I thought, well, that is right. That is common sense. And it struck me that I would say to you on this last Sunday night of the year, if you wish to forsake your sins, forsake them NOW. If you would have mercy from God through Jesus Christ, believe on Him NOW. What fitter time than before the dying year is gone—NOW, NOW, NOW? In that very paper I read a story concerning Messrs. Moody and Sankey on the same point.  
The story is that while they were preaching in Edinburgh, there was a man sitting opposite to them who was very deeply interested, and was drinking it all in. There was a pause in the service and the man went out with his friend, but when he reached the door he stopped and his friend said, “Come away, Jamie.” “No,” he said, “I will go back. I came here to get good to my soul and I have not taken it all in yet, I must go back again.” He went back, and sat in his old place and listened again. The Lord blessed him. He found Christ and so found salvation. Being a miner, he went down the pit the next day, to his work, and a mass of rock fell on him. He was taken out, but he could not recover. He said to the man who was helping him out, “O, Andrew, I am so glad it was all settled last night. Oh, Mon,” said he, “it was all settled last night.”  
Now, I hope those people who were killed in the railway accident on Christmas Eve could say—“It was all settled the night before.” What a blessed thing it will be for you, if you should meet with an accident tomorrow, to say, “Blessed be God, it was all settled last night. I gave any heart to Jesus, I yielded myself to His Divine Love and Mercy, and I am saved.” O Holy Spirit, grant it may be so, and You shall have the praise. Amen and amen!

***PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—2 Timothy 2.*HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—1,041, 960.** Adapted from*The C.H. Spurgeon Collection*, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307. Sermon #1854 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

**÷2Ti 2.19**

THE FOUNDATION AND ITS SEAL— A SERMON FOR THE TIMES

NO. 1854

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, AUGUST 9, 1885, *BY C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“Nevertheless the foundation of God stands sure, having this seal, ‘The Lord knows them that are His,’ and,  
‘Let everyone that names the name of Christ depart from iniquity.’”*** 2Ti 2:19***.***

PAUL had met with many difficulties in his earnest career, but his most painful trials came from false brethren. It is battle, enough, for the Church to contend with the world, but what is she to do when she has to contend with herself? To go forth weeping, bearing precious seed and, in due time, to reap it in the heat of the sun is toil enough for the farmer— but what is he to do when the tares are sown among the wheat and they spring up and well-near choke the growing grain? He is distressed and knows not what to do! At first he is eager to root up the tares; then he fears that he might root up the wheat with them and so, at his Master’s command, he lets both grow together until the harvest. This he does with tears in his eyes, for he foresees that those growing tares must do fearful mischief to the good seed and, in the end, where he looked for much, he will gather little.

A compact army of brave spirits, every man in health and every man a hero, can march across a continent and strike at the foe, time after time— and every stroke shall fall as from the hammer of Thor. But if you have the leadership of a great and motley host—and there are many sick folk to be carried in the ambulances, while others are faint-hearted, cowardly and cold in the cause and, yet another company are half suspected of a design to go over to the adversary—then the captain’s hair may well turn gray in a night at the thought of what may be the result of a battle! Paul was full of somewhat similar anxieties when about to leave the field of conduct to receive his crown. He was handing over his commission of Watchman of the Churches to Timothy and, as he did so, it was with a trembling hand, as he thought of the evil influences which were at work within the Church, itself. Outside persecution seemed light enough to him, but internal dissension, heresy and ungodliness weighed upon his spirit.

When I read this Second Epistle to Timothy, it reminds me, somewhat—only it is a great improvement upon it—of David’s addressing Solomon and reminding him of those who had given him trouble in his lifetime. He exhorted him how to deal wisely with them lest his kingdom should be disturbed by them. You notice that throughout the Epistle, the Apostle makes more mention of troublesome individuals than in any other letter. In the first chapter there is Phygellus and Hermogenes. And now we come upon Hymenaeus and Philetus. These dogs generally hunt in couples. A little further on you get Demas and Alexander, the coppersmith, who had done much evil to the Apostle. The departing saint, harboring no resentment, yet has great anxiety of spirit as to what these mischiefmakers might do with a young man like Timothy, since they had been such thorns in his own side.

It is a cheering thing to note that while Paul mentions these things with a gracious anxiety, they do not disturb the serenity of his faith, nor make him question, for a moment, the success of the cause, nor doubt the success of the work which the Lord had worked by his own hands. These are his words—“For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: therefore there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the Righteous Judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them, also, that love His appearing.” Courage, then, servant of God! Whatever may be your trials because of an apostatizing church, your faith will give you victory! Be faithful to the Word of the Holy Testimony and the Truth of God shall yet prevail. Live much in communion with your Master, for by His name shall you triumph!

Project yourself into the eternal future. Feel the crown already upon your head when it is aching under many sorrows! Hear the Master’s word, “Well done,” when you are weary with the noise of them that oppose the Cross. Stand fast! Having done all, still stand! The campaign is not lost. Despite all that has happened, or ever shall happen, not one jot the less does, “the foundation of God stands sure.” The work of God goes on and the reward which God gives to the workers is not diminished, nor even placed in danger. Therefore, in patience, possess your soul.

This morning, with deep solemnity of soul, I approach this text and pray that the Spirit of God may bless it to us all. I see in it, three things. The first, perhaps, is rather in the context, it is *the lamentable overthrow* of which the Apostle has been speaking. He says that these two men, Hymenaeus and Philetus, overthrew the faith of some. Secondly, we shall survey *the abiding foundation—*“the foundation of God stands sure.” And then, thirdly, *the instructive inscription* upon the foundation stone, “The Lord knows them that are His.” And, “Let everyone that names the name of Christ depart from iniquity.”

**I.**First, let us think, for a little, of THE LAMENTABLE OVERTHROW which the Apostle so much deplored.  
The Apostle observed with sorrow *a general coldness*. It was, in some respects, coldness towards himself, but in reality it was a turning away from the simplicity of the Doctrine of Salvation by Grace through faith. He says in the 15th verse of the previous chapter, “This you know, that all they which are in Asia are turned away from me; of whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes,” two men, I suppose, of whom he had hoped better things—perhaps persons who had professed a warm attachment to him. Their departure was the unkindest cut of all.  
A great lack of spiritual life and zeal for the Truth of God is our trial, today. Laodicea is not the only Church that is neither cold nor hot. I am, at this moment, unwillingly compelled to believe that a very serious blight is upon many of our Churches. From a wide correspondence, I gather that a wintry chill is just now upon the Church—possibly it is not to such an extent as in certain terrible periods—but still to a very saddening degree. There is not that firmness in the faith, that holiness of life and that enthusiasm for the Cross of Christ that one would wish to see. I view the immediate prospect with serious anxiety. Yet, I was reading Mr. Bunyan’s words concerning the age in which he lived and I find that he had similar apprehensions in his time. And I notice that before his day, each loyalhearted man of God was troubled with similar fears.  
Nor were those fears childish—they were not a presumptuous trembling for the Ark of the Lord, but a godly jealousy lest the enemy should get an advantage over the hosts of God. It is a mercy that there should be somebody to complain; somebody to express the longing of the Church for better things. I am sure that there is grave reason for regret at this moment. Though we look with the greatest gratitude upon all the things that are good, we still have to look with heavy hearts upon much that is grievous to the Spirit of God in the Churches of the present day.  
Furthermore, the Apostle saw with much alarm that *teachers were erring*. He names two especially, Hymenaeus and Philetus, and he mentions the doctrine that they taught—not needlessly explaining it, but merely giving a hint at it. They taught, among other things, that the Resurrection was already past. I suppose they had fallen into the manner of certain in our day who spiritualize or rationalize everything. They say, “This is mythical! This death of Christ is to be understood as the triumph of selfsacrifice. This Resurrection of Christ means the revival of forgotten principles.” Thus they hold an atonement which is no Atonement and a resurrection which is no Resurrection. They appear to accept the great historical fact and yet they reduce it to fiction! This is the subtlety of the old serpent! Somehow or other, these men manage to extract from the Gospel an attractive philosophy, but it is not the Gospel which God intended to be preached! They seek, rather, the wisdom of man’s thought than the Revelation of God’s thoughts. You need not that I go into particulars, for all around us men are dealing craftily with the Truth of God—adulterating it and in heart denying it. These are, by no means, persons to be trifled with—many of them are keen, acute, and thoughtful—and it is the great peril of the Church, at this moment, that she numbers such among her teachers. These can stab under the shield. We care not for the besiegers outside, but we are distressed because of the traitors within! God grant that this thing may go no further, but may His people become alarmed by the growing decline of the Church and resolve to be rid of this destructive influence which eats as does a canker.  
In Paul’s day, many *professors were apostatizing from the faith*because of the evil leaders. Sheep are such creatures to follow something, that, when they do not follow the shepherd, they display great readiness to follow one another. When Hymenaeus and Philetus taught a highly intellectual doctrine, many people who fancied themselves to be cultured, must necessarily be of their mind. Hymenaeus had discovered a method of being abreast of the times, so that the Christian teacher could figure in the heathen academy and be complimented for his liberal views. These “cultured” teachers looked down with contempt upon those uncouth fishermen who were so unlearned and ignorant as to believe that the teaching of Jesus meant what it said, for they, themselves, gave the Gospel a more rational meaning! They thought themselves profound and eclectic men who could see the soul of things and, therefore, they rejected the simplicity of the Cross and put in its place the theories of the philosophers. They took away the foundation facts under the pretence of building higher and thus the faith of many was overthrown.  
Take away the Resurrection and what remains of the Gospel? The Resurrection of Christ and the consequent resurrection of His people is the keystone of the arch of the Christian system! And if that is removed as a myth, the whole building falls. The Apostle saw numbers of persons led astray by this error as, alas, we see many in these times deluded with kindred falsehoods! It becomes Christian men, nowadays, to carefully discriminate as to what they hear. I read, the other day, a complaint as to small towns having many chapels where one might have sufficed. Truly, one *might* suffice if the Gospel were faithfully preached in it, but a score would not be enough if, in them all, there was an absence of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and of the life and power of the Holy Spirit! When another Gospel is introduced, those who love the Truth of God are bound to enter their earnest protest and to form another congregation. I am for unity in the life and Truth of God, and for our coming closer and closer together— spiritual men to spiritual men—but that is quite another thing from making an aggregate of this great motley mass of Christian profession and unchristian teaching, since it has so little of the true life of Christ within it! Would to God that in every place where Christ is preached professedly, He were preached truthfully! Oh that you who profess to follow Christ were really doing so! But what is the chaff to the wheat? How much of chaff is mixed with every heap that lies upon our Lord’s threshing floor!  
Paul also deplored that *ungodliness increased*. He says that the profane and vain babblings of his time increased unto more ungodliness. O Brothers and Sisters, it is *godliness* that we need—the living of the soul *with* God, *in* God and *to* God. We need a *holy fear* of God, a *sacred sense* of God, a *true delight* in God! We need less of man and more of God! Less of mere creed-repeating and more of vital faith in God. Less following of men and more following of God in Christ Jesus. More of union with God, living in God and likeness to God. Oh that He would work this in us! The world grows dark with accursed lusts and the Christian Church grows more conformed to the ungodly world. Persecutions unto death have ceased—it is easy and respectable to bear the Christian name—and, therefore, the separation from the world, which is the glory of Christians, becomes less and less apparent!  
My heart is sorely wounded with the sight of some who will come into God’s house and undertake God’s service during the Sabbath and yet, during the week they are unjust, oppressive, graceless and greedy—not servants of God, but servants of self and sin! By unholy professors, the Cross is dishonored, the Holy Spirit is grieved and Christ is put to an open shame! All this vexed the heart of the Apostle in his day and it is our cross and burden at this hour. “Lord have mercy upon us! Christ have mercy upon us!”  
**II.**Now let us turn to the subject which supplied Paul with consolation. He speaks of the ABIDING FOUNDATION—“Nevertheless the foundation of God stands sure.” It is a joy to quit the ever-moving flood for the firm, substantial rock. It is bliss to feel that there is something under your feet, something substantial, abiding, sure. “Nevertheless, the foundation of God stands sure.” Though the earth is removed and though the mountains are carried into the midst of the sea—though the waters thereof roar and are troubled and though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof—yet will we not fear, for the Lord Jehovah changes not!  
What is this foundation which stands sure? Those who have interpreted the passage have given many meanings to it, but I believe that all those meanings are really one. For the sake of clearness, I would give three answers to the enquiry—the foundation is, secretly, the purpose of God; doctrinally, the Truth of God; effectively, the Church of God—in all, the system of God whereby He glorifies His Grace. The foundation is *the Divine purpose*. Though men prove fickle, false, wicked and the Church is sorely grieved, “nevertheless” God’s purpose is carried out! The Covenant of Grace is fulfilled and the Glory of God is revealed. God has a grand design from which He has never swerved, no, not by so much as a hair’s breadth! His purpose shall stand! He will do all His pleasure. It is incumbent upon us to believe in the responsibility of men and to feel the weight of that Truth, for as a Truth of God, it is of the most solemn importance. It is our duty to give ourselves up with all our might to the doing of that which is right, as if all things depended on us. Yet when we are baffled by matters which are beyond our control, it is a blessed thing to fall back upon the purpose and Providence of the Almighty—and feel that though *we* are defeated—He cannot be! There is a power high over all which works for righteousness. The Messiah “shall not fail nor be discouraged till He has set judgement in the earth and the isles shall wait for His Law.” The Divine design in creation shall be effected and in redemption and in Providence, it shall be the same. The Lord shall be, at the last, victor all along the line! The good shall glorify Him and even the evil shall be compelled to magnify the greatness of His majesty. “The Lord reigns; let the earth rejoice; let the multitude of isles be glad thereof.” God Himself, who is in very deed the Foundation of all things, stands sure!  
The Apostle also meant *the Divine Truth*, which is the foundation of the Gospel. He had been speaking about certain Truths of God which were spirited away by those two unworthies, Hymenaeus and Philetus, and he says, “Nevertheless the foundation of God stands sure.” Interpreters have thought that Paul points at the doctrine of the Resurrection. No doubt he does, but he includes every other doctrine which is a foundational Truth of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Yonder is a man who has proved that Jesus is not truly God. Let him prove what he likes, since Jesus *is* God for all that! Another man has disproved the substitutionary Atonement of Christ—let him disprove it if he pleases, for it is just as true! Rhetoric and logic can do wonders in*appearance*, but they do nothing in *reality*. The orator’s thunder has not shaken the unchangeable Truth of God! He is proud of his triumphs, but as we look into the Book and look into the dear Master’s face, we feel that, “nevertheless the foundation of God stands sure.”  
No Truth of God has ever been destroyed by all the fires through which it has passed! The fire which tried the bush in the wilderness was a much more potent element than any that men can kindle, for it was God’s own Presence and He is, emphatically, “a consuming fire.” Yet the bush was not consumed by such a fire! What, then, can destroy it? Even so, since the Truth can stand the test of God, the All-Trying One, depend upon it, it can endure the test of such poor fires as man can bring to bear upon it! In a broad Scotch version I read, “The bush lowe’d and was nane the waur”— that is to say, “it was none the worse.” Brethren, the Gospel is none the worse for all the opposition which has surrounded it, though it has been as fierce as a devouring flame! Only the additions of men have been burnt out of it. Everything that can be consumed *ought* to be consumed and only that which cannot be burned is really God’s eternal Truth. All that has happened by all the controversy of all the ages, is that man’s fiction has been separated from God’s foundation—man’s speculation has been purged out of God’s Revelation! The foundation of God stands sure and, oh, the joy of this fact to every heart that loves the Lord!  
But, further, I think Paul meant, here, not only the purpose of God and the Truth of God, but *God’s Divine work* in the world in the salvation of His own. The Divine Election of God has been fulfilled so far—and those whom God has really saved—in whom there has been a real work of Grace, stand sure when all others are overthrown. You look upon the Church and lament that so many have turned aside; that so many others are very poor specimens of Christians; that so many more are sadly questionable and that a certain company are evidently false. Well, it *is* very sad, but there is a remnant according to the election of Grace—“the foundation of God stands sure.” Those who were really laid upon the foundation by the Spirit of God—those who are vitally united to Christ—these still stand firm in faith and character! Those who are truly born of God live unto God! The righteous hold on their way. The choice spirits endure unto the end. Does not Jesus say, “My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me”? Does He not declare that, “A stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him, for they know not the voice of strangers”?  
The teachers of error would, if it were possible, have deceived the very elect, but the chosen detect the deception by the spiritual discernment which is in them and by the teaching of the Holy Spirit! They love the Truth and live the Truth—and the Truth lives in them. Thus in their persons, “the foundation of God stands sure.” Brothers and Sisters, let us take great joy in this foundation of God, this faithful Church of God which is steadfast and immovable in the day of blasphemy and rebuke. Blessed be the name of the Lord, He still has a quickened people! He still has a Church in the world—in all communities of professing Christians, there is a secret seed of faithful ones—and while the floods and the winds have driven down the stream, the many towering houses that were built upon the sand, yet the house of God still stands upon the Rock!  
It is not yet complete so as to be fully built as the great House of God is to be. At the present it wears, rather, the aspect of a foundation, or basement, than of a house—but it will rise by degrees to be a fair palace—and even now the King, Himself, deigns to dwell in it! What there is of the true Church is a sure prophecy of what there shall be before long. “The foundation of God stands sure.” Let us take courage from this and be not sorely moved nor dismayed in the day of apostasy. “They went out from us, but they were not of us.” The hireling flees because he is an hireling. Let us not dwell exclusively upon the mournful side, lest we lose that joy of the Lord which is our strength. Our Master wept over Jerusalem, once, but He also rejoiced in spirit when His mind looked another way. In His heart He always mourned over the woes of ungodly men, but still, He thought and spoke of more cheering themes—and so must we. It would not become us to let any one form of thought penetrate our hearts through and through with painful monotony. You can contemplate the sad side of things till you become so wretched as to be unable to do good! Have a brave and hopeful heart. When you see a black cloud, look for its silver lining. When you see that which looked like substantial material consumed in the fire, be thankful that if the wood and hay are gone, the gold and silver remain. God is laying a foundation for the future, a foundation so sure that it cannot be moved! And He will build upon it, course after course of jeweled stones till its walls, great and high, appear unto all men!  
Soon shall we see its windows of agate and its gates of carbuncle. Soon shall the glittering pinnacles of “the terrible crystal” shine in the eternal light and, best of all, we shall inhabit the house forever and go no more out, for the Lord God and the Lamb shall be the Glory of that House and His faithful ones shall be built into it as living stones! Pluck up courage, then, and stand in your place, O you who are trembling! Let, “Onward!,” be your watchword! Victory is not so far away as we fear. The retreat of yonder cowards is nothing—the turning back of the men of Ephraim is according to their nature. But be strong and

quit yourselves like men, for the Lord of Hosts is with us, the God of Jacob is our refuge!  
**III.**Now, we are, in the third place, as we may be helped of the Holy Spirit, to look at this foundation and observe THE INSTRUCTIVE INSCRIPTION. I think this figure best expresses the Apostle’s intent. He represents the foundation stone as bearing an inscription upon it, like the stone mentioned by the Prophet Zechariah, of which we read, “I will engrave the graving thereof, says the Lord of Hosts, and I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day.” The custom of putting inscriptions upon foundation stones is ancient and general. In the days of the Pharaohs, the royal cartouche was impressed upon each brick that was placed in buildings raised by royal authority. The structure was thus known to have been erected by a certain Pharaoh. Here we have the royal cartouche, or seal, of the King of Kings set upon the foundation of the great palace of the Church. The House of Wisdom bears, on its forefront and foundation, the seal of the Lord. The Jews were known to write texts of Scripture upon the doorposts of their houses—in this, also, we have an illustration of our text.  
The Lord has set upon His purpose, His Gospel, His Truth, the double mark described in the text—the Divine Election and the Divine Sanctification. This seal is placed to declare that it belongs to the Lord, alone, and to set it apart for His personal habitation. Does not the Lord thus say, “This is My rest forever: here will I dwell; for I have desired it”? By His choice and by His sanctifying Grace, He has formed a people for Himself and they shall show forth His praise. The inscription, moreover, is put upon the foundation stone, that every man may take heed how he builds on it. We cannot be sure, when we build, that every stone we place upon the foundation is well and truly laid there—“The Lord knows them that are His.” But we have this mark to guide us—those who truly name the name of Christ depart from all iniquity. “By their fruits you shall know them.”  
We are to use judgement in our building and this is the rule of it—we must look for holiness in every real convert, for, “without holiness no man shall see the Lord.” It is labor in vain to build those into the visible Church who are not sanctified in the spirit of their minds. In doctrine, also, it is in vain to preach unless our doctrine is according to godliness. A holy God will not dwell with an unholy people! If the foundation is holy, so must the building be. The seal upon the foundation is the mark of the builder and the indication of the object of that which is built. It is intended to denote the character of the entire edifice, for God’s building is all of one piece and of one nature throughout. On each individual Christian, who is truly so, there is the private seal of Divine knowledge and the public seal of Divine likeness. God knows and approves each true Believer and each true Believer proves his knowledge of God and his delight in Him by departing from iniquity.  
My inmost soul vehemently desires to aid in building up a Church that shall be composed of men approved of God—God-fearing, God-loving men and women in whom God lives and who, therefore, live unto Him! What a Church this will be! Upon such a people will be seen the second mark, for they will hate all sin and flee from it. They love that which is good, true, loving and God-like. In us these two things must meet—God’s free and sovereign Grace towards us and our hearty and practical obedience to His will, or else we are not His sealed ones and are not built on His sealed foundation.  
If I might use another illustration, I can suppose that when the stones for the Temple were quarried in the mountains, each one received a special mark from Solomon’s seal, marking it as a Temple stone and, perhaps, denoting its place in the sacred edifice. This would be like the first inscription, “The Lord knows them that are His.” But the stone would not long lie in the quarry. It would be taken away from its fellows, after being marked for removal. Here is the transport mark in the second inscription—“Let everyone that names the name of Christ depart from iniquity.” The first seal marked it for the Lord, the second secured its removal from the common stones around it. First comes election and then sanctification follows. I want every professing Christian to have that double mark and so to be Christ’s man, known of all to be such by coming out from the unclean and being separated unto the Lord. Remember the words of the Prophet Isaiah—“Depart you, depart you, go you out from them, touch no unclean thing; go you out of the midst of her; be you clean, that bear the vessels of the Lord.”  
Carefully follow me while I notice that the first mark is concerning God and us, and the second mark is concerning us and God.  
The first is *concerning God and us*. “The Lord knows them that are His.” He knows, that is, He foresees and predestinates, for, “whom He did foreknow He also did predestinate.” Those that are His, He always has known to be His, for they were His from before the foundation of the world! They are His known ones when He deals with them in Grace and comes into their hearts by His powerful operations. He watches over them by a special Providence, knowing the way that they take and never losing sight of them.  
The text teaches us that the Lord discriminates—“The Lord knows them that are His.” Some who bear His name are not His and He knows them not. He will say of them at the last, “I never knew you.” They are supposed to be His. They suppose themselves to be His—they are taken into His Church as His, they continue throughout a long life nominally His—but they are discovered at the last. There is another and severer test than that of ministers, elders and Church votes—the Lord knows the secret things of the heart. Be not deceived, God is not mocked! There is an eye that has no failure in its vision, but sees to the very soul of things and reads the hypocrite despite his pretended sanctity! This discernment on the part of God should make us walk very truthfully before Him. Let none of us profess to be the Lord’s unless we are such—nor ever pretend to an experience which we have not truly felt, for the Lord cannot be, in any measure, deceived—He searches the heart and tries the reins of the children of men.  
“The Lord knows them that are His,” signifies that He is familiar with them and communes with them. They that are really the Lord’s property are also the Lord’s company—He has conversation with them. They know Him and He knows them. He makes Himself known to them and they make themselves known to Him. O Brothers and Sisters, do you know God? Does God know you? Will He ever say, “I never knew you”? When I have been cast down, I have said unto the Lord—“Lord, You cannot say You do not know me, for I have knocked at Your door by the hour together! I have burdened You with my needs and haunted You with my groans. I have been Your daily beggar, receiving large alms at Your hands.” It is a blessed thing to be sure that we are not unknown in Heaven. At least we have the fellowship of asking and receiving, if no more.  
Further, the words imply God’s preservation of His own, for when God knows a man, He approves him and, consequently, preserves him. “The Lord knows them that are His” and He will keep such to the end. This man, Hymenaeus, and his fellow, Philetus, may deceive many, but the Lord, who is the true Pastor of the Church, will keep His own sheep according to His word—“I give unto My sheep eternal life and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand.” This is the first seal of the sure foundation. Be not afraid of it. “The Lord knows them that are His.”  
The second seal is *concerning us and God—*“Let everyone that names the name of Christ depart from iniquity.” Observe how the practical always goes with the doctrinal in holy Scripture. Those whom Free Grace chooses, Free Grace cleanses. We are not chosen because we are holy, but chosen *to be* holy and, being chosen, the purpose is no dead letter, but we are made to seek after holiness. Note that the word is universal as to Believers—“Let everyone that names the name of Christ depart from iniquity.” You expect ministers to be careful in their conduct and so they should be. But are not their people under the same obligation? Elders and deacons are expected to be gracious. This, indeed, is as it should be, but why not those of whom they are the servants? Let everyone that is called a Christian, or trusts Christ, or preaches Christ, or teaches Christ, flee far from the ways of unrighteousness!  
This is a sweeping precept as to the thing to be avoided—let him, “depart from iniquity”—not from this or that crime or folly, but from iniquity, itself, from everything that is evil, from everything that is unrighteous or unholy! O you Christian people, be holy, for Christ is holy! Do not pollute that holy name by which you are named. O you people of God, if you are, indeed, the Lord’s, let no sin dwell with you! Do not say, “It is a constitutional sin.” You are born again, what have you to do with the old constitution but to mortify it? Do not say, “Oh, but others do it.” What have you to do with *others*?—to their own master they stand or fall! Depart from iniquity on your own account, even as Israel departed out of Egypt. Let your family life, your personal life, your business life be as holy as Christ, your Lord, would have it to be.  
The text is very decisive—it does not say, “Let him put iniquity on one side,” but, “Let him depart from it.” Get away from evil. All your lives long travel further and further from it.  
Do you know where my text originally came from? I believe it was taken from the Book of Numbers. Read in the 16th chapter the story of Korah, Dathan and Abiram. In the Septuagint, almost the same words occur as those now before us. Moses and Aaron were the servants of God and they were, so to speak, the foundation of the building of the Jewish Commonwealth. Moses was faithful in all his house. Korah, Dathan and Abiram rebelled and sought to overthrow that foundation—and Moses replied to them, “The Lord will show who are His, and who are holy; and will cause him to come near unto Him; even him whom He has chosen will He cause to come near to Him.” So Moses bids them come and bring their censers and officiate as priests, if they dare to do so. There they stand and there stands Aaron and the Lord knows and shows who are His!  
Now, turn to the 26th verse of the same chapter and read, “Depart, I pray you, from the tents of these wicked men, and touch nothing of theirs, lest you be consumed in all their sins.” Then the faithful fled away from their tents on every side and, before long, the ground split asunder that was under them and the earth opened her mouth and swallowed them up. What a parallel is the whole chapter with my text! And what a warning to all who teach false doctrine within the Church of God! Judgment will surely overtake them. The Lord shall “gather out of His Kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity and shall cast them into a furnace of fire.” The Lord Jesus is exercising discipline in His Church every day. It is no trifling matter to be a Church member and no small business to be a preacher of the Gospel. If you name the name of Christ, you will either be settled in Him or driven from Him! There is continually going on an establishment of living stones upon the foundation and a separating from it of the rubbish which gathers.  
Come to Christ, we say, and oh that you would come! But still do *not* come to Him pretendedly and nominally, for, “His fan is in His hand and He will thoroughly purge His floor.” To and fro goes that great winnowing fan and every breath of the wind drives away chaff that looks like wheat! Who can tell, by sight, what it is? The good grain falls to the ground, but lo, the chaff is blown away! Yonder fire that is burning outside the threshing floor destroys it. Judgment must begin at the House of God! The Lord may let the wicked remain in this world unpunished for many a day, but if you come near to Him, He will be sanctified in you, or upon you. There is discipline within my Master’s house and if you come under His roof, you must come under that discipline. For this cause in olden times many were sick in the Churches and many died prematurely—and it is still so, for within His great house a jealous God maintains a strict rule. Thus says the Lord, “You only have I known of all the families of the earth: therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities.” Look how He dealt with Ananias and Sapphira within the Church, while many a liar outside of it grows gray in falsehood! Nadab and Abihu died before the Lord because they offered strange fire, while many another man has lived on in the blackest iniquities. For Achan’s sin, the whole nation of Israel was sorely troubled! What a solemn thing is iniquity in the Church of God!  
Brothers and Sisters, I conclude with a brief but earnest appeal. Let us seek after the highest degree of holiness. Let us not be satisfied with being nominal Christians! Let us aim at the greatest measure of godliness. Let us plunge into the stream of Grace, immersing ourselves wholly into the life of God. How many professors appear to know nothing of the real force and energy of the Spirit of God in subduing sin and creating holiness! Theirs is a shallow life. Alas, how much they lose! They come under the obligations of the House of God, but they do not know the infinite privileges of that house. It is for the truly *spiritual* that God reserves the choicest of His dainties. Be half a Christian and you shall have enough religion to make you miserable—be wholly a Christian and your joy shall be full! Walk with God in the light as He is in the light and you shall have fellowship with Him, such as shall make earth akin to Heaven!  
But take a little light and a little darkness and attempt to make a mixture of them—seek to join the Church *and* the world—and you shall have neither the pleasures of the world nor the comforts of the Spirit. It is a pity for a man to miss joys which an angel might covet! What an injury such professors are to the Church! Each one pulls his companions up or drags them down. Every man in the Church is either a help or a hindrance. No Christian man can live to himself. He may attempt to confine himself within his own ribs, button up his coat and fancy that what he does is to himself, alone, and that his tongue and his heart are his own, but it is not so. A smell steals forth from every man’s life and it is either like the spikenard of the alabaster box, or like the reeking of a dung-hill. God help us to remember our influence upon others!  
Think, also, how much the world is injured by Christians who are not Christians! Oh Friends, we need, nowadays, a sterling Christianity! We cannot do with German silver, now! We must have the real metal. I was about to say I would sooner you had no religion and made no pretence to having any, than to have the imitation of it. Sin is real today. We have heard enough of how far sinners will go—they venture not only to the brink of Hell, but they snatch the accursed fire out of the pit, itself, and bring it into our city! Shall saints be shams, when sinners are so real? Shall Baal have worshippers that cut themselves with knives and leap upon his altar in the frenzy of their lust—and shall Jehovah have only a faithless company who, as yet, are halting between two opinions and do not know whether He is God or not? Oh for a Church of God that will shake itself loose from the world! If we had but one such Church, there would be hope for our age. God send it!  
Last of all, how is Christ shamed and dishonored when we are not holy, but worldly, covetous, proud and unloving! Oh, Sirs, it seems to me that since the foundation of God was laid in agony and bloody sweat and, since God Himself became Incarnate that He might lay the foundation of holiness in the world, we ought to take heed how and what we build thereon! We must come to it, for, “other foundation can no man lay.” And it behooves us to come very solemnly to it and to know what we mean by building thereon. True godliness is not to say, “I believe,” but to believe! Not to *talk* of repentance, but to repent! It is not to speak of regeneration, but to be born again! It is not to talk about consecration, but really to live to God! It is not to speak about the Holy Spirit, but to have Him dwelling in you!  
Be it ours to have the Truth of God in the inward parts and Grace in the core of the heart. Oh, may God bring us to this! We ask it for our Lord Jesus Christ’s sake. Amen.

Adapted from*The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #1348 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

÷2Ti 2.20

THE GREAT HOUSE AND THE VESSELS IN IT  
NO. 1348

**DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, APRIL 8, 1877, *BY C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but, also, of wood and of earth; and some to honor and some to dishonor. If a man, therefore, purges himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honor, sanctified, and meet for the Master’s use, and prepared unto every good work.”*** 2Ti 2:20-21***.***

ONE of the most serious calamities which can befall a Church is to have her own ministers teaching heresy. Yet this is no new thing—it has happened from the beginning. Paul and Peter and James and John, in their Epistles, had to speak of seducers in the Churches, even in those primitive days, and ever since then there have arisen in the very midst of the House of God those who have subverted the faith of many and led them away from the fundamental Truths of God into errors of their own inventing.

The Apostle compares this to gangrene which is one of the most dangerous and deadly mischiefs which can occur to the body. It is *within* the body—it eats deeper and deeper into the flesh, festering and putrefying— and if it is not stopped it will continue its ravages till life is extinguished by “black mortification.” False doctrine and an unchristian spirit in the midst of the Church, itself, must be regarded as such a gangrene—a silent wolf ravenously gnawing at the heart—the vulture of Prometheus devouring the vitals. No external opposition is one-half so much to be dreaded!

Yet here is our comfort when distressed at the evils of the present age, among which this is one of the chief, that the Truth of God abides forever the same! “The foundation of God stands sure.” There is no moving that. Whether 10,000 oppose it or promulgate it, the Truth of God is still the same in every jot and tittle. Even as the sun shines evermore, as well when clouds conceal its brightness as when, from a clear sky, it pours abroad a flood of glory, the lovers of profane and vain babblings have not taken away from us, nor can they take from us, the eternal Truths of God!

The Lord lives, though they have said, “There is no God.” The precious blood of Jesus has not lost its efficacy, though divines have beclouded the Atonement. The Spirit of God is not less mighty to quicken and to console though men have denied His personality. The Resurrection is as sure as if Hymenaeus and Philetus had never said that it is passed already. And the eternal Covenant of Grace abides forever unbroken though Pharisees and Sadducees unite to revile it! The foundation of God stands sure and, moreover, the foundation of the Church remains sure, also, for, blessed be God, “the Lord knows them that are His.”

All that God has built upon the foundation which He, Himself, has laid, keeps its place—not one living stone that He ever laid upon the Foundation has been lifted from its resting place. Earthquakes of error may test the stability of the building and cause great searching of heart, but sooner shall the mountains which are round about Jerusalem start from their seats than the work or Word of the Lord be frustrated! The things which cannot be shaken remain unaltered in the very worst times. “After all,” says the Apostle, in effect, though in fewer words, “it is not such a very great wonder that there should be persons in the Church who are not of the sterling metal of sincerity, nor of the gold and silver of Truth which endures the fire. You must not look at Hymenaeus and Philetus as if they were prodigies. There have been many like they are and there will be many more. These ill weeds grow in all ages and they multiply and increase.”

Where, dear Brothers and Sisters, beneath the skies shall we find absolute purity in any community? The very first family had a Cain in it and there was a wicked Ham even in the select few within the Ark. In the household of the father of the faithful there was an Ishmael. Isaac, with all his quiet walk with God, must be troubled with an Esau. And you know how, in the house of Jacob, there were many sons that walked not as they should. When the Church of God was in the wilderness and had a barrier of desert between it and the outer world, yet you know how Korah, Dathan and Abiram were there, beside many other troublers in Israel!

Yes, even amidst the most select part of the visible Church of God, in the *priesthood*, there were found those that dishonored it. Nadab and Abihu were slain with fire before the Lord and Hophni and Phinehas died in battle because they had made themselves vile, though God’s anointed priests. Even when our Divine Master had formed for Himself—

***“A little garden, walled around,***

***Chosen, and made peculiar ground,”***  
in which there were but 12 choice trees, yet one of them bore evil fruit. “I have chosen you 12, and one of you is a devil.” In the great field which Christ has sown, tares will spring up among the wheat, for the enemy

takes pains to sow them. Neither is it possible for us to root them up. In the king’s garden, briars will grow—thorns, also—and thistles will the most sacred soil yield us.

Even the lilies of Christ grow among thorns. You cannot keep the best of Churches altogether pure, for though the Lord Himself has prepared a vineyard and make a winepress and built a wall about it, yet the foxes come and spoil the vines. And though our great Lord has an orchard which yields rare fruit, yet when He comes to visit it, He finds a barren fig tree, dug about and fed, it is true, but still barren! Look to Christ’s fold on earth and behold there are wolves in sheep’s clothing there! Look to the net which His servants draw to shore and there are both good and bad fish in it. Yes, lift your eyes to the skies and though there are myriads of stars, yet you shall mark wandering stars among them—and meteors which are and are not—and are quenched in the blackness of darkness forever. Until we shall come to the Heaven of the Most High we must expect to find chaff mixed with the wheat, dross with the gold, goats with the sheep and dead flies in the ointment. Only let us see to it that *we* are not of that ill character, but are precious in the sight of the Lord.

Coming to the text, the Apostle suggests the encouragement I have already given, under a certain metaphor. He says that in a great house there will naturally be varieties of furniture. And there will be vessels and utensils of many kinds—some of them will be of wood and of earthenware, for meaner purposes—but others of gold and silver, for state occasions— when the honor and glory of the great proprietor are to be displayed. There are vessels of precious metal in a great house and these are its honor, decking the tables on high festivals when the Master is at home. But there are others of baser stuff kept in the background, never displayed at times of rejoicing, but meant for common drudgery.

There are cups and flagons of solid silver prized as perpetual heirlooms of the family which are carefully preserved. And there are plates and pots which are soon worn out and are only of temporary use. There are many sets of them being broken up in the lifetime of a family. The same is true in the Church of God which, being in the world, has its common side and its common vessels. But being, also, a heavenly house, the Church has its nobler furniture, far more precious than gold which perishes though it is tried with fire.

For our instruction, may the Holy Spirit help us while we look, first, at the great house. Secondly, at the meaner vessels, peeping into the kitchen. Thirdly, at the nobler vessels, going into the china cabinet to look at the silver and gold. And then, fourthly, before we leave the house, let us ask for an interview with the Master, Himself.

**I.**First, let us consider THE GREAT HOUSE. The Apostle compares the Church to a great house. We feel sure he is not speaking of the world. It did not occur to him to speak about the world and it would have been altogether superfluous to tell us that in the world there are all sorts of people—everybody knows that! The Church is a great house belonging to a great Person, for the Church is the House of God, according to the promise— “I will dwell in them, and walk in them.”

The Church is the temple in which the Lord is worshipped, the palace in which He rules. It is His castle and place of defense for His Truth. It is the armory out of which He supplies His people with weapons. The Church is God’s mansion in which He abides—“This is My rest forever. Here will I dwell for I have desired it.” There it is that He rests in His love and, in infinite condescension, manifests Himself as He does not unto the world. King Solomon built a house for himself in the forest of Lebanon, and behold, the Lord has, of living stones, built for Himself a far more glorious house where He may abide! It is a great house because it is the house of the great God! Who can be so great as He? It is a great house because planned and designed upon a great scale.

I fear that some who live in the house have no idea how great it is. They have a very faint notion of its length and breadth. The great thoughts of God are far beyond their most elevated conception, so that He might say to them as He has said to others, “My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are My ways your ways, says the Lord.” The palace of the King of kings is “exceedingly magnificent,” and for spaciousness far excels all the abodes of earthly princes. We read of the golden palace of Nero, that it

reached from hill to hill and enclosed lakes and streams and gardens beneath its wondrous roof. But behold, the Lord has stretched the line of His electing Grace over nations and kindreds even to the ends of the earth!

His house takes in a mighty sweep of humanity. Many are the rooms in the house and there are dwellers in one room who have never yet seen any part of the great house but the little chamber in which they were born! They have never walked through the marvelous corridors, or moved in the vast halls which God has built with cedar pillars and cedar beams and carved work of heavenly workmanship. Some good men hardly care to see the long rows of polished columns, quarried by Grace from the rough mass of Nature which now shine resplendent as monuments of Divine Love and Wisdom! Colossal is the plan of the Eternal—the Church of God is worthy of the infinite mind!

Angels and principalities delight to study the stupendous plan and well they may—as the great Architect unrolls His drawings, piece by piece, to let them see the various sections of the complete design, they are struck with admiration and exclaim, “ Oh the riches of the wisdom and the knowledge of God!” The Church is no narrow cottage wherein a few may luxuriate in bigotry, but it is a great house, worthy of the infinite heart of Jehovah, worthy of the blood of Jesus, the Incarnate God, and worthy of the power of the ever-blessed Spirit!

It is a great house because it has been erected at great cost and with great labor. Who can tell the cost of this mansion? It is a price beyond price, for God has given His only-begotten Son—He had but one, and Heaven could not match Him—that He might redeem unto Himself a people who should be His dwelling place forever. Solomon’s temple, now that they have laid bare a part of the foundations, even though it is in utter ruin, astonishes all beholders as they mark the enormous size and accurate adjustment of the stones—what must it have been in its glory? What cost was lavished on that glorious house!

But think of the labor and the skill, the Divine art and engineering with which Jehovah has hewn out of the rock of sinful nature the stones with which He builds up His spiritual house! What energy has the Holy Spirit displayed! What resurrection power! Harder than any granite we were by nature, yet has He cut us away from the rock of which we formed a part and fashioned and squared us—and made us to be built together for an habitation of God through the Spirit. Tell it to the praise of the glory of His Grace, that the Lord’s Omnipotent power and boundless wealth of love are revealed in His Church!

When our eyes shall see the Church of God, at last, in all her beauty descending out of Heaven from God, having the Glory of God and her light like unto a stone most precious, even like unto a jasper stone—when we shall see, I say, that the length and the breadth and the height of it are equal—when we shall see its deep foundations laid in the eternal purpose and its walls built up with lofty pinnacles of glory, high as the Divine Person of her Lord. And when we shall mark its wondrous compass, broad enough to hold the glory and honor of the nations—then shall we shout for joy as we behold the riches and the power and the splendor of the great King of kings who has built for Himself this great house!

It is a great house, again, because its household arrangements are conducted on a great scale. You know how country people, when there is some rich lord living in the village, speak always of his mansion as “the great house.” It is the great house for which those bullocks are being fattened and those sheep and lambs will be consumed at the great house, for there are many in the family and none are allowed to go hungry. Solomon kept a great house. When you read the account of the daily provision for his table, you see that it was a great house, indeed—a vast and truly royal establishment!

Yes, but neither for quality nor quantity could Solomon’s palace match the great house of God in its plenty. Speak of fine flour—behold, He has given us angels’ food! Speak of royal dainties—behold, the Lord has given us fat things full of marrow, wines on the lees well-refined! What a perpetual feast does the Lord Jesus keep up for all His followers! If any of them hunger it is not because their rations are stinted. If there are any complaints, it is not because the Master’s oxen and fatlings are not freely provided! Ah, no, to every man there is a good piece of meat and a flagon of wine dealt out, even as David dealt it out in the day when he removed the Ark unto the hill of Zion.

Glory be to God! He has said, “Eat, O Friends! Drink, yes, drink abundantly, O Beloved!” In this mountain shall the hand of the Lord rest and He will make unto all nations a feast of fat things. Behold, His oxen and fatlings are killed, all things are ready. It is a great house, where great sinners are fed on great dainties and filled with the great goodness of the Lord! It is a great house for the number of its inhabitants. How many have lived beneath that roof tree for ages. “Lord,” they say like a great host, “You have been our dwelling place throughout all generations.” God is the home of His people, and His Church is the home of God!

And what multitudes are dwelling there now! Not only the companies that we know of, with whom it is our delight to meet for solemn worship, but all over the world the Lord has a people who dwell in the midst of His Church! And, though men have disfigured their Master’s house by chalking up odd signs over some of the rooms and calling them by other names than those of the Owner, yet the Lord’s people are all one Church—and to whatever part or party they may seem to belong, if Christ is in them they belong to Him of whom the whole family in Heaven and earth is named— and they make up but one spiritual house. What a swarm there is of the Lord’s children and yet not one of the family remains unfed. The Church is a great house wherein thousands dwell, yes, a number that no man can number!

Once more, it is a great house because of its importance. People speak of “the great house” in our remote counties because to the whole neighborhood it bears a special relationship, being connected with some of its most vital interests—county politics and police—dignity and wealth find their center at “the great house.” The Church is a great house because it is God’s hospice where He distributes bread and wine to refresh the weary and entertains wayfarers that otherwise had been lost in the storm. It is God’s hospital into which He takes the sick and there He

nourishes them till they renew their youth like the eagle’s.

It is God’s great lighthouse with its lantern flashing forth a directing ray so that wanderers far away may be directed to the haven of peace. “Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God has shined.” It is the seat of God’s magistracy, for there are set thrones of judgment, the thrones of the house of David. Behold, the Lord has set His King upon His holy hill of Zion and therefore shall the power of His scepter go forth to the ends of the earth! The great house of the Church is the university for teaching all nations! It is the library wherein the sacred oracles are preserved! It is the treasury wherein His Truth is deposited and the registry of new-born heirs of Heaven!

It is important to Heaven as well as to earth, for its topmost towers reach into Glory and there is in it a ladder, the foot of which rests on earth, but the top reaches to Heaven—up and down which the angels come and go continually. Said I not well that the Apostle had wisely chosen the figure when he called the Church a great house?

**II.**We will now go inside the great house and we at once observe that it is well furnished. Our text, however, invites us to note that it contains a number of MEANER VESSELS, articles of the coarser kind for ordinary and common uses. Here are plates, wooden buckets, pitchers and pots and various vessels of coarse pottery. Some have thought that this figure of vessels to dishonor relates to Christians of a lower grade, persons of small Grace and of less sanctified conversation. Now, although Believers may, from some points of view, be comparable to earthen vessels, yet I dare not look upon *any* child of God, however low in Grace, as a vessel to dishonor!

Moreover, the word, “these,” refers to the earthen and wooden vessels— surely they cannot represent saints—or we should never be told to purge ourselves from them! If a man is God’s child, into whatever state and condition he may fall it is our business to look after him and endeavor to restore him, remembering ourselves, also, lest we be tempted. But it cannot be right to purge ourselves from even the least of our believing Brothers and Sisters! Besides, that is not the run of the chapter at all.

The real meaning is that in the Church of God there are unworthy persons serving inferior and temporary purposes who are vessels to dishonor. They are in the Church, but they are like vessels of wood and vessels of earth—they are not the treasure of the mansion, they are not brought out on state occasions and are not set much store by—for they are *not* “precious in the sight of the Lord.” The Apostle does not tell us how they came there, for it was not his intent to do so and no parable or metaphor could teach everything. Neither will I stay to describe how some professors have come into the Church of God—some by distinct falsehood and by making professions which they knew were untrue—others through ignorance and others, again, by being self-deceived and carried away with excitement.

The parable does not say how they got there, but they are there—yet they are only vessels of wood and vessels of earth. It is no credit to them that they are where they are, for they are not vessels to honor, though in an honorable place. It is no honor to any man to be a member of a Christian Church if he is, in himself, intrinsically worthless though they make a *minister* of him, or elect him deacon! It is no honor to him to be in office if the metal he is made of does not fit him for so honorable a purpose. He is an intruder in an honorable position and it is a dishonor to him to be where he is. It is no honor to a weed to grow in the best part of the garden. It is no honor to a barren fig tree to cumber the finest ground in the vineyard.

Ah, dear Friend, if you are in the Church of God, but not truly one of the Lord’s people, it is a *dishonorable* thing of you to have come there! And it is equally dishonorable for you to remain there without fulfilling that great requisite which is demanded of everyone who names the name of Jesus—that he departs from all iniquity! The vessels in the great house are, however, of some use, even though they are made of wood and earth. And so there are persons in the Church of God whom the Lord Jesus will not acknowledge as His treasure, but He, nevertheless, turns them to some temporary purpose. Some are useful as the scaffold to a house, or the dogshores to a ship, or the hedges to a field. I believe that some unworthy members of the Church are useful in the way of watch dogs to keep others awake, or knives to let blood, or burdens to try strength. Some quarrelsome members of the Church help to scour the other vessels lest they should rust through being peaceful.

The Church is made up of men who are yet in the body and it has to deal with the outside world. And sometimes the worldly men who are in her serve some purpose in connection with this, her lowest need. Judas made a good treasurer, for his economy saved more than he stole. Joab was a good warrior for David, though he was by no means a saint. False professors do not make the Gospel untrue and sometimes, when they have spoken it, God has blessed it. You may see, if you go down the Kennington Park road today, a row of young trees planted by the road—how are they kept up while yet they are slender? Why, small posts of dead timber hold them up! And even so, a dead Sunday school teacher may yet be useful to a genuine Christian child—and a dead deacon may be the financial support of a living Church! Yes, and there are dead preachers, too, who, nevertheless, serve to fill up a space—but what vessels to dishonor they are!

It is a dreadful thing, however, for those who are like the posts I just mentioned, because the quicker the young tree grows, the sooner will the post be taken away, having no participant in the life which it helped to support. You see, then, that the base professors who get into the Church are turned to some good for His Church by our great Master. The servants of the great house can use the wooden ware and the earthenware, for a while, for rough everyday purposes, even as mere formalists can be employed in some scullery work or another.

There is one thing noticeable—the wooden and earthen vessels are not for the Master’s use. When He holds high festival His cups are all of precious metal! “All King Solomon’s drinking vessels were of gold.” Would you have the King of kings set an earthen pot upon His royal table? Shall the guests at His table eat from wooden bowls? False professors are only useful to the *servants*, not to the Master—they serve base purposes and are not to be seen on those great days when He manifests His Glory. The

Great Master overrules all things, being the Master of the servants and, as far as that which answers the purpose of His servants, is serviceable to Him. But personally, between the King at His table and the wooden vessel, there is no congruity—it would be an insult to hand Him wine in any but a sumptuous cup of precious metal, or to bring Him butter in any but a lordly dish!

How sad it is that many Christians are useful to the Church in various ways, but as for *personal* service rendered to the Lord Jesus Christ, *Himself*, they have no share, whatever, and never can have till Grace changes them from wood to silver, or from earth to gold. Note that in these vessels of which the Apostle speaks the substance is base. They are wood, or they are earth, nothing more. So are we all, by nature, of base material. Grace must make us into silver or into golden vessels or the Master cannot, Himself, use us, nor can our use in the Church ever be to honor. The wooden vessels in the Church are very easily hacked and carved and spoiled—if a man is inclined to mischief, he can put his knife to them and can cut great notches in them. He can ruin their character and render them worthless. Cunning teachers can soon take away from merely nominal Christians what they professed to believe, for they are very readily cut and hacked by those who play at such games.

As for the earthen vessels, how soon they are broken! Outside of any great house there are the remains of many broken pots which fell to the ground and shattered to pieces. And, I am sorry to say, we, also, can find enough of such relics to sadden us all. There were some in this house, once, who were comely to look upon. But there came a temptation and brushed them from the table—and they were shattered in a moment! Others of precious metal have endured far more shocks and tests of a severer kind. But those being only of earth were broken at once. Heaps of crockery accumulate outside every great house and certainly outside the great house of Christ. These vessels unto dishonor, though turned to some account, require a great deal of care on the part of the servants.

When our forefathers used to eat from wooden plates, the time the good wives used to spend in scalding and cleaning them to keep them at all sweet to eat upon was something terrible! And there are members of the Church who take a world of time from pastors and elders to keep them at all decent—we are continually trying to set them right, or keep them right in the common relationships of life. There are quarrels in their families which must be settled lest they become scandals—and these occupy the careful thought of their fellow Christians who have to watch for their good. Or they get lax in their doctrines, or foolish in their habits, or loose in their business transactions and we have to be scouring and cleaning them times without number!

Certain sorts of earthen vessels you have to be very particular in handling. Like egg-shell china, you may hardly look at them. Thank God I have not many in this Church—perhaps none of that sort as far as *my* handling is concerned—but other people’s touches, though quite as wise, are not so welcome. Certain earthen vessels get dreadfully chipped unless they have dainty handling. If a Brother does not take his hat off to them in very lowly style and behave very reverently, they are ready to take offense! They feel themselves hurt and slighted when no such thing was intended. They stand upon their dignity and expect the fullest recognition of it. These are real earthen pots, very apt to be chipped, perhaps a little cracked already and needing a great deal of care and trouble on the part of the Lord’s servants, lest they should go to pieces and spill everything that is put into them.

There are such in all great houses, and in the Master’s great house there are, I fear, not just a few. They are useful up to a certain point, but they bring no honor to the house because there are plenty as good as they in other houses—every cottage can have common earthen pitchers in it. They are vessels in which is no pleasure. They are not peculiar, or precious. Nobody ever sounds abroad the Master’s fame because He has so many thousands of wooden bowls or earthen pots. No, the king’s honor comes from the plates—the gold and silver vessels, the peculiar treasure of kings. People speak about these rich goods and say, “You should see the sideboards loaded down with the massive services of gold and silver! You should see how the tables groan beneath the splendor of the royal feast when the king brings forth his treasures.”

True Christians are the glory of Christ, but false professors bring, at their very best, only dishonor. Better the smallest silver vessel than the largest earthen one! Better the least of all the saints than the greatest of vain professors! So much upon the vessels of dishonor.

**III.**We are now going into the treasury, or plate room, and will think of THE NOBLER VESSELS. These are, first of all, of solid metal—vessels of silver and vessels of gold. They are not all equally valuable, but they are all precious. Here is weight for you—here is something that is worth treasuring—something which will last for ages and at any time will endure the fire. Now, in real Christians, those who really love the Lord, there is something substantial and weighty. When you get hold of them, you know the difference between them and the wooden professor. Even those who do not like them—strange taste, that which does not appreciate silver and gold—are nevertheless compelled to say, “That is a genuine article, worth a great deal, weighty and substantial.”

Now, we shall, none of us, ever be vessels of silver and gold unless the Lord makes us so by Divine Grace. Vessels of earth are things of *nature—* any potter can make them. Vessels of wood are common enough. Copper soon produces a pail. But a vessel of silver or of gold is a rarer thing! It costs mining and searching, furnace work and fashioning, toil and skill. On each vessel unto honor, Jesus Himself has put His hand to mold and fashion it—and to cause it to be “prepared unto glory.” Did you ever hear how vessels come to be golden? Listen to this, and you shall know. One very dear to me has put the story into rhyme—

***“ ‘Oh that I were a cup, a golden cup  
Meet for the Master’s use!  
Brimming and trembling with that draught of joy (The love of His beloved and purchased ones) Which fills His heart with gladness.’  
So spoke a poor, vile, broken, earthy thing, A worthless castaway.  
The Master heard and when He passed that way***

***He stooped and touched it with His wounded hand— When lo! Its baseness vanished, and instead There stood a golden chalice wondrous fair, And overflowing with deep love for him!  
He raised it to His gracious lips, and quaffed ‘The wine that makes glad the heart of God,’ Then took the cup to Heaven.”***

On the vessels of honor you can see the hallmark. What is the hallmark which denotes the purity of the Lord’s golden vessels? Well, He has only one stamp for everything. When He laid the foundation what was the seal He put upon it? “The Lord knows them that are His, and let everyone that names the name of Christ depart from all iniquity.” That was God’s seal! That was the impress of the great King upon the foundation stone. Do we find it here? Yes, we do. “If a man, therefore, purges himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honor.” You see, then, that the man who is the golden or silver vessel, departs from all iniquity—and *that* is the token of his genuine character.

The man who is truly the Lord’s, seeks to be cleansed, not only from the open sin of the world, but from the common sin of professing Christians. He labors to be purged from that which the wooden vessel and the earthen vessel would delight in. He wants to be pure within and without. He desires perfection. He labors daily to conquer every sin and strives with all his might to serve his Lord. He is not content to have a fair appearance, as wood and earth may have—he wishes to be solid, substantial metal, purged and purified to the utmost possible degree and fit for the highest purposes. Now, this seeking after purity is the hallmark of the King’s vessels of gold and silver.

Notice, however, that they are *purged*, for the Lord will not use filthy vessels no matter what they may be. He will only use those that are clean. And He would have His true people purged, as I have said before, not only from gross sin, but from doctrinal error and from association with the perverse-minded. We are to be purged from Hymenaeus and Philetus *and* from the vain babblings of which the Apostle has been speaking in the previous part of the chapter. I fear that Christian men do a great deal of mischief by their complicity with those who are teaching what is downright falsehood. If we are to serve the Lord in the matter of advancing His Truth, we must be true to the Truth of God ourselves. If we join hand in hand with others and so form a confederacy when the very pillars of the temple are being pulled down by rude hands, it may be we shall be partakers of other men’s sins. We must be clean-handed in this matter!

And then notice that these gold and silver vessels are reserved as well as purged. They are made meet for the Master’s use. Nobody is to drink out of them but the King, Himself. This is the blessedness of the child of God when he comes to be what he should be, that he can sing as we did just now—  
As Joseph had a cup out of which he, alone, drank, so the Lord takes His people to be His peculiar treasure, vessels for His personal use. Brethren, I count it an honor to be useful to the meanest child of God, but I confess that the honor lies mainly in the fact that I am thereby serving the Master, Himself. Oh, to be used by God! This is to answer the end of our being. If you can feel that God has used you, then may you rejoice, indeed!

***“I am Yours and Yours, alone, This I gladly, fully own!  
And in all my works and ways, Only now would seek Your praise.”***

There are some Christians whom the Lord cannot much use, because, first of all, they are not cleansed from selfishness. They have an eye to their own honor or aggrandizement. The Lord will not be in complicity with selfish aims! Some men are self-confident—there is too much of the “I” about them—and our Master will not use them. He will have our weakness, but not our strength! And if we are great somebodies, He will pass us by and take some little nobody and make use of him. The Lord cannot use other men because they are too apt to be proud. If He were to give them a little success, it would be dangerous to their Christian existence! Their poor brains would begin to swim and they would think the Lord could hardly do without them! Indeed, when they meet with a little encouragement they swell into such wonderful people that they expect everybody to fall down and worship them!

God will not use them, neither will He set upon His table vessels which are in any way defiled. There must be purity! A man may work his heart out in the ministry or the Sunday school, but if he is practicing some secret sin he cannot prosper—it is not possible that God should honor him! There may be a measure of apparent success for a time and, in God’s Sovereignty, He may use His Truth, itself, in spite of the man, but the man himself will not be useful to the Master. Littleness of Grace and contentedness with that spiritual poverty, also puts many a man aside. We must be full if God is to pour out of us to the thirsty! We must be full of His Light if we are to illuminate the darkness of others! We cannot reveal to the world what the Lord has not revealed to us.

Oh, for a holy character and holy communion with God! Then we shall be golden vessels fit for the Master’s use and so, according to the text, we shall be ready for every good work—ready for the work when it comes and ready at the work when it has come—because completely consecrated to God and subject to His hand. In this readiness for whatever comes we shall be honored. Men may despise us, as they will, but what does it matter if *God* honors us? This height of Grace may cost us a sharp experience, but must not gold be tried with fire? As thieves are most anxious to steal not the pots and wooden vessels, but the gold and the silver, so we may expect to be exposed to greater temptations and greater persecutions than others.

More Grace involves more trials, but then we shall have the delight of glorifying God more. Oh, to be vessels unto honor! Beloved members of this Church, aspire to this! You have acknowledged in your names, that you are Christians! You have been baptized into the sacred name of the Divine Trinity! You have borne, up to now, a consistent moral character, but oh, see to it that the inner substance is the real metal—the gold and silver! See to it that you are reserved for the Lord’s own special use! Be as consecrated to Him as were the bowls before the altar. Never let the

world drink out of you, as Belshazzar did out of the vessels taken at Jerusalem. May the Lord grant that you may never be defiled, but may be kept, by His Grace, pure and consecrated to Him.

**IV.**Fourthly, for a moment we must speak about THE MASTER. He is introduced here, you see, as having certain vessels meet for His use—and this shows that He is *in* the house. There would be no need to reserve vessels for His use if He were not there—He is in the midst of His Church by His indwelling Spirit. How this ought to make us wish to be purged, sanctified and ready for Him! Your Master is not far away. His Presence in the Church is promised—“Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world.” What manner of persons, therefore, ought you to be?

Secondly, the Master knows all about the house and knows the quality of all the vessels. There is no deceiving Him with the wooden plate—He knows it is not gold. And as for that earthen cup, though it may be gilt all over, He knows it is not gold. He reads the heart of everyone here present—wood or earth, silver or gold—the Master understands us. And then reflect that the Master will use us all as far as we are fit to be used. We are in God’s house and if we are wood, He will put us to wooden use.

There are many wooden preachers. If we are earth and earthly-minded He may put us to earthly uses, as He did Judas, who carried the bag, but had no Grace. If you are silver He will give you silver use. And if you are gold He will give you golden service in which you shall be happy, honored and blessed. What comes of this, then, lastly? Why, Brothers and Sisters, let us bestir ourselves that we be purged, for the text says, “If a man therefore purges himself.” It throws this business upon each one of us *personally*—a man must purge *himself* from ill company! And when we have confessed the responsibility, let us turn to God in prayer and feel that thorough purging is a work which we cannot achieve and, therefore, we cry, “Cleanse me, O God! Sanctify me! Make me meet for Your service and prepared for every good work.”

Beloved, finish with earnest prayer. Pray God that you may not be hypocrites! Beseech the Lord to search you and try you, that you not be found deceivers. And when you are sure that you are His, then ask Him to make you not merely silver, for it is very apt to tarnish, but rather the precious gold which, when exposed to the worst influences, scarcely shows a trace of dullness. Pure unalloyed gold may we be! And then may the Master, both in secret and public, use us to His own joy. May He refresh Himself with our love and faith, yes, may His joy be fulfilled in us, that our joy may be full. God grant it may be so, for Christ’s sake.

Adapted from*The C.H. Spurgeon Collection*, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307.  
Sermon #2089 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

**÷2Ti 3.5**

THE FORM OF GODLINESS WITHOUT THE POWER  
NO. 2088

**DELIVERED ON LORD’S DAY MORNING, JUNE 2, 1889, *BY C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“Having a form of godliness but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.”***2Ti 3:5***.***

PAUL warns us of certain characters which will appear in the last times. It is a very terrible list. The like have appeared in other days but we are led by his warning to apprehend that they will appear in greater numbers in the last days than in any previous age. “Lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God.”

These will swarm like flies in the decay of the year and will make the times exceeding perilous. We are nearing that period at this very time. That these people would, some of them, be within the Church is the most painful part of it. But they will be so, for they are comprehended in this last clause of the black catalog, which we have taken for our text—“Having a form of godliness but denying the power thereof.”

Paul does not paint the future with rose-colored glasses—he is no smooth-tongued Prophet of a golden age into which this dull earth may be imagined to be glowing. There are sanguine Brothers and Sisters who are looking forward to everything growing better and better and better, until, at last, this present age ripens into a millennium. They will not be able to sustain their hopes, for Scripture gives them no solid basis to rest upon. We who believe that there will be no millennial reign without the King and who expect no rule of righteousness except from the appearing of the righteous Lord, are nearer the mark.

Apart from the second Advent of our Lord, the world is more likely to sink into a pandemonium than to rise into a millennium. A Divine interposition seems to me the hope set before us in Scripture and, indeed, to be the only hope adequate to the occasion. We look to the darkening down of things. The state of mankind, however improved politically, may yet grow worse and worse *spiritually*. Certainly, we are assured in verse 13 that “evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived.” There will spring up in the Christian Church and round about it, a body of faithless men who profess to have faith—ungodly men who will unite with the saints—men having the form of godliness but denying the power.

We may call *these* hard times, if we will, but we have hardly yet come to the border of those truly harder times when it will go hard with the Church and she shall need, even more than today, to cry mightily unto the Lord to keep her alive. With this cloud upon our spirit, we come to the text itself. Let us consider it carefully and may the Holy Spirit help us!

True religion is a spiritual thing but it necessarily embodies itself in a *form*. Man is a spiritual creature but the human spirit needs a *body* in which to enshrine itself. And thus, by this need, we become allied to materialism. And if not “half dust, half Deity,” as one has said, we are certainly both matter and soul. In each of us there is the form or body and the soul or power. It is so with religion—it is essentially a *spiritual* thing but it requires a form in which to embody and manifest itself.

Christian people fall into a certain outward method of procedure, a peculiar outward mode of uttering their faith, which becomes to true godliness what the body is to the soul. The form is useful, the form is necessary, the form ought to be vitalized—just as the body is useful and is necessary and is vitalized by the soul. If you get both the form, as modeled in the Word of God and the power, as bestowed by the Spirit of God, you do well and are living Christians. If you get the power alone, without the ordained form, you somewhat maim yourself. But if you get the form without the power, then, you dwell in spiritual *death*.

The body without the spirit is dead. And what follows upon death with flesh? Why, corruption—corruption so horrible that even love itself has to cry, “Bury my dead out of my sight.” So that if there is in any the body of religion without the *life* of religion, it leads to decay and thus to corruption—and that has a tendency to decompose the character. The raw material of a devil is an angel bereft of holiness. You cannot make a Judas except out of an Apostle. The eminently good in outward *form*, when without inward *life*, decays into the foulest thing under Heaven. You cannot wonder that these are called “perilous times,” in which such characters abound.

One Judas is an awful weight for this poor globe to bear but a tribe of them must be a peril, indeed. Yet, if not of the very worst order, those are enough to be dreaded who have the shadow of religion without its substance. Of such I have to speak at this time—from such may God give you Divine Grace to turn away! May none of us ever be spots in our feasts of love, or clouds without water carried about of winds. But this we shall be if we have the *form* of godliness without the *power* thereof.

With great solemnity of soul I approach this subject, seeking from the Lord the aid of His Spirit, who makes the Word to be a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. First, I shall speak of the men, and secondly, of their folly. And when I am done with that, I shall have some words of instruction to give by way of conclusion.

**I.**First, let us talk awhile of THE MEN. They had the form of godliness but denied the power thereof. Note what they had and then observe what they had not. They had a *form* of godliness. What is a form of godliness? It is, first of all, attention to the ordinances of religion. These, so far as they are Scriptural, are few and simple. There is Baptism, wherein, in figure, the Believer is buried with Christ, that he may rise into newness of life. And there is the Lord’s Supper, wherein, in type and emblem, he feeds upon Christ and sustains the life which came to him by fellowship with Christ’s death. Those who have obeyed the Lord in these two ordinances have exhibited in their own persons the form of godliness. That form is every way instructive to others and impressive to the man himself.

Every baptized person and every communicant at the Lord’s Table, should be godly and gracious. But neither Baptism nor the Lord’s Supper will secure this. Where there is not the life of God in the soul, neither holiness or godliness follow upon the ordinances. And thus we may have around us baptized worldlings and men who go from the table of the Lord to drink the cup of devils. It is sad that it should be so. Such persons are guilty of presumption, falsehood, sacrilege and blasphemy. Ah me, we sit beside such every Sabbath!

The form of godliness involves attendance with the assemblies of God's people. Those who have professed Christ are accustomed to come together at certain times for worship and, in their assemblies, they join in common prayer and common praise. They listen to the testimony of God by His servants whom He calls to preach His Word with power. They also associate together in Church fellowship for purposes of mutual help and discipline. This is a very proper form—full of blessing both to the Church and to the world—when it does not die down into mere form. A man may go to Heaven alone but he will do better if he travels there with Mr. Great-Heart and Father Honest and Christiana and the children.

Christ’s people are called sheep for one reason—they love to go in flocks. Dogs do very well separately but sheep do best in company. The sheep of Christ love to be together in the same pasture and to follow in a flock the footsteps of the Good Shepherd. Those who constantly associate in worship, unite in Church fellowship and work together for sacred purposes have the form of godliness and a very useful and proper form it is. Alas, it is of no value without the power of the Holy Spirit.

Some go further than public worship. They use a great deal of religious talk. They freely speak of the things of God in Christian company. They can defend the doctrines of Scripture, they can plead for its precepts and they can narrate the experience of a Believer. They are fondest of talking of what is doing in the Church—the tattle of the streets of Jerusalem is very pleasant to them. They flavor their speech with godly phrases when they are in company that will relish it. I do not censure them—on the contrary, I wish there were more of holy talk among professors. I wish we could revive the old habit, “They that feared the Lord spoke often one to another.”

Holy conversation causes the heart to glow and gives to us a foretaste of the fellowship of the glorified. But there may be a savor of religion about a man’s conversation and yet it may be a borrowed flavor—like hot sauces used to disguise the staleness of ancient meat. That religion which comes from the lips outward but does not well up from the deep fountains of the *heart* is not that living water which will spring up unto eternal life.

Tongue godliness is an abomination if the heart is destitute of Divine Grace.

More than this—some have a form of godliness upheld and published by religious activity. It is possible to be intensely active in the outside work of the Church and yet to know nothing of spiritual power. One may be an excellent Sunday school teacher after a fashion and yet have need to be taught what it is to be born again. One may be an eloquent preacher, or a diligent officer in the Church of God and yet know nothing of the mysterious power of the Spirit of Truth upon the heart. It is well to be like Martha in service. But one thing is needful—to sit at the Master’s feet and learn as Mary did.

When we have done all the work our position requires of us, we may only have *displayed* the form of godliness. Unless we hearken to our Lord and from His Presence derive power, we shall be as a sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal. Brethren, I speak to myself and to each one of you in solemn earnestness. If much speaking, generous giving and constant occupation could win Heaven, we might easily make sure of it. But more than these are needed. I speak to each one of you. And if I singled out anyone more than another to be the pointed object of my address, it would be the best among us—the one who is doing most for his Master and who, in his inmost soul, is thinking, “That warning does not apply to me.”

O my active and energetic Brother, remember the word, “Let him that thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.” If any of you dislike this searching sermon, your dislike proves how much you need it. He that is not willing to search himself should stand self-incriminated by that unwillingness to look at his affairs. If you are right, you will not object to be weighed in the balances. If you are, indeed, pure gold, you may still feel anxiety at the sight of the furnace but you will not be driven to anger at the prospect of the fire. Your prayer will always be, “Search me, O God and know my heart: try me and know my thoughts: and see if there is any wicked way in me and lead me in the way everlasting.”

I need not enlarge further. You all know what a form of godliness is and most of us who are here present hold fast that form—may we never dishonor it! I trust we are anxious to make that form accurate according to Scripture so that our form of godliness may be that into which the earliest saints were delivered. Let us be Christians of a high type, cast in our Lord’s own mold. But do not become sticklers for the form and neglect the inner life—that will never do. Shall we fight about a man’s clothes and allow the man, himself, to die?

But now, as these people had not the power of godliness, how did they come to hold the form of it? This needs several answers. Some come by the form of godliness in an hereditary way. Their ancestors were always godly people and they almost naturally take up with the profession of their fathers. This is common and where it is honest, it is most commendable. It is a great mercy when, instead of the fathers, shall be the children. And we may hopefully anticipate that our children will follow us in the things of God, if by example, instruction and prayer, we have sought it before the Lord.

We are unhappy if we do not see our children walking in the God’s Truth. Yet the idea of birthright membership is an evil one and is as perilous as it is unscriptural. If children are taken into the Church simply because of their earthly parentage, surely this is not consistent with that description of the sons of God which is found in the inspired Scripture— “Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man but of God. ” Not generation but REGENERATION, makes the Christian. You are not Christians because you can trace a line of fleshly descent throughout twenty generations of children of God.

You must, yourselves, be born again. For except a man is born from above, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Many, no doubt, lay hold naturally on the form of godliness because of family ties—this is poor work. Ishmael is a sorry son of Abraham and Esau of Isaac and Absalom of David. Grace does not run in the blood. If you have no better foundation for your religion than your earthly parentage, you are in a wretched case.

Others have accepted the form of godliness by the force of authority and influence. They were, as lads, put apprentice to godly men. As girls, they were under the guidance of pious teachers. And as they grew up, they came under the influence of persons of superior intelligence and character who were on the Lord’s side. This accounts for their form of godliness. Many persons are the creatures of their surroundings—religion or irreligion is with them the result of circumstances. Such persons were led to make a profession of faith in Christ because others did so and friends encouraged them to do the same.

The deep searching of heart, which they ought to have exhibited, was slurred over and they were found among the people of God without having to knock for entrance at the wicket gate. I do not wish anyone to condemn himself because he was guided to the Savior by godly friends—far from it. But, nevertheless, there is danger lest we fail to have *personal* repentance and personal faith and are content to lean upon the opinions of others.

I have seen the form of godliness taken up on account of friendships. Many a time courtship and marriage have led to a formal religiousness, but a lacking heart. The future husband is induced to make a profession of religion for the sake of gaining one who was a sincere Christian and would not have broken her Lord’s command to be unequally yoked together with an unbeliever. Godliness should never be put on in order that we may put a wedding ring upon the finger—this is a sad abuse of religious profession.

Other kinds of friendship, also, have led men and women to profess a faith they never had and to unite themselves visibly with the Church, while in spirit and in truth they were never truly a part of it. I put these things to you that there may be a great searching of heart among us all and that we may candidly consider how we have come by our form of godliness. Certain persons assume the form of godliness from a natural religious disposition. Do not suppose that all unconverted people are without

religion. Much religiousness is found in the heathen and there are races which have naturally more of reverence than others.

The German, with his profound philosophy, is often free, not only from superstition but from reverence. The Russian is by race naturally religious, not to say superstitious. I am speaking after the manner of *men*— the usual Russian takes off his hat to Holy Places, pictures and persons— and he is little inclined to disbelieve or scoff. We perceive like differences among our own acquaintances—one man is readily fooled by skeptics, while another is ready, with open mouth, to believe every word. One is naturally an infidel, another is as naturally credulous.

I mean, then, that to some the form of godliness commends itself because they have a natural leaning that way. They could not be happy unless they were attending where God is worshipped, or unless they were reckoned among the Believers in Christ. They must play at religion even if they do not make it their life business. Let me remind you of the questionable value of that which springs out of fallen human nature. Assuredly it brings no one into the spiritual kingdom, for “that which is born of the flesh is flesh.” Only “that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.” “You must be born again.” Beware of everything which springs up in the field without the sowing of the husbandman, for it will turn out to be a weed. O Sirs, the day will come when God will try us as with fire and that which comes of unregenerate nature will not stand the test but will be utterly consumed!

I do not doubt that, in these silken days, many have a form of godliness because of the respect it brings them. Time was when to be a Christian was to be reviled, if not to be imprisoned and, perhaps, burned at the stake. Hypocrites were fewer in those days for a profession cost too much. Yet, strange to say, there were some who played the Judas even in those times. Today religion walks forth in her velvet slippers. And in certain classes and ranks, if men did not make some profession of religion, they would be looked upon with suspicion and therefore men will take the name of Christian upon them and wear religion as a part of full dress.

The cross is at this day worn as a necklace. The cross as the instrument of our Savior’s shame and death is forgotten, and instead thereof, it is made the badge of honor, a jewel wherewith ungodly men may adorn themselves. Is this indicative of the deceitfulness of the age? Beware of seeking respect by a hypocritical godliness. Honor gained by a heartless profession is, in God’s sight, the greatest disgrace. The actor may strut in his mimic royalty, but he must take off his crown and robes when the play is over. And what will he then be?

From the days of Iscariot until now, some have taken up the form of godliness to gain thereby. To make gain of godliness is to imitate the son of perdition. This is a perilous road and yet many risk their souls for the lucre which they find therein. Apparent zeal for God may really be zeal for gold. The Emperor Maximilian showed great zeal against idolatry and published a decree that images of gold and silver should be melted down. He was extremely zealous about this. The images were all to be melted down and the metal forfeited to the emperor.

It was shrewdly suspected that this great iconoclast was not altogether swayed by unselfish motives. When a business brings grist to the mill, it is not hard to keep to it. Some love Christ because they carry His money bag for Him. Beware of that kind of godliness which makes a man hesitate until he sees whether a duty will pay or not and then makes him eager because he sees it will answer his purpose.

Once more—I do not doubt that a form of godliness has come to many because it brings them ease of conscience and they are able, like the Pharisee, to thank God that they are not as other men are. Have they not been to Church? Have they not paid for their pew? They can now go about their daily business without those stings of conscience which would come of neglecting the requirements of religion. These people profess to have been converted and they are numbered with Believers. But, alas, they are not of them.

Of all people these are the hardest to reach and the least likely to be saved. They hide behind the earthworks of a nominal religion. They are out of reach of the shot and shell of Gospel rebukes. They fly among the sinners and they have taken up their quarters among the saints. Sad is that man’s plight who wears the name of life but has never been quickened by the Holy Spirit. Thus, I have very feebly tried to show what these men had and why they had it.

Let us now remember what they did *not* have. They had “the form” of godliness. But they were denied “the power.” What is that power? God Himself is the power of godliness, The Holy Spirit is the life and force of it. Godliness is the power which brings a man to God and binds him to Him. Godliness is that which creates repentance towards God and faith in Him. Godliness is the result of a great change of heart in reference to God and His Character. Godliness looks towards God and mourns its distance from Him. godliness hastens to draw near and rests not till it is at home with God.

Godliness makes a man like God. Godliness leads a man to love God and to serve God. It brings the fear of God before his eyes and the love of God into his heart. Godliness leads to consecration, to sanctification, to concentration. The godly man seeks first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and expects other things to be added to him. Godliness makes a man commune with God and gives him a partnership with God in His glorious designs. And so it prepares him to dwell with God forever.

Many who have the form of godliness are strangers to this power and so are in religion worldly, in prayer mechanical, in public one thing and in private another. True godliness lies in *spiritual power* and they who are without this are dead while they live.

What is the general history of those who have not this power? Well, dear Friends, their course usually runs thus—they do not begin with denying the power but they begin by trying to do without it. They would like to become members of the Church and as they fear that they are not fit for it, they look about for something which looks like conversion and the

new birth. They try to persuade themselves that they have been changed—they accept *emotion* as regeneration and a belief of doctrine for belief in Christ.

It is rather hard at first to reckon brass as gold but it grows easier as it is persisted in. Patching up a conversion and manufacturing a regeneration, they venture forward. At the first they are a good deal suspicious of themselves but they industriously kill every question by treating it as a needless doubt. Thus, by degrees, they believe a lie.

The next step is easy—they deceive themselves and come to believe that they are surely saved. All is now right for eternity, so they fancy. And they fold their arms in calm security. Meeting with godly people, they put on a bold front and speak up as bravely as if they were the true soldiers of King Jesus. Good people are charmed to meet with fresh Brethren and at once take them into their confidence. Thus they deceive others and help to strengthen themselves in their false hope.

They use the choice phrases of earnest Christians. Mixing with them, they pick up their particular expressions and pronounce Shibboleth in the most approved fashion. At last they take the daring step of denying the power. Being without it themselves, they conceive that others are without it, also. Judging from their own case, they conclude that it is all an affair of words. They get on very well without any supernatural power and others, no doubt, do the same—only they add a little cant to it to please the very godly folk.

They practically deny the power in their lives, so that those who see them and take them for Christians say, “There really is nothing in it. For these people are as we are. They have a touch of paint here and a little varnish there but it is all the same wood.” Practically, their actions assure the world that there is no power in Christianity. It is only a name. Very soon, privately, in their hearts they think it is so and they invent doctrines to match. Looking about them they see inconsistent Christians and faulty Believers and they say to themselves, “There is not much in faith, after all. I am as good as any of these Believers and perhaps better, though I am sure there is no work of the Spirit in me.”

Thus, within their own hearts they believe, what, at first, they dare not speak—they count godliness an empty thing. By-and-by, in some cases, these people profanely deny the Divine power of our holy faith and then they become the greatest enemies of the Cross of Christ. These traitors, nourished in the very House of God, are the worst foes of the Truth of God and righteousness. They ridicule that which once they professed to reverence. They have measured Christ’s corn with their own bushel. And because they never felt the powers of the world to come, they imagine that no one else has done so either.

Look at the Church of the present day. The advanced school, I mean. In its midst we see preachers who have a form of godliness but deny the power thereof. They talk of the Lord Jesus but they deny His Godhead, which is His power. They speak of the Holy Spirit but deny His personality, wherein lies His very existence. They take away the substance and power from all the doctrines of Revelation, though they pretend still to believe them. They talk of redemption but they deny substitution, which is the essence of it.

They extol the Scriptures but deny their infallibility, wherein lies their value. They use the phrases of orthodoxy and believe nothing in common with the orthodox. I know not which to loathe the more—their teachings or their spirit—surely they are worthy of each other. They burn the kernel and preserve the husk. They kill the truth and then pretend to reverence its sepulcher—“they say they are Jews and are not but do lie.”

This is horrible, but the evil is widely spread and in the presence of it the children of God are framing compromises, selling their Lord and becoming partakers with the despisers of His Truth. “Having a form of godliness but denying the power thereof.” It is the sin of the age—the sin which is ruining the Churches of our land.

**II.** In the second place, we are to observe THE WICKED FOLLY of this hypocritical conduct. Those who rest in the mere show of godliness are acting in a shameless manner and I will try to expose it.   
First, they degrade the very name of Christ. Brethren, if there is no spiritual power in godliness, it is worth nothing. We want no clouds without rain. Of shams and mere pretences we have more than enough. Those who have not the power of godliness show us a very damaging picture of religion. They make out our Lord’s religion to be comparable to a show at a country fair, with fine pictures and loud drumming on the outside and nothing within worth a moment’s consideration. The best of the show is on the outside.   
Or if there is anything within, it is a masquerade where all act borrowed parts but no one is what he seems to be. Gracious Lord, never suffer us so to act as to make the world think that our Redeemer is nothing more than the clever manager of a theater, where nothing is real but all is pantomime. Brothers and Sisters, if you pray at all, pray God to make you real through and through. May you be made of true metal! It were better for you that you had never been born than that you should make Christ dishonorable among the sons of men by leading them to conclude that religion is all a piece of acting.   
The folly of this is illustrated by the fact that there is no value in such a dead form. The form of godliness without the power is not worth the trouble it takes to put it together and keep it together. Imitation jewels are pretty and brilliant. But if you take them to the jeweler he will give you nothing for them. There is a religion which is all paste gems—a godliness which glitters but is not gold. And in that day when you will want to realize something from it, you will be wretchedly disappointed.   
A form of godliness joined to an unholy heart is of no value to God. I have read that the swan was not allowed to be offered upon the altar of God because, although its feathers are as white as snow, yet its skin is black. God will not accept that external morality which conceals internal impurity. There must be a pure heart as well as a clean life. The power of godliness must work within, or else God will not accept our offering. There is no value to man or to God in a religion which is a dead form.   
Next, there is no use in mere formality. If your religion is without spiritual life, what is the use of it? Could you ride home on a dead horse? Would you hunt with dead dogs? Would anyone like to go into battle with a pasteboard helmet? When the sword fell on it, what use would such a helmet be? What an outcry has been raised about bad swords! Is false religion any better? In the depth of winter can you warm yourself before a painted fire? Could you dine off the picture of a feast when you are hungry?   
There must be vitality and substantiality—or else the form is utterly worthless. And worse than worthless, for it may flatter you into deadly self-conceit. Moreover, there is no comfort in it. The form without the power has nothing in it to warm the heart, to raise the spirits, or to strengthen the mind against the day of sickness, or in the hour of death. O God, if my religion has been a mere form, what shall I do in the swelling of Jordan? My fine profession will all disappear and nothing will come of it wherewith I may face the last enemy.   
Peter called hypocrites “wells without water.” You are thirsty and you gladly spy a well. It is well surrounded with a curb and provided with a windlass and bucket. You hasten to draw water. What? Does the bucket come up empty? You try again. How bitter is your disappointment! A well without water is a mockery. It is a mere pit of destruction—a deadly delusion. Are some of you possessors of a religion which never yields you a drop of comfort? Is it a bondage to you? Do you follow Christ as a slave follows his master? Away with such a religion!   
The godliness which is worth having is a joy to a man—it is his choice, his treasure, his all. When it does not yield him conscious joy, yet he prizes it as the only source from which joy is expected of him. He follows after Christ with love, out of his heart’s desire after Him and not from the force of fashion, or the power of fear.   
To have the form of godliness without the power of it is to lack constancy in your religion. You never saw a mirage, perhaps. But those who have travel in the East, when they come home, are sure to tell you about them. It is a very hot and thirsty day and you are riding on a camel. Suddenly there rises before you a beautiful scene. Just a little from you are brooks of water, flowing between beds of osiers and banks of reeds and rushes. Yonder are palm trees and orange groves. Yes, and a city rises on a hill, crowned with minarets and towers.   
You are rejoiced and ask your guide to lead you nearer to the water which glistens in the sun. He grimly answers, “Take no notice, it is a mirage. There is nothing yonder but the burning sand.” You can scarce believe him. It seems so real! But lo, it is all gone, like a dream of night. And so is the hope which is built upon the form of godliness without the power. The white ants will eat up all the substance of a box and yet leave it standing till a touch causes the whole fabric to fall in dust—beware of a profession of which the substance has been eaten away. Believe in nothing which has not the stamp of eternity upon it.   
Be careful, poor Child—you may blow your bubble and the sunlight may paint it with rainbows. But in an instant it is gone and not a trace of it remains. Your transient globe of beauty is for you and your fellow children and not for men.   
In reality, this kind of religion is in opposition to Christ. It is Jannes and Jambres over again—the magician of hypocrisy is trying to work miracles which belong to God only. In appearance he would produce the same marvels as the finger of God. But he fails. God grant we may never be guilty of resisting the Truth of God by a lying profession. False men do serious injury to true godliness. For, like Ehud, they come with a pretended message from God and with their dagger sharpened at both edges, they strike vital godliness in its very heart. Nobody can do so much damage to the Church of God as the man who is within its walls but not within its life.   
This nominal godliness, which is devoid of power, is a shameful thing. I close with that. It is a shameful thing for this life, for the Lord Jesus loathes it. When He passed by the fig tree, which was so early with its leaves but so empty of fruit, He saw therein the likeness of the vainglorious professor who has no real holiness and He said, “Henceforth let no fruit grow on you forever.” His Word withered it at once—it stood a terrible emblem of the end of a false profession.   
How shameful will such a fruitless, lifeless professor be in eternity, when the secrets of all hearts shall be revealed! What shame and everlasting contempt will await him when his falsehood shall be detected and his baseness shall fill all holy minds with horror! O, beware of the Hell of the false professor!   
I have done when I have added a few words of instruction. The form of godliness is most precious. Let those who feel the power of godliness honor it and use it. Do not despise it because others have damaged it. Come forth and make an open profession of religion. But see that you have the power of it. Cry to God that you may never wear a sleeve which is longer than your arm—I mean may never go beyond what is really and truly your own. It will be better for you to go to God as a lost soul and cry for mercy, than to profess yourself saved when you are not.   
Yet confess Christ without fail or fear. Do not be ashamed of Jesus because of the ill manners of His disciples. Regard the ill savor of false professors as a part of the cross which you will have to bear for your Lord. To be associated with some who are not true seems inevitable in this life—however carefully we choose our company.   
My next is a word of discrimination. Those to whom my text has nothing to say will be the first to take it home to themselves. When I discharge my heart with a faithful sermon, certain trembling souls whom I would gladly comfort are sure to think that I mean them. A poor woman, in deep distress, comes to me, crying, “Sir, I have no feeling.” Dear heart, she has ten times too much feeling. Another moans out, “I am sure I am a hypocrite.” I never met with a hypocrite who thought himself one. And I never shall.   
“Oh,” said another, “I feel condemned.” He that feels himself condemned may hope for pardon. If you are afraid of yourselves I am not afraid of you. If you tremble at God’s Word, you have one of the surest marks of God’s elect. Those who fear that they are mistaken are seldom mistaken. If you search yourselves and allow the Word of God to search you, it is well with you. The bankrupt trader fears to have his books examined. The sound man even pays an accountant to overhaul his affairs. Use discrimination and neither acquit nor condemn yourself without reason.   
If the Spirit of God leads you to weep in secret for sin and to pray in secret for Divine Grace. If He leads you to seek after holiness. If He leads you to trust alone in Jesus, then you know the power of godliness and you have never denied it. You who cry, “Oh, that I felt more of the power of the Holy Spirit, for I know that He could comfort and sanctify me and make me live the life of Heaven on earth!” You are not aimed at either by the text or the sermon. For you have not denied the power. No, no, this text does not belong to *you* but to quite another class of people.   
Let me give you a word of admonition. Learn from the text that there is something in godliness worth having. The “form” of godliness is not all—there is a blessed “power.” The Holy Spirit is that power and He can work in you to will and to do of God’s good pleasure. Come to Jesus Christ, dear Souls. Do not come to the minister, nor to the Church, in the first place. But come to Jesus. Come and lay yourselves at His feet and say, “Lord, I will not be comforted unless You comfort me.” Come and take everything at first hand from your crucified Lord. Then shall you know the power of godliness.   
Beware of second-hand religion, it is never worth the carrying home. Get your godliness direct from Heaven by the personal dealing of your own soul with your Savior. Profess only what you possess and rest only in that which has been given you from above. Your heavenly life, as yet, may be very feeble but the grain of mustard seed will grow. You may be the least in Israel but that is better than being the greatest in Babylon.   
The Lord bless these words and apply them to each one in his own way by His Holy Spirit. You can make either a blister of them or a plaster of them, as conscience shall direct. God guide you, for Jesus Christ’s sake. Amen.

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÷2Ti 3.15

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AND THE SCRIPTURES

NO. 1866

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, OCTOBER 18, 1885, *BY C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“And that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.”***2Ti 3:15***.***

HOW very remarkably the times repeat themselves! As I said just now, in the reading of the chapter, the warning which Paul gave concerning his own times is quite as necessary for this present age. Again darkness thickens and the mists hang heavily around our footsteps. Evil men and seducers wax worse and worse and very many have turned away their ears from the Truth of God to listen to fables. Nor do we wonder that it is so. History must repeat itself so long as we have the same human nature to deal with, the same sins to ensnare mankind, the same Truth to be trifled with and the same devil to stir men up to the same mischief.

But, Brothers and Sisters, when the same evils come, we must apply to them the same remedies. When a disease appears which has done deadly mischief in past times, physicians inquire for medicines which, on a former occasion, curbed the enemy. We are bound to do the same in *spiritual* matters. We must see what Paul did in his day when the malaria of false doctrine was in the air. It is remarkable how very simple, as a rule, everything is that is really effective. If a discovery is made in science or machinery, it is complicated, at first, and that for the very reason that it is imperfect. But all improvements are in the direction of simplicity. It is just the same with spiritual teachings. When we get at reality, we cut off superfluity. Let us not talk of inventing wise measures for the present distress in the spiritual world, but let us use the great remedy which was so effectual in Paul’s day! Paul, himself, taught young Timothy the Gospel— he made him not only hear his doctrine, but see his practice. We cannot force the Truth of God upon men, but we can make our own teaching clear and decided—and make our lives consistent therewith. Truth and holiness are the surest antidotes to error and unrighteousness. The Apostle said to Timothy, “Continue in the things which you have learned and have been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them.”

He then dwelt upon another potent remedy which had been of great service to the young preacher, namely, the knowing of the Holy Scriptures from his earliest childhood. This was, to young Timothy, one of his best safeguards. His early training held him like an anchor and saved him from the dreadful drift of the age. Happy young man, of whom the Apostle could say, “From childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus!”

Brothers and Sisters, to be prepared for the coming conflict, we have only to preach the Gospel and to live the Gospel—and also to take care that we teach the children the Word of the Lord! This last is especially to be attended to, for it is by the mouth of babes and sucklings that God will still the enemy. It is idle to dream that human learning must be met by human learning, or that Satan must cast out Satan. No! Lift up the bronze serpent wherever the fiery serpents are biting the people and men shall look to it and live. Bring the children out and hold them up—and turn their little eyes towards the divinely ordained remedy, for still there is life in a look—life as against the varied venoms of the serpent which are now poisoning the blood of men! There is no cure, after all, for midnight but the rising sun. No hope remains for a dark world but in that Light of God which lightens every man. Shine forth, O Sun of Righteousness, and mist, cloud and darkness must disappear. Brothers, keep to the Apostolic plans and rest assured of Apostolic success! Preach Christ! Preach the Word in season and out of season—and teach the children. One of God’s chief methods for preserving His fields from tares is to sow them early with wheat. Upon that I am going to speak, this morning, as the Holy Spirit shall help me.

In tracing the gracious work of God upon the heart of Timothy and upon others who are favored as he was, I shall notice that this work *commenced with early instruction—*“From childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures.” And secondly, it was*quickened and made effectual by saving faith—*“The Holy Scriptures which are able to make you wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.” Then we shall notice that the effect of this early teaching upon Timothy was that it *created a solid character* and, furthermore, that it *produced great usefulness*.

**I.**The work of God’s Grace in Timothy COMMENCED WITH EARLY INSTRUCTION—“From childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures.”  
*Note the time for instruction*. The expression, “from childhood,” might be better understood if we read it, “from a very child” or, as the Revised Version has it, “from a babe.” It does not mean a well-grown child, or youth, but a child just rising out of infancy. From a very child Timothy had known the sacred writings. This expression is, no doubt, used to show that we cannot begin too early to imbue the minds of our children with Scriptural knowledge. Babes receive impressions long before we are aware of the fact. During the first months of a child’s life, it learns more than we imagine. It soon learns the love of its mother and its own dependence— and if the mother is wise, it learns the meaning of obedience and the necessity of yielding its will to a higher will. This may be the keynote of its whole future life. If it learns obedience and submission early, it may save a thousand tears from the child’s eyes and as many from the mother’s heart. A special vantage ground is lost when even babyhood is left uncultured.  
The Holy Scripture may be learned by children as soon as they are capable of understanding anything. It is a very remarkable fact which I have heard asserted by many teachers, that children will learn to read out of the Bible better than from any other book. I scarcely know why. It may, perhaps, be on account of the simplicity of the language—and I believe it is so. A Biblical fact will often be grasped when an incident of common history is forgotten. There is an adaptation in the Bible for human beings of all ages and, therefore, it has a fitness for children. We make a mistake when we think that we must begin with something else and lead up to the Scriptures. The Bible is the book for the peep of day. Parts of it are above a child’s mind, for they are above the comprehension of the most advanced among us. There are depths in it where leviathan may swim—but there are also brooks in which a lamb may wade. Wise teachers know how to lead their little ones into the green pastures beside the still waters.  
I was noticing, in the life of that man of God whose loss presses very heavily upon many of our hearts, namely, the Earl of Shaftesbury, that his first religious impressions were produced by a humble woman. The impressions which made him Shaftesbury, the man of God and the friend of man, were received in the nursery! Little Lord Ashley had a godly nurse who spoke to him of the things of God. He tells us that she died before he was seven years of age—clear proof that early in life his heart had been able to receive the seal of the Spirit of God—and to receive it by humble instrumentality. Blessed among women was she whose name we know not, but who worked incalculable service for God and man by her holy teaching of the chosen child! Young nurses, note this.  
Give us the first seven years of a child, with God’s Grace, and we may defy the world, the flesh and the devil to ruin that immortal soul! Those first years, while yet the clay is soft and plastic, go far to decide the form of the vessel. Do not say that your office, you who teach the young, is in the least degree inferior to ours, whose main business is with older folks. No, you have the first of them and your impressions, as they come first, will endure last—oh that they may be good and only good! Among the thoughts that come to an old man before he enters Heaven, the most plentiful are those that before visited him when he sat upon his mother’s knee. That which made Dr. Guthrie ask for a “bairn’s hymn” when he was dying is but an instinct of our nature which leads us to complete the circle by folding together the ends of life. Childlike things are dearest to old age! We shuffle off a portion of the coil that surrounds and hampers us and go back, again, to our more natural selves and, therefore, the old songs are on our lips and the old thoughts are in our minds! The teachings of our childhood leave clean cut and sharp impressions upon the mind which remain after 70 years have passed. Let us see that such impressions are made for the highest ends.  
It is well to *note the admirable selection of instructors*. We are not at a loss to tell who instructed youthful Timothy. In the first chapter of this Epistle, Paul says, “When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in you, which dwelt first in your grandmother Lois, and your mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in you, also.” No doubt grandmother Lois and mother Eunice united in teaching the little one. Who should teach the children but the parents? Timothy’s father was a Greek and probably a heathen, but his child was happy in having a venerable grandmother, so often the dearest of all relatives to a little child. He had also a gracious mother, once a devout Jewess and afterwards, also, a firmly believing Christian who made it her daily pleasure to teach her own dear child the Word of the Lord.  
O dear mothers, you have a very sacred trust reposed in you by God! He has, in effect, said to you, “Take this child and nurse it for Me and I will give you your wages.” You are called to equip the future man of God, that he may be thoroughly furnished unto every good work. If God spares you, you may live to hear that pretty boy speak to thousands and you will have the sweet reflection in your heart that the quiet teachings of the nursery led the man to love his God and serve Him! Those who think that a woman detained at home by her little family is doing nothing, think the reverse of what is true! Scarcely can the godly mother quit her home for a place of worship, but dream not that she is lost to the work of the Church—far from it—she is doing the best possible service for her Lord! Mothers, the godly training of your offspring is your first and most pressing duty! Christian women, by teaching children the Holy Scriptures, are as much fulfilling their part for the Lord as Moses in judging Israel, or Solomon in building the Temple!  
Nowadays, since the world has in it, alas, so few of Christian mothers and grandmothers, the Church has thought it wise to supplement the instruction of home by teaching held under her fostering wing. Those children who have no such parents, the Church takes under her maternal care. I regard this as a very blessed institution. I am thankful for the many of our Brothers and Sisters who give their Sabbaths—and many of them a considerable part of their week evenings, also—to the teaching of other people’s children who somehow grow to be very much their own. They endeavor to perform the duties of fathers and mothers, for God’s sake, to those children who are neglected by their own parents—and therein they do well. Let no Christian parents fall into the delusion that the Sunday school is intended to ease them of their personal duties. The first and most natural condition of things is for Christian parents to train up their own children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.  
Let holy grandmother’s and gracious mothers, with their husbands, see to it that their own boys and girls are well taught in the Book of the Lord. Where there are no such Christian parents, it is well and wisely done for godly people to intervene. It is a Christly work when others undertake the duty which the natural doers of it have left undone. The Lord Jesus looks with pleasure upon those who feed His lambs and nurse His babes, for it is not His will that any of these little ones should perish. Timothy had the great privilege of being taught by those whose natural duty it is, but where that great privilege cannot be enjoyed, let us all, as God shall help us, try to make up to the children the terrible loss which they endure. Come forward, earnest men and women, and sanctify yourselves for this joyful service!  
*Note the subject of the instruction*. “From childhood you have known the *Holy Scriptures*”—he was led*to treat the Book of God with great reverence*. I lay stress upon those two words, “*Holy Scriptures*.” One of the first objects of the Sunday school should be to teach the children great reverence for these holy writings, these Inspired Scriptures. The Jews esteemed the Old Testament beyond all price and though, unfortunately, many of them fell into a superstitious reverence for the letter and lost the spirit of it, yet were they much to be commended for their profound regard to the Holy Oracles. Especially is this feeling of reverence needed nowadays. I meet with men who hold strange views, but I do not care one-half so much about their views, nor about the strangeness of them, as I do about a certain something which I spy out at the back of this novel thinking. When I find that, if I prove their views to be unscriptural, I have, nevertheless, proved nothing to them, for they do not care about Scripture—then I have found out a principle far more dangerous than mere doctrinal blundering!  
This indifference to Scripture is the great curse of the Church at this hour! We can be tolerant of divergent opinions, so long as we perceive an honest intent to follow the Statute Book. But if it comes to this, that the Bible, itself, is of small authority to you, then we have no need of further parley—we are in different camps and the sooner we recognize this, the better for all parties concerned. If we are to have a Church of God at all in the land, Scripture must be regarded as holy and to be had in reverence. This Scripture was given by Holy Inspiration and is not the result of dim myths and dubious traditions! Neither has it drifted down to us by the survival of the fittest as one of the best of human books. It must be given to my children and accepted by ourselves as the Infallible Revelation of the Most Holy God! Lay much stress upon this—tell your children that the Word of the Lord is a pure Word, as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. Let their esteem for the Book of God be carried to the highest point!  
Observe that Timothy was taught not only to reverence holy things in general, but especially to *know the Scriptures*. The teaching of his mother and his grandmother was the teaching of Holy Scripture. Suppose we get the children together on the Sabbath and then amuse them and make the hours to pass away pleasantly? Or instruct them, as we do in the weekdays, in the elements of a moral education—what have we done? We have done nothing worthy of the day, or of the Church of God! Suppose that we are particularly careful to teach the children the rules and regulations of our own Church and do not take them to the Scriptures? Suppose that we bring before them a book which is set up as the standard of our Church but do not dwell upon the Bible—what have we done? The aforesaid standard may or may not be correct and we may, therefore, have taught our children the Truth of God or have taught them error! But if we keep to Holy Scripture, we cannot go aside. With such a Standard we know that we are right. This Book is the Word of God and if we teach it, we teach that which the Lord will accept and bless.  
O dear teachers—and I speak here to myself, also—let our teaching be more and more Scriptural! Fret not if our classes forget what we say, but pray them to remember what the *Lord* says. May Divine Truths about sin, righteousness and judgement to come be written on their hearts! May revealed Truths of God concerning the love of God, the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit never be forgotten by them! May they know the virtue and necessity of the atoning blood of our Lord, the power of His Resurrection and the Glory of His Second Coming! May the Doctrines of Grace be engraved as with a pen of iron upon their minds and written as with the point of a diamond upon their hearts—never to be erased! Brothers and Sisters, if we can secure this, we have not lived in vain. The generation now ruling seems bent on departing from the eternal Truths of God, but we shall not despair if the Gospel is impressed upon the memory of the rising race.  
Once more upon this point—it appears that young Timothy was so taught as a child that *the teaching was effectual*. “You have known the Holy Scriptures,” says Paul. It is a good deal to say of a child that he has “*known*the Holy Scriptures.” You may say, “I have taught the children the Scriptures,” but that they have *known* them is quite another thing. Do all of you who are grown up, know the Scriptures? I fear that although knowledge in general increases, knowledge of the Scriptures is far too rare! If we were now to hold an examination, I am afraid that some of you would hardly shine in the lists at the end. But here was a little child who knew the Holy Scriptures! That is to say, he had a remarkable acquaintance with them. Children can get that—it is by no means an impossible attainment. God blessing your efforts, dear Friends, your children may know all of Scripture that is necessary to their salvation. They may have as true an idea of sin as their mother has. They may have as clear a view of the Atonement as their grandmother can have. They may have as distinct a faith in Jesus as any of us can have!  
The things that make for our peace require no length of experience to prepare us for receiving them—they are among the simplicities of thought. He may run that reads them—and a child may read them as soon as he can run! The opinion that children cannot receive the whole Truth of the Gospel is a great mistake, for their child-condition is a help rather than a hindrance! Older folk must become as little children before they can enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Do lay a good groundwork with the children. Let not Sunday school work be slurred, nor done in a slovenly manner. Let the children know the Holy Scripture! Let the Scriptures be consulted rather than any *human* book.  
**II.**Our second need was to be that this work was QUICKENED BY SAVING FAITH. The Scriptures do not save, but they are able to make a man *wise unto salvation*. Children may know the Scriptures and yet not be children of God. *Faith in Jesus Christ is that Grace which brings immediate salvation.* Many dear children are called of God so early that they cannot precisely tell when they were converted—but they were converted—they must, at some time or other, have passed from death to life. You could not have told this morning, by observation, the moment when the sun rose, but it did rise—and there was a time when it was below the horizon and another time when it had risen above it. The moment, whether we see it or not, in which a child is really saved, is when he or she believes in the Lord Jesus Christ. Perhaps for years Lois and Eunice had been teaching the Old Testament to Timothy while they, themselves, did not know the Lord Jesus. And, if so, they were teaching him the type without the antitype—the riddles without the answers—but it was good teaching, for all that, since it was all the Truth of God which they then knew.  
How much happier, however, is our task, since we are able to teach concerning the Lord Jesus so plainly, having the New Testament to explain the Old! May we not hope that even earlier in life than Timothy, our dear children may catch the thought that Christ Jesus is the Sum and Substance of Holy Scripture and, so, by faith in Him may receive power to become the sons of God? I mention this, simple as it is, because I want all teachers to feel that if their children do not as yet know all the doctrines of the Bible and if there are certain higher or deeper Truths of God which their minds have not yet grasped, still, children are saved as soon as they are wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus! Faith in the Lord Jesus, as He is set forth in Scripture, will surely save. “If you believe with all your heart, you may,” said Philip to the eunuch—and we say the same to every child—you may confess your faith if you have any true faith in Jesus to confess. If you believe that Jesus is the Christ and so put your trust in Him, you are as truly saved as though gray hairs adorned your brow.  
Notice that *by this faith in Christ Jesus, we continue and advance in salvation*. The moment we believe in Christ we are saved, but we are not at once as wise as we may be and hope to be. We may be, as it were, saved unintelligently. I mean, of course, comparatively so, but it is desirable that we should be able to give a reason for the hope that is in us and so be wise unto salvation. By faith, children become little disciples and, by faith, they go on to become more proficient. How are we to go on to wisdom? Not by quitting the way of faith, but by keeping to that same faith in Christ Jesus by which we began to learn. In the school of Grace, faith is the great faculty by which we make advances in wisdom. If by faith you have been able to say A, B and C, it must be by faith that you shall go on to say D, E and F, until you shall come to the end of the alphabet and be an expert in the Book of Wisdom. If by faith you can read in the spelling book of simple faith, by the same faith in Christ Jesus you must go on to read in the classics of full assurance and become a scribe well instructed in the things of the Kingdom of God. Keep, therefore, close to the practice of faith from which so many are turning aside.  
In these times men look to make progress by what they call *thought*, by which they mean vain imagination and speculation

We cannot advance a step by doubt—our only progress is by faith. There are no such things as “steppingstones of our dead selves.” Unless, indeed, they are steppingstones down to death and destruction! The only steppingstones to life and Heaven are to be found in the Truths of God revealed to our faith. Believe God and you have made progress! So let us pray for our children, that they may constantly know and believe more and more, for the Scripture is able to make them wise unto salvation, but only through faith which is in Christ Jesus. Faith is the result to aim at. Faith in the appointed, anointed and exalted Savior. This is the anchor to which we would bring these little ships, for here they will abide in perfect safety!  
Observe that the text gives us a plain intimation that *by faith, knowledge is turned into wisdom*. Exceedingly practical is the difference between knowledge and wisdom. See it in the text, “From a child you have known.” But it is faith, faith alone, that turns that knowledge into wisdom—and thus the Holy Scriptures are “able to make wise unto salvation.” “Knowledge is power,” but wisdom is the application of that power to practical ends! Knowledge may be bullion, but wisdom is the minted gold, fit for circulation among men! You can give your children knowledge without their having faith, but they *must* have faith given them of the Holy Spirit before that knowledge can become wisdom! Scriptural knowledge is wisdom when it influences the heart, when it rules the mind, when it affects the daily life, when it sanctifies the spirit, when it renews the will. O Teachers, pray for your dear children that God would give them faith in Christ Jesus so that the knowledge which you have given them may turn to wisdom! Go as far as you can go with the teaching, but always cry mightily unto the Lord that His Holy Spirit may work regeneration, create faith, impart wisdom and give salvation.  
Learn yet, again, that *faith finds her wisdom in the use of knowledge conferred by the Scriptures*. “From childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise unto salvation through faith.” Faith never finds her wisdom in the thoughts of men, nor in *pretended* revelations. She resorts to the Inspired Writings for her guidance. This is the well from which she drinks, the manna on which she feeds. Faith takes the Lord Jesus to be her wisdom. The knowledge of Christ is, to her, the most excellent of the sciences. She asks only—What is written? And when that question is answered, her difficulties are ended! I know it is not so with this unbelieving age and this it is which causes me to go mourning and lamenting. Alas for a Church which rejects the testimony of the Lord! As for us, we abide by the Word of the Lord and from it we will not stir an inch!  
See then, my Hearers, what is needed for all of you who are unconverted. The Holy Scriptures must be made the means of your salvation through faith. Know the Bible, read the Bible, search the Bible—and yet the Bible, alone, will *not* save you! What did our Lord, Himself, say? “You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and they are they which testify of Me; and you will not come unto Me that you might have life.” If you come not to Jesus, you will miss eternal life! Searching the Scriptures is able to make you wise unto salvation “through *faith* which is in Christ Jesus”—but not without that faith! Pray, you Sunday school teachers, that you may see this faith worked in the children whom you teach! What a blessed groundwork for faith, your teaching of the Holy Scriptures will be! But never mistake it for the building, itself, which is of faith alone!  
**III.**Time fails me. I cannot dwell as I would upon other points, but I beg you to notice, in the third place, that sound instruction in Holy Scripture, when quickened by a living faith, CREATES A SOUND CHARACTER. The man who, from childhood has known the Holy Scriptures, when he obtains faith in Christ, will be grounded and settled upon the abiding principles of the unchanging Word of God. I wish it were so with the bulk of those who profess and call themselves, “Christians.” In these days we are surrounded by unsettled minds, “ever learning, but never coming to a knowledge of the Truth of God.” These are carried about by every wind of doctrine. What numbers of professors I have known who go into one place of worship and hear one form of doctrine and apparently approve it because the preacher is “a clever man!” They hear an opposite teaching and they are equally at home, because, again, it is “a clever man!” They join with a Church and you ask them, “Do you agree with the views of that community?” They neither know nor care what those views may be—one doctrine is as good as another to them. Their spiritual appetite can enjoy soap as well as butter! They can digest bricks as well as bread!  
These religious ostriches have a marvelous power of swallowing everything—but they have no spiritual discernment, no appreciation of the Truth of God. They follow any “clever” person and, in this, prove that they are not the sheep of our Lord’s pasture, of whom it is written, “A stranger will they not follow, for they know not the voice of strangers.” We desire to build up a Church with those who know what they know and can give a reason for what they believe. The true Believer’s great reason for his faith is, “It is written.” Christ our Master met the tempter in the wilderness with, “It is written.” Though He was, Himself, Inspired, yet His teaching was full of the Old Testament—He was always quoting the Words of the Inspired Book and, therein, setting us an example.  
If you and I would contend with Satan and with an evil world, so as to overcome in the conflict, we must take care to take our stand squarely and firmly upon the Scriptures! Let us treat our opponents to volleys of Scripture! Let us fire point-blank with sacred texts! These are arguments which wound and kill! Our own reasonings are mere paper pellets, but Scriptural proofs are bullets of steel! Our opponents will find it useless to try to lead us away from the old faith when they perceive that we will not budge an inch from Holy Scripture. We are bomb-proof when we shelter beneath the Word of the Lord. The cunning craftiness of deceivers is foiled by the clear simplicity of, “Thus says the Lord.”  
Those who know the Scriptures and so believe in Jesus, are pillared upon a personal acquaintance with the foundations of their faith. “From childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures”—they were not treated with an ignorant reverence, but with an intelligent homage. How much I desire that each one of you may be a personal student of the Holy Scriptures! We need to know them for ourselves! Personally grasping them as a Revelation of God to himself, the godly man loves them, studies them, feels them, lives upon them and so knows them! By this means he becomes as independent of other men. Paul is to die. Poor Timothy! Yes, it *will* be, “poor Timothy!” *if* he carries his faith in Paul’s bosom and has none in his own heart! But Timothy’s *Bible* is not going to die! Timothy’s knowledge of Scripture is not going to be taken from him, nor is the Holy Spirit about to depart from him!  
Look at some of our Churches—while a well-instructed Gospel minister leads the way, the Brethren abide in their steadfastness. The good man dies and where is the Church? No doubt, those who are instructed in the Scriptures remain in their places, but the more ignorant are scattered like chaff! There are numbers, now, in this part of London, wandering about, who were once zealous for the faith, but are now almost indifferent to it. I will not mention names, but I could do so readily enough—I mean the names of esteemed Brethren who gathered an earnest following about them, but they are gone—and with their going, numbers of their followers have gone, too! I fear there could not have been a sound knowledge of the Word of God, or these people would have survived the great loss of their teacher. Oh, to have a good personal building up upon the solid Word of God! Then you will know what you know and you will hold fast to it—and there will be no driving you away from the standards of the faith. I labor for this among you and I pray that I may not labor in vain.  
The man that has been taught the Scripture from his youth is anchored by the Divine influences of that Scripture. It has so operated upon him that he knows for himself its Divine power. He knows the difference between the Truth of God and error by the effect produced on his heart and life. Without any boasting, he is able to discern between things that differ because about Scriptural Truth there is a strange, mysterious unction which does not attend the teachings of the most learned of men. I cannot explain to you what this unction is, but every child of God knows it. When I read a text of Scripture, even if I do not now it to be a text of Scripture by memory, I perceive its Divine origin at once by a mystic influence which it exerts over my heart. The most striking passages of any sermon are wellplaced texts. A sentence from the mouth of God will have more permanent power over a Christian man than the best composed of human statements! God’s Word is living, powerful and has a power to enter the heart beyond that of any other word! The Words of the Bible strike and stick— they enter and abide.  
He that has been taught in Scripture, steeped in Scripture, saturated with Scripture—is conscious of its permeating influence and it gives him permanence of conviction. Like the crimson dye in cloth, the tint of Scripture is not to be gotten out of the soul when once fixed there! It is dyed ingrain—it enters into the very nature of the man! Bible Truths influence his thoughts, words and deeds—it is all-pervading—he begins to eat, drink and sleep Holy Scripture. The man’s heart is fixed on God, fixed in the Truths of God and fixed in holy living. He will stand fast, however evil the days. Though all the rest should apostatize, this man cannot, for the Divine Word, through faith, has bound him to the Altar of the Lord and, in the Truth of God he must and will both live and die, come what may.  
Besides, a man that has once been taught in the Scripture and to whose soul the Spirit has blessed that teaching, has come to yield himself to the supremacy of Scripture and this must operate to the shaping of his character. I confess that sometimes I come across a text which does not, at first blush, agree with other teachings of Scripture which I have already received—and this startles me for the moment. But one thing is settled in my heart, namely, that I will follow the Scripture wherever it leads me and that I will renounce the most cherished opinion rather than shape a text or alter a syllable of the Inspired Book. It is not mine to make God’s Word consistent, but to believe that it is so! When a text stands in the middle of the road, I drive no further. The Romans had a god they called, “Terminus,” who was the god of landmarks. Holy Scripture is my sacred landmark and I hear a voice which threatens me with a curse if I remove it! Sometimes I say to myself, “I did not think to find this Truth to be just so, but as it *is* so, I must bow. It is rather awkward for my theory, but I must alter my system, for the Scripture cannot be broken.” “Let God be true, but every man a liar.”  
We want our children to have this deep reverence for Scripture, even as we have it ourselves. There it stands! The eternal pen has written it and we accept it! If God has said it, we have no desire to question it, lest the Scripture should say to us, “No but, O man, who are *you* that replies against God?” We must bow before the Infallibility of the Holy Spirit and say, “Lord, teach me what this means. What I know not, teach me.” He who goes through the world with an intense reverence for Scripture will be a man, indeed. The Lord will make good in him that Word—“Them that honor Me I will honor.” Angels and men, before long, reverence the man who reverences the Word of God. Feed your mind on the pulse of Scripture and, like Daniel and his comrades, your countenance shall appear fairer and fatter in flesh than all the children who eat the portion of the king’s meat from the philosophic tables of the world.  
While on this point, I would also say that this kind of instruction will hold a man fast against the differing seductions of the age. Here I go into one place of worship and I see a pretty little dolls’ house at the far end and people are bowing down before some paper flowers and candlesticks! Around the building I see pictures of virgins and saints, but he who has read his Bible enters not into this modern idolatry! A priest once said to a poor Irishman, “There will be no good come of your reading the Bible.” “Why,” replied the man, “it is written, ‘Search the Scriptures.’ Please, your Reverence, I was just reading, ‘you shall read it to your children’ and the priests have no children—how can you account for that?” “Ah!” replied the priest, “the likes of *you* cannot understand the book.” “Well,” said the man, “if I cannot understand it, it will do me no harm, but if I *can* understand it, it will do me great good.”  
Just so! The Bible is a very dangerous book to superstition, but to nothing else! Spread it, then, to the winds of Heaven and read it, every one of you! To the Law and to the Testimony! If we speak not according to this Word, it is because there is no Light of God in us! He that holds to the Bible will be equally free from the dangers of rationalism which are now so abundant and he will keep himself clean from the ravings of anarchy which now sound like the cries of dragons from the dark places of the earth! People are beginning to forget the Commandment, “you shall not steal,” and they are planning various methods of political thievery by which the foundations of society will be shaken. Love of Holy Scripture will be the sheet anchor of the State as well as of the Church! If men are thoroughly grounded in Holy Scripture, we shall undergo political changes with great advantage—but if not, there is mischief brewing. The Bible is the cornerstone of our future hope.  
**IV.**Now, lastly. As this early teaching creates a fine solid character, so will it PRODUCE GREAT USEFULNESS. I will say nothing more than just this. Thus Timothy became above all others a choice companion for Paul, one upon whom Paul looked with love and remembered with joy. Companions for Apostles are only to be produced in the school of Holy Scripture. Those who have communed with Moses, David and the Prophets, are fit to associate with an Apostle. It is something to produce out of a child a comrade for a veteran servant of the living God! Let a man of God get side by side with a youth who knows the Scriptures and he feels, “This is fit company for me.” Paul, worn with years of persecution, strokes his gray beard and his eyes light up with joy as he looks on that young Timothy! What is there about him more than about any other? Why, only that he knows the Scriptures and they have made him wise unto salvation!  
There were, no doubt, fine young fellows to be found who gloried in preferring the advanced thought of philosophers to the stereotyped teachings of Holy Scripture. But had they begun to talk to the Apostle upon their new theories, Paul would have dismissed them with words of warning. He knew nothing of them or of their “other Gospel,” except that they troubled him and the Churches. Without Scriptural training, a convert has no grit, no backbone and no soul in him. But when Paul looked on a gracious youth who knew the Scriptures and held fast to them, he thanked God and took courage.  
This young man became a minister and an Evangelist. He was a preacher of such a sort that we should have been glad to have heard him. God send us many such! Perhaps we might have said, “The young man’s opinions were rather crude and his expressions were somewhat rough, but we can put up with that from so young a man. On the other hand, what a richness of Scripture there was in him! What depth of thought! Did you not notice he had not got through a dozen sentences before he had quoted Scripture? And when he came to prove his point, he did not give half-a-dozen rationalistic arguments, but he brought out a single Word from the Lord and the point was settled.” You must agree with a man who is at home with his Bible. This is the kind of preacher that we need more of! Instruct your children well, beloved Teachers, that they, also, may become Scriptural teachers in due time.  
Timothy became, also, a great champion for the faith. He came forward and in the midst of all those who were preaching false doctrine, he stood firm to the end—he was steadfast, unmovable, courageous—because as a child he had known the Scriptures! O Teachers, see what you may do! In your schools sit our future Evangelists. In that infant class sits an Apostle to some distant land! There may come under your training hand, my Sister, a future father in Israel! There shall come under your teaching, my Brother, those that are to bear the banners of the Lord in the thick of the fray! The ages look to you each time your class assembles!  
Oh, that God may help you to do your part well! We pray with one heart and one soul that the Lord Jesus Christ may be with our Sunday schools from this day and till He comes. Amen and Amen!

***PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—*** 2Ti 1:1-8***;*** 2Ti 3:1-17***;*** 2Ti 4:1-8***.*  
HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—4, 480, 119 (SONG VI).**

Adapted from*The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #989 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

**÷2Ti 4.6**

A LAST LOOKOUT  
NO. 989

**A SERMON  
*DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“The time of my departure is at hand.”*** 2Ti 4:6***.***

SO near, so very near the change—his removal from this to another world. And so very conscious of it. Yet Paul looked back with calm satisfaction. He looked forward with sweet assurance. And he looked round with deepest interest on the mission that had engaged his life. As you must have noticed while we were reading the chapter, in his case “the ruling passion was strong in death.” Writing what he well knows is the last letter he shall ever write, its main topic is care for the Church of God— anxiety for the promotion of the Truth of God—zeal for the furtherance of the Gospel.

When he is dead and gone from the post of service, the scene of suffering, the field of enterprise—on whom shall his mantle fall? He desires that in Timothy he may find a worthy successor, strong in the faith, sincere of heart, and having dauntless courage—one who will wield the sword and hold the banner when his hand is palsied in death. Men have usually shown us what lies at the bottom of their heart when they have come to die. Often their last expiring expressions have been indicative of their entire character.

Certainly you have before you in the last sentences of Paul’s pen a fair epitome of his entire life. He is trusting in the Savior. He is anxious to show his love for that Savior. The welfare of the Christian Church and the advancement of the holy cause of the Gospel are uppermost in his mind. May it be yours and mine to live wholly for Christ, and to die also for Him. May this ever be foremost in our thoughts—“How can I advance the kingdom of our Lord and Savior? By what means can I bless His Church and people?”

It is very beautiful to observe the way in which Paul describes his death in this verse. According to our translation he speaks of it as an *offering*. “I am now ready,” he says, “to be offered.” If we accept this version he may be supposed to mean that he felt as one standing like a bullock or a lamb, ready to be laid on an altar. He foresaw he would die a martyr’s death. He knew he could not be crucified as his brother Peter had been, for a Roman citizen was, as a rule, exempt from that ignominious death. He expected to die in some other manner. Probably he guessed it would be by the sword, and so he describes himself as waiting for the sacrificial knife to be used, that he might be presented as a sacrifice.

So I say the words of our translation would lead us to think. But the original is far more instructive. He here likens himself, in the Greek, not to an *offering*, but to the *drink offering*. Every Jew would know what that meant. When there was a burnt sacrifice offered, the bullock or the victim then slain was the main part of the sacrifice. But sometimes there was a

little, what if I say, an unimportant supplement added to that sacrifice?— a little oil and a little wine were poured on the altar or the bullock—and thus a drink offering was said to be added to the burnt offering.

Now Paul does not venture to call himself an offering— *Christ* is his offering. Christ is, so to speak, the Sacrifice on the altar. He likens himself only to that little wine and oil poured out as a supplement—not necessarily to its perfection—but tolerated in performing a vow, or allowed in connection with a free will offering. You can confirm this if you refer at your leisure to the fifteenth chapter of Numbers, from the fourth to the eighth verses. The drink offering was thus a kind of addendum by which the person who gave it showed his thankfulness.

So Paul is resolved to show his thankfulness to Christ, the great Sacrifice, and he is willing that his blood should be poured as a drink offering on the altar where his Lord and Master was the great Burnt Offering. He rejoices when he can say, “I am ready to be presented as a drink offering unto God.” We have mainly to do with the second description which he gives of his death. What does he say, when the hour that this grim monster must be grappled with, is at hand? I do not find him sad. Those who delight in gloomy poetry have often represented death in terrible language. “It is hard,” says one***—***

***“To feel the hand of death arrest one’s steps, Throw a chill blight on all one’s budding hopes, And hurl one’s soul untimely to the shades.”***

And another exclaims—  
***“O God, it is a fearful thing  
To see the human soul take wing,  
In any shape, in any mood!  
I’ve seen it rushing forth in blood,  
I’ve seen it on the breaking ocean,  
Strive with a swollen convulsive motion.”***

Not so the Apostle Paul. I do not even hear him speak of flying through the gate as our grand old poet has described death. He does not say, “The hour of my dissolution is at hand”—a very proper word if he had used it. But he is not looking so much at the *process* as at the *result* of his dying. He does not even say, “The hour of my death is at hand,” but he adopts a beautiful expression, “The time of my departure”—words which are used sometimes to signify the departure of a vessel from the port—the pulling up of the anchor so that it looses its moorings when about to put out to sea. So he feels himself like a ship lying at the harbor for awhile—but he says, “The time for pulling up the anchor, the time for letting loose the cable, and cutting from the mooring is at hand. I shall soon be launched upon my voyage.”

And he knew right well where that voyage would end—in the fair havens of the Port of Peace—in the better country where his Lord had gone before him. Now we will proceed very briefly to say a word about *departure*. And then a shorter word still about the *time* of our departure. And then a little more about *the time* of our departure *being at hand*—trying here, especially, to bring forward some lessons which may be of practical usefulness to each one of us.  
**I.**First, then, dear Brethren, let us think a little about OUR DEPARTURE. It is quite certain we shall not dwell here forever—we shall not live here below as long as the first man did, or as those antediluvian fathers who tarried some eight or nine hundred years. The length of human life then led to greatness of sin. Monstrosities of evil were ripened through the long continuance of physical strength and the accumulating force of eager passions. All things considered, it is a mercy that life is abridged and not prolonged to a thousand years.

Amidst the sharp competition of man with man, and class with class, there is a bound to every scheme of personal aggrandizement a limit to all the spoils of individual despotism, a restraint upon the hoardings of any one’s avarice. It is well, I say, that it should be so. The narrow span of life clips the wings of ambition, and frustrates it of its prey. Death comes in to deprive the mighty of his power, to stop the speed of the invader, to scatter abroad the possessions of the rich. The most reprobate men must end their career after they have had their three score years and ten, or their four score years of wickedness.

And as for the good and godly, though we mourn their exit—especially when we think that they have been prematurely taken from us—we remember how the triumphs of genius have been, for the most part, achieved in youth. And how much the world has been enriched by the heads and hearts of those who have but sown the seeds of faith and left others to reap the fruits. If into less than the allotted term they have crowded the service of their generation, we may save our tears, for our regrets are needless. The summons will reach each one of us before long. We cannot stop here as long as the gray fathers of our race—we expect— and it is meet that we should prepare to go.

The world itself is to be consumed one day. “The elements shall melt with fervent heat.” The land on which we stand we are likely to call *terra firma*, but beneath it is probably an ocean of fire, and it shall, itself, feel the force of the ocean. We must not marvel the house being so frail that the tenants are unsettled and migratory. Certainly, whether we doubt it or not, we shall have to go. There will be a departure for us.

Beloved Believer in Christ Jesus, to you the soft term, “Departure,” is not more soft than the Truth it represents. To die is to depart out of this world unto the Father! What do you say about your departure? What do you say of that from which you go, and what do you think of that land to which you go? Well, of the land from which we go, my Brethren, we might say many hard things if we would—but I think we had better not. We shall speak more correctly if we say the hard things of *ourselves*.

This land, my Brethren, has been a land of mercy to us—there have been sorrows in it, of course. But in bidding it farewell we must do it justice and speak the truth concerning it. Our sorrows have usually sprung up in our own bosoms, and those that have come from the soil, itself, would have been very light if it had not been for the plague of our hearts, which made us vex and fret over them. Oh, the mercy you and I have enjoyed in this life! It has been worthwhile to live for us who are Believers. Even had we to die like a dog dies, it has been worthwhile to live for the joy and blessedness which God has made to pass before us.

I dare not call that an evil country in which I have met my Savior, and received the pardon of my sins! I dare not call that an ill life in which I have seen my Savior, though through a glass darkly. How shall I speak ill of that Lamb where Zion is built? It is beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, the place of our solemn assemblies where we have worshipped God! No, cursed of old as the earth was to bring forth the thorn and the thistle, the existence of the Church of God in that land seems to a great degree to have made reparation for the blight to such as know and love the Savior.

Oh, have we not gone up to the House of God in company with songs of ecstatic joy? And have we not, when we have gathered round the Table of the Lord—though nothing was upon it but the type and emblem—have we not felt it a joyous thing to be found in the assembly of the Saints, and in the courts of the Lord’s House even here? When we loose our cable, and bid farewell to earth, it shall not be with bitterness in the retrospect. There is sin in it, and we are called to leave it. There has been trial in it, and we are called to be delivered from it. There has been sorrow in it, and we are glad that we shall go where we shall sorrow no more.

There have been weakness, and pain, and suffering in it, and we are glad that we shall be raised in power. There has been death in it, and we are glad to bid farewell to shrouds and to knells. But for all that, there has been such mercy in it, such loving kindness of God in it that the wilderness and the solitary place have been made glad, and the desert has rejoiced and blossomed as a rose! We will not bid farewell to the world, execrating it, or leaving behind us a cold shudder and a sad remembrance— we will depart, bidding adieu to the scenes that remain, and to the people of God that tarry there a little longer—blessing Him whose goodness and mercy have followed us all the days of our life, and who is now bringing us to dwell in the House of the Lord forever!

But, dear Brethren, if I have had to speak in a somewhat apologetic manner of the land from which we depart, I shall need to use many apologies for my own poor talk about the land to which we are bound. Ah, where do you go, spirit loosened from your clay—do you know? Where do you go? The answer must be, partly, that we don’t know. None of us have seen the streets of gold of which we sang just now. Those harpings of the harpers, harping with their harps, have never fallen on these ears. Eye has not seen it, ear has not heard it—it is all unrevealed to the senses— flesh and blood cannot inherit it, and, therefore, flesh and blood cannot imagine it.

Yet it is not unknown, for God has revealed it unto us by His Spirit. Spiritual men know what it is to feel the spirit—their own new-born spirit—living, glowing, burning, triumphing within them. They know, therefore, that if the body should drop off they would not die. They feel there is a life within them superior to blood and bone, and nerve and sinew. They feel the life of God within them, and none can deny it. Their own experience has proven to them that there is an inner life.

Well, then, when that inner life is strong and vigorous, the spirit often reveals to it what the world of spirits will be. We know what holiness is, do we not, Brethren? Are we not seeking it? That is Heaven—perfect holiness is Heaven. We know what peace means—Christ is our Peace. Rest—He gives us rest—we find *that* when we take His yoke. Rest is Heaven. And rest in Jesus tells us what Heaven is. We know, even today, what communion with God is. If anyone should say, “I do not know it,” I should reply to him thus—Suppose I said to you, “You know not what it is to eat and drink”? The man would tell me that I belied him, for he knew, as he knew his own existence, what it was to eat and drink.

And, as surely as I live, I have communion with God! I know it as certainly as you know that I have declared it to you. Well, Friends, that is Heaven. It has but to be developed from the germ to the produce, and there is Heaven in its full development. Communion with Believers—in like manner—know we not what that is? Have we not rejoiced in each other’s joys, been made glad with the experience of our Brethren? That, too, carried to perfection, will be Heaven. Oh, to throw yourself into the bosom of the Savior and lie there taken up with His mind and His love— yielding all things to His supremacy—beholding your King in Him!

When you have been in that state you have had an ante past of Heaven. Your view may have been but as one seeing a man’s face in the shadows, yet you would know that man again even by the shadow—so we know what Heaven is. We shall not be strangers in a strange land when we get there. Though, like the Queen of Sheba, we shall say, “The half has not been told me,” yet we shall reflect on it thus—“I did surmise there would be something of this sort. I did know from what I felt of its budding in my soul below that the full-blown flower would be somewhat of this kind.”

Where, then, is that spirit going that is departing to soar through places unknown? Your answer is, “I am going—going to the Throne of Him whose Cross first gave me life, and light, and hope. I am going to the very bosom of my Savior, where I hope to rest and to have fellowship with the Church of the First-Born, whose names are written in Heaven.” This is your departure that you have in near prospect.

Suppose, dear Friend, the thought of departing from this world to Heaven should ever startle you, let me remind you that you are not the first that ever went that way. Your vessel is in the pool, as it were, or in the dock. She is going out on her voyage—oh, but you will not go alone— nor have to track your course through paths unnavigated or unknown before! When the Portuguese captain first went by the Cape of Storms it was a venturous voyage, and he called it the Cape of Good Hope when he had rounded it.

When Columbus first went in search of the New World, his was a brave spirit that dared cross the unnavigated Atlantic. But oh, there are tens of thousands that have gone where you go! The Atlantic that severs us from Canaan is white with the sails of the vessels that are on voyage there! Fear not! They have not been wrecked. We hear good news of their arrival—there is good hope for you. There are no icebergs on the road, no mists, no counter currents, and no sunken vessels or quicksands.

You have but to cut your moorings, and with Christ on board you shall be at your desired haven *at once*. Remember, too, your Savior went that way. Have you to depart? Christ departed, too. Some of my Brethren are always so pleased—pleased as some children are with a new toy—at the idea that they shall never die. They hope that Christ will come before the

time of their decease—for, “we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed.” Well, let Him come! Yes, let Him come quickly!

But if I had my choice. Were it permitted me to choose, I would prefer to pass through the portals of the grave. Those that are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord will not prevent, go before, or steal a march on them which are asleep. But surely they will lack one point of conformity to their Lord—for He *disdained not* to sojourn awhile in the tomb— though it were impossible that He should be held of death. Let the seal of death, then, be set upon this face of mine, that my fate in the matter may be like His. Enoch and Elijah were exempt from this privilege—*privilege* I call it—of conformity to His death.

But it is safe to go by the beaten track, and desirable to travel by the ordinary route to the heavenly city. Jesus died. Through the valley of shadows, the vale of death-shades, there are the footprints of Immanuel all the way along—go down into it and fear not. Think you, too, dear Brothers and Sisters, that we may well look forward to our departure, and look forward to it comfortably, too? Is it not expedient by reason of nature? Is it not desirable by reason of Grace? Is it not necessary by reason of Glory?

I say, is not our departure necessary by reason of nature? Men are not, when they come to old age, what they were in the prime of their days. The staff is needed for the foot, and the glass is wanted for the eye. And after a certain number of years, even those on whom Time has gently laid his hand find the taste is gone. They might proclaim, like old Barzillai, that they know not what they eat or drink. The hearing fails, the daughters of music are silent, the whole tenement gets very crazy.

Oh, it were a melancholy thing if we had to continue to live! Perhaps there is no more hideous picture than that which the satirist drew of men who lived on to six or seven hundred years of age—that strange satirical man, Swift. Be thankful that we do not linger on in imbecility. Kind Nature says we may depart. She gives us notice and makes it welcome by the decays that come upon us. Besides, Divine Grace desires it. For it were a poor experience of His kindness as our best and true Friend that did not make us long to see our Savior’s face. It is no mere driveling sentiment, I hope, when we join to sing***—***

***“Father, I long, I faint to see  
The place of Your abode!  
I’d leave Your earthly courts, and flee  
Up to Your seat, my God!”***

I must confess there was one verse in the hymn we sung just now which I could not quite chime in with. I am not eagerly wishing to go to Heaven this night. I have a great deal more to do here! Therefore I do not want to take a hasty leave of all below. To full many of us, I suppose, there are times of quiet contemplation and times of rapt devotion when our thoughts surmount these lower skies, and look within the veil and then, oh, how we wish to be there! Yet there are other times. Times of strenuous activity when we buckle on the armor and press to the front. And then we see such a battle to be waged, such a victory to be won, such a work to be worked, that we say—“Well to abide in the flesh, to continue with you all for the joy and furtherance of your faith seems more loyal to Christ, more necessary for you, and more in accord with our present feelings.”

I think it is idle for us to be crying to go Home. It is too much like the lazy workman that wants Saturday night to come when it is only Tuesday morning. Oh, no! If God spares us to do a long life’s work, so much the better. At the same time, as a spark flies upward to the sun, the central source of flame, so does the newborn spirit aspire towards Heaven, towards Jesus, by whom it was kindled. And, I add, that Glory demands it, and makes our departure necessary. Is not Christ in Heaven praying that we may be with Him where He is?

Are there not the saints in Heaven, of whom it is said, they without us cannot be perfect? The circle of the skies cannot be completed until all the redeemed are there. The grand orchestra of Glory misses some notes as yet. What if the bass is full? There are still some trebles and tenors needed! There are some sopranos that will be requisite to swell the enchanting melodies and consummate the worship of the Eternal! What, therefore, Nature prepares for, Grace desires, and Glory, itself, demands, we have no just cause to shudder at. Our departure need not make us afraid.

**II.**Having thus occupied so much time on this first point, I have little or no room to enlarge on the second. THE TIME OF OUR DEPARTURE, though unknown to us, is fixed by God, unalterably fixed. It is so rightly, wisely, lovingly settled and prepared for that no chance or haphazard can break the spell of destiny. The wisdom of Divine Love shall be proven by the carefulness of its provision. Perhaps you will say—“It is not easy to discern this. The natural order of things is so often disturbed by casualties of one kind or another.”

Let me remind you, then, that it is through *faith*, only through faith, that we can understand these things. For it is as true now of the Providence of God as it was of old of the creation of God that “*things* which are seen were not made of things which do appear.” Because the *mode* of your departure is beyond your own comprehension, it does not follow that the *time* of your departure is not foreseen by God. “Ah, but,” you say, “it seems so shocking for anyone to die suddenly, unexpectedly, without warning, and so come to an untimely end!”

I answer you thus: If you take counsel with death your flesh will find no comfort—but if you trust in God, your faith will cease to parley with these feverish anxieties, and your spirit will enjoy a sweet calm. Dire calamities befell Job when he was bereaved of his children and his servants, his herds and his flocks. Yet he took little heed of the different ways in which his troubles were brought about. Whether by an onslaught of the Sabeans or by a raid of the Chaldeans—whether the fire fell from Heaven, or the wind came from the wilderness—it mattered little. Whatever strange facts broke on his ears, one thought penetrated his heart, and one expression broke from his lips—“The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord”!

So, too, Beloved, when the time of your departure arrives—be it by disease or decay, be it by accident or assault that your soul quits its present tenement—rest assured that “your times are in His hands” And know of a

surety that “all His saints are in His hands likewise. Besides this, dear Friends, since the time of our departure must come, were the manner of it at our own disposal, I think we should most of us say, “What I shall choose, I know not.” Fevers and chills, the pangs and tortures of one malady or another, or the delirium incident to sickness. Can we really prefer one over the other? Or are the shock of a disaster, or the terror of a wreck at sea to be preferred? One is the prolonging of pain—the other the dispatch of fate. Should we covet and desire weeks or months spent in the vestibule of the grave?

Rather should we say, Let the Lord do with me as seems Him good. To live in constant communion with God is a sure relief from all these bitter frettings. Those who have walked with Him have often been favored with such premonitions of their departure as no physician could give them. Survivors will tell you that though death seemed to come suddenly to the godly merchant, he had in the last acts of his life appeared to expect and prepare for it. He even had taken an affecting farewell of his family while in the vigor of health as though he were aware that he was setting out on his last journey, which a few hours afterwards it proved to be.

So, too, the minister of Christ has sometimes fallen, expiring in his pulpit with a *nunc dimittis*, “Now let Your servant depart in peace” on his lips—secretly, but surely—made ready to depart and to be with his Lord. There is a time to depart. And God’s time to call me is, by His Grace, my time to go.

**III.**Now, to our third point—THE TIME AT HAND. “The time of my departure is at hand.” In a certain sense, every Christian here may say this. For whatever interval may interpose between us and death, how very short it is! Have you not all a sense that time flows faster than it did? In our childish days we thought a year was quite a period of time, a very epoch in our career. Now as for weeks—one can hardly reckon them! We seem to be traveling in an express train, flying along at such a rate that we can harshly count the months!

Why, the past year only seemed to come in at one door and go out at the other. It was over so soon. We shall soon be at the terminus of life, even if we live for several years. But in the case of some of us, God knows of whom, this year, perhaps this month, will be our last. I think tomorrow night we shall have to report at the Church Meeting the deaths of nine members of this Church within the last eight or nine days. Since these have gone, some of us may expect to follow them.

There are those who will evidently go—disease has set in upon them. Some of those disorders that in this land seem to be always fatal tell these dear friends that the time of their departure is undoubtedly at hand. And then old age, which comes so gracefully and graciously to many of our matrons and our veterans, shows, past all dispute, “the time of your departure is at hand.” The lease of your life is almost up. Not, indeed, that I only would address myself to such special cases. I speak to every Brother and Sister in Christ here, “The time of our departure is at hand.”

What then, dear Friends? Is not this a reason for surveying our condition again? If our vessel is just launching, let us see that she is seaworthy. It would be a sad thing for us to be near departing and yet to be just as near discovering that we are lost. Remember, dear Friends, it is possible for anyone to maintain a decent profession of Christ for fifty years, and be a hypocrite, after all. It is possible to occupy an office in the Church of God, and that of the very highest, and yet to be a Judas.

And one may not only serve Christ, but suffer for Him, too, and yet, like Demas, may not persevere to the end. For all that looks like Grace is not Grace. Where true Grace is, there it will always be. But where the semblance of it is, it will oftentimes suddenly disappear. Search yourself, good Brothers and Sisters. Set your house in order, for you must die and not live. Have you the faith of God’s elect? Are you built on Christ? Is your heart renewed? Are you verily an heir of Heaven? I charge every man and woman within this place, since the time of his departure may be far nearer than he thinks, to take stock, and reckon up, and see whether he is Christ’s or not.

But if the time of my departure is at hand, and I am satisfied that it is all right with me, is there not a call for me to do all I can for my household? Father, the time of your departure is at hand—is your wife unsaved? Will you pass another night without lovingly speaking to her of her soul? Are those dear boys unregenerate? Is that girl still thoughtless? The time of your departure is at hand! You can do little more for the lads and lasses—you can do little more for the wife and the brother. Oh, do what you can!

Sister, you are consumptive. You will soon be gone. You are the only Christian in the family. God sent you there to be a missionary. Do not have to say, when you are dying, “The last hope of my family is going out, for I have not cared for their souls.” Masters, you that have servants about you, you must soon be taken away. Will you not do something for their souls? I know if there were a mother about to go to Australia, and she had to leave some of her children behind, she would fret if she thought, “I have not done all that needs to be done for those poor children. Who will care for them now their mother is gone?” Well, but to have neglected something necessary for their temporal comfort would be little in comparison with not having cared for their souls! Oh, let it not be so! Let it not be a thorn in your dying pillow that you did not fulfill the relations of life while you had the opportunity! “The time of my departure is at hand.”

Then there is a third lesson. Let me try to finish all my work, not only as regards my duty to my family, but in respect to all the world so far as my influence or ability can reach. Rich men, be your own executors. Do what you can with your substance while it is your own. Men of talent, speak for Jesus before your tongue has ceased to articulate and becomes a piece of clay. George Whitfield may supply us with a fine model of this uniform consistency. He was so orderly and precise in his habits, and so scrupulous and holy in his life that he used to say he would not like to go to bed if there were a pair of gloves out of place in the house, much less were his will not made, or any part of his duty unfulfilled to the best of his knowledge.

He wished to have all right, and to be fully prepared for whatever might happen, so that, if he never woke again from the slumbers of the night, nobody would have cause to reflect upon anything he had left undone, entailing needless trouble on his wife or his children. Such care bestowed on what some account to be trifles is a habit worthy of our imitation. The main work of life may be sadly spoiled by negligence in little things. This is a striking test of character. “He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust, also, in much.”

Oh, then, time is fleeting, dispatch is urgent! Gather up your thoughts, quicken your hands, speed your pace, for God commands you to make haste. If you have anything to do, you must do it soon. The wheels of eternity are sounding behind you. Press on! If you are to run a race you must run it fast, for Death will soon overtake you. You may almost feel the hot breath of the white horse of Death upon your cheeks already. O God, help us to do something before we go and be no more seen!

It was grand of the Apostle that in the same breath, when he said, “The time of my departure is at hand,” he could also say, “I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith.” So may we be able to say when the time of our departure has arrived. If the time of our departure is at hand, let it cheer us amid our troubles. Sometimes, when our friends go to Liverpool to sail for Canada, or any other distant region—on the night before they sail they get into a very poor lodging.

I think I hear one of them grumbling, “What a hard bed! What a small room! What a bad view!” “Oh,” says the other, “never mind, Brother. We are not going to live here. We are off tomorrow.” Think you in like manner, you children of poverty—this is not your rest. Put up with it—you are away tomorrow! You sons of sorrow, you daughters of weakness, you children of sickness, let this cheer you—

***“The road may be rough,  
But it cannot be long  
And I’ll smooth it with hope,  
And cheer it with song.”***

Oftentimes when I have been traveling on the Continent I have been obliged to put up at an hotel that was full, where the room was so inconvenient that it scarcely furnished any accommodation at all. But we have said, “Oh, never mind—we are off in the morning! What matters it for one night?” So, as we are soon to be gone, and the time of our departure is at hand, let us not be ruffling our tempers about trifles, nor raise evil spirits around us by caviling and finding fault. Take things as you find them, for we shall soon be up and away.

And if the time of my departure is at hand, I should like to be on good terms with all my friends on earth. Were you going to stop here always, when a man treated you badly, apart from a Christian spirit, you might as well have it out with him. But as we are going to stop such a little while, we may well put up with it. It is not desirable to be too ready at taking an offense. What if my neighbor has an ugly temper? The Lord has to put up with him, and so I may. There are some people with whom I would rather dwell in Heaven forever than abide with them half an hour on earth. Nevertheless, for the love of the Brethren, and for the peace of the Church, we may tolerate much during the short time we have to do with peevish moods and perverse humors.

Does Christ love them, and shall not we? He covers their offenses! Why, then, should we expose them or publish them abroad? If any of you have any grievances with one another—if there is any bickering, or jealousy between you—I should like you to make up tonight, because the time of your departure is at hand. Suppose there is someone you spoke harshly to— you would not like to hear tomorrow that he was dead, would you? You would not have minded what you said to him if he had lived—but now that the seal is set upon all your communications, one with another, you could wish that the last conversation had been more friendly.

There has been a little difference between two brothers—a little coldness between two sisters. Oh, since one or other of you will soon be gone, make up! Live in love, as Christ loved you and gave Himself for you! If one of you were going to Australia tomorrow, never to come back again, and you had had a little tiff with your brother, why I know before you started you would say, “Come, Brother, let us part good friends.” So now, since you are so soon to depart, end all strife, and dwell together in blessed harmony till the departure actually occurs.

If the time of my departure is at hand, then let me guard against being elated by any temporal prosperity. Possessions, estates, creature comforts dwindle into insignificance before this outlook. Yes, you may have procured a comfortable house and a delightful garden, but it is not your rest—your tenure is about to expire. Yes, you may say, “God did prosper me last year, the bank account did swell, the premises were enlarged, and the business thrived beyond all expectation.” Ah, hold them loosely. Do not think that they are to be your Heaven. Be very jealous lest you should get your good things here, for if you do, you will not have them hereafter.

Be not lifted up too much when you grasp the pain of which you must so soon quit your hold. As I said of the discomfort of the hotel, we did not think much of it, because we were going away. So, if it happens to be very luxurious, do not be enamored of it, for you must go tomorrow. “These are the things,” said one, when he looked at a rich man’s treasures, “that make it hard to die.” But it need not be so if you hold them as gifts of God’s kindness, and not as gods to be worshipped with self-indulgence. You may take leave of them with composure, “knowing in yourselves that you have in Heaven a better and an enduring substance.”

Lastly, if the time of our departure is at hand, let us be prepared to bear our testimony. We are witnesses for Christ. Let us bear our testimony before we are taken up and mingle with the cloud of witnesses who have finished their course and rested from their labors. Do you say, “I hope to do that on my dying bed”? Brothers and Sisters, do it *now*—do it *now*—for you may never have opportunity to do it *then*.

Mr. Whitfield was always desirous that he might bear a testimony for Christ in the hour of death. But he could not do so at that momentous crisis, for as you well know, he was suddenly taken ill after preaching, and very soon expired. Was this to be grievously deplored? Ah, no. Why, dear Friends, he had borne so many testimonies for his Lord and Master while he was alive, there was no need to add anything in the last few moments before his death, or to supply the deficiencies of a life devoted to

the proclamation of the Gospel.

Oh, let you and I bear our testimony NOW! Let us tell to others, wherever we can, what Christ has done for us. Let us help Christ’s cause with all our might while it is called today. Let us work for Jesus while we can work for Him. As to thinking we can undo the effect of our idleness by the spasmodic effort of our dying breath, that were a vain hope, indeed, compared with living for Jesus Christ. Your dying testimony, if you are able to bear it, will have the greater force if it is not a sickly regret, but a healthy confirmation of your whole career.

I only wish these words about departure were applicable to all here. “Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints.” But, “As I live, says the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his ways, and live.” O unconverted Man, Woman—the time for letting loose your cable draws near. It is even at the door. You must shortly set sail for a far country. Alas, then yours is not the voyage of a passenger with a sweeter clime, a happier home, a brighter prospect in view.

Your departure is the banishment of a convict with a penal settlement looming in the distance—fear all widespread and hope all blank—for the term of your banishment is for eternity! I fear there are some of you who may depart before long full of gloom with a fearful looking for of judgment and of fiery indignation. I seem to see the Angel of Death hovering over my audience. He may, perhaps, select for his victim an unconverted soul. If so, behind that Death Angel attends something far more grim.

Hell follows death to souls that love not Christ. Oh, make haste, make haste! Seek Christ! Lay hold on eternal life. And may infinite Mercy save you, for Jesus Christ’s sake. Amen and Amen.

“THE TREASURY OF DAVID,” BY C. H. Spurgeon, VOLS. I & II. This work is the substance of many Libraries. It contains the essence of all the commentators upon the Psalms, both ancient and modern. Besides containing original observations by the Author, it is crowded with the wisdom of hundreds of the most eminent writers. Reviewers pronounce the work to be of the highest value. The volumes are published at 8s. each, and contain far more matter than is generally sold for half a guinea. Vol. I is now in the fourth thousand. Published by PASSMORE & ALABASTER, Paternoster Row, and may be had of all.

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**÷2Ti 4.13**

PAUL—HIS CLOAK AND HIS BOOKS  
NO. 542

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, NOVEMBER 29, 1863, *BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“The cloak that I left at Troas with Carpus, when you come, bring with you, and the books, but especially the parchments.”*** 2Ti 4:13***.***

FOOLISH persons have made remarks upon the trifles of Scripture. They have marveled why so little a matter as a cloak should be mentioned in an Inspired Book. But they ought to know that this is one of the many indications that the Book is by the same Author as the Book of Nature. Are there not things which our short-sightedness would call trifles in the volume of Creation around us? What is the peculiar value of the daisy upon the lawn, or the buttercup in the meadow? Compared with the rolling sea, or the eternal hills, how inconsiderable they seem!

Why has the humming bird a plumage so wondrously bejeweled and why is so much marvelous skill expended upon the wing of a butterfly? Why such curious machinery in the foot of a fly, or such a matchless optical arrangement in the eye of a spider? Because to most men these are trifles, are they to be left out of Nature’s plans? No. Because greatness of Divine skill is as apparent in the minute as in the magnificent—even so in Holy Writ—the little things which are embalmed in the amber of Inspiration are far from inappropriate or unwise.

Besides, in Providence are there not trifles? It is not every day that a nation is rent by revolution, or a throne shaken by rebellion—far oftener a bird’s nest is destroyed by a child, or an anthill overturned by a spade. It is not at every hour that a torrent inundates a province, but how frequently do the dewdrops moisten the green leaves? We do not often read of hurricanes, tornadoes and earthquakes, but the annals of Providence could reveal the history of many a grain of dust borne along in the summer’s gale, many a sear leaf rent from the poplar and many a rush waving by the river’s brim.

Learn to see in the little things of the Bible the God of Providence and Nature. Observe two pictures and you will, if thoroughly skilled in art, detect certain minute details which indicate the same authorship if they are by the same hand. The very little things often, to men of artistic eye, identify the painter more certainly than the more prominent strokes, which might far more easily be counterfeited. Experts detect a handwriting by a slight quivering in the upstrokes, the turn of the final mark, a dot, a cross, or even less matters.

Can we not see the legible handwriting of the God of Nature and Providence in the very fact that the sublimities of Revelation are interspersed with homely, everyday remarks? But they are not trifles. I venture to say that my text has much in it of spiritual instruction. I trust that this *cloak* may warm your hearts this morning, that *these books* may give you instruction, and that *the Apostle*himself may be to you an example of heroism, fitted to stir your minds to imitation.

**I.**First, let us LOOK AT THIS MEMORABLE CLOAK which Paul left with Carpus at Troas. Troas was a principal seaport town of Asia Minor. Very likely the Apostle Paul was seized at Troas on the second occasion of his being taken before the Roman emperor. The soldiers usually appropriated to themselves any extra garments in the possession of an arrested person, such things being considered as the perquisites of those who made the arrest. The Apostle may have been forewarned of his seizure, and therefore prudently committed his few books and his outer garment, which made up all his household stuff, to the care of a certain honest man named Carpus.

Although Troas was a full six hundred miles’ journey from Rome, yet the Apostle Paul is too poor to purchase a garment, and so directs Timothy, as he is coming that way, to bring his cloak. He needs it much, for the sharp winter is coming on and the dungeon is very, very chilly. This is a brief detail of the circumstances. What kind of cloak it was, certain learned commentators have spent whole pages in trying to discover. But as we know nothing at all about it, ourselves, we will leave the question to them—believing that they know as much as we do, but no more.

**1.**But what does the cloak teach us? There are five or six lessons in it. The first is this—*let us perceive here, with admiration, the complete selfsacrifice of the Apostle Paul for the Lord’s sake*. Remember, my dear Friends, what the Apostle once was. He was great, famous, and wealthy. He had been brought up at the feet of Gamaliel. He was so zealous among his brethren that he could not but have commanded their sincere respect. He was attended by a guard of soldiers when he went from Jerusalem to Damascus. I do not know whether the horse on which he rode was his own, but he must have been a man of importance to have been allotted so important a post in religious matters.

He was a man of good standing in society and doubtless everybody looking at young Saul of Tarsus would have said, “He will make a great man. He has every chance in life. He has a liberal education, a zealous temperament, abundant gifts and the general esteem of the Jewish rulers. He will rise to eminence.” But when the Lord met him that day on the road to Damascus, how everything changed with him! Then he could truly say, “But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yes, doubtless and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ and be found in Him.”

He begins to preach—away goes his character. Now nothing is too bad for Paul among his Jewish associates. “Away with such a fellow from the earth. It is not fit that he should live,” was the exact expression of Jewish feeling towards him. He continues his labors and away has gone his wealth—he has either scattered it among the poor, or it has been sequestered by his former friends. He journeys from place to place at no small sacrifice of comfort. The wife to whom he was probably once united—for no unmarried man could vote in the Sanhedrim as Paul did against Stephen—had fallen sick and died and the Apostle now preferred a life of singleness, that he might give himself entirely to his work.

If only in this world he had hope, he would have been of all men the most miserable. He has at last grown gray, and now the very men who owed their conversion to him have forsaken him. When he first came into Rome they stood with him, but now they have all gone like winter’s leaves, and the poor old man, “such an one as Paul the aged,” sits with nothing in all the world to call property but an old cloak and a few books—and those are six hundred miles away. Ah, how he emptied himself, and to what extremity of destitution was he willing to bring himself for Christ’s name sake!

Do not complain that he mentions his clothes—a greater than he did so and did so in an hour more solemn than that in which Paul wrote the Epistle. Remember who it was that said, “They parted My garments among them and upon My vesture did they cast lots.” The Savior must die in absolute nakedness and the Apostle is made something like He as he sits shivering in the cold.

Brethren, was Paul right in all this? Were his sacrifices reasonable? Was the object which he contemplated worthy of all this suffering and self-denial? Was he carried away by an excessive heat of fanaticism to spend upon an inferior object what was not required of him? No Believer here thinks so. You all believe that if you could give up substance and talent and esteem, yes, and your own life, also, for Christ, it would be well spent. I say you think so, but how many of us have ever carried it out? Had I not better say, how *few* of us? There are some who seldom have an opportunity for sacrificing for Christ at all. What they give is spared from their superfluity—they never feel it.

It is a high luxury when a man has such a love for Jesus that he is able to give until he pinches himself. If Paul were reasonable, what are you and I? If Paul only gives as a Christian should do, how ashamed should we be of ourselves? If he will bring himself to poverty for Christ, what shall we say of those base-born professors who will not lose a trifle in their trade for honesty’s sake? What shall we say of those who say “I know how to get money and I know how to keep it, too,” and look with scorn upon those who are more generous than they? If you are content to condemn Paul and charge him with folly, do so. But if not, if this is but a reasonable service and such as the infinite Grace of God which Paul experienced required of him, then let us do something of the like sort. If you have experienced as much love, love the Lord as much and spend and be spent for the Lord Jesus!

**2.**Secondly, dear Friends, we learn *how utterly forsaken the Apostle was by his friend*s. If he had not a cloak of his own, could not some of them lend him one? Ten years before, the Apostle was brought in chains along the Appian way to Rome. And fifty miles before he reached Rome, a little band of members of the Church came to meet him. And when he came within twenty miles of the city, at the “Three Taverns,” there came a still larger group of the disciples to escort him, so that the chained prisoner, Paul, went into Rome attended by all the Believers in that city.

He was then a younger man. But now for some reason or other, ten years afterward, nobody comes to visit him. He is confined in prison and they do not even know where he is, so that Onesiphorus, when he comes to Rome, has to seek him out very diligently. He is as obscure as if he had never had a name and though he is still as great and glorious an Apostle as ever, men have so forgotten him, and the Church has so despised him that he is friendless! The Philippian Church, ten years before, had made a collection for him when he was in prison. And though he had learned in whatsoever state he was, to be content, yet he thanked them for their contribution as an offering of a sweet smelling savor unto God.

Now he is old and no Church remembers him. He is brought to trial and there are Eubulus and Pudens and Linus—will not some of them stand by his side when he is brought before the emperor? “At my first answer no man stood with me.” Poor soul, he served his God and worked himself down to poverty for the Church’s sake, yet the Church has forsaken him! Oh, how great must have been the anguish of the loving heart of Paul at such ingratitude! Why did not the few who were in Rome, if they had been ever so poor, make a contribution for him? Could not those who were of Caesar’s household have found a cloak for the Apostle? No. He is so utterly left, that although he is ready to die of fever in the dungeon, not a soul will lend or give him a cloak.

What patience does this teach to those similarly situated! Has it fallen to your lot, my Brother, to be forsaken of friends? Were there other times when your name was the symbol of popularity, when many lived in your favor like insects in your sunbeam? And has it come to this, now, that you are forgotten as a dead man out of mind? In your greatest trials do you find your fewest friends? Have those who once loved and respected you fallen asleep in Jesus? And have others turned out to be hypocritical and untrue? What are you to do now?

You are to remember this case of the Apostle. It is put here for your comfort. He had to pass through as deep waters as any that you are called to ford, and yet remember, he says, “Notwithstanding, the Lord stood with me and strengthened me.” So now, when man deserts you, God will be your Friend. This God is our God *forever and ever—*not in sunshiny weather only, but forever and ever! This God is our God in dark nights as well as in bright days.

Go to Him, spread your complaint before Him. Murmur not. If Paul had to suffer desertion, you must not expect better usage. Let not your faith fail you as though some new thing had happened to you. This is common to the saints. David had his Ahithophel, Christ his Judas, Paul his Demas—and can you expect to fare better than they? As you look at that old cloak, as it speaks of human ingratitude, be of good courage and wait on the Lord, for He shall strengthen your heart. “Wait, I say, on the Lord.”

**3.**There is a third lesson. Our text *shows the Apostle’s independence of mind*. Why did not the Apostle borrow a cloak? Why did he not beg one? No, no, no! That is not to the Apostle’s taste at all. He has a cloak and though it is six hundred miles away, he will wait until it comes. Though there may be some that may lend, he knows that they who go a borrowing go a sorrowing, and that they who beg are seldom welcome. I do not think a Christian man should blush to borrow or to beg if he is absolutely brought to it, but I never like that class of people who do either systematically.

I wish many of the poor would not damage the charity of others by being so ready to beg on every presence of necessity. A Christian man would do well to remember that it is never to his honor, though it is not always to his dishonor, to beg. “I cannot dig, to beg I am ashamed,” said the *unfaithful* steward. And if he had been a *faithful* one he would have been more ashamed, still. I say again, when it comes to the pinch and a man must ask of his fellows, let him do it boldly. But let him never be too ready to do it, but, like the Apostle, as long as he can do without it, let him say, “I have labored with my own hand and eaten no man’s bread for nothing.”

He taught that the minister of God had a right to be supported by the people. “If you partake of their spirituals,” says he, “it is right that you give of your temporals.” He insists upon it that they are not to muzzle the mouth of the ox that treads out the corn. Yet though he holds this as a great general principle, he never takes anything himself. He follows his trade of tent making. He stitches away at the canvas and earns his own living so that he is chargeable unto no man. Noble example! How anxious all Christians ought to be to see that they do not come to want in their old age!

Yet Paul does come to poverty—his independent spirit is not broken at the last, for he will wait till his own cloak is brought six hundred miles rather than ask any man to give or lend. Let the Christian man be quite as independent, for though independence is not a Christian grace, yet it is a common grace which, when wreathed with Christianity, is very beautiful and befits the character of a son of God.

**4.**The fourth remark is—*see here, how very little the Apostles thought about how they were dressed*. Paul wants enough to keep him warm. He asks no more. There is no doubt whatever that the other parts of his garments were getting very dilapidated—that he was, indeed, in a state of rags. And so he needed the cloak to wrap about him. We read in olden times of many of the most eminent servants of God being dressed in the poorest manner. When good Bishop Hooper was led out to be burnt, he had been long in prison and his clothes were so gone from him that he borrowed an old scholar’s gown, full of rags and holes, that he might put it on and went limping with pains of sciatica and rheumatism to the stake.

We read of Jerome of Prague, that he lay in a damp, cold dungeon and was refused anything to cover him in his nakedness and cold. Some ministers are very careful lest they should not always be dressed in a canonical or gentlemanly manner. I like that remark of Whitfield’s, when someone of a bad character wondered how he could preach without a cassock. “Ah,” he said, “I can preach without a cassock, but I cannot preach without a character.” What matters the outward garment, so long as the *character* is right?

This is a lesson to our private members, too. We sometimes hear them say, “I could not come out on the Sunday—I had not fit clothes to come in.” Any clothes are fit to come to the House of God with, if they are paid for, no matter how coarse they may be. If they are the best God has given you, do not murmur. Inasmuch as the trial of raiment is a very sharp one to some of the poorest of God’s people, I think this text was put into the Bible for their comfort. Your Master wore no soft and dainty raiment. His garment was the simple peasant’s smock-frock—woven from the top throughout without seam—and yet He never blushed to wear it in the presence of kings and priests.

I shall always believe that the Christian ought to cultivate a noble indifference to these outward things. But when it comes to the pinch of absolute want of clothing, then he may comfort himself in this thought, “Now am I companion with the Master. Now do I walk in the same temptation as the Apostles. Now I suffer even as they also suffered.” Every saint is an image of Christ. But a poor saint is His exact image, for Christ was poor. So, if you are brought to such a pinch with regard to poverty that you scarcely know how to provide things decent by way of raiment, do not be dispirited. But say, “My Master suffered the same, and so did the Apostle Paul.” And so take heart and be of good cheer.

**5.**Paul’s cloak at Troas shows me*how mighty the Apostle was to resist temptation*. “I do not see that,” you say. The Apostle had the gift of miracles. Our Savior, though able to work miracles, never worked anything like a miracle on His own account. Nor did His Apostles. Miraculous gifts were entrusted to them with Gospel ends and purposes—for the good of others and for the promotion of the Truth of God. But never for themselves. Our Savior was tempted of the devil, you will remember, when He was hungry, to turn stones into bread. That was a strong temptation—to apply miraculous powers which were intended for other ends—to His own comfort.

But He rebuked Satan and said, “Man shall not live by bread alone.” Paul also had power to have created a cloak if he had liked. Why could he not? His very *shadow* healed the sick! If he had willed it, he could have prevented the cold and damp from having any effect upon himself. He who had once raised to life dead Eutychus, when he had fallen from a loft, and brought back the vital heat, could certainly have kept the heat in his own body if he had chosen. And I am bold to say the devil often came to him and said, “If you are an Apostle of God, if you can work miracles, command this atmosphere to rise in temperature, or these rags to be joined together and form you a comfortable raiment.”

You do not know—you cannot tell, for you were never put to it—what were the stern struggles the Apostle must have had in resisting the foul temptation to use his miraculous gifts for himself. O Brothers and Sisters, I am afraid you and I are much more ready to give way to self than was the Apostle. We preach the Gospel and if God helps us, oh, directly the devil will have us to take some of the praise. “You preached a good sermon this morning,” said one to John Bunyan, as he came down the stairs. “You are too late,” said Honest John, “the devil told me that when I was preaching.” Yes, God works the miracles, but we take the honor to ourselves.

There is the temptation for any man who has gifts to use them to his own purposes. And if he does, he is an unfaithful steward to his Master. I do beseech you, whether in the Sunday school or the Church, never let the miracle-working power which God has given you be used for yourselves. You can do for Christ’s sake mighty things through faith and prayer, but never let prayer and faith be prostituted to so base a purpose as to minister unto the flesh. I know carnal minds will not comprehend this, but spiritual minds, who know the temptations of the devil, will know how stern must be a life-long battle to keep ourselves back from doing that which might apparently make us happy, but which would at the same time make us unholy.

**6.**The sixth lesson from this cloak is *we are taught in this passage how precisely similar one child of God is to another*. I know we look upon Abraham and Isaac and Jacob as being very great and blessed beings—we think that they lived in a higher region than we do. We cannot think that if they had lived in these times, they would have been Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. We suppose that these are very bad days and that any great height of Divine Grace, or self-denial is not very easily attainable.

Brethren, my own conviction is that if Abraham, Isaac and Jacob had lived now—instead of being *less*, they would have been greater saints—for they only lived in the dawn, and we live in the noon. We hear the Apostles often called “*Saint*” Peter and “*Saint*” Paul. And thus they are set up on high as on an elevated niche. If we had seen Peter and Paul we should have thought them a very ordinary sort of people—wonderfully like ourselves. And if we had gone into their daily life and trials, we should have said, “Well, you are wonderfully superior to what I am in Grace, but somehow or other, you are men of like passions with me. I have a quick temper, so have you, Peter.

“I have a thorn in the flesh, so have you, Paul. I have a sick house, Peter’s wife’s mother lies sick of a fever. I complain of the rheumatism, and the Apostle Paul, when aged, feels the cold and wants his cloak.” Ah, we must not consider the Bible as a Book intended for transcendental superelevated souls—it is an everyday Book and these good people were everyday people. They had more Divine Grace, but we can get more Grace as well as they could—the Fountain at which they drew is quite as full and as free to us as to them. We have only to believe after their fashion and trust to Jesus after their way—and although our trials are not the same as theirs, we shall overcome through the blood of the Lamb.

I like to see religion brought out in everyday life. Do not tell me about the godliness of the Tabernacle. Tell me about the godliness of your *shop*, your *counter*, and your *kitchen*. Let me see how Divine Grace enables you to be patient in the cold, or joyful in hunger, or industrious in labor. Though Grace is no common thing, yet it shines best in common things.

To preach a sermon, or to sing a hymn is but a paltry thing compared with the power to suffer cold and hunger and nakedness for Christ’s sake. Courage then, courage then, fellow Pilgrim! The road was not smoothed for Paul any more than it is for us. There was no royal road to Heaven in

those days any more than there is now. They had to go through sloughs and bogs and mire—just as we do—  
***“They wrestled hard as we do now  
With sins and doubts and fears,”***  
but they have gained the victory at last, and even so shall we! So much then, for the cloak which was left at Troas with Carpus.  
**II.**We will LOOK AT HIS BOOKS. We do not know what the books were, and we can only form some guess as to what the parchments were. Paul had a few books which were left, perhaps wrapped up in the cloak, and Timothy was to be careful to bring them. *Even an Apostle must read*. Some of our very ultra-Calvinistic Brothers and Sisters think that a minister who reads books and studies his sermon must be a very deplorable specimen of a preacher. A man who comes up into the pulpit, professes to take his text on the spot and talks any quantity of nonsense is the idol of many.  
If he will speak without premeditation, or pretend to do so, and never produce what they call a dish of dead men’s brains—oh, that is the preacher! How rebuked are they by the Apostle! He is *Inspired* and yet he wants books! He has been preaching at least for thirty years, and yet he wants books! He had *seen* the Lord, and yet he wants books! He had had a wider experience than most men, and yet he wants books! He had been caught up into the third Heaven and had heard things which it was unlawful for a men to utter, yet he wants books! He had written the major part of the New Testament, and yet he wants books!  
The Apostle says to Timothy, and so he says to every preacher, “Give yourself unto reading.” The man who never reads will never be read. He who never quotes will never be quoted. He who will not use the thoughts of other men’s brains proves that he has no brains of his own. Brothers and Sisters, what is true of ministers is true of all our people. *You*need to read. Renounce as much as you will all light literature, but study as much as possible sound theological works, especially the Puritan writers and expositions of the Bible. We are quite persuaded that the very best way for you to be spending your leisure is to be either reading or praying. You may get much instruction from books which afterward you may use as a true weapon in your Lord and Master’s service. Paul cries, “Bring the books”—join in the cry.  
Our second remark is that *the Apostle is not ashamed to confess that he does read*. He is writing to his young son, Timothy. Now some old preachers never like to say a thing which will let the young ones into their secrets. They suppose they must put on a very dignified air and make a mystery of their sermonizing. But all this is alien from the spirit of truthfulness. Paul wants books and is not ashamed to tell Timothy that he does. And Timothy may go and tell Tychicus and Titus if he likes—Paul does not care.

*Paul herein is a picture of industry* . He is in prison. He cannot preach—what will he do? As he cannot preach, he will read. As we read of the fishermen of old and their boats, the fishermen were out of them. What were they doing? Mending their nets. So if Providence has laid you upon a sick bed and you cannot teach your class—if you cannot be working for God in public, mend your nets by reading. If one occupation is taken from you, take another and let the books of the Apostle read you a lesson of industry.

He says, “ *Especially the parchment*s.” I think the books were Latin and Greek works but the parchments were Oriental. And possibly they were the parchments of Holy Scripture. Or, as likely, they were his own parchments, on which were written the originals of his letters which stand in our Bible as the Epistles to the Ephesians, the Philippians, the Colossians, and so on. Now, it must be, “*Especially the parchment*s” with all our reading. Let it be *especially the Bible*. Do you attach no weight to this advice? This advice is more needed in England now than almost at any other time, for the number of persons who read the Bible, I believe, is becoming smaller every day.

Persons read the views of their denominations as set forth in the periodicals. They read the views of their leader as set forth in his sermons or his works. But the Book, the good old Book, the Divine Fountainhead from which all Revelation wells up—this is too often left. You may go to human puddles until you forsake the clear crystal stream which flows from the Throne of God. Read the books, by all means, but especially the parchments. Search human literature, if you will, but especially stand fast by that Book which is Infallible, the Revelation of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

**III.** We now want to have AN INTERVIEW WITH THE APOSTLE PAUL HIMSELF, for we may learn much from him. It is almost too dark to see him—we will find him in that frightful den! The horrid dungeon—the filth lies upon the floor till it looks like a road which is seldom scraped—the draft blows through the only little slit which they call a window. The poor old man, without his cloak, wraps his ragged garment about him. Sometimes you see him kneeling down to pray and then he dips his pen into the ink and writes to his dear son, Timothy. No companion, except Luke, who occasionally comes in for a short time. Now, how shall we find the old man? What sort of temper will he be in?

We find him *full of confidence in the religion which has cost him so much.* For in the first chapter, at the twelfth verse, we hear him say, “For this reason I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know Whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day.” No doubt, often the tempter said to him, “Paul, why you have lost everything for your religion! It has brought you to beggary. See, you have preached it and what is the reward of it? The very men you have converted have forsaken you. Give it up, give it up, it cannot be worth all this. Why, they will not even bring you a cloak to wrap round you. You are left here to shiver and very soon your head will be struck from your body. Take off your hand from the standard and retire.”

“No,” says the Apostle, “I *know* Whom I have believed.” Why, I have heard of professors who say, “Ever since I have been a Christian I have lost in my business and therefore I will give it up.” But our beloved Apostle clings to it with a life grip. And oh, there is no heart in our piety if our afflictions make us doubt the Truth of our religion. For these trials, inasmuch as they work patience, and patience experience, and experience hope, render us such that we are not ashamed, but we do the more firmly hold on to Christ. Just think, you hear the Apostle say, “I know Whom I believe.” It is very easy for *us* to say it. We are very comfortable, sitting in our pews. We shall go home to our plentiful meal. We shall be clothed comfortably.

We have friends about us who will smile at us and it is not hard to say, “I know Whom I have believed.” But if you were vexed on the one hand by Hermogenes and Philetus, and on the other hand by Alexander the coppersmith, and Demas, you would not find it quite so easy to say, “The Lord is faithful.” Behold this noble champion who is just as much unmoved at the worst as he was at the best times. “I know how to be full,” said he once. And now he can say, “I know how to suffer hunger—I know how to abound and how to suffer loss.”

But he is not only confident. You will notice that this grand old man is *having communion with Jesus Christ in his sufferings*. Turn to the second chapter, at the tenth verse. Did ever sweeter language than this come from anyone? “Therefore I endure all things for the elect’s sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory. It is a faithful saving: For if we are dead with Him, we shall also live with Him: If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him. If we deny Him, He also will deny us: if we believe not, yet He abides faithful: He cannot deny Himself.” Ah, there are *two* in the dungeon—not only the man who is suffering trouble as an evildoer, even unto bonds—but there sits with him One like unto the Son of Man, sharing all his griefs and bearing all his despondencies and so lifting up his head. Well may the Apostle rejoice that he has fellowship with Christ in his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death.

Nor is this all. Not only is he confident for the past and in sweet communion for the present, but *he is resigned for the future*. Look at the fourth chapter and the sixth verse. “I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand.” It is a beautiful emblem taken from the sacrificial bullock. There it is, tied to the horns of the altar, and ready to be offered. So the Apostle stands as a sacrifice ready to be offered upon the altar. I am afraid that we cannot all say we are ready to be offered. Paul was ready to be a *burnt offering*. If God willed it, he would be burnt to ashes at the stake. Or he would be a *drink offering*, as he did become, when a stream of blood flowed under the sharp sword.

He was ready to be a *peace offering*, if God willed it, to die in his bed. In any case, he was a *freewill offering* unto God, for he offered himself voluntarily. As he says, “I am now ready to be offered and the time of my departure is at hand.” Glorious old man! Many a professed Christian has been clothed in scarlet, and fared sumptuously every day and yet never could say he was ready to be offered. Rather he looked upon the time of his departure with grief and sorrow. As you think, then, of poor, shivering, ragged Paul, think of the jewel which he carried in his breast. And O you sons of poverty, remember that the magnificence of a holy life and the grandeur and nobility of a consecrated heart can deliver you altogether from any shame which may cling to your rags and poverty! For as the sun at setting paints the clouds with all the colors of Heaven, so your very rags, poverty, and shame may make your life the more illustrious as the splendor of your piety lights them with heavenly radiance!

We have not quite concluded with the Apostle. We find him not only resigned, but *triumphant*. “I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith.” See the Grecian warrior just returned from battle? He has many wounds and there is a gash across his brow. His breast is streaming here and there with cuts and flesh wounds. One arm is dislocated. He halts, like Jacob, on his thigh. He is covered with the smoke and dust of battle. He is besmeared with much blood. He is faint, and weary, and ready to die, but what does he say? As he lifts up his right arm, with his buckler tightly clasped upon it, he cries, “I have fought a good fight, I have kept my shield.” That was the object of ambition with every Grecian warrior. If he kept his *shield* he came home glorious.

Now, *faith* is the Christian’s shield. And here I see the Apostle, though he wears all the marks of the conflict, yet he triumphs in these marks of the Lord Jesus, saying, “I have fought a good fight. My very scars and wounds prove it. I have kept the faith.” He looks to that golden buckler of the faith fastened to his arm and rejoices in it. The tyrant Nero, nor all the warriors of Rome never had such triumph as the Apostle Paul! None of them had such true glory as this solitary man who has trod the winepress alone. And of the people—there were none with him—who has stood against the lion, a solitary champion, with no eye to pity and no arm to save, still triumphant to the end? Brave spirit! Never mind the old cloak at Troas, so long as your faith is safe.

Once more. He not only triumphs in the present, but he *is in expectation of a crown*. When the Grecian wrestler had fought a good fight, a crown was presented to him. And so Paul, who writes about the old cloak, also writes— “Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing.”

When I was picturing Paul, and talking of the poverty of many Believers—“Ah,” said the Sinner, “Who would be a Christian? Who would suffer so much for Christ? Who would lose everything as Paul did?” Worldly minds here are thinking—”What a fool, to be led away by such an excitement!” Ah, but see how the tables have turned! “Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown!” What if he had been robed in scarlet, had rolled in wealth, and been great? And what if there had been no crown for him in Heaven? No joy hereafter—but a fearful looking for of judgment? See, he springs from his dungeon to his throne! Nero may cut off his head, but that head shall wear a starry crown. Courage, then, you that are downtrodden, afflicted, and despairing! Be of good cheer, for the end will make up for the way. And all the roughness of the pilgrimage will be well recompensed by the Glory which shall await all those who are resting upon Christ Jesus.

We close, having done with this old cloak, when we say, is it not beautiful as you read this Epistle, and, indeed, all the Apostle’s letters, to see how *everything which the Apostle thought of was connected with Christ*? How he had concentrated every passion, every power, every thought, every act, every word—and set the whole upon Christ. I believe that there are many who love Christ after a sort, just as the sun shines today. But you know if you concentrate the rays of that sun with a magnifying glass and fix all the rays upon any object, then what heat there is, what burning, what flame, what fire!

So many men scatter their love and admiration on almost any and every creature, and Christ gets a little, as we all get some rays of the sun. But that is *the man*, who, like the Apostle Paul, brings all his thoughts and words to a focus. Then he burns his way through life. His heart is on fire. Like coals of juniper are his words. He is a man of force and energy. He may have no cloak, yet for all that, he is a great man and the Czar in his imperial mantle is but a driveling dwarf by the side of this giant in the army of God. O, I wish we could set our thoughts on Christ this morning. Are we trusting in Him this morning? Is He all our salvation and all our desire? If He is, then let us live to Him.

Those who are wholly Christ’s are not many. O that we were espoused as chaste virgins unto Christ—that we might have no other lover and know no other object of delight! Blind are these eyes to all but Christ. And deaf these ears to any music but the voice of Christ. And lame these feet to any way but that of obedience to Him! Palsied these hands to anything but work for Him. And dead this heart to every joy if Jesus cannot move! Even as a straw floats upon the river and is carried to the ocean, so would I be bereft of all power, and will to do anything but that which my Lord would have me do—and be carried along by the stream of His Grace right onward, ready to be offered up, or ready to live, ready to suffer, or ready to reign just as He wills—only that He may be served in my living and dying!

It will little matter what cloak you wear, or if you have not any at all, if you have but such a concentration of all your bodily and mental powers and spiritual energies upon Christ Jesus and upon Him alone. May those of you who have never trusted Jesus be ready to rely upon Him now. He did not forsake Paul, even in extremity, and He will not forsake you—

***“Trust Him, He will never deceive you, Though you hardly of Him deem. He will never, never leave you, Nor will let you quite leave Him.”***

Therefore trust Him now and forever, for Jesus’ sake. Amen. Adapted from *The C.H. Spurgeon Collection,* Version 1.0 . Ages Software, 1.800.297.4308

÷2Ti 4.20

THE SICK MAN LEFT BEHIND  
NO. 1452A

*FROM THE SICK ROOM OF C. H. SPURGEON.*  
JANUARY 12, 1879.  
*“But Trophimus have I left at Miletum sick.”***2Ti 4:20***.*

THESE are among the last words of Paul the Apostle, for we find them in the closing verses of the last of his Epistles. The chapter reminds us of a dying man’s final adieu to his best friend, in the course of which he calls to mind the associates of his life. Among his memories of love we find Paul recollecting Trophimus who had frequently shared with him the perils of rivers and perils of robbers which so largely attended the Apostle’s career. He had left the good man ill at Miletum and as Timothy at Ephesus was within an easy journey of him, there was no need to add a hint that he should visit him, for he would be sure to do it.

The love of Jesus works great tenderness and unity in the hearts of His disciples. The overflow of our Lord’s great soul has saturated all His true followers with brotherly affection—because Jesus has loved Paul, Paul loves Timothy and Timothy must love Trophimus. From this love there arises communion of feeling so that in sympathy they share each other’s joys and griefs. When one member rejoices, the body rejoices—and when one member *suffers* the whole body suffers with it. Trophimus is sick and Paul cannot forget him, though he, himself, expects in a few weeks to die a martyr’s death! Neither would he have Timothy ignorant of the fact, though twice, within a few verses, he hurries him to come to Rome, saying, “Do your diligence to come shortly unto me.”

If Timothy could not personally visit the sick friend, yet it was well that he should know of his affliction, for he would then remember him in his prayers. “Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God.” Let us remember those who are one with us in Christ and especially let us bear on our hearts all those who are afflicted in mind, body, or estate. If we have had to leave Trophimus at Miletum, or at Brighton, or at Ventnor, let us leave our heart’s love with him. And if we hear that another Trophimus lies sick not far from our own home, let us accept the information as in itself a sufficient summons to minister to the afflicted friend.

May holy sympathy pervade all our souls, for however active and zealous we may be, we have not yet reached a perfect character unless we are full of compassion, tender-hearted and considerate of the sorrowful, for this is the mind of Christ. Simple as the statement of our text certainly is, it is found in an Inspired Book and it is, therefore, more than an ordinary note in a common letter. Like another verse of the same chapter, “The cloak that I left at Troas with Carpus, when you come, bring with you, and the books, but especially the parchments,” has been judged to be beneath the dignity of Inspiration, we think not so. The God who counts the hairs of our heads in Providence may well mention His sick servant on

the pages of Inspiration!

Instead of quibbling at the littleness of the recorded fact, let us admire “the love of the Spirit” who, while He lifts Ezekiel and Daniel above the spheres and raises the language of David and Isaiah to the utmost pitch of poetry and eloquence, yet deigns to breathe in such a line as this— “Trophimus have I left at Miletum sick.” Can we learn anything more from this plain line of Apostolic penmanship? Let us see. If the same Divine Spirit who Inspired it, will shine upon it, we shall not read it in vain!

**I.**From the fact that Paul left Trophimus sick at Miletum we learn that IT IS THE WILL OF GOD THAT SOME GOOD MEN SHOULD BE IN ILL HEALTH. Whatever the malady may have been which affected Trophimus, Paul could certainly have healed him if the Divine Spirit had permitted the use of his miraculous powers to that end. He had raised up Eutychus from death and he had given back the use of his limbs to the cripple at Lystra. We feel, therefore, fully assured that had God allowed the Apostle so to use his healing energy, Trophimus would have left his bed and continued his journey to Rome.

Not so, however, had the Lord willed. The good fruit-bearing vine must be pruned and Trophimus must suffer—there were ends to be answered by his weakness which could not be compassed by his health. Instantaneous restoration could have been given, but it was withheld under Divine direction. This doctrine leads us away from the vain idea of chance. We are not wounded by arrows shot at a venture, but we smart by the determinate counsel of Heaven! An overruling hand is everywhere present, preventing or permitting ill and no one shaft of disease is ever let fly by stealth from the bow of death! If someone must be ill, it was a wise Providence which selected Trophimus, for it was better for him to be ill than Titus, or Tychicus, or Timothy.

It was well, too, that he happened to be ill at Miletum near to his own native city, Ephesus. We cannot always see the hand of God in Providence, but we may always be sure that it is there. If not a sparrow lights on the ground without our Father, surely not a child of the Divine family is laid low without His sacred will! Chance is a heathenish idea which cannot live in the Presence of an everywhere present, living and working God! Away with it from every Christian mind! It is dishonoring to the Lord and grievous to ourselves!

This also delivers us from regarding affliction as being always brought upon men by their personal sin. Many a sickness has been the direct result of intemperance, or some other form of wickedness—but here is a worthy, well-approved Brother laid aside and left on the road through a malady for which he is not blamed in any measure. It is too common, nowadays, for men to be of a hard and cruel spirit and ascribe the illnesses, even, of those who are true children of God to some fault in their habits of life. We wonder how they would like to be dealt with in this manner if they were suffering and could wash their hands in innocence in reference to their daily lives?

In our Lord’s day they told Him, “Lord, he whom You love is sick.” And Solomon, long before that time, wrote, “Whom the Lord loves He corrects; even as a father the son in whom he delights.” This was a much better, more humane and more truthful speech than the frozen philosophy of modern times which traces each man’s sickness to his own violation of natural law and, instead of pouring in the balm of consolation, pours out the sulfuric acid of slanderous insinuation! Let the *afflicted* examine himself to see if the rod is not sent to correct some secret evil and let him diligently consider where he may amend—but far be it from *us* to stand at his bedside like judges or lictors and look upon our friend as an offender as well as a sufferer!

Such brutality may be left to the philosophers, but it would ill become the sons of God! We may not think a shade the less of Trophimus because he is sick at Miletum. He is probably a far better man than any of us and perhaps for that very reason he is more tried. There is gold in him which pays for putting into the crucible—he bears such rich fruit that he is worth pruning—he is a diamond of so pure a water that he will repay the lapidary’s toil. This may not be quite so true of any of us and, therefore, we escape his sharper trials. Let us, as James says, “count them happy that endure,” and like David, say, “Blessed is the man whom You chasten, O Lord, and teach him out of Your Law.”

What do the Scriptures say? —“For whom the Lord loves, He chastens and scourges every son whom He receives. If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chastens not?” Lazarus of Bethany, Dorcas, Epaphroditus and Trophimus are a few of that great host of sick folk whom the Lord loves in their sicknesses, for whom the promise was written, “The Lord will strengthen him upon the bed of languishing: You will make all his bed in his sickness.”

**II.**We have only strength and space for mere hints and so we notice, secondly, that GOOD MEN MAY BE LAID ASIDE WHEN THEY SEEM TO BE MOST NEEDED—as Trophimus was when the aged Apostle had but a scanty escort and required his aid. Paul needed him, badly enough, soon after he had been obliged to leave him at Miletum, for he writes sorrowfully, “Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia. Only Luke is with me.” “And Tychicus have I sent to Ephesus.” How glad he would have been with Trophimus, for we see how he begs Timothy to come with all speed and to bring Mark, whose service he greatly needed with him.

Yet not even for Paul’s sake can Trophimus be suddenly raised up! His Lord sees it to be necessary that he should feel the heat of the furnace and into the crucible he must go. We think that the Church cannot spare the earnest minister, the indefatigable missionary, the faithful deacon, the tender teacher—but God thinks not so! *No one* is indispensable in the household of God! He can do His own work not only without Trophimus, but even without Paul! Yes, we go further—it sometimes happens that the work of the Lord is *quickened* by the decease of one upon whom it seemed to depend! When a broad, far-spreading tree is cut down, many smaller trees which were dwarfed and stunted while it stood, suddenly shoot up into vigorous growth—even so, one good man may do much and yet, when he is removed, others may do more!

Temporary illnesses of great workers may call to the front those who would otherwise, from modesty, have remained in the rear—and the result may be a great gain. Poor Trophimus had, in his healthier days, been the innocent cause of bringing Paul into a world of trouble, for we read in Act 21:27 that a tumult was made by the Jews because they imagined that Paul had brought Trophimus into the Temple and so had defiled it. Now, when he could have been of service, he is sick and, no doubt, it was a great grief to him that it should be so. Yet for him, as oftentimes for us, there was no alternative but to submit himself under the hand of God and feel that the Lord is always right.

Why do we not yield at once? Why do we chomp the bit and paw the ground, restless to be on the road? If our Lord bids us stand still, can we not be quiet? Active spirits are apt to become restive spirits when under the restraining hand—energy soon sours into rebellion and we quarrel with God because we are not allowed to glorify Him in our own way—a foolish form of contest which at bottom means that we have a will of our own and will only serve God upon condition of having it indulged!

Brothers and Sisters, he who writes these lines knows what he writes and this is the verdict of his experience—God’s work needs us far less than we imagine and God would have us aware of this fact, for He will not give His Glory to human instruments any more than He will allow His praise to be bestowed on graven images!

**III.**Our text clearly shows us that GOOD MEN WOULD HAVE THE LORD’S WORK GO ON WHATEVER BECOMES OF THEM. Paul did not desert Trophimus, but left him, because a higher call summoned him to Rome. Trophimus, we may be sure, did not wish to delay the great Apostle, but was content to be left. No doubt they both felt the separation but, like true soldiers of Christ, they endured hardness and, for the sake of the cause, parted company for a while. It would be a great grief to a truehearted worker if he knew that any fellow-laborer slackened his pace for his sake. The sick in an army of an earthly monarch are necessarily an impediment, but it need not be so in the army of the King of kings!

*Spiritual* sickness is a sore hindrance, but sickness of body should not delay the host. If we cannot preach we can pray. If one work is out of our reach, we can try another and if we can do nothing, our inability should serve as a call to the vigorous to be doing all the more! Trophimus is sick, then let Timothy be the more energetic! Trophimus cannot attend the Apostle, then let Timothy be the more diligent to come before winter! Thus, by acting as an incentive, the lack of one man’s service may produce tenfold more in others who are awakened to extra exertions.

Brethren, it will be the sweetest alleviation to the pains of a sick pastor if he sees you each and all nerved to special diligence. His enforced rest will be the better enjoyed if he knows that the Church of God is not a sufferer because of it. And his whole mind and spirit will minister to the health of his body if he sees the fruit of the Spirit of God in all of you, keeping you faithful and zealous. Will you not see to this for Jesus’ sake?

÷Tit 1.2

WHAT GOD CANNOT DO!  
NO. 568

**DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, MAY 8, 1864, *BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“God, that cannot lie.”***Tit 1:2***.***

TRUTH once reigned supreme upon our globe and then earth was Paradise. Man knew no sorrow while he was ignorant of falsehood. The Father of Lies invaded the garden of bliss and with one foul lie he blighted Eden into a wilderness and made man a traitor to his God. Cunningly he handled the glittering falsehood and made it dazzle in the woman’s eyes— “God does know that in the day you eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened and you shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.”

Proud ambition rode upon that lie as a conqueror in his chariot and the city of Mansoul opened its gates to welcome the fascinating enemy. As it was a lie which first subjugated the world to Satan’s influences, so it is by lies that he secures his throne. Among the heathen his kingdom is quiet and secure, because the minds of the people are deluded with a false mythology. The domains of Mahomet and the Pope are equally the kingdom of Satan and his reign is undisturbed, for human merit, priestly efficacy, and a thousand other deceptions buttress his throne. The darkness of ignorance, the dungeons of falsehood and the chains of superstition are the main reliance of that monster who oppresses all the nations with his infernal tyranny.

Since by the lie Satan now holds the world and maintains his power, he everywhere encourages lies and aids their propagation. Look about you and see what a prolific family falsehood has! The children of the untrue are as many as the frogs of Egypt, and like those plagues, they intrude into every chamber. The slime of falsehood may be seen upon most things, both in secular and religious life. You have lying news and garbled reports in print. And as for the flying gossip of the tongue, if it touches the characters of good men, beware of believing a word it utters. If you would not have complicity with those who make the lie, be not hasty to entertain it.

From the high places of the earth falsehood is not excluded. The untruth glides right royally from the kingly tongue, but is as much a lie as if the ragged mendicant had blurted it forth with low-lived oaths and curses. What is diplomacy for the most part? Is it not “the art of lying”? Was not he thought to be the best politician who used language to conceal his thoughts? In how many a conference have the plenipotentiaries labored which could overreach, dissimulate and intrigue to the greatest degree?

In the commerce of courts who knows not that flatteries and lies are the most abundant commodities? The art of king-craft, as practiced by the most high and mighty Prince James, whose name dishonors our English Bible, was only and simply the science of lying in the neatest possible manner. In these modern times, the difference between the promises of the politicians and the performances in the House of Commons proves

that the lie is still commonly patronized. Falsehood is everywhere. It is entertained both by the lowest and the highest. It permeates all society. It has ruined the whole of our race and so defiled the entire world that upright men exclaim, “Woe is me, that I sojourn in Mesech, that I dwell in the tents of Kedar!”

In the so-called religious world, which *should* be as the Holy of Holies, here, too, the lie has insinuated itself. Of old there were prophets who prophesied lies and dreamers of false dreams. And there were others who spoke the Word of God with such bated breath and after such a fashion that it was no longer the Truth as it came from God, but truth alloyed with human falsehood. It is so today. There are those wearing the vestments of God’s priests who do not hesitate to profess what they do not believe. Such men are the priests of Hell. To wear a bishop’s miter and teach infidelity—how shall I stigmatize it? It is nothing less than detestable hypocrisy and robbery.

And what shall I say of men of all creeds, all subscribing to the same articles and catechism when all the world knows they cannot all honestly believe the same thing and yet differ as much from one another as light from darkness? What shall I say but that shame covers my face that there should be so many ministers of God who are untrue to their convictions and continue to do and say what they feel to be unscriptural? In other quarters philosophy is *believed* and Christianity *professed*—the traditions of men are put in the place of God’s Truth. The prophets prophesy lies and the people love to have it so.

Brethren, we have everywhere to battle with falsehood and if we are to bless the world we must confront it with sturdy face and zealous spirit. God’s purpose is to drive the lie out of the world and let this be your purpose and mine. His Holy Spirit has undertaken to drive falsehood out of our hearts—be this *our* determination, in His strength—that it shall be cut up root and branch and utterly consumed. Then let us walk in the Truth of God. “Buy the Truth and sell it not,” hold fast the Truth, speak the Truth in love and act the Truth in all our deeds, for so shall we be known to be the children of that God of whom our text asserts that He is “God, that cannot lie.”

After wandering over the sandy desert of deceit, how pleasant is it to reach our text and feel that one spot, at least, is verdant with eternal Truth! Blessed be You, O God, for You cannot lie!

We will use our text in the following manner this morning—first, while we do not attempt to prove it, we will remind you of a few things which may confirm your confidence that God cannot lie so that our opening remarks shall be upon the truth of the text. Then secondly, we will speak upon the breadth of the text, endeavoring to show that we must give no narrow interpretation to the words before us, but must receive them with an extent of meaning not usual to the expression. And then, thirdly, we will try to use the text for our own improvement, arguing from it that if God cannot lie He ought to receive our loving confidence.

**I.**First, then, let us commune together awhile concerning THE TRUTH OF THE TEXT, not, as we have said, to prove it, because we all believe it, but to confirm our confidence of it. I think we shall feel assured that God cannot lie when we remember that He is not subject to those infirmities which lead us into falsehood. Lord Bacon has said, “There are three parts in truth—first, the enquiry, which is the wooing of it. Secondly, the knowledge of it, which is the presence of it. And thirdly, the belief, which is the enjoyment of it.”

In each of these three points, by reason of infirmity, men fail to be perfectly true. In the search after truth, our moral eye is not altogether clear and therefore we fail to see what we love not. We do not follow truth in a straight line, but are very liable to turn aside to the right hand or to the left, either to obey our prejudices or advance our profit. “Truth lies in a well,” said the old philosopher. Many go down into that well to find Truth, but looking into the water they see their own faces and become so desperately enamored of their own beauty that they forget poor Truth, or dream that she is the counterpart of themselves.

Now the great God cannot be liable to this error, because there is no discovery of truth with Him. He needs not to search anything out, for “all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.” When in Scripture that term is sometimes used—“Shall not God search this out?”—when we hear Him spoken of as “searching the heart and trying the reins of the children of men,” it is not because He is not perfectly acquainted with all things, but only to set forth the certainty and accuracy of Divine knowledge.

God has no need to search, or if He had, having nothing in Him which should lead Him to make a dishonest search, He does not lie. When *we* have searched out the Truth of God *there* is the knowing of it. And here the falsehood gets a footing in the form of a sin of omission, for we often refuse to know all that we might know. It would be inconvenient, perhaps, for us to be too well acquainted with certain arguments, for then our prejudices must be given up and therefore we close our eyes to them for fear of knowing the truth.

Do not many men leave passages of Scripture altogether unread because they have no wish to receive the doctrines which are taught in them? Every time you refuse to give a hearing to God’s Truth, you do in effect lie because you prefer not to know the Truth of God, which is really to prefer to hold error. Now nothing of this kind can ever happen with our only wise God. He knows all Truth, seeing it all at a glance and retaining it ever in His mind. In nothing is He ignorant, either willfully or otherwise.

He receives Truth as His own Beloved and when the world casts her out, she finds a happy shelter beneath His shield. We are quite clear that we frequently fall into the lie through a defect in our believing, for we sometimes know more than we care to believe. Truth is grasped by the understanding but thrust out by the affections. We know her as Peter knew his Lord and yet deny it after the same fashion as that disciple did his Master. Moreover, through weakness, we are led to doubt what we know to be God’s Truth and even to speak unadvisedly with our lips.

Now this can never occur with God, since God is One and is not to be divided into parts and passions and His tongue can never be diverse from His heart. God’s tongue *is* His heart and God’s heart *is* His hand. God is

One. You and I are such that we can know in the heart, and yet with the tongue deny. But God is One and indivisible. God is Light, and in Him is no darkness at all. With Him is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.

Then again, the Scriptural idea of God forbids that He should lie. Just review your thoughts about God, if you can. What idea have you formed of Him? If you have read Holy Scripture and have gotten the slightest shadow of an idea of God, I think you will see that it is utterly inconsistent with the thrice Holy One, whose kingdom is over all, that He should lie. Admit the very possibility of His speaking an untruth and to the Christian there would be no God at all. The depraved mind of the heathen may imagine a monster to be a god who can live in adultery and in theft and in lying, for such the gods of the Hindus are described as being. But the enlightened mind of the Christian can conceive no such thing. The very word “God” comprehends everything which is good and great. Admit the lie and to us at once there would be nothing but the black darkness of Atheism. I could neither love, worship, nor obey a *lying* God.

Again, we all know that God is too wise to lie. Falsehood is the expedient of a fool. It is only a short-sighted man who lies. For some present advantage the poor creature who cannot see the end as well as the beginning states that which is not. But no wise man who can look far into the future ever thinks a lie to be profitable. He knows that Truth may suffer loss at first but that in the long run she is always successful. He endorses that worldly-wise proverb, that, “Honesty is the best policy” after all. And the man, I say, who has anything like foresight, or judgment, or wisdom, prefers always the straight line to the curve and goes directly to the mark, believing that this is in the end the best.

Do you suppose that God, who must know this, with an intensity of knowledge infinitely greater than ours, will choose the policy of the witless knave? Shall God, only wise, who sees the end from the beginning, act as only brainless fools will choose to behave themselves? Oh, it cannot be, my Brethren! God, the All-Wise, must also be All-True. And the lie, again, is the method of the little and the mean. You know that a great man does not lie. A good man can never be false. Put goodness and greatness together and a lie is altogether incongruous to the character.

Now God is too great to need the lie and too good to wish to do such a thing! Both His greatness and His goodness repel the thought. My dear Friends, what motive could God have for lying? When a man lies it is that he may gain something, but “the cattle on a thousand hills” are God’s and all the beasts of the forest and all the flocks of the meadows. He says, “if I were hungry I would not tell you.” Mines of inexhaustible riches are His and treasures of infinite power and wisdom. He cannot gain anything by untruth, for “the earth is the Lord’s and the fullness thereof.” Why, then, should He lie?

Men are false, oftentimes, to win applause. See how the sycophant cringes to the tyrant’s foot and spawns his villainy. But God needs no honor and no fame, especially from the wicked. To Him it were the greatest disgust of His righteous soul to be loved by unholy creatures. His Glory is great enough even if there were no creatures! His own selfcontained Glory is such that if there were no eyes to see it and no ears to hear it, He would be infinitely glorious. He asks nothing—no respect and no honor of man—and therefore has He no need to stoop to the lie to gain it. And of whom, again, could He be afraid? Men will sometimes, under the impulse of fear, keep back or even contradict the truth, but can fear ever enter into the heart of the eternal God?

He looks down upon all nations who are in rebellion against Him and He does not even care to rise to put them down. “He that sits in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision!” Are not the chariots of the Lord twenty thousand, even thousands of angels? Even these are but as a drop in a bucket, when compared with the deep and infinite sea of His own power. Who, then, shall think that Jehovah needs to be afraid? “Fear,” and “Jehovah,” are two words which cannot meet together. Therefore, since there can be no motive whatever which should possibly lead God to lie, we feel well assured that the declaration of Paul is most certainly true—“God, that cannot lie.”

Moreover, dear Friends, we may add to all this the experience of men with regard to God. It has been evident enough in all ages that God cannot lie. He did not lie when Adam fell. It seemed a strange thing, that after all the skill and labor which had been spent in making such a world as this, so fair and beautiful, God should resign it to the dominion of Satan and drive the man whom He had made in His own image, out of his home, his Eden, to labor in sweat and toil and suffering until he came to his grave. But God did it and the fiery sword at the gate of Eden was proof that God could not and would not lie.

He might come to Adam and bemoan himself, crying, “Adam, where are you?” as if He pitied him and would, if it had been possible, have spared the stroke. But still it must be done and Eden is blasted and Adam becomes a wanderer upon the fruitless earth. Then afterwards, to quote a notable instance of God’s faithfulness, when the flood swept away the race of men and Noah came forth the heritor of a new Covenant, we have clear proof that God cannot lie. No flood has ever destroyed the earth since then. Partial floods there have been and parts of provinces have been inundated, but no flood has ever come upon the earth of such a character as that which Noah saw—therefore the rainbow, every time it is painted upon the cloud—is an assurance to us that God cannot lie.

Then He made an oath with Abraham that he should have a son and that his seed should become possessors of all the land in which the Patriarch had sojourned. Did not that come true? They waited in Egypt two hundred years. They smarted under the tyrant’s lash. They lay among the pots and yet, after all, with a high hand and with an outstretched arm He brought forth His people, led them through the wilderness and divided Canaan by lot to them, having driven out the inhabitants of the land before them. Since that time He made His Covenant with David and how fast has that stood! All the threats which He has uttered against the enemies of Israel—how surely have they been fulfilled!

Last of all and best of all, when the fullness of time was come, did not God send forth His own Son, born of a woman, made under the Law? Did He not, according to His ancient promise, lay upon Him the iniquity of us all? Were not the Incarnation and death of our Lord Jesus the grandest

proof of the truthfulness of God which could be afforded? His own Son must leave Heaven emptied of His Glory, must be given up to be despised and rejected of men, must be nailed to the accursed wood and be forsaken in the hour of His bitterest grief—herein is Truth, indeed! I say if this must be according to the promise and if this was according to the fact, then we have the clearest and the surest evidence that God cannot by any possibility be false to His own Word. Rightly has He earned the title which His Nature claims—“God, that cannot lie.”

May I not add as another argument that you have found Him true? You have been to Him, dear Friends, in many times of trial. You have taken His promise and laid it before His Mercy Seat. What do you say—has He ever broken His promise? You have been through the floods—did He leave you? You have passed through the fires—were you burned? You have cried to Him in trouble—did He fail to deliver you? O you poor and needy ones, you have been brought very low, but has He not been your Helper? You have passed hard by the gates of the grave and Hell has opened its horrid jaws to swallow you up, but are you not today the living monuments of the fidelity of God to His promise and the veracity of every Word of the Most High God? Let these things, then, refresh your memories that you may the more confidently know that He is “God, that cannot lie.”

**II.**Let us pass on to look at THE BREADTH OF MEANING IN THE TEXT. When we are told in Scripture that God cannot lie there is usually associated with the idea the thought of *immutability*. As for instance—“He is not a man that He should lie, nor the son of man that He should repent.” The word “lie,” here includes beyond its ordinary meaning the thought of *change*, so that when we read that God cannot lie, we understand by it not only that He cannot say what is untrue, but that having said something which *is* true, He never changes from it and does not by any possibility alter His purpose or retract His Word.

This is very consolatory to the Christian, that whatever God has said in the Divine purpose is never changed. The Decrees of God were not written upon sand, but upon the eternal brass of His unchangeable Nature. We may truly say of the sealed Book of the Decrees, “Has He said and shall He not do it? Has He purposed and shall it not come to pass?” We read in Scripture of several instances where God apparently changed, but I think the observation of the old Puritan explains all these, He says, “God may will a change, but He cannot change His will.” Those changes of operation which we sometimes read of in Scripture did not involve any change in the Divine purpose!

God, for instance, sent to warn Hezekiah that according to the common course of nature he must die, and yet afterwards fifteen years were added to his life—God’s purpose having been all along that Hezekiah should live till the end of the fifteen years. But still His purpose equally included that Hezekiah should be brought so near to the gates of death that in the ordinary course of nature he must die. And then that the miracle should come in was still part of the purpose, that Hezekiah might be cured in a supernatural manner and be made to live nearer to his God in consequence. God wills a change, but He never changes His will.  
And when the Last Great Day shall come, you and I shall see how everything happened according to that hidden roll wherein God had written with His own wise finger every thought which man should think, every word which he should utter and every deed which he should do. Just as it was in the Book of Decree, so shall it transpire in the roll of human history. God never changes, then, as to His purpose and here is our comfort. If He has determined to save us and we know He has, for all who believe in Him are His elect, then we shall be saved. Heaven shall never by any possibility be defeated by Hell. Hell and earth may combine together to destroy a soul which rests upon Christ, but while God’s Decree stands fast and firm, that chosen soul is safe! And since that Decree never can be removed, let us take confidence and rejoice.

No promise has ever been altered and no threat, either. Still is His promise sure. “I have not said unto the seed of Jacob, seek you My face in vain.” No new decrees have been passed repealing the past. We can never say of God’s Book, as we can of old law books, that such-and-such an act is obsolete. There is no obsolete Statute in God’s Book. There stand promises, as fresh, as new, as vigorous and as forceful today as when they first dropped from the mouth of God. The words, then, “God, that cannot lie,” include the very gracious and precious doctrine that He cannot by any possibility change.

But we must not, while talking in this manner, forget the primary meaning, that He cannot be false in His thoughts, Words, or actions. There is no shadow of a lie upon anything which God thinks, or speaks, or does. He cannot lie in His prophecies. How solemnly true have they been! Ask the wastes of Nineveh! Turn to the mounds of Babylon! Let the traveler speak concerning Idumea and Petra. Turn even to the rock of Sidon and to Your land, O Immanuel! We may boldly ask the traveler, “Has He said and has He not done it? Have His words fallen to the ground? Has God’s curse been an idle Word?” No, not in one single case.

All the words of the Lord are sure. The prophecies will be as true as they have been and the Book of Revelation, though we may not comprehend it today, will doubtless be fulfilled in every stroke and in every line and we shall marvel how it was that we did not know its meaning. But at present it is enough for us to know its Truth—its meaning shall only be learned as the events explain the prophesy. As God is true in His prophecies, so is He faithful to His promises. Have you and I, dear Friends, a confidence in these? If so, let us try them this morning.

Sinner, weeping and bemoaning yourself, God will forgive you your sin if you believe in Jesus! If you will confess that He is faithful and just to forgive you, He has promised to do so and He cannot lie. Christian, if you have a promise today laid upon your heart, if you have been pleading it, perhaps for months and it has not been fulfilled, I pray you gather fresh courage this morning and again renew your wrestling. Go and say, “Lord, I know You cannot lie, therefore fulfill Your Word unto Your servant.”

If the promises of God were not kept, God would lie. They must, therefore, be fulfilled. And let us believe that they will be and go to God, not with a wavering spirit which half hopes that the Words may be true, but with the full assurance that they cannot fail! As certainly as we know that day and night shall not cease and that summer will not fail, so surely let

us be convinced that every Word of the Lord shall stand!

His threats are true, also. Ah, Sinner, you may go on in your ways for many a day, but your sin shall find you out at last. Seventy years God’s long-suffering may wait over you, but when you shall come into another world you shall find every terrible Word of Scripture fulfilled. You shall then know that there is a place, “where their worm dies not and the fire is not quenched.” You shall then experience the “wailing and gnashing of teeth” unless you repent. If you will believe in Jesus you shall find the promise true! But if you will not, equally sure shall be the threat.

This is a dreadful part of the subject to those who are out of Christ, who have never been partakers of the Holy Spirit. It will be in vain for you to cry to Him, then, and ask Him, then, to change His mind. No, though you should weep oceans of tears, Hell’s flames cannot be quenched nor can your soul escape from the place to which it is finally doomed! Today, while mercy is preached to you, lay hold upon it! But remember, if you do not, as God cannot lie He cannot suffer you to escape—you must feel the weight and terror of His arm.

We might thus go through everything which concerns God, from prophesy to promises and threats and onwards and multiply observations but we choose to close this point by observing that every word of instruction from God is most certainly true. It is astounding how much sensation is caused in the Christian Church by the outbreak, every now and then, of fresh phases of infidelity. I do not think that these alarms are at all warranted. It is what we must expect to the very end of this dispensation.

If all carnal minds believed the Bible, I think the spiritual might almost begin to doubt it. But as there are always some who will attack it, I shall feel none the less confident in it. Really, the Book of God has stood so many attacks from such different quarters that to be at all alarmed about it shows a very childish fear. When a rock has been standing all our lifetime and has been known to stand firmly throughout all the ages of history, none but foolish people will think that the next wave will sweep it away.

Within our own short life—say some five-and-twenty years’ recollection—have we not remembered, I was about to say almost as many as five-and-twenty shapes of infidelity? You know it must change about every twenty years at least, for no system of infidelity can live longer than that! There was the witty system of objection which Voltaire introduced. And how short-lived was that! Then came the bullying, low-lived, blackguard system of Tom Paine. And how short-lived was its race! Then, in more modern times, unbelief took the shape of Secularism—what particular shapes it takes now we scarcely know—perhaps Colensoism is the most fashionable—but that is dying out and something else will follow it.

These creations of an hour just live their little day and they are gone. But look at belief in Scripture and at Scripture itself. The Bible is better understood, more prized, and I believe, on the whole, more practiced than ever it was since the day when its Author sent it abroad into the world. It is still onward. And after all which has been done against it, no visible effect has been produced upon the granite wall of Scriptural Truth by all the pickaxes and boring rods which have been broken upon it.

Walking through our Museums nowadays, we smile at those who think that Scripture is not true. Every block of stone from Nineveh, every relic which has been brought from the Holy Land speaks with a tongue which must be heard even by the deaf adder of Secularism and which says, “Yes, the Bible is true and the Word of God is no fiction.” Beloved, we may rest assured that we have not a Word in the Book of God which is untrue. There may be an interpolation or two of man’s which ought to be revised and taken away, but the Book, as it comes from God, is Truth and nothing but Truth—not only containing God’s Word, but *being* God’s Word— being not like a lump of gold inside a mass of quartz, but all gold and nothing but gold!

And being Inspired to the highest degree—I will not say *verbally* inspired, but more than that—having a fullness more than that which the letter can convey! Having in it a profundity of meaning such as words never had when used by any other being, God having the power to speak a multitude of Truths at once. And when He means to teach us one thing according to our capability of receiving it, He often teaches us twenty other things which, for the time, we do not comprehend but which, byand-by, as our senses are exercised, reveal themselves by the Holy Spirit. Every time I open my Bible I will read it as the Word of “God, that cannot lie.” And when I get a promise or a threat, I will either rejoice or tremble because I know that these stand fast.

Dear Friends, this leads us, in closing this point, to say that when we read that passage—“God, that cannot lie”—we understand that His very Nature cannot lie, for He hates lies! Wherever there is a lie God is its Enemy. It was to overcome the lie of sin that God sent His Son to bleed. And every day the thoughts of God are centered upon the extermination of evil and the extension of His own Truth. Nothing can set forth in words to us the hatred and detestation which God has in His heart of anything which is untrue. O that we knew and felt this and would glow with the same anger, seeking to exterminate the false, slaying it in our own hearts and giving it nothing to feed upon in our temper, our conversation, or our deeds!

**III.**But I shall now come to make a practical use of the text, in the third place, by observing HOW WE OUGHT TO ACT TOWARDS GOD IF IT IS TRUE THAT HE IS A “GOD THAT CANNOT LIE.” Brethren, if it is so that God cannot lie, then it must be the natural duty of all His creatures to believe Him. I cannot resist that conclusion. It seems to me to be as clear as noonday that it is every man’s duty to believe the Truth of God, and that if God must speak and act Truth and Truth only, it is the duty of all intelligent creatures to believe Him.

Here is “Duty-faith” again, which some are railing at, but how they can get away from it and yet believe that God cannot lie, I cannot understand. If it is not my duty to believe in God, then it is no sin for me to call God a liar. Will anyone subscribe to that—that God is a liar? I think not. And if to think God to be a liar would be a most atrocious piece of blasphemy, then it can only be so on the ground that it is the natural and incumbent duty of every creature understanding the truthfulness of God to believe in

God! If God has set forth the Lord Jesus Christ as the Propitiation for sin and has told me to trust Christ, it is my *duty* to trust Christ, because God cannot lie.

And though my sinful heart will never believe in Christ as a matter of duty but only through the work of the Holy Spirit, yet faith does not cease to *be* a duty. And whenever I am unbelieving and have doubts concerning God, however moral my outward life may be, I am living in daily sin! I am perpetrating a sin against the first principles of morality. If I doubt God, as far as I am able I rob Him of His honor and stab Him in the vital point of His Glory. I am, in fact, living an open traitor and a sworn rebel against God upon whom I heap the daily insult of daring to doubt Him.

O my Hearers, there are some of you who do not believe in Christ! I wish you would look at your character and position in this light. You are not trusting in Christ for your salvation. Remember, “He that believes not God, has made Him a liar.” Those are John’s own Inspired Words and you are, every day that you are not a Believer in Christ, virtually writing upon your doorpost and saying with your mouth, “God is a liar. Christ is not able to save me. I will not trust Him. I do not believe God’s promise. I do not think He is sincere in His invitation to me to come to Christ. I do not believe what God says.”

Remember that you are living in such a state as this and may God the Holy Spirit impress you with a sense of the sin of that state. And feeling this your sin and misery, I pray God to lead you to cry, “Lord, I believe, help You my unbelief!” This, then, is our first practical conclusion from the fact that God cannot lie. Other thoughts suggest themselves. If we were absolutely sure that there lived on earth a person who could not lie, how would you treat him? You know there cannot be such a man! There may be a man who *will not* lie, but there cannot be a man of whom it may be said that he*cannot* lie, for alas, we have all the power of evil in us and we can lie and to a certain degree it is quite true that “all men are liars.”

But if you could be certain that there was a man out of whose heart the black drop had been wrung and that he could not lie—how would you act towards him? Well, I think you would cultivate his acquaintance. If you are true yourselves, you would desire his friendship. You would say, “He is the friend for me! I have trusted in such-and-such a man and he has played the Judas. I asked counsel of another, and he was an Ahithophel. But if this man cannot lie, he shall be my bosom companion if he will accept me. And he shall be my counselor if he will but have the goodness to direct me.”

I should expect to see a levee of all the good in the world waiting at the man’s door! You know how the world, with all its sinfulness, does reverence the man who is true! We had an instance in our streets the other day of the good man and the true, who received homage of all and yet that man could lie. But inasmuch as we never have seen that he did, but his life has been straightforward, therefore have we paid him honor and deservedly so. Well now, if such is the case, should not all Christians seek more and more the friendship of God. “O Lord, be You my familiar Friend, my Counselor, my Guide. If You cannot lie I will lay bare my heart to You. I will tell You all my secrets. I will trust You with all the desires of my heart. I know You can never betray me, or be unfaithful. Let there be a union established between my soul and Yours, and let it never be broken.” Let communion with God be the desire of your hearts on the ground that He cannot lie.

If we knew a man who could not lie we should believe him, I think, without an oath. I cannot suppose that when he came into the court of justice they would pass him the Bible. No, his word would be better than the oath of ordinary men if he could not lie. You would not need any sign or evidence to prove what he said. You would take his word at once. So should it be with God. Ah, dear Friends, God has given us more than His Word, He has given us His Oath. And yet, strange is it that we who profess to be His children are vile enough to distrust our own Father. And sometimes, if He does not give us signs and evidences, we begin to distrust Him so that, after all, I am afraid we rather trust the signs than trust God and put more confidence in frames and evidences than we do in the naked promise, which is an atrocious sin, indeed!

Many Believers cannot be comfortable without signs and evidences. When they feel in a good frame of mind—ah, then God’s promise is true! When they can pray heartily, when they can feel the love of God shed abroad in their hearts, then they say, “How God has kept His promise.” Ah, but, my Brothers and Sisters, that is a *seeing*faith. “Blessed are they that have *not* seen and yet have believed.” Faith is to believe in God when my heart is as hard as the nether millstone! When my frames are bad, when I cannot pray, when I cannot sing, when I can do nothing good. To say, “He has promised and will perform. He has said that whoever believes in Christ is not condemned. I do believe in Christ and therefore I am not condemned”—this is genuine faith.

Again, if we knew a man who could not lie we should believe him in the teeth of fifty witnesses the other way. Why, we should say, “they may say what they will, but they can lie.” You might have good evidence that they were usually honest men, but you would say, “They can lie. They have the power of lying. But here is a man who stands alone and cannot lie. Then his word must be true!”

This shows us, Beloved, that we ought to believe God in the teeth of every contradiction. Even if outward Providence should come to you and say that God has forsaken you, that is only one. And even if another and another and another should come and fifty trials should all say that God has forsaken you, yet, as God says, “I will never leave you, nor forsake you,” which will you take—the one promise of God who cannot lie, or the fifty outward Providences which you cannot interpret? I know what the devil has been whispering in your ear—

***“The Lord has quite forsaken you,  
Your God will be gracious no more.”***

But then, remember who has said, “Fear you not, for I am with you: be not dismayed, for I am your God.” Which will you believe—the devil’s insinuation, or God’s own testimony? My dear Sister, you have been praying for a certain thing for years? You pray, you pray, and you pray again, and now discouragement arises! Unbelief says, “God will not hear that prayer! That prayer of yours does not come up before the Throne of God and there will be no answer.” But the Lord has said, “Ask and it shall be given you.

Seek and you shall find. Knock and it shall be opened unto you.” Which will you believe—your unbelief—the long months of weariness and the anxieties which prompted you to discouragement? Or will you believe in the naked promise?

Why, if God cannot lie, let us give Him what we would give to a man if he were of the same character—our full confidence even in the teeth of contradiction—for He is “God, that cannot lie.” If a man were introduced to us and we were certain that he could not lie, we should believe everything he said, however incredible it might appear to us. I shall have an appeal to every soul here present. It does seem very incredible at first sight that God should take a sinner, full of sin and forgive all his iniquities in one moment simply and only upon the ground of the sinner believing in Christ! I remember the time when it seemed to me utterly impossible that I could ever have my sins forgiven.

I had a clear sense of the value of pardon and this thought would be always ringing in my ears—“It is too good to be true that you should be pardoned. That you, an *enemy*, should be made into a child! That you who have gone on sinning against light and against knowledge, should yet rejoice in union to Christ. The thing is too good to be true!” But, beloved Friends, supposing it should seem too good to be true, yet, since you have it upon the testimony of One who “cannot lie,” I pray you believe it.

“But, Sir.” No! None of your “buts”! He cannot lie. “Ah, but.” Away with your “ahs” and your “buts,” for Jehovah cannot lie! He has said it, “He that believes and is baptized shall be saved.” To believe is to trust Christ. If therefore you are trusting Christ, you must be saved. And whatever you may be, or whatever you may have done, if you will now trust Jesus Christ you have God’s Word for it—and He cannot lie—that you shall be saved! Come now, will you kick against the promise because of its greatness? Do not! Let your doubts and fears be hushed to sleep and now, with the promise of God as your pillow and God’s faithfulness as your support, lie down in peace and behold in faith’s open vision the ladder, the top of which leads to Heaven!

Trust the promise of God in Christ and depend upon it that He will be as good to you, even to *you*, as His own Word, and in Heaven you shall have to sing of the “God, that cannot lie.” I would that these weak words of mine, for I am very conscious of their feebleness this morning, may nevertheless have comfort in them for any who have been doubting and fearing—that they may trust my Lord. And sure I am that if they begin a life of faith, they will begin a life of happiness and of security! “The just shall live by faith,” and well may they do so, when they have trust in a “God, that cannot lie.”

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**÷Tit 1.4**

FIVE LINKS IN A GOLDEN CHAIN  
NO. 2439

**INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S DAY, NOVEMBER 17, 1895, *DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORD’S-DAY EVENING, NOVEMBER 6, 1887.**

***“To Titus, my own [or, “true”] son after the common faith: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ our Savior.”***Tit 1:4***.***

AMONG the friends of Paul, Titus was one of the most useful and one of the best beloved. Paul was the Apostle to the Gentiles and Titus was a Gentile. I should suppose that both his parents were Gentiles and, in this respect, he differed from Timothy, whose mother was a Jewess. Timothy would well serve as a preacher to the circumcision, but Titus would be a man after Paul’s heart as a preacher to the Gentiles. He seems to have been a man of great common sense, so that, when Paul had anything difficult to be done, he sent Titus. When the collection was to be made at Corinth on behalf of the poor saints at Jerusalem, Paul sent Titus to stir the members up and, with him, another brother to take charge of the contributions. Titus appears to have been a man of business capacity and strict honesty, as well as a man who could order the Church aright and preach the Gospel with power.

Paul was, on one occasion, comforted by the coming of Titus. At another time, he was sad because Titus was not where he had hoped to meet with him. Though we know little about him from the Acts of the Apostles, or anywhere else, he appears to have been in every way one of the ablest of the companions of Paul—and the Apostle takes care to mention him over and over again in his Epistles to the Galatians and to the Corinthians—rendering honor to whom honor is due. It is a great pity when eminent men forget those who help them and it is a sad sign when any of us do not gratefully feel how much we owe to our coworkers. What can any servant of God do unless he has kind friends to bear him up by their prayers and their help? Paul did not forget to mention his friend and helper, Titus.

Dear Brothers and Sisters, in this particular verse, which I have chosen for my text, it seems to me that Paul has brought together five points in which he was one with Titus. It is a great blessing when Christian men are in union with each other and when they are willing to talk about the bonds that unite them. The more we can promote true unity among Christian men, the better. “First pure, then peaceable,” must be our motto. First, the Truth of God—afterwards, unity in the Truth. We must not be content with merely contending for the faith—we must next fight the battles of life—and do all we can to note the points in which true Christians are agreed. I desire, at this time, to “stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance,” to refresh your memories in regard to all the love that we have borne to one another in the days and years that are now past—and to exhort you to a still closer union in heart unto the Glory of God.

There are five things in which Paul seems to me to bring out clearly his union with Titus. I might call them, “five links in a golden chain.” I shall only briefly speak of each of the five and try to apply them to ourselves.

**I.**First, Paul says of himself and Titus, that THERE WAS A CLOSE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THEM—“Titus, my own son.”  
This was a very close relationship—not that Titus was Paul’s son after the flesh, for there was no natural relationship between them at all. Probably, in the early part of their lives, they had been total strangers to one another. But now, *Paul views Titus as his son*. We know, Beloved, many of us, that the Grace of God creates relationships of a very near and tender kind, relationships which will endure through life, relationships which will outlast death and be, perhaps, even more strong and vivid in eternity than they are here! Up yonder, where they neither marry nor are given in marriage, I should think that the relationships which come of the flesh will, to a large degree, be merged in their celestial condition, but there, the sonship of Titus towards Paul is even stronger than it was when they were here below.  
How comes that sonship? It comes, often, through God blessing a ministry to the conversion of a soul. Henceforth, he who has spoken the Word with power to the heart bears to him who has heard it the relationship of a father to a son. There are many in this place to whom I stand in this most hallowed relationship. You recognize it, I know, and I desire to express my intense and fervent love to the many of you who have been born unto God by the preaching of the Word here. I do not know of anything that has more greatly comforted me during the last week or two, in the time of sharp contention for the faith, than the reception of so many letters from persons of whom I have never heard before, saying, “You do not know me, but you are my spiritual father, and now, at such a time of trial as this is to you, I must write and send you a word of good cheer.” It is always a marvel to me that my feeble testimony should ever be blessed to the conversion of a seeking soul, but when I think of the hundreds and the thousands—yes, I am not exaggerating when I say *thousands*— whom I have met with here on earth, and the many more, at present unknown to me, whom I hope to meet with either here or in Heaven, I do rejoice, yes, and I will rejoice! And I cannot help expressing my great love to all those who have been brought to the Savior by the words which I have preached and published.  
The Apostle Paul not only said of Titus that he was his son, but*he called him his “true” son*. The Revised Version correctly translates it, “My true child.” We have, alas, some who have called us, “father,” in a spiritual sense, of whom we have cause to be ashamed. There are converts and converts. There are those who *say* they have received the Word and, perhaps, they have after the poor fashion in which the brain can receive it, but they have never received it in the *heart*—so, after running well, for a while, they grow weary and turn aside. And then the gainsayer says, “That is one of your converts!” They throw this in our teeth and we do not wonder that they should do so. These base-born ones, these who have no part nor lot in the matter, though they pretend to have it—these are a perpetual grief to us—a wound in our spirit which is hard to bear. But, oh, what a mercy it is when we know that many of our converts are our “true” spiritual children, in whom the work of repentance was deep, and whose profession of faith was sincere—who are not the products of free will, but the products of the Holy Spirit—and who bring forth fruit, not of themselves, but their fruit is found in Christ Jesus to whom they are eternally joined! Oh, those of you, between whom and myself there is this intimate relationship, let us feel some touch of this sacred kinship and rejoice before God that we feel it!  
But, Beloved, many of you are joined together by spiritual ties in other relationships. You, also, have been the means of bringing souls to Christ and there are those sitting by your side who, for that reason, look upon you with great love. Others of you are Brothers and Sisters in Christ— there is a brotherhood produced by the Christian life that will remain when other brotherhoods have all disappeared. An ungodly man may be the literal brother of a saint, but they will be separated in that day when there shall be weeping at the Judgment Seat of Christ. And they shall be eternally separated, for, though they seemed to be of one family, they were really of two families—the one an heir of wrath, the other receiving Grace to become a child of God.  
But Beloved, as many of you as believe in Jesus Christ are members of one family. You are related to one another in the highest possible way through the kinship of the *spiritual* life. Therefore let us now salute each other in the Lord. Standing or sitting in our places and without using any outward sign or symbol, let our hearts go out to one another in loving greeting. As one family we dwell in Christ, knit to one another by ties of sympathy, love and mutual delight, because knit to Christ Jesus the Lord! I want you to feel that blessed union. Let us make this service a sort of family gathering, as when the father stands up at the head of the table at Christmas time, or on New Year’s Day, and says that he is glad to see all the family at home once more. I seem to stand among you, thus, not as the oldest in years, but still the chief official member of this Church—and I salute you all, and bid you rejoice together because of ties of love which time cannot loose and death, itself, cannot dissolve!  
**II.**Then the Apostle, wishing to show how real was the union between himself and Titus, next mentioned that THEY WERE BRETHREN BY A COMMON FAITH—“Titus, my true son after the common faith.”  
Yes, Beloved, and *our* faith is also common. It is the same faith in two respects. First, because *we believe the same truths* and, secondly, because we believe them with “like precious faith.” We who are rightly members of this Tabernacle Church have believed the same Truths of God—there is no dispute or discussion among us about the fundamentals of our faith. To us, there is one God—Father, Son and Holy Spirit. To us, there is one Mediator—Jesus Christ the Savior. We believe in the election of Grace by the Divine Father. We believe in the vicarious Sacrifice of the Eternal Son. We believe in the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit and in the need of it in the case of every living man, woman and child.  
We believe in “one Lord, one faith, one Baptism.” I feel intensely grateful for this unity of faith. A Church divided in its doctrine—what can it do? If it has to spend its strength in continual debate! What force has it with which to conquer the world? But knowing, as we know, that the Scriptures are our unerring guide, that the Holy Spirit is the Infallible Explainer of the Scriptures, we come to one common fountain to learn what we are to receive, and we receive it with one common anointing, even the anointing of the Spirit of God!  
This unity of the faith is one of the things in which we ought continually to rejoice. I hope that I love all Christians, yet I cannot help saying that when I sit down and talk with a Brother who believes the Doctrines of Grace, I feel myself a great deal more at home than I do when I am with one who does not believe them. Where there is the unity of the faith, there seems to be a music which creates harmony—and that harmony is delightful to the renewed spirit. God grant, dear Friends, that none of us may err from the faith, but that we may be steadfast, immovable, firmly fixed in our belief of the great Doctrines of the Gospel, for this is the way in which we are made truly one!  
Then Paul says that he and Titus were one, “after the common faith,” that is, *the one faith was believed by them in the same way*. There is only one faith worth having. Paul calls it, in the first verse, “the faith of God’s elect.” It is real faith, cordial faith, childlike faith, God-given faith! It is not a faith that springs out of human nature unaided by the Holy Spirit, but it is precious faith—faith which is the gift of God and the work of the Holy Spirit! Now, if we believe only intellectually, we do not enter into sympathy with one another as we do when we both believe *spiritually*, with heart and soul, from the very depths of our being.  
Beloved, I trust that I can say of myself and of you, also, that we have received faith as a gift from God. Here, then, is another sacred tie binding us together. You have that jewel of faith gleaming on your bosom and here are others who have the same precious gem—and by that very fact you are drawn to each other. Your faith and my faith, if they are both true faith, are, “the common faith.” I may have very little faith and you may have the full assurance of understanding, but your faith and mine are of the same sort. Your faith may be but as a grain of mustard seed and your friend’s faith may have grown into a tree, but it is the same faith—it clings to the same Christ and will produce the same eternal results in the salvation of the soul! Come, then, let us spiritually shake hands, again, over this second point. First, we are closely related to one another. Secondly, we possess a common faith, which is a wonderful bond of union between us.  
**III.**Carefully note the third link. It is this—WE HAVE A MUTUAL BENEDICTION, for Paul wishes for Titus, “Grace, mercy and peace.” This is just what Titus would have wished for Paul if he had been sending him a benediction! And I wish to you, Beloved, “Grace, mercy and peace,” and I think you are, in your hearts, wishing for me, also, “Grace, mercy, and peace.” We all alike need these three choice favors!  
First, we need “*Grace*” *to help*. I know how it is with the weak Believer—he sees some brave Christian doing mighty works for God and he says, “Oh, I wish that I were like he is! Oh, that I were as strong as he is!” And he gets the notion that this more prominent worker has no fainting fits or weaknesses such as he has. Oh, no—he supposes that his Brother’s head is bathed in everlasting sunshine and that his heart is continually flooded with rivers of delight! That shows, my Friend, that you are greatly mistaken, for the most eminent saint has no more Grace to give away than the least in the family of God has! I sometimes wish that I could rid the minds of our dear trembling friends, Miss MuchAfraid and Mr. Despondency, of the ideas they have concerning some of us to whom they look up with esteem. I am not going to let you into *all* our secrets, but, believe me, our heads ache as much as yours and our eyes are sometimes as wet with tears as ever yours are! Yes, and our hearts get quite as heavy as yours do.  
“Yes,” you say, “very likely, but then, somehow or other, you are stronger than we are.” Just so, but suppose you have to carry 50 pounds and you can carry that and no more? Well, you have strength enough for your task. If another man has to carry 100 pounds and he can just carry that, and no more, he is in exactly the same condition as you are! Here is a Brother who has a large measure full of manna which he is carrying for the supply of his family. Here is another who has quite a small measure and, as he carries it into his tent, he says to himself, “Oh, I wish that I had that great bushel of manna that my Brother took into his tent just now.” Yes, but listen—“he that gathered much had nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack.” Mark you, I do not discourage the attempt to gather much Grace, I would urge you to get all you can of it, for, however much you gather, you will have none too much, but I would discourage your despair if there should seem to be but little falling to your share, for you shall have no need! The fact is, all of us need Grace. You who preach the Gospel, you who are deacons, you who are elders, you who teach the infant class, you who can only give away a tract—you must do all these works with Grace or else you will not really do them at all! And our need of Grace is a common meeting place for us all. Only Grace can save you and only Grace can save me—and the Grace of God shall be given to us and all Believers as we have need of it.  
Our next need is, “*mercy*” *to forgive*. Titus, perhaps, thought to himself, “Well, Paul wishes mercy for me, but can hardly wish it for himself, for he is such an eminent servant of God, so holy, so consecrated, so zealous, so self-denying that he does not need mercy.” I reminded you, in our reading, that Paul, in writing to a Church, says, “Grace be to you, and peace,” but when he writes to a minister, he says, “Grace, *mercy* and peace.” It looks as though ministers needed more mercy than their people did! And it is my firm conviction that the more eminent is their office and the more remarkable is their usefulness in the service of God, the more mercy they require! Brothers, how can we meet our responsibilities unless we constantly cry, “Lord, have mercy upon us”? How can we deal faithfully with the souls committed to our charge and be clear of the blood of all men, unless the Lord shall have mercy upon us, and upon us beyond all others?  
All of us, then, need mercy. I do. Do not you? You are only a plain man with a family growing up around you, but you need mercy for your sins as the head of the household. Perhaps you are only a domestic servant, my Sister, but you need mercy even in that humble calling of yours. You, perhaps,

dear Friend, are very rich—oh, you need much mercy! And you, on the other hand, are very poor—I am sure that you need mercy. Some of you are in good health. You need mercy lest you should pervert that strength to an evil purpose. Others of you are very sickly—you may well cry for mercy, that you may bear up under your many pains and depressions of spirit. We all need mercy. So that is another point in which we are one.  
The third word of the benediction is “*peace*” *to comfort*. I hope that many of us know what peace of conscience means, what peace with God means and what peace with man means. If God has given us His peace, it is a treasure of untold value, “the pearl of great price.” To be at peace with God is better than to be a millionaire, or Czar of all the Russias. Peace of mind, restfulness of heart, quiet of spirit, deliverance from care, from quarrelling, from complaining—I know that I need that kind of peace—and you need it, too, do you not? You need it in your family, in your business, in your own hearts! Well, then, here we meet, again, having this same need of peace and, when we get it, we meet once more in finding the same delicious enjoyment of it! I wish to you, Beloved, now and henceforth, Grace, mercy and peace! And I believe that you wish the same to me. And herein, again, we join our hands and bless God that we feel true union of heart.  
**IV.**Upon the next part of my subject, which is more weighty, still, I must say but little. It is this—“Grace, mercy and peace, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.” That is, WE ARE ONE IN THE SOURCE OF EVERY BLESSING.  
*All good comes to us from God the Father* through the one Mediator, the Lord Jesus Christ our Savior. I love to think of this—that all the Grace, mercy and peace that come to you—and all the Grace, mercy and peace that come to me, come from the heart of God! How many wagons there are upon the road of Grace and all of them heavily laden! One stops at that Brother’s door and another waits at this Sister’s gate, but they all started from one spot. Look on the side of the wagons and you will see the name of the same Proprietor on every one of them! “The chariots of God are twenty thousand,” but they are all the Lord’s, so that whatever Grace, mercy and peace come to us at all, come from the same place! Get to the very foundation of this Truth of God and you will see that we who believe all eat bread baked in the same oven, our clothes come out of the same wardrobe, the water that we drink comes from the same Rock! Yes, and the shoes that we wear were made by the same mighty Worker who bade Moses say to Israel of old, “Your shoes shall be iron and brass; and as your days, so shall your strength be.” You have not anything that is worth having but what your Father gave to you! And your Father is *my* Father—and the hand that passes the blessing to you passes the blessing to me and to the whole family of Believers!  
These blessings not only all come from the same source, but *they all come by the same channel—*“the Lord Jesus Christ.” There is the sacred blood mark on every Covenant blessing, whether you have it, or your Brother has it, or some Christian far away in India gets it. It all comes by the same Divinely-appointed Channel—the Man, the God, Christ Jesus our Lord! I do not know how you feel about this matter, but it seems to me as if this ought to bind us very closely together. I remember when I first left my grandfather, with whom I had been brought up as a little child, how grieved I was to part from him. It was the great sorrow of my little life. Grandfather seemed very sorry, too, and we had a cry together. He did not quite know what to say to me, but he said, “Now child, tonight, when the moon shines and you look at it, don’t forget that it is the same moon your grandfather will be looking at.” And for years, as a child, I used to love the moon because I thought that my grandfather’s eyes and my own somehow met there on the moon! How much better it is to think that you, dear Friend, going so far away to Australia, are looking to the Savior, while we are doing the same thing, here, and so our eyes meet! You go to God at the Mercy Seat in prayer and that is just where we go—so, after all, we pray at the same sacred spot and our petitions meet at the great Throne of Mercy! Thus we are made to feel our blessed union in Christ.  
Some people say that they try to remember other people, but if you really love them, you will not “try” to remember them—you will not be able to keep from remembering them! Their image will come up before your mind’s eye. You cannot avoid it and you will not wish to avoid it. So, dear Friends, we will not say that we will try to remember each other while we are parted a while—but every blessing that comes to us shall remind us that it comes from our Father, through Jesus Christ our Mediator—and so we shall feel that we are truly one.  
**V.**Then, to close, there is one more point of union and that lies in OUR COMMON RELATIONSHIP TO OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST. See how Paul puts it, “The Lord Jesus Christ our Savior.”  
I must dwell briefly upon every word of this title. First, Jesus is *Lord* to all His people—and equally *to be obeyed by them all, and adored by them all*. It is important that, with bowed knee and reverent love, we call Him Lord and God. We put our finger into the print of the nails and the wound in His side, confessing that He is and must be real Man, but, at the same moment, we cry with Thomas, “My Lord and my God.” I cannot pretend to have any union with the man who cannot, from his heart, say that! If you do not count Christ to be God, well, go your way, my fellow man, and I will go mine—but your way and my way cannot be the same. We know that this is the Christ of God, and he who does not know it needs to be taught of God the very first principles of the Gospel. So, you see, we have a true unity in the Lordship of Christ—we desire, as one man, to be obedient to all His commands and to worship Him as “very God of very God.”  
Then comes the next word, “the Lord Jesus Christ.” That will come again when I speak of the word, “Savior,” so I pass on to the following word, “the Lord Jesus Christ.” He is, to all of us who believe, the Anointed One, so anointed that every Word that Jesus Christ has spoken is to us Infallibly Inspired. We believe in Jesus, not only as men say they do, today, but we*really*believe in Jesus, for we believe in His Doctrine, in that which He, Himself spoke, and in that which He spoke by His Inspired Apostles. We cannot separate between Christ and the Truth He came to preach, and the work He came to do—nor will we attempt to do so. He is to us the Anointed of God, as Prophet, Priest and King—and we accept Him in all the offices for which He bears that anointing, do we not, my Brothers and Sisters? I know that we do! As Brothers and Sisters in one common faith, we rejoice in the common Christ whose anointing has fallen upon us, too. Though we are but as the skirts of the garment of our Great High Priest, yet the holy oil upon His head has come down even to us, as it is written, “you have an unction from the Holy One.”  
The Apostle further writes, “The Lord Jesus Christ *our Savior*.” Sometimes, in the Bible, we find the Lord Jesus Christ called, “*a* Savior.” “Unto you is born in the city of David *a* Savior, which is Christ the Lord.” That is good, but it is not good enough for what poor sinners need. Our Lord Jesus Christ is not *a* Savior among other saviors, though He does instrumentally make His people saviors, as it is written, “saviors shall come up on Mount Zion; and happy are they who, as instruments in His hands, save souls from death, and hide multitudes of sins.” But Jesus is also called “*the* Savior.” He is “*the* Savior of all men, specially of those that believe”—the Savior, *par excellence*.  
Then, next, He is *my* Savior, as Mary sang, “My spirit has rejoiced in God *my* Savior.” Oh, that is sweet, indeed—to get a personal grip of Him and to know that He has saved me from despair, from sin, from the power of evil, from death, from Hell! But there is, in some respects, a superior sweetness in this plural pronoun, “*our* Savior.” Selfishness is gone when we come to feel an intense delight in this Truth of God—that the Lord Jesus Christ is the Savior of many more beside ourselves. “*Our* Savior”—does not this bind us to one another? A common delight in one person is one of the strongest bands of sympathetic union that can bind men together—and a common obligation to some one superior Being becomes a great reason for our being knit together in love. My Savior, your Savior, our Savior—“The Lord Jesus Christ our Savior.” Whenever we feel any disposition to break off from this Brother and from that, whom we know to be, after all, saved in the Lord, let us come together with a fresh clasp of the hands as we say to one another, “We rejoice in our Savior and we are one in Him.”  
What I want to say—as a parting word, before I leave you once more for my season of rest—is just this. Let us keep close together, now, shoulder to shoulder, if ever we did so in all our lives. “Close your ranks!” must be the message to the faithful in these evil days. Let us feel heart touching heart in the deepest and truest Christian affection, for, in proportion as we are welded together in love, we shall be strong for all the practical purposes for which the Holy Spirit intends a Church to be used.  
These 34 years—is not that the number?—they are so many, I begin to forget the number—a third of a century have I served among you as a preacher of the Gospel! I am always fearing that I shall get “flat, stale and unprofitable,” and that my voice will cease to have any music for you, but there is one thing I know, from the first day I came among you until now, I have preached nothing but “the glorious Gospel of the blessed God!” ”Jesus Christ and Him Crucified!” And I am not afraid that that *Gospel* will ever get “flat, stale, or unprofitable.” And this is the golden chain which has bound us together in holy fellowship. This is the foundation on which we have built—“One Lord, one faith, one Baptism.” Yes, one Baptism—there are others who hold another baptism, but we know of no outward baptism but the *immersion* of the Believer into the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit! And upon this point we are all agreed, as we are upon the rest of the articles of our faith.  
So, being one, let us show to all the world what the power of Christian unity really is! Keep together in the Prayer Meetings. Never let those precious gatherings decay or drop. If you have come together in large numbers—and you have in my presence—do so *much more in my absence.* Let each one feel bound to meet with his Brothers and Sisters in prayer. I am longing for a genuine revival of religion—a revival of religion *everywhere*—and I think I can see signs that it is coming. I find that many of the Baptist ministers who love the Gospel are going over the groundwork, preaching the fundamental doctrines more than they ever did —that is a good thing. I find that the Churches are meeting together for prayer at this juncture more than they have done, seeking that God will help and guide them to be faithful—that also is a good thing.  
And people are talking about the plan of salvation—on the tops of omnibuses and in the railway carriages—everywhere it comes up as a subject of debate! In the daily papers the same theme is brought forward, for which I thank God. And though I have had to bear my share of reproach for the Truth’s sake, yet I joyfully accept it. Anything which can call public attention to the Gospel of Christ is a help to us and I believe that the attention called to this question is hopeful, that the discussion of it by so many is still *more* hopeful and that the firm adherence to the faith, which I see in so many, will be attended by an intense zeal for the conversion of souls—and then we shall see a revival. God has been hindered and hampered by the false doctrine and heresy that have been cherished in so many of the churches—and the Spirit of God has been grieved and driven away by the utter rottenness of worldliness that has been indulged in by so many professing Christians. By God’s Grace we have let a little light into this darkness. By God’s Grace we have opened a door, here and there, and a clear cold draft is blowing out some of the fog and the evil gases of the stagnant atmosphere that has been poisoning our people far too long.  
Now is our time, Brothers and Sisters! Let us, as one man, pray God to send this benediction from on high—“Grace, mercy and peace.” I charge you, while I am away, to be instant in and out of season about this matter and to let this be a special object of supplication with the members of this Church—that we should have a revival of religion here, at any rate, while the pastor is away. It is better for it to come while he is away, for nobody will then put the credit of it upon any instrument. Break out, heavenly fire! Descend! Descend! Descend! Let the sacrifice be consumed!  
As for you who do not know and love the Lord, we love you, we desire to bring you into the blessed circle of love by the door of faith in Christ. Look alone to Jesus Christ, who is the only way of salvation for you as for us. Oh, that you would look to Him and live! God grant it, for Christ’s sake! Amen.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:  
*Titus 1; Titus 2.***

While reading this chapter we must understand that Titus was sent to Crete to superintend the preaching of the Gospel throughout that island. Crete was, at that time, inhabited by a people who were only partially civilized, and sunk in the very worst of vices. Paul, therefore, tells Titus to speak to them about things which would hardly be mentioned to Christians nowadays.

Tit 1:1-4**.***Paul, a servant of God, and an Apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God’s elect, and the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness; in hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began; but has in due times manifested His Word through preaching, which is committed unto me according to the commandment of God our Savior; to Titus, my own son after the common faith: Grace, mercy and peace, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ our Savior.* You have probably noticed that Paul’s benediction, when he is writing to a minister, is always. “Grace, mercy and peace.” Writing to Churches, his usual formula is, “Grace be to you and peace,” but God’s servants, called to the work of the ministry, need very special “mercy”—as if the higher the office, the greater the liability to sin and, therefore, in his Pastoral Epistles, whether he is addressing Titus or Timothy, Paul wishes for his sons in the faith, “Grace, mercy and peace.” Oh, what a mercy it will be for any of us ministers if, at the last, we are clear of the blood of all men! If, having been called to preach the Gospel, we shall do it so faithfully as to be acquitted and even rewarded by our Lord and Master, it will be mercy upon mercy! [This “charge” of the beloved Pastor has even more force and pathos now that he has gone “away” to Heaven.]

**5, 6.***For this cause left I you in Crete, that you should set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed you: if any are blameless, the husband of one wife.*For there were many converts, there, who had two or three wives. Whatever position they might be permitted to occupy in the Church, they could not become officers—they must keep in the rear rank.

**6-12.***Having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly. For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not self-willed, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre; but a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate; holding fast the faithful Word as he has been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers. For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision: whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre’s sake. One of themselves, even a prophet of their own.*According to Jerome, this was Epimenides, a prophet-poet who lived in Crete in the sixth century before Christ.

**12.***Said, The Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, slow bellies.* They were a degraded people and, therefore, those who would teach them had a most difficult task and needed great Grace. Paul exhorts Titus that only specially fit men—men whose example would have influence and whose characters would have weight—should be allowed to be elders in such Churches.

**13-16.***This witness is true. Therefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith; not giving heed to Jewish fables, and commandments of men that turn from the truth. Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled. They profess that they know God; but in works they deny Him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate.*This was bad soil, but it had to be plowed, sown and, with an Almighty God at the back of the Gospel plower and sower, a fruitful harvest came even in Crete! We need not be afraid of the adaptation of the Gospel to the lowest of the low. If there is any quarter of the town where the people are more sunken in vice than anywhere else, there the Gospel is to be carried with more prayer and more faith than anywhere else! Depend upon it, God can bless His Word anywhere—among Cretans or among any other sort of degraded people.

Tit 2:1**.***But speak you the things which become sound doctrine.* There are certain things which are suitable to go with sound doctrine— they are meet and fit and appropriate thereto.

**2.***That the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience.*Among the heathen, old men often gave themselves up to drunkenness and gluttony. So, now, this is the teaching that is to be given to aged Christian men. They need faith, love and patience, as well as the virtues of sobriety, gravity and temperance! The infirmities of old age often create petulance, so the Grace of God is to make the venerable Christian to be full of faith, love and patience.

**3.***The aged women, likewise, that they be in behavior as becomes holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things.* Old women also among the heathen were often addicted to the taking of much wine, so here they are cautioned against it by the Spirit of God. They are also tempted to spread slanderous reports against people— having little to do in their old age, they are apt to do that little by way of mischief—so they are warned that they are not to be “false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things.” And how beautifully can an aged Christian woman, by her kindly example, be a teacher of good things! There is no more charming sight under Heaven, I think, than that of an elderly Christian lady whose words and whose whole life are such as becomes the Gospel of Christ.

**4, 5.***That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the Word of God be not blasphemed.*There were some women who supposed that the moment they became Christians, they were to run about everywhere. “No,” says the Apostle, “let them stay at home.” There is no gain to the Christian Church when the love, the industry and the zeal, which ought to make a happy home, are squandered upon something else. The young women of Crete appear to have been such that they needed to be taught “to love their husbands.” That expression does not occur elsewhere in Scripture. Christian women do not need to be told to love their husbands, but these Cretans, just brought out of the slough of sin, had to be taught even *this* lesson. Oh, what a blessing is love in the marriage relationship! And what a gracious influence love has upon children! How are they to be brought up aright except the whole house be perfumed with love?

**6.***Young men, likewise, exhort to be sober-minded.*That exhortation is as necessary in London as it was in Crete! Young men often know a great deal, or think they do—and they are very apt to be intoxicated with the idea of knowing so much and being able to do so much—so that the exhortation to them is to “be sober-minded.”

**7-9.***In all things showing yourself a pattern of good works: in doctrine showing incorruptness, gravity, sincerity, sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you. Exhort servants—*Or, as it might and should be rendered, “bond-slaves.”

**9, 10.** *To be obedient unto their own masters, and to please them well in all things; not answering again; not purloining.* Not picking and stealing, which very naturally was the common habit of slaves—and who wonders at it in their wretched condition?

**10.***But showing all good fidelity; that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things.*Is not that a wonderful passage? Here is a slave, able to be an ornament to the Gospel of Christ! This blessed Gospel is not sent only to kings and princes! When Paul preached it, the great mass of the population were in cruel bondage, treated like dogs, or even worse. Yet the Gospel even had a message for them—it told them that they might, by a godly character, adorn the doctrine of God, their Savior!

**11-15.***For the Grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts we should live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ; who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise you.*

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**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.** Sermon #3521 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

**÷Tit 1.15**

A SEARCHING TEST  
NO. 3521

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, JULY 20, 1916.

***DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON THURSDAY EVENING, JANUARY 18, 1872.**

***“Unto the pure all things are pure, but unto them who are defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure, but even their mind and conscience are defiled.”***Tit 1:15***.***

I SHALL not profess, this evening, to enter into a full exposition of this text, for there are many deep things in it, and many intricate questions are suggested by it. I shall only make some observations upon it intended to be of practical service.

This text has often been misused—made to mean what was never in the Apostle’s mind. He does not mean that a wrong thing becomes right to a pure-minded man—that is the very opposite of what he does mean! He means that when men’s minds are pure, other matters become pure to them, but when their minds are impure, then they use these things for impurity. We shall endeavor to pick out the meaning as we go along, but by no means does it mean that I may pretend that I am of a pure mind and that, therefore, will make impurity, itself, pure! That would be to prove, if I found any pleasure in impurity, that my mind was impure. The true solution of the conduct of a man who professes to be pure in mind and yet commits himself to an unholy course of life, is not that the man makes that unholy life, pure, but that his unholy living proves that his mind is not pure at all!

Our text has in it, tonight, *two kinds of men*—*the pure and the defiled and unbelieving.* And secondly, it has *two kinds of effects produced upon these men by outward things—*to the one, all things are pure—to the other, there is nothing pure. First, let us talk about these—

**I.**TWO KINDS OF MEN.  
First, the *pure*—where shall we find them? Where are they born? We answer, no men are born so! Who shall bring a clean thing out of an unclean? No one! Not one! As our parents have sinned, we, their children, are born with tendencies to sin—we are impure even from birth! There are none pure but those who are made so by a second creation! The first time they are marred upon the wheel. They must go under the Creator’s hand a second time—they must feel the power of the purifying Spirit of God creating them anew before they can be called pure at all! And these are not absolutely pure. Even in those who are entitled to be called, “pure in heart,” there remains impurity. If any man shall question that, let him remember the First Epistle of John, the first Chapter, at the 8th verse—“If any man says he has no sin, he is a liar, and the truth is not in him.” There is sin in the best of men—and if they do not perceive it, it must be because they are blinded with a foolish self-conceit—for in the purest heart there still remains connected with it the old nature and the impurity inherited from the first Adam. This makes life a perpetual conflict until life’s close. Still, we name men by their predominant characteristics. The partial impurity of a good man does not entitle him to be called impure. If the master principle within him, the reigning principle, is purity, he is a pure man. A man may once in his life have spoken an untruth—he may have been surprised into saying a thing which is not— but if the general tenor of his life is stern integrity, we do not, therefore, condemn him and brand him as a liar! Otherwise where were the men living upon earth who would be worthy of a name implying praise? The godly are pure—have been made pure by regeneration, and they are pure, though not absolutely so.  
They are *pure in their affections*. They love not that which is unchaste, unhallowed, untruthful, unlawful before God. Their soul loves that which God approves. They seek after that which God, Himself, commands. If they do not always keep God’s statutes, yet they love them. And if they do not always walk in His ways without slipping, yet they love His ways and desire to walk in them without a single turning aside to the right hand or to the left! The set of the current of their soul is towards purity. They mourn over those currents and eddies into which they are turned by temptation. They are the last men to excuse them—the rush and current of their soul, their deepest and truest life—is that they may be cleansed from all false ways and from sin. And as they are pure in their affections, they become *pure in their actions*. They, if they are, indeed, the people of God, cannot run with the multitude to do evil. The swine may find its pleasure in the mire, but God’s sheep love clean pastures. The raven may feed upon its garbage and be at home, there, but not so the dove—it likes the clean garner and the clean roosting place. The child of God shuns not only the darker sins which defile so many, but even those which others think but a trifle. And what some would permit and rejoice in, the Christian mourns, abhors, laments and avoids. The actions of the Christian—I do not claim perfection for them, but I do claim that the true Christian strives after perfection in his actions, that he seeks after it, yes, and that, as a rule, he comes nearer to it than his enemies would allow, or than even his own reflections, when he is examining himself, would permit him to believe! God has a people who still walk uprightly in the world. There are still some that are as pillars in the House of God upon whom he has written the name of our God—some who have not defiled their garments—who shall walk with Him in white, for, by His Grace, they are made worthy.  
And these men being thus pure in their affections and in their actions are most of all *pure in their desires*. Their greatest desire is towards purity. I am sure I speak the language of every renewed heart when I say that if the Lord were to appear by night to you, and say to you, as He did to Solomon, “What shall I give you?” there is no renewed heart here that would say, “Lord, give me riches!” There is no one that would say, “Give me health!” We may desire both of these things in a secondary degree, but our main desire would be this, “Lord, give me that holy character which would please You and bring honor to the religion I profess.” Holiness, holiness, holiness—it is a thing which every renewed heart longs after beyond everything else! I would have perfect orthodoxy in my head if I could, but I know even if I had that, an unhallowed life would render it of little service to me. But could I have a clean heart, other things would come with it and from it, for the pure in heart shall see God! And if they see God, what else is there that they shall *not* see, for the eyes which have glanced on God, Himself, will be able to perceive the difference between truth and error, and will not be liable to be deceived! The Christian is pure in his desires. Now if it is so, that in his affections within, and his actions without, and in the desires of his entire nature, he would be pure, he is entitled to this name and God has given it to him!  
But there are *some, on the other hand, who are defied and unbelieving*. These two things appear to go together. Now it was denied some time since, that every unbeliever is unclean in his life, and I think there is some ground in the denial. I should not like to stand here and say that I believe every infidel, every rejecter of the religion of Christ is a man unfit for the social circle and a sinner against the laws of decency! I do not believe it. Honestly, I must say that there are some men who have rejected the Gospel—I grieve that they have—have denied God and yet somehow they have been a vast deal better than their creed, and they have managed to walk in a consistency of moral conduct towards man which has almost been worthy to be set up as an example to Christians! I believe such cases are not the rule, and that candor, when it has made the admission which I have made, is compelled to add that this is an extraordinary thing and cannot have been produced by the creed, for the creed, itself, of the godless is necessarily logically and properly the creed of the unbelieving, producing sin! Why should they obey a Law of God if they do not believe in a Law-Giver, or if they only believe in a law-giver who will not punish and who cannot reward? When men have denied God, they have surely given up the sanction which should lead them to anything like purity—and if they live as most of them do live—it cannot be said that they are inconsistent with their creed.  
Yet, indeed, as a rule, and as a rule without exception—having said what I have said (and I do not contradict myself)—as a rule without an exception, *the unbelieving heart is a defiled heart for all that*. For what did we admit? That the man who rejects his God is not, therefore, a thief? Has he not robbed God? What did we say? That the man who rejects Christ is not, therefore, licentious? Is that purity which rejects perfection? Is that heart pure that cannot see loveliness in the Character and the Person of the Redeemer? What did we admit? That the unbeliever is not seditious? Yet is he a loyal subject of God who denies the Godhead, who rails against God, and who lives from day to day as if there were no God at all? Men, if they were called sinners, would not shudder at the word—they admit it! But call them criminals and at once they are angry and defend themselves—the reason being, I suppose, that with the mass of mankind it seems a trifle to offend God, but a very serious thing to have offended man! And here is the whole stress of the matter—the defilement of the unbeliever lies always God-ward, even when it is not apparent man-ward. And when the unbeliever, somehow or other, keeps his garments clean as before his fellow men, yet as before his God what is he? He is one who has cast off all obligations to his Maker, who denies all responsibilities to his King, who receives bounties from Jehovah’s hands but is not grateful and will not even acknowledge that the mercies come from those hands at all! He lives in habitual contempt of the Adorable— destitute of all admiration for the infinitely Glorious—who does what angels must shudder to think of—lives without love to Christ, without trust in the promises of God! There is a defilement, there, which, I venture to say, is even greater if looked at in a right light, than any form of defilement which becomes perceptible by men as between themselves!  
But notice in this text that it seems to correct a good deal of the mental philosophy we have heard of. For instance, I have heard it asserted that conscience is God’s vice regent among men. I have often heard expressions from the pulpit and read them in books which led me to infer that every fallen man has got not only something good in him, but some strong principle almost akin to the Divine! I believe in the fall of man and I believe that to be *total—*and that *conscience* is a power which has fallen with all the rest, and that there does not exist in the world a pure conscience—except so far as God has purified it by the work of His Spirit. Conscience, itself, is a defiled thing! And so far from being a representative of God, I could not think for a moment of comparing it with that Ever-Blessed and Pure Being! The fact is that conscience, although it must be to man practically his guide, is not ever a safe one, for the true guide of every man is the Bible, the revealed will of God. That is true, pure and right, but my conscience may often be a dark conscience, an ignorant conscience, a perverted conscience—and so my business is not to follow my conscience as I find it, but to go to God and ask Him to enlighten my conscience and guide it! Neither is it an excuse for a man for doing wrong when he says he was conscientious in doing it. It is an excuse as far as *men* are concerned, but not before God! God’s Law is not of variable quantity or quality depending upon the quantity or quality of the conscience—it is fixed and definite! Just as if a man were to take prussic acid, believing that it would benefit him—he would die, despite his conscience—or as if a person were to walk northward, expecting to reach his home in the south! He would not do anything of the kind! Or as if a man were to go to sea in a leaky vessel and a storm came on—his conscience would not save him—so it is with you! If you are astray, you are astray. Your business was to have waited upon God to have had that conscience corrected! Your business was to have laid that conscience at the foot of the Cross and ask the Master to purify it—to have waited upon the Holy Spirit for His teaching and consulted the Infallible Oracles of God’s Book to know what was the will of the Most High! It is not, therefore, for every man to be crying up his conscience. I believe in the conscience, by all means, among men, but there is none perfect before God! Their conscience should be bowed to God’s Law, to God’s Gospel, to believe His teachings and to obey His precepts. Conscience, no more than any other power, is irresponsible! It is under law in Him. He created man and put the conscience within him, which conscience has been spoiled and injured by the Fall.  
Now there are men in the world with defiled understandings and defiled consciences. They cannot judge rightly. *Their understanding is defiled*. They put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter. “A man cannot do that,” says one. He *does* do it. There are thousands in this world who deliberately judge amiss, and who, when they sit down, even to think of a question (which, alas, we cannot often bring them to do), naturally come to a wrong conclusion because the scales which they weigh are out of gear. The measure which they use is not the measure of the sanctuary! Their understanding is defiled. And even when they bring their moral sense to bear upon some question, they are inevitably mistaken because *their conscience, itself, has become defiled also*. A sad state for men to be in, but into this state each man, according to his degree, is brought until his will turns to God and is rectified by the great Spirit. We are all impure—impure in every part. “The whole head is sick, and the whole heart is faint.” We are all fallen. In manhood’s vast temple there stands not a solitary pillar that is quite erect. Here and there, there are masses that seem as though they stood as once they were, to let us know how grand a thing human nature might have been—but there is enough upon the whole to let us see that it is all in ruin, and in such ruin that unless He who built it at the first shall put forth His Omnipotent Power and use again the old fiat which created the world, it will still be a ruin and desolation—a den of all manner of unclean things!  
Thus have I spoken upon the two sorts of men, the pure and the defiled. But now, secondly, here is the main point that we have to speak of—  
**II.**THE TWO AFFECTS PRODUCED ON THESE TWO KINDS OF MEN.  
To those who are pure, *all things are pure.* To those who are impure and unbelieving, *everything becomes impure*. Only a few things by way of specimen.  
First, let us think *of the attributes of God*. To the Believer in Christ, whose heart is pure, how glorious is God! And every time we think of Him, adore Him and have fellowship with Him, we grow purer for it. The true Believer cannot think of God and draw nearer to Him without becoming more like his God. But look at the unbeliever. Oft-times his very thoughts of God have been, themselves, defiled by the defilement of his understanding, irritating him, filling him with wrath and abhorrence. He does not delight in the holiness of God—he says it is severity. “How can a man be happy with such laws to bind him?” He does not delight in the wisdom of God in Providence—he thinks things are ordered very much amiss, seeing they do not all conduce to his pleasure in the ways of sin! And, especially, if you set before him God’s mercy, that most blessed of all attributes which, to the Believer, is purifying to the highest degree, you will find the unbeliever saying, “God is Merciful,” and making that an excuse for his continuing in sin! How sad it is that when we preach the Gospel and give the invitations of Infinite Mercy, there are many who will say, “Ah, then, I can turn to God just when I like, and He is very gracious, and He will forgive me! Therefore I will continue in my rebellion against Him.” And when we have been pathetic, and our soul has poured over from our eyes as we have spoken of those saved at the eleventh hour, while there have been some minds that have been led to Christ, thereby, there are some who have drawn the horrible inference that they, too, might wait until the eleventh hour and venture their eternal interests upon the mercy of God at the last! Brothers, I believe you cannot preach of God without some men making mischief of it, even of just so simple a Truth as His Mercy. But when you come to

is Sovereignty—a deep that can never be fathomed—how many have been drowned in it! I believe we ought to speak about it. I am not of those who say we should be silent upon it, but how many have been drowned in those deeps, willfully, because they have said, “Who has resisted His will? Why does He find fault? If it is to be, it is to be. If it will be, it will be.” They have even dared to make God the Author of their sin and drawn an apology for their unrighteousness from the thrice holy King of Kings! To the pure in heart, all things are so pure that we, ourselves, sink into nothing in humility and penitence before Him! But to the ungodly, even God, Himself, becomes an argument for continuance in sin!  
Now take another. It is so with God, but *it is equally is so with the Gospel*. The Doctrines of the Gospel are, to the Believer, very pure. There is not one of them but what has a practical effect upon his life. I take the Doctrine of Election. Then if He has chosen us, He has chosen us to be a peculiar people zealous of good works, and special love we feel binds us to special service. We often sing—  
***“Loved of my God, for Him again  
With love intense I burn!  
Chosen of Him before time began,  
We choose Him in return!”***  
So with the Doctrine of Redemption that He has redeemed us by His precious blood. The inference from it is, “You are not your own, you are bought with a price—therefore, glorify God in your bodies and in your spirits, which are His.” Take the sweet Doctrine of Final Perseverance, “The righteous shall hold on his way.” Now the godly man feels that he must so live as to prove that he is a godly man by persevering, and he looks for daily Grace to hold him on and to keep him to the end. He blesses that Infinite Affection that does not turn aside from him and he feels drawn to it by constant watchfulness. I might mention all the Doctrines, but every Christian will admit at once that he that has this hope in him purifies himself. But take the effect of these Truths of God upon the unbelieving and the impure. Why, you know how they will pervert Divine Election! How often men have made that a coverlet for the grossest licentiousness! As for the redeeming blood, alas, how many have made the Cross, which is the Tree of Life, to be the tree of death to them! It has become a savor of death unto death to them. We have known some whose damnation is just—who have said, “We are the children of God, and we will live as we like,” and they have, therefore, given themselves over to uncleanness. Surely of all blasphemers, they must bear the palm—they stand among the worst. But when men thus turn the Gospel into licentiousness, are we to say it is the Gospel’s fault? Are we to keep back some of these Doctrines? By no means, for, “unto the pure all things are pure.” Unto the unclean and unbelieving, these holy things will always be impure. You might as well forbid the sun to shine because when its beams fall upon a dunghill, it brings forth unwholesome odors! Yes, but that same sun, when it falls upon the flowers, makes them shed their aromatic perfume on every hand! It is doing incalculable good. It is not the sun, but the dunghill that must be blamed. And when the Truth of God is perverted, you must not blame the Truth, but blame the unclean, unbelieving heart that turns it into sin!  
Now the same thing is true *of the ordinances of the Gospel*, and dreadfully true, here, too! When you come to the ordinances of the Gospel, such, for instance, as the preaching of the Word—the true Believer, every time he hears the Word is purged by the Word. “Now you are clean, you are purged through the Word which I have spoken to you.” The Truth of God shows him his own sinfulness. He sees his face in a mirror and endeavors to remove the spots which the Word of God reveals to him. But an ungodly man hearing the Word of God, grows the worse, perhaps, not only openly, but in his heart! Oh, there are some that sit in this very place—have done so for years! I thank God they are getting to be very, very few, now. I hope there will be none such, soon. May Grace grant there may not be one! But you will notice that the very Truth of God which once made them tremble, does not now—and whereas some years ago the preaching of the Gospel often brought tears to their eyes and sent them on their knees, it does not now—and sins which they were gladly to give up at one time, and which pricked their conscience, are now indulged in without compunction, for the same Gospel which softens, hardens, as the sun, which shines on wax and melts it, shines on clay and hardens it! Even the blessed ordinance of preaching—the hearing of the Word—may make some men to become yet more and more unclean. Alas, that it should be so. But see how Baptism and the Lord’s Supper, both of them (for I cannot now stay long to discriminate), have been misused. Whereas these are, both of them, ordinances to lead men to remember precious Truths of God—the death and burial of the Lord in the one case, and the soul’s feeding in the other case, on the precious body and blood of Jesus, and rejoicing in Him as blessed spiritual meat, how is it that we have been told (and it is preached from thousands of pulpits in England) that Baptism washes away sin and absolutely regenerates the soul? And though I have been chided for putting too strong a sense upon the word, “regenerate,” I have lived to see a stronger sense put upon it by some than I put upon it until it has become with some, simply a superstitious ordinance, and nothing more, full of mischief. And as to the Lord’s Supper, they tell us that there is in it a power to forgive all sin, even the most heinous. And this is not spoken now and then, accidentally—a slip of tongue—but is printed and scattered all over England as a true Doctrine of God!  
Well, these men’s minds are impure and, therefore, even those two precious ordinances are turned into superstition and into impurity—and I suppose it always will be so. But if the mind becomes pure, and becomes believing in Christ, it will never exalt mere bread and wine into the place of Deity, and water into the place of the Divine Spirit, Himself. God save us from having our minds rendered so impure as to fall into superstition by simple ordinances which are full of instruction! I do not doubt that there are many who are now depending for eternal life upon having gone to the “Sacrament of the Mass,” and are expecting to enter Heaven because they have reposed their confidence in a man who was arrogant enough to call himself the exclusive priest of God! God save us from having our understanding defiled, for it must be before it can submit to the belief of such superstition as this!  
But I must pass on. I have often noticed how *the Church of God, itself,* becomes to pure minds one thing, and to impure minds another. You shall find a man a member of a Christian Church who will tell you that wherever he has gone in that Church he has met with Brothers and Sisters full of love, full of earnestness—and he has been delighted to associate with them. I have been at the bedside of a venerable Brother recently, whom nearly all of you know, and if you were to hear his opinion of the Church of which he is a member, he would speak of it in the most glowing terms. The reason is that he sees in his fellow Christians very much what there is in himself. The man who is loving comes to love the Brethren! The man who is chaste, pure and zealous, attributes to others a like spirit and believes they are pure, and they are to him so assuredly. But you shall meet with another, a carnal, worldly-minded professor, and he says, “Oh, there’s no love!” He has not any. “There’s no zeal” he says. There certainly would not be if all were like he! “Ah,” he says, “I don’t see any of the Apostolic living that I read of in the Scriptures.” There is no Apostolic living in his own case! He didn’t see it because he hasn’t got it! To use an old illustration—if you send a buzzard flying over a tract of country, what will it see? Why, it will be looking out for all the dead carcasses and it will be sure to be able to tell you how much carrion there is about! But if you send a dove over that same space, it won’t have an eye for it, for it has no taste for it—but it will tell you of everything that is fair and beautiful, like itself! So is it with the pure mind in the midst of God’s people—it sees purity! It cannot shut its eyes to impurity, but it rejoices in the Truth and speaks of it, and speaks it as well as it can at all times with a charity that thinks no evil. But with the impure and the unbelieving, every place is defiled—and the man tars everything with the filth that is in his own bucket!  
Now*the events of Providence*—I will not detain you much longer, but let me observe that all the events of Providence are, to some men, one thing, and to some men another! Is a man with a pure mind suddenly lifted up in the world in wealth? He uses that for the poor of the Church of Christ. If he is impure, then that wealth allows him to gratify his impure taste and he sinks deeper in impurity! Does a pure man come to poverty? Then his poverty drives him nearer to God and he seeks to make himself useful among the poorer Brethren where he dwells. But if he is impure, he assumes the most groveling tastes and becomes the more wicked! Is a man a Christian? Then health is a delight to him—to consecrate it all to his Lord. Has a sinner health—then that health shall enable him to go farther into sin, or, at any rate, to indulge himself the more, for he will not consecrate it to his God. Anything that happens may be used two ways—and the pure shall see in every event something which he can turn to God’s Glory! And the impure can see in everything a means by which he may indulge himself.  
Now it is so if you mingle with the sons of men and see their sins. We are grieved at them. But when the Christian sees sin, he thinks, “This is what I would be but for the Grace of God.” So he praises God for His Grace. “This is what I shall be,” he says, “if I am not watchful.” So he becomes the more watchful and out of the very sin of his fellow men, he extracts some reasons for greater holiness and grows more pure because he observes the loathsomeness of impurity and turns from it the more earnestly. But the ungodly man is carried away by the evil example—his conscience is more deadened by it—and he becomes bolder in sin in consequence of what he sees in others! I am sure you will have observed it so, that where the good man gathers grapes, another finds nothing but poisoned apples—and where the Christian turns over this man’s depravity and finds in it a reason for greater holiness in his own person, the ungodly man only sees more excuses for himself for the past—and the greater license for himself in the future! Take another list of things, namely, the treatment of men to us. Suppose men praise us? The Christian says, “I must be watchful, for the praise of man is often inconsistent with the favor or God.” The ungodly man says, “Everybody praises me! What a silly fellow I must be!” There is a foulness of pride which comes upon him. The man who lives near to God, if he is sneered at by the sons of men, says, “It comes upon me for God’s sake. By His Grace, I will bear it.”But the other says he will not have any more of that and turns aside from a path which becomes rough, even though he knows that path to be right! How often has unjust treatment driven the ungodly man to anger, and in some cases to malice and to resolutions of revenge! To the impure an injustice makes him more impure. But see the Christian who is like his Master. Every injustice makes him cry for Grace to forgive—and when yet more injustice is heaped upon him, he forgives the more and tries to heap yet more coals of fire upon the head of his enemy by doing him the greater kindness, if by any means he may win his soul! So out of the worst of things the Christian extracts the best, while from the very best of things an unhallowed mind may extract the worst!  
Let us close—though there are many, many illustrations that might be given of this. Here you have, tonight, means afforded for judging yourselves. Do you find in God’s Book that which makes you angry with God? Do you find in the Gospel that which makes you complaisant with yourself while you are unregenerate? Do you find in Providence that which irritates you, or which seems to excuse you in sin? Then your mind is impure, for these things are with you according to what you are. “It is dark,” you say. It is your eyes that are dark—the Light of God is light and bright. “It is bitter,” you say, when we bring you the honey of the Gospel. It is not the honey that is bitter—it is your mouth—it is your mouth that is out of order. How often ought people to recollect this when they hear a true Gospel sermon! George Herbert says, “Judge not the preacher—*he is your judge*.” And very often when a man has condemned the sermon, he had far better condemn himself! He has not agreed with it? No, if he had, it would not have been true! When sometimes we have heard some man of low life railing at us, we have said, “Thank God! Supposing that wretch had praised us, we would have known there was something amiss about us! There are public papers which, if they praised a man, you would know at once that the man deserved hanging, or something near approaching to it! Their censure is the only homage they can give to that which is right. So when any soul kicks against Christ—the precious blood of Christ, the Gospel of God, the purity of God—do we condemn God because this man condemns Him? No, but God is glorified by the unrighteous nature of this man rebelling against Him! If God were other than He is, an unrighteous man might love Him, but being hated and despised, and forgotten of ungodly men, it does but prove that God is not such as they are, but infinitely superior to them! Let us judge ourselves, then, by this.  
But provided we are obliged to come to the conclusion that our minds are not pure, we need not end there, for there are means by which they may be made so! Glory be to God, if my mind and conscience are defiled, they need not always be so. There is cleansing. I cannot effect it for myself, nor can any outward forms do it—  
***“No outward form can make me clean,  
The leprosy lies deep within”***  
But God has set forth Christ to be a Savior—and He shall save His people from their sins—from their sinfulness, too, and whoever believes in Christ Jesus, that is, trusts in Him, there is already in him the beginning of purity! God the Holy Spirit will give him more and more of the likeness of Christ, for he that believes shall be saved from sin, from indwelling sin, from all sin, from the power as well as from the guilt of it! Faith will cleanse him, applying to him the precious blood and the water which flows from the side of Christ! Faith will, by the Holy Spirit’s power, become a cleansing as well as a saving Grace! God grant it to us, and may we all be among the pure, unto whom all things shall be pure. We ask it for Christ’s sake! Amen.

—Adapted from the *C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Version 1.0, Ages Software.  
**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.** Sermon #2416 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

**÷Tit 2.10**

ADORNING THE GOSPEL

NO. 2416

**INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S DAY, JUNE 9, 1895. *DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,*  
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***“That they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things.”*** Tit 2:10***.***

I AM afraid that there are some Christians who would hardly like the best preaching that they could ever have. The best doctrine that could ever be delivered would be like that of our Lord Jesus Christ, Himself— eminently ethical, full of precepts and words of wisdom for daily life. I verily believe that if some stern doctrinalists had heard some of Christ’s sermons, they would have said that they had not the Gospel in them! He did not preach, every time He spoke, those grand doctrines which plainly show the way of salvation, but He frequently proclaimed those important precepts which show us the *fruits* of salvation and which help us to judgewhether we have been saved or not.

You will notice that it was often the same in the preaching of the Apostles. Although Paul, himself, is a master of doctrine and, in the Epistle to the Ephesians, gives us a whole system of theology in miniature—though he never shrinks from the most profound doctrine, going to the very depths of the Doctrine of Election and to the very heights with the Doctrines of Justification by Faith and the Final Preservation of the Saints— yet he is preeminently practical in his teaching and often deals with the details of ordinary life.

Exceedingly noticeable is this in his Epistle to Titus. As you know, Titus was a teacher of teachers. He had to set in order the things that were needing and to show other preachers how they were to preach. He was told to bid the aged men to “be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience.” Further, he was to instruct “the aged women, likewise, that they be in behavior as becomes holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things.” This was very close dealing with most practical matters! These aged women, in their turn, were to be instructors, “that they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the Word of God be not blasphemed. Young men, likewise, exhort to be sober minded.” You see how much of the Epistle is taken up with the affairs of ordinary life and matters of holy practice. So let our preaching be and let Christian people learn to receive joyfully such instruction! God will assuredly bless it, not only to its own great end of promoting holiness, but also as the means of convincing men of sin wherein they deviate from these blessed precepts—and thus, by conviction of sin—leading them to feel their need of a Savior and thus, incidentally, driving them to the Cross where all hopes of salvation must alone be fixed!

I feel glad that my text is so practical and I am not ashamed to preach the practical precepts of our holy faith. Yet I want you to notice how continually and how wisely Paul interweaves his practical exhortations with the doctrines of religion. He would have the bondservants to be obedient, honest and faithful towards their masters for this reason, “that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things.” Ah, you who despise doctrines, who turn upon your heels if there is a doctrinal sermon, where are you, now, when the true motive for which holiness of life is to be carried out is to be found here, “that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things”? It is the fashion, nowadays, to talk much about preaching Christ, but not His doctrines. I neither understand nor wish to understand what that expression can mean. Christ without His doctrine? The great Teacher without His teachings? The Lord without His commands? The Christ without His anointing? Jesus, the only Savior, without His precious blood of Atonement? This is Judas-like, to betray the Son of Man with a kiss, to set up a engraved image in the place of Christ, a stuffed idol from which everything is absent that is vital to the true Christ of God! Dear Friends, we love “the doctrine of God our Savior” with all our hearts! We have received it to the joy of our spirit and in it we find the mainspring of motive which leads us to love our God and to walk in obedience to His precepts.

There are two matters upon which I am going to speak as the Holy Spirit shall guide me. First, *here is a name of adornment for the Gospel*— “the doctrine of God our Savior.” And, secondly,*here is a method of adornment for the Gospel*. These poor slaves were bid to so act that they should adorn the doctrine of God their Savior in all things.

**I.**First, here is A NAME OF ADORNMENT FOR THE GOSPEL. Let us think it over for a few minutes—“the doctrine of God our Savior.”  
Dear Friends, our misery was great, otherwise we had never needed a Savior who should be called, “God our Savior.” For a little sin, or for a sin however great, which had but little of evil in its consequences, we might have been saved by some finite being! But if God, Himself, must leave His high abode and sojourn here to be our Savior, then was our ruin terrible in the extreme! It is part of the doctrine that we have learned from the Bible that man is lost and utterly undone by nature and by practice, too. And we could not fully preach “the doctrine of God our Savior” if we did not show, first, how awful is the gulf which is open before us—which none but God could fill. To proclaim aright the remedy for sin, we must declare how desperate was the disease, which none but God could heal, nor even He, except by shedding of His own blood! Surely this is a grand doctrine—that we need a Divine Savior, and that there is such a Savior provided—but that apart from Him there is no salvation!  
It is also a very precious thought to us that while our ruin is evidently great, yet it is most sure that the remedy is equally great, or even greater, for we have a Savior whose name is, “God our Savior.” He is the one door of hope for the most despairing and desponding of men, “God our Savior.” Further down in this chapter, Paul calls Him, “the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ.” He that has come from Heaven to save us is a Man and feels for us with all the sympathy of a man, but He is also God and, therefore “able to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by Him.” It is the best news that was ever published among the sons of men, that He whom we have offended has, Himself, become our Savior!  
When no eye had pitied—when, even had it pitied, there was still no arm that could have sufficed for our rescue—His eye pitied and His arm was made bare for the salvation of the sons of men! This was the Doctrine that, in Paul’s days, was whispered about everywhere, from Nero’s palace, down to those horrible holes where the slaves had to sleep at night. Afterwards, in the catacombs and in the caves of the earth, this was the story that the poor people came together to hear—that God was a Savior, that the Most High had, Himself, interposed to save the fallen and ruined sons of men! When it could be preached in the streets, it was so preached. When it might be proclaimed in the public synagogue, or in a school where philosophers gathered, or on Mars Hill at Athens, it was so preached. But when it could not be spoken in public, it was *whispered* and told privately from one to another of those who believed. Even the slaves passed on the message of hope to their fellow slaves, so that this grand Doctrine—“the doctrine of God our Savior”—was scattered abroad as the light is spread when the sun rises in the East and hastens on his course till the whole round globe is lightened by his golden rays!  
“The doctrine of God our Savior.” Once more, my dear Friends, *this Doctrine is, in itself, Divine*, for there is an idiom here by which we are made to understand that it is not only a doctrine which speaks*of* God our Savior, but it is *the* Doctrine of God our Savior! It is His breath—the Doctrine is, itself, the very breath of God! This Divine teaching, this Revelation, this doctrine of salvation by a Divine Savior, has a divinity about itself! Let us, therefore, proclaim it wherever we have the opportunity and let us not attempt to conquer the world with any other weapon but “the doctrine of God our Savior!” Let us take it as David took Goliath’s sword from Ahimelech and say, “There is none like that; give it to me.”  
I do not believe in the science of comparative religions. No! There is but one true religion, all the rest are lies! There is but one faith of God’s elect. There is “one Lord, one faith, one Baptism.” There is but one faith that comes from God! Paul once wrote the words, “another gospel,” but, directly, as if afraid somebody would catch at the expression and think there might be two gospels, he recalled the words, and said, “which is not another, but there are some that trouble you and would pervert the Gospel of Christ.” There is but *one* message of salvation and that concerns the one and only Savior—and—“there is none other name under Heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.” This will be thought by some people to be very narrow-minded talk, but we are not at all afraid of being thought narrow-minded! We are a great deal more afraid of running in the broad way with the multitude to do evil and excusing others in the doing of it! No, the Word of Christ, Himself, still stands—“He that believes on the Son has everlasting life: and he that believes not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him. For God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world, through Him might be saved. He that believes on Him is not condemned, but he that believes not is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only-begotten Son of God.”  
So, you see, this wonderful teaching of Paul’s reminds us of the greatness of our misery, of the Divine Nature of our Savior and implies that the Doctrine, itself, is of a Divine order. I think I ought, also, to say, dear Friends, that these things being so, our safety is great! Our salvation, because we have God for our Savior, is great, indeed! In his Epistle to the Hebrews, Paul asks the question which has never been answered—“How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation which, at the first, began to be spoken by the Lord and was confirmed to us by them that heard Him; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will?”  
You can never think too much of this great salvation! When you desire it, prize it as a beggar might prize gold. When you have it, grasp it as the pearl of great price! We have, indeed, a great salvation—it is salvation from spiritual death, salvation from the rule and government of Satan, as well as from the manners and customs of an ungodly world. And it is also salvation from the guilt of sin, salvation from the dread of Hell, salvation from the fear of death and, it shall ultimately be perfect salvation from the least spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing! Our salvation to the fullest will only be revealed in the day of Christ’s appearing, when the body, also, shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption, and all the surroundings of this poor sin-smitten earth—and the creation, itself— through this great salvation, shall be brought into the liberty of the glory of the children of God.  
“The doctrine of God our Savior”—the more I think of all that is meant by these words, the more it seems to be an ornament of the rarest kind for the neck of the Gospel! “The doctrine of God our Savior.” Turn the words over in your minds—see what a Gospel it is that you have received, see how great it is, see how Divine it is—prize it so as to rejoice in it day by day and so as to defend it, if necessary, with your lives! Rejoice in it so that when you come to die, it shall be the light that shall remove the darkness of the last dread hour!  
Let us make a little further enquiry into this Doctrine of God our Savior. Why is the Gospel called by this name? Well, first, because *God, our Savior, is the Author of the Doctrine, and the Author of the salvation which it brings.* It all comes from Him. It seems to be thought, nowadays, that the Gospel which we have received has been evolved from man’s inner consciousness and that there are to be further evolutions which will blot out the present as the human race keeps rising, from platform to platform, till, one of these days, it will get up—God, alone, knows where—but certainly far beyond any necessity for such a Gospel as the martyrs died for and the Apostles declared! With such views we have no sympathy, whatever, and we entertain towards such erroneous notions the most determined opposition! We believe in a Revelation from God and we believe that it is woe unto him who adds to or takes from that Revelation. We do not think the Church will have a particle of enthusiasm left in it—and it has none too much now—if ever people should get the idea that the Gospel is not a Divine Revelation, but only the product of human thought. Dear Friends, the doctrine that we believe and teach, and by which we have been saved, is, “the doctrine of God our Savior” because it came from Him—He is the Author of it.  
And next, it is “the doctrine of God our Savior” because He is the substance of it. If you take the whole Truth of the Gospel and compress it till you get the very essence of it, you will find that it is, “Jesus only.” The very substance of the Gospel is Jesus Christ, Himself—His Person, His work, His glorious offices. It is, indeed, “the doctrine of God our Savior.” Beware that you hear no doctrine but that which exalts Him! If there is any teaching which puts Him into a corner, you get into a corner as far as you can from it! If there is any teaching that does not lift Him up, how can it be blessed of the Holy Spirit, since it is the Holy Spirit’s work to reveal Christ to His people and to make Him great in their thoughts?

***“None but Jesus, none but Jesus,***

***Can do helpless sinners good”***  
and, therefore, to this Gospel we must adhere with all our hearts! It is the Doctrine of God our Savior, for He is the substance of it!

Yet again it is the Doctrine of God our Savior because *He is the object of it—it all points to Him*. If you hear a real Gospel sermon, it directs you to look to Jesus Christ. That teaching which leads you to think of the priest and to think of the church, whatever there may be about them that is good, is not “the doctrine of God our Savior.” “To Him give all the Prophets witness,” to Him the Gospel continually points and this is the preacher’s one cry, “Behold the Lamb of God, which takes away the sin of the world.”

This “doctrine of God our Savior” is simplicity, itself, and yet no man ever understood it except by the Holy Spirit’s teaching, for no man can rightly say that Jesus is the Christ but by the Holy Spirit. Simple as it is, it seems to me that it is the most wonderful thing that was ever revealed, if I think of the effect it has upon the hearts of men! When Paul began to preach it and when he wrote these words to Titus, this simple teaching was being carried all over the known world by enthusiastic spirits, some of them able to speak in strange tongues and with words of eloquence, but the great mass of them, poor people, servants, *slaves*! Yet, wherever they went, they that were scattered abroad, spread this doctrine everywhere and it burned away until the great Roman Empire simmered like a pot on the fire and, after a while, boiling over and scalding many with its scum.

The great ones of the earth, of course, ridiculed this “doctrine of God our Savior”—it was “foolishness” to them—and he that received it was thought to be an idiot—he had forsaken the gods of his fathers, so he must be a fool. Yet the doctrine still went on spreading and then they tried to put out the fire and to quench it with blood, but men bravely died for it rather than deny it! They pressed to the judgment seats, so determined to avow their faith in Christ that Roman governors had to write home to know what they were to do. The more they put the Christians to death, the more Christians there were! Further cruelties were committed—unspeakable tortures of all kinds were invented—but, for Christ’s sake, His followers endured all! They seemed to come on with an almost Omnipotent force to make a huge hecatomb of victims! They appeared to press onward through martyrdoms of a most horrible kind and all the while, this “doctrine of God our Savior” had a wonderful power among men!

And, dear Friends, you who are conversant with Church history know how often this Doctrine has broken all the bands that wicked men tried to fasten around it. I often wondered, until I understood the *supernatural* reason for it, what made the French Protestants, for instance, meet together in the desert, towards the South of France, while they were being dragooned by the king’s soldiers and while multitudes of them were being hunted to death. How was it that, in the dead of night, in lonely places, they came together to hear the Gospel? What is there about this Gospel that seems to touch the soul of man and makes him quite another creature—makes him joyous instead of sad, and makes him so mighty that he dares to defy death and Hell in defense of it? The reason is because this Doctrine cures the woe and misery of the *soul—*and brings light, comfort, happiness and hope to it! It is made by God, on purpose, to touch the heart of man and stir it to its very depths!

As for the new doctrine that many are teaching—it has not enough in it to make even a mouse enthusiastic! It has not enough in it for them to bait a mousetrap of their own—and the only way in which they can make any progress at all is by sneaking into our churches, obtaining a hearing and winning attention, and then, traitors as they are, speaking against the very Truths of God that has built our houses of prayer! They cannot build their own places of worship—there is nothing in their teaching that can make anybody generous and there is nothing in it that can make anybody glad. No, it is “the doctrine of God our Savior” that Paul insists upon, and he says to Titus, “having adorned it as well as I can with my preaching, now you take care that you and your people adorn it with your lives.”

**II.**That is to be the second part of my subject, A METHOD OF ADORNMENT FOR THE GOSPEL.  
Let us enquire, first, *who were the persons* who were to “adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things”? They were, according to our translation, “servants,” but the correct word would be serfs, or slaves. These Christian slaves were to adorn the Doctrine of God their Savior. Some of these slaves—the women slaves especially—spent much of their time in adorning their mistresses. I will not attempt to repeat the terrible stories that are told of Roman women and their cruelty to their handmaids. Certainly the poor slaves had to spend hours upon hours in the adornment of their mistresses and some of the male “swells” of the Roman Empire wasted a great deal of the time of their slaves—the men, I mean—in the adornment of themselves. So that these slaves would have a pretty good idea of what was meant by the ornamenting or adorning of the Gospel and it must have struck them as a very wonderful thing that they should be selected to adorn the Gospel!  
The word is not applied to the masters, to the princes, or to any of the great ones of the earth—but to those, who, in addition to being poor, were not even owners of themselves! Slaves in Paul’s days were simply goods and chattels, but they were regarded as goods and chattels of the very lowest kind—they were as often and as freely sold as the sheep in the market. Think of how they used to be treated, when, for instance, for making a slight mistake in waiting at table, a slave was thrown into the fishpond to be eaten alive by the fish—the thing was frequently done. The most fearful punishments were executed on them and you might have seen in Pompeii the wretched places by the doorway where the slave, who was the porter, had an iron collar and a weight about his neck, and where he slept under the stairs, as a dog might do in a kennel and, perhaps, for years never left his miserable den. Yet*these* were the kind of people who were to adorn the Gospel! Paul did not think badly of them. Everybody else did, but he set the task of adorning the Gospel by making it lovely and beautiful in the eyes of men—to even the very poorest and worst-off as to their position! Is it not wonderful to think of, and yet, such is the literal fact?  
Paul also told them *how they were to adorn the Gospel*. I do not think, for a moment, Paul believed that the practice of slavery ought to exist. He believed to the fullest extent that the great principles of Christianity would overthrow slavery anywhere and the sooner they did so, the better pleased would he be, but, for the time being, as it was the custom to have slaves, they must adorn the Doctrine of God their Savior in the position in which they were.  
Slaves in those days were constantly rebelling. At one time they rose up and, for a while, they kept all Rome in fear and alarm, for the masters thought they would all be killed by their rebellious slaves. So Paul exhorts them, first, “to be obedient unto their own masters.” Then the man’s master, however wicked he might be, would say, “Whatever has come over my slave? My orders are exactly carried out—all I could wish to have done is done, and done well. He is not an eye-servant or a mere man-pleaser, but he does his work heartily and I have heard him say that he does it out of love to one, Jesus, who is his God and Savior.” The slave was to put aside all his selfishness and, finding himself a slave, to determine that he would so serve his master that he might recommend his religion to his master!  
The slaves were also to be “well pleasing” to their masters—“to please them well in all things.” They were not to be always quarrelling, grumbling and complaining about this, and that, and the other, but to wear a contented spirit. Then the master would be sure to ask, “What can have come over my slave?” And, by the way in which he acted, the slave would be a practical missionary to his master!  
Paul added, “not answering again.” Of course, the slaves were usually sharp in their retorts to their masters. They did not care whether they lived or died and they said hard things. Paul says let the quiet patience of the Christian slaves make their masters and mistresses wonder what it is that has made such a difference in them. He also added, “not purloining.” Slaves and servants in Paul’s time were all thieves. In the writings of secular authors of that period, you constantly meet with the declaration that, “to multiply servants is to multiply thieves.” Of course the poor creatures helped themselves whenever they could—if you treat a man like a dog, should you be surprised if he acts like one? But the *Christian* slave might be trusted with untold gold! And obedience to this precept, “not purloining,” was the way in which he adorned the Doctrine of God, his Savior.  
He was also to be faithful to his master—“showing all good fidelity.” There were Christian slaves who had bad masters, who, nevertheless, were faithful to them in guarding their interests, and it was such a marvel that the rich heathen who despised the name of Christ, yet coveted to buy Christian slaves, for they found them to be the most faithful of mankind and wondered what it was that made them so! This is what Paul meant when he said that they should adorn the Doctrine of God, their Savior, in their sad and low estate, by not being degraded by it, but standing up in the grandeur of their Christian liberty, determining that they would not be the slaves of sin—and this was a wonderful adornment for the Gospel!  
You and I are not slaves! We have been saved from that degradation by this Gospel of God our Savior, for our fathers were as much slaves as these poor people were, but we are free. *What can we do to adorn the Gospel of God our Savior*? Well, first, remember that the adornment of the Gospel of God our Savior is not to be esthetic. We cannot adorn the Gospel with music, with painting and with architecture. When you stand beneath the blue sky and see how God has decked His world with many flowers beneath your feet, and all around you hear the birds singing. And when, in the still and silent night, you gaze upon the silver stars, you feel that there is nothing we can build and nothing we can make that is in the least worthy of the great God. You remember how Stephen said of the Temple at Jerusalem, “Solomon built Him an house,” and then added, “Howbeit the Most High dwells not in temples made with hands. As says the Prophet, Heaven is My throne, and earth is My footstool: what house will you build Me? says the Lord: or what is the place of My rest?” As much as to say there was nothing in all that material grandeur, for, from the very day in which Solomon built the Temple with all its splendor, religion declined and decayed throughout all Israel! You cannot “adorn the doctrine of God our Savior” with anything tangible and material—it is to be adorned in quite another way.  
Neither can you adorn the Doctrine by anything peculiar in your garb or your mode of speech, as some have tried to do. The Gospel is not any the better for a broad brim to your hat. It will not be any the worse for the color of your coat. Neither can it be adorned by any ecclesiastical addition whatever! Neither can it be adorned by the flowers of rhetoric. What grand speeches are sometimes made about the Gospel! Yet, somehow, they do not seem to fit it. The Gospel is best adorned when most unadorned! In her native beauty she is altogether unrivalled, she is then a queen—but when you deck her out, as they do who come from Rome, with meretricious garments—her true splendor is marred and hidden.  
How, then, can we ornament the Gospel? An ornament should always be suitable. Nothing is really ornamental that is not suitable to the person upon whom it is placed. Then, what is appropriate to the Gospel? Well, *holiness* suits the Gospel. Adorn it with a holy life! How pure, how clean, how sweet, how heavenly the Gospel is! Hang, then, the jewels of holiness about its neck and place them as rings on its hands. The Gospel is also to be adorned with *mercifulness*. It is all mercy, it is all love, there is no love like it—“God so loved the world.” Well, then, adorn the Gospel with the suitable jewels of mercifulness and kindness! Be full of lovingkindness to others, for you have tasted of the lovingkindness of the Lord! The Gospel is also the Gospel of happiness. It is called, “the glorious Gospel of the blessed God.” A more correct translation would be, “the happy God.” Well, then, adorn the Gospel by being happy!— ***“Why does your face, you humble souls,  
Those mournful colors wear?”***  
Adorn the Gospel by a cheerful countenance and a happy life!  
Men of business, adorn the Gospel by the strictness of your integrity. Ours is a just Gospel, for God is Just, and yet the Justifier of everyone that believes in Jesus. The Gospel makes abundant provision for justice to all men, so I pray that you may be so exact, so particular about everything, that when men speak of you, they will not be able to say that you make a profession of religion, but it has not much effect upon your life. Never let it be so said truthfully—be so strictly just that people will not need to count money after you, for in that way they will see what is the meaning of the expression, “adorning the doctrine.” A person asked me, one day, “Is not such-and-such a person Baptist?” I replied, “I do not know him.” He said, “He is a fellow who says a very long grace before his dinner and he goes to such-and-such a Chapel.” “Well,” I answered, “if he goes there, he certainly attends a Baptist Chapel.” Then he said, “He is as big a thief as there is out of prison anywhere.” I said, “I hope he is not a Baptist. At any rate, he is not a *Christian* if he is what you say, for a Christian is an honest man.” Unless we are strictly so, we do not adorn the Doctrine of God our Savior.  
Adorn the Gospel, next, by your *unselfishness*. If you are always looking to your own interests. If you have no thought but for your own personal comfort. If your religion can live and die within your own heart, you have not any that is worth having! If you would adorn the Gospel, you must love others, love them intensely and make it one objective of your lives to make other people happy, for so you will then be acting according to the spirit and genius of the Gospel, and you will be adorning the Doctrine of God our Savior in all things!  
Again, let a spirit of *quick forgiveness* be upon you. Resent no injury. Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how He said, “But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you.” Thus you will have a fine set of jewels to adorn the Doctrine of God our Savior!  
Next, *have patience under trouble*. Be not afraid of sudden fear. Be not carried away into grumbling or murmuring in the time of your poverty or pain. A patient woman, one who can bear up and bear on under all kinds of adversity, is one of the greatest ornaments of the Gospel!  
*A placid and steady calm* is also a great adornment for the Gospel. One has seen such gentleness of spirit in some Christian matrons that we have felt that they have been an ornament to the Doctrine of Jesus Christ. May we learn that holy calm and may the Spirit of God so dwell in us that in all we say, and all we do, and all we are, we may adorn the Doctrine of God our Savior in all things! May the Lord add His blessing upon this discourse, for Jesus Christ’s sake! Amen.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:**Tit 2:6-15***; Titus 3.***

Tit 2:6**.***Young men, likewise, exhort to be sober minded.*They are full of spirits, they are very sanguine, they are apt to be carried away with novelties—exhort them to have that which is thought to be a virtue of age, namely, sobriety. Let them be old when they are young that they may be young when they are old.

**7.***In all things showing yourself a pattern of good works.* Titus was, himself, a young man. He must, therefore, be a pattern to young men and, as a pastor or Evangelist, he must be a pattern to all sorts of men.

**7, 8.***In doctrine showing incorruptibility, gravity, sincerity, sound speech that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you.*It is a pity when the Truth of God suffers at the hand of its own advocate and, perhaps, the very worst wounds that Truth has received have been in the house of its friends. You must be careful, therefore, “that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you.”

**9.***Exhort servants to be obedient unto their own masters.* They were mostly slaves in those days. A sad condition of society was that in which service meant slavery, yet even slaves were “to be obedient unto their own masters.”

**9, 10.***And to please them well in all things; not answering again; not purloining.*Not practicing petty thefts, as, alas, some servants do even now—

**10.***But showing all good fidelity; that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things.*The life of the Christian, even if he is a servant, is to be an ornament of Christianity. Christ does not look for the ornament of His religion to the riches or the talents of His followers, but to their *holy lives*, “that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things.”

**11, 12.***For the Grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world.*Christians are not to run out of the world, as monks and hermits sought to do, but to live “in this present world.” Yet, while in the world, we are to be godly— that is, full of God! That kind of life which is without God is not for Christians! Those worldly desires, the pride and ambition which are common to worldly men are not to have power over us. We are to deny them and to live soberly. This word relates not only to eating and drinking, but to the general sobriety of a man’s mind—“Denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world.”

**13, 14.***Looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.* See what Christ died for? See what Christ lives for? See what we are to live for—that we should not only be a people purified, but purified unto Himself! We are not only to have good works, but we are to be *zealous* of them—we are to burn with zeal for them, for zeal is a kind of fire—it is to burn and blaze in us until we warm and enlighten others!

**15.***These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise you.*As I have already reminded you, Titus was a young man, and people are apt to despise the pastoral office when it is held by a young man. Yet they ought always to *respect* it, whether it is held by a young man or an old man. God knows best who is most fitted for the work of the ministry—and those of us who are getting old must never look with any kind of scorn or contempt upon those who are commencing their service, for we, too, were once young. You cannot measure a man’s Grace by the length of his beard, nor by the number of his years.

Tit 3:1-2**.***Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work, to speak evil of no man, to be not brawlers, but gentle, showing all meekness unto all men.*Gentleness was not reckoned a virtue among the Greeks. I do not suppose that the people in Crete had ever heard of it before Paul wrote this Epistle to Titus. Among the Romans and the Greeks, it seemed to be a virtue to stand up for your own, to be like a gamecock who is always ready to fight and will never miss a chance of fighting. But this Christian virtue of gentleness is a most amiable one and greatly adorns the Doctrine of Christ. The world has run away with this word, gentle, and now calls many a person a gentleman who has no right to the name. I wish that every gentleman were, indeed, a gentleman! It is very significant that Moses, the type of the Lord Jesus under the Law, was the meekest of men—should not Christians, therefore, excel in gentleness under this milder dispensation?

**3, 4.***For we ourselves, also, were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another. But after that the kindness and love of God, our Savior, toward man appeared.*“The philanthropy of God” would be a good translation, or rather, a sort of borrowing from the Greek itself. “After we had seen the philanthropy of God”—

**5-8.***Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Spirit; which He shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior; that being justified by His Grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life. This is a faithful saying.*It would be worthwhile for you to turn to the other places in which this expression, “This is a faithful saying,” occurs.

**8.***And these things I will that you affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men.*They are saved by *faith*—let them be careful to maintain good works. “These things are good and profitable unto men,” that is, to those who practice and observe them.

**9.***But avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the Law; for they are unprofitable and vain.*There are hundreds of questions which are thought, by some people, to be very important, but which have no practical bearing, whatever, either upon the Glory of God, or upon the holiness of man. We are not to go into these matters—let those who have time to waste take up these questions—as for us, we have not time enough for things that are unprofitable and vain.

**10, 11.***A man who is an heretic, after the first and second admonition, reject; knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sins, being condemned of himself.* When it comes to unbelief of fundamental and vital doctrines, we who are like Titus, set in office over a Church, must deal with such deadly evils with a strong hand.

**12, 13.***When I shall send Artemas unto you, or Tychicus, be diligent to come unto me to Nicopolis: for I have determined there to winter. Bring Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their journey diligently, that nothing be wanting unto them.* Paul had already told Titus to bid the saints in Crete to abound in good works. Now he is commanded to take care of certain traveling Christians and to speed them on their way. It was the custom in olden times, when traveling was very different from what it is now, when the Christians passed from one town to another, to find the Church and to be entertained and speeded on their journey by their fellow Believers. Thus they kept up a practical fellowship of love to all the saints.

**14, 15.***And let our people, also, learn to maintain good works for necessary uses, that they be not unfruitful. All that are with me salute you. Greet them that love us in the faith. Grace be with you all. Amen.*May that final benediction drop like the dew upon this whole company! “Grace be with you all. Amen.”

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**÷Tit 2.11**

THE TWO APPEARINGS AND THE DISCIPLINE OF GRACE

NO. 1894

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, APRIL 4, 1886, *BY C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“For the Grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people,  
zealous of good works.”***Tit 2:11-14***.***

UPON reading this text, one sees at a glance that Paul believed in a Divine Savior. He did not preach a Savior who was a mere man. He believed the Lord Jesus Christ to be truly Man, but he also believed Him to be God over all and he, therefore, uses the striking words, “the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ.” There is no appearing of God the Father—there is no such expression in Scripture! The appearing is the appearing of that second Person of the blessed Trinity in unity who has already once appeared and who will appear a second time without a sin offering unto salvation in the latter days. Paul believed in Jesus as “the great God and our Savior.” It was his high delight to extol the Lord who once was crucified in weakness. He calls Him, here, “the great God,” thus specially dwelling upon His power, dominion and Glory. And this is the more remarkable because he immediately goes on to say, “who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity.” He that gave Himself. He that surrendered life, itself, upon the accursed tree. He that was stripped of all honor and Glory and entered into the utmost depths of humiliation was, assuredly, the great God notwithstanding all! O Brothers, if you take away the Deity of Christ, what in the Gospel is left that is worth preaching? None but the great God is equal to the work of being our Savior!

We learn, also, at first sight, that Paul believed in a great redemption. “Who gave Himself for us that He might redeem us from all iniquity.” That word, “redemption,” sounds in my ears like a silver bell! We are ransomed, purchased back from slavery and this at an immeasurable price—not merely by the *obedience* of Christ, nor the*suffering* of Christ, nor even the *death* of Christ, but by Christ’s giving *Himself* for us. All that there is in the great God and Savior was paid down that He might “redeem us from all iniquity.” The splendor of the Gospel lies in the redeeming Sacrifice of the Son of God and we shall never fail to put this to the front in our preaching! It is the gem of all the Gospel gems! As the moon is among the stars, so is this great doctrine among all the lesser lights which God has kindled to make glad the night of fallen man! Paul never hesitates—he has a Divine Savior and a Divine redemption—and he preaches these with unwavering confidence. Oh that all preachers were like Paul!

It is also clear that Paul looked upon the appearing of the Savior as a Redeemer from all iniquity as a display of the Grace of God. He says, “The Grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men.” In the Person of Christ, the Grace of God is revealed, as when the sun rises and makes glad all lands. It is not a *private* vision of God to a favored Prophet on the lone mountain’s brow, but it is an open declaration of the Grace of God to every creature under Heaven—a display of the Grace of God to all eyes that are open to behold it! When the Lord Jesus Christ came to Bethlehem and when He closed a perfect life by death upon Calvary, He manifested the Grace of God more gloriously than has been done by creation or Providence. This is the clearest Revelation of the everlasting mercy of the living God! In the Redeemer we behold the unveiling of the Father’s face. What if I say the laying bare of the Divine heart? To repeat the figure of the text, this is the dayspring from on high which has visited us. This is the Sun which has risen with healing in His wings. The Grace of God has conspicuously shone forth and made itself visible to men of every rank in the Person and work of the Lord Jesus. This was not given us because of anything deserved on our part—it is a manifestation of free, rich, undeserved Grace and of that Grace in its fullness! The Grace of God has been made manifest to the entire universe in the appearing of Jesus Christ our Lord!

The grand objective of the manifestation of Divine Grace in Christ Jesus is to deliver men from the dominion of evil. The world in Paul’s day was sunk in immorality, debauchery, ungodliness, bloodshed and cruelty of every kind. I have not time, this morning, to give you, even, an outline of the Roman world when Paul wrote this letter to Titus. We are bad enough, now, but the outward manners and customs of that period were simply horrible! The spread of the Gospel has worked a change for the better. In the Apostle’s days the favorite spectacles for holiday entertainment were the slaughter of men—and such was the general depravity, that vices which we hardly dare to mention were defended and gloried in. In the midnight of the world’s history, our Lord appeared to put away sin. The Lord Jesus Christ, who is the manifestation of the Divine Grace to men, came into the world to put an end to the unutterable tyranny of evil. His work and teaching are meant to lift up mankind at large, but also to redeem His people from all iniquity and to sanctify them to Himself as His peculiar heritage.

Paul looks upon recovery from sin as being a wonderful proof of Divine Grace. He does not talk about a kind of Grace that would leave men in sin and yet save them from its punishment. No, his salvation is*salvation from sin*. He does not talk about a Free Grace which winks at iniquity and makes nothing of transgression, but of a greater Grace by far—a Grace which denounces the iniquity and condemns the transgression—and then delivers the victim of it from the habit which has brought him into bondage. He declares that the Grace of God has shone upon the world, in the work of Jesus, in order that the darkness of its sin and ignorance may disappear and the brightness of holiness, righteousness and peace may rule the day. God send us to see these blessed results in every part of the world! God make us to see them in ourselves! May we feel that the Grace of God has appeared to us individually! Our Apostle would have Titus know that this Grace was intended for all ranks of men—for the Cretans who were “always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons”—and even for the most despised bond slaves who, under the Roman empire were treated worse than dogs. To each one of us, whether rich or poor, prominent or obscure, the Gospel has come and its design is that we may be delivered, by it, from all ungodliness and worldly lusts.

This being the run of the text, I ask you to come closer to it, while I try to show how the Apostle stimulates us to holiness and urges us to overcome all evil. Firstly he describes *our position.* Secondly, he describes *our instruction.* And, thirdly, he mentions *our encouragements*. May the good Spirit bless our meditations at this hour!

**I.**First of all, the Apostle in this text describes OUR POSITION. The people of God stand between two appearances. In the 11th verse he tells us, “The Grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men.” And then he says, in the 13th verse, “Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ.” We live in an age which is an interval between two appearings of the Lord from Heaven. Believers in Jesus are shut off from the old economy by the first coming of our Lord. The times of man’s ignorance God, winked at, but now He commands all men, everywhere, to repent. We are divided from the past by a wall of light upon whose forefront we read the words, Bethlehem, Gethsemane and Calvary. We date from the birth of the Virgin’s Son—we begin with Anno Domini. All the rest of time is before Christ and is marked off from the Christian era. Bethlehem’s manger is our beginning. The chief landmark in all time to us is the wondrous life of Him who is the Light of the world! We look to the appearing of the Grace of God in the form of the lowly One of Nazareth, for our trust is there. We confide in Him who was made flesh and dwelt among us, so that men beheld His Glory, the Glory as of the Only Begotten of the Father, full of Grace and Truth. The dense darkness of the heathen ages begins to be broken when we reach the first appearing—and the dawn of a glorious day begins!

Brothers and Sisters, we look forward to a second appearing! Our outlook for the close of this present era is another appearing—an appearing of Glory rather than of Grace. After our Master rose from the brow of Olivet, His disciples remained for a while in mute astonishment. But soon an angelic messenger reminded them of prophecy and promise by saying, “You men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into Heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into Heaven, shall so come in like manner as you have seen Him go into Heaven.” We believe that our Lord, in the fullness of time, will descend from Heaven with a shout, with the trumpet of the archangel and the voice of God—

***“The Lord shall come! The earth shall quake! The mountains to their center shake  
And, withering from the vault of night,  
The stars shall pale their feeble light.”***

This is the terminus of the present age. We look from Anno Domini, in which He came the first time, to that greater Anno Domini, or year of our Lord, in which He shall come a second time, in all the splendor of His power, to reign in righteousness and break the evil powers as with a rod of iron!

See, then, where we are—we are compassed about, behind and before— with the appearings of our Lord. Behind us is our trust. Before us is our hope. Behind us is the Son of God in humiliation. Before us is the great God, our Savior, in His Glory. To use an ecclesiastical term, we stand between two Epiphanies—the first is the manifestation of the Son of God in human flesh in dishonor and weakness. The second is the manifestation of the same Son of God in all His power and Glory! In what a position, then, do the saints stand! They have an era all to themselves which begins and ends with the Lord’s appearing!

Our position is further described in the text, if you look at it, as being *in this present world, or age*. We are living in the age which lies between the two blazing beacons of the Divine appearings and we are called to hasten from one to the other. The sacramental host of God’s elect is marching on from the one appearing to the other with hasty feet. We have everything to hope for in the *last* appearing, as we have everything to trust to in the *first* appearing—and we have now to wait with patient hope throughout that weary interval which intervenes! Paul calls it, “this present world.” This marks its fleeting nature. It is present, but it is scarcely future, for the Lord may come so soon and thus end it all. It is present, now, but it will not be present long. It is but a little time and He who will come shall come and will not tarry. Now it is this “present world.” Oh, how present it is! How sadly it surrounds us!

Yet, by faith, we count these present things to be unsubstantial as a dream and we look to the things which are not seen and not present, as being real and eternal! We pass through this world as men on pilgrimage. We traverse an enemy’s country. Going from one manifestation to another, we are as birds migrating on the wing from one region to another—there is no rest for us by the way. We are to keep ourselves as loose as we can from this country through which we make our pilgrimage, for we are strangers and foreigners and here we have no continuing city. We hurry through this Vanity Fair—before us lies the Celestial City and the coming of the Lord who is the King thereof! As voyagers cross the Atlantic and so pass from shore to shore, so do we speed over the waves of this everchanging world to the Glory Land of the bright appearing of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

Already I have given to you, in this description of our position, the very best argument for a holy life. If it is so, my Brothers and Sisters, that you are not of the world, even as Jesus is not of the world. If this is so, that before you blazes the supernatural splendor of the Second Advent and behind you burns the everlasting light of the Redeemer’s first appearing, what manner of people ought you to be? If, indeed, you are but journeying through this present world, suffer not your hearts to be defiled with its sins! Learn not the manner of speech of these aliens through whose country you are passing! Is it not written, “The people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations”? “Come you out from among them and be you separate, touch not the unclean thing,” for the Lord has said, “I will be a Father unto you and you shall be My sons and daughters.”

They that lived before the coming of Christ had responsibilities, but not such as those which rest upon you who have seen the face of God in Jesus Christ and who expect to see that face again! You live in light which renders their brightest knowledge a comparative darkness! Walk as children of Light. You stand between two mornings between which there is no evening. The Glory of the Lord has risen upon you, once, in the Incarnation and Atonement of your Lord—that Light is shining more and more— and soon there will come the perfect day which shall be ushered in by the Second Advent. The sun shall no more go down, but it shall unveil itself and shed an indescribable splendor upon all hearts that look for it!

“Put on, therefore, the armor of light.” What a grand expression! Helmet of light, breastplate of light, shoes of light—everything of light! What a knight must he be who is clad, not in steel, but in light! Light which shall flash confusion on his foes! There ought to be a holy light about you, O Believer in Jesus, for there is the appearing of Grace behind you and the appearing of Glory before you! Two manifestations of God shine upon you. Like a wall of fire, the Lord’s appearings are round about you—there ought to be a special Glory of holiness in the midst. “Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in Heaven.” That is the position of the righteous according to my text—and it furnishes a loud call to holiness.

**II.**Secondly, I have to call your attention to THE INSTRUCTION which is given to us by the Grace of God which has appeared unto all men. Our translation runs thus—“The Grace of God has appeared to all men, teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world.” A better translation would be, “The Grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, disciplining us in order that we may deny ungodliness and worldly lusts.” Those of you who know a little Greek will note that the word which, in our version, is rendered, “teaching,” is a scholastic term and has to do with the education of children—not merely the teaching, but the training and bringing of them up. The Grace of God has come to be a schoolmaster to us, to teach us, to train us, to prepare us for a more developed state. Christ has manifested in His own Person that wonderful Grace of God which is to deal with us as with sons, to educate us unto holiness and so to the full possession of our heavenly heritage. We are the many sons who are to be brought to Glory by the discipline of Grace.

So then, first of all, *Grace has a discipline*. We generally think of law when we talk about schoolmasters and discipline, but Grace, itself, has a discipline and a wonderful training power, too. The manifestation of Grace is preparing us for the manifestation of Glory. What the Law could not do, Grace is doing. The free favor of God instills new principles, suggests new thoughts and, by inspiring us with gratitude, creates in us love to God and hatred of that which is opposed to God. Happy are they who go to the school of the Grace of God! This Grace of God entering into us shows us what was evil even more clearly than the Commandments do. We receive a vital, testing principle within whereby we discern between good and evil. The Grace of God provides us with instruction, but also with chastisement, as it is written, “As many as I love I rebuke and chasten.” As soon as we come under the conscious enjoyment of the Free Grace of God, we find it to be a holy rule, a fatherly government, a heavenly training. We find not self-indulgence, much less licentiousness, but, on the contrary, the Grace of God both restrains and constrains us—it makes us free to holiness and delivers us from the law of sin and death by “the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus.”

Grace has its discipline and *Grace has its chosen disciples*, for you cannot help noticing that while the 11th verse says that, “the Grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men,” yet it is clear that this Grace of God has not exercised its holy *discipline* upon all men and, therefore, the text changes its, “all men,” into, “us.” Usually in Scripture, when you get a generality, you soon find a particularity near it. The text has it, “teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously and godly, in this present world.” Thus you see that Grace has its *own disciples*. Are you a disciple of the Grace of God? Did you ever come and submit yourself to it? Have you learned to spell that word, “faith”? Have you childlike trust in Jesus? Have you learned to wash in the laver of Atonement? Have you learned those holy exercises which are taught by the Grace of God? Can you say that your salvation is of Grace? Do you know the meaning of that text, “By Grace are you saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God”? If so, then you are His disciples and the Grace of God which has appeared so conspicuously has come to discipline you!

As the disciples of Grace, endeavor to adorn its doctrine. According to the previous verses, even a slave might do this. He might be an ornament to the Grace of God. Let Grace have such an effect upon your life and character that all may exclaim, “Look what Grace can do! Look how the Grace of God produces holiness in Believers!” All along I wish to be driving at the point which the Apostle is aiming at—that we are to be holy—holy because Grace exercises a purifying discipline and because we are the disciples of that Grace.

*The discipline of Grace, according to the Apostle, has three results— denying, living, looking*. You see the three words before you. The first is, “denying.” When a young man comes to our College, he usually has much to unlearn. If his education has been neglected, a sort of instinctive ignorance covers his mind with briars and brambles. If he has gone to some faulty school where the teaching is flimsy, his tutor has, first of all, to fetch out of him what he has been badly taught. The most difficult part of the training of young men is not to put the right thing *into* them, but to get the wrong thing *out* of them! A man proposes to teach a language in six months and in the end, a great thing is done if one of his pupils is able to forget all his nonsense in six years! When the Holy Spirit comes into the heart, He finds that we know so much, already, of what it were well to leave unknown—we are self-conceited, we are puffed up. We have learned lessons of worldly wisdom and carnal policy—and these we need to unlearn and deny. The Holy Spirit works this denying in us by the discipline of Grace.

What have we to deny? First, we have to deny ungodliness. That is a lesson which many of you have great need to learn. Listen to working men. “Oh,” they say, “we have to work hard. We cannot think about God or religion.” This is ungodliness! The Grace of God teaches us to deny this—we come to loathe such atheism. Others are prospering in the world and they cry, “If you had as much business to look after as I have, you would have no time to think about your soul or another world. Trying to battle with the competition of the times leaves me no opportunity for prayer or Bible reading! I have enough to do with my day-book and ledger.” This also is ungodliness! The Grace of God leads us to deny this— we abhor such forgetfulness of God! A great work of the Holy Spirit is to make a man godly, to make him think of God, to make him feel that this present life is not all, but that there is a judgment to come wherein he must give an account before God. God cannot be forgotten with impunity. If we treat Him as if He were nothing and leave Him out of our calculations for life, we shall make a fatal mistake. O my Hearer, there is a God and, as surely as you live, you are accountable to Him! When the Spirit of God comes with the Grace of the Gospel, He removes our inveterate ungodliness and causes us to deny it with joyful earnestness.

We next deny “worldly lusts,” that is, the lusts of the present world or age which I described to you, just now, as coming in between the two appearings. This present age is as full of evil lusts as that in which Paul wrote concerning the Cretins. The lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh and the pride of life are yet with us. Wherever the Grace of God comes effectually, it makes the loose liver deny the desires of the flesh. It causes the man who lusted after gold to conquer his greediness. It brings the proud man away from his ambitions. It trains the idler to diligence and it sobers the wanton mind which cared only for the frivolities of life. Not only do we *leave* these lusts, but we*deny* them. We have an abhorrence of those things wherein we formerly placed our delight. Our cry is, “What have I to do any more with idols?” To the worldling, we say, “These things may belong to you, but as for us, we cannot own them. Sin shall no more have dominion over us. We are not of the world and, therefore, its ways and fashions are none of ours.” The period in which we live shall have no paramount influence over us, for our truest life is with Christ in eternity and our conversation is in Heaven. The Grace of God has made us deny the prevailing philosophies, glories, maxims and fashions of this present world. In the best sense we are nonconformists. We desire to be crucified to the world and the world to us. This was a great thing for Grace to do among the degraded sensualists of Paul’s day—and it is not a less glorious achievement in these times.

But then, Brothers and Sisters, you cannot be complete with a merely negative religion—you must have something positive. And so the next word is *living*—that “we should *live* soberly, righteously and godly, in this present world.” Observe, Brethren, that the Holy Spirit expects us to live in this present world and, therefore, we are not to exclude ourselves from it. This age is the battlefield in which the soldier of Christ is to fight. Society is the place in which Christianity is to exhibit the Graces of Christ. If it were possible for these good Sisters to retire into a large house and live secluded from the world, they would be shirking their duty rather than fulfilling it! If all the good men and true were to form a select colony and do nothing else but pray and hear sermons, they would simply be refusing to serve God in His own appointed way. No, you have to live soberly, godly, righteously *in this world*, such as it is, at present! It is of no use for you to scheme to escape from it! You are bound to breast this torrent and buffet all its waves. If the Grace of God is in you, that Grace is meant to be displayed—not in a select and secluded retreat—but in this present world. You are to shine in the darkness like a light.

This life is described in a three-fold way. You are, first, to live “ *soberly*”—that is, for yourself. “Soberly” in all your eating and your drinking and in the indulgence of all bodily appetites—that goes without saying. Drunks and gluttons, fornicators and adulterers cannot inherit the Kingdom of God! You are to live soberly in all your thinking, all your speaking, all your acting. There is to be sobriety in all your worldly pursuits. You are to have yourself well in hand. You are to be self-restrained. I know some Brothers who are not often sober. I do not accuse them of being drunk with wine, but they are *mentally* intoxicated—they have no reason, no moderation, no judgment. They are all spur and no rein. Right or wrong, they must have that which they have set their hearts upon. They never look round to take the full bearing of a matter. They never estimate calmly—but with closed eyes they rush on like bulls. Alas for these unsober people! They are not to be depended on—they are everything by turns and nothing long. The man who is disciplined by the Grace of God becomes thoughtful, considerate, self-contained and he is no longer tossed about by passion, or swayed by prejudice. There is only one insobriety into which I pray we may fall and, truth to say, that is the truest sobriety. Of this the Scripture says, “Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit.” When the Spirit of God takes full possession of us, then we are borne along by His sacred energy and are filled with a Divine enthusiasm which needs no restraint. Under all other influences we must guard ourselves against yielding too completely, that thus we may live “soberly.”

As to his fellow men, the Believer lives “ *righteously*.” I cannot understand that Christian who can do a dirty thing in business. Craft, cunning, over-reaching, misrepresentation and deceit are no instruments for the hand of godly men! I am told that my principles are too angelic for business life—that a man cannot be a match for his fellow men in trade if he is too Puritan. Others are up to tricks and he will be ruined if he cannot trick them in return! O my dear Hearers, do not talk in this way! If you mean to go the way of the devil, say so—and accept the consequences. But if you profess to be servants of God, deny all partnership with unrighteousness! Dishonesty and falsehood are the opposites of godliness! A Christian man may be poor, but he must live righteously—he may lack sharpness, but he must*not* lack integrity! A Christian profession without uprightness is a lie! Grace must discipline us to righteous living.

Towards God we are told in the text that we are to be *godly*. Every man who has the Grace of God in him, indeed, and of a truth, will think much of God and will seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness. God will enter into all his calculations. God’s Presence will be his joy; God’s strength will be his confidence; God’s Providence will be his inheritance; God’s Glory will be the chief end of his being; God’s Law the guide of his conversation! Now, if the Grace of God, which has appeared so plainly to all men, has really come with its sacred discipline upon us, it is teaching us to live in this three-fold manner.

Once more, there is *looking*, as well as living. One work of the Grace of God is to cause us to be “looking for that blessed hope of the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ.” What is that “blessed hope”? Why, first, that when He comes we shall rise from the dead, if we have fallen asleep, and that if we are alive and remain, we shall be changed at His appearing! Our hope is that we shall be approved of Him and shall hear Him say, “Well done, good and faithful servant.” This hope is not of debt, but of Grace! Though our Lord will give us a reward, it will not be according to the Law of Works. We expect to be like Jesus when we shall see Him as He is. When Jesus shines forth as the sun, “then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the Kingdom of our Father.” Our gain by godliness cannot be counted down into the palm of our hand. It lies in the glorious future and yet, to faith, it is so near that at this moment I almost hear the chariot of the Coming One! The Lord comes and in the coming of the Lord lies the great hope of the Believer—his great stimulus to overcome evil—his incentive to perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord! Oh to be found blameless in the day of the manifestation of our Lord! God grant us this! Do you not see, Brothers and Sisters, how the discipline of the Doctrine of Grace runs towards the separating of us from sin and the making us to live unto God?

**III.**Lastly, and briefly, the text sets forth certain of OUR ENCOURAGEMENTS. I will only briefly hint at them.  
In this great battle for right, truth and holiness, what could we do, my Brothers and Sisters, if we were left alone? But our first encouragement is that Grace has come to our rescue, for in the day when the Lord Jesus Christ appeared among men, He brought for us the Grace of God to help us to overcome all iniquity. He that struggles, now, against inbred sin has the Holy Spirit within him to help him. He that goes forth to fight against evil in other men by preaching the Gospel has that same Holy Spirit going with the Truth of God to make it like a fire and like a hammer. I would ground my weapons and retreat from a fight so hopeless were it not that the Lord of Hosts is with us, the God of Jacob is our refuge! The Grace of God that brings salvation from sin has flashed forth conspicuously like the lightning which is seen from one part of the Heaven to the other—and our victory over darkness is insured. However hard the conflict with evil, it is not desperate. We may hope on and hope always!  
A certain warrior was found in prayer and when his king sneered, he answered that he was pleading with his majesty’s august ally. I question whether God is the ally of anybody when he goes forth with gun and sword, but in using those weapons which are “not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds,” we may truly reckon upon our august Ally! Speak the Truth of God, man, for God speaks with you! Work for God, woman, for God works in you to will and to do of His own good pleasure! The appearance of the Grace of God in the Person of Christ is encouragement enough to those who are under the most difficult circumstances and have to contend for righteousness against the deadliest odds. Grace has appeared—therefore let us be of good courage!  
A second encouragement is that *another appearing is coming*. He who bowed His head in weakness and died in the moment of victory, is coming in all the Glory of His endless life! Do not question it, the world is not going to darken into an eternal night—the morning comes as well as the night and though sin and corruption abound, and the love of many waxes cold—these are but the tokens of His near advent who said that it would be so before His appearing! The right with the might and the might with the right shall be! As surely as God lives, it shall be so. We are not fighting a losing battle. The Lord must triumph. Oh, if His suffering life and cruel death had been the only appearing, we might have feared. But it is not—it is but the first—and the prefatory part of His manifestation. He comes! He comes! None can hinder His coming! Every moment brings Him nearer! Nothing can delay His Glory! When the hour shall strike, He shall appear in the majesty of God to put an end to the dominion of sin and bring in endless peace! Satan shall shortly be bruised under our feet—therefore comfort one another with these words and then prepare for further battle! Sharpen your swords and be ready for close fighting! Trust in God and keep your powder dry! This must always be our war cry, “He must reign.” We are looking for the appearing of the great God and Savior Jesus Christ!  
Another encouragement is that *we are serving a glorious Master*. The Christ whom we follow is not a dead Prophet like Mohamed. Truly, we preach Christ Crucified, but we also believe in Christ risen from the dead, in Christ gone up on high, in Christ soon to come a second time! He lives and He lives as the great God and our Savior. If, indeed, you are soldiers of such a Captain, throw fear to the winds! Can you be cowards when the Lord of Hosts leads you? Dare you tremble when at your head is The Wonderful, The Counselor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace? The trumpet is already at the lip of the archangel—who will not play the man? The great drum which makes the universe to throb, summons you to action—  
***“Stand up, stand up for Jesus,  
You soldiers of the Cross!  
Lift high His royal banner,  
It must not suffer loss.”***  
His Cross is the old Cross, still, and none can overthrow it. Hallelujah, hallelujah to the name of Jesus!  
Then come the tender thoughts with which I finish, the memories of *what the Lord has done for us* to make us holy—“Who gave Himself for us.” Special redemption, redemption with a wondrous price—“who gave Himself for us.” Put away that trumpet and that drum! Take down the harp and gently touch its sweetest strings! Tell how the Lord Jesus loved us and gave Himself for us. O Sirs, if nothing else can touch our hearts, this must—“You are not your own, you are bought with a price.”  
And He gave Himself for us with these two objectives—first, redemption, that He might redeem us from all iniquity. That He might break the bonds of sin asunder and cast the cords of depravity far from us. He died—forget not that—died that your sins might die! He died that every lust might be dragged into captivity at His chariot wheels. He gave Himself for you that you might give yourselves for Him!  
Again, He died that He might purify us—purify us unto Himself. How clean we must be if we are to be clean unto Him. The Holy Jesus will only commune with those whom He has purified after the manner of His own Nature—purified unto Himself. He has purified us to be wholly His. No human hand may use the golden cup, no human incense may burn in the consecrated censer. We are purified unto Himself, as the Hebrew would put it, to be His *segullah—*His peculiar possession. The translation, “peculiar people,” is unfortunate, because, “peculiar,” has come to mean odd, strange, singular. The passage really means that Believers are Christ’s own people, His choice and select portion. Saints are Christ’s crown jewels, His box of diamonds—His very, very, very own! He carries His people as lambs in His bosom. He engraves their names on His heart.  
They are the inheritance to which He is the heir and He values them more than all the universe! He would lose everything sooner than lose one of them! He desires that you who are being disciplined by His Grace should know that you are altogether His. You are Christ’s men. You are each one to feel, “I do not belong to the world. I do not belong to myself. I belong only to Christ. I am set aside by Him, for Himself, only, and His I will be.” The silver and the gold are His and the cattle upon a thousand hills are His—but He makes small account of them—“the Lord’s portion is His people.”  
The Apostle finishes up by saying that we are to be a people “zealous of good works.” Would to God that all Christian men and women were disciplined by Divine Grace till they became zealous for good works! In holiness, zeal is sobriety. We are not only to approve of good works and speak for good works, but we are to be red-hot for them! We are to be on fire for everything that is right and true. We may not be content to be quiet and inoffensive, but we are to be zealous of good works. Oh that my Lord’s Grace would set us on fire in this way! There is plenty of *fuel* in the Church—what is needed is *fire*! A great many very respectable people are, in their sleepy way, doing as little as they can for any good cause. This will never do. We must wake up! Oh the quantity of ambulance work that Christ’s soldiers have to do! One half of Christ’s army has to carry the other half. Oh that our Brothers and Sisters could get off the sick-list!  
Oh that all of us were ardent, fervent, vigorous, zealous! Come, Holy Spirit, and quicken us! We may not go about to get this by our own efforts and energies, but God will work it by His Grace. Grace given us in Christ is the fountainhead of all holy impulse. O heavenly Grace, come like a flood at this time and bear us right away! Oh that those of you who have never felt the Grace of God may be enabled to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as to His first appearing! Then, trusting in His death upon the Cross, you will learn to look for His second coming upon the Throne of God and you will rejoice in it! Unto His great name be Glory forever and ever! Amen.

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**÷Tit 2.14**

CHRIST’S MARVELOUS GIVING  
NO. 3513

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, MAY 25, 1916.

***DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORD’S-DAY EVENING, NOVEMBER 25, 1866.**

***“Who gave Himself for us.”***Tit 2:14***.***

WE have once more, you see, the old subject. We still have to tell the story of the love of God towards man in the Person of His Only-Begotten Son, Jesus Christ. When you come to your table, you find a variety there. Sometimes there is one dish upon it and sometimes another, but you are never at all surprised to find the bread there every time and, perhaps, we might add that there would be a deficiency if there were not salt there every time, too. So there are certain Truths of God which cannot be repeated too often, and especially is this true of this master Truth, that, “God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.” Why, this is the Bread of Life—“God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whoever believes on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” This is the salt upon the table and must never be forgotten! This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, “that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, even the chief.”

Now we shall take the text and use it thus—first of all *we shall ask it some questions.* Then *we shall surround it with a setting of facts.* Ad when we have done that, *we will endeavor to press out of it its very soul as we draw certain inferences from it*. First then—

**I.**WE WILL PUT THE TEXT INTO THE WITNESS BOX AND ASK IT A FEW QUESTIONS.  
There are only five words in the text and we will be content to let it go with four questions. “Who gave Himself for us.” The first question we ask the text is, *Who is this that is spoken of*? And the text gives the answer. It is “the great God and our Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us.” We had offended God. The dignity of Divine Justice demanded that offenses against so good and just a Law as that which God had promulgated should not be allowed to go unpunished. But the attribute of Justice is not the only one in the heart of God. God is Love, and is, therefore, full of mercy. Yet, nevertheless, He never permits one quality of His Godhead to triumph over another. He could not be too merciful, and so become unjust—He would not permit Mercy to put Justice to an eclipse. The difficulty was solved thus—God Himself stooped from His loftiness and veiled His Glory in a garb of our inferior clay. The Word—that same Word without whom was not anything made that was made—became flesh and dwelt among us! And His Apostles, His friends and His enemies beheld him—the Seed of the woman, but yet the Son of God, very God of very God, in all the majesty of Deity—and yet Man of the substance of His mother in all the weakness of our humanity, sin being the only thing which separated us from Him, He being without sin and we being full of it! It is, then, *God*, who “gave Himself for us.” It is, then, Man, who gave Himself for us! It is Jesus Christ, co-equal and co-eternal with the Father, who thought it not robbery to be equal with God—who made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Himself the form of a Servant, and was made in the likeness of sinful flesh and, being found in fashion as a Man, humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross! It is Christ Jesus, the Man, the God, “who gave Himself for us.” Now I hope we shall not make any mistakes here, for mistakes here will be fatal! We may be thought uncharitable for saying it, but we should be dishonest if we did not say it, that it is essential to be right here— ***“You cannot be right in the rest  
Unless you think rightly of Him.”***  
You dishonor Christ if you do not believe in His Deity! He will have nothing to do with you unless you accept Him as being God as well as Man. You must receive Him as being, without any diminution, completely and wholly Divine, and you must accept Him as being your Brother, as being a Man just as you are. This, this is the Person and, relying upon Him, we shall find salvation! But rejecting His Deity, He will say to us, “You know Me not, and I never knew you!”  
The text has answered the question, “Who?” And now, putting it in the witness box again, we ask it another question—“*What*? *What did He do*?” The answer is, “*He gave Himself for us*.” It was a gift. Christ’s offering of Himself for us was voluntary. He did it of His own will. He did not die because we merited that He should love us to the death—on the contrary, we merited that He should hate us! We deserved that He should cast us from His Presence as obnoxious things, for we were full of sin! We were the wicked keepers of the vineyard who devoured, for our own profit, the fruit which belonged to the King’s Son, and He is that King’s Son, whom we slew with wicked hands casting Him out of the vineyard! And He died for us who were His enemies. Remember the words of Scripture, “Scarcely for a righteous man will one die; perhaps for a good, a generous man, one might even dare to die; but God commends His love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for the ungodly.” He gave Himself! We cannot purchase the love of God! This highest expression of Divine Love, the gift of His own Son, was, in the nature of things, not for sale. What could we have offered that God should come into this world and be found in fashion as a Man and should die? Why, the works of all the angels in Heaven put together could not have deserved one pang from Christ! If forever the angels had continued their ceaseless songs and if all men had remained faithful, and could have heaped up their pile of merit to add to that of the angels—and if all the creatures that ever were, or ever shall be, could each bring in their golden heap of merit—yet could they ever deserve yon Cross? Could they deserve that the Son of God should hang, bleeding and dying, there? Impossible! It must by a gift, for it was utterly not for sale! Though all worlds were coined and minted, yet could they not have purchased a tear from the Redeemer—they were not worth it. It must be Grace! It cannot be merit! He gave Himself!  
And the gift is so thoroughly a gift that no prep of any kind was brought to bear upon the Savior. There was no necessity that He should die, except the necessity of His loving us. Ah, Friends, we might have been blotted out of existence and I do not know that there would have been any lack in God’s universe if the whole race of man had disappeared! That universe is too wide and great to miss such chirping grasshoppers as we are! When one star is blotted out, it may make a little difference to our midnight sky, but to an eye that sees immensity it can make no change. Know you not that this little solar system, which we think so vast, and those distant fixed stars and yon mighty masses of interstellar dust and ash, if such they are, and yonder streaming comet, with its stupendous walk of grandeur—all these are only like a little corner in the field of God’s great works? He takes them all up as nothing and considers them, mighty as they are and beyond all*human* conception great—to be but the small dust of the balance which does not turn the scale! And if they were all gone tomorrow, there would be no more loss than as if a few grains of dust were thrown to the summer’s wind!  
But God Himself must stoop, rather than we should die! Oh, what magnificence of love! And the more so because there was no need for it. In the course of Nature, God would have been as holy and as heavenly without us as He is with us—and the pomp of yonder skies would have been as illustrious had we been dashed into the flames of Hell as it will be now! God has gained nothing, except the manifestation of a love beyond an angel’s dream, a Grace, the heights, and depths, and lengths, and breadths of which surpass all knowledge of all creatures! God only knows the love of God which is manifested in Jesus Christ. *He gave Himself!* We will leave this point, now, when it is fully understood that Christ’s dying to save sinners and giving Himself for the ungodly was a pure act of gratuitous mercy! There was nothing to compel God to give His Son and nothing to lead the Son to die, except the simple might of His love to men. He would not see us die. He had a Father’s love for us! He seemed to stand over our fallen race, as David stood over Absalom, and we were as bad as Absalom—and there David stood and said, “My son, my son! Would God I had died for you, my son, my son!” But He did more than this, for He *did* die for us! And all for love of us who were His enemies!— ***“So strange, so boundless was the love,  
Which pitied dying man—  
The Father sent His equal Son  
To give them life again.”***  
‘Twas all of love and of Grace!  
The third question is, “*What did He give*?” “Who gave *Himself* for us.” And here lies the glory of the text, that He gave not merely the crowns and royalties of Heaven, though it was much to leave these, to come and don the humble garb of a carpenter’s Son! He gave up not only the songs of seraphs, the shouts of cherubim—‘twas something to leave them to come and dwell among the groans and tears of this poor fallen world! He gave up not only the grandeur of His Father’s court—though it was much to leave that to come and live with wild beasts and men more wild than they, to fast His forty days and then to die in ignominy and shame upon the tree! No, there is little said about all this. He gave all this, it is true, but He gave Himself! Mark, Brothers and Sisters, what a richness there is here! It is not that He gave His righteousness, though that has become our dress. It is not even that He gave His blood, though that is the fount in which we wash. It is that He gave *Himself*—His Godhead and Manhood both combined. All that that word, “Christ,” means He gave to us and for us. He gave Himself! Oh, that we could dive and plunge into this unfathomed sea—Himself! Omnipotence, Omniscience, Infinity—Himself. He gave Himself—Purity, Love, Kindness, Meekness, Gentleness—that wonderful compound of all perfections, to make up one perfection— HIMSELF! You do not come to Christ’s House and say, “He gives me this House, His Church, to dwell in.” You do not come to His Table and merely say, “He gives me this Table to feast at,” but you go farther, and you take Him by faith into your arms and you say, “Who loved me, and gave *Himself* for me.” Oh, that you could get hold of that sweet word—*Himself*! It is the love of a husband to his wife, who not only gives her all that she can wish, daily food and raiment, and all the comforts that can nourish and cherish her, and make her life glad, but who gives himself to her! So does Jesus. The body and soul of Jesus, the Deity of Jesus, and all that that means, He has been pleased to give to and for His people! “Who gave Himself for us.”  
There is another question which we shall ask the text, and that is, “*For whom did Christ give Himself*?” Well, the text says, “For *us*.” There are those who say that Christ has thus given Himself for every man now living, or that ever did or shall live. We are not able to subscribe to the statement, though there is a Truth in it, that in a certain sense He is “the Savior of all men,” but then it is added, “Specially of them who believe.” At any rate, dear Hearer, let me tell you one thing that is certain. Whether Atonement may be said to be particular or general, there are none who partake in its real efficacy but certain characters—and those characters are known by certain Infallible signs. You must not say that He gave Himself for you unless these signs are manifest in you! And the first sign is that of simple faith in the Lord Jesus. If you believe in Him, that is a proof to you that He gave Himself for you! See, if He gave Himself for all men alike, then He did equally for Judas and for Peter. Care you for such love as that? He died equally for those who were then in Hell as for those who were then in Heaven? Care you for such a Doctrine as that? For my part, I desire to have a personal, peculiar, and special interest in the precious blood of Jesus—such an interest in it as shall lead me to His right hand and enable me to say, “He has washed me from my sins, in His blood.” Now I think we have no right to conclude that we shall have any benefit from the death of Christ unless we trust Him—and if we do trust Him, that trust will produce the following things—“Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity.” We shall hate sin. We shall fight against it. We shall be delivered from it—“and purify unto Himself, a peculiar people, zealous of good works.” I have no right, therefore, to conclude that I shall be a partaker of the precious blood of Jesus unless I become in my life, “zealous of good works,” My good works cannot save me, cannot even help to save me—*but they are evidences of my being saved—*and if I am *not* zealous for good works, I lack the evidence of salvation and I have no right whatever to conclude that I shall receive

one jot of benefit from Christ’s sufferings upon the Cross!  
Oh, my dear Hearer, I would to God that you could trust the Man, the God who died on Calvary! I would that you could trust Him so that you could say, “He will save me. He has saved me.” The gratitude which you would feel towards Him would inspire you with an invincible hatred against sin! You would begin to fight against every evil way! You would conform yourselves, by His Grace, to His Law and His Word, and you would become a new creature in Him! May God grant that you may yet be able to say, “Who gave Himself for me”! I have asked the text enough questions, and there I leave them. For a few minutes only I am now going to use the text another way, namely—  
**II.**PUT THE TEXT INTO A SETTING OF FACTS.  
There was a day before all days when there was no day but the Ancient of Days! A time when there was no time, but when Eternity was all! Then God, in the Eterna1 Purpose, decreed to save His people. If we may speak so of things too mysterious for us to know them, and which we can only set forth after the manner of men, God had determined that His people should be saved, but He foresaw that they would sin! It was necessary, therefore, that the penalty due to their sins should be borne by someone. They could not be saved unless a substitute were found who would bear the penalty of sin in their place. Where was such a substitute to be found? No angel offered. There was no angel, for God dwelt alone, and even if there had then been angels, they could never have dared to offer to sustain the fearful weight of human guilt! But in that solemn council chamber, when it was deliberated who should enter into bonds of suretyship to pay all the debts of the people of God, Christ came and gave Himself a Bondsman and a Surety for all that was due from them, or would be due from them, to the Judgment Seat of God! In that day, then, He “gave Himself for us.”  
But Time began, and this round world had made, in the mind of God, a few revolutions. Men said the world was getting old, but to God it was but an infant. But the fullness of time was come and suddenly, amidst the darkness of the night, there was heard sweeter singing than before had come from mortal lips, “Glory to God in the highest; on earth peace; good will to men!” What lit up the sky with unknown splendor and what had filled the air with *chorales* at the dead of night? Look, the Babe upon its mother’s breast, there in Bethlehem’s manger! “He gave Himself for us.” That same One who had given Himself a Surety has come down to earth to be a Man, and to give Himself for us. See Him! For 30 years He toiled on, amidst the drudgery of the carpenters shop! What is He doing? The Law of God needed to be fulfilled, and He “gave Himself for us,” and fulfilled the Law! But now the time comes when He is 32 or 33 years of age and the Law demands that the penalty shall be paid. Do you see Him going to meet Judas in the garden, with confident, but solemn steps? He “gave Himself for us.” He could, with a word, have driven those soldiers into Hell, but they bind Him—He “gave Himself for us.” They take Him before Pilate, Herod and Caiaphas, and they mock Him, and jeer Him, and pluck His cheeks, and whip His shoulders! How is it that He will smart at this rate? How is it that He bears so passively all the insults and indignities which they heap upon Him? He gave Himself for us! Our sins demanded smart—He bared His back and took the smart. He gave Himself for us! But do you see that dreadful procession going through the streets of Jerusalem, along the rough pavement of the Via Dolorosa? Do you see the weeping women as they mourn because of Him? How is it that He is willing to be led a captive up to the hill of Calvary? Alas, they throw Him on the ground! They drive accursed iron through His hands and feet! They hoist Him into the air! They dash the Cross into its appointed place and there He hangs—a naked spectacle of scorn and shame, derided of men, and mourned by angels! How is it that the Lord of Glory, who made all worlds, and hung out the stars like lamps, should now be bleeding and dying there? He gave Himself for us! Can you see the streaming fountains of the four wounds in His hands and feet? Can you trace His agony as it carves lines upon His brow and all down His emaciated frame? No, you cannot see the griefs of His soul. No spirit can behold them. They were too terrible for you to know them. It seemed as though all Hell were emptied into the bosom of the Son of God, and as though all the miseries of all the ages were made to meet upon Him, till He bore—  
***“All that Incarnate God, could bear,  
With strength enough, but none to spare.”***Now why is all this, but that He gave Himself for us till His head hung down in death? And His arms, in chill, cold death, hung down by His side—and they buried the lifeless Victor in the tomb of Joseph of Arimethea? He gave Himself for us!  
What more now remains? He lives again! On the third day He comes from the tomb and even then He still gave Himself for us! Oh, yes, Beloved, He has gone up on high but He still gives Himself for us, for up there He is constantly engaged in pleading the sinner’s cause! Up yonder, amidst the glories of Heaven, He has not forgotten us poor sinners who are here below, but He spreads His hands and pleads before His Father’s Throne and wins for us unnumbered blessings, for He gave Himself for us!  
And I have been thinking whether I might not use the text in another way. Christ’s servants needed a subject upon which to preach, and so He “gave Himself for *us*,” to be the constant topic of our ministry! Christ’s servants needed a sweet Companion to be with them in their troubles, and He gave Himself for us. Christ’s people need comfort—they need spiritual food and drink, and so He gave Himself for us—His flesh to be our spiritual meat, and His blood to be our spiritual drink. And we expect, soon, to go Home to the land of the hereafter, to the realms of the blessed, and what is to be our Heaven? Why, our Heaven will be Christ, Himself, for He gave Himself for us! Oh, He is all that we need, all that we wish for! We cannot desire anything greater and better than to be with Christ and to have Christ, to feed upon Christ, to lie in Christ’s bosom, to know the kisses of His mouth, to look at the gleaming of His loving eyes, to hear His loving words, to feel Him press us to His heart, and tell us that He has loved us from before the foundation of the world—and given Himself for us.  
I think we have put the text now into a setting of certain facts. Do not forget them, but let them be your joy! And now the last thing we have to do is to—  
**III.**TURN THE TEXT TO PRACTICAL ACCOUNT BY DRAWING FROM IT A FEW INFERENCES.  
The first inference I draw is this—*that He who gave Himself for His people will not deny them anything*. This is a sweet encouragement to you who practice the art of prayer. You know how Paul puts it, “He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not, with Him, also freely give us all things?” Christ is All. If Christ gives Himself to you, He will give you your bread and your water, and He will give you a house to dwell in. If He gives you Himself, He will not let you starve on the road to Heaven. Jesus Christ does not Give us Himself and then deny us common things. Oh, child of God, go boldly to the Throne of Grace ! You have got the major—you shall certainly have the minor! You have the greater, you cannot be denied the less!  
Now I draw another inference, namely, that if Christ has already given Himself in so painful a way as I have described, since there is no need that He should suffer anymore, *we must believe that He is willing to give Himself now unto the hearts of poor sinners*. Beloved, for Christ to come to Bethlehem is a greater stoop than for Him to come into your heart! Had Christ to die upon Calvary? That is all done and He need not die again! Do you think that He who is willing to die is unwilling to apply the results of His passion? If a man leaps into the water to bring out a drowning child, after he has brought the child alive on shore, if he happens to have a piece of bread in his pocket, and the child needs it, do you think that he who rescued the child’s life will deny that child so small a thing as a piece of bread? And come, do you think that Christ died on Calvary, and yet will not come into your heart if you seek Him? Do you believe that He who died for sinners will ever reject the prayer of a sinner? If you believe that, you think harshly of Him, for His heart is very tender. He feels even a cry. You know how it is with your children—if they cry through pain, why, you would give anything for someone to come and heal them! And if you cry because your sin is painful, the Great Physician will come and heal you! Ah, Jesus Christ is much more easily moved by our cries and tears than we are by the cries of our fellow creatures. Come, poor Sinner, come and put your trust in my Master! You cannot think Him hard-hearted. If He were, why did He die? Do you think Him unkind? Then why did He bleed? You are inclined to think so harshly of Him! You are making great cuts at His heart when you think Him to be rough and ungenerous. “As I live, says the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of him that dies, but rather that he would turn unto Me and live.”  
This is the voice of the God whom you look upon as so sternly just! Did Jesus Christ, the Tender One, speak in even more plaintive tones, “Come unto Me, all you that labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest”? You working men, you laboring men, Christ bids you come to Him! “All you that labor.” And you who are unhappy, you who know you have done wrong and cannot sleep at nights because of it! You who are troubled about sin and would gladly go and hide your heads, and get— ***“Anywhere, anywhere out of the world”  
—***your Father says to you, one and all, “Run not from Me, but come to Me, My child!” Jesus, who died, says, “Flee not from Me, but come to Me, for I will accept you. I will receive you. I cast out none that come unto Me. “Sinner, Jesus never did reject a coming soul, yet, and He never will! Oh, try Him! Try Him! Now come, with your sins about you just as you are, to the bleeding, dying Savior and He will say to you, “I have blotted out your sins; go and sin no more; I have forgiven you.” May God grant you Grace to put your trust in Him “who gave Himself for us”!  
There are many other inferences which I might draw if I had time, but in this last one, we have drawn to be so applied to your hearts as to be carried out—and it will be enough. Now do not go and try to do good worlds in order to merit Heaven. Do not go and try to pray yourselves into Heaven by the efficacy of praying. Remember, He, “gave Himself for us.” The old proverb is that “there is nothing freer than a gift,” and surely this Gift of God, this Eternal Life must be free, and we must have it freely, or not at all. I sometimes see put up at some of our doctors that they receive “gratis patients.” That is the sort of patients my Master receives! He receives none but those who come gratis. He never did receive anything, yet, and He never will—except your love and your thanks after He has saved you! But you must come to Him empty-handed. Come just as you are and He will receive you, now, and you shall live to sing to the praise and the glory of His Grace who has accepted you in the Beloved and, “who gave Himself for us.” God help you to do it. Amen.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:**Psa 45:1-14***.***

It is a Psalm of instruction, and yet it is a song of love, for the science of love to Christ is the most excellent of all the sciences. To know Christ is to love Him, and we are best instructed who love Him most. The Psalm is most of all a Maschil, a Psalm of instruction, when we are taught to love. Hence the Psalm is a song of love.

**1.***My heart is overflowing with a good theme.*A good instrument—the heart refined and sanctified—a good subject, for, he says—  
**1.***I speak of the things which I have made touching the King.*Oh, it is a loyal subject concerning King Jesus! The original has it, “My heart boils up with a good matter”—bubbles up—as if each verse of this Psalm were, so to speak, the bubbling up of a boiling heart that is heated with the love of Christ! And all is concerning Him—concerning Him, the King. “I speak of the things which I have made.” That is experience—things I made on my own—and there is no matter like that. Theoretical theology is of little value. We must have it in the heart—and have it in our own.  
**1.***My tongue is the pen of a ready writer.* As though it were moved by another hand, as a pen might be. So the Psalmist feels as if his tongue were under Divine Influence and he were about to utter things his own, yet not his own—things which he has made, yet which the Spirit speaks.  
**2.***You are fairer than the children of men.*And then he sees Him. He sees Him by faith—and he speaks, not so much about him, as to Him. “You are fairer than the children of men.” Oh, it is sweet meditating upon Christ, when Christ Himself is present! It is blessed work to speak about Christ when you can speak to Christ at the same time! You are fairer than the children of men—the very fairest of them. Whatever beauty, excellence and worth there may be about mankind, You have all, and more than all that they possess!  
**2.***Grace is poured into Your lips.*It comes, therefore, pouring from them. It comes welling up from Your mouth. Every word that You speak is full of Grace and the Truth of God!  
**2.***Therefore God has blessed You forever.*The Mediator, the God-Man, Christ Jesus, is blessed of God! The blessing of the Most High rests upon Him because He is so infinitely lovely. His words are unspeakably gracious and if God blesses Him, shall not we bless Him? If God, Himself, praises Him, shall not we praise Him? Oh, let us not be silent, but where God leads the way, let us joyfully follow!  
**3.***Gird Your sword upon Your thigh, O most Mighty, with Your glory and Your majesty.*He loves the fighting Christ—Christ with the sword on His thigh. Oh, but it is sweet to see the Prince of Peace—to know that He comes to our heart bearing unspeakably precious blessings! But yet the terrible side of Christ is precious to His saints. They ask Him to gird His sword upon His thigh. An armed Christ can only be armed for the defense of His people and for the deliverance of them from captivity. Therefore, O you loveliest of the lovely, be the mightiest of the mighty too!  
**4.***And in Your majesty ride prosperously because of truth and meekness and righteousness; and Your right hand shall teach You terrible things.* There are three things that are much put to it in this world, and have a hard time of it—the *Truth of God*, which is beset with error, like the hunted hind pursued by dogs. O God, defend Your Truth! O Christ of God, lay upon Your sword to smite down error! The next thing is *meekness*. A gentle spirit has a hard time of it among the hard-hearted sons of men. They do not understand meekness. They call the meek man a milksop. They make mirth out of his gentleness. O sword of the Lord, defend the meek ones of the earth! And there is a third thing that has a hard time of it, and that is righteousness among a godless generation, that put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter—darkness for light and light for darkness! Righteousness has to run the gauntlet. But, O You who are Truth, and Meekness, and Righteousness embodied, come forth with Your sharp sword and fight on the behalf of these things! We do not ask the Lord to come into the world for the sake of pomp, pride and power. We only want His battles to be battles of love! We only ask Him to extend the Kingdom of His Truth and meekness, and righteousness.  
**5.***Your arrows are sharp in the heart of the king’s enemies: whereby the people fall under You.*Christ has far-reaching power. He not only can smite with the sword, but He has skill with the bow, and He can dart an arrow to those that are far off, that they may feel His power. Oh, that He would do so now, that those who are leagues away from Him may, to their own surprise, find a shaft come right into their heart, that they may fall under the power of Christ and cry out to Him to come and heal the wound that His own arrow has made! He will do it, for it is written, “I wound, and I heal”—and wherever Christ wounds in mercy, He heals in mercy, too!  
**6.***Your throne, O God, is forever and ever; the scepter of Your kingdom is a right scepter.*Notice that the more you look at Christ, the more there is to see. Here the songster first said, “You are fairer than the children of men.” And now he cries, “Your throne, O God, is forever and ever.” That man has not seen much of Christ who has not perceived Him to be God— God on the Throne, God on an everlasting Throne! Oh, if any of you have not yet believed in Christ as God, I pray you may do so, for you do not know the Christ of the Scriptures at all, however much you may value His moral Character as supreme in wisdom, unless you can say, “My Lord and My God,” as Thomas did when he saw His wounds. “Your throne, O God, is forever and ever. The scepter of Your kingdom is a right scepter.” There is the joy of it! Christ has absolute sovereignty, but that absolute sovereignty never goes beyond the realm of right! “The scepter of Your kingdom is a right scepter*.”*  
**7.***You love righteousness, and hate wickedness: therefore God, Your God, has anointed You with the oil of gladness above Your fellows.*Christ is no neutral. He loves righteousness and hates wickedness. He is like fire in all that He does. There is about Him a certain strength of heart, both to love and to hate—and it is for this reason that God loves Him, for God hates lukewarmness. “So then, because you are neither cold nor hot,” He says, “I will spew you out of My mouth.” But Christ is never neutral about those matters. He loves righteousness. He hates wickedness. “Therefore, God, Your God, has anointed You with the oil of gladness above Your fellows*.”*And if you want to have the oil of gladness, dear Friends, you must not be neutral! You who live betwixt and between—who are neither very good nor very bad—who are not decided worldlings, nor yet decided Christians, you never have any joy at all! You see, you do not go enough into the world to get its joy, bad and base as it is, and you do not go enough into Christ’s Kingdom to get its joy. So you get no comfort either way. Oh, to be cast into the Kingdom altogether— thrown into it as a man into the deep sea and swallowed up in it! In its lowest depths are the sweetest waters!  
**8.***All Your garments smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia, out of the ivory palaces, whereby they have made You glad.*The very clothes of Christ are precious to Believers. “Unto you that believe, He is preciousness.” But even His very garments are savored with it, whether He puts on His priestly robes, or His royal robes, or His prophetic mantle. Each one of these has in it a sweet savor of all manner of choice perfumes, myrrh, aloes and cassia. Bitter sweets all of them! Oh, in Christ there is a wonderful bitter sweetness—the pangs of death that breed our life—the pangs of sorrow that bring us joy! His down casting for our uplifting.  
**9.***Kings’ daughters were among Your honorable women: upon Your right hand did stand the queen in gold of Ophir.*No one is so honored as the one who waits upon the Savior. They are honorable women that minister to Him of their substance, that are often found in His Temple, like Anna of old. These are kings’ daughters, every one of them. And as for His Church as a whole, she is a queen! She takes no low mean rank, and her apparel is like her dignity. She is clothed in the gold of Ophir—the best of metals and the best kind of that metal—the gold of Ophir. And “strangely, my Soul, are you arrayed by the great Sacred Three.” All manner of royal apparel is put upon the Church of God and upon every member of it!  
**10.***Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline your ear; forget also your own people, and your father’s house.*We cannot know Christ thoroughly unless we leave off knowing the world. There must be a forgetting as well as a remembering. We are to forget our father’s house—come right out from it. If Christ is to love His Church, it must be a nonconforming Church in the deepest sense of that word. I mean not conformed to this world, but transformed by the renewing of its mind! Not only are we not to love the world, but we are not to think of it. “*Forget* also your own people, and your father’s house.”  
**11.***So shall the king greatly desire your beauty.*We were thinking of His beauty. But see, when once we see the beauty of Christ, Christ puts a beauty upon us! And when we learn the beauties of Christ, we soon see beauties in His Church. I find that those who rail at the Church of God have not a very high esteem of the Church’s Head. But when He is beloved, His people are beloved for His sake. Why, there is an old proverb that says, “Love me, love my dog.” Much more may we say, “Love Christ, love His Church.”

**11.***Because He is your Lord, worship Him.* This is the great business of the Church—to carry on the worship of her Lord! And I believe that, met together as we are tonight, we are met for the noblest purpose under Heaven. When the people of God come together for worship, they are doing that which angels do before the Throne of God—an occupation from which they never cease day or night!

**12.***And the daughter of Tyre shall be there with a gift.*Well, but she is a *heathen.* She is a trafficker. What does she know about the King of Israel? Ah, but when Israel acknowledges her King—when the Church of Christ delights in Christ and dotes upon Him, she shall have plenty of converts—from the least likely places!

**12.***Even the rich among the people shall entreat Your favor.* They are generally taken up with other things, but then they shall know, when once the Church is right with her King!

**13.***The king’s daughter is all glorious within: her clothing is of worked gold.*Who has worked it but her King, whose own right hand has hammered out the precious fabric, and then has taken every golden thread and, with His own bleeding hands, has worked it into a sacred vesture that shall outlast the stars! “Her clothing is of worked gold.”

**14.***She shall be brought to the King in robes of many colors; the virgins, her companions who follow her, shall be brought to You.*Happy are those pure virgin spirits that hardly dare think themselves fit to be called a part of the bride, but yet follow her and keep close to her! They are really a part of her, and they “shall be brought unto You.”

—Adapted from the *C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Version 1.0, Ages Software.  
**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.** Sermon #70 New Park Street Pulpit 1

GOOD WORKS  
NO. 70

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, MARCH 16, 1856, *BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.**

***“Zealous of good works.”***Tit 2:14***.***

We shall not be afraid of leading any of you into a legal spirit this morning through what we shall say. After our frequent exhortations to avoid anything like trusting in your works, attended as they have been, we trust, by the Holy Spirit, we are not afraid that you will so misunderstand us as to suppose that when we speak of good works, today, we shall in any way whatever wish you to imagine that they can promote your eternal salvation! We labored when here the Sabbath morning before last, to let you know the difference between the two Covenants, the Covenant of Grace and the Covenant of Works. [See Sermon #69, Volume 2—THE AL

LEGORIES OF SARAH AND HAGAR—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at

www.spurgeongems.org.] We shall beg you to remember what we then said, and if by any slips of the tongue we should say anything that should look like legality, we beg you will put the two together and wherein we shall err from the great Truth of Justification by Faith, to reject our testimony!

“Zealous of good works.” There are some who hear us preach High Doctrine and constantly declare that we are saved by Grace through faith and that not of ourselves, it is the gift of God, who, therefore, suppose that we cannot preach good works. These also suppose that we could not preach a good sermon of exhortation to Christians to live in holiness. Well, we will not say that we can preach a good sermon at all! But we will say that we will try and preach one as to that matter that shall be as good as theirs and as much lead the children of God to live in holiness as any of their exhortations can do! For their sermons are grounded on trusting in the flesh and based on threats, regulations and promises— which they hope will induce God’s children, but which are well enough for slaves—though of little use in operating on the true-born Believer! The children of God are a holy people—for this very purpose were they born and brought into the world—that they should be holy! For this they were redeemed with blood and made a peculiar people. God’s end in Election, the end of all His purposes, is not answered until they become a people zealous of good works!

Now, this morning, we shall first of all tell you *the nature of good work*s, for there are many things called “good works” that are not so at all. Secondly, we shall *trace good works to their origin*—and where good works came from. Thirdly, we shall attempt to show you *the use of good work*s. And we shall close up by endeavoring to *prove that our Doctrines, those of free, distinguishing, discriminating Grace, have a tendency to make us who believe them,*“*zealous of good works.*”

**I.**First, then, we are about to answer the question, WHAT ARE GOOD WORKS? Now, I dare say we shall offend many here when we tell them what good works are. For in our opinion, good works are the rarest things in the world! And we believe we might walk for many a mile before we should see a good work at all. We use the word, *good,* in its proper sense. There are many works which are good enough between man and man, but we shall use the word, good, in a higher sense today as regards *God*. We think we shall be able to show you that there are very few good works anywhere and that there are none out of the pale of Christ’s Church! We think, if we read Scripture rightly, that no work can be good unless it is commanded of God. How this cuts off a large portion of what men will do in order to win salvation! The Pharisee said he tithed mint, anise and cummin—could he prove that God commanded him to tithe his mint, his anise and his cummin? Perhaps not. He said he fasted so many times a week—could he prove that God told him to fast? If not, his fasting was not *obedience*. If I do a thing that I am not *commanded* to do, I do not *obey* in doing it. Vain, then, are all the pretences of men, that by mortifying their bodies, by denying their flesh, by doing this, that, or the other, they shall, therefore, win the favor of God! No work is good unless God has commanded it. A man may build a long row of almshouses—but if he builds without reference to the commandment—he has performed no good work.

Again— *nothing is a good work unless it is done with a good motive*. And there is no motive which can be said to be good but to the Glory of God. He who performs good works with a view to save himself, does not do them from a good motive because his motive is selfish. He who does them, also, to gain the esteem of his fellows and for the good of society has a laudable motive, so far as *man* is concerned, but it is, after all, an inferior motive! What end had we in view? If for the benefit of our fellow creatures, then let our fellow creatures pay us. But that has nothing to do with God! Work is not good unless a man does it with a view to God’s Glory—and no man can do it with a view to that until God has taught him what His Glory is and he has been brought into subjection to God’s Divine will! If any work is to be a good work, it has to have an eye unto the Most High and has to promote His Glory and honor in the world. And even, Beloved, when our works are done from the best motives, nothing is a good work unless it is done with faith, for, “without faith it is impossible to please God.” Like Cain, we may build the altar and lay the first fruits of the earth upon it—and it may appear an acceptable sacrifice in itself—but if destitute of the salt of *faith*, there it will lie—it will not be accepted by God, for *without faith* it is impossible to please Him! Bring me a man who all his life long has been spending his health and strength for his fellow creatures. Fetch me some public officer who has fully discharged his trust—one who has labored night and day, even to the wearing down of his constitution because he believed that England expected every man to do his duty and he wished to do it. Bring me that man, let me see all his charitable works. Let me witness the most lavish benevolence, the most profuse bounty—tell me that he has always, with a consistent motive, labored for his country. And then, if he cannot answer this question, “Do you believe in the Son of God?” I shall be bound in all honesty to tell him that he has not done a solitary good work in all his life as far as God is concerned!

Furthermore, *when we have faith in God and perform all our works with the best of motives, even then we have not so much as a solitary good work until the blood of Christ is sprinkled thereon*. Looking on all that we have ever done in our lives, can we find a solitary thing which we dare call good until Christ’s blood is put upon it? Granted there is something good about it, for the Spirit worked it in our souls. There is also much that is evil about it, for even our best exercises are so terribly spoiled, marred and ruined by the sins and imperfections that are in them, that we dare not call them good until Jesus Christ has sprinkled them with His blood and taken the stain away! Oh, how often have I thought to myself, “Now, I have labored to preach God’s Word. I have not spared, at all times, before friends or foes, and I hope I have not shunned to declare the whole Counsel of God!” And yet, Beloved, how many of those sermons have not been good works at all, because I had not an eye out to my Master’s honor at the time, or because there was not faith mixed with them but I preached in a desponding, low, miserable frame? Or, perhaps, I had some natural aim—even in the winning of souls? I have often feared, even when we rejoice to see souls converted, that we may have some evil motive, such as honoring ourselves, that the world may say, “See how many souls are brought to God by him!” And even when the Church associates in doing holy works, have you not noticed that something selfish creeps in? A wish to exalt our own Church, to glorify our own people and to make ourselves mighty? I am sure, Beloved, if you sit down and pull your good works to pieces, you will find so many bad stitches in them that they need to be all unstitched and done over again! There are so many spots and blurs about them, that you need to have them washed in the blood of Christ to make them good for anything!

And now, Beloved, do you think you have any good works? “Oh!” you say “I am afraid I have not many—no, I know I have not. But thanks be unto His love, He who accepted my person in Christ, accepts my works through Christ and He who blessed me in Him, that I should be a chosen vessel, has been pleased to accept that which He Himself poured into the vessel, ‘to the praise of the Glory of His Grace, wherein He has made me accepted in the Beloved.’”

And now, *you moralists*, you who have trusted in yourselves that you are righteous. If what I have said is true, what has become of all your holiness? You are saying, “I am a charitable man.” Granted that you are! I tell you to go and appeal to your fellow creatures and let them pay you for your charity. You say, “Yes, but I am a consistent and moral man, I am a great credit to the country. If all men would act as I do, what a good thing for this world and generation!” Of course you have served your generation—then send in your bill and let your generation pay you. I tell you, you have toiled for nothing! You have only sown the wind. And likely enough you will reap the whirlwind. God owes you nothing. You have not lived to His honor. You must honestly confess that you have not performed a single action with a desire to please Him! You have labored to please yourself—that has been the highest motive you have had. You felt that if you were good, you would go to Heaven and that if you were evil, you would be sure to go to Hell. You have been thoroughly selfish, from first to last. Reckon up your accounts and settle with yourself! God owes you nothing. You have done nothing for Him. And if you have, then consider within yourself, you have so much violated God’s commands and so frequently done all you could to injure your Maker, if it were possible, that all your accounts are easily struck off. And as for your good works, where are they? Where are they? Ah, it is a figment and a fiction, a laugh and a dream. Good works in sinners? There are no such things! Augustine well said, “Good works, as they are called, in sinners, are nothing but splendid sins.” This is true of the best worlds of the best man who is out of Christ—they are nothing but splendid sins—varnished sins! God forgive you, dear Friends, for your good works! If you are out of Christ, you have as great need to be forgiven for your good works as you have for your bad ones!

**II.**And now, secondly, WHERE DO GOOD WORKS COME FROM? It is an old maxim that nature can never rise above itself. Water, coming from the top of a hill, will rise as high as its source. But unless there is some extraordinary pressure put upon it, it will never rise higher. So of human nature. Scripture says it is exceedingly vile. We cannot expect good works out of an evil nature! Can a bitter well send forth sweet water? As poison grows not on healthful trees, with healthful fruit, so healthy fruit cannot grow on poisonous trees. We must not look for good works in an evil nature any more than we should look for the grapes of Sorek on the vines of Gomorrah! We cannot expect to find good works coming from Nature. Truly it is vain and idle to think that good works can arise from the natural man. “Where, then,” you ask, “do they come from?” We answer, good works come from a real conversion, brought about by the Spirit of God. Until our conversion, there is not the shadow of goodness about us. In the eyes of the world, we may be reputable and respectable—but in the eyes of God we are nothing of the sort! Could we look into our hearts, as we sometimes look into other people’s faces, we would see very much there which would drive out of our souls the very imagination of good works before our heart is changed! How many things there are in the world which we have upon our tables and which we even eat, that if we were to put beneath our microscope, we would be afraid to touch, for we would see all kinds of loathsome creatures creeping and crawling about in them—such things as we never conceived! And so it is with human nature—when once the human heart is put under the microscope of Scripture and we see it with a *spiritual eye*—we see it to be vile and filthy. We then realize that we are quite sure that until we have a new heart and a right spirit, it would be just as impossible to expect to find good works in an unrighteous, unconverted man, as to hope to see fire burning in the midst of the ocean! The two things would be incongruous.

Our good works, if we have any, spring from a real conversion. Yet more, they also spring from a constant spiritual influence exercised upon us, from the time of conversion even until the hour of death. Ah, Christian, you would have no good works if you had no fresh influence, day by day. You would not find the Grace given you at your first hour sufficient to produce fruit today. It is not like the planting of a tree in our hearts, which naturally of itself brings forth fruit. The sap has to come up from the root, Jesus Christ! We are not trees by ourselves, but we are branches fixed on the living Vine. Good works, I know from where you come! You come floating down on the stream of Grace and if I did not have that stream of Grace always flowing, I would never find good works coming from me. Good works from the creature? Impossible! Good works are the *gifts* of God, His choice pearls, which He sends down with His Grace!

And again—we think that *good works spring from union with Christ*. We believe that the more a man knows and feels himself to be one with Jesus, the more holy he will be. The very fact that Christ and the Christian become one makes the Christian Christ-like. Why is a Christian’s character like Christ’s Character? Only for this reason—that he is joined and united to the Lord Jesus Christ. Why does that branch bring forth grapes? Simply because it has been engrafted into the Vine and therefore it partakes of the nature of the stem. So, Christian, the only way whereby you can bring forth fruit to God is by being grafted into Christ and united with Him! You Christians who think you can walk in holiness without keeping up perpetual fellowship with Christ have made a great mistake! If you would be holy, you must live close to Jesus. Good works spring only from there. Here we draw the most powerful reasons against anything like trusting in works. For as works are only the gift of God, how utterly impossible does it become for an unrighteous, unconverted, ungodly man to produce any such good works in himself? And if they are God’s gifts, how little merit can there be in them!

**III.**We have thus tried to trace good works to their origin and foundation. And now we come to the third point, which is, WHAT IS THE USE OF GOOD WORKS?

I am rather fond of being *called* an Antinomian, for this reason—the term is generally applied to those who hold the Truth of God very firmly and will not let it go. But I should not be fond of *being* an Antinomian. We are not against the Law of God! We believe it is no longer binding on us as the Covenant of salvation. But we have nothing to say against the Law of God. “The Law is holy—we are carnal, sold under sin.” None shall charge us truthfully with being Antinomians. We quarrel with Antinomians. But as for some poor souls who are so inconsistent as to say the Law is not binding and yet try to keep it with all their might, we do not quarrel with them! They will never do much mischief. But we think they might learn to distinguish between the Law as a Covenant of life and a direction after we have obtained life.

Well, we do love good works. Do you ask, of what use are they? I reply, first—*Good works are useful as evidences of Grace*. The Antinomian says, “But I do not require evidences, I can live without them.” This is unreasonable. Do you see yonder clock? That is the evidence of the time of day. The hour would be precisely the same if we had not that evidence. Still, we find the clock of great use. So we say, good works are the best evidence of spiritual life in the soul. Is it not written, “We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the Brethren?” Loving the Brethren is a good work! Again, “If any man abide in Me, he shall bring forth fruit.” Fruits of righteousness are good works and they are evidences that we abide in Christ! If I am living day by day in sin, what right have I to conclude I am a child of God? A man comes to this Chapel and while he hears the Gospel, he exclaims, “What delicious Truth! What heavenly Doctrine!” Yet when he leaves the place, you may see him enter one public-house after another and get intoxicated! Has this man any right to think himself an heir of Heaven? The man who comes to God’s House and drinks “wine on the lees, well refined,” and then goes away and drinks the cup and enjoys the company of the ungodly, gives no evidence that he is a partaker of Divine Grace! He says, “I do not like good works.” Of course he does not! “I know I shall not be saved by good works.” Of this we are certain, for he has none to be saved by! Many are ready enough to say—

***“Nothing in my hands I bring,***

***Simply to Your Cross I cling,”***  
who believe they are children of God, because, though they have no good works as evidence, they think they have faith. Ah, Sir, you have faith and there is another gentleman quite as respectable as you are, who has faith. I shall not tell you his name, this morning, but he is better than you are, for it is said, “he believes and trembles,” while you sit unmoved by the most powerful appeals! Yes, you who think you are children of God while you live in sin, you are in the most dreadful error. There is no delusion, if you except the delusion of the Pharisee, which is more dreadful than the delusion of a man who thinks that sin and Grace can reign together! The Christian has sins of heart, over which he groans and laments. But as regards his outward life, he is kept—so that the Evil One touches him not—the Lord keeps him under the shadow of His wing. He does not, except in some falls, allow him to turn out of the way. Works are the evidences of our faith—by faith our souls are justified before God—by works our faith is justified before ourselves and fellow men.

Secondly, we think good works are *the witnesses or testimony to other people of the truth of what we believe*. Every Christian was sent into the world to be a preacher. And just like every other creature that God has made, he will always be preaching about his Lord. Does not the whole world preach God? Do not the stars, while they shine, look down from Heaven and say there is a God? Do not the winds haunt God’s name in their mighty howling? Do not the waves murmur it upon the shore or thunder it in the storms? Do not the floods and the fields, the skies and the plains, the mountains and the valleys, the streamlets and the rivers, all speak of God? Assuredly they do and a new-born creature—the man created in Christ—must preach Jesus Christ wherever he goes! This is the use of good works. He will preach, not always with his mouth, but with his life! The use of good works is that they are a Christian’s sermon. A sermon is not what a man says but what he does. You who practice, are preaching. It is not preaching *and* practicing, but practicing *is* preaching! The sermon that is preached by the mouth is soon forgotten, but what we preach by our lives is never forgotten. There is nothing like faithful practice and holy living if we would preach to the world! The reason why Christianity does not advance with a mightier stride is simply this—that professors are, in a large measure, a disgrace to religion and many of those who are joined to the Church have no more godliness than those who are out of it. If I preached such a contradictory sermon on a Sunday as some of you have preached the most part of your lives, you would go out and say, “We will not go again till he can be a little more consistent with himself.” There is a difference in the very tone of the voice of some people when they are in the Chapel engaged in prayer and when they are in the workshop! You would hardly think them the same persons. Away with your inconsistency! Professors, take heed lest your inconsistencies should blot your evidences and some of you should be found manifesting, not inconsistency, but a most fearful consistency— living in sin and iniquity—and therefore being consistent with yourselves in hypocrisy!

In the third place, *good works are of use to a Christian as an adornment*. You will all remember that passage in the Scriptures which tells us how a woman should adorn herself. “Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel. But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit.” The adornment of good works, the adornment in which we hope to enter Heaven, is the blood and righteousness of Jesus Christ—but the adornment of a Christian here below is his *holiness*, his *piety*, his *consistency*. If some people had a little more piety, they would not require such a showy dress. If they had a little more godliness to set them off, they would have no need whatever to be always decorating themselves. The best earrings that a woman can wear are the earrings of hearing the Word with attention. The very best ring that we can have upon our finger is the ring which the Father puts upon the finger of the prodigal son, when he is brought back. And the very best dress we can ever wear is a garment worked by the Holy Spirit—the garment of a consistent conduct. But it is marvelous, while many are taking all the trouble they can to array this poor body, they have very few ornaments for their soul. They forgot to dress the soul! Oh, no. They are too late at Chapel, all because of that other pin, which they might have left out. They come here just when the service is beginning, because, in truth, they have so much to put on, they could not be expected to be here on time! And there are Christian men and Christian women who forget what God has written in His Word, which is as true, now, as it ever was, that Christian women should array themselves with modesty. It would be a good thing, perhaps, if we went back to Wesley’s rule, to come out from the world in our apparel and to dress as plainly and neatly as the Quakers, though alas, they have sadly gone from their primitive simplicity!

I am obliged to depart a little, sometimes, from what we call the high things of the Gospel. For, really, the children of God cannot now be identified by outward appearance from the children of the devil and they really ought to be! There should be some distinction between the one and the other. And although religion allows distinction of rank and dress, yet everything in the Bible cries out against our arraying ourselves and making ourselves proud by reason of the goodliness of our apparel! Some will say, “I wish you would leave that alone!” Of course you do, because it applies to yourself! But we let nothing alone which we believe to be in the Scriptures. And while I would not spare any man’s soul, honesty to every man’s conscience and honesty to myself demands that I should always speak of that which I see to be an evil breaking out in the Church! We should always take care that in everything, we keep as near as possible to the written Word. If you want ornaments, here they are—here are jewels, rings, dresses and all kinds of ornaments—men and women, you may dress yourselves up till you shine like angels. How can you do it? By dressing yourselves out in*benevolence*, in *love* to the saints, in *honesty* and *integrity*, in *uprightness*, in *godliness*, in*brotherly kindness*, in *charity*. These are the ornaments which angels admire and which even the world will admire! For men must give admiration to the man or the woman who is arrayed in the jewels of a holy life and godly conversation. I beseech you, Brothers and Sisters, “adorn the Doctrine of God, our Savior, in all things.”

**IV.**Thus have I told you the use of good works. Now just a moment or two to tell you that the religion which we profess in this place and which we preach IS CALCULATED TO PRODUCE GOOD WORKS IN THE CHILD OF GOD.

Some say that that which is called Calvinism, which is an *alias* for the true Gospel, is calculated to lead men into sin. Now we will refute that, just by reminding them that the holiest people in the world have been those who professed the Doctrines which we hold. If you ask who in the dark ages were the great moral lights of the world, the answer will be such as Athanasius, Ambrose, Chrysostom. And then coming still lower, such men as Wickliffe, Jerome of Prague and Calvin. And every one of these held the Doctrines which we love to proclaim. And just let me remind you, there never were better men in the world than the Puritans— and every one of them held fast the Truths of God we love! I happened to find in a book, the other day, a statement which pleased me so much that I thought I would read it to you. The writer says, “The Puritans were the most resolved Protestants in the nation. Zealous Calvinists, warm and affectionate preachers. They were the most pious and devout people in the land—men of prayer in secret and in public—as well as in their families. Their manner of devotion was fervent and solemn, depending on the assistance of the Divine Spirit. They had a profound reverence for the holy name of God and were great enemies, not only to profane swearing, but to foolish talking and jesting. They were strict observers of the Lord’s-Day, spending the whole of it in public and private devotion and charity. It was the distinguishing mark of a Puritan, in those times, to see him going to Church twice a day, with his Bible under his arm. And while others were at plays and interludes, at revels, or walking in the fields, or at the diversions of bowling, fencing, etc.—on the eve of the Sabbath, these Puritans, with their families, were employed in reading the Scriptures, singing Psalms, repeating sermons, catechizing their children and prayer. Nor was this the work only of the Lord’s-Day, but they had their hours of family devotion on the week days. They were circumspect as to all excess in eating and drinking, apparel and lawful diversions—being frugal, industrious, exact in their dealings and solicitous to give everyone his own.” That is a noble testimony to Puritan Truth and the power of the Gospel. But I have one, which I think will please you, in another part of the book. A learned infidel says of the modern Calvinists and Jansenists, that, “When compared with their antagonists, they have excelled, in no small degree, in the most rigid and respectable virtues. That they have been an honor to their own age and the best model for imitation to every age succeeding.” Only think of an infidel speaking like that! I think it was an infidel who said, “Go to the Arminians to hear about good works. But go to the Calvinists to see them exhibited.” And even Dr. Priestly, who was a Unitarian, admits that, “They who hold the Doctrines of Grace, have less apparent conformity to the world and more of a principle of real religion, than his own followers—and that they who, from a principle of religion, ascribe more to God and less to man than others, have the greatest elevation of piety.”

And just now, as the Unitarians are bringing up all their great men— so great that we never heard their names to this day—and endeavoring to do all they can in London to bring people to Unitarianism, we would just tell them this fact. Dr. Priestly ascribes the coolness of Unitarianism to their becoming more indifferent to religious Doctrine—and accounts for the fact of their chapels not being well attended, by saying that Unitarians have a very slight attachment to their religious Doctrines. What a mercy! For if they continued to hold them, they would inevitably be lost. A man who denies the Divinity of Christ is sure to be lost. It is idle for them to talk of their being Christians! They might as well talk of being holy angels. The best proof I can give you of the holy tendency of our Doctrines is this great fact—in every age those who have held the Doctrines of Grace have exhibited in their lives a holy walk and conversation!

But once more—in just hastily running over the Doctrines, we ask— *what could more tend to make men holy than the Truths of God we preach*? Do we not teach you that God has chosen to Himself a people who must be holy? Is that an unholy Doctrine? Do we not tell you that God has chosen to Himself a people who in this world shall show forth His praise by holy living? Is that an unholy Doctrine? And we have told you that the Holy Spirit gives a new heart and a right spirit and that there is something more required than you can do yourselves—that you are unable to perform such good things as God expects from you— therefore God the Spirit must renovate you! Do you call that an unholy Doctrine? Is the Doctrine, that men by nature are vile and need renewing Grace, unholy? And the Doctrine that the true saints will certainly hold onto the end, is that unholy? I think the contrary to these Doctrines are the most unholy in the world! Is the Doctrine that only those who believe, have an interest in the blood of Christ, an unholy thing? Is the Doctrine that I preach, that Christ has redeemed only such as live in holiness, having been brought thereto by the Holy Spirit, an unholy thing? I think not! We challenge all those who love to speak against our Doctrines to prove that there is a single one of them which has an unholy tendency! Charge us with not holding good works? Come and try to get into our Church and you will soon have a proof that you are wrong—why, we would not have you, Sir, if you would give us a thousand pounds—unless we considered you were a holy man! If you have not good works, it will be a long time before we will receive you. And if you were to steal into our Church, you would be turned out in a week if you lived in sin and unrighteousness. For it would soon be reported to the pastor and deacons and you would see whether we did not hold the necessity of good works! If you did not exhibit them every day, we would cast you out from among us and have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them! Our church order is the best refutation of the calumny.

What more can we say, then? We hope we have proved our points to all honest and consistent men. We only send you away, you hypocrites, with this ringing in your ears, “Except you have the Spirit of Christ, you are none of His.” Except you live like Christ, you shall not be with Christ at the last! If your spirit is not sanctified in this world, you will not find that God will sanctify you when you come before His Throne!

But you, poor Sinners, who have no holiness of your own and no good works at all. I know you have not any, because you are not a child of God. Do you feel that you have not? Come, then, and Christ will give you some—He will give you Himself! If you believe on the Lord Jesus, He will wash you from all your sins, give you a new heart and henceforth your life shall be holy, your conduct shall be consistent. He shall keep you to the end and you shall most assuredly be saved! God bless this testimony to any such as are living in sin, that they may be reclaimed from it, for Christ’s sake and by His Grace! Amen.

Adapted from*The C.H. Spurgeon Collection*, Version 1.0, Ages Software.  
**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.** Sermon #2042 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

**÷Tit 3.3**

THE MAINTENANCE OF GOOD WORKS  
NO. 2042

**DELIVERED ON LORD’S DAY MORNING, SEPTEMBER 2, 1888, *BY C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving many lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another. But after that the kindness and love of God our Savior toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have***

***done but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit; which He shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior. That being justified by His Grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life. This is a faithful saying and these things I will that you affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men.”***Tit 3:3-8***.***

LAST Thursday evening my sermon was based upon the contrast in the second chapter of Ephesians, between the expressions “not of works” and “created in Christ Jesus unto good works.” I tried to show the true place of good works in connection with salvation. Many of you were not present then and I felt that the subject was of such extreme importance that I must return to the same line of thought in this greater congregation. I shall endeavor by another text which contains the same contrast, to set before you the usefulness, the benefit, yes, and the absolute *necessity* for our abounding in good works if indeed we are saved by faith in Christ Jesus.

Let us come at once to our text. Our Apostle tells us that we are to speak evil of no man but to show meekness unto all men. And he adds this as an all-sufficient reason—we ourselves also were sometimes like the very worst of them. When we look upon the world today, it pains us by its folly, disobedience and delusion. He that knows most of this modern Babylon, whether he observes the richer or the poorer classes of society, will find the deepest cause for grief. But we cannot condemn with bitterness—for such were some of us. Not only can we not condemn with bitterness but we must look upon our sinful fellow creatures with great compassion—for such were some of us.

Yes more—we feel encouraged to *hope* for ungodly men, even for the foolish and disobedient—for we ourselves also were, not long ago, like they. We feel that we must give the thought of our heart and the energy of our lives to the great work of saving men out of gratitude to the Lord our God, who, in His kindness and love, has saved us. “I am a man,” said one, “and everything that has to do with men concerns me”—but the child of God adds to this, “I am also a sinful man and owe my cleansing to the loving favor of the Lord. I was in the same mire of sin as these are in—and if I am now washed in the laver of regeneration and renewed by the Holy

Spirit, I owe it all to Sovereign Grace and am bound by love to man and love to God to seek the cleansing and renewal of my fellow men.”

Eyes that have wept over our own sin will always be most ready to weep over the sins of others. If you have judged yourselves with candor, you will not judge others with severity. You will be more ready to pity than to condemn, more anxious to hide a multitude of sins than to punish a single sinner. I will give little for your supposed regeneration if there is not created in you a tender heart which can truly say—

***“My God, I feel the mournful scene;  
My heart yearns over dying men;  
And gladly my pity would reclaim,  
And snatch the firebrands from the flame.”***

With this feeling towards mankind at large, we are led to consider the Divine remedy for sinfulness and to look with pleasure upon what God has devised for the creation of holiness in a fallen race. He at first created man a pure and spotless being. When He placed Adam in the garden He made a friend of him. And though Adam has fallen and all his race are depraved, God is still aiming at the same thing, namely, to create holy beings, purified unto Himself, to be a peculiar people zealous for good works. What has the Lord done? What is He still doing to this end? How far have we participated in those processes of Divine Grace which work towards this glorious design?

I ask your attention this morning while I speak, first, of what we were. And here let the tears stand in your eyes. Secondly, of what has been done for us—and here let Divine Grace move in your hearts. And, thirdly, of what we wish to do—and here let care be seen in your lives.

**I.**First, Beloved, let us think for a few minutes only OF WHAT WE ONCE WERE. Think, I say, with tears of repentance in our eyes. “For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving many lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another.” The Apostle does not say, “You yourselves,” as if he spoke to Titus and the believing Cretans but *we ourselves*, thus including himself. Beloved Apostle, you do humbly present to us this bitter cup of confession, drinking of it yourself with us and putting yourself on a level with us—“We ourselves also.” Come, then, pastor, elders, deacons, and members of the Church—you that have served your Lord for many years— hesitate not to join in this humiliating confession.

A threefold set of evils is here described. The first set consists of the evils of the mind—“We were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived.” We were foolish. We thought we knew and therefore we did not learn. We said, “We see,” and therefore we were blind and would not come to Jesus for sight. We thought we knew better than God. For our foolish heart was darkened and we imagined ourselves to be better judges of what was good for us than the Lord our God. We refused heavenly warnings because we dreamed that sin was pleasant and profitable. We rejected Divine Truth because we did not care to be taught and disdained the lowly position of a disciple sitting at Jesus’ feet.

Our pride proved our folly. What lying things we tried to believe! We put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter—darkness for light and light for darkness. In thought, desire, language and action “we were sometimes foolish.” Some of us were manifestly foolish for we rushed headlong into sins which injured us and have left that in our bones which years have not been sufficient to remove. Every lover of vice is a fool at large. O my Brothers and Sisters, I suppose you have no photograph of yourself as you used to be. But if you have, take it down and study it and bless God that He has made you to differ so greatly from your former self!

In addition to being foolish we are said to have been disobedient. And so we were, for we forsook the commands of God. We wanted our own will and way. We said, “Who is the Lord, that we should obey His voice?” There is a touch of Pharaoh about every one of us. Obedience is distasteful to the obstinate. And we were such. “I knew,” said God, “that you were very obstinate and had an iron sinew.” Our necks by nature refused to bow to the yoke of our Creator. We would, if we could, be the lords of Providence for we were not content with the Divine allotment. We wished that we were the legislators of the universe, that we might give license to our own lusts and no longer be hampered with restrictions.

To the holy Law of God we were disobedient. Ah, how long some of us were disobedient to the Gospel! We heard it as though we heard it not. Or when it did touch the heart we did not allow its influence to remain. Like water, which retains no mark of a blow, so did we obliterate the effect of the Truth of God. We were determined not to be obedient to the faith of the Lord Jesus. We were unwilling to yield God His due place either in Providence, Law, or Gospel. Paul adds that we were deceived, or led astray. As sheep follow one another and go away from the pasture, so did we follow some chosen companion and would not follow the Good Shepherd. We were deceived.

Perhaps we were deceived in our thoughts and made to believe a lie— certainly we were deceived in our idea of happiness. We hoped to find it where it did not exist—we searched for the living among the dead. We were the dupes of custom and of company. We were here, there, and everywhere in our actions—no more to be relied upon than lost sheep. Children of God, remember these errors of your minds. Lay them upon your consciences and let your souls plead guilty to them. For I feel assured that we have all, in some measure, been in this triple condition—foolish, disobedient, deceived.

The next bundle of mischief is found in the evil of our pursuits. The Apostle says we were “serving many lusts and pleasures.” The word for “serving” means being under servitude. We were once the slaves of many lusts and pleasures. By lusts we understand desires, longings, ambitions, passions. Many are these masters and they are all tyrants. Some are ruled by greed for money. Others crave for fame. Some are enslaved by lust for power—others by the lust of the eye. And many by the lusts of the flesh. We were born slaves and we live slaves until the great Liberator emancipates us. No man can be in worse bondage than to be enslaved by his own evil desires.

We were also the bond slaves of pleasure. Alas, alas, that we were so far infatuated as to call it pleasure! Looking back at our former lives we may well be amazed that we could once take pleasure in things we are now ashamed. The Lord has taken the very name of our former idols out of our mouths. Some who are now saints were once the slaves of drunkenness or of “chambering and wantonness.” Some were given up to evil company and rioting or to pride and self-seeking. Many are the evils which array themselves in the silken robes of pleasure that they may tempt the hungry heart of man.

Once we took pleasure in those sins which are now our misery as we look back on them. O my Brethren, we dare not deny our base original! Today we drink from the well of holiness and not of undefiled pleasures which delight our souls. But we blush as we remember that not too long ago foul and putrid pools seemed sweet to our vitiated taste. Like Nebuchadnezzar in the failure of his mind we fed among beasts in the madness of our sin. Unlike the Egyptians, who loathed to drink of the river when God had smitten it with His curse, we took all the more delight in draughts of unhallowed pleasure because it yielded a fearful intoxication to know that we were daring to defy a Law.

Do not let me talk about these things this morning while you listen to me without feeling. I want you to be turning over the pages of your old life and joining with Paul and the rest of us in our sad confession of former pleasure in evil. A holy man was likely to carry with him a book which had three leaves in it but never a word. The first leaf was black and this showed his sin. The second was red and this reminded him of the way of cleansing by blood—while the third was white—to show how clean the Lord can make us. I beg you just now to study that first black page. It is all black. And as you look at it, it seems blacker and blacker. What seemed at one time to be a little white, darkens down as it is gazed upon, till it wears the deepest shade of all. You were sometimes erring in your minds and in your pursuits. Is not this enough to bring the water into your eyes, O you that now follow the Lamb wherever He goes?

The Apostle then mentions the evils of our hearts. Here you must discriminate and judge, each one for himself, how far the accusation lies. He speaks of “living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another.” That is to say first, we harbored anger against those who had done us evil. And secondly, we lived in envy of those who appeared to have more good than we had ourselves. The first sin is very common—many abide year after year in the poisonous atmosphere of an angry spirit. All are not alike in this, for some are naturally easy and agreeable. But in all of us there is that proud spirit which resents injuries and would revenge them. Men may sin against God and we are not indignant. But if they sin against us—we are very angry.

To the spirit of Christ it is natural and even delightful to forgive—but such is not the spirit of the world. I have heard of men who would not forgive their own children and of brothers who were implacable towards each other. This is the spirit of the devil. Revenge is the delight of the wicked but to do kindness in return for injury is the luxury of a Christian. One main distinction between the heirs of God and the heirs of wrath is this— the unregenerate are in the power of self and so of hate—but the regenerate are under the dominion of Christ and so of love. You may judge yourself by this—whether your prevailing spirit is that of wrath or of love—if you are given to anger, you are a child of wrath. And if you are full of love, you are a child of God whose name is Love.

God help us to stamp out the last spark of personal animosity! Let us remove the memories of injury, as the incoming tide washes out the marks on the sand. If any of you have disputes in your family, end them at once, cost what it may. How can you love God whom you have not seen if you do not love your brother whom you have seen? Divine Grace makes a great change in this respect in those who by nature are malicious.

The other form of evil is envy of those who seem to have more of good than we have. Frequently envy attacks men because of their wealth. How dare they have luxuries when we are poor? At other times envy spits its venom against a man’s good repute when he happens to be more praised than we are. How can any man venture to be better thought of than we are? Truly this is the spirit of Satan—the spirit which now works in the children of disobedience. The child of God is delivered from envy by the Grace of God. And if it ever does arise, he hates himself for admitting it. He would wish to see others happy even if he were unhappy himself.

If he is in the depths of poverty he is glad that everybody is not so pinched as he is. If he has received unjust censure he is willing to hope that there was some mistake. And he is glad that everybody is not quite so unfairly dealt with. He rejoices in the praise of others and triumphs in their success. What? Do you wince at this and feel that you have not reached it so far? May Divine Grace enable you to get into this spirit for it is the spirit of Jesus! Beloved, sin takes different shapes in different people but it is in us all. This darkness once beclouded those who today shine like stars among the godly. Sin is often restrained by circumstances and yet it is in the heart.

We ought not to take credit to ourselves because of our freedom from evils into which we had no chance of falling. We have not been so bad as others because we could not be. A certain boy has run away from home. Another boy remained at home. Is he, therefore, a better child? Listen—he had broken his leg and could not get out of bed. That takes away all the credit of his staying at home. Some men cannot sin in a certain direction and then they say to themselves, “What excellent fellows we are to abstain from this wickedness!” Sirs, you would have done it if you could, and therefore your self-praise is mere flattery. Had you been placed in the same position as others, you would have acted as others have done—for your heart goes after the same idols.

Sin in the heart of every man defiles everything that he does. Even if an ungodly man should do what in itself might be a good action there is a defilement in his motive which taints it all. You cannot draw pure water from a foul well. As is the heart, such is the life. Listen to this, you that have never passed under the processes of Divine Grace. See what you are and where you are if left to yourselves and cry to the Lord to save you. **II.**Now for a more cheerful topic. We are now to think OF WHAT HAS

BEEN DONE FOR US. And here let us feel the movements of Divine Grace in our hearts. What has been done for us?

First, there was a Divine interposition. “The kindness and love of God our Savior toward man appeared.” Man was in the dark—plunging onward to blacker midnight every step he took. I do not find, as I read history, any excuse for the modern notion that men are longing for God and laboring to find Him. No, the sheep were never seeking the Shepherd but all were going astray. Men everywhere turn their backs to the light and try to forget what has been handed down by their forefathers—they are everywhere feeling after a great lie which they may raise to the Throne of God. We do not, by nature, long after God nor sigh for His holiness. The gracious Lord came in uncalled for and unsought and in the bounty of His heart and in the great love of His nature He determined to save man.

Methinks I hear Him say, “How shall I give you up?” He sees mankind resolved to perish unless an almighty arm shall intervene. And He interposes in fullness of pity and power. You know how, in many ways, the Lord has intervened on our behalf. But, especially you remember how He came down from Heaven, took our nature, lived among us, mourned our sin and bore it in His own body on the tree. You know how the Son of God interposed in that grand Avatar, that marvelous incarnation in which the Word became flesh and dwelt among us. Then He broke what would otherwise have been an everlasting darkness.

Then He snapped the chains which would have fettered our humanity throughout all the ages. The love and kindness of God our Savior which had always existed, at length “appeared,” when God, in the Person of His Son, came here, met our iniquities hand to hand and overcame their terrible power—that we also might overcome. Note well that there was a Divine salvation. In consequence of the interposition of Jesus, Believers are described as being saved—“not by works of righteousness which we have done but according to His mercy He saved us.”

Hearken to this. There are men in the world who are saved—they are spoken of not as “to be saved,” not as to be saved when they come to die but saved even now—saved from the dominion of the evils which we described under our first head—saved from folly, disobedience, delusion and the like. Whosoever believes in the Lord Jesus Christ whom God has set forth to be the Propitiation for sin is saved from the guilt and power of sin. He shall no longer be the slave of his lusts and pleasures. He is saved from that dread bondage. He is saved from hate—for he has tasted love and learned to love. He shall not be condemned for all that he has ever done, for his great Substitute and Savior has borne away the guilt, the curse, the punishment of sin—yes, the sin itself.

O my Hearers, if you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ this morning you are saved! As surely as once you were lost, being led astray—so surely are you now saved, if you are a Believer, being found by the great Shepherd and brought back again upon His shoulders. I beg you to get hold of this Truth of God that according to His mercy the Lord has saved us who believe in Jesus. Will you tell me, or rather tell yourselves, whether you are saved or not? If you are not saved you are lost. If you are not already forgiven you are already condemned. You are in the ruin of fallen nature unless you are renewed by the Holy Spirit. You are a slave to sin unless your liberty has been procured by the great ransom. Examine yourselves on these points and follow me in the next thought.

There was a motive for this salvation. Positively, “According to His mercy He saved us.” And negatively, “Not by works of righteousness which we have done.” Brethren, we could not have been saved at the first by our works of righteousness. For we had not done any. “No,” says the Apostle, “we were foolish, disobedient, deceived,” and therefore we had no works of righteousness and yet the Lord interposed and saved us. Behold and admire the splendor of His love, that “He loved us even when we were *dead* in sins.” He loved us and therefore quickened us. God does not come to men to help them when they are saving themselves—He comes to the rescue when they are *damning* themselves.

When the heart is full of folly and disobedience the good God visits it with His favor. He comes, not according to the hopefulness of our character, but according to His mercy. And mercy has no eye except for guilt and misery. The Grace of God is not given according to any good thing that we have done since our conversion—the expression before us shuts out all real works of righteousness which we have done since regeneration—as all supposed ones before it. The Lord assuredly foreknew these works but He also foreknew our sins. He did not save us according to the foreknowledge of our good works—these works are a part of the salvation which He gave us.

As well say that a physician healed a sick man because he foreknew that he would be better. Or that you give a beggar an alms because you foresee that he would have the alms. Works of righteousness are the *fruit* of salvation and the root must come *before* the fruit. The Lord saves His people out of clear, unmixed, undiluted mercy and Grace and for no other reason. “I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. So then it is not of him that wills, nor of him that runs but of God that shows mercy.”

Oh how splendidly is the Grace of God seen in the whole plan of salvation! How clearly is it seen in our cases, for “we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived,” yet He saved us, “not by works of righteousness which we have done but according to His mercy”! Will not some self-convicted sinner find comfort here? O despairing one, does not a little hope come in by this window? Do you not see that God can save you on the ground of*mercy*? He can wash you and renew you according to the sovereignty of His Grace? On the footing of merit you are hopelessly lost— but on the ground of mercy there is hope.

Observe, next that there was a power by which we were saved. “He saved us by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit; which He shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior.” The way in which we are delivered from the dominion of sin is by the work of the Holy Spirit. This adorable Person is very God of very God. This Divine Being comes to us and causes us to be born again. By His eternal power and Godhead He gives us a totally new nature, a life which could not

grow out of our former life, nor be developed from our nature—a life which is a new creation of God. We are saved not by evolution but by creation. The Spirit of God creates us anew in Christ Jesus unto good works.

We experience regeneration which means being generated over again, or born again. Remember the result of this as set forth in Covenant terms—“A new heart also will I give you and a new spirit will I put within you—and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh and I will give you an heart of flesh.” This great process is carried out by the Holy Spirit. After we are regenerated He continues to renew us. Our thoughts, feelings, desires and acts are constantly renewed. Regeneration as the commencement of the new creation can never come twice to any man but renewal of the Holy Spirit is constantly and perpetually repeated.

The life once given is revived—the light once kindled is fed with holy oil which is poured upon it continually. The newborn life is deepened and increased in force by that same Holy Spirit who first of all created it. See then, dear Hearers, that the only way to holiness is to be made anew and to be kept anew. The washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit are both essential. The name of Jesus has been engraved in us—even on our hearts—but it needs to be cut deeper and deeper lest the letters be covered up by the moss of routine, or filled up by the bespattering of sin. We are saved “by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit”—one process in different stages. This is what our God has done for us—blessed be His name! Being washed and renewed we are saved.

There is also mentioned a blessed privilege which comes to us by Jesus Christ. The Spirit is shed on us abundantly by Jesus Christ and we are “justified by His Grace.” Both justification and sanctification come to us through the medium of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit is shed on us abundantly “through Jesus Christ our Savior.” Beloved, never forget that regeneration is worked in us by the Holy Spirit but comes to us by Jesus Christ. We do not receive any blessing apart from our Lord Jesus. In all works of the Spirit, whether regeneration or renewal, it is the Lord Jesus who is putting forth His power, for He says, “Behold, I make all things new.”

The Mediator is the conduit through which Divine Grace supplies us daily with the water of life. Everything is by Jesus Christ. Without Him was not anything made that was made either in Grace or in nature. We must not think it possible for us to receive anything from God apart from the appointed Mediator. But, oh, think of it!—in Jesus Christ we are today abundantly anointed by the Holy Spirit. The sacred oil is shed upon us abundantly from Him who is our Head. We are sweet to God through the Divine perfume of the Holy Spirit who comes to us by Jesus Christ. This day we are just in the sight of God in Christ’s righteousness, through which we are “justified by Grace.”

Jehovah sees no sin for which He must punish us. He has said, “Take away his filthy garments from him and set a fair miter upon his head.” And this is done. We are accepted in the Beloved. Since Jesus has washed our feet, we are “clean every part”—clean in the double sense of being washed with water and with blood and so cleansed from the power and guilt of sin. What a high privilege is this! Can we ever sufficiently praise God for it?

Once more—there comes out of this a Divine result. We become today joint-heirs with Christ Jesus and so heirs of a heavenly estate. And then out of this heirship there grows a hope which reaches forward to the eternal future with exceeding joy. We are “made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.” Think of that! What a space there is between “foolish, disobedient, deceived”—right up to “heirs according to the hope of eternal life”! Who thought of bridging this great gulf? Who but God? With what power did He bridge it? How but by the Divine power and Godhead of the Holy Spirit? Where was the bridge found by which the chasm could be crossed? The Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ who loved us and gave Himself for us, has made a way over the once impassable deep.

I have thus very briefly set before you an outline of the work of Divine Grace within the human heart. Do you understand it? Have you ever felt it? Do you feel the life of regeneration pulsing within you this morning? Will you not bless God for it?—

***“We raise our Father’s name on high,  
Who His own Spirit sends  
To bring rebellious strangers near,  
And turn His foes to friends.”***

**III.**We will now speak on WHAT WE WISH TO DO. And here let us show care in our lives. Mark well these words, “This is a faithful saying and these things I will that you affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men.”

“Be careful to maintain good works.” This precept is full in its meaning. In another Scripture you are told to be careful for nothing but here you are bid to be careful to maintain good works. We read, “casting all your care upon Him. For He cares for you”—but do not cast off your care to maintain good works. You have a number of cares about you—slip a bridle over their heads and train them to plow in the field of good works. Do not let care be wasted over food and raiment and such temporary matters—these may be left with God. But take sacred cares upon you—the cares of holy and gracious living. Yoke your best thoughts to the care of holiness—“be careful to maintain good works.”

What are good works? The term is greatly inclusive. Of course we number in the list works of charity, works of kindness and benevolence, works of piety, reverence and holiness. Such works as comply with the two tables of command are good works. Works of obedience are good works. What you do because God bids you do it, is a good work. Works of love to Jesus done out of a desire for His Glory—these are good works. The common actions of everyday life, when they are well done, with a view not to merit but out of gratitude—these are good works. “Be careful to maintain good works” of every sort and kind.

You are sure to be working in some way—mind you that your works are good works. If you have commenced well, be careful to maintain good works. And if you have maintained them, go on to increase them. I preached last Thursday night as now—salvation by Divine Grace and by Grace alone. And if I know how to speak plainly, I certainly did speak plainly then and I hope I do so now. Remember, you are saved by grace and not by works of righteousness. But *after* you are saved there comes in this precept, “Be careful to maintain good works.”

This precept is special in its direction. To the sinner—that he *may be* saved *we say not a word concerning good works*, *except to remind him that he has none*. To the Believer who *is* saved, we say ten thousand words concerning good works—beseeching him to bring forth much fruit, that so he may be Christ’s disciple. There is all the difference between the living and the dead—the living we arouse to work—the dead must first receive life. Exhortations which may most fittingly be addressed to the regenerate may be quite out of place when spoken to those who are under the power of unbelief and are strangers to the family of Divine Grace.

The voice of our text is to them that have believed in God—faith is presupposed as the absolutely indispensable foundation of good works. You cannot work that which will please God if you are without faith in Him. As there is no coming to God in prayer without believing that He is and that He is the rewarder of them that diligently seek Him, so there is no bringing any other sacrifice to Him without a faith suitable to the business in hand. For living works you must have a *living faith* and for loving works you must have a *loving faith*.

When we know and trust God with holy intelligence and sacred confidence we work His pleasure. Good works must be done freely—God wants not slaves to grace His Throne. He seeks not from us the forced works of men in bondage. He desires the spontaneous zeal of consecrated souls who rejoice to do His will because they are not their own but bought with the precious blood of Jesus. It is the heartiness of our work which is the heart of it. To those who have renewed hearts, this exhortation is addressed—“Be careful to maintain good works.”

This precept is weighty in importance, for it is prefaced thus—“This is a faithful saying.” This is one among four great matters thus described. It is not trivial. It is not a temporary precept which belongs to an extinct race and a past age. “This is a faithful saying”—a true Christian Proverb—“that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works.” Let the ungodly never say that we who believe in Free Grace think lightly of a holy life. O you who are the people of my care, I charge you before God and the holy angels that in proportion as you hold the Truth of doctrine, you follow out the purity of precept! You hold the Truth of God and you know that salvation is not of man, nor of man’s work—it is not of merit—but of mercy, not of ourselves but of God alone.

I beseech you to be as right in practice as in doctrine, and therefore be careful to maintain good works. Dogs will open their mouths but do not find bones for them—the enemies of the faith will laugh at it but do not give them ground of accusation. May God the Holy Spirit help you so to live that they may be ashamed—having no evil thing to say of you!

I am afraid that this precept of being careful to maintain good works is neglected in practice, or else the Apostle would not have said to Titus, “These things I will that you affirm constantly.” Titus must repeat perpetually the precept which commands the careful maintenance of good works. Beloved, I fear that preachers often think too well of their congregations and talk to them as if they were all perfect, or nearly so. I cannot thus flatter you. I have been astounded when I have seen what professing Christians can do. How some dare call themselves followers of Jesus I cannot tell! It is horrible. We condemn Judas but he is to be found in many.

Our Lord is still sold for gain. He still has at His heels sons of perdition who kiss Him and betray Him. There are still persons in our Churches who need to have the Ten Commandments read to them every Sabbath Day. It is not a bad plan of the Church of England—to put up the Ten Commandments near the communion table where they can be clearly seen. Some people need to see them, though I am afraid when they come in their way, they wink hard at some of the Commands and go away and forget that they have seen them. Common morality is neglected by some who call themselves Christians.

My Brethren, such things ought not to be but as long as they are, so we must hear Paul saying—“I will that you affirm constantly that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works.” Certain people turn on their heel and say, “That is legal talk. The preacher is preaching up works instead of Divine Grace.” What? Do you dare to say that? I will meet you face to face at God’s right hand at the Last Day if you dare to insinuate so gross a libel. Dare you say that I do not preach continually salvation by the Divine Grace of God and by the Divine Grace of God only? Having preached salvation by Grace without a moment’s hesitation, I shall also continually affirm that they which have believed in God must be “careful to maintain good works.”

This, mark you, is supported by argument. The Apostle presses home his precept by saying—“These things are good and profitable unto men.” He instances other things which are neither good nor profitable, namely, “Foolish questions and genealogies and contentions and strivings about the Law.” In these days some are occupied with questions about the future state instead of accepting the plain testimony of Scripture and some give more prominence to speculations drawn from prophecy than to the maintaining of good works. I reverence the prophecies. But I have small patience with those whose one business is guessing at their meaning.

One whose family was utterly unruly and immoral met with a Christian friend and said to him—“Do you quite see the meaning of the Seven Trumpets?” “No,” answered his friend, “I do not. And if you looked more to your seven children the seven trumpets would suffer no harm.” To train up your children and instruct your servants and order your household aright are “things which are good and profitable unto men.” A life of godliness is better than the understanding of mysteries. The eternal Truth of

God is to be defended at all hazards but questions which do not signify the turn of a hair to either God or man may be left to settle themselves.

“Be careful to maintain good works” whether you are a babe in Grace or a strong man in Christ Jesus. A holy household is as a pillar to the Church of God. Children brought up in the fear of God are as cornerstones polished after the similitude of a palace. You, husbands and wives that live together in holy love and see your children serving God, you adorn the doctrine of God our Savior! Tradesmen who are esteemed for integrity, merchants who bargain to their own hurt but change not, dealers who can be trusted in the market with uncounted gold—your acts are good and profitable both to the Church and to the world! Men are won to Christ when they see Christianity embodied in the good and the true.

But when religion is a thin veneer or a mere touch of tinsel they call it “humbug.” And rough as the word is, it is worthy of the contemptible thing which it describes. If our religion comes from the very soul, if our life is the life of Christ in us and we prove that we have new hearts and right spirits by acting the honorable, the kindly, the truly Christian part—these things are good and profitable unto those who watch us—for they may induce them to seek for better things.

I pray you, my Beloved, be careful to maintain good works. I thus stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance—if your minds were not pure I would not stir them up—for it would be of no use to raise the mud which now lies quiet. I stir you up because I am not afraid to do so but am sure that it will do you good. You will take home this exhortation and you will say, each one to himself, “What can I do more for Jesus? How can I walk more worthy in my profession? How can I be careful to maintain good works?” So may God bless you!

You who do not believe in God. You who have not come to trust in His dear Son—I am not talking to you. To you I must say, first, that you must be made new creatures. I do not talk to a crab-tree and say, “Bear apples.” It cannot. The tree must first become good before the fruit can be good. “You must be born again.” You will never be better till you are made new creatures. You must be spiritually slain and then made alive again. There must be an end of you and there must be a beginning of Christ in you. God grant that this may happen at once and may you immediately believe in the Lord Jesus! Amen.

A PASTORAL VISIT

NO. 3103

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, JULY 30, 1908.  
*DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON. *“The Church in your house.”***Phm 1:2***.*

SOME interpreters have supposed that a small congregation met for worship in a room in Philemon’s house and there is a tradition that such was the case for some considerable time. The Churches established by Paul were, at their commencement, for the most part small. Obliged—for the sake of peace and to avoid persecution—to meet in out of-the-way places where they were not likely to be seen by foes, the retired house of some well-known friend, perhaps that of the minister, if it had a room conveniently large, would be the natural place for Believers to gather together in those early Churches. Philemon, therefore, might literally have had a Church in his house and a congregation might have gathered there. It strikes me that there would be a great deal of good done if persons who have large rooms in their houses would endeavor to get together little congregations. There are many, even of our poorer friends, who live in neighborhoods of London destitute of the means of Grace, who might promote a great blessing if they occasionally opened their houses for a Prayer Meeting or religious assembly. We need no consecrated places for the worship of God—

***“Wherever we seek Him, He is found,  
And every place is hallowed ground.”***

Certainly our text does not give any countenance to the calling of certain buildings “Churches.” Buildings for worship, whether erected by Episcopalians or Dissenters, are frequently called “Churches.” If I ask for “the church” in any town, I am forthwith directed to an edifice, probably with a spire or a steeple, which the inhabitants call “the church.” Why, they might as well point me to a signpost when I asked for a man—a *building* cannot be a Church! A Church is an assembly of faithful men and it cannot be anything else. I cannot see how such a piece of architecture as we now call “a church” could very well have been in Philemon’s house—it must have been a large house if it had such a thing in it for an ornament. The fact is, it is a misnomer, a misuse of language, and we must mind that we do not get into it. For my own part, I like the good old-fashioned name of “Meeting House” as well as any. It is a place where the people of God meet and although “Meeting House” does not sound very smart, nor fine, nor fashionable—and that is everything, nowadays, with many people—yet it is far better than misusing language as it is misused when bricks, stones and mortar receive a tittle belonging exclusively to godly men and women!

However, it appears that Philemon had a Church in his house—a Church largely, if not exclusively, composed of his own family. He was privileged to possess a godly wife—the beloved Apphia—their sons and daughters walked in their parents’ footsteps. And their servants and even their visitor, Archippus, were members of this Church which was in the house of Philemon.

**I.**Now let me attempt to describe A CHURCH IN A HOUSE, meaning, all the while, to be asking you WHETHER YOU HAVE A CHURCH IN YOUR HOUSE.

*A Church, according to the New Testament, consists of converted persons,* or persons who profess to be converted. No visible Church is absolutely pure. A Church must be taken upon its own profession, consisting as it does of persons who avow themselves to be followers of and Believers in Christ, having been converted from darkness to light by the Spirit of God. Well, then, I see, in a family where there is a Church, a godly father and a godly mother rejoicing over converted sons and daughters—and glad and able to entrust their household affairs to Christian servants. It cannot be a Church, whatever profession may be made, unless there is the Grace of God there. It may be nominally such, but it cannot be really so. A family is not born a Church and the little ones born into the family are not born into the Church. They must be born-again before they can be members of the Church—there must have been the work of the Spirit of God in the hearts of the members of the family before they can form a Church in the house.

But it strikes me that a number of converted people are not necessarily a Church. In order to form a Church, *they must worship together.* Happy is the household which meets every morning for prayer! Happy are they who let not the evening depart without uniting in supplication! Brothers and Sisters, I wish it were more common—I wish it were universal, with all professors of religion—to have family prayer! We sometimes hear of the children of Christian parents who do not grow up in the fear of God and we are asked how it is that they turn out so badly. In many, very many cases, I fear there is such a neglect of family worship that it is not probable that the children are at all impressed by any piety supposed to be possessed by their parents! Family prayer in our old Puritan households was a matter of very great importance. Let me tell you what Philip Henry used to do. He was a minister and of course had more time to give to it than many of you in business have. But he went through the whole Bible in course, expounding it, chapter by chapter, and accompanying it by prayer and singing. One reason he gave for singing was that it was like Rahab’s tying the crimson line in the window—everyone who went by would know what she had done—and he said that the sound of singing at family prayers was a distinct confession that that family loved and worshipped God! He called his children together on Thursdays and catechized them upon the General Assembly’s Catechism and upon the lessons through which they had gone during the week.

Perhaps you will think that this was very dreary work, but what will you say when I tell you that that good man’s son, Mr. Matthew Henry, wrote his famous *Commentary* from the notes which he took of his father’s expositions at morning and evening prayers? Young lads do not take notes of dreary things, you may depend upon it! Catch them at that, if you can. We do not find our boys taking down heavy sermons, but they have no objection to putting down anything which strikes and interests them. That family of Mr. Henry, to which I have referred, was so well ordered that very often visitors to the house who were unconverted when they went there, were converted during their visit! Now I do not suppose that you could, all of you, expound the Scriptures like that! And you could not all, perhaps, sing. But I do think we might, all of us, manage to come together once a day at least—twice, if possible—for the worship of God in the household. Remember what Matthew Henry says—“They who pray in the family, do well. They who read and pray, do better. But they who sing, and read, and pray, do best of all.” If we want to bring up a godly family who shall be a seed to serve God when our heads are under the clods of the valley, let us seek to train them up in the fear of God by meeting together as a family for worship. I do not see how there can be a Church without worship—and I do not see how there can be a Church in a house unless there is constant worship in the family.

But there must be something more than this before there can be a Church. A Church is not merely a company of people meeting for worship—*there must be some bond of unity.*A load of bricks is not a house—the bricks must be fitly framed and cemented together—and then they grow into a house. So a Church is fitly framed together and grows into a holy temple for the Lord. Now, dear Friends, there must be a knitting of hearts among Christians in families. Of course, they will love each other from the ties of the flesh, but they should also love each other from the higher ties of the Spirit. There is no reason why, without breaking through any of the gradations that must necessarily exist in society, there should not be a bond of unity taking in the whole family— master, mistress, children and servants. In the olden times, in the days of such men as Abraham, the servants were a part of the family. Nowadays, people change their servants once a month and there are some servants who stay too long even then! But it strikes me that good masters and good mistresses make good servants—and where love and kindness are shown, it will not always, nor often, be the case that the servants will be a social evil. Instead of that, they will be a great benefit. And a wise, prudent, Christian servant becomes as much a part of the household as even a child. To make a Church, there must be a feeling of union. I should like to see the clan-feeling in our families in which every servant would stand up for the master’s honor, and everyone would seek the good of the entire family—and even when the children were grown up and scattered, it would be well to see them still duly respecting the ties of Christian kindred and seeking to promote the good and the unity of the whole.

And to make a Church, *there must be oversight.* A Church is not a complete Church without a pastor, its elders and its deacons. A Church in the house will have its elders. There need not be any election of these because they are already elected. The parents will naturally take the oversight of the little Church that is in the house. If you want a pastor, the father should be the priest in his own house. He is the most fitting teacher, expounder and example. Then who are to be your deacons? Why, those who have to go out to the factory, when the bell rings in the morning, and who help to provide food for the household! And there is another we must not forget—that gentle one who goes so noiselessly about the house to see after her husband and children, and who produces a thousand happy thoughts by that kind way of hers. Sometimes the oversight of the household will fall to the lot of the eldest son, or daughter, but sometimes some long-abiding servant, some old housekeeper virtually becomes the presiding genius. There must be oversight and God sometimes graciously sends to families those who are more advanced in spiritual things who become, as it were, the officers of the Church in the house.

A Church in the house must, of course, *be furnished with instruction.* One of the first reasons why there is a Church at all is to teach the members. We are formed into Churches for mutual edification. Ah, dear Friends, how much youthful piety receives edification in those households where the parents set a godly example! Wonderful is the influence of the mother upon her son. You recollect the case of the mighty Byron, who seems to have been a sort of fallen angel who flew across the sky like a thunderbolt from a Satanic hand. What was his mother? Why, a very passionate woman who frequently threw the tongs at her own son in her passion! Of course she had a wild and passionate son. Look, on the other hand, at the meek and gentle bard of Olney, pouring forth notes that were almost fit for Heaven. What sort of mother had Cowper? You know her character well, as her son has described it in

the lines beginning— ***“Oh, that those lips had language!”***  
Let Christian parents, forming a Church in their house, look to the formation of the character of their children, especially their converted children—and let them not overlook their converted servants! With an ardent and a longing desire, strive to build them up in the faith and help them to grow in Divine Grace and in the knowledge of the Lord. You Christian fathers ought to take care, as far as your means allow, to provide your children with instructive books. I do not mean dull books, but good, interesting books, at once instructive and attractive, that may teach them the way of God more perfectly. Whenever you have the opportunity, let drop a word which will strike the child’s attention and remain in its heart. Just as I, as a preacher, would never miss an opportunity of saying anything here which I met with in the week, and which I thought you ought to hear, so let the Christian father be studying each day how he may instruct the Church in his house in the fear of the Lord more perfectly!

I think I have now described the Church so far as its organization is concerned, but I cannot very well describe it all. You must go and live in the midst of such a Church to understand thoroughly what it is like. Mr. Talkative, in “*The Pilgrim’s Progress*,” was a very fine fellow abroad and had a great deal to say about religion. But what was he at home? Ah, nothing could be said of him *there* worth the hearing! Where there is a Church in the house, every member strives to increase the other’s comfort, all seek to promote each other’s holiness, each one endeavors to discharge his duty according to the position in which he is placed in that Church. And when they meet together, their prayers are earnest and fervent, and all their actions are not the actions of a worldly family, but of those who have tasted that the Lord is gracious!

One thing more. *A Church is really worth nothing at all if it does not try to extend itself.*And a Church in a house is no true Church if it is satisfied without endeavoring to bring in every member of the family. If you have half a dozen converted, but there are seven of you, never leave off praying till you have the seventh! And if, in God’s mercy, He has given you ten out of eleven, there are ten reasons why you should be in earnest for the conversion of the eleventh. Plead with the Master till your little Church shall have swallowed up the whole of your congregation! A happy day will it be for us when the Church in the Tabernacle fills every pew, but you may come at your results sooner than we can come at ours. May the day soon come when the Church in your house shall include every person in the family, not one being left out! What a happy world it would be if there were such a Church in every house! It would be Heaven begun below! The angels might then mistake earth for Heaven and linger so long that they would need to be recalled to Paradise, making the mistake that they were already in Paradise! Oh, may we live to see the day when walking down a street in London, we shall hear, at the appointed hour in every house, the song of praise and know that no door will be locked for the night till first the Lord has been asked to keep watch and ward over the slumbering household!

**II.**Having thus described a Church in a house, I propose what I cannot often accomplish among you, though I wish I could, and that is TO PAY YOU A PASTORAL VISIT.

I am going to knock at your door, take a chair and sit down, and ask you a few simple questions. The first is, *Have you a Church in your house?*“No,” says one, “I am the only converted one in the house.” Ah, dear Friend, I can understand the difficulty of your position, but I can also rejoice in the hopefulness of your being there, trusting that it is a token for good to the house! Now that the Lord has sent one spark of fire there, may there soon be a flame! “Well,” says another, “we have several Christians in our house, but I cannot say that there is a Church here.” I like your honesty, my Friend, but may I tell you what I suspect is the reason why there are so many houses that have Christians in them, but no Churches? It often is because those Christians are inconsistent. Why, if some of you were not professors of religion, you would be very decent sort of people—but being professors, the way in which you act and speak is detestable! You may think this strong language, but I know it is true. There are some families where the father, instead of exhibiting the gentleness and kindness of a Christian, well-near scares the children from the very thought of godliness! There are some households where the wife is a gadding busybody, whose slovenliness and dirt might well disgust her husband at the very thought of going to the House of Prayer. There are some children professing godliness who have not yet learned the Commandment which tells them to obey their parents! And there are some professedly Christian servants who are eye-servers, not remembering what Paul has said to such. One of the worst evils we have to deal with, as Christians, is the evil of inconsistency at home! Whenever I see a professed Christian walking among his household as though he were a tyrant, letting no one come near him, without affection or kindness and simply a domineering master, I ask—Where is the Grace of God in that man? And I ask the same question with respect to other faults. O Beloved, do make your households happy! You cannot make them holy if you do not shine with genial cheerfulness. And you Christian people in households, do seek to act so that you may not be a disgrace to your profession, but may form a true Church in the house where you dwell together.

While I thus speak, perhaps you will say that I am exposing too much of that domestic economy over which you judge it convenient to drop a veil. It is my duty to tell you the truth plainly, so listen to it attentively. “Well,” someone says, “I thank God that I have a Church in my house.” Then I thank God, too, and we will together praise and bless Him for His great mercy. But I must now ask you, *Who are the members?* “Well, there is Father.” Oh, I am so glad, because your father has so much to do with the management and if he who holds the reins cannot drive, there will be some mistakes. I am glad your father is converted. “Ah!” says one, “but my father is *not* converted.” Then, I am sorry. O Father, I beseech you, let your child’s prayer come into your ears as well as into God’s ears! You will be a curse to your family if you are not a blessing! And I know you do not want to be a bane to your offspring. But with some of you, the father is converted and the mother is converted, too. I am glad of that, because parents—and mothers in particular—have a sweet influence on the family and the little ones. Well, then, let us see. Is John converted? Is the eldest son yet made a partaker of Divine Grace? “Yes.” Oh, then that is a mercy, because elder brothers have so much to do, by their example, in inclining younger brothers rightly or wrongly. And Emily—is she converted? That is a happy thing, if it is so, for she, also, will have a great influence for good upon the younger ones. Now where does it stop? I hope it does not stop at the servants—are they converted? Happy is the master who has Christian servants! And I speak experimentally when I say this. It is a great comfort to you to have those about you who really do fear God.

Yes, but we must not forget any who are in the household. I must ask you, *Who are they who are not converted?*The very little ones, of course, are too young to understand, so we will leave them in the hands of a Covenant God and plead with Him for them. But are there not some who can understand, but who are not yet converted? “Ah,” says the mother, “do not ask me about that,” and she brushes away a tear. And the father says, “It is a painful subject.” Yes, it is a painful subject, but we must mention it, because some of them are here tonight. You would not willfully give your parents pain, young man, would you? I know your desire is to comfort them and there can be no greater joy to them than to know that their children are walking in the Truth of God. And among the servants, there is the nursemaid—is she brought in? And there is the kitchen-boy—do not leave him out! A Church in a house is not complete till it comprises everybody in the house, from the dishwasher up to the master. Yes, and if there is a friend staying there, the Church is not complete till the friend is also converted. Now, I cannot expect you all to answer me, but I still hope that you will do it quietly to yourselves. How many members are there in the Church in your house? Who are members and who are not?

Then, by your leave, I shall ask you another question, and that is, *As you have a Church consisting of so many members, what are you doing for Christ?*It is no use having a Church that is not doing anything. As a family, are you seeking to extend the bounds of Messiah’s Kingdom within your own sphere? Dr. Guthrie advocates Territorial Missions and a very admirable scheme it is to advocate. And I give him all honor for it, but I will tonight take the liberty of advocating Home Missions. I do not mean missions that have to do with anything outside, but missions to the kitchen, the parlor, the drawing-room and every room up to the attic—missions in which every single one in the family shall be concerned. I hope that, as a Church in the house, you will not have a neglected district in the house. Some of you go out tract-distributing— begin at home! Some of you preach—begin to preach at home. Hard work that, because those to whom you preach know how you practice! If you cannot preach at home because your practice runs counter to your preaching, do not preach at all—for a man has no right to talk and instruct others it he cannot, at least in some measure, live out what he teaches!

**III.**Before leaving, however, I venture to GIVE A LITTLE ADVICE AS TO THE WAY OF HAVING A CHURCH IN A HOUSE.  
It must be brought about, of course, by Divine Grace. The Holy Spirit is the great Agent, but still He uses means. You young woman—yes, you—you are thinking about being engaged to that young man. You are a professed Christian, but he is a worldling. Now, do you ever expect to have a Church in your house at that rate? And may I ask you—do you know what you are doing? I see some of you are smiling. Well, you may smile as much as you can now, for you will never have much smiling after, I can tell you that! If you want to wither your happiness forever, you have only to go and be yoked with an unbeliever. I have known some Christian women who have forgotten the Divine precept and have been married to ungodly men. And I have seen godly men married to ungodly women. And mark this—my experience has not been very long, but it has been very wide—*I never knew any good come of it.*I have always seen misery as the result and in nine cases out of ten, backsliding has followed—often final, too—proving that the person committing that sin had no Grace at all! We do not often talk about these things when we are preaching, but we ought to talk about them a great deal more than we do. I do beseech you, young Christian people, if you hope to have God’s blessing, take care that you do not get “unequally yoked with unbelievers.”  
Then, supposing the house is already started, I have this advice to give. *If you want to bring in others of the family who are not converted, make them happy.*There are a great many more flies caught with honey than with vinegar, and there are a great many more persons brought to God by love than there are by pitiless declamations. “The love of Christ constrains,” not only after we are saved, but it is often the constraining means of bringing us to be saved. Let us imitate Puritan theology in its soundness and Puritan living in its holiness, but not in its gloom—if, indeed, it was gloomy, which I very much question. Let the Christian family be the most cheerful household anywhere! And if I might venture on the advice, let me say, *never make Sunday doleful and sad*. Some people do. Why, I think Sunday should be to the household the bright day of the week—the day when the father is at home—the day when the mother is not at work—the day when John comes home to spend a few hours—the day when they all go to the House of God and sing— ***“I have been there, and still would go  
‘Tis like a little Heaven below.”***  
Oh, make your households to be like flower gardens—plant no thorns and root out all ill weeds of discontent! Depend upon it, household happiness is a great means of promoting household holiness!  
And let me entreat you, dear Friends, to *be much in prayer for those who are not converted.*“Yes,” says the mother, “my unconverted boy is gone away from home.” Well, but your prayers can follow him! See the

case of Philemon and Onesimus. [See Sermon #1268, Volume 21—THE STORY OF A RUNAWAY SLAVE—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at

http://www.spurgeongems.org.] Onesimus had run away with some of his master’s money, but his master sent his prayers after him and, by-andby, there came a sheriff’s officer to arrest him—not one of Caesar’s officers, but one of God’s. It was the Apostle Paul who, in the preaching of the Word of God, arrested the runaway servant and he went back to his master saved! How do you know but that your son will come home converted? How do you know, Mother, but that you will yet see your daughter rejoicing in Christ? Never cease praying for them till the breath is out of their bodies, but continue in supplication till they are brought into the Church in your house!

But O you Christians who wish to make a Church in your house, *do not let your own inconsistencies mar any good work in others!* Above all, *do not have any disagreements among yourselves.*Talk not in such a way that good impressions, once happily made, become wretchedly marred. I have heard of a wife walking home with her husband from a place of worship. He was an ungodly man. She had often prayed for him and he went with her to hear the sermon. She had been praying that he might be blessed and yet, in walking home, she was foolish enough to begin criticizing the sermon. She asked him how he liked it and he made no answer. She began pulling it to pieces, till at last he stopped her and said, “My dear wife, you have often prayed to God that I might be blessed. God has blessed that sermon to me this morning and I cannot bear to hear you speak of it as you have been speaking.” I know this is a fault with many Christians—not that we ministers care at all what you say about us, except for the evil you often do in spoiling to others that which does not happen to suit your fastidious taste, for you may in that way be doing the devil’s work.

**IV.**The last thing I want to say to you is this. LOOK ONWARDS A MINUTE.  
When Halyburton lay a-dying, he said, among other joyous expressions, “I bless God that I have a father in Heaven! I bless God that I have a mother in Heaven! I bless God that I have ten brothers and sisters in Heaven! I am the last of the family and I shall be in Heaven within an hour!” This was a glorious thought! What a happy meeting theirs would be! Spirits “are neither married nor given in marriage,” nor are social ties respected there, but still, I cannot conceive of Halyburton’s family but as making up a constellation like the Pleiades, all meekly and gently shining together to the praise of God!  
I saw in a house, the other day, a very singular picture of the Resurrection. It was supposed to represent the resurrection of a Christian family. The artist was not very imaginative, but still he had done it pretty well. The big stone that covered the tomb was just broken in halves and you saw coming up at the top some of the little ones, those latest buried. There were three or four of them stretching their wings upwards. Of course, this represented as much the resurrection of the soul as of the body in the artist’s mind, it was rather a complicated metaphor. Then there were the father and mother, and a number of grandchildren—and I was glad to see that there were the grandfather and grandmother, both coming up from one tomb, and going up together to the Throne of God. I only hope that, though some of us may be buried in distant lands and—  
***“Our graves are scattered far and wide,  
By fount, and stream, and sea”—***  
yet, practically, we may rise together when the last trumpet sounds, an unbroken family!  
I may be excused, perhaps, for referring to God’s singular mercy to my own household. What a blessing it is to my father and mother now that they can rejoice in six of their children walking in the Truth of God who have given themselves up to the Lord Jesus! The Lord has been graciously pleased to bring them in, one by one, and all who have now reached years of discretion, so as to be able to understand the Gospel, have believed in Jesus Christ! And in generations that have gone by, my grandfather could say the same, and *his* father could say the same of his house! We have been a race of those whom God has blessed. May it be your privilege, also, beloved members of this Church! I cannot wish you a greater blessing. If I knew how to bestow the greatest blessing upon you, I think my knowledge would not amount to more than this, that, being yourselves saved, you might have all your families walking in the Truth of God and, speaking after the manner of men, why should it not be the case with you? Prayer, earnest and mighty prayer, gets no denial from the Throne of God!—  
***“Faith, mighty faith, the promise sees,”***  
and claims its fulfillment, “for the promise is unto you and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even to as many as the Lord our God shall call.” God’s eternal purpose stands fast and fixed, we know, but when He moves His people’s hearts to pray, He intends to bless. We will be more earnest in praying for one another than we have been. We will be more earnest in praying about our children than we have been. And may God grant us Grace so that we may, all of us, be able to say that we have a Church in our house! “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ”—this is the foundation of the Church and they who have believed are members of Christ’s Church and so see His face in the midst of the one family in Heaven and earth, which is named by Him as “the general assembly and Church of the first-born, which are written in Heaven.” God grant that, of this Church, both we and ours may all be members!

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: *PHILEMON.***

**Verse 1.***Paul, a prisoner of Jesus Christ.*This is one of Paul’s private letters, though it has the stamp of Inspiration upon it. It was not written concerning Church business, nor to teach some great doctrinal Truth of God, but there was a runaway slave who had come to Rome and who had been converted under Paul’s ministry. Paul was sending him back to his master—and this was the letter which he was to take with him, to make some sort of apology for him and to ask his master to receive him with kindness and to forgive his fault. Every word of this Epistle is very wisely put. Paul begins by calling himself “a prisoner of Jesus Christ.” Who would not grant him his desire when he was wearing a chain for Christ’s sake? If a letter were to come to you from some beloved minister whom you knew to be lying in a dungeon and likely soon to die, you would be greatly touched if you noticed the traces of the rust of his chains on the letter. “Paul, a prisoner of Jesus Christ.”

**1, 2.***And Timothy our brother, unto Philemon our dearly beloved, and fellow laborer, and to our beloved Apphia, and Archippus our fellow soldier, and to the Church in your house.*He joins Timothy with himself to give double weight to the message. Probably Timothy was well known to Philemon and much respected by him, so he puts Timothy’s name that there might be two to plead with him. Then, notice the loving titles with which Paul addresses Philemon—“our dearly beloved, and fellow laborer.” Probably the person whom Paul called, “beloved Apphia” was Philemon’s wife, so he writes to her, also, for perhaps the wife was the more tenderhearted of the two, so she might put in a good word for Onesimus—and her husband would all the more readily grant Paul’s request. He also mentions Archippus, who was either the pastor of the Church at Colosse, or an Evangelist who stayed occasionally at the house of Philemon. So he mentions him with all the rest of the household who met there for worship and so made up the Church in the house.

**3-7.***Grace to you, and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. I thank my God, making mention of you always in my prayers, hearing of your love and faith which you have toward the Lord Jesus, and toward all saints; that the communication of your faith may become effectual by the acknowledging of every good thing which is in you in Christ Jesus. For we have great joy and consolation in your love because the hearts of the saints are refreshed by you, Brother.* Paul recalls how much Philemon had done in the comforting of persecuted and poor saints. And when you are about to ask a favor of anyone, it is well to show your gratitude for what you or others have already received from him.

**8, 9.***Therefore though I might be much bold in Christ to enjoin you that which is convenient, yet for love’s sake I rather beseech you, being such an one as Paul the aged, and now, also, a prisoner of Jesus Christ.*He says in effect, “I am an Apostle and I am your spiritual father, so I might have spoken with authority to you and have said, ‘It is your duty to do this.’ But I am not going to do anything of the kind. I am going to plead with you and beseech it of you as a kindness and a favor. Pay a loving tribute to my old age and, besides that, I am a prisoner shut up in the dungeon for Christ’s sake—hear the clanking of my chains, and grant my request for love’s sake.’”

**10.***I beseech you for my son Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my bonds.* “He came to hear me preach in the prison. He has been listening to me while I am still a captive and he has been given to me, as another son in the Gospel, to be a comfort to me in my bonds. I beseech you for him.”

**11, 12.***Which in time past was to you unprofitable, but now profitable to you and to me: whom I have sent again.*“He was your slave, and therefore I have sent him back to you.”

**12.***You therefore receive him, that is, my own heart.* “Look upon him as though he were my very heart and receive him as you would receive me if I could go to you.”

**13, 14.***Whom I would have retained with me, that in your place he might have ministered unto me in the bonds of the Gospel: but without your permission would I do nothing; that your benefit should not be as it were of necessity, but willingly.*“I would have kept him,” says Paul, “for I need someone to be my companion, to comfort me in my distress. But I would not do it without asking your permission, lest I should seem to take advantage of you. Though I know that you would willingly consent to it, yet, nevertheless, that it might be perfectly voluntary on your part, I have sent him back to you, that you may do as you will with him.”

**15-17.***For perhaps he therefore departed for a season, that you should receive him forever; not now as a servant, but above a servant, a beloved Brother, especially to me, but how much more unto you, both in the flesh, and in the Lord? If you count me therefore a partner.* “If you have true fellowship and communion with me”—

**17.***Receive him as myself.*How beautifully this is put all through! It very much reminds me of our Lord Jesus Christ, who seems to say to the Divine Father, “This poor child is in fellowship with Me. Receive him, therefore, as Myself.” And this is just what God does in the case of repenting and believing sinners—He receives them just as if He could see Christ in them.

**18.***If he has wronged you, or owes you anything, put that on my account.* How generously this is put by this poor prisoner at Rome and how gloriously, in this, he is like our Master who stands as Surety for us!

**19.***I, Paul, have written it with my own hand, I will repay it: albeit I do not say to you how you owe unto me even your own self besides.* Paul had been the means of Philemon’s conversion, so he was immeasurably in debt to the Apostle. But Paul only gently reminds him of the fact as a reason why he should deal kindly with Onesimus for his sake.

**20.***Yes, Brother, let me have joy of you in the Lord: refresh my heart in the Lord.* “You have refreshed others, then, surely, you will not now let me be without refreshment! You have been very kind to all sorts of saints, then you cannot be unkind to the man who is your own spiritual father.”

**21.***Having confidence in your obedience I wrote unto you, knowing that you will do more than I say.*This is delicately yet forcibly put, and we feel certain that Philemon must have done as Paul wished, even though we have no record of the fact.

**22-25.***But withal prepare me also a lodging: for I trust that through your prayers I shall be given unto you. There salute you Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus; Marcus, Aristarchus, Demas, Lucas, my fellow laborers. The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen.*

*—Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307*  
**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.** Sermon #1268 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

THE STORY OF A RUNAWAY SLAVE

NO. 1268

*DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

***“Perhaps he therefore departed for a season,  
that you should receive him forever.”***Phm 1:15***.***

NATURE is selfish but Grace is loving. He who boasts that he cares for nobody and nobody cares for him, is the reverse of a Christian, for Jesus Christ enlarges the heart when He cleanses it. None so tender and sympathetic as our Master and if we are truly His disciples, the same mind will be in us which was also in Christ Jesus. The Apostle Paul was eminently large-hearted and sympathetic. Surely he had enough to do at Rome to bear his own troubles and to preach the Gospel. If, like the priest in the parable of the good Samaritan, he had, “passed by on the other side,” he might have been excused, for he was on the urgent business of that Master who once said to His 70 messengers, “Salute no man by the way.”

We might not have wondered if Paul had said, “I cannot find time to attend to the needs of a runaway slave.” But Paul was not of that mind. He had been preaching and Onesimus had been converted—and from now on he regarded him as his own son. I do not know why Onesimus came to Paul. Perhaps he went to him as a great many scapegraces have come to me—because their fathers knew me. And so, as Onesimus’ master had known Paul, the servant applied to his master’s friend, perhaps to beg some little help in his extremity. Anyway, Paul seized the opportunity and preached Jesus to him and the runaway slave became a Believer in the Lord Jesus Christ!

Paul watched him, admired the character of his convert and was glad to be served by him. And when Paul thought it right that he should return to his master, Philemon, he took a deal of trouble to compose a letter of apology for him, a letter which shows long thinking, since every word is well selected. Although the Holy Spirit dictated it, Inspiration does not prevent a man’s exercising thought and care on what he writes. Every word is chosen for a purpose. If he had been pleading for himself, he could not have pleaded more earnestly or wisely. Paul, as you know, was not accustomed to write letters with his own hand, but dictated to a secretary.

It is supposed that he had an affection of the eyes and, therefore, when he did write, he used large capital letters, as he says in one of the Epistles, “You see how large a letter I have written unto you with my own hand.” The Epistle was not a large one, but he probably alluded to the largeness of the characters which he was obliged to use whenever he, himself, wrote. This letter to Philemon, at least part of it, was not dictated, but was written by his own hand. See the 19th verse. “I, Paul, have written it with my own hand. I will repay it.” It is the only note of hand which I recall in Scripture, but there it is—an I O U for whatever amount Onesimus

may have stolen!  
Let us cultivate a large-hearted spirit and sympathize with the people of  
God, especially with new converts, if we find them in trouble through past  
wrongdoing. If anything needs setting right, do not let us condemn them  
off-hand and say, “You have been stealing from your master, have you?  
You profess to be converted, but we do not believe it.” Such suspicious  
and severe treatment may be deserved, but it is not such as the love of  
Christ would suggest. Try and set the fallen ones right and give them  
again, as we say, “a fair start in the world.” If God has forgiven them,  
surely *we* may, and if Jesus Christ has received them, they cannot be too  
bad for us to receive! Let us do for them what Jesus would have done had  
He been here—so shall we truly be the disciples of Jesus.  
Thus I introduce to you the text, and I notice concerning it, first, that it  
contains *a singular instance of Divine Grace*. Secondly, it brings before us  
*a case of sin overruled*. And, thirdly, it may be regarded as *an example of  
relationship improved by Grace*, for now he that was a servant for a season  
will abide with Philemon all his lifetime and be no more a servant, but a  
beloved Brother in Christ.  
**I.**But, first, let us look at Onesimus as AN INSTANCE OF DIVINE  
GRACE. We see the Grace of God in his *election*. He was a slave. In those  
days slaves were very ignorant, untaught and degraded. Being barbarously used, they were for the most part, themselves sunk in the lowest  
barbarism. Neither did their masters attempt to raise them out of it. It is  
possible that Philemon’s attempt to do good to Onesimus may have been  
irksome to the man and he may, therefore, have fled from his house. His  
master’s prayers, warnings and Christian regulations may have been disagreeable to him and therefore he ran away.  
He wronged his master, which he would scarcely have done if he had  
not been treated as a confidential servant to some extent. Possibly the  
unusual kindness of Philemon and the trust reposed in him may have  
been too much for his untrained nature. We know not what he stole, but  
evidently he had taken *something*, for the Apostle says, “If he has wronged  
you, or owes you anything, put that on my account.” He ran away from  
Colosse, therefore, and thinking that he would be less likely to be discovered by the ministers of justice, he sought the city of Rome which was,  
then, as large as the city of London is now, and perhaps larger. There, in those back slums, such as the Jews’ quarter in Rome now is,  
Onesimus would go and hide. Or among those gangs of thieves which infested the imperial city, he would not be known or heard of any more, so  
he thought—and he could live the free and easy life of a thief. Yet, mark  
you, the Lord looked out of Heaven with an eye of love and set that eye on  
Onesimus! Were there no *free men*, that God must elect a *slave*? Were  
there no faithful servants, that He must choose one who had embezzled  
his master’s money? Were there none of the educated and polite, that He  
must look upon a barbarian? Were there none among the moral and the  
excellent that Infinite Love should fix itself upon this degraded being who  
was now mixed up with the very scum of society?  
And what the scum of society was in old Rome I should not like to  
think, for the upper classes were about as brutalized in their general habits as we can very well conceive! What the lowest scum of all must have  
been, none of us can tell. Onesimus was part and parcel of the dregs of a  
sink of sin. Read Paul’s first chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, if you  
can, and you will see in what a horrible state the heathen world was, at  
that time. And Onesimus was among the worst of the worst! And yet Eternal Love, which passed by kings and princes and left Pharisees and Sadducees, philosophers and magi to stumble in the dark as they chose, fixed  
its eyes upon this poor benighted creature that he might be made a vessel  
to honor, fit for the Master’s use!—  
***“When the Eternal bows the skies  
To visit earthly things,  
With scorn Divine He turns His eyes  
From towers of haughty kings.  
He bids His awful chariot roll  
Far downward from the skies,  
To visit every humble soul,  
With pleasure in His eyes.  
Why should the Lord that reigns above  
Disdain so lofty kings?  
Say, Lord, and why such looks of love  
Upon such worthless things?  
Mortals are dumb; what creature dares  
Dispute His awful will?  
Ask no account of His affairs,  
But tremble and be still.  
Just like His nature is His Grace,  
All sovereign, and all free  
Great God, how searchless are Your ways  
How deep your judgments be!”***  
“I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion  
on whom I will have compassion,” rolls like thunder from the Cross of  
Calvary and from the Mount of Sinai. The Lord is Sovereign and does as  
He pleases. Let us admire that marvelous electing love which selected  
such a one as Onesimus!  
Grace, also, is to be observed, in the next place, in the *conversion* of  
this runaway slave. Look at him! How unlikely he appears to become a  
convert. He is an Asiatic slave of about the same grade as an ordinary  
Lascar, or heathen Chinese. He was, however, worse than the ordinary  
Lascar who is certainly free and probably an honest man, if he is nothing  
else. This man had been dishonest and he was daring, for after taking his  
master’s property he was bold enough to make a long journey from Colosse to reach Rome. But Everlasting Love means to convert the man—and  
converted he shall be!  
He may have heard Paul preach at Colosse and Athens, but yet he had  
not been impressed. In Rome, Paul was not preaching in St. Peter’s—it  
was in no such noble building! Paul was not preaching in a place like the  
Tabernacle, where Onesimus could have a comfortable seat—no such  
place as that—but it was probably down there at the back of the Palatine  
Hill, where the praetorian guard have their lodgings and where there was  
a prison called the Praetorian. In a bare room in the barrack prison Paul sat with a soldier chained to his hand, preaching to all who were admitted to hear him—and *there* it was that the Grace of God reached the heart of this wild young man, and, oh, what an immediate change it made in  
him!  
Now you see him repenting of his sin, grieved to think he has wronged  
a good man, vexed to see the depravity of his heart as well as the error of  
his life. He weeps. Paul preaches to him Christ crucified and the glance of  
joy is in his eye—and from that heavy heart a load is taken! New thoughts  
light up that dark mind! The very face is changed and the entire man renewed, for the Grace of God can turn a lion into a lamb, the raven into a  
dove! Some of us, I have no doubt, are quite as wonderful instances of Divine election and effectual calling as Onesimus was. Let us, therefore, record the lovingkindness of the Lord and let us say to ourselves, “Christ  
shall have the glory of it. The Lord has done it and unto the Lord be  
honor, world without end.”  
The Grace of God was conspicuous in *the character which it worked in  
Onesimus* upon his conversion, for he appears to have been helpful, useful and profitable. So Paul says. Paul was willing to have had him as an  
associate and it is not every man that is converted that we should altogether choose as a companion. There are odd people to be met with who  
will go to Heaven, we have no doubt, for they are pilgrims on the right  
way. But we would like to keep on the other side of the road, for they are  
cross-grained and there is a something about them that one’s nature can  
no more delight in than the palate can take pleasure in nauseous medicine. They are a sort of spiritual hedgehogs—they are alive and useful  
and, no doubt, they illustrate the wisdom and patience of God—but they  
are not good companions. One would not like to carry them in his bosom. But Onesimus was evidently of a kind, tender, loving spirit. Paul at  
once called him Brother and would have liked to retain him. When he sent  
him back, was it not a clear proof of a change of heart in Onesimus that  
he would go back? Away as he was in Rome, he might have passed on  
from one town to another and have remained perfectly free. But feeling  
that he was under some kind of bond to his master—especially since he  
had injured him—he takes Paul’s advice to return to his old position. He  
will go back and take a letter of apology or introduction to his master, for  
he knows that it is his duty to make reparation for the wrong that he has  
done.  
I always like to see a resolve to make restitution of former wrongs in  
people who profess to be converted. If they have taken any money wrongfully, they ought to repay it. It were well if they returned sevenfold. If we  
have, in any way, robbed or wronged another, I think the first instincts of  
Grace in the heart will suggest compensation in all ways within our  
power. Do not think it is to be got over by saying, “God has forgiven me  
and, therefore, I may leave it.” No, dear Friend, but inasmuch as God has  
forgiven you, try to undo all the wrong and prove the sincerity of your repentance by so doing.  
So Onesimus will go back to Philemon and work out his term of years  
with him, or otherwise do Philemon’s wishes, for though he might have  
preferred to wait upon Paul, his first duty was due to the man whom he had injured. That showed a gentle, humble, honest, upright spirit and let Onesimus be commended for it—no, let the Grace of God be extolled for it! Look at the difference between the man who robbed and the man who now comes back to be profitable to his master. What wonders the Grace of God has done! Brethren, let me add—what wonders the Grace of God can do! Many plans are employed in the world for the reformation of the wicked and the reclaiming of the fallen—and to every one of these, as far as they are rightly bottomed, we wish good success—for whatever things are lovely  
and pure, and of good report, we wish them God speed.  
But mark this word—the true reforming of the drunk lies in giving him  
a new *heart*! The true reclaiming of the harlot is to be found in a renewed  
*nature*! Purity will never come to fallen women by those hideous Contagious Diseases Acts, which, to my mind, wear, like Cain, a curse upon  
their forehead! Womanhood will but sink lower under such laws. The harlot must be washed in the Savior’s blood or she will never be clean! The  
lowest strata of society will never be brought into the light of virtue, sobriety and purity except by Jesus Christ and His Gospel—and we must stick  
to that. Let all others do what they like, but God forbid that I should glory  
save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.  
I see certain of my Brethren fiddling away at the branches of the tree of  
vice with their wooden saws, but, as for the Gospel, it lays the axe at the  
roots of the whole forest of evil! And if it is fairly received into the heart it  
fells all the upas trees at once—and instead of them, there spring up the  
fir tree, the pine tree and the box tree together—to beautify the house of  
our Master’s Glory! Let us, when we see what the Spirit of God can do for  
men, publish the Grace of God and extol it with all our might! **II.**And now, secondly, we have in our text and its connections, a very  
interesting INSTANCE OF SIN OVERRULED. Onesimus had no right to  
rob his master and run away. But God was pleased to make use of that  
crime for his conversion. It brought him to Rome and so brought him  
where Paul was preaching—and thus it brought him to Christ and to his  
right mind. Now, when we speak of this, we must be cautious. When Paul  
says, “Perhaps he departed for a season, that you should receive him forever,” he does not excuse his departure. He does not make it out that  
Onesimus did right—not for a moment! Sin is sin, and, whatever sin may  
be overruled to do, yet sin is *still* sin!  
The crucifixion of our Savior has brought the greatest conceivable  
blessings upon mankind, yet, none the less, it was “with wicked hands”  
that they took Jesus and crucified Him. The selling of Joseph into Egypt  
was the means in the hand of God for the preservation of Jacob and his  
sons in the time of famine. But his brothers had nothing to do with that  
and they were, none the less, guilty for having sold their brother for a  
slave. Let it always be remembered that the faultiness or virtue of an act  
is not contingent upon the result of that act.  
If, for instance, a man who has been set on a railway to turn the switch  
forgets to do it, you call it a very great crime if the train comes to mischief  
and a dozen people are killed. Yes, but the crime is the same if *nobody* is  
killed. It is not the *result* of the carelessness, but the carelessness, itself,  
which deserves punishment. If it were the man’s duty to turn the switch in such-and-such a way, and his not doing so should even by some strange accident turn to the saving of life, the man would be equally blameworthy. There would be no credit due to him, for if his duty lies in a certain line his fault also lies in a certain line, namely, the neglecting of  
that duty.  
So if God overrules sin for good, as He sometimes does, it is none the  
less sin. It is sin just as much as ever, only there is so much the more  
glory to the wonderful wisdom and Grace of God who, out of evil, brings  
forth good and so does what only Omnipotent Wisdom can perform. Onesimus is not excused, then, for having embezzled his master’s goods nor  
for having left him without permission—he still is a transgressor—but  
God’s Grace is glorified. Remember, too, that this must be noticed—that  
when Onesimus left his master, he was performing an action, the results  
of which, in all probability, would have been ruinous to him. He was living as a trusted dependent beneath the roof of a kind master  
who had a Church in his house. If I read the Epistle rightly, he had a  
godly mistress and a godly master and he had an opportunity of learning  
the Gospel continually. But this reckless young blade, very likely, could  
not bear it and could have lived more contentedly with a heathen master,  
who would have beaten him one day and made him drunk another! The  
Christian master he could not bear, so away he went. He threw away the  
opportunities of salvation and he went to Rome. And he must have gone  
into the lowest part of the city and associated, as I have already told you,  
with the very grossest company.  
Now, had it come to pass that he had joined in the insurrections of the  
slaves which took place frequently about that time, as he in all probability  
would have done had not Grace prevented, he would have been put to  
death as others had been. He would have had a short stay in Rome. I half  
suspect a month and off with his head as was the rule towards slaves and  
vagabonds. Onesimus was just the very man that would have been likely  
to be hurried to death and to eternal destruction. He had put his head, as  
it were, between the lion’s jaws by what he had done. When a young man  
suddenly leaves home and goes to London, we know what it means. When  
his friends do not know where he is, and he does not want them to know,  
we are aware, within a little while, where he is and what he is up to. What Onesimus was doing, I do not know, but he was certainly doing  
his best to ruin himself. His course, therefore, is to be judged, as far as he  
is concerned, by what it was *likely* to bring him to—and though it did not  
bring him to it, that was no credit to him—all the honor of it is due to the  
overruling power of God! See, dear Brothers and Sisters, how God overruled all. Thus had the Lord purposed. Nobody shall be able to touch the  
heart of Onesimus but Paul. Onesimus is living at Colosse. Paul cannot  
come there, he is in prison. It is necessary, then, that Onesimus should  
go to Paul. Suppose the kindness of Philemon’s heart had prompted him  
to say to Onesimus, “I want you to go to Rome and find Paul out and hear  
him”?  
This evil servant would have said, “I am not going to risk my life to hear  
a sermon. If I go with the money you are sending to Paul, or with the letter, I shall deliver it, but I want none of his preaching.” Sometimes, you know, when people are brought to hear a preacher with the view of their being converted, if they have any idea of it, it is about the very *last* thing likely to happen, because they go there resolved to be fireproof. And so the preaching does not come home to them—and it would probably have been just so with Onesimus. No, no, he was not to be won in that way! He must  
go to Rome another way. How shall it be done?  
Well, the *devil* shall do it, not knowing that he will be losing a willing  
servant thereby! The devil tempts Onesimus to steal. Onesimus does it  
and when he has stolen he is afraid of being discovered and so he makes  
tracks for Rome as quickly as he can! And he gets down among the back  
slums and there he feels what the prodigal felt—a hungry belly—and that  
is one of the best preachers in the world to some people! Their conscience  
is reached in that way. Being very hungry, not knowing what to do and no  
man giving anything to him, he thinks whether there is anybody in Rome  
that would take pity on him.  
He does not know anybody in Rome at all and is likely to starve. Perhaps one morning there was a Christian woman—I should not wonder—  
who was going to hear Paul and she saw this poor man sitting crouched  
up on the steps of a temple. Perhaps she went to him and spoke about his  
soul. “Soul?” said he, “I care

nothing about that, but my body would  
thank you for something to eat. I am starving.” She replied, “Come with  
me, then,” and she gave him bread and then she said, “I do this for Jesus  
Christ’s sake.” “Jesus Christ!” he said, “I have heard of Him. I used to  
hear of Him over at Colosse.” “Whom did you hear speak about Him?” the  
woman would ask. “Why, a short man with weak eyes. A great preacher  
named Paul, who used to come to my master’s house.” “Why, I am going  
to hear him preach,” the woman would say, “will you come and hear him  
with me?” “Well, I think I should like to hear him again. He always had a  
kind word to say to the poor.” So he goes in and pushes his way among  
the soldiers. And Paul’s Master incites Paul to speak the right words. It may have been so, or it may have been the other way—that not  
knowing anybody else at all, he thought, “Well, there is Paul, I know. He is  
here a prisoner and I will go down and see what prison he is in.” He goes  
down to the Praetorian and finds him there, tells him of his extreme poverty and Paul talks to him. And then he confesses the wrong he has done  
and Paul, after teaching him a little while, says, “Now, you must go back  
and make amends to your master for the wrong you have done.” It may  
have been either of these ways, but, at any rate, the Lord must have Onesimus in Rome to hear Paul. And the sin of Onesimus, though perfectly  
voluntary on his part, so that God had no hand in it, is yet overruled by a  
mysterious Providence to bring him where the Gospel shall be blessed to  
his soul.  
Now, I want to speak to some of you Christian people about this matter.  
Have you a son who has left home? Is he a willful, wayward young man  
who has gone away because he could not bear the restraints of a Christian family? It is a sad thing it should be so—a very sad thing—but do not  
despond or even have a thought of despair about him! You do not know  
where he is, but God does! And you cannot follow him, but the Spirit of  
God can! He is going on a voyage to Shanghai. Ah, there may be a Paul at Shanghai who is to be the means of his salvation! And as that Paul is not in England, your son must go there. Is it to Australia that he is going? There may be a word spoken there, by the blessing of God, to your son  
which is the only word which ever will reach him!  
I cannot speak it. Nobody in London can speak it. But the man there,  
will, and God, therefore, is letting him go away in all his willfulness and  
folly that he may be brought under the means of Grace which will prove  
effectual to his salvation. Many a sailor boy has been wild, reckless, godless, Christless and at last has got into a foreign hospital. Ah, if his  
mother knew that he was down with the yellow fever, how sad her mind  
would be, for she would conclude that her dear son will die away at Havana or somewhere, and never come home again. But it is just in that  
hospital that God means to meet with him!  
A sailor writes to me something like that. He says, “My mother asked  
me to read a chapter every day, but I never did. I got into the hospital at  
Havana, and, when I lay there, there was a man near to me who was dying. And he died one night, but before he died, he said to me, ‘Mate, could  
you come here? I want to speak to you. I have got something that is very  
precious to me here. I was a wild fellow, but reading this packet of sermons has brought me to the Savior, and I am dying with a good hope  
through Grace. Now, when I am dead and gone, will you take these sermons and read them? And may God bless them to you. And will you write  
a letter to the man that preached and printed those sermons, to tell him  
that God blessed them to my conversion and that I hope he will bless  
them to yourself’?”  
It was a packet of my sermons, and God *did* bless them to that young  
man who, I have no doubt whatever, went to that hospital because there a  
man who had been brought to Christ would hand to him the words which  
God had blessed to himself and would bless to his friend! You do not  
know, dear Mother, you do not know. The worst thing that can happen to  
a young man is sometimes the best thing that can happen to him! I have  
sometimes thought, when I have seen young men of position and wealth  
taking to racing and all sorts of dissipation, “Well, it is a dreadfully bad  
thing, but they may as well get through their money as quickly as ever  
they can, and then when they have got down to begging they will be like  
the young gentleman in the parable who left his father.”  
When he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land, and  
he began to be in need, and he said, “I will arise and go to my father.”  
Perhaps the disease that follows vice—perhaps the poverty that comes like  
an armed man after extravagance and debauchery—is but love in another  
form, sent to compel the sinner to come to himself and consider his ways  
and seek an ever merciful God! You Christian people often see the little  
gutter children—the poor little Arabs in the street—and you feel much pity  
for them, as well you may. There is a dear Sister here, Miss Annie  
MacPherson, who lives only for them. God bless her and her work! When  
you see them you cannot be glad to see them as they are, but I have often  
thought that the poverty and hunger of one of these poor little children  
has a louder voice to most hearts than their vice and ignorance! And God knew that we were not ready and able to hear the cry of the child’s sin, so  
He added the child’s hunger to that cry, that it might pierce our hearts. People could live in sin and yet be happy, if they were well-to-do and  
rich. And if sin did not make parents poor and wretched, and their children miserable, we should not see it and, therefore, we should not awaken  
ourselves to grapple with it. It is a blessing, you know, in some diseases,  
when the patient can throw the complaint out upon the skin. It is a horrible thing to see it on the skin, but still it is better than its being hidden  
inside. Oftentimes the outward sin and the outward misery are a sort of  
throwing out of the disease so that the eyes of those who know where the  
healing medicine is to be had is thereby drawn to the disease—and so the  
soul’s secret malady is dealt with.  
Onesimus might have stayed at home and he might never have been a  
thief! But he might have been lost through self-righteousness. But now  
his sin is visible. The scapegrace has displayed the depravity of his heart  
and now it is that he comes under Paul’s eyes and Paul’s prayers and becomes converted! Do not, I pray you, ever despair of man or woman or  
child because you see their sin upon the surface of their character. On the  
contrary, say to yourself, “This is placed where I can see it, that I may  
pray about it. It is thrown out under my eyes that I may now concern myself to bring this poor soul to Jesus Christ, the mighty Savior who can  
save the most forlorn sinner.”  
Look at it in the light of earnest, active benevolence and awaken yourselves to conquer it! Our duty is to hope on and to pray on. It may be,  
perhaps, that, “he therefore departed for a season, that you should receive  
him forever.” Perhaps the boy has been so wayward that his sin may come  
to a crisis and a new heart may be given him. Perhaps your daughter’s  
evil has been developed that now the Lord may convince her of sin and  
bring her to the Savior’s feet. At any rate, if the case is ever so bad, hope  
in God and pray on!  
**III.**Once more. Our text may be viewed as AN EXAMPLE OF RELATIONS IMPROVED. “He therefore departed for a season, that you should  
receive him forever.” “*Not now as a servant, but a Brother beloved, specially to one, but how much more unto you*?” You know we are a long while  
learning great truths. Perhaps Philemon had not quite found out that it  
was wrong for him to have a slave. Some men who were very good in their  
time did not know it. John Newton did not know that he was flying wrong  
in the slave trade and George Whitfield, when he left slaves to the orphanage at Savannah, which had been willed to him, did not think, for a moment, that he was doing anything more than if he had been dealing with  
horses, or gold and silver.  
Public sentiment was not enlightened, although the Gospel has always  
struck at the very root of slavery. The essence of the Gospel is that we are  
to do to others as we would that others should do to us—and *nobody*  
would wish to be another man’s slave—and therefore he has no right to  
have another man as his slave. Perhaps, when Onesimus ran away and  
came back again, this letter of Paul may have opened Philemon’s eyes a  
little as to his own position. Maybe he began to doubt that he was a good  
master. He had trusted his servant and not treated him as a slave at all, but perhaps he had not regarded him as a brother. And now Onesimus has come back. He will be a better servant, but Philemon will be a better master and a slave-holder no longer. He will regard his former servant as  
a Brother in Christ.  
Now, this is what the Grace of God does when it comes into a family. It  
does not alter the relations. It does not give the child a right to be pert and  
forget that he is to be obedient to his parents. It does not give the father a  
right to lord it over his children without wisdom and love, for it tells him  
that he is not to provoke his children to anger, lest they be discouraged. It  
does not give the servant the right to be a master, neither does it take  
away from the master his position, or allow him to exaggerate his authority—but all round it softens and sweetens.  
Rowland Hill used to say that he would not give a halfpenny for a man’s  
piety if his dog and his cat were not better off after he was converted.  
There was much weight in that remark. Everything in the house goes better when Grace oils the wheels. The mistress is, perhaps, rather sharp,  
quick, tart—well, she gets a little sugar into her constitution when she receives the Grace of God! The servant may be apt to loiter, be late up in the  
morning, very slovenly, fond of a gossip at the door. But if she is truly  
converted, all that kind of thing ends. She is conscientious and attends to  
her duty as she ought. The master, perhaps—well, he is the master and  
you know it. But when he is a truly Christian man—he has a gentleness,  
a suavity, a considerateness about him.  
The husband is the head of the wife, but when renewed by Grace he is  
not at all the head of the wife as some husbands are. The wife also keeps  
her place and seeks, by all gentleness and wisdom to make the house as  
happy as she can. I do not believe in your religion, dear Friend, if it belongs to the Tabernacle and the Prayer Meeting, but not to your home.  
The best religion in the world is that which smiles at the table, works at  
the sewing machine, and is amiable in the drawing-room. Give me the religion which blacks boots and does them well, cooks the food and cooks it  
so that it can be eaten! Measures out yards of calico and does not make  
them half-an-inch short! Sells a hundred yards of an article and does not  
label 90 a hundred, as many trades people do!  
That is the true Christianity which affects the whole of life! If we are  
truly Christians we shall be changed in all our relationships to our fellow  
men and, therefore, we shall regard those whom we call our inferiors with  
quite a different eye. It is wrong in Christian people when they are so  
sharp upon little faults that they see in servants, especially if they are  
Christian servants. That is not the way to correct them. They see a little  
something wrong and, oh, they are down upon the poor girls as if they  
had murdered somebody! If your Master, and mine, were to treat us in  
that style I wonder how we would get on? How quick some are in discharging their maids for small faults! No excuse, no trying the persons  
again—they must go.  
Many a young man has been turned out of a situation for the littlest trifle, by a Christian employer, when he must have known that he would be  
exposed to all sorts of risks. And many a servant has been sent adrift as if  
she were a dog, with no sort of thought whether another position could be found, and without anything being done to prevent her going astray. Do let us think of others, especially of those whom Christ loves even as He does us. Philemon might have said, “No, no, I won’t take you back, Mr. Onesimus, not I. Once bitten, twice shy, Sir. I never ride a horse with broken knees. You stole my money! I am not going to have you back again.” I have heard that style of talk, have not you? Did you ever feel like it? If you have, go home and pray to God to get such a feeling out of you, for it is  
bad stuff to have in your soul! You cannot take it to Heaven. When the Lord Jesus Christ has forgiven you so freely, are you to take  
your servant by the throat and say, “Pay me what you owe?” God forbid  
that we should continue in such a temper! Be pitiful, easily entreated,  
ready to forgive. It is a deal better that you should suffer a wrong than *do*  
a wrong—much better that you should overlook a fault which you might  
have noticed, than notice a fault which you ought to have overlooked— ***“Let love through all your actions run,  
And all your words be kind,”***  
is said in the little hymn which we used to learn when we were children.  
We should practice it now, and—  
***“Live like the blessed virgin’s Son  
That meek and lowly Child.”***  
God grant we may, of His infinite Grace! I want to say this, and then I  
have done. If the mysterious Providence of God was to be seen in Onesimus getting to Rome, I wonder whether there is any Providence of God  
in some of you being here tonight? It is possible. Such things do happen.  
People come here that never meant to come. The last thing in the world  
they would have believed, if anybody had said it, is that they would be  
here, yet here they are.  
With all manner of lyrists and turns they have gone about, but they  
have got here somehow. Did you miss a train, and so stepped in to wait?  
Did not your ship sail quite so soon as you expected, and so are you here  
tonight? Say, is that it? I do pray you, then, consider this question with  
your heart. “Does not God mean to bless me? Has He not brought me  
here, on purpose, that this night I may yield my heart to Jesus as Onesimus did?” My dear Friend, if you believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, you  
shall have immediate pardon for all sin and shall be saved! The Lord has  
brought you here in His infinite wisdom to hear that, and I hope that He  
has also brought you here that you may accept it and so go your way altogether changed.  
Some three years ago I was talking with an aged minister, and he began  
fumbling about in his waistcoat pocket, but he was a long while before he  
found what he wanted. At last he brought out a letter that was well near  
worn to pieces, and he said, “God Almighty bless you! God Almighty bless  
you!” And I said, “Friend, what is it?” He said, “I had a son. I thought he  
would be the stay of my old age, but he disgraced himself and he went  
away from me, and I could not tell where he went, only he said he was going to America. He took a ticket to sail for America from the London  
Docks, but he did not go on the particular day that he expected.” This aged minister bade me read the letter, and I read it, and it was like  
this—“Father, I am here in America. I have found a situation and God has prospered me. I write to ask your forgiveness for the thousand wrongs that I have done you and the grief I have caused you, for blessed be God, I have found the Savior! I have joined the Church of God here, and hope to spend my life in God’s service. It happened thus: I did not sail for America the day I expected. I went down to the Tabernacle to see what it was like, and God met with me. Mr. Spurgeon said, ‘Perhaps there is a runaway son here. The Lord call him by His Grace.’ And he did. “Now,” said he, as he folded up the letter and put it in his pocket, “that son of mine is dead and he is in Heaven, and I love you, and I shall do so as long as I live, be  
cause you were the means of bringing him to Christ.”  
Is there a similar character here tonight? I feel persuaded there is—  
somebody of the same sort—and in the name of God I charge him to take  
the warning that I give him from this pulpit! I dare you to go out of this  
place as you came in! Oh, young man, the Lord in mercy gives you another opportunity of turning from the error of your ways, and I pray you  
now, here—as you now are—lift your eyes to Heaven, and say, “God be  
merciful to me a sinner,” and He will be so. Then go home to your father  
and tell him what the Grace or God has done for you—and wonder at the  
love which brought you here to bring you to Christ!  
Dear Friend, if there is nothing mysterious about it, yet here we are. We  
are where the Gospel is preached and that brings responsibility upon us.  
If a man is lost, it is better for him to be lost *without* hearing the Gospel  
than to be lost as some of you will be if you perish under the sound of a  
clear, earnest enunciation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ! How long have  
some of you been between two opinions? “Have I been so long time with  
you,” says Christ, “and yet have you not known Me?” All this teaching and  
preaching and invitations—and yet do you not turn?—  
***“O God, You the sinner turn,  
Convince him of his lost estate.  
Let him linger no longer,  
Lest he linger till he rue his  
Fatal choice too late.”***  
God bless you, for Christ’s sake. Amen.

***PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Philemon.*HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—231, 248.** Adapted from *The C.H. Spurgeon Collection*, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307.

÷Phm 1.2

A PASTORAL VISIT

NO. 3103

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, JULY 30, 1908.  
*DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON. *“The Church in your house.”***Phm 1:2***.*

SOME interpreters have supposed that a small congregation met for worship in a room in Philemon’s house and there is a tradition that such was the case for some considerable time. The Churches established by Paul were, at their commencement, for the most part small. Obliged—for the sake of peace and to avoid persecution—to meet in out of-the-way places where they were not likely to be seen by foes, the retired house of some well-known friend, perhaps that of the minister, if it had a room conveniently large, would be the natural place for Believers to gather together in those early Churches. Philemon, therefore, might literally have had a Church in his house and a congregation might have gathered there. It strikes me that there would be a great deal of good done if persons who have large rooms in their houses would endeavor to get together little congregations. There are many, even of our poorer friends, who live in neighborhoods of London destitute of the means of Grace, who might promote a great blessing if they occasionally opened their houses for a Prayer Meeting or religious assembly. We need no consecrated places for the worship of God—

***“Wherever we seek Him, He is found,  
And every place is hallowed ground.”***

Certainly our text does not give any countenance to the calling of certain buildings “Churches.” Buildings for worship, whether erected by Episcopalians or Dissenters, are frequently called “Churches.” If I ask for “the church” in any town, I am forthwith directed to an edifice, probably with a spire or a steeple, which the inhabitants call “the church.” Why, they might as well point me to a signpost when I asked for a man—a *building* cannot be a Church! A Church is an assembly of faithful men and it cannot be anything else. I cannot see how such a piece of architecture as we now call “a church” could very well have been in Philemon’s house—it must have been a large house if it had such a thing in it for an ornament. The fact is, it is a misnomer, a misuse of language, and we must mind that we do not get into it. For my own part, I like the good old-fashioned name of “Meeting House” as well as any. It is a place where the people of God meet and although “Meeting House” does not sound very smart, nor fine, nor fashionable—and that is everything, nowadays, with many people—yet it is far better than misusing language as it is misused when bricks, stones and mortar receive a tittle belonging exclusively to godly men and women!

However, it appears that Philemon had a Church in his house—a Church largely, if not exclusively, composed of his own family. He was privileged to possess a godly wife—the beloved Apphia—their sons and daughters walked in their parents’ footsteps. And their servants and even their visitor, Archippus, were members of this Church which was in the house of Philemon.

**I.**Now let me attempt to describe A CHURCH IN A HOUSE, meaning, all the while, to be asking you WHETHER YOU HAVE A CHURCH IN YOUR HOUSE.

*A Church, according to the New Testament, consists of converted persons,* or persons who profess to be converted. No visible Church is absolutely pure. A Church must be taken upon its own profession, consisting as it does of persons who avow themselves to be followers of and Believers in Christ, having been converted from darkness to light by the Spirit of God. Well, then, I see, in a family where there is a Church, a godly father and a godly mother rejoicing over converted sons and daughters—and glad and able to entrust their household affairs to Christian servants. It cannot be a Church, whatever profession may be made, unless there is the Grace of God there. It may be nominally such, but it cannot be really so. A family is not born a Church and the little ones born into the family are not born into the Church. They must be born-again before they can be members of the Church—there must have been the work of the Spirit of God in the hearts of the members of the family before they can form a Church in the house.

But it strikes me that a number of converted people are not necessarily a Church. In order to form a Church, *they must worship together.* Happy is the household which meets every morning for prayer! Happy are they who let not the evening depart without uniting in supplication! Brothers and Sisters, I wish it were more common—I wish it were universal, with all professors of religion—to have family prayer! We sometimes hear of the children of Christian parents who do not grow up in the fear of God and we are asked how it is that they turn out so badly. In many, very many cases, I fear there is such a neglect of family worship that it is not probable that the children are at all impressed by any piety supposed to be possessed by their parents! Family prayer in our old Puritan households was a matter of very great importance. Let me tell you what Philip Henry used to do. He was a minister and of course had more time to give to it than many of you in business have. But he went through the whole Bible in course, expounding it, chapter by chapter, and accompanying it by prayer and singing. One reason he gave for singing was that it was like Rahab’s tying the crimson line in the window—everyone who went by would know what she had done—and he said that the sound of singing at family prayers was a distinct confession that that family loved and worshipped God! He called his children together on Thursdays and catechized them upon the General Assembly’s Catechism and upon the lessons through which they had gone during the week.

Perhaps you will think that this was very dreary work, but what will you say when I tell you that that good man’s son, Mr. Matthew Henry, wrote his famous *Commentary* from the notes which he took of his father’s expositions at morning and evening prayers? Young lads do not take notes of dreary things, you may depend upon it! Catch them at that, if you can. We do not find our boys taking down heavy sermons, but they have no objection to putting down anything which strikes and interests them. That family of Mr. Henry, to which I have referred, was so well ordered that very often visitors to the house who were unconverted when they went there, were converted during their visit! Now I do not suppose that you could, all of you, expound the Scriptures like that! And you could not all, perhaps, sing. But I do think we might, all of us, manage to come together once a day at least—twice, if possible—for the worship of God in the household. Remember what Matthew Henry says—“They who pray in the family, do well. They who read and pray, do better. But they who sing, and read, and pray, do best of all.” If we want to bring up a godly family who shall be a seed to serve God when our heads are under the clods of the valley, let us seek to train them up in the fear of God by meeting together as a family for worship. I do not see how there can be a Church without worship—and I do not see how there can be a Church in a house unless there is constant worship in the family.

But there must be something more than this before there can be a Church. A Church is not merely a company of people meeting for worship—*there must be some bond of unity.*A load of bricks is not a house—the bricks must be fitly framed and cemented together—and then they grow into a house. So a Church is fitly framed together and grows into a holy temple for the Lord. Now, dear Friends, there must be a knitting of hearts among Christians in families. Of course, they will love each other from the ties of the flesh, but they should also love each other from the higher ties of the Spirit. There is no reason why, without breaking through any of the gradations that must necessarily exist in society, there should not be a bond of unity taking in the whole family— master, mistress, children and servants. In the olden times, in the days of such men as Abraham, the servants were a part of the family. Nowadays, people change their servants once a month and there are some servants who stay too long even then! But it strikes me that good masters and good mistresses make good servants—and where love and kindness are shown, it will not always, nor often, be the case that the servants will be a social evil. Instead of that, they will be a great benefit. And a wise, prudent, Christian servant becomes as much a part of the household as even a child. To make a Church, there must be a feeling of union. I should like to see the clan-feeling in our families in which every servant would stand up for the master’s honor, and everyone would seek the good of the entire family—and even when the children were grown up and scattered, it would be well to see them still duly respecting the ties of Christian kindred and seeking to promote the good and the unity of the whole.

And to make a Church, *there must be oversight.* A Church is not a complete Church without a pastor, its elders and its deacons. A Church in the house will have its elders. There need not be any election of these because they are already elected. The parents will naturally take the oversight of the little Church that is in the house. If you want a pastor, the father should be the priest in his own house. He is the most fitting teacher, expounder and example. Then who are to be your deacons? Why, those who have to go out to the factory, when the bell rings in the morning, and who help to provide food for the household! And there is another we must not forget—that gentle one who goes so noiselessly about the house to see after her husband and children, and who produces a thousand happy thoughts by that kind way of hers. Sometimes the oversight of the household will fall to the lot of the eldest son, or daughter, but sometimes some long-abiding servant, some old housekeeper virtually becomes the presiding genius. There must be oversight and God sometimes graciously sends to families those who are more advanced in spiritual things who become, as it were, the officers of the Church in the house.

A Church in the house must, of course, *be furnished with instruction.* One of the first reasons why there is a Church at all is to teach the members. We are formed into Churches for mutual edification. Ah, dear Friends, how much youthful piety receives edification in those households where the parents set a godly example! Wonderful is the influence of the mother upon her son. You recollect the case of the mighty Byron, who seems to have been a sort of fallen angel who flew across the sky like a thunderbolt from a Satanic hand. What was his mother? Why, a very passionate woman who frequently threw the tongs at her own son in her passion! Of course she had a wild and passionate son. Look, on the other hand, at the meek and gentle bard of Olney, pouring forth notes that were almost fit for Heaven. What sort of mother had Cowper? You know her character well, as her son has described it in

the lines beginning— ***“Oh, that those lips had language!”***  
Let Christian parents, forming a Church in their house, look to the formation of the character of their children, especially their converted children—and let them not overlook their converted servants! With an ardent and a longing desire, strive to build them up in the faith and help them to grow in Divine Grace and in the knowledge of the Lord. You Christian fathers ought to take care, as far as your means allow, to provide your children with instructive books. I do not mean dull books, but good, interesting books, at once instructive and attractive, that may teach them the way of God more perfectly. Whenever you have the opportunity, let drop a word which will strike the child’s attention and remain in its heart. Just as I, as a preacher, would never miss an opportunity of saying anything here which I met with in the week, and which I thought you ought to hear, so let the Christian father be studying each day how he may instruct the Church in his house in the fear of the Lord more perfectly!

I think I have now described the Church so far as its organization is concerned, but I cannot very well describe it all. You must go and live in the midst of such a Church to understand thoroughly what it is like. Mr. Talkative, in “*The Pilgrim’s Progress*,” was a very fine fellow abroad and had a great deal to say about religion. But what was he at home? Ah, nothing could be said of him *there* worth the hearing! Where there is a Church in the house, every member strives to increase the other’s comfort, all seek to promote each other’s holiness, each one endeavors to discharge his duty according to the position in which he is placed in that Church. And when they meet together, their prayers are earnest and fervent, and all their actions are not the actions of a worldly family, but of those who have tasted that the Lord is gracious!

One thing more. *A Church is really worth nothing at all if it does not try to extend itself.*And a Church in a house is no true Church if it is satisfied without endeavoring to bring in every member of the family. If you have half a dozen converted, but there are seven of you, never leave off praying till you have the seventh! And if, in God’s mercy, He has given you ten out of eleven, there are ten reasons why you should be in earnest for the conversion of the eleventh. Plead with the Master till your little Church shall have swallowed up the whole of your congregation! A happy day will it be for us when the Church in the Tabernacle fills every pew, but you may come at your results sooner than we can come at ours. May the day soon come when the Church in your house shall include every person in the family, not one being left out! What a happy world it would be if there were such a Church in every house! It would be Heaven begun below! The angels might then mistake earth for Heaven and linger so long that they would need to be recalled to Paradise, making the mistake that they were already in Paradise! Oh, may we live to see the day when walking down a street in London, we shall hear, at the appointed hour in every house, the song of praise and know that no door will be locked for the night till first the Lord has been asked to keep watch and ward over the slumbering household!

**II.**Having thus described a Church in a house, I propose what I cannot often accomplish among you, though I wish I could, and that is TO PAY YOU A PASTORAL VISIT.

I am going to knock at your door, take a chair and sit down, and ask you a few simple questions. The first is, *Have you a Church in your house?*“No,” says one, “I am the only converted one in the house.” Ah, dear Friend, I can understand the difficulty of your position, but I can also rejoice in the hopefulness of your being there, trusting that it is a token for good to the house! Now that the Lord has sent one spark of fire there, may there soon be a flame! “Well,” says another, “we have several Christians in our house, but I cannot say that there is a Church here.” I like your honesty, my Friend, but may I tell you what I suspect is the reason why there are so many houses that have Christians in them, but no Churches? It often is because those Christians are inconsistent. Why, if some of you were not professors of religion, you would be very decent sort of people—but being professors, the way in which you act and speak is detestable! You may think this strong language, but I know it is true. There are some families where the father, instead of exhibiting the gentleness and kindness of a Christian, well-near scares the children from the very thought of godliness! There are some households where the wife is a gadding busybody, whose slovenliness and dirt might well disgust her husband at the very thought of going to the House of Prayer. There are some children professing godliness who have not yet learned the Commandment which tells them to obey their parents! And there are some professedly Christian servants who are eye-servers, not remembering what Paul has said to such. One of the worst evils we have to deal with, as Christians, is the evil of inconsistency at home! Whenever I see a professed Christian walking among his household as though he were a tyrant, letting no one come near him, without affection or kindness and simply a domineering master, I ask—Where is the Grace of God in that man? And I ask the same question with respect to other faults. O Beloved, do make your households happy! You cannot make them holy if you do not shine with genial cheerfulness. And you Christian people in households, do seek to act so that you may not be a disgrace to your profession, but may form a true Church in the house where you dwell together.

While I thus speak, perhaps you will say that I am exposing too much of that domestic economy over which you judge it convenient to drop a veil. It is my duty to tell you the truth plainly, so listen to it attentively. “Well,” someone says, “I thank God that I have a Church in my house.” Then I thank God, too, and we will together praise and bless Him for His great mercy. But I must now ask you, *Who are the members?* “Well, there is Father.” Oh, I am so glad, because your father has so much to do with the management and if he who holds the reins cannot drive, there will be some mistakes. I am glad your father is converted. “Ah!” says one, “but my father is *not* converted.” Then, I am sorry. O Father, I beseech you, let your child’s prayer come into your ears as well as into God’s ears! You will be a curse to your family if you are not a blessing! And I know you do not want to be a bane to your offspring. But with some of you, the father is converted and the mother is converted, too. I am glad of that, because parents—and mothers in particular—have a sweet influence on the family and the little ones. Well, then, let us see. Is John converted? Is the eldest son yet made a partaker of Divine Grace? “Yes.” Oh, then that is a mercy, because elder brothers have so much to do, by their example, in inclining younger brothers rightly or wrongly. And Emily—is she converted? That is a happy thing, if it is so, for she, also, will have a great influence for good upon the younger ones. Now where does it stop? I hope it does not stop at the servants—are they converted? Happy is the master who has Christian servants! And I speak experimentally when I say this. It is a great comfort to you to have those about you who really do fear God.

Yes, but we must not forget any who are in the household. I must ask you, *Who are they who are not converted?*The very little ones, of course, are too young to understand, so we will leave them in the hands of a Covenant God and plead with Him for them. But are there not some who can understand, but who are not yet converted? “Ah,” says the mother, “do not ask me about that,” and she brushes away a tear. And the father says, “It is a painful subject.” Yes, it is a painful subject, but we must mention it, because some of them are here tonight. You would not willfully give your parents pain, young man, would you? I know your desire is to comfort them and there can be no greater joy to them than to know that their children are walking in the Truth of God. And among the servants, there is the nursemaid—is she brought in? And there is the kitchen-boy—do not leave him out! A Church in a house is not complete till it comprises everybody in the house, from the dishwasher up to the master. Yes, and if there is a friend staying there, the Church is not complete till the friend is also converted. Now, I cannot expect you all to answer me, but I still hope that you will do it quietly to yourselves. How many members are there in the Church in your house? Who are members and who are not?

Then, by your leave, I shall ask you another question, and that is, *As you have a Church consisting of so many members, what are you doing for Christ?*It is no use having a Church that is not doing anything. As a family, are you seeking to extend the bounds of Messiah’s Kingdom within your own sphere? Dr. Guthrie advocates Territorial Missions and a very admirable scheme it is to advocate. And I give him all honor for it, but I will tonight take the liberty of advocating Home Missions. I do not mean missions that have to do with anything outside, but missions to the kitchen, the parlor, the drawing-room and every room up to the attic—missions in which every single one in the family shall be concerned. I hope that, as a Church in the house, you will not have a neglected district in the house. Some of you go out tract-distributing— begin at home! Some of you preach—begin to preach at home. Hard work that, because those to whom you preach know how you practice! If you cannot preach at home because your practice runs counter to your preaching, do not preach at all—for a man has no right to talk and instruct others it he cannot, at least in some measure, live out what he teaches!

**III.**Before leaving, however, I venture to GIVE A LITTLE ADVICE AS TO THE WAY OF HAVING A CHURCH IN A HOUSE.  
It must be brought about, of course, by Divine Grace. The Holy Spirit is the great Agent, but still He uses means. You young woman—yes, you—you are thinking about being engaged to that young man. You are a professed Christian, but he is a worldling. Now, do you ever expect to have a Church in your house at that rate? And may I ask you—do you know what you are doing? I see some of you are smiling. Well, you may smile as much as you can now, for you will never have much smiling after, I can tell you that! If you want to wither your happiness forever, you have only to go and be yoked with an unbeliever. I have known some Christian women who have forgotten the Divine precept and have been married to ungodly men. And I have seen godly men married to ungodly women. And mark this—my experience has not been very long, but it has been very wide—*I never knew any good come of it.*I have always seen misery as the result and in nine cases out of ten, backsliding has followed—often final, too—proving that the person committing that sin had no Grace at all! We do not often talk about these things when we are preaching, but we ought to talk about them a great deal more than we do. I do beseech you, young Christian people, if you hope to have God’s blessing, take care that you do not get “unequally yoked with unbelievers.”  
Then, supposing the house is already started, I have this advice to give. *If you want to bring in others of the family who are not converted, make them happy.*There are a great many more flies caught with honey than with vinegar, and there are a great many more persons brought to God by love than there are by pitiless declamations. “The love of Christ constrains,” not only after we are saved, but it is often the constraining means of bringing us to be saved. Let us imitate Puritan theology in its soundness and Puritan living in its holiness, but not in its gloom—if, indeed, it was gloomy, which I very much question. Let the Christian family be the most cheerful household anywhere! And if I might venture on the advice, let me say, *never make Sunday doleful and sad*. Some people do. Why, I think Sunday should be to the household the bright day of the week—the day when the father is at home—the day when the mother is not at work—the day when John comes home to spend a few hours—the day when they all go to the House of God and sing— ***“I have been there, and still would go  
‘Tis like a little Heaven below.”***  
Oh, make your households to be like flower gardens—plant no thorns and root out all ill weeds of discontent! Depend upon it, household happiness is a great means of promoting household holiness!  
And let me entreat you, dear Friends, to *be much in prayer for those who are not converted.*“Yes,” says the mother, “my unconverted boy is gone away from home.” Well, but your prayers can follow him! See the

case of Philemon and Onesimus. [See Sermon #1268, Volume 21—THE STORY OF A RUNAWAY SLAVE—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at

http://www.spurgeongems.org.] Onesimus had run away with some of his master’s money, but his master sent his prayers after him and, by-andby, there came a sheriff’s officer to arrest him—not one of Caesar’s officers, but one of God’s. It was the Apostle Paul who, in the preaching of the Word of God, arrested the runaway servant and he went back to his master saved! How do you know but that your son will come home converted? How do you know, Mother, but that you will yet see your daughter rejoicing in Christ? Never cease praying for them till the breath is out of their bodies, but continue in supplication till they are brought into the Church in your house!

But O you Christians who wish to make a Church in your house, *do not let your own inconsistencies mar any good work in others!* Above all, *do not have any disagreements among yourselves.*Talk not in such a way that good impressions, once happily made, become wretchedly marred. I have heard of a wife walking home with her husband from a place of worship. He was an ungodly man. She had often prayed for him and he went with her to hear the sermon. She had been praying that he might be blessed and yet, in walking home, she was foolish enough to begin criticizing the sermon. She asked him how he liked it and he made no answer. She began pulling it to pieces, till at last he stopped her and said, “My dear wife, you have often prayed to God that I might be blessed. God has blessed that sermon to me this morning and I cannot bear to hear you speak of it as you have been speaking.” I know this is a fault with many Christians—not that we ministers care at all what you say about us, except for the evil you often do in spoiling to others that which does not happen to suit your fastidious taste, for you may in that way be doing the devil’s work.

**IV.**The last thing I want to say to you is this. LOOK ONWARDS A MINUTE.  
When Halyburton lay a-dying, he said, among other joyous expressions, “I bless God that I have a father in Heaven! I bless God that I have a mother in Heaven! I bless God that I have ten brothers and sisters in Heaven! I am the last of the family and I shall be in Heaven within an hour!” This was a glorious thought! What a happy meeting theirs would be! Spirits “are neither married nor given in marriage,” nor are social ties respected there, but still, I cannot conceive of Halyburton’s family but as making up a constellation like the Pleiades, all meekly and gently shining together to the praise of God!  
I saw in a house, the other day, a very singular picture of the Resurrection. It was supposed to represent the resurrection of a Christian family. The artist was not very imaginative, but still he had done it pretty well. The big stone that covered the tomb was just broken in halves and you saw coming up at the top some of the little ones, those latest buried. There were three or four of them stretching their wings upwards. Of course, this represented as much the resurrection of the soul as of the body in the artist’s mind, it was rather a complicated metaphor. Then there were the father and mother, and a number of grandchildren—and I was glad to see that there were the grandfather and grandmother, both coming up from one tomb, and going up together to the Throne of God. I only hope that, though some of us may be buried in distant lands and—  
***“Our graves are scattered far and wide,  
By fount, and stream, and sea”—***  
yet, practically, we may rise together when the last trumpet sounds, an unbroken family!  
I may be excused, perhaps, for referring to God’s singular mercy to my own household. What a blessing it is to my father and mother now that they can rejoice in six of their children walking in the Truth of God who have given themselves up to the Lord Jesus! The Lord has been graciously pleased to bring them in, one by one, and all who have now reached years of discretion, so as to be able to understand the Gospel, have believed in Jesus Christ! And in generations that have gone by, my grandfather could say the same, and *his* father could say the same of his house! We have been a race of those whom God has blessed. May it be your privilege, also, beloved members of this Church! I cannot wish you a greater blessing. If I knew how to bestow the greatest blessing upon you, I think my knowledge would not amount to more than this, that, being yourselves saved, you might have all your families walking in the Truth of God and, speaking after the manner of men, why should it not be the case with you? Prayer, earnest and mighty prayer, gets no denial from the Throne of God!—  
***“Faith, mighty faith, the promise sees,”***  
and claims its fulfillment, “for the promise is unto you and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even to as many as the Lord our God shall call.” God’s eternal purpose stands fast and fixed, we know, but when He moves His people’s hearts to pray, He intends to bless. We will be more earnest in praying for one another than we have been. We will be more earnest in praying about our children than we have been. And may God grant us Grace so that we may, all of us, be able to say that we have a Church in our house! “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ”—this is the foundation of the Church and they who have believed are members of Christ’s Church and so see His face in the midst of the one family in Heaven and earth, which is named by Him as “the general assembly and Church of the first-born, which are written in Heaven.” God grant that, of this Church, both we and ours may all be members!

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: *PHILEMON.***

**Verse 1.***Paul, a prisoner of Jesus Christ.*This is one of Paul’s private letters, though it has the stamp of Inspiration upon it. It was not written concerning Church business, nor to teach some great doctrinal Truth of God, but there was a runaway slave who had come to Rome and who had been converted under Paul’s ministry. Paul was sending him back to his master—and this was the letter which he was to take with him, to make some sort of apology for him and to ask his master to receive him with kindness and to forgive his fault. Every word of this Epistle is very wisely put. Paul begins by calling himself “a prisoner of Jesus Christ.” Who would not grant him his desire when he was wearing a chain for Christ’s sake? If a letter were to come to you from some beloved minister whom you knew to be lying in a dungeon and likely soon to die, you would be greatly touched if you noticed the traces of the rust of his chains on the letter. “Paul, a prisoner of Jesus Christ.”

**1, 2.***And Timothy our brother, unto Philemon our dearly beloved, and fellow laborer, and to our beloved Apphia, and Archippus our fellow soldier, and to the Church in your house.*He joins Timothy with himself to give double weight to the message. Probably Timothy was well known to Philemon and much respected by him, so he puts Timothy’s name that there might be two to plead with him. Then, notice the loving titles with which Paul addresses Philemon—“our dearly beloved, and fellow laborer.” Probably the person whom Paul called, “beloved Apphia” was Philemon’s wife, so he writes to her, also, for perhaps the wife was the more tenderhearted of the two, so she might put in a good word for Onesimus—and her husband would all the more readily grant Paul’s request. He also mentions Archippus, who was either the pastor of the Church at Colosse, or an Evangelist who stayed occasionally at the house of Philemon. So he mentions him with all the rest of the household who met there for worship and so made up the Church in the house.

**3-7.***Grace to you, and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. I thank my God, making mention of you always in my prayers, hearing of your love and faith which you have toward the Lord Jesus, and toward all saints; that the communication of your faith may become effectual by the acknowledging of every good thing which is in you in Christ Jesus. For we have great joy and consolation in your love because the hearts of the saints are refreshed by you, Brother.* Paul recalls how much Philemon had done in the comforting of persecuted and poor saints. And when you are about to ask a favor of anyone, it is well to show your gratitude for what you or others have already received from him.

**8, 9.***Therefore though I might be much bold in Christ to enjoin you that which is convenient, yet for love’s sake I rather beseech you, being such an one as Paul the aged, and now, also, a prisoner of Jesus Christ.*He says in effect, “I am an Apostle and I am your spiritual father, so I might have spoken with authority to you and have said, ‘It is your duty to do this.’ But I am not going to do anything of the kind. I am going to plead with you and beseech it of you as a kindness and a favor. Pay a loving tribute to my old age and, besides that, I am a prisoner shut up in the dungeon for Christ’s sake—hear the clanking of my chains, and grant my request for love’s sake.’”

**10.***I beseech you for my son Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my bonds.* “He came to hear me preach in the prison. He has been listening to me while I am still a captive and he has been given to me, as another son in the Gospel, to be a comfort to me in my bonds. I beseech you for him.”

**11, 12.***Which in time past was to you unprofitable, but now profitable to you and to me: whom I have sent again.*“He was your slave, and therefore I have sent him back to you.”

**12.***You therefore receive him, that is, my own heart.* “Look upon him as though he were my very heart and receive him as you would receive me if I could go to you.”

**13, 14.***Whom I would have retained with me, that in your place he might have ministered unto me in the bonds of the Gospel: but without your permission would I do nothing; that your benefit should not be as it were of necessity, but willingly.*“I would have kept him,” says Paul, “for I need someone to be my companion, to comfort me in my distress. But I would not do it without asking your permission, lest I should seem to take advantage of you. Though I know that you would willingly consent to it, yet, nevertheless, that it might be perfectly voluntary on your part, I have sent him back to you, that you may do as you will with him.”

**15-17.***For perhaps he therefore departed for a season, that you should receive him forever; not now as a servant, but above a servant, a beloved Brother, especially to me, but how much more unto you, both in the flesh, and in the Lord? If you count me therefore a partner.* “If you have true fellowship and communion with me”—

**17.***Receive him as myself.*How beautifully this is put all through! It very much reminds me of our Lord Jesus Christ, who seems to say to the Divine Father, “This poor child is in fellowship with Me. Receive him, therefore, as Myself.” And this is just what God does in the case of repenting and believing sinners—He receives them just as if He could see Christ in them.

**18.***If he has wronged you, or owes you anything, put that on my account.* How generously this is put by this poor prisoner at Rome and how gloriously, in this, he is like our Master who stands as Surety for us!

**19.***I, Paul, have written it with my own hand, I will repay it: albeit I do not say to you how you owe unto me even your own self besides.* Paul had been the means of Philemon’s conversion, so he was immeasurably in debt to the Apostle. But Paul only gently reminds him of the fact as a reason why he should deal kindly with Onesimus for his sake.

**20.***Yes, Brother, let me have joy of you in the Lord: refresh my heart in the Lord.* “You have refreshed others, then, surely, you will not now let me be without refreshment! You have been very kind to all sorts of saints, then you cannot be unkind to the man who is your own spiritual father.”

**21.***Having confidence in your obedience I wrote unto you, knowing that you will do more than I say.*This is delicately yet forcibly put, and we feel certain that Philemon must have done as Paul wished, even though we have no record of the fact.

**22-25.***But withal prepare me also a lodging: for I trust that through your prayers I shall be given unto you. There salute you Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus; Marcus, Aristarchus, Demas, Lucas, my fellow laborers. The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen.*

*—Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307*  
**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.** Sermon #1268 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

**÷Phm 1.15**

THE STORY OF A RUNAWAY SLAVE

NO. 1268

***DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,***

**AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***"Perhaps he therefore departed for a season,***

***that you should receive him forever."***

Phm 1:15***.***

**NATURE** is selfish but Grace is loving. He who boasts that he cares for nobody and nobody cares for him, is the reverse of a Christian, for Jesus Christ enlarges the heart when He cleanses it. None so tender and sympathetic as our Master and if we are truly His disciples, the same mind will be in us which was also in Christ Jesus. The Apostle Paul was eminently large-hearted and sympathetic. Surely he had enough to do at Rome to bear his own troubles and to preach the Gospel. If, like the priest in the parable of the good Samaritan, he had, "passed by on the other side," he might have been excused, for he was on the urgent business of that Master who once said to His 70 messengers, "Salute no man by the way."

We might not have wondered if Paul had said, "I cannot find time to attend to the needs of a runaway slave." But Paul was not of that mind. He had been preaching and Onesimus had been converted—and from now on he regarded him as his own son. I do not know why Onesimus came to Paul. Perhaps he went to him as a great many scapegraces have come to me—because their fathers knew me. And so, as Onesimus' master had known Paul, the servant applied to his master's friend, perhaps to beg some little help in his extremity. Anyway, Paul seized the opportunity and preached Jesus to him and the runaway slave became a Believer in the Lord Jesus Christ!

Paul watched him, admired the character of his convert and was glad to be served by him. And when Paul thought it right that he should return to his master, Philemon, he took a deal of trouble to compose a letter of apology for him, a letter which shows long thinking, since every word is well selected. Although the Holy Spirit dictated it, Inspiration does not prevent a man's exercising thought and care on what he writes. Every word is chosen for a purpose. If he had been pleading for himself, he could not have pleaded more earnestly or wisely. Paul, as you know, was not accustomed to write letters with his own hand, but dictated to a secretary.

It is supposed that he had an affection of the eyes and, therefore, when he did write, he used large capital letters, as he says in one of the Epistles, "You see how large a letter I have written unto you with my own hand." The Epistle was not a large one, but he probably alluded to the largeness of the characters which he was obliged to use whenever he, himself, wrote. This letter to Philemon, at least part of it, was not dictated, but was written by his own hand. See the 19th verse. "I, Paul, have written it with my own hand. I will repay it." It is the only note of hand which I recall in Scripture, but there it is—an I O U for whatever amount Onesimus may have stolen!

Let us cultivate a large-hearted spirit and sympathize with the people of God, especially with new converts, if we find them in trouble through past wrongdoing. If anything needs setting right, do not let us condemn them off-hand and say, "You have been stealing from your master, have you? You profess to be converted, but we do not believe it." Such suspicious and severe treatment may be deserved, but it is not such as the love of Christ would suggest. Try and set the fallen ones right and give them again, as we say, "a fair start in the world." If God has forgiven them, surely *we* may, and if Jesus Christ has received them, they cannot be too bad for us to receive! Let us do for them what Jesus would have done had He been here—so shall we truly be the disciples of Jesus.

Thus I introduce to you the text, and I notice concerning it, first, that it contains *a singular instance of Divine Grace*. Secondly, it brings before us *a case of sin overruled*. And, thirdly, it may be regarded as *an example of relationship improved by Grace*, for now he that was a servant for a season will abide with Philemon all his lifetime and be no more a servant, but a beloved Brother in Christ.

**I.** But, first, let us look at Onesimus as **AN** **INSTANCE** **OF** **DIVINE** **GRACE**. We see the Grace of God in his *election*. He was a slave. In those days slaves were very ignorant, untaught and degraded. Being barbarously used, they were for the most part, themselves sunk in the lowest barbarism. Neither did their masters attempt to raise them out of it. It is possible that Philemon's attempt to do good to Onesimus may have been irksome to the man and he may, therefore, have fled from his house. His master's prayers, warnings and Christian regulations may have been disagreeable to him and therefore he ran away.

He wronged his master, which he would scarcely have done if he had not been treated as a confidential servant to some extent. Possibly the unusual kindness of Philemon and the trust reposed in him may have been too much for his untrained nature. We know not what he stole, but evidently he had taken *something*, for the Apostle says, "If he has wronged you, or owes you anything, put that on my account." He ran away from Colosse, therefore, and thinking that he would be less likely to be discovered by the ministers of justice, he sought the city of Rome which was, then, as large as the city of London is now, and perhaps larger.

There, in those back slums, such as the Jews' quarter in Rome now is, Onesimus would go and hide. Or among those gangs of thieves which infested the imperial city, he would not be known or heard of any more, so he thought—and he could live the free and easy life of a thief. Yet, mark you, the Lord looked out of Heaven with an eye of love and set that eye on Onesimus! Were there no *free men*, that God must elect a *slave*? Were there no faithful servants, that He must choose one who had embezzled his master's money? Were there none of the educated and polite, that He must look upon a barbarian? Were there none among the moral and the excellent that Infinite Love should fix itself upon this degraded being who was now mixed up with the very scum of society? And what the scum of society was in old Rome I should not like to think, for the upper classes were about as brutalized in their general habits as we can very well conceive! What the lowest scum of all must have been, none of us can tell. Onesimus was part and parcel of the dregs of a sink of sin. Read Paul's first chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, if you can, and you will see in what a horrible state the heathen world was, at that time. And Onesimus was among the worst of the worst! And yet Eternal Love, which passed by kings and princes and left Pharisees and Sadducees, philosophers and magi to stumble in the dark as they chose, fixed its eyes upon this poor benighted creature that he might be made a vessel to honor, fit for the Master's use!—

***"When the Eternal bows the skies To visit earthly things, With scorn Divine He turns His eyes From towers of haughty kings. He bids His awful chariot roll Far downward from the skies, To visit every humble soul, With pleasure in His eyes. Why should the Lord that reigns above Disdain so lofty kings? Say, Lord, and why such looks of love Upon such worthless things? Mortals are dumb; what creature dares Dispute His awful will? Ask no account of His affairs, But tremble and be still. Just like His nature is His Grace, All sovereign, and all free Great God, how searchless are Your ways How deep your judgments be!"***

"I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion," rolls like thunder from the Cross of Calvary and from the Mount of Sinai. The Lord is Sovereign and does as He pleases. Let us admire that marvelous electing love which selected such a one as Onesimus!

Grace, also, is to be observed, in the next place, in the *conversion* of this runaway slave. Look at him! How unlikely he appears to become a convert. He is an Asiatic slave of about the same grade as an ordinary Lascar, or heathen Chinese. He was, however, worse than the ordinary Lascar who is certainly free and probably an honest man, if he is nothing else. This man had been dishonest and he was daring, for after taking his master's property he was bold enough to make a long journey from Colosse to reach Rome. But Everlasting Love means to convert the man—and converted he shall be!

He may have heard Paul preach at Colosse and Athens, but yet he had not been impressed. In Rome, Paul was not preaching in St. Peter's—it was in no such noble building! Paul was not preaching in a place like the Tabernacle, where Onesimus could have a comfortable seat—no such place as that—but it was probably down there at the back of the Palatine Hill, where the praetorian guard have their lodgings and where there was sat with a soldier chained to his hand, preaching to all who were admitted to hear him—and *there* it was that the Grace of God reached the heart of this wild young man, and, oh, what an immediate change it made in him!

Now you see him repenting of his sin, grieved to think he has wronged a good man, vexed to see the depravity of his heart as well as the error of his life. He weeps. Paul preaches to him Christ crucified and the glance of joy is in his eye—and from that heavy heart a load is taken! New thoughts light up that dark mind! The very face is changed and the entire man renewed, for the Grace of God can turn a lion into a lamb, the raven into a dove! Some of us, I have no doubt, are quite as wonderful instances of Divine election and effectual calling as Onesimus was. Let us, therefore, record the lovingkindness of the Lord and let us say to ourselves, "Christ shall have the glory of it. The Lord has done it and unto the Lord be honor, world without end."

The Grace of God was conspicuous in *the character which it worked in Onesimus* upon his conversion, for he appears to have been helpful, useful and profitable. So Paul says. Paul was willing to have had him as an associate and it is not every man that is converted that we should altogether choose as a companion. There are odd people to be met with who will go to Heaven, we have no doubt, for they are pilgrims on the right way. But we would like to keep on the other side of the road, for they are cross-grained and there is a something about them that one's nature can no more delight in than the palate can take pleasure in nauseous medicine. They are a sort of spiritual hedgehogs—they are alive and useful and, no doubt, they illustrate the wisdom and patience of God—but they are not good companions. One would not like to carry them in his bosom.

But Onesimus was evidently of a kind, tender, loving spirit. Paul at once called him Brother and would have liked to retain him. When he sent him back, was it not a clear proof of a change of heart in Onesimus that he would go back? Away as he was in Rome, he might have passed on from one town to another and have remained perfectly free. But feeling that he was under some kind of bond to his master—especially since he had injured him—he takes Paul's advice to return to his old position. He will go back and take a letter of apology or introduction to his master, for he knows that it is his duty to make reparation for the wrong that he has done.

I always like to see a resolve to make restitution of former wrongs in people who profess to be converted. If they have taken any money wrongfully, they ought to repay it. It were well if they returned sevenfold. If we have, in any way, robbed or wronged another, I think the first instincts of Grace in the heart will suggest compensation in all ways within our power. Do not think it is to be got over by saying, "God has forgiven me and, therefore, I may leave it." No, dear Friend, but inasmuch as God has forgiven you, try to undo all the wrong and prove the sincerity of your repentance by so doing.

So Onesimus will go back to Philemon and work out his term of years with him, or otherwise do Philemon's wishes, for though he might have had injured. That showed a gentle, humble, honest, upright spirit and let Onesimus be commended for it—no, let the Grace of God be extolled for it! Look at the difference between the man who robbed and the man who now comes back to be profitable to his master. What wonders the Grace of God has done! Brethren, let me add—what wonders the Grace of God can do! Many plans are employed in the world for the reformation of the wicked and the reclaiming of the fallen—and to every one of these, as far as they are rightly bottomed, we wish good success—for whatever things are lovely and pure, and of good report, we wish them God speed.

But mark this word—the true reforming of the drunk lies in giving him a new *heart*! The true reclaiming of the harlot is to be found in a renewed *nature*! Purity will never come to fallen women by those hideous Contagious Diseases Acts, which, to my mind, wear, like Cain, a curse upon their forehead! Womanhood will but sink lower under such laws. The harlot must be washed in the Savior's blood or she will never be clean! The lowest strata of society will never be brought into the light of virtue, sobriety and purity except by Jesus Christ and His Gospel—and we must stick to that. Let all others do what they like, but God forbid that I should glory save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.

I see certain of my Brethren fiddling away at the branches of the tree of vice with their wooden saws, but, as for the Gospel, it lays the axe at the roots of the whole forest of evil! And if it is fairly received into the heart it fells all the upas trees at once—and instead of them, there spring up the fir tree, the pine tree and the box tree together—to beautify the house of our Master's Glory! Let us, when we see what the Spirit of God can do for men, publish the Grace of God and extol it with all our might!

**II.** And now, secondly, we have in our text and its connections, a very interesting **INSTANCE** **OF** **SIN** **OVERRULED**. Onesimus had no right to rob his master and run away. But God was pleased to make use of that crime for his conversion. It brought him to Rome and so brought him where Paul was preaching—and thus it brought him to Christ and to his right mind. Now, when we speak of this, we must be cautious. When Paul says, "Perhaps he departed for a season, that you should receive him forever," he does not excuse his departure. He does not make it out that Onesimus did right—not for a moment! Sin is sin, and, whatever sin may be overruled to do, yet sin is *still* sin!

The crucifixion of our Savior has brought the greatest conceivable blessings upon mankind, yet, none the less, it was "with wicked hands" that they took Jesus and crucified Him. The selling of Joseph into Egypt was the means in the hand of God for the preservation of Jacob and his sons in the time of famine. But his brothers had nothing to do with that and they were, none the less, guilty for having sold their brother for a slave. Let it always be remembered that the faultiness or virtue of an act is not contingent upon the result of that act.

If, for instance, a man who has been set on a railway to turn the switch forgets to do it, you call it a very great crime if the train comes to mischief and a dozen people are killed. Yes, but the crime is the same if *nobody* is killed. It is not the *result* of the carelessness, but the carelessness, itself, in such-and-such a way, and his not doing so should even by some strange accident turn to the saving of life, the man would be equally blameworthy. There would be no credit due to him, for if his duty lies in a certain line his fault also lies in a certain line, namely, the neglecting of that duty.

So if God overrules sin for good, as He sometimes does, it is none the less sin. It is sin just as much as ever, only there is so much the more glory to the wonderful wisdom and Grace of God who, out of evil, brings forth good and so does what only Omnipotent Wisdom can perform. Onesimus is not excused, then, for having embezzled his master's goods nor for having left him without permission—he still is a transgressor—but God's Grace is glorified. Remember, too, that this must be noticed—that when Onesimus left his master, he was performing an action, the results of which, in all probability, would have been ruinous to him.

He was living as a trusted dependent beneath the roof of a kind master who had a Church in his house. If I read the Epistle rightly, he had a godly mistress and a godly master and he had an opportunity of learning the Gospel continually. But this reckless young blade, very likely, could not bear it and could have lived more contentedly with a heathen master, who would have beaten him one day and made him drunk another! The Christian master he could not bear, so away he went. He threw away the opportunities of salvation and he went to Rome. And he must have gone into the lowest part of the city and associated, as I have already told you, with the very grossest company.

Now, had it come to pass that he had joined in the insurrections of the slaves which took place frequently about that time, as he in all probability would have done had not Grace prevented, he would have been put to death as others had been. He would have had a short stay in Rome. I half suspect a month and off with his head as was the rule towards slaves and vagabonds. Onesimus was just the very man that would have been likely to be hurried to death and to eternal destruction. He had put his head, as it were, between the lion's jaws by what he had done. When a young man suddenly leaves home and goes to London, we know what it means. When his friends do not know where he is, and he does not want them to know, we are aware, within a little while, where he is and what he is up to.

What Onesimus was doing, I do not know, but he was certainly doing his best to ruin himself. His course, therefore, is to be judged, as far as he is concerned, by what it was *likely* to bring him to—and though it did not bring him to it, that was no credit to him—all the honor of it is due to the overruling power of God! See, dear Brothers and Sisters, how God overruled all. Thus had the Lord purposed. Nobody shall be able to touch the heart of Onesimus but Paul. Onesimus is living at Colosse. Paul cannot come there, he is in prison. It is necessary, then, that Onesimus should go to Paul. Suppose the kindness of Philemon's heart had prompted him to say to Onesimus, "I want you to go to Rome and find Paul out and hear him"?

This evil servant would have said, "I am not going to risk my life to hear a sermon. If I go with the money you are sending to Paul, or with the letknow, when people are brought to hear a preacher with the view of their being converted, if they have any idea of it, it is about the very *last* thing likely to happen, because they go there resolved to be fireproof. And so the preaching does not come home to them—and it would probably have been just so with Onesimus. No, no, he was not to be won in that way! He must go to Rome another way. How shall it be done?

Well, the *devil* shall do it, not knowing that he will be losing a willing servant thereby! The devil tempts Onesimus to steal. Onesimus does it and when he has stolen he is afraid of being discovered and so he makes tracks for Rome as quickly as he can! And he gets down among the back slums and there he feels what the prodigal felt—a hungry belly—and that is one of the best preachers in the world to some people! Their conscience is reached in that way. Being very hungry, not knowing what to do and no man giving anything to him, he thinks whether there is anybody in Rome that would take pity on him.

He does not know anybody in Rome at all and is likely to starve. Perhaps one morning there was a Christian woman—I should not wonder— who was going to hear Paul and she saw this poor man sitting crouched up on the steps of a temple. Perhaps she went to him and spoke about his soul. "Soul?" said he, "I care nothing about that, but my body would thank you for something to eat. I am starving." She replied, "Come with me, then," and she gave him bread and then she said, "I do this for Jesus Christ's sake." "Jesus Christ!" he said, "I have heard of Him. I used to hear of Him over at Colosse." "Whom did you hear speak about Him?" the woman would ask. "Why, a short man with weak eyes. A great preacher named Paul, who used to come to my master's house." "Why, I am going to hear him preach," the woman would say, "will you come and hear him with me?" "Well, I think I should like to hear him again. He always had a kind word to say to the poor." So he goes in and pushes his way among the soldiers. And Paul's Master incites Paul to speak the right words.

It may have been so, or it may have been the other way—that not knowing anybody else at all, he thought, "Well, there is Paul, I know. He is here a prisoner and I will go down and see what prison he is in." He goes down to the Praetorian and finds him there, tells him of his extreme poverty and Paul talks to him. And then he confesses the wrong he has done and Paul, after teaching him a little while, says, "Now, you must go back and make amends to your master for the wrong you have done." It may have been either of these ways, but, at any rate, the Lord must have Onesimus in Rome to hear Paul. And the sin of Onesimus, though perfectly voluntary on his part, so that God had no hand in it, is yet overruled by a mysterious Providence to bring him where the Gospel shall be blessed to his soul.

Now, I want to speak to some of you Christian people about this matter. Have you a son who has left home? Is he a willful, wayward young man who has gone away because he could not bear the restraints of a Christian family? It is a sad thing it should be so—a very sad thing—but do not despond or even have a thought of despair about him! You do not know where he is, but God does! And you cannot follow him, but the Spirit of Shanghai who is to be the means of his salvation! And as that Paul is not in England, your son must go there. Is it to Australia that he is going? There may be a word spoken there, by the blessing of God, to your son which is the only word which ever will reach him!

I cannot speak it. Nobody in London can speak it. But the man there, will, and God, therefore, is letting him go away in all his willfulness and folly that he may be brought under the means of Grace which will prove effectual to his salvation. Many a sailor boy has been wild, reckless, godless, Christless and at last has got into a foreign hospital. Ah, if his mother knew that he was down with the yellow fever, how sad her mind would be, for she would conclude that her dear son will die away at Havana or somewhere, and never come home again. But it is just in that hospital that God means to meet with him!

A sailor writes to me something like that. He says, "My mother asked me to read a chapter every day, but I never did. I got into the hospital at Havana, and, when I lay there, there was a man near to me who was dying. And he died one night, but before he died, he said to me, 'Mate, could you come here? I want to speak to you. I have got something that is very precious to me here. I was a wild fellow, but reading this packet of sermons has brought me to the Savior, and I am dying with a good hope through Grace. Now, when I am dead and gone, will you take these sermons and read them? And may God bless them to you. And will you write a letter to the man that preached and printed those sermons, to tell him that God blessed them to my conversion and that I hope he will bless them to yourself'?"

It was a packet of my sermons, and God *did* bless them to that young man who, I have no doubt whatever, went to that hospital because there a man who had been brought to Christ would hand to him the words which God had blessed to himself and would bless to his friend! You do not know, dear Mother, you do not know. The worst thing that can happen to a young man is sometimes the best thing that can happen to him! I have sometimes thought, when I have seen young men of position and wealth taking to racing and all sorts of dissipation, "Well, it is a dreadfully bad thing, but they may as well get through their money as quickly as ever they can, and then when they have got down to begging they will be like the young gentleman in the parable who left his father."

When he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land, and he began to be in need, and he said, "I will arise and go to my father." Perhaps the disease that follows vice—perhaps the poverty that comes like an armed man after extravagance and debauchery—is but love in another form, sent to compel the sinner to come to himself and consider his ways and seek an ever merciful God! You Christian people often see the little gutter children—the poor little Arabs in the street—and you feel much pity for them, as well you may. There is a dear Sister here, Miss Annie MacPherson, who lives only for them. God bless her and her work! When you see them you cannot be glad to see them as they are, but I have often thought that the poverty and hunger of one of these poor little children has a louder voice to most hearts than their vice and ignorance! And God knew that we were not ready and able to hear the cry of the child's sin, so He added the child's hunger to that cry, that it might pierce our hearts.

People could live in sin and yet be happy, if they were well-to-do and rich. And if sin did not make parents poor and wretched, and their children miserable, we should not see it and, therefore, we should not awaken ourselves to grapple with it. It is a blessing, you know, in some diseases, when the patient can throw the complaint out upon the skin. It is a horrible thing to see it on the skin, but still it is better than its being hidden inside. Oftentimes the outward sin and the outward misery are a sort of throwing out of the disease so that the eyes of those who know where the healing medicine is to be had is thereby drawn to the disease—and so the soul's secret malady is dealt with.

Onesimus might have stayed at home and he might never have been a thief! But he might have been lost through self-righteousness. But now his sin is visible. The scapegrace has displayed the depravity of his heart and now it is that he comes under Paul's eyes and Paul's prayers and becomes converted! Do not, I pray you, ever despair of man or woman or child because you see their sin upon the surface of their character. On the contrary, say to yourself, "This is placed where I can see it, that I may pray about it. It is thrown out under my eyes that I may now concern myself to bring this poor soul to Jesus Christ, the mighty Savior who can save the most forlorn sinner."

Look at it in the light of earnest, active benevolence and awaken yourselves to conquer it! Our duty is to hope on and to pray on. It may be, perhaps, that, "he therefore departed for a season, that you should receive him forever." Perhaps the boy has been so wayward that his sin may come to a crisis and a new heart may be given him. Perhaps your daughter's evil has been developed that now the Lord may convince her of sin and bring her to the Savior's feet. At any rate, if the case is ever so bad, hope in God and pray on!

**III.** Once more. Our text may be viewed as **AN** **EXAMPLE** **OF** **RELATIONS** **IMPROVED**. "He therefore departed for a season, that you should receive him forever." "*Not now as a servant, but a Brother beloved, specially to one, but how much more unto you*?" You know we are a long while learning great truths. Perhaps Philemon had not quite found out that it was wrong for him to have a slave. Some men who were very good in their time did not know it. John Newton did not know that he was flying wrong in the slave trade and George Whitfield, when he left slaves to the orphanage at Savannah, which had been willed to him, did not think, for a moment, that he was doing anything more than if he had been dealing with horses, or gold and silver.

Public sentiment was not enlightened, although the Gospel has always struck at the very root of slavery. The essence of the Gospel is that we are to do to others as we would that others should do to us—and *nobody* would wish to be another man's slave—and therefore he has no right to have another man as his slave. Perhaps, when Onesimus ran away and came back again, this letter of Paul may have opened Philemon's eyes a little as to his own position. Maybe he began to doubt that he was a good but perhaps he had not regarded him as a brother. And now Onesimus has come back. He will be a better servant, but Philemon will be a better master and a slave-holder no longer. He will regard his former servant as a Brother in Christ.

Now, this is what the Grace of God does when it comes into a family. It does not alter the relations. It does not give the child a right to be pert and forget that he is to be obedient to his parents. It does not give the father a right to lord it over his children without wisdom and love, for it tells him that he is not to provoke his children to anger, lest they be discouraged. It does not give the servant the right to be a master, neither does it take away from the master his position, or allow him to exaggerate his authority—but all round it softens and sweetens.

Rowland Hill used to say that he would not give a halfpenny for a man's piety if his dog and his cat were not better off after he was converted. There was much weight in that remark. Everything in the house goes better when Grace oils the wheels. The mistress is, perhaps, rather sharp, quick, tart—well, she gets a little sugar into her constitution when she receives the Grace of God! The servant may be apt to loiter, be late up in the morning, very slovenly, fond of a gossip at the door. But if she is truly converted, all that kind of thing ends. She is conscientious and attends to her duty as she ought. The master, perhaps—well, he is the master and you know it. But when he is a truly Christian man—he has a gentleness, a suavity, a considerateness about him.

The husband is the head of the wife, but when renewed by Grace he is not at all the head of the wife as some husbands are. The wife also keeps her place and seeks, by all gentleness and wisdom to make the house as happy as she can. I do not believe in your religion, dear Friend, if it belongs to the Tabernacle and the Prayer Meeting, but not to your home. The best religion in the world is that which smiles at the table, works at the sewing machine, and is amiable in the drawing-room. Give me the religion which blacks boots and does them well, cooks the food and cooks it so that it can be eaten! Measures out yards of calico and does not make them half-an-inch short! Sells a hundred yards of an article and does not label 90 a hundred, as many trades people do!

That is the true Christianity which affects the whole of life! If we are truly Christians we shall be changed in all our relationships to our fellow men and, therefore, we shall regard those whom we call our inferiors with quite a different eye. It is wrong in Christian people when they are so sharp upon little faults that they see in servants, especially if they are Christian servants. That is not the way to correct them. They see a little something wrong and, oh, they are down upon the poor girls as if they had murdered somebody! If your Master, and mine, were to treat us in that style I wonder how we would get on? How quick some are in discharging their maids for small faults! No excuse, no trying the persons again—they must go.

Many a young man has been turned out of a situation for the littlest trifle, by a Christian employer, when he must have known that he would be exposed to all sorts of risks. And many a servant has been sent adrift as if found, and without anything being done to prevent her going astray. Do let us think of others, especially of those whom Christ loves even as He does us. Philemon might have said, "No, no, I won't take you back, Mr. Onesimus, not I. Once bitten, twice shy, Sir. I never ride a horse with broken knees. You stole my money! I am not going to have you back again." I have heard that style of talk, have not you? Did you ever feel like it? If you have, go home and pray to God to get such a feeling out of you, for it is bad stuff to have in your soul! You cannot take it to Heaven.

When the Lord Jesus Christ has forgiven you so freely, are you to take your servant by the throat and say, "Pay me what you owe?" God forbid that we should continue in such a temper! Be pitiful, easily entreated, ready to forgive. It is a deal better that you should suffer a wrong than *do* a wrong—much better that you should overlook a fault which you might have noticed, than notice a fault which you ought to have overlooked—

***"Let love through all your actions run, And all your words be kind,"***

is said in the little hymn which we used to learn when we were children. We should practice it now, and—

***"Live like the blessed virgin's Son That meek and lowly Child."***

God grant we may, of His infinite Grace! I want to say this, and then I have done. If the mysterious Providence of God was to be seen in Onesimus getting to Rome, I wonder whether there is any Providence of God in some of you being here tonight? It is possible. Such things do happen. People come here that never meant to come. The last thing in the world they would have believed, if anybody had said it, is that they would be here, yet here they are.

With all manner of lyrists and turns they have gone about, but they have got here somehow. Did you miss a train, and so stepped in to wait? Did not your ship sail quite so soon as you expected, and so are you here tonight? Say, is that it? I do pray you, then, consider this question with your heart. "Does not God mean to bless me? Has He not brought me here, on purpose, that this night I may yield my heart to Jesus as Onesimus did?" My dear Friend, if you believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, you shall have immediate pardon for all sin and shall be saved! The Lord has brought you here in His infinite wisdom to hear that, and I hope that He has also brought you here that you may accept it and so go your way altogether changed.

Some three years ago I was talking with an aged minister, and he began fumbling about in his waistcoat pocket, but he was a long while before he found what he wanted. At last he brought out a letter that was well near worn to pieces, and he said, "God Almighty bless you! God Almighty bless you!" And I said, "Friend, what is it?" He said, "I had a son. I thought he would be the stay of my old age, but he disgraced himself and he went away from me, and I could not tell where he went, only he said he was going to America. He took a ticket to sail for America from the London Docks, but he did not go on the particular day that he expected."

This aged minister bade me read the letter, and I read it, and it was like this—"Father, I am here in America. I have found a situation and God has prospered me. I write to ask your forgiveness for the thousand wrongs that I have done you and the grief I have caused you, for blessed be God, I have found the Savior! I have joined the Church of God here, and hope to spend my life in God's service. It happened thus: I did not sail for America the day I expected. I went down to the Tabernacle to see what it was like, and God met with me. Mr. Spurgeon said, 'Perhaps there is a runaway son here. The Lord call him by His Grace.' And he did. "Now," said he, as he folded up the letter and put it in his pocket, "that son of mine is dead and he is in Heaven, and I love you, and I shall do so as long as I live, because you were the means of bringing him to Christ."

Is there a similar character here tonight? I feel persuaded there is— somebody of the same sort—and in the name of God I charge him to take the warning that I give him from this pulpit! I dare you to go out of this place as you came in! Oh, young man, the Lord in mercy gives you another opportunity of turning from the error of your ways, and I pray you now, here—as you now are—lift your eyes to Heaven, and say, "God be merciful to me a sinner," and He will be so. Then go home to your father and tell him what the Grace or God has done for you—and wonder at the love which brought you here to bring you to Christ!

Dear Friend, if there is nothing mysterious about it, yet here we are. We are where the Gospel is preached and that brings responsibility upon us. If a man is lost, it is better for him to be lost *without* hearing the Gospel than to be lost as some of you will be if you perish under the sound of a clear, earnest enunciation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ! How long have some of you been between two opinions? "Have I been so long time with you," says Christ, "and yet have you not known Me?" All this teaching and preaching and invitations—and yet do you not turn?—

***"O God, You the sinner turn, Convince him of his lost estate.***

***Let him linger no longer, Lest he linger till he rue his Fatal choice too late."***

God bless you, for Christ's sake. Amen.

***PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Philemon.***

**HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK"—231, 248.**